Taking Its Toll

The regressive impact of property crime in Britain

The Rt. Hon. David Lammy MP
Foreword by William J Bratton

Policy Exchange

Taking Its Toll

The regressive impact of property crime in Britain

The Rt. Hon. David Lammy MP
Foreword by William J Bratton

About the Author

The Rt. Hon. David Lammy MP – David Lammy has been the Member of Parliament for Tottenham since 2000, and is a candidate in the Primary to be Labour's nominee for the 2016 London Mayoral election. Tottenham is one of most disadvantaged constituencies in the UK and was the epicentre of the August 2011 riots. He authored a book on what he believes to be the causes of the riots, *Out of the Ashes*.

David was one of five children raised by a single mother. He attended The Kings School in Peterborough on a choral scholarship. He studied law at the School of Oriental and African Studies (SOAS) Law School, was admitted to the Bar of England and Wales in 1994, and became the first Black Briton to study a Masters in Law at the Harvard Law School in 1997.

Prior to his election to the House of Commons, David served as a member of the Greater London Assembly, with portfolio responsibility for Culture and Arts. He was a Minister in the last Labour government from 2001 to 2010 and was made a Privy Councillor in 2008.

Contents

Foreword by William J Bratton

In 1994, when I first became Police Commissioner of the City of New York, the city was experiencing nearly unprecedented levels of violent crime. To some people's surprise, however, one of the first things I had the New York City Police Department (NYPD) do was approach low-level crime and disorder, including fare evasion in the public transit system, graffiti and other types of vandalism, and pickpocketing and petty larcenies, with the same vigour as they approached more serious crime.

I knew that many New Yorkers had unfortunately come to accept low-level crime as part of city life. But I also knew that such disorder ruined the quality of life for the vast majority of law-abiding people who lived and worked in our great City. Moreover, I knew that the way to tackle the violence and felony crime was to tackle the seemingly small things, because doing so prevents many of the big things. As Sir Robert Peel taught, almost two centuries ago, the purpose of the police is to prevent crime and disorder.

Starting in 1994 and continuing up to today, the NYPD rose to the challenge. They did it by working with local communities across the city, by getting out of their cars and walking the streets, by tackling hitherto neglected crimes like aggressive begging and soliciting, and by showing local people that they were there to serve them.

I met David Lammy most recently in the foyer of Police Headquarters in New York. He was leaving a meeting in which he had discussed the issues in this report with the detectives of the NYPD's Grand Larceny Initiative. The Grand Larceny Initiative is a project that I and one of my Deputy Commissioners established, with the aim of reducing thefts by applying to them the same data-driven and forensic detective work that we apply to crimes like assault, murder, or drug dealing.

In 2014, the first year of my second tenure as Police Commissioner, now under Mayor Bill de Blasio, New York City saw the fewest murders and robberies of the modern era. As violent crime declined to record lows, however, we had observed that many gangs and other organised criminals had deemphasized their traditional focus on drug-dealing and robbery and diversified into shoplifting and theft. For criminals, these forms of criminality promise high returns for little risk. Nationally in the United States, the cost of retail theft, organized and otherwise, is in excess of $30 billion per year. Despite this, retailers often do not make reports to law enforcement, police have not always prioritised such crime, and even when arrests and convictions do occur, criminal sentences can be minimal. We decided that we were going to stop this new wave of crime before it engulfed us, and via the Grand Larceny Initiative we are having great success in doing just that.

David Lammy's paper intelligently explores many of the key issues around resourcing, prioritisation, and structure of policing in England and Wales, as

well as the ways these relate to addressing property crime. He examines a cross-section of criminality in the UK, and offers some important recommendations for change aimed at reducing property crime in a period of constrained public resources. Our own efforts here in New York have shown that strong political commitment, determined police focus, and community and private-partner buy-in can seriously reduce property crimes that afflict our cities.

It is not my place to endorse each of this paper's specific recommendations, opinions, or arguments. Some of the matters David Lammy discusses are specific to London and the United Kingdom and are not easily translatable to New York City.

