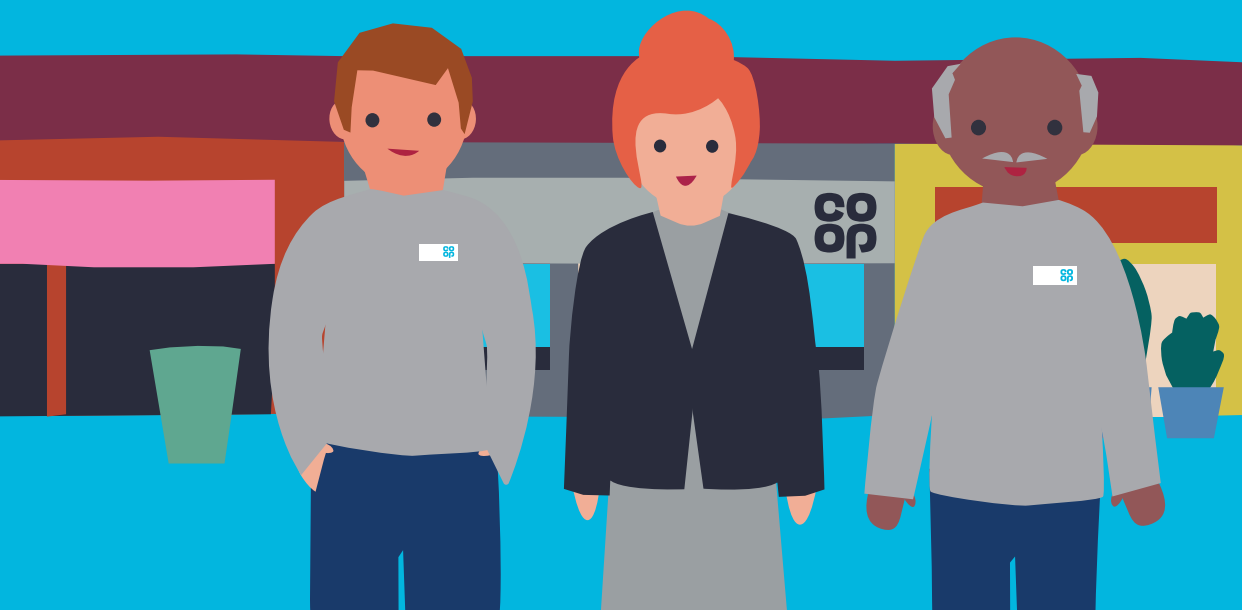




Safer colleagues Safer communities

November 2018



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Foreword from Jo Whitfield

Nothing is more important than protecting our colleagues now and in the future. We are using the assets we have, shaped through our Co-op values, to achieve this - investing in political capital, calling on our Government to do more to protect shop workers on the front line and working closely with our local communities to tackle the root causes of crime.

In this report we set out what we know about the violence and crime affecting our colleagues - not just the statistics, but also how it feels. We will share why tackling crime is so important to us and how the Co-op is committed to tackling crime impacting our colleagues and the communities in which they live.

Violence and crime which affects shop workers is about much more than the statistics. Often it is seen as a crime against businesses. Harmless. Victimless. Faceless. In actual fact it's our colleagues on the front line who are affected. We will introduce you to some of our colleagues who have been abused, assaulted and attacked.

We are serious about protecting our colleagues and making our communities safer places to live and work. This isn't about profits, it's about people - stock and property can be replaced, people can't.

I look forward to us all working together to make our colleagues and the communities in which they live safer.

Jo Whitfield
Retail Chief Executive
Co-op



* Names in colleague case studies used throughout this report have been changed to protect identities

Colleague case study: Jon's story

Three men in bandanas barged into the store, the first one armed with an axe. One of the men jumped over the kiosk and swore aggressively at Benjamin screaming that he "open the till now." Another masked man grabbed Sally by the hair, made her open the door to the back office and once inside, threw her onto the floor. Two other colleagues were thrown into the back office and made to open the safe, which was cleared of cash, as the masked man at the checkout cleared the tills and the cigarette counter.

Sam was one of the colleagues thrown into the back office. The masked man hit him with the axe. Sam put his arm up to protect his head, and the axe cut through his arm. There was blood everywhere. The masked men sped off into the night on mopeds with cash and stock.

