

Council Motion - Social Value – Retail Crime and Reoffending

We ask the Board to increase the focus of our Safer Colleagues, Safer Communities Campaign on tackling the cycle of reoffending to keep our colleagues and communities safer.

Co-op members have successfully campaigned together over several years to make sure that retail crime and shop worker violence is taken seriously by Parliament, the police and the courts.

However, retail crime is just the tip of the iceberg of crime which blights our communities and will, unless reoffending is tackled, continue to do so.

We know that there is no single intervention that reduces re-offending but rather a range of actions which includes education and training, substance abuse rehabilitation and permanent employment.

We ask the Board to lobby Government to stress the importance of tackling reoffending to protect our colleagues and communities.

Board Response

During 2023, the Co-op's Safer Colleagues Safer Communities campaign has led on debate on retail crime including violence and abuse towards shopworkers and played an important role in the development and publication of the UK's first Retail Crime Action Plan in October 2023 by the National Police Chiefs Council.

In addition, we had previously campaigned for the introduction of a standalone offence and were delighted when this was put on the statute book by the Scottish Parliament. We want to see this same protection apply across all of the UK and gave evidence to the Public Bill Committee for the Criminal Justice Bill. As a member of the wider co-operative movement, we played an important role in supporting 13,000 members of co-operative societies to write to their MP in the early 2024 to support the need for a standalone offence.

However, since its inception our Safer Colleague Safer Communities campaign has always sought to tackle the root causes of crime because we understand that keeping colleagues sustainably safe means not just tackling the threat in the moment but also about preventing crime from happening.

The positive social action we have supported through the Peer Action Collective with young people impacted by violence, our work with those who have substance abuse problems through Offender to Rehab or with offenders through the HMPPS' Employment Advisory Boards in prisons, as well as the support we have given to hundreds of local causes who are providing positive interventions in local communities, are all testament to our determination to tackle root causes of crime and so prevent re-offending.

It is vital that the police have a full range of interventions available so that they can both stop the crime happening at that moment but also prevent re-offending; without action to prevent re-offending crime is simply pushing the problem along the High St to other retailers.

During 2024, the Co-op will continue to work with partners including other co-operative societies and retailers to develop the evidence base which can underpin a comprehensive and holistic approach to tackling retail crime which protects colleagues, shops and the communities they both serve.

The Board recommends supporting this motion.