But I commend David for a much-needed and timely report. I hope that it will spark the beginning of a debate about lower level criminality, the effect it has on the lives of hardworking and law-abiding citizens, and the disproportionate harm that property crime causes to our most deprived and vulnerable communities.

William J Bratton
New York City Police Commissioner
1 March 2015

Preface by the Author

Walking down Tottenham High Road in the aftermath of the 2011 riots, the sheer scale of destruction was immediately apparent. Glass crunched underfoot on the streets I had walked all my life, as dazed families stood staring at their burnt-out homes. Buildings that a few hours earlier had housed thriving shops and businesses were now smouldering shells of wrangled metal. This was an intensity of criminality the like of which Britain has rarely seen.

In the weeks after the riots, once the cameras had moved on, the glass had been swept away and shattered windows replaced, it became clear that the majority of the criminal acts committed during the riots were not acts of violent crime but property crime: theft, looting, vandalism, arson and criminal damage.

Outsiders assumed that the crimes committed during those August evenings were isolated examples of criminality. They were wrong. I was shocked to discover that the burning, looting, stealing and violence of the 2011 riots barely made a blip on national crime rates. While the visual nature of the criminality on display was enough to make front page headlines around the world, the reality was that this was simply a particularly public symbol of a property crime epidemic that has been quietly sweeping across Britain for years.

The data that proved this supported what local residents, shopkeepers and business owners told me in the weeks after the riots. While the scale and intensity of the riots were exceptional, the nature of the crimes committed during them was not. Incidents of theft, vandalism, fraud and even arson had, I was told, become an increasingly common occurrence. Boarding up broken windows or making insurance claims for stolen stock had become an all-too-common feature of life in Tottenham.

It was with this in mind that I began this report, in conjunction with Policy Exchange, into the prevalence and impact of property crime across the UK. Throughout our investigations, three striking findings became clear:

1. Property crime in 2015 enjoys a *de facto* decriminalisation.
Members of the public consistently report a lack of confidence in the ability or willingness of police to investigate and prosecute incidents of property crime. A quarter of small business shoplifting victims we surveyed said that police do not respond when called, and that they are unable to catch shoplifters.[1] 35 per cent said that they have no confidence in the ability of police to adequately prosecute shoplifters.[2] One small business owner I spoke to claimed that police did not even record shoplifting incidents he reported, as 'it is not worth the paperwork'.[3] Despite the proliferation of CCTV, security guards and electronic tags, shop theft is increasing.[4] Shopkeepers are reporting no more than ten per cent of shoplifting incidents, and police do not investigate shoplifting much of the time. In the face of an increasingly widespread (and necessary) debate about terrorism, violent

1 NFRN and Policy Exchange Crime Survey 2014 (unpublished)

2 Ibid

3 Ibid

4 Barrett, David, 'Rapes now at their highest ever level, ONS figures reveal', *The Telegraph*, 16 October 2014 http://www.telegraph.co.uk/news/uknews/crime/11165613/Rapes-now-at-their-highest-ever-level-ONS-figures-reveal.html (last accessed 18/2/15)

crime and cybercrime, the property crimes that blight lives across the country are being quietly ignored. They remain criminal acts in law but in practice are increasingly dismissed as inevitable and unavoidable.

2. Organised crime involving theft and fraud against both businesses and citizens is an increasingly common problem.

Far from the stereotype of lone burglars or shoplifters, organised crime is behind an increasing proportion of property crime committed in the UK. In particular, the increase in mobile phone theft in recent years is not, as some may think, limited to opportunistic thieves. Instead, much of it is well organised by gangs who make significant profits from sending stolen phones abroad for resale. Households known to have large quantities of gold jewellery – particularly Asian families owning traditional family valuables – are being targeted by gold thieves who ambush families on their way to weddings and rob them of their jewellery. Lead is being stolen from church roofs and copper from railway company cabling. Organised crime groups are taking advantage of local policing boundaries and lax penalties for shoplifting to brazenly steal from shops around the country without suffering any consequences. This is not a problem limited to the UK. New York detectives I met with described gangs shifting their focus away from high-risk activities such prostitution, drugs and extortion to equally lucrative but far lower-risk shoplifting and resale. In London, groups of moped-mounted thieves smash and grab designer handbags and luxury jewellery from Bond Street shops, or snatch iPhones from unsuspecting pedestrians in Camden.[5]