Sam was rushed straight to hospital as he had lost a lot of blood. The police arrived and when the store manager Jon arrived he described it as "a scene from a horror movie." There was blood everywhere, and police tape covering the shop.

The local police sent a prevention officer into store to help stop it from happening again, but in the fortnight that followed there were five attempted break-ins at the store. Three were successful. For the colleagues at the store it was awful - bringing up feelings from the first incident, over and over again.

The colleagues involved all dealt with it in different ways. Some pretended it hadn't happened, some were angry, others used humour as their way of coping. Co-op offered counselling support through LifeWorks, our employee assistance programme. The store manager Jon reached out to LifeWorks to find out how he could support his colleagues who were involved.

Jon said "I wanted to do all that I could to help and support them. They didn't want to talk to a stranger about what had happened, so I told them to talk to me and I asked LifeWorks for the tools to help. They were great."

The three men were caught in the middle of a similar attempt elsewhere. Between them they were sentenced to 26 years in prison.



Violence and crime in 2018



250

Every day 250 shop workers are the victim of a violent incident[^]

64%

of violent incidents involved the use of knives - increasingly violent incidents involve weapons[†]

841

Up to the start of October this year Co-op Food stores have had 841 incidents of violent crime carried out by customers or criminal gangs against our colleagues

[^] 'Freedom From Fear' Survey, 2017, Usdaw

[†] The Crime Report (2018), Association of Convenience Stores (ACS)

Wherever you look, whatever research you read or whichever professional you speak to it is clear violence affecting shop workers is at unprecedented levels. Every day 250 shop workers are the victim of a violent incident.

Udaw's 2017 'Freedom From Fear' Survey[^] shows that over the past year more than two-thirds of shop workers were verbally abused and 42% were threatened. And the figures were up on the previous year's survey - assaults were up 25% and threats up 38%.

Increasingly violent incidents are involving weapons - 64% used knives. Whilst axes, firearms, hammers and syringes are other common weapons of choice[†].

For too many shop workers, facing violence has become part of the job.

It is true that in the last two years, 69% of our Co-op stores have experienced no violent attacks. But that's little consolation for our colleagues working in those stores that have experienced violence.

Fifty of our stores had at least one violent incident in each of the last three years. Up to the start of October this year we've had 841 incidents of violent crime carried out by customers or criminal gangs against our colleagues. This includes 186 robberies, 591 physical assaults, and 64 hate crimes.

The most common assaults - a quarter of all assaults - happen when shop workers are enforcing the law by challenging and verifying the age of those who want to buy age-restricted products like cigarettes and alcohol. There are now more than 50 types of products that are restricted by law. It is the single biggest reason for attacks.

And if shop workers don't enforce the law they are personally liable for breaking it. So the pressures on someone working at the check-out can be considerable, especially when the customer becomes threatening.

We've seen eight years of budget cuts to Britain's police forces. Today's police officers are dealing with more complex crimes as well as having their resources stretched to the limit. Something has to give, and despite the best efforts of our police it's often crime affecting shops and shop workers that has been affected.

At a strategic level, 63%* of police and crime plans make no reference to business crime and 83%* make no reference to the business community. It is not surprising then that police detection rates for crime affecting shops and their workers are 1 in 500.* And where police do have the resources to be able to take forward a prosecution and there is a conviction, the average sentence served is just 26 days*.

Of course, we recognise that there are deep-seated issues in our communities which are driving this increase in crime in our communities.

For example, the Association of Convenience Stores (ACS) recently commissioned research by the Centre for Social Justice - Desperate for a Fix* - which highlighted the connection between substance abuse and violent crime affecting shops and shop workers.

The Government's Serious Violent Crime Strategy published in April 2018 highlighted other research on a diverse range of issues. We recognise that tackling these root causes of crime which affects our colleagues is essential.



63%

At a strategic level, 63% of police and crime plans make no reference to business crime*

1 in 500

Police detection rates for attacks affecting shops and their workers are 1 in 500*

* Desperate for a Fix (June 2018), Centre for Social Justice (CSJ)

Co-op response to crime

We recognise it is our responsibility to keep our colleagues safe in this ever more threatening environment and as a co-operative we do all we can to protect our colleagues.

