



The Rt Hon Suella Braverman MP,  
Home Secretary,  
Home Office,  
2 Marsham Street,  
London, SW1P 4DF

Helen Dickinson OBE  
Chief Executive:  
Tel: 020 7854 8911  
Email: [helen.dickinson@brc.org.uk](mailto:helen.dickinson@brc.org.uk)  
Contact: [tom.mccarthy@brc.org.uk](mailto:tom.mccarthy@brc.org.uk)

29 September 2023

Dear Home Secretary,

We are writing to ask you to take action to support our colleagues who continue to face unacceptable levels of violence and abuse, amid a rise in theft, much of it organised crime, and anti-social behaviour which in many cases are the root cause of violent incidents.

The latest BRC Crime Survey, covering the period from 1 April 2021 to 31 March 2022, reported more than 850 incidents of violence and abuse against retail workers every day, and a more recent survey found theft had risen by a further 27% across 10 of the UK's largest cities over the last year. Recent high-profile interventions by some retail CEOs show that these trends are getting worse. At the same time, retailers lost £953m to shoplifting and invested £715m on crime prevention measures. Many retailers are also making significant investments in technology solutions to tackle the issue.

In 2021, the government amended the Police, Crime, Sentencing and Courts Bill to place into statute the aggravating factor applied by the courts in cases of assault, as set out in Sentencing Council guidelines, for offences committed against those providing a public service or performing a public duty. This was welcomed by the retail industry as it showed the government understood the scale of the issue, but it is now clear that it did not go far enough. The Ministry of Justice is not able to track data on the amendment, so it is impossible to tell if it is effective, yet the situation in our businesses continues to deteriorate.

Firstly, we ask you to address this issue by creating a new statutory offence of assaulting, threatening, or abusing a retail worker, allowing for violent incidents resulting from retail workers enforcing a statutory age restriction or preventing theft, to be charged as an aggravated offence – similar to the 2021 Protection of Workers (Retail and Age-restricted Goods and Services) Act passed in Scotland. This standalone offence would send an important signal that our colleagues will receive better protection in law and act as a deterrent to would-be offenders. This action should be taken without delay.

Secondly, the police also need to prioritise these offences and improve their response to incidents. While the police face challenges across numerous competing priorities, 44% of BRC members rate the police response as poor or very poor.



For one major retailer, the police's own data shows that they failed to respond to 73% of serious retail crimes that were reported. The police consistently tell us that a lack of data about these offences means they have no visibility about the nature or scale of the issue. While retailers are working to improve reporting of incidents, and we have developed strong and effective partnerships with police in many parts of the country, a standalone offence would vastly improve that visibility so that the police can allocate appropriate resources and improve their response.

Your department's continued focus on retail crime is welcome, and the discussion at the recent meeting with the Minister for Crime, Policing and Fire provided an excellent opportunity for some businesses to identify the most significant threats and potential solutions. While we look forward to supporting the development of the action plan emerging from that meeting, it is our firm view that this standalone offence is also needed.

We ask that you treat this request with the seriousness that it deserves and would be keen to meet with you to discuss the issue in more detail.

Yours sincerely,

**Nick Stowe, CEO**  
**Adena Services**

**Giles Hurley, CEO UK&I**  
**Aldi UK**

**Maria Hollins, CEO**  
**Ann Summers**

**Sue Kemp, Managing Director**  
**Associated Independent Stores**

**James Barker, Managing Director**  
**Barker and Stonehouse**

**Dawood Pervez, Managing Director**  
**Bestway Wholesale**

**Meryl Halls, Managing Director**  
**Booksellers Association**

**Leanne Cahill, CEO**  
**Bravissimo**

**Charmaine Griffiths, Chief Executive**  
**British Heart Foundation**

**Kenny Wilson, Chief Executive**  
**Airwair International - Dr Martens**

**John Boumphrey, UK Country Manager**  
**Amazon UK Services**

**Mohsin Issa CBE, Co-Owner**  
**ASDA Stores**

**Graham Bell, CEO**  
**B&Q**

**Nick Collard, Chief Executive Officer**  
**Bensons for Beds Retail**

**Andrew Goodacre, Chief Executive**  
**BIRA**

**Sebastian James, Senior Vice President and**  
**Managing Director**  
**Boots UK**

**Gavin Murphy, Managing Director**  
**Breitling UK**

**Helen Dickinson, Chief Executive**  
**British Retail Consortium**

The Form Rooms, 22 Tower Street, WC2H 9NS

+44 (0)20 7854 8900

[info@brc.org.uk](mailto:info@brc.org.uk) | [brc.org.uk](http://brc.org.uk)

British Retail Consortium - a company limited by guarantee  
Registered in England and Wales No. 40572