> "Much of it is well organised by gangs who make significant profits from sending stolen phones abroad for resale"

Fragmented, localised police forces have a diminished ability to respond to organised crime groups moving into acquisitive crime; to do so would require disparate forces to work together to solve cross-border crimes in a way that is currently not happening. Shoplifting is not seen by police forces as having sufficient seriousness to cross that threshold, so criminals get away with it. Worryingly, the proceeds of these types of crimes are often used to fund more serious criminality. The National Crime Agency (NCA) has strategic oversight for organised crime, but is under-resourced and underpowered.

The proliferation of pawnbrokers on high streets is also concerning (in 1991 there were 70 pawn shops in the UK; there are now over 2,500).[6] This represents an explosion in opportunities for thieves to fence stolen property. Some prosecutors privately admit that defence lawyers now counsel their clients to plead guilty to handling instead of theft, as it is likely to attract a softer sentence – this is despite the fact that the official sentencing guidelines for handling specify that penalties for handlers should be equivalent to those for thieves.

Some police forces (and indeed some private companies, working in partnership with police and theft victims) have innovative and effective ways to monitor stolen property and the flow of goods through the second-hand retail sector. Police forces and the NCA can and must do more to bring thieves to justice.

5 See, for examples, Davenport, Justin, 'Bike raiders bag a huge haul', *Evening Standard*, 18 August 2014, p9; or Pettit, Josh, 'Raid on smash-and-grab gang linked to Dorchester robberies, *Evening Standard*, 15 October 2014, p9

6 Philby, Charlotte, 'Pawnbroking: the business that always does well in hard times', *The Independent*, 3 April 2013, http://www.independent.co.uk/news/business/analysis-and-features/pawnbroking-the-business-that-always-does-well-in-hard-times-8558926.html (last accessed 18/2/15)

3. There is no such thing as a 'victimless crime'; it is a damaging myth that needs to be dispensed with.

The perception that only violent crimes have victims is inaccurate and unhelpful. Each incident of theft or criminal damage has a victim, from the homeowner whose wall is covered in graffiti by vandals to the businesswoman who has a designer handbag snatched by organised criminals from the high-end boutique. What's more, property crime does not affect everyone equally. In many of our most deprived communities theft has a real regressive effect, driving up both shop prices and the cost of insurance premiums for people who already have low disposable incomes. Unfortunately, the falling crime rate in the UK since 1995 has resulted in a greater concentration of victimisation; the financial and emotional burden of a greater proportion of crimes is being borne by a smaller group of chronic repeat victims living mostly in poorer areas.

While the impact of violent crime is almost always greater on an individual victim, the sheer scale and prevalence of property crime means its impact across the population is far greater than many realise. 20,000 bicycles thefts were reported to the Metropolitan Police in 2012–13, an increase of 6000 from 2000–2001 per-annum levels. Yet only 474 of these thefts were solved![7]

As a society we need to get better at making it clear that we are on the side of victims and not on the side of thieves and vandals. We must reiterate our commitment to sanctioning those who deprive others of their hard-earned possessions. And we must move past the idea that property crimes are victimless: they are not and never have been.

I hope this report will prompt politicians, policymakers and public servants to better address, prevent and respond to Britain's property crime epidemic.

Rt. Hon. David Lammy MP
Member of Parliament for Tottenham
1 March 2015

7 Metropolitan Police, Financial year table '2012–13', *Crime Mapping: Data Tables, Year End Figures (Fixed),* Metropolitan Police Website, http://maps.met.police.uk/tables.htm (last accessed 13/2/15)

Recommendations

Innovation and crime prevention

The prevalence of property crime could be significantly reduced by a new focus on preventing crime, rather than simply responding to it.

