



## Surrey Police Approach to Retail Crime

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**What are the Policing Principles?**

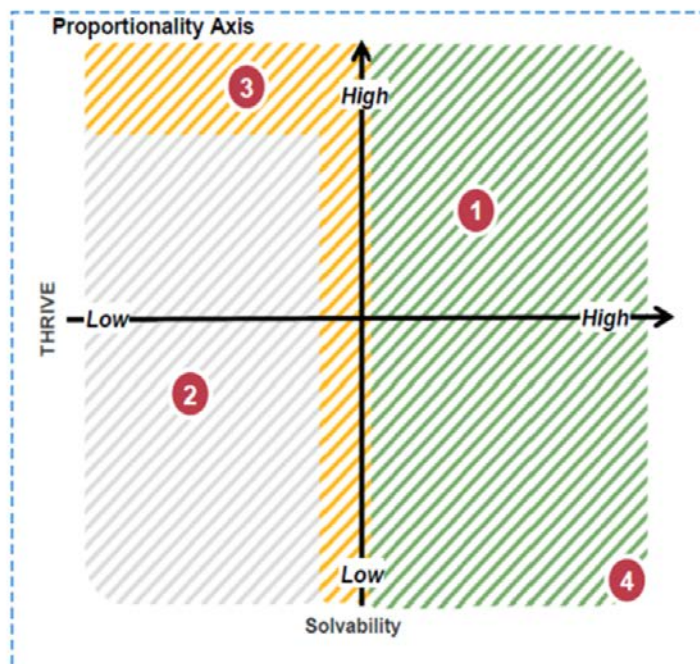
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| Accountability <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> | Fairness <input checked="" type="checkbox"/>   | Honesty <input checked="" type="checkbox"/>      |
| Integrity <input checked="" type="checkbox"/>      | Leadership <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> | Objectivity <input checked="" type="checkbox"/>  |
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## 1. Background

- 1.1. The purpose of this document is to provide a briefing for the PCC Performance Meeting on the approach taken to Retail Crime. The PCC has requested this report to detail in particular the response to 'low level' incidents that may be signals for more serious crime, as well as the chronic targeting of specific retailers.
- 1.2. Currently there are no specific flags on the NICHE crime recording system that identify crime records as being Retail Crime. The bulk of offences that will affect retailers across the County and within the scope of this paper will fall under the following classifications: Shoplifting, Robbery of Commercial Premises and Making off Without Payment (MOWP). Whilst there will also be Public Order and ASB reports that affect retailers, it is not possible to separate the data for these type of offences specifically to retail premises.

## 2. Allocation Criteria

- 2.1. The current approach to the allocation of all criminal offences, for investigation is based upon the THRIVE methodology where the offence is assessed for the following factors: Threat, Harm, Risk, Investigative opportunities, Vulnerability and Engagement. The use of the THRIVE framework allows the Occurrence Management Unit (OMU) and supervisors to make a proportionality assessment by balancing solvability with threat, harm and risk to decide on whether to investigate a crime or not. This can be best explained using the following model:



Cases that are medium or high threat, harm and risk will usually fall into the area marked 1 and 4. These will always be allocated for investigation, even where the solvability factors are low. Cases that are low on threat harm and risk with limited solvability factors will fall in the area marked 2 and will not be prioritised for investigation. The orange sector marked 3, are the areas where threat, harm and risk may be lower but solvability can be higher. Cases that fall within this area require professional judgement on the proportionality of investigating the case, often factors such as whether the victim has been repeatedly targeted or the suspect is involved in more wide-ranging criminality as well as local issues will be considered in the decision making for these cases. Additionally potential damage to the reputation of the police service through not investigating a case with a known suspect, will also be a consideration.

