



Says...

**KEEP TRADE
LOCAL**

FEDERATION OF SMALL BUSINESSES

Crime

Crime against business





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The Keep Trade Local Campaign

Small shops are struggling to survive because of local, regional and national government policies, together with the failure of the competition authorities to deal with the aggressive policies of supermarkets.

The loss of the UK's independent retailers has far reaching socio-economic and environmental implications for the whole community. 42% of English towns and villages no longer have a shop of any kind¹. By 2010 many local communities will have no shops or services.

The Keep Trade Local campaign was launched in March 2008 and has since been taken up by local communities across the UK. In addition to its grassroots campaign activities, the FSB is gathering signatures to the Keep Trade Local petition at <http://petitions.pm.gov.uk/keeptradelocal/> which calls for the Prime Minister to secure the future of small shops across the UK and safeguard the choice and competition that people expect in the market place.

¹ 'Nightmare on every street' Report by NIIRTA (Northern Ireland Independent Retail Trade Association) 2008

Crime against business

Introduction

Crime is an issue for local traders because they are often subject to repeat victimisation and anti-social behaviour. Crime affects a business' ability to meet customer deadlines, attract customers and their profitability, ultimately risking businesses closing down and putting local jobs at risk. Valuable time and resources are spent in dealing with the aftermath of a crime and businesses are feeling the squeeze of narrowing profit margins and rising insurance premiums.

This type of crime is not a 'victimless' crime as it affects the local trader, their staff and wider community as employees feel at risk and jobs are lost as businesses are forced to relocate or close down. This is a huge concern to both the sustainability of our local communities and the national economy. It is estimated that crime costs the UK economy a significant £12 billion a year.

Police pilot surveys show that crimes against business make up 20% of all recorded crime and are essentially the 'forgotten fifth'. Small businesses, unlike larger stores are not able to pay for security measures or security personnel, and are vulnerable to attacks and theft. Salt is rubbed in the wound when security measures such as shutters and CCTV add to the rateable value of their premises and pushes up the non-domestic business rates bill.

Partnership working through business crime partnerships is important but small businesses are hugely reliant on an effective police response and support from the local authority. The police need to proactively engage with small businesses and take a more customer focused approach, to ensure that we protect local businesses and keep trade local.





1

Police forces must adopt a national definition for crimes against business and targets for reduction in local policing plans

Key facts:

- *64% of businesses are the victims of crime over a twelve month period.*
- *The most frequent crimes are vandalism, vehicle damage, threatening behaviour, graffiti, shoplifting and burglary.*
- *Police pilot surveys show that 20% or the 'forgotten fifth' of all recorded crime is targeted against businesses.*

At the moment, only a handful of police forces are using a definition for crimes against business and specifically recording this type of crime. For example, the current definition used by Warwickshire is 'Any crime which takes place against a business or on a business premises is business crime'.

All police forces must adopt a common definition to ensure that crimes against business are properly recorded and recognised across the country. This will ensure a more consistent approach and ensure that the extent of the problem is fully captured so that strategies can be put in place to tackle the issue.

The government is moving away from setting national targets or Key Performance Indicators (KPI). We are therefore relying on individual police forces to set targets at a local level. Crimes against business are included as a target for reduction in some local policing plans. This should be the case for all of them. Local business crime strategies should also be developed and their delivery assessed by police authorities and police performance structures.

Case study:

Talking about the Thames Valley policing plan, the Deputy Chief Constable said that;

'A key difference between the 2007/08 plan and its predecessor is a dramatic increase in the emphasis on the business community. Although more time will be spent taking action to prevent and detect business crime, they will also be working hard to ensure that our relationship with the business community goes over and beyond the question of business crime. Critically, they will be developing relationships with the business community around Neighbourhood Policing.

Small businesses can expect to be hearing more from senior officers whose success in the 2007/2008 reporting year will be measured, inter alia, by the extent to which they engage with their local business community'.

2

Local Structures must include reducing business crime as a priority in their strategies

Key facts:

- *Local authorities have a statutory requirement to work in partnership with agencies to tackle crime and disorder.*
- *National CDRP guidance issued by the Home Office in September 2007 gives good practice examples of how CDRPs should be engaging with businesses and the wider community.*

Local Structures in the form of Local Area Agreements (LAAs) and Local Strategic Partnerships (LSPs) offer an important opportunity to set the agenda for tackling crimes against business at a local level. These priorities should then filter down to the Crime and Disorder Reduction Partnerships (CDRPs) and Community Safety Partnerships (CSPs). More effective use should be made of these structures in order to set a consistent agenda across the country.

The Home Office should play a more robust role in centrally coordinating CDRPs/CSPs and ensuring that their targets include business crime. There is a need to strike a better balance between respecting local decision making and what works locally, whilst ensuring that CDRPs/CSPs follow a national model for engaging with business.

