

Subject: ACS Crime Report 2016 - Impact of Business Crime on Convenience Stores

From: Julie Byers <julie.byers@acs.org.uk>

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To: "john@coyne4pcc.org" <john@coyne4pcc.org>

Dear Mr Coyne

ACS Crime Report 2016: The Impact of Business Crime on Convenience Stores

I am writing to share ACS' (the Association of Convenience Stores) Crime Report 2016, which shows the impact that business crime has on convenience stores. I hope that you will review the report and make a commitment to address business crime in your Police and Crime Plan. ACS represents 33,500 local shops across the UK which include the Co-operative Group, Spar UK, Costcutter, One Stop, My Local as well as thousands of independent retailers.

Convenience stores are at the heart of local communities. They provide a range of products and essential services such as bill payment services, Post Offices and free to use cash machines. As a sector, we employ over 407,000 people and have invested £596 million in the UK economy in the last year alone. ACS' Community Barometer identifies that convenience stores are in the top three businesses on high streets that have the most positive impact on communities.

The ACS Crime Report 2016 (<http://www.acs.org.uk/research/crime-report-2016/>) has found that business crime cost convenience stores £122 million in the last year, taking into account the amount retailers invest, the total cost of crime per store was £3,750. This is equivalent to a 3pence crime tax on every customer transaction. Shop theft is the most common crime faced by our members, costing £43 million annually. The common perception of this type of business crime is that it is victimless. We want to overcome this perception by ensuring better reporting, better police response to businesses as well as effective prosecution of offenders.

Violence and verbal abuse against retailers and employees in our sector is also unacceptably high, the ACS Crime Report suggests that there were almost 11,000 incidents of violence resulting in injury last year alone. The most common triggers for confrontation include refusing the sale of age restricted products by enforcing age verification schemes as well as refusing the sale of alcohol because the customer is intoxicated. Whilst incidents of violence in the sector have been in steady decline, this level of violence and abuse in-store is still unacceptable.

As a Police and Crime Commissioner candidate, we are asking you to commit to include business crime in your Police and Crime Plan. We believe there are three key areas that all Police and Crime Plans should address in relation to business crime:

1. **Engagement with the Business Community:** A commitment to have an ongoing dialogue with the business community about policing priorities.
2. **Reporting Procedures:** A commitment to ensure businesses and the police know what to expect from each other including how to best report crime, especially for high volume, low value offences like shop theft. This will break the vicious cycle of retailers not reporting all crime incidents because they have little confidence the police will respond.
3. **Collaboration and Information Sharing:** A commitment to, wherever possible, enhance intelligence sharing between businesses, neighbouring police forces and national and local

business crime networks.

I hope that you can include some or all of these commitments in your Police and Crime Plan if you are successful in the upcoming elections. Business crime has a huge impact on local shops and the communities they serve and I hope you can ensure it is taken seriously in your police force area.

We would value your response to our survey which asks whether you will be including measures in your Police and Crime Plan to address business crime. To respond, please click here: <https://www.surveymonkey.co.uk/r/N9P5N7V>.

If you have any queries or would like to hear the experiences of business crime from a retailer in your force area, please contact Julie.Byers@acs.org.uk.

Kind regards,
Julie Byers

Julie Byers

Public Affairs Executive

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