### 2.2. Robbery of Commercial Premises

- 2.2.1. Where a retail premises is targeted for an offence of Robbery, this will always involve some degree of violence being threatened or used. This will result in the THRIVE assessment falling into the medium or high category, and as such these offences will always be allocated for investigation. Usually these offences will attract a grade 1 or 2 deployment of NPT officers

to the scene immediately during or after the offence has taken place to search for suspects and secure evidence. Offences where there are aggravating factors including the use of weapons or serious assaults occurring in the commission of the offence, will be allocated to CID for investigation by PIP 2 level investigators.

### **2.3. Shoplifting**

- 2.3.1.** Offences of shoplifting in the vast majority of cases will fall into the low or medium THRIVE category unless any aggravating factors occur such as the use of threats of violence, or abusive language to make good an escape. As a result, unless there are any strong solvability factors in the case, it will fall into category 2 and not be allocated for investigation. Additional aggravating factors such as significant repeat offending with impact on the viability of a small business will increase the THRIVE assessment level and move the case into section 3 or 4, increasing the likelihood of allocation for investigation.
- 2.3.2.** Some offences that fall into category 2 may have potential CCTV lines of enquiry, these offences will be allocated to the Telephone Investigation Bureau (TIB) in OMU to obtain CCTV still images and attempt to identify the suspect from these. If a suspect is identified it will then be allocated to NPT to progress, otherwise it will be filed.
- 2.3.3.** Where a clear suspect is identified for the offence or there are viable lines of enquiry such as vehicle index with a known user, this will be allocated for investigation by OMU to the relevant NPT team. Each case will then be reviewed by the NPT supervisor for proportionality with the vast majority of cases being investigated to a conclusion by NPT officers.

### **2.4. Making off Without Payment (MOWP)**

- 2.4.1.** Offences of Making off Without Payment will be assessed against the THRIVE allocation model in the same way as shoplifting. As a result, unless any aggravating factors apply such as the vehicle/suspect being linked to a series of offences or the chronic, repeat targeting of a location these offences will fall into category 2 and not be allocated.
- 2.4.2.** Where suspects and vehicles that are involved in a MOWP offence are linked to wider criminality, this will again increase the THRIVE level to the point where the offence will fall into category 3 and a professional decision will be made. In these circumstances it is likely that the MOWP offence is a facilitating factor in the use of the vehicle to commit more serious criminality, as a result offences in this category will be allocated to NPT to investigate as it provides a good opportunity to disrupt more organised criminality.

## **3. Problem Solving for Retail Crime**

- 3.1.** On application of the THRIVE principles, a large share of volume crime affecting retailers will not reach the threshold for allocation. This however does not impede the application of problem solving methodology to locations that are subject of repeat offending. Where chronic targeting is identified, in addition to increasing the likelihood of reactive investigation, officers from both NPT and SNT teams from across the force utilise problem solving approaches to mitigate future offending and identify offenders. The identification of repeat targeting will occur either in the OMU during the THRIVE assessment process, or through SNT supervisor reviews of offending on their borough.
- 3.2.** The types of problem solving initiatives that are centred on retail premises across the force are wide ranging. For example they can relate to issues of repeat ASB or public order offences in the locality of shopping centres, high volume but low value shoplifting that could indicate increased drug supply activity in an area, or the targeting of retail premises by Organised Criminal Groups as a means of funding other more serious criminal activity.
- 3.3.** The following are examples of recent problem solving activity from across the Force:
  - 3.3.1.** The Guildford SNT working with the Safer Guildford Partnership identified that the Boots shop in the town centre was being repeatedly targeted for shoplifting. Analysis established that the suspects for the majority of offending were drug users who attended Boots to make use of the needle exchange service and obtain their prescriptions, before committing theft on the way out. As Boots were the only provider of this service in the town and despite prosecution in a number of cases, the management of Boots felt they could not ethically ban

the perpetrators from the store and deny them the use of the exchange and prescription service. To address the issue, a second location for provision of these services has been arranged at a local day centre meaning that offenders now can be banned from the store. Combined with the use of Criminal Behaviour Orders for the most impactful offenders there has been a significant effect. In the first month of this new service, thefts from Boots had reduced to 1 offence compared to an average of 8 in the preceding months.

