



# Senedd Cymru Welsh Parliament

## Welsh Cross Party Group – Small Shops: Retail Crime

Wednesday 21<sup>st</sup> February, 12:30 – 13:30 Microsoft Teams (Online)

### MINUTES

#### PRESENT:

Name	Organisation	Minutes
Edward Woodall	ACS	EW
Daniel Askew	ACS	DA
Willem Van De Ven	ACS	WV
Vikki Howells	MS for Cynon Valley	VH
Robin Lewis	MS Support Staff for Vikki Howells	RL
Vince Malone	Tenby Stores Retailer	VM
Ioan Bellin	MS Support Staff for Delyth Jewell	IB
Jenny Rathbone	MS for Cardiff Central	JR
Gwen Patterson	NFRN	GP
Dennis Clarke	Councillor for Centre of Barry	DC
Sam Whiteside	N/A	SW
Nicky Ryan	MS Support Staff for	NR
Peter Robinson	Robinson Retail	PR
Sue Jude	NFSP	SJ
Tom Perry	MS Support Staff for Tom Giffard	PR
Kiera Marshall	MS Support Staff	KM
Laura McCormack	Booksellers Association	LM
John Parkinson	N/A	JP
Alun Michael	South Wales Police and Crime Commissioner	AM
Russell George	MS for Montgomeryshire	RG

#### 1. Apologies

Peredur Owen Griffiths MS

Andrew Goodacre (BIRA)

## **2. Welcome and Introductions**

VH welcomed IRC Members and MSs to the CPG on Small Shops and outlined the agenda for the session.

## **3. New Findings on Retail Crime & Launch of Stop Shop Theft Campaign**

EW outlined the results of ACS' Crime Report 2023 covering the impact crime has on convenience retailers including the cost of crime, impact on store colleagues and business owners, and the increasing trend of retail crime.

EW further outlined in the report engagement from the police on retail crime with businesses and how businesses are investing to prevent retail crime.

EW outlined the national retail crime action plan and the key areas it will focus on.

EW outlined the statutory aggravating factor and how it can help businesses to ensure offenders are proportionately punished.

EW outlined the Stop the Shop Theft Campaign and how it is being used to get Police and Crime Commissioners to commit to action on retail crime in their community.

## **4. Retailer Insights on Retail Crime**

VM outlined his experience of retail crime at his shop covering the type of offenders committing the crime, police response time and how he trains his store colleagues to ensure their safety.

VM recommended that there needs to be a concerted and educated approach to the issue of retail crime and that it needs to be taken more seriously.

## **5. How Retail Crime is Being Tackled in South Wales**

AM outlined highlighted the increase of retail crime in local communities and the seriousness of the issue.

AM provided an outline of the national picture on retail crime and what is being done to tackle it.

AM outlined what work is being done to tackle retail crime on a local level and said he has worked to strengthen engagement with neighbourhood policing teams to help tackle retail crime and push for commitment of additional funding being used for tackling antisocial behaviour hotspots.

AM outlined the changes needed for retail crime to be better addressed including changes to legislation, highlighting issues impacting businesses, working with those directly affected, and collectively recognising that there is a duty to protect people in vulnerable situations.

## **6. Q and A with Audience**

PR asked what future work will be done to address retail crime and described the different ways retail crime is impacting his business and is not being addressed.

AM acknowledged the concerns made by PR and highlighted the value of reporting retail crime, the need to record evidence of crime, and how reporting data is used to tackle local issues.

SW outlined his appreciation for the ACS Crime Report in mirroring retail experience and provided an overview of his experience of retail crime and the lack of proper punishment for offenders.

AM agreed for the need for stronger punishment for offenders.

DC asked AM if he thinks the image of decriminalising shop lifting is a key reason people turn to crime and what its increased.

AM said decriminalisation of shop lifting is a problem and he believes this will change through the national retail crime action plan and future changes to legislation.

IB asked if crime is being displaced across Wales.

EW highlighted the need for the police and local authorities to think about all hierarchies in areas to make sure retail crime is getting tackled.

## **Closing Remarks**

VH provided closing remarks and thanked everyone for attending.