

# PROBLEM SOLVING AND INNOVATION BMSW4014

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# Current Situation



- Retail theft increased by 25% in the last year, with over 20 million occurrences reported, the highest amount since 2003, according to crime figures from the British Retail Consortium (Bartholomew, 2025).
- Shop thefts have had the most impact on supermarkets and high street retailers.
- According to the BRC, there was a 50% increase in violence and abuse against shop employees, with over 2,000 such occurrences occurring every day (Wilson and Connolly, 2025).

The rise of shoplifting is causing supermarkets across the UK to feel the effects of a noticeable increase in retail crime. It is causing concern for retail businesses, staff safety, consumer happiness and the whole economy. Based on the British Retail Consortium's crime data, retail theft went up by 25% in the past year, with more than 20 million reported cases, the biggest number since 2003. The BRC also pointed out that, in addition to expensive damage to their businesses, about 2,000 retail workers were victims of abuse and violence every working day (Bartholomew, 2025).

Shop thefts rose steeply to 20.4 million in the 12 months leading up to September which was 3.7 million more than in the previous year, as recorded by the British Retail Consortium. Supermarkets and stores on high streets have been the most seriously affected by these changes. It is costing UK retailers an estimated £2 billion every year. Because of the large numbers of people in supermarkets and the way they are designed, theft of items such as alcohol, meat, baby formula and toiletries is more common (Wilson and Connolly, 2025).

Shop theft in England and Wales reached its highest rate since data began at over 492,000 incidents and was also up by a large margin of 23% compared to the previous year. On the other hand, retail experts believe that the actual number is much greater since a lot of problems go undiscovered (Wilson and Connolly, 2025). According to various shop managers and owners, supermarkets and independent stores deal with theft on a daily basis and some of them have to handle several incidents each day.

The articles raise the issue of how offenders have grown bolder in recent times. "Kamikaze shoplifting" is happening more often, in which people stuff items into bags and leave the store without fear of being caught. Because of the rising risk of violence, retail stores often instruct their staff not to get involved if it happens. Violence and abuse against people working in shops rose by 50% and over 2,000 incidents like this happened daily, as per the BRC. Such actions are issues like threats, assaults and intimidation which usually result in staff feeling traumatised or afraid to deal with offenders (Wilson and Connolly, 2025).

People's views on shoplifting are starting to change. Hundreds of videos showing thieves shoplifting inside supermarkets end up on social media, making people who follow the law irritated. Numerous individuals think the police take too much time to help and the justice system fails to focus on crimes in

stores. There is no fear among some organised gangs to enter supermarkets, because of the weak enforcement against them. Supermarket employees are finding it pressured by their long and intense work shifts. Persons working in this context have been hurt, threatened and disturbed emotionally. According to an interview with the BBC, a shop manager said, “I don’t want to die at work.” While security guards are common in supermarkets, they do not have much authority and hence have trouble catching or stopping offenders (Wilson and Connolly, 2025).

# References

- Bartholomew, J. (2025). 'it's very brazen': Retail workers and shoplifters on the UK's record theft statistics. The Guardian. Available at: <https://www.theguardian.com/business/2025/mar/04/retail-workers-shoplifters-uk-record-theft-crime> (Accessed: 07 June 2025).
- Wilson, C. and Connolly, J. (2025). UK shoplifting on the rise and more brazen, new survey says, BBC News. Available at: <https://www.bbc.com/news/articles/cp82jvd3g54o> (Accessed: 07 June 2025).