**3.3.2.** The Reigate and Banstead SNT identified a pattern of shoplift offences taking place in Redhill. In these cases offenders were making no attempt to use any subtlety or conceal their identity during offences before were being detained. All of the individuals involved were prolific offenders and eligible to be remanded in custody after being charged with the offence. Analysis of the issue established that individuals were working to courier drugs into the prison estate which were plugged within their body, by being charged and remanded quickly into prison they were able to then excrete the drugs and sell them within the prison. As a result officers were able to identify those individuals likely to be involved in such circumstances and deal with them as suspected drug supply offenders resulting in recovery of controlled drugs whilst in police custody.

**3.3.3.** The Runnymede SNT responded to an increase in ASB within Addlestone Town that saw shoppers and retail premises targeted for nuisance behaviour, theft and public order offences. The premises targeted were large multi-national retailers and local small businesses alike. Working in partnership with the local authority, the local chamber of commerce and business owners through the JAG forum, the SNT identified a core group of local youths involved in the behaviour and that the new Addlestone One multi-storey car park was a magnet for the youths to gather prior to causing issues. The SNT obtained only the second partial closure order nationally on a car park to restrict persons from gathering within it, and utilised dispersal orders within the town to address the immediate issue with the youths.

In the longer term they worked with retailers and the car park owners using the Designing Out Crime Officers (DOCOs) to target harden premises and the car park to deter youths from gathering in the area. Once the youths involved had been identified, rather than criminalise them, the SNT worked with a number of agencies including schools, Surrey Family Services and Housing Associations to work with the parents to address the behaviour of their children. Additionally, the youth restorative justice programme agreed for those involved to complete community reparation in the affected area as well as other diversionary activity as an alternative to prosecution. Following this action and the provision of greater activities for youths in the area, the problem was resolved and gave a long term solution to remove the issue rather than a solely short term enforcement solution.

#### **3.4. Challenges**

**3.4.1.** From a number of areas across the Force, challenges have been highlighted with some larger retailers who have not engaged with attempts to reduce offending at their premises. A particular example was given of one retailer who accounts for the highest number of calls for service by any premises in their borough but have declined to heed advice provided by the local team and the DOCOs to reduce offending. In this particular example, the SNT are seeking in partnership with the local authority, to use alcohol licence conditions to improve their engagement in this area.

This example is not isolated where larger retailers are willing to accept a degree of loss through theft when placing high value items in prominent locations to drive increased sales.

#### **4. Conclusion[s]**

**4.1.** The Surrey Police approach to retail crime is consistent with the allocation practices for all other crime types recorded within Surrey. By their nature however, the majority of reports of retail crime are of low threat, harm and risk, and as result unless significant solvability factors exist, they will not be further investigated. This should reassure retailers however that unlike initiatives in other Police Force areas that have attracted negative press coverage, there is no arbitrary rule such as a minimum value under which police will not investigate. Each report will be assessed on its own individual circumstances.

- 4.2. The PCC and the wider public should be reassured that Surrey Police are able to identify where retail crime is chronic in its nature, and are able to take action to work with the retailer to reduce crime. The capacity to do so will only be enhanced by the planned investment in Specialist Neighbourhood Teams and the recent activation of improved analytical functions within NICHE, the crime management system used by Surrey Police, which improve the ability to identify repeat locations of offending.
- 4.3. Crime data for each of the three categories discussed in this report has been included in Appendix 1. It is of note that reports of all 3 offending types have increased in the last financial year. Offences of Robbery of Business Premises, the most serious type of retail crime, remains low across the county however, with an improved rate of positive outcomes. Offences of shoplifting have increased by 4%, with an almost corresponding reduction in positive outcome rates. The increases in this area have centred on the boroughs with the highest density of retail premises and is likely linked to wider socio-economic conditions that have led to an increase in many types of acquisitive crime. Similarly MOWP offences have increased by 7% in the last financial year, with a significant reduction in positive outcomes likely linked to the low THRIVE assessments of this type of offending.
- 4.4. Given the increases in all these crime types, it is essential for Surrey Police to continue to identify opportunities to reduce offending by working with retailers to design out opportunities for offending, and to target those habitually and persistently perpetrate this type of crime.

