**BRC Operations Community Members Meeting**

**Security Issues**

**November 9th 2021**

**Brief Summary**

* BRC Operations Community members met to re-commence the Business as Usual type gatherings on Security. For nearly 2 years there have been weekly meetings on Covid related issues – but this was designed specifically to deal with non-Covid matters.
* Members decided that there should be quarterly meetings next year.
* The draft crime survey for 2022 was circulated. It was noted that steps would need to be taken to ensure comparisons with previous years could be made given some businesses had been closed during a proportion of the reporting period. The questions had also been adjusted to reflect the move to online retailing. There was some discussion over future timing of surveys to see if they could be published closer to the reporting period.
* Members reported on the current security related issues. Issues were common among all members - retail violence with customers facing empty shelves turning aggressive ; theft and armed robberies in stores including by young people - particularly of tobacco with thieves jumping counters - with the reduction in security guards; increase in burglaries; cross border offending by organised gangs – mainly from Romania. Police were still not treating retail incidents as a priority and in particular there was a lack of police action on cross border gangs. Regional hotspots were London, Manchester and Birmingham. Online there was a growing problem of fraudulent returns and fraud in general. There remained a reluctance to report incidents in view of the perception of a poor police response and the time/cost taken to report.
* The Met Police representatives reported that violence against retail staff (and GPs) was their main priority. There was a NBCC ambition to establish minimum standards for investigations in this area. They noted the importance of reporting – even if the response was deemed poor, reports help establish where resources should be directed. There is a focus at present on thefts from HGVs.
* Members noted a report on the NRCSG follow up on data transfers (where the Task and Finish Group was looking at placing some guidance on the ICO website by illustrating what can be done and also the potential for a sandbox initiative) and the substance misuse task and finish group. Members were asked to strengthen the retail presence on these groups given there was only one representative on the data group. The Shopkindly campaign would resume on November 22 in time for the Christmas and Black Friday period.
* The SIA reported a lack of trained security staff – reflecting member concerns in finding such staff. Overnight security was a case in point where wage demands were very high.
* Matt Turner (Met) reported on the Safe Spaces initiative designed to indicate shops that would provide a safe space for anyone who felt threatened in any way. Next was the launch partner and other retailers had expressed an interest and were encouraged to turn that into active participation.
* It was reported that the first report from the Manchester arena inquiry was proposing that all in house cctv operators/operations should be licensed. Members also noted the Protect Duty proposal was yet to be revealed in final form.