1. Establish a crime prevention Centre of Excellence as part of the College of Policing

Such a Centre would train, equip, and resource both crime prevention officers and local neighbourhood policing teams who engage in crime prevention work, increasing the crime prevention skills of police forces around the country. The Centre of Excellence could also devise and drive reform in internal police structures to improve career pathways for crime prevention practitioners and specialists.

2. Tighten regulations on private rented sector properties

Stipulate that landlords must ensure their properties meet a minimum security standard, including the installation of window locks, double locks or deadlocks on external doors, internal lighting on a timer and external lighting on a sensor. This obligation should be triggered by the signing or renewing of a lease. Burglary is damaging to landlords and tenants alike and a greater responsibility should be placed on landlords to help prevent it.

3. Design out crime in new residential and commercial developments

Mandate that security measures designed to reduce crime should be incorporated into the design of all new large residential and commercial developments. Developers should be obliged to submit their plans for assessment by local police design experts before their plans are accepted by their local authority planning department for consideration.

4. Police should work with the private sector to tackle property crime

Police can disrupt the market in stolen property by working with the private sector, collaborating on innovative approaches that use new technology to track merchandise and property. Examples of successful innovative partnership working can be seen in organisations such as Smartwater and Recipero.

5. The Home Office should take responsibility for leading crime prevention nationally

Central Government no longer has a national website for crime prevention, and to a large extent has abrogated responsibility for preventing property crime victimisation. This should be reversed; the Home Office should continue to play its part in nationally coordinating crime prevention efforts, starting with creating a website to guide citizens on how they can reduce their risks.

Human-centred policing and data

The focus of policing must be on providing a community- and people-orientated service.

6. Implement fortnightly New York-style statistical accountability meetings

Compstat is the statistical accountability framework in the New York Police Department; it involves senior officers going through crime statistics and calling police commanders to account for any increase in crime rates or decrease in police effectiveness. It also works to gather sufficient data to spot trends, patterns and emerging challenges. Police and Crime Commissioners (PCCs) or their equivalent should hold at least fortnightly Compstat-style statistical accountability meetings with both their Chief Constables and police stations' commanding officers to discuss emerging crime patterns and trends. Forensic data analysis and mapping data is already done with major crimes; technological improvements mean that it can now be used for property crimes like burglary.

7. Sharing detailed information

Police forces should share statistical databases and crime maps with their neighbouring forces, so they can pool information on crime figures, hotspots, trends and intelligence. This will make it easier to identify organised criminal activity that takes advantage of defined police area borders, and to mount joint operations to tackle it.

8. We need better statistics on business crime

The Office of National Statistics (ONS) should conduct a survey of business crime, similar to their Commercial Victimisation Survey (CVS), every year. A CVS was held in 1994, 2002 and 2012–14. The lack of annual data about business crime makes it difficult to show changes and trends over time. It also means improvements and reform of data collection processes are not rolled out quickly in relation to collecting statistics on crimes against businesses.

9. Return to proper neighbourhood policing, focusing on what matters to the community

Restore the successful ward-level neighbourhood policing team consisting of a sergeant, two constables and three Police Community Support Officers (PCSOs). These neighbourhood policing teams should focus on quality of life issues that affect the bulk of crime victims: property crime, minor crime, and the fear of crime. Community policing should invest in relationships with public sector agencies, local businesses and community organisations and work in partnership to prevent and respond to chronic crime. Local neighbourhood policing teams should be given a 'long leash' to empower them to creatively tackle criminality through building networks and community.

10. Increase retail crime reporting rates

Local police should work with retailers to encourage them to report all crime, even where the police can take no action, so statistical analysis can be done. Much of this can be done by altering officers' attitudes towards shopkeepers who report crimes, encouraging reporting rather than actively discouraging it. Local business

crime action committees – which already exist in many parts of the country – may also have a role to play in fostering trusting relationships between police and retailers.