## **5. Decision[s] Required**

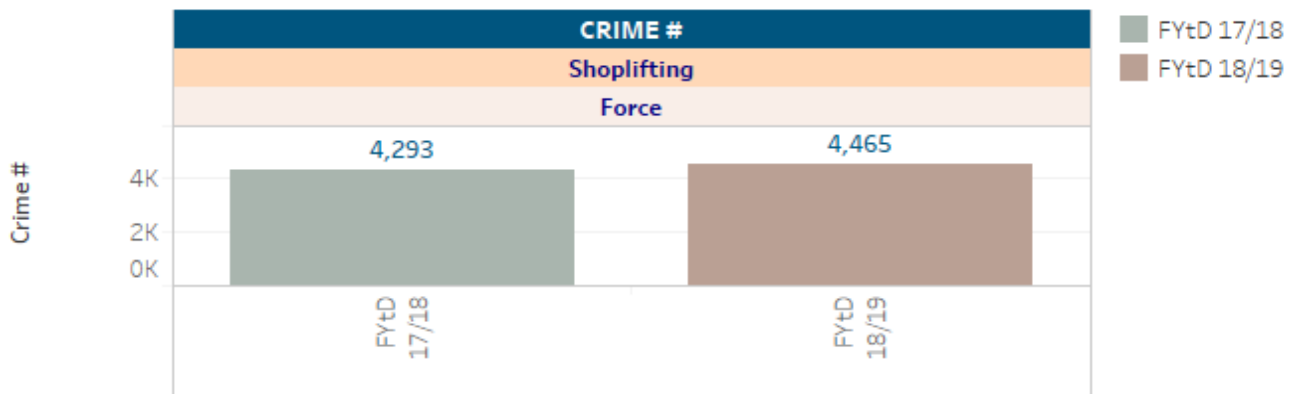
- 5.1. None, this paper is for information and discussion only.

## **6. Attachments / Background Papers**

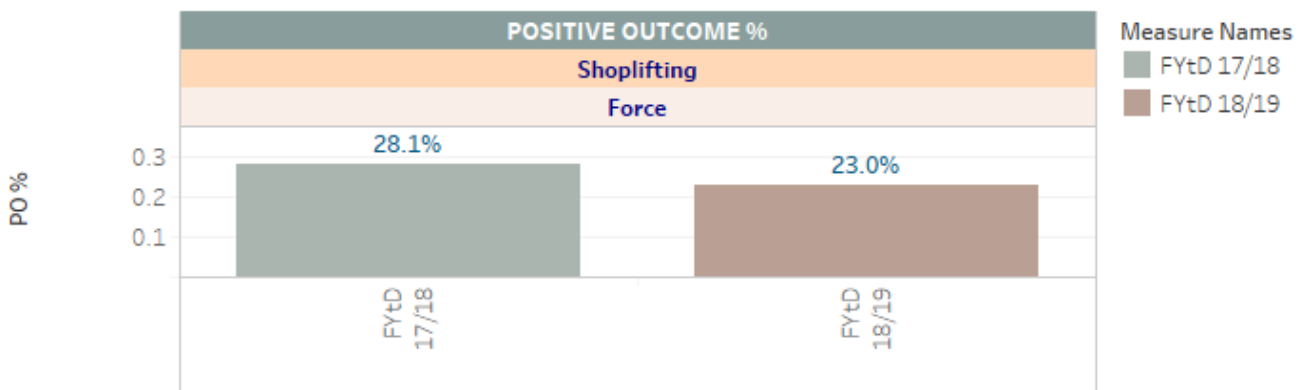
### **Crime Volumes & Positive Outcome Rates**