Case study:

The East Midlands region hosted a Crime Pays and So Do We! Conference in 2007 which was aimed at CDRPs, LAAs and LSPs, in addition to Police Authorities. The three main objectives for the event were to:

- *Raise awareness of the seriousness of crimes against business.*
- *Encourage CDRPs and LSPs to engage more closely with their local business community.*
- *Encourage CDRPs and those preparing LAAs to treat crime against business as a priority for action.*

The event gave an important opportunity for local structures to come together and discuss aligning their agendas to address the needs of the business community.





3

Neighbourhood Policing Units must proactively engage with the business community

Key facts:

- *The FSB has worked on a best practice guide with the National Policing Improvement Agency (NPIA) for Neighbourhood Policing Units (NPU) on how to successfully engage with the business community.*
- *Businesses can find the contact details of their NPU business liaison officer at www.neighbourhoodpolicing.co.uk*

Neighbourhood Policing Units (NPU) were rolled out in all areas by spring 2008. NPUs offer a crucial opportunity for the police to engage with businesses at a local level, restore confidence in the system and to treat the business community as an important local customer. Police Officers and Community Support Officers should be engaging with all businesses on their patch and each business should be informed as to how to contact their PCSO and Neighborhood Officer.

The Met Police, for example, has been working proactively with the business community by distributing accessible top tips postcards on the beat including crime prevention advice and highlighting the key contacts for the business liaison officers. Businesses can also act as important sources of intelligence in their local community and therefore this positive engagement by police should be replicated across the country.

Case studies:

Following work with the FSB and surveys on business crime in the region, Lincolnshire police wrote to Neighbourhood Policing teams with the following positive message:

'Lincolnshire police are committed to reducing all crime in the county and I ask that Neighbourhood Policing Teams (NPT's) make contact with individual businesses within their respective areas. Crime against businesses is not just a crime against the business, as it impacts on the staff, customers and the wider community. If local businesses are forced to close down or relocate, this is a major contributing factor to the decline of town centres and rural economies'.

Nottinghamshire Police

Nottinghamshire Police run the *'Safer Business'* initiative in response to the fact that one in four crimes in the region is committed against businesses, which includes:

- *Crime Prevention surveys - free of charge to help identify areas of potential weakness and recommendations for security improvements.*
 - *Supplying cost effective crime prevention interventions at 40% less than the Recommended Retail Price.*
 - *Assisting in setting up Business Watches or combined security schemes on business parks.*
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4

The Police must operate easy online reporting mechanisms to facilitate local crime mapping to inform local strategies

Key facts:

- *40% of businesses that experience crime say that they do not report crime because of a lack of faith in the criminal justice system.*
- *The FSB is running its Every Crime Every Time campaign (see www.fsb.org.uk/ecet) to encourage businesses to report crime.*

Businesses need an easy and straightforward way of reporting crime and fraud to the police. Currently only a handful of police forces have online reporting mechanisms and a handful of these only exist for specific offences. Businesses should be able to report crime easily, obtain a crime reference number and be reassured that the data is feeding into local crime mapping and informing local strategies.

The FSB is running a twelve month Every Crime, Every Time campaign to encourage businesses to report crime committed against them, improving the statistical picture and enabling local strategies to be mobilised for local crime issues. The campaign also raises awareness of the impact of crime against the business community.

Businesses can get involved in the Every Crime Every Time campaign by going to www.fsb.org.uk/ecet and downloading a welcome letter and poster to display in their premises. Crime incidents can be reported via the online reporting form in order to inform national and local strategies on crimes against business.

Case study:

Northumbria police provide an easy reporting facility for non emergency crimes via which members of the public and businesses can use to report crimes by phone, text or via an online form on the website. This gives the public and businesses an easy method via which to report crimes, see: www.northumbria.police.uk

How can you help Keep Trade Local?

This campaign can only succeed if people like YOU get involved.

The Keep Trade Local campaign was inspired by FSB members, adopted by members at annual conference in March 2008, and is now being delivered by members in local communities across the country.

The campaign seeks to unite communities, businesses and residents associations across the country that find themselves under threat from the range of problems currently driving small independent retailers out of our high streets.



Says...

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Things you can do to make a difference:

- Write to your local MP ensuring that they understand the problems small businesses are facing
- Write to your local newspaper
- Sign the Keep Trade Local petition: <http://petitions.pm.gov.uk/keeptradelocal/>
- Join your FSB's Keep Trade Local network
- Ensure that FSB posters and campaign materials are in the windows of small shops on your local high street
- Run a local campaign in your branch/region
- Report all crime to the police, no matter how minor. This will allow a full picture of the extent of crimes against business to emerge and adequate resources to be allocated

And last but not least,

- Shop local and use your local businesses – if we don't use our local shops and tradespeople we will lose them

Keep Trade Local has already been endorsed by leading political figures from across the political spectrum. It has achieved celebrity endorsement and has struck a chord with people up and down the UK.

We now need your support to carry the campaign forward. Our local communities deserve nothing less.

We will follow up this document with more information on each campaigning area.

For more information about the campaign please contact Aviva Bresky: aviva.bresky@fsb.org.uk

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This report can be downloaded from the FSB website at <http://www.fsb.org.uk/policy/archivePubs/>

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