11. Empower neighbourhood policing teams to prevent crime and gather intelligence

Hotspot policing is about finding where crime is high and leveraging local knowledge to fix structural issues. Local neighbourhood policing teams should feed their experiences into statistical data gathering mechanisms referred to in Recommendation 6, above, so a more complete picture emerges of crime, its causes and its solutions. Neighbourhood police must be trained and empowered to prevent crime, not just respond to it.

12. Community values, community policing

New police recruits should walk the same beat for at least a year, and preferably two years, after they complete training. They should understand the nature of the local community before being instilled with police culture. This will also serve to strengthen the 'policing by consent' social contract and build better relationships between officers and the communities they work in.

Victims and systems

Property crime victimisation should be taken much more seriously.

13. Adhere to sentencing guidelines around the handling of stolen goods

Guidelines currently reflect the seriousness of handling stolen goods, but are not being adequately followed in sentencing practice. Magistrates and judges should be encouraged to follow official guidelines that treat handling of stolen goods as deserving of a similar sentence to theft: handling creates a market for stolen goods, systematically encouraging more theft.

14. Address recidivism rates by implementing a penalties escalator for repeated theft

Courts should be able to break the caution-fine-reoffending cycle by increasing the sentence for repeat offending. A shoplifter's tenth conviction, for example, should carry a stronger sentence than their first conviction.

15. Give magistrates flexibility to enforce unpaid court fines

Currently magistrates' only recourse is to imprison an offender for six months for non-payment of a fine. This recourse is disproportionate, meaning that usually no action is taken. This is a particular concern given half of fines go unpaid.[8] A more nuanced approached to tackling unpaid fines is necessary if they are to be an effective sentence.

16. Develop business crime strategy documents

Each policing area should develop strategy documents (owned at a senior level, such as the PCC or Chief Constable) for addressing business crime, similar to the London Business Crime Strategy. These strategies should include measures to:

a. Increase the reporting of crimes;
b. Share information on criminals between police and business victims; and
c. Prevent crime against retailers and other businesses.

17. Define the seriousness of shoplifting by victim impact rather than monetary value

Revise the *Anti-Social Behaviour, Crime and Policing Act* 2013 to redefine 'seriousness' of shoplifting by the impact on the victim, rather than a nominal monetary figure. The impact of a £150 theft, for example, would be far greater on an independent corner shop than on Fortnum and Mason, yet this is not reflected under the current Act.

18. Introduce social housing insurance rental schemes

Social housing providers should offer low cost home contents insurance packages that can be paid at the same time as the rent, to try to increase insurance coverage amongst those most vulnerable to property crime.

19. Ensure all crime victims are given the opportunity to make a Victim Personal Statement

The opportunity to make a Victim Personal Statement (VPS) should be more consistently offered to victims of all forms of crime. To ensure this happens, courts should not grant a court date without the submission by prosecutors of either a VPS or a declaration by the victim that he or she does not want to give a Statement.

20. Revise the Victims' Code and extend services for victims

The Victims' Code should be amended to allow for more than one representative of a business to be treated as a crime victim. Government-funded victims' services (such as the counselling and support groups run by the charity Victim Support) should be extended to include victims of business crime, such as small business owners who are repeatedly affected by theft.
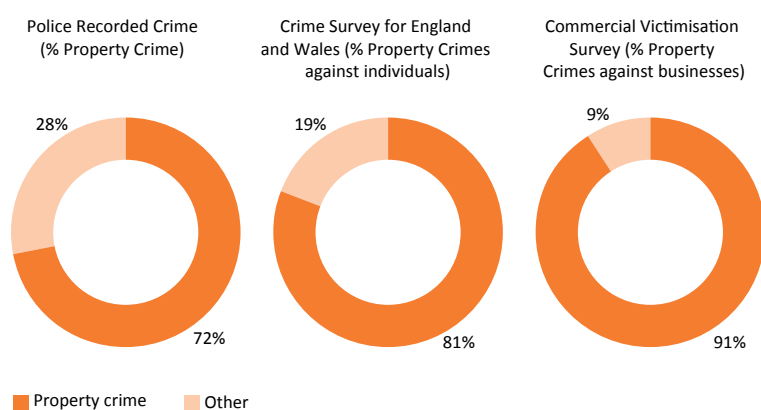
1
Introduction