We have spent £70m since 2015 in an attempt to protect our colleagues from violent incidents. The average spend per year in each of our 2,500 stores is £9,000 and high risk stores in 2018 received upgraded CCTV. In addition, £4.5m has been spent on new headsets which improve service and security in our stores.

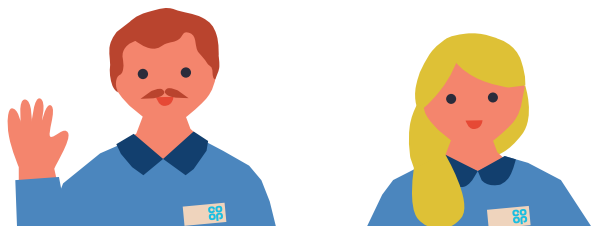
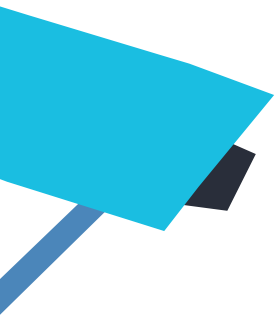
But it's about more than just the amount of investment we make, it's about how we use it. Our partnership with SECOM, a security business that specialises in technological innovation, is one of the most sophisticated and leading-edge approaches to protecting colleagues.

Despite all our efforts, however, it is inevitable that incidents do occur and our response is again driven by the desire to do all we can for colleagues.

After a serious incident our Retail Support Centre in Angel Square assists colleagues on the front line by taking over operational administration. We put a security guard at the store for the next seven days and look to put in place longer term improvements for the store such as lighting and CCTV.

Our security partners take witness statements from our colleagues, liaise with the police and work with the Crime Prosecution Service to build a case for prosecution in cases where multiple crimes have been committed by the same gang in high risk stores. We understand the pressures the police are under and we want to do the best for our colleagues by taking on this role where we can.

As well as the practicalities, our Retail Support Centre also offers support to colleagues through LifeWorks, our employee assistance programme, where colleagues affected can access emotional support, counselling and time off from work.



SECOM runs the remote monitoring centre for Co-op store security.

SECOM monitors CCTV feeds from the 600 highest risk Co-op stores, using patterns of activity to predict when extra attention is needed. Once an incident support button has been pressed in store, SECOM operators can broadcast warnings to and throughout stores during incidents, helping to diffuse situations.

Security guards can be deployed in the hotspot areas and accurate 'evidence packs' can be presented to the police with witness statements, victim impact statements and CCTV evidence, saving valuable police time. One local police force commented "the excellent work we've collaborated on has had a massive effect, resulting in a reduction of incidents being reported to the police and increased staff morale."

The use of intelligence enables Co-op's dedicated investigators to identify repeat shoplifting offenders in store. This has led to a marked reduction in crime in the areas we have focused on - to date this year, more than 50 offenders have been successfully prosecuted.

Co-op will continue to invest in new technology to create safer colleagues and safer communities. Whilst the solution is less obvious than security guards on the door it has proven much more effective - a security guard can offer no more deterrent against a weapon than any other colleague in store. Staying one step ahead is therefore crucial when tackling crime.



Colleague case studies

Dave's story

Three masked men entered the Co-op store through the main entrance armed with pick axes. Dave was in the Manager's office and heard a large bang from outside the room. After leaving the office Dave was faced with the three men who had forced both Ella and Jack into the back office, threatening to use their axes.

The men forced Dave onto his knees and made him open the cash office door and empty the safe. Dave was punched in the face three times while Ella and Jack were forced to watch. The men demanded the roll top safe to also be emptied, but Dave explained that this was not accessible to the store team.

In the office the men rolled an axe over Dave's head, put it to his chin, and then taped the axe onto the safe. Dave thought quickly on the spot and led the men to the kiosk area, handing over the cash from the tills to make sure the men left the store.

Jessica's story

The store opened at 7am but Jessica and her colleague started work at 6am to get the store ready for opening. It was just after 6am when Jessica heard a loud noise, like the sound of breaking glass. Checking the CCTV cameras she saw two men breaking into the store.