**Shoplifting**

CRM FFF FYtD CHA

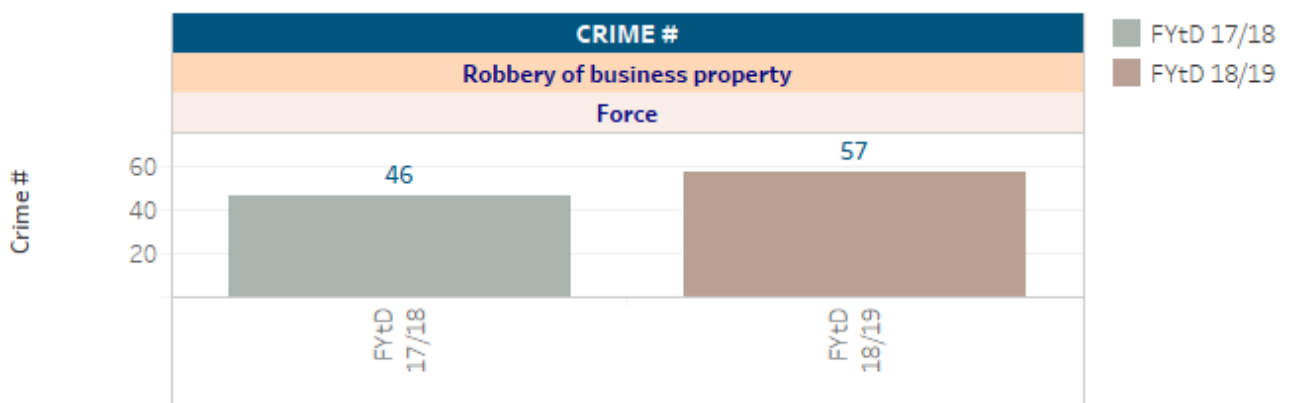


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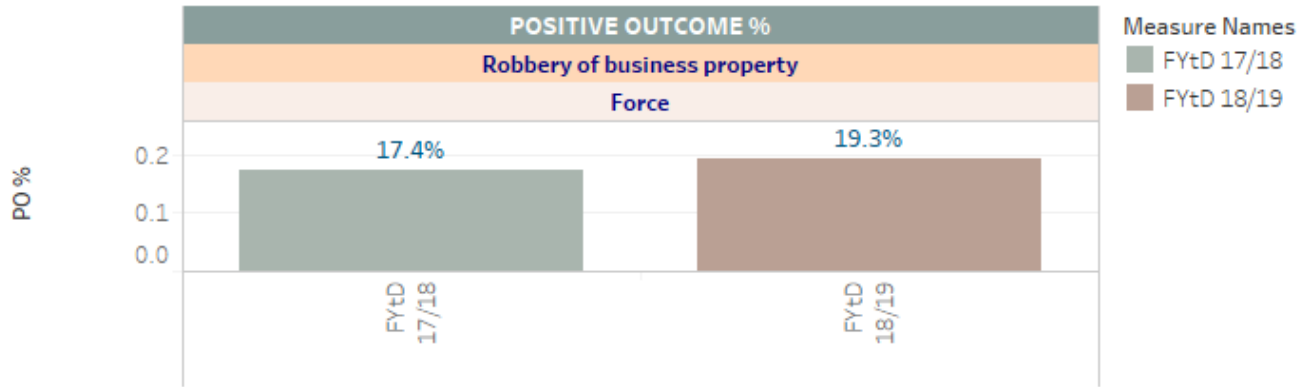


**Robbery of Business Property**

CRM FFF FYtD CHA



POS FFF FYtD CHA



**Making Off Without Payment**

FYTD	CRIME				Positive Outcomes (inc Resolutions)				Positive Outcome Rate		
	Last Year	This Year	#	%age	Last Year	This Year	#	%age	Last Year	This Year	%age
<b>Force</b>											
Theft - making off without payment	2075	2220	145	7.0%	74	41	-33	-44.6%	3.6%	1.8%	-1.7%