LEON GUARDING

Security, compliance and risk intelligence from Leon Guarding & FM Limited

Issue 2 | February 2026

LEON INSIDER

THIS MONTH

The retail crime numbers are out, and for the first time in years they point downwards. The SIA gets a new Chair. And the Crime and Policing Bill enters its final stretch through Parliament.

LEAD STORY | RETAIL VIOLENCE FALLS BY A FIFTH — BUT THE JOB IS FAR FROM DONE

The British Retail Consortium published its Crime Report 2026 this month, covering September 2024 to August 2025. It is the first survey in several years to show meaningful improvement.

The headline: violence and abuse against shopworkers fell from around 2,000 incidents a day to 1,600 — a 20% drop.

20%

1,600 incidents a day

down from 2,000

The detail is less comfortable

1,600

a day is still roughly three and a half times the pre-pandemic figure of 455

118

Incidents involving physical violence barely moved: 118 a day, against 123 last year

36

incidents a day involve a weapon — over 13,000 a year

5.5 million

detected incidents of shop theft, costing nearly £400 million

£100 million

Parcel and delivery theft, measured for the first time, cost retailers over £100 million

Source: British Retail Consortium Crime Report 2026

LEAD STORY | RETAIL VIOLENCE FALLS BY A FIFTH — BUT THE JOB IS FAR FROM DONE

The BRC credits the improvement to sustained retailer investment — more than £5 billion on security over five years — alongside better police response and closer partnership working. The proportion of retailers rating police response as good or excellent rose from 9% to 13%.

Our read: the fall in abuse tracks investment in visible, staffed security presence. The physical violence figure has not moved because the trigger has not changed — two-thirds of attacks on retail staff begin with a theft challenge. Deterrence is improving. Confrontation management is not.

£5 billion
on security over five years

9% to 13%

two-thirds
of attacks on retail staff begin with a theft challenge.

Source: British Retail Consortium Crime Report 2026

REGULATOR | NEW CHAIR AT THE SIA

The Home Office confirmed on 16 February that Mike Cunningham CBE QPM will become Chair of the Security Industry Authority, taking up the role on 1 March for a three-year term. He succeeds Heather Baily QPM, who steps down at the end of this month after five years.

Cunningham brings a background across policing, criminal justice and community safety. In his statement he flagged the obvious priority: the SIA is preparing to take on its role as regulator for Martyn's Law.

Why it matters: leadership changes at the SIA have historically preceded shifts in enforcement emphasis and training standards. With the qualifications review and Martyn's Law both live, expect the new Chair's first year to be an active one.

LEGISLATION WATCH | CRIME AND POLICING BILL NEARS THE STATUTE BOOK

The Crime and Policing Bill is expected to pass into law shortly. Two measures matter directly to anyone protecting retail or town-centre sites:

- A standalone offence of assaulting a retail worker, carrying a possible custodial sentence
- Repeal of the £200 low-value shoplifting threshold, which had downgraded police response to theft below that value

The Bill also introduces Respect Orders, allowing courts to ban repeat offenders from named town centres.

We will cover the practical implications for site teams once commencement dates are confirmed.

NORTH OF THE BORDER

Police Scotland's dedicated Retail Crime Taskforce had £3 million of continued funding confirmed in the January 2026 Scottish Budget. Scotland has had a standalone offence of assaulting a retail worker since 2021 — useful context for anyone forecasting what the English and Welsh equivalent will and will not achieve.

BY THE NUMBERS

1,600
daily incidents of violence and abuse against UK shopworkers

118
of those, incidents involving physical violence

36
incidents a day involving a weapon

5.5m
detected shop theft incidents in the year

£5bn
retailer spend on security over five years

13%
retailers rating police response good or excellent, up from 9%

FROM LEON GUARDING

In the community | HOPE Family Barking food bank

Leon Guarding colleagues were back at the HOPE Family Barking food bank again this month, as they have been every month since last year, helping support local families in need.

PRACTICAL TIP | REPORT EVERYTHING, EVEN THE SMALL STUFF

The improvement in police response did not happen on its own. It followed years of retailers logging incidents consistently, including ones they expected would go nowhere.

Under-reporting is self-defeating: it lowers the recorded crime figure for your area, which lowers the resource allocated to it, which lowers the response you get next time.

Three things worth auditing on your sites this month

01

1. Is every incident logged, or only the ones that escalate?

02

2. Does your officer know the crime reference process, or only the internal one?

03

3. Are repeat offenders tracked as a category, and is that intelligence shared with neighbouring businesses?

Leon Guarding officers log every incident through CASPER, with GPS and QR-verified patrol records and body-worn camera footage uploaded to the same file. Clients receive the audit trail, not a summary.