Jessica couldn't close the shutters as they could only be closed from the outside, so she and her colleague ran off the shop floor, through the warehouse and locked themselves in the back office, pressing the panic button twice. From the back office Jessica called the police who already knew there was an issue because the panic button had been activated. Minutes later the two men wearing motorbike helmets prised open the door with a crowbar where Jessica and her colleague Mark were hiding. The men confronted Jessica demanding the safe keys. The men snatched the keys, emptied the safe and escaped.

In the weeks that followed Jessica was offered counselling through LifeWorks, and the shutter system was updated so they could be closed from the inside with a fob. A security guard was also put on the door for two weeks.

But a few days after the security guard had left, Jessica was opening the store and spotted a man inside hiding down one of the aisles - he'd taken the tiles off the roof to get in. The alarm hadn't been triggered as he'd only passed the sensor once - it had to be passed at least twice to be activated. Jessica and her team leader were able to close the shutters which kept the man inside until the police arrived with a sniffer dog. The police found the man trying to hide with a basket full of cigarettes, and he was sentenced to community service. For Jessica it brought all of the memories of the first incident flooding back.

Making change for good

We have seen a positive impact from the action we have taken and our colleagues are less likely to suffer a violent incident than shop workers in other retail shops.

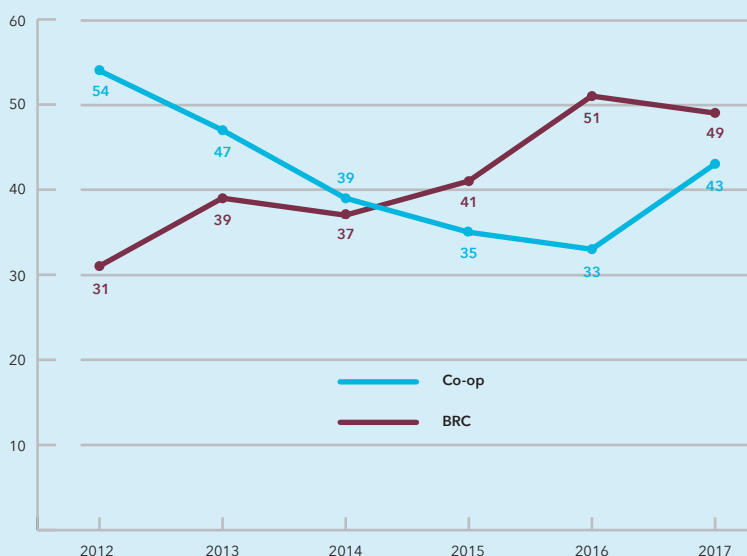
We recognise that our action will only displace or deter attacks on our colleagues.

As a co-operative, we are always about long-term sustainable change and not quick fixes – this is just as true for the issue of violence.

Of course, we are realistic about what one business can achieve. We are not going to solve crime and violence alone. So we need to build co-operative alliances to collaborate with victims, other retailers and partner organisations.

However, we do believe that our Co-op can help make a real, sustainable difference both locally and nationally, to our colleagues and the communities in which they live and work.

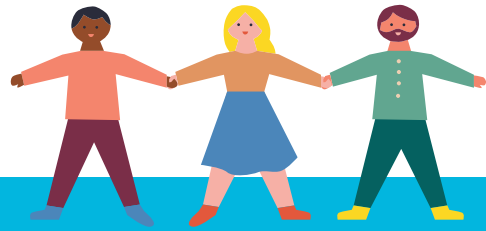
Violent crime per 1,000 colleagues:
British Retail Consortium (BRC) compared
to Co-op (2012 to 2017)



We will continue to invest in our stores, in our Retail Support Centre and in our partnership with SECOM to keep colleagues safe focusing on two specific areas:

- We want to see a fundamental change in how society thinks about and responds to violence against shop workers; and
- We want to work with communities, charities and civil society to better address the root causes of crime at a local level.





Taking violence against shop workers seriously

It is clear that at present violence against shop workers, especially shop workers enforcing the law, is not viewed as a serious issue. At the moment the Government and law enforcement agencies don't prioritise tackling crimes affecting shops and the people who work in them.

