

# **PROLIFIC OFFENDING DRIVEN BY SUBSTANCE MISUSE**

**TOOLKIT FOR RETAILERS:**

**WHAT TO DO IF YOUR STORE IS BEING TARGETED BY OFFENDERS WITH ADDICTION ISSUES**

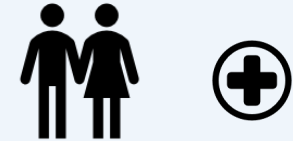
**Prolific offenders are often driven by the need to feed a substance misuse problem, and this can lead to violence and abuse towards shop staff**



**Levels of violence and abuse towards shop workers have been rising steadily year on year.** The British Retail Consortium Crime Survey 2021 reported that **450 incidents of violence** happened everyday in shops in 2020



According to the 'Desperate for a Fix' Report (2018), **70% of shop theft** is attributed to frequent users of heroin, crack cocaine and powdered cocaine



Violence and abuse can leave shop-workers with lasting **physical and mental injury**



Prolific offenders are behind **70% of shop theft** and these individuals are increasingly resorting to violence and abuse directed at shop staff



Violence and abuse brings with it **significant financial costs to businesses** with the British Retail Consortium estimating its members spend **£1.2 billion on measures to protect staff** and prevent crime while the Association of Convenience Stores estimate its members spent **£5,239 per store**

## My store is being targeted by offenders motivated by addiction issues, what should I do?

### In store

- ⇒ Implement measures to limit stock levels or move items that are commonly targeted to highly visible areas (e.g. alcohol products)
- ⇒ Ensure store teams make all customers aware of your presence when they enter the store (e.g. greet customers at the door).
- ⇒ Collect evidence of multiple offences committed by a single offender
- ⇒ Notify store/security teams of known offenders identity and behaviours
- ⇒ Consider issuing store banning notices to offenders. You may be able to do this through your local Business Crime Reduction Partnership
- ⇒ Provide employees with training and development opportunities to help de-escalate an incident

### Work with the police

- ⇒ Report all incidents to the police using either online reporting, 101 or 999 in emergencies. Refer to guidance on reporting available on the following websites: [The Association of Convenience Stores](#) and [The British Retail Consortium](#)
- ⇒ Build an evidence pack of multiple offences that have been committed by one offender.
- ⇒ Request a meeting with your neighbourhood policing team to discuss the problem
- ⇒ Write to your Police and Crime Commissioners to ask for information on the support available.

### Work with the community

- ⇒ Work with other businesses in your area through Business Crime Reduction Partnerships or Business Improvement Districts, to address prolific offenders
- ⇒ Engage with the community safety partnership to consider what can be done to work with other agencies on a joined-up response. For example, contacting the Housing Association or care providers for the offender to support with interventions
- ⇒ If necessary, consider using the Community Trigger mechanism (Anti-social behaviour case review). Refer to [gov.uk guidance](#) for more information on when to use the community trigger
- ⇒ Provide store management and guarding teams with access to information on local support services in order to signpost if requested by an offender. For information on what support is available, refer to:
  - The National Retail Crime Steering Group [map of local programmes and services](#)
  - Guidance on the FRANK [website](#)

## Resources and Links

For more information about substance misuse as a driver of prolific offending and violence refer to:

- The National Retail Crime Steering Group (NRCSG) [website](#)
- The Centre for Social Justice's 2018 ['Desperate for a Fix' Report](#)
- Dr Emmeline Taylor's report: ['It's not part of the job'](#)

For more information on crime prevention options:

- Visit the National Business Crime Centre (NBCC) [website](#)
- Refer to the ACS Crime Guidance [here](#)
- Engage with your local Business Crime Reduction Partnership (BCRP). Further information on partnership working and how to get involved [here](#)

For training and development resources refer to:

- The NRCSG website ['De-escalation training' video](#), created by the Suzy Lamplugh Trust
- The National Business Crime Centre training animation on 'Reducing Customer Conflict' and ['Managing violence and abuse in convenience stores'](#)

For information on support and community projects available in your local area:

- Refer to the National Retail Crime Steering Group [website](#) and [map](#) of local programmes and initiatives across the UK.
- Refer to [NHS](#) and [FRANK](#) for details of the local support services available.