**Gerry Murphy, Chairman**  
Burberry

**Will Stratton-Morris, Chief Executive**  
Caffe Nero UK

**Kevin Barrett, Group CEO**  
Carpentryright

**Owen McLellan, Group Managing Director**  
Company Shop

**David Robinson, CEO**  
Dobbies Garden Centres Group

**Nick Wilkinson, CEO**  
Dunelm Group

**Andrew Hinds, Chairman**  
F Hinds

**Tom Athron, Chief Executive Officer**  
Fortnum & Mason

**Karthik Harith, General Manager (UK)**  
Getir UK

**Henrik Nordvall, CEO/Country Manager UK&I**  
H&M Hennes & Mauritz UK

**Doug Putman, Owner**  
HMV

**Damian McGloughlin, CEO**  
Homebase

**Richard Walker OBE, Executive Chairman**  
Iceland Food

**Andrew Higginson, Chairman**  
Regis Schultz, Group CEO  
JD Sports Fashion

**Beth Butterwick, Chief Executive Officer**  
Jigsaw

**Bob Neville, Managing Director UK&I**  
C&J Clark International

**Darcy Willson-Rymer, Chief Executive**  
Card Factory

**Debbie Robinson, Chief Executive**  
Central Co-op

**Alexander Baldock, Group Chief Executive**  
Currys

**Daniel Rubin, Chairman**  
Dune Group

**Nigel Murray, Managing Director**  
EH Booth & Co

**Ed Duggan, Financial & Commercial Director**  
Fishpools

**Noel Coyle, CEO**  
Fraser Hart

**Roisin Currie, CEO**  
Greggs

**Manju Malhotra, Chief Executive Officer**  
Harvey Nichols

**Alex Gourlay, Executive Chairman**  
Holland & Barrett

**Fran Barnes, Chief Executive Officer**  
Horticultural Trades Association

**Peter Jelkeby, UK & IE Country Manager**  
IKEA UK

**Lee Bagnall, CEO**  
JD Outdoor

**Nish Kankiwala, CEO**  
John Lewis Partnership

The Form Rooms, 22 Tower Street, WC2H 9NS  
+44 (0)20 7854 8900

[info@brc.org.uk](mailto:info@brc.org.uk) | [brc.org.uk](http://brc.org.uk)

British Retail Consortium - a company limited by guarantee  
Registered in England and Wales No. 40572



**Gwynn Milligan, CEO**  
**JoJo Maman Bébé**

**Jamie Dunning, President and Managing Director**  
**Krispy Kreme U.K.**

**Glenn Edwards, Managing Director**  
**LEON Restaurants**

**Ryan McDonnell, CEO**  
**Lidl GB**

**Jo Whitfield, CEO**  
**Matalan Retail**

**Muntazir Dipoti, National President**  
**National Federation of Retail Newsagents**

**Leila Bailey, Managing Director**  
**OKA Direct**

**Paul Marchant, Chief Executive**  
**Primark**

**Chris Brook-Carter, Chief Executive Officer**  
**Retail Trust**

**Julie Abraham, CEO**  
**Richer Sounds**

**Simon Roberts, Chief Executive Officer**  
**Sainsbury's**

**John Brodie, Chief Executive**  
**Scottish Midland Co-operative Society**

**Steve Carson, CEO**  
**ScS Group**

**Andy Lightfoot, Chief Executive Officer**  
**Space NK**

**Alex Rayner, VP & General Manager**  
**Starbucks UK, Switzerland and Austria**

**Thierry Garnier, Chief Executive**  
**Kingfisher**

**Linda Campbell, Managing Director**  
**Laser Clinics**

**Adil Khan, Chief Executive Officer**  
**Liberty Retail**

**Stuart Machin, Chief Executive**  
**Marks & Spencer**

**Alistair Macrow, Chief Executive Officer**  
**McDonald's UK & Ireland**

**Helen Connolly, Chief Executive Officer**  
**New Look Retailers**

**Nick Read, Group CEO**  
**Post Office**

**Nick Vance, Chief Executive Officer**  
**Radley+Co**

**Howard Saycell, CEO**  
**RETRA**

**Christina Dowling, UK Retail Manager**  
**Rigby & Peller**

**Doug Winchester, Managing Director**  
**Savers Health and Beauty**

**John Mewett, CEO**  
**Screwfix**

**Sarah Boyd, Managing Director**  
**Sephora UK**

**Nick Bunker, Non-Exec Chair**  
**Spar UK**

**Peter Macnab, CEO**  
**Superdrug Stores**

The Form Rooms, 22 Tower Street, WC2H 9NS  
+44 (0)20 7854 8900

[info@brc.org.uk](mailto:info@brc.org.uk) | [brc.org.uk](http://brc.org.uk)

British Retail Consortium - a company limited by guarantee  
Registered in England and Wales No. 40572



**Ken Murphy, Group Chief Executive  
Tesco Stores**

**Shirine Khoury-Haq, Chief Executive  
The Co-operative Group**

**Mark Smith, Chief Executive  
The Southern Co-operative**

**Mary Homer, CEO  
The White Company**

**Michael Munnely, President for Europe  
TJX**

**Sebastian Hobbs, Chief Executive  
Well Pharmacy**

**David Potts, Chief Executive  
Wm Morrison Supermarkets**

**Justin Hampshire, Chief Executive  
TFG Brands (London)**

**Gill Smith, Managing Director  
The Perfume Shop**

**Brian Duffy, CEO  
The Watches of Switzerland Group**

**Gavin Peck, Chief Executive  
The Works Stores**

**Paddy Lillis, General Secretary  
USDAW**

**Carl Cowling, Group Chief Executive  
WHSmith**

CC.

The Rt Hon Rishi Sunak MP, Prime Minister  
The Rt Hon Jeremy Hunt MP, Chancellor of the Exchequer  
Kevin Hollinrake MP, Minister for Enterprise, Markets and Small Business  
The Rt Hon Yvette Cooper MP, Shadow Home Secretary