We want to build a national case for changing how society thinks about crime against shop workers. We want to influence the national debate so that crimes against shop workers are harder to commit, more likely to be detected and more appropriately punished.

So, over the coming years, we will look to raise the public profile of the reality of violence which affects our colleagues and all shop workers. This is so that Government's policy reflects the seriousness of the issue and the police are given the resources and legal powers to protect shop workers.

We see every day how stretched our police are which is why we do as much as we can to reduce the demands we make of them. We have already developed innovative ways to work with them so our colleagues are safer.

We believe they need more resources to do the job they want to do so they can protect our colleagues at work and at home. We stand with the police in their call for more officers.

We will work with other Co-op Societies, other businesses, political parties and Trade Unions. We know there's public support for this work. An opinion survey carried out by Populus, showed 85%* of people believe the Government owes a 'duty of care' to shop workers who enforce legal age restrictions.

* Co-operative Party - Retail Workers, Populus poll, 2018

Working together

Our stores in Chorlton, South Manchester, are subject to higher than average incidents of anti-social behaviour. Laura's store was targeted regularly by a gang of school children. The gang would often come into the shop and steal, cause damage and even threatened the team with knives. The store was fitted with an intelligent CCTV system, working in partnership with SECOM.

The CCTV system picked up on details of the gang and used images of the children's uniform to detect their school. Working with Laura, her team and the local police, a boy was identified and his parents were informed. The parent brought the boy into the shop, he paid for the goods he'd stolen and apologised to the team for the abuse they'd suffered.

The team are also benefiting from a security guard in store and thanks to the data that's being gathered by the system, the security guards are there to support the team when they're needed.

The headsets all colleagues have started to wear help the team feel connected to each other no matter where they are in the store. All the colleagues feel much safer being able to talk to each other whilst getting on with what they need to do and knowing they can call on another member of the team if they need to.

In Chorlton, strong local relationships were also built up with the police through our Retail Support Centre. This has had a hugely positive impact on reducing crime and anti-social behaviour in the area.

Supporting change - Usdaw's Freedom from Fear campaign

We are supporting Usdaw's Freedom from Fear Campaign and its Respect for Shopworkers Week starting on 12 November 2018.

We have also been backing parliamentary work from Alex Norris MP and David Hanson MP. Alex and David are both working to strengthen the penalties against assaults on shop workers and we've asked our colleagues and members to write to their own MPs to support these initiatives.



Community response through partnerships

As well as working to influence decision makers at a national level, we will look to supplement with community solutions locally which will help address those root causes of crime in society. Our members, through our Local Community Fund, choose to support what matters most to them. Thanks to our members, we've invested £2.6m in over 1,200 causes addressing some of the underlying issues that are fuelling rising crime across the country.



Teen Bar in Blyth, Northumberland

is working to keep young people off the streets and away from anti-social behaviour

The Streetwise project in Bradford

is giving young people a new direction in life

Spirit of Peace in Sevenoaks

is giving young adults life skills for managing conflict in relationships without resorting to violence

Our Local Community Fund projects tackling underlying causes of serious crime (as classified by Govt.)

Key:

Scotland	204
South West	175
South East	150
North West	149
Yorkshire and The Humber	124
North East	82
London	80
Wales	74
East Midlands	70
Eastern	60
West Midlands	52
Northern Ireland	13

Community response

Community case study

Damilola Taylor *trust*

Through our Local Community Fund, we have supported the Damilola Taylor Trust in their aims to tackle the underlying causes of crime.

The Damilola Taylor Trust is committed to supporting young people aged 12 to 24 in South London, providing them with the opportunity to live their lives free of fear and violence.

This is achieved by helping young people to build a sense of responsibility, self-confidence and ability so that they can make good choices

The Damilola Taylor Trust's mission is brought to life through partnership working with action plans, including:

- 1. Short term:**
working with research partners to develop the best approach for changing behaviours
- 2. Medium term:**
delivering ongoing events that drive engagement with the community
- 3. Longer term:**
career pathway programs to provide access to professions where young people are under-represented; providing mentoring programmes.



We will continue to support work like this all across the UK through our Local Community Fund. In addition, we want to work more intensively in specific areas to help local groups address the root causes of crime, providing support in whatever way we can.

We will work with grassroots organisations with specialist understanding of the local challenges they face. Through financial and non-financial support we'll help them grow and do even more of the great things they do. We'll utilise our community assets such as our colleagues, our Member Pioneers out in local communities, our members and the Co-op Foundation.

We hope to be able to help develop a model of intervention which can help stop individuals from ending up in a life of violence and crime.

We are clear our role is to support the experts on the ground and not try and become the experts. But we also know - because it's what we do - that when people co-operate great things happen and lives can be changed - co-operation transforms.

We hope to grow local partnerships in up to 20 specific areas over the coming years. Partnerships which are designed to support local, grassroots organisations. We are starting in two areas (Manchester and South East London) because we already have relationships with amazing organisations there such as; The Stephen Lawrence Charitable Trust, The Edge and Whalley Range Youth Opportunities Association.

Community case studies

The Archway Project, London

Our Local Community Fund has supported the Archway Project to help young people to move away from crime. The project is based in Thamesmead, South East London and provides training to disadvantaged young people, helping them to replace criminal records with meaningful employment.

The aims of the project are:

- to divert young people away from crime, reduce re-offending and provide young people with the qualifications and skills necessary to assist them in securing meaningful employment
- to provide mentally and/or physically disadvantaged young people with the qualifications and skills necessary to assist them in securing meaningful employment

The project provides a range of activities and courses for disadvantaged young people between the ages of 11 and 25 including: engineering, cookery, archery, employment advice and much more. Courses are registered with either the Business and Technology Education Council or the Assessment and Qualification Alliance.



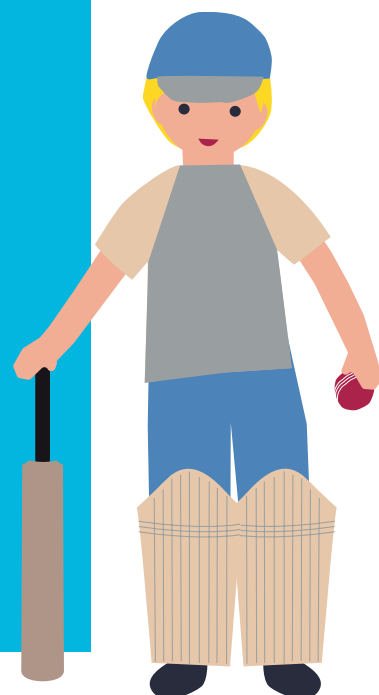
Streetsport, Aberdeen, Scotland

Streetsport is a non-profit 'prevention, intervention and diversionary tactics initiative' based in Aberdeen that actively reduces instances of youth crime and anti-social behaviour.

Streetsport delivers free activity sessions for young people across Aberdeen. By organising mobile activity arenas and operating during peak times of anti-social behaviour Streetsport is able to support and empower young people to be confident and responsible citizens in their communities.

The aim of the activities is to reduce instances of youth crime and anti-social behaviour and encourage inclusivity through sport and creative endeavour. Streetsport operates 50 weeks of the year in all weathers, providing a fun environment for young people to feel healthier, closer and most importantly safer.

We have supported the Streetsport project through our Local Community Fund.



Conclusion

This year we set ourselves a new ambition. To be a Stronger Co-op that builds Stronger Communities.

Protecting our colleagues and making our communities safer places to live and work does just that.

- Our priority is to look after our colleagues and make sure that today, tomorrow and in the future they are safer at work.
- Building partnerships with colleagues, communities and Usdaw will strengthen our resources to tackle crime and build safer, stronger communities together. It will also help to raise the public profile of the reality of crime affecting shop workers and show this is about protecting people, not profits.
- We have chosen to do this in a grassroots community focused response to local injustice because it is a co-operative approach. It's 'self-help by the people' to borrow an old 19th century Co-op phrase that still holds good today. It's about using commercial endeavour to address social concerns. This is all traditional co-operative thinking applied to a very contemporary set of circumstances.
- But we can be more than just local in our response. We are a national business, owned by nearly five million members and with a presence in every postcode area in the UK. That means we have the authority to speak at a national level. And because our business is motivated by a social purpose, we can choose to make violence and crime affecting shop workers a priority.





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