The ubiquity of property crime is clear: Britons are far more likely to be victims of property crime than any other type of crime, and it represents over three quarters of total crime in England and Wales.[9] Despite this, police forces around the country, under the strain of austerity-driven budget cuts, are struggling to tackle the prevalence of this type of crime. Almost three quarters of theft, criminal damage and arson crimes reported to police have their file marked "investigation complete, no suspect identified".[10]

Property crime disproportionately affects the most deprived communities. A combination of higher crime rates, lower insurance penetration and insecure housing tenure means that both crimes against people and crimes against businesses have a regressive effect on local communities. Somewhat counter-intuitively, it is those with the least who are most likely to be the victims of theft and criminal damage.

Figure 1: Property crime as a percentage of police recorded crime[11]/Property crime as a percentage of CSEW total crime[12]/Property crime as a percentage of CVS-recorded crimes against businesses[13]

Police Recorded Crime (% Property Crime)

Crime Survey for England and Wales (% Property Crimes against individuals)

Commercial Victimisation Survey (% Property Crimes against businesses)

- Property crime
- Other

Source: www.ons.gov.uk/ons/rel/crime-stats/crime-statistics/focus-on-property-crime--2011-12/rpt-chapter-1-overview.html

9 Office of National Statistics, 'Summary' in Chapter 1, *Crime Statistics, Focus on Property Crime, 2011–12*, http://www.ons.gov.uk/ons/rel/crime-stats/crime-statistics/focus-on-property-crime--2011-12/rpt-chapter-1-overview.html (last accessed 18/2/15)

10 Victim Support, 'Half of all crimes going unsolved', (media release), *Victim Support website*, 17 July 2014 – https://www.victimsupport.org.uk/about-us/news/half-all-crimes-going-unsolved (last accessed 15/1/15)

11 Office of National Statistics, 'Summary' in Chapter 1, *Crime Statistics, Focus on Property Crime, 2011–12*, http://www.ons.gov.uk/ons/rel/crime-stats/crime-statistics/focus-on-property-crime--2011-12/rpt-chapter-1-overview.html (last accessed 18/2/15)

12 Ibid

13 bid

14 Fielding, Matthew, and Vincent Jones, 'Disrupting the Optimal Forager', *International Journal of Police Science & Management*, Vol. 14 No. 1, 2011

15 MOPAC, 'London Comparison against the National Crime Picture, *MOPAC Crime Dashboard*, (see the graph 'Crime % change against previous financial year, Rolling 12 months to September 14'), 2014, https://www.london.gov.uk/priorities/policing-crime/data-information/crime-dashboard (last accessed 13/2/15)

16 Barrett, David, 'Rapes now at their highest ever level, ONS figures reveal', *The Telegraph*, 16 October 2014 http://www.telegraph.co.uk/news/uknews/crime/11165613/Rapes-now-at-their-highest-ever-level-ONS-figures-reveal.html (last accessed 18/2/15)

17 Office of National Statistics, 'Figure 1.9' in Bulletin Tables, Focus on Property Crime 2012–13, http://www.ons.gov.uk/ons/rel/crime-stats/crime-statistics/focus-on-property-crime--2012-13/rft-bulletin-tables-2012-13.xls (last accessed 18/2/15) Figure 1.9 shows the proportion of burglaries (both with loss and with no loss) that are reported to police; Office of National Statistics, 'Table 1A', in *Crime in England & Wales, year ending September 2013 – Appendix tables*, http://www.ons.gov.uk/ons/rel/crime-stats/crime-statistics/period-ending-september-2013/rft-appendix-tables.xls Table 1A meanwhile shows the breakdown between loss and no-loss burglaries for 2012–13

18 British Retail Consortium, *Retail Crime Survey 2013*, January 2014, http://www.brc.org.uk/downloads/2013_BRC_Retail_Crime_Survey.pdf (last accessed 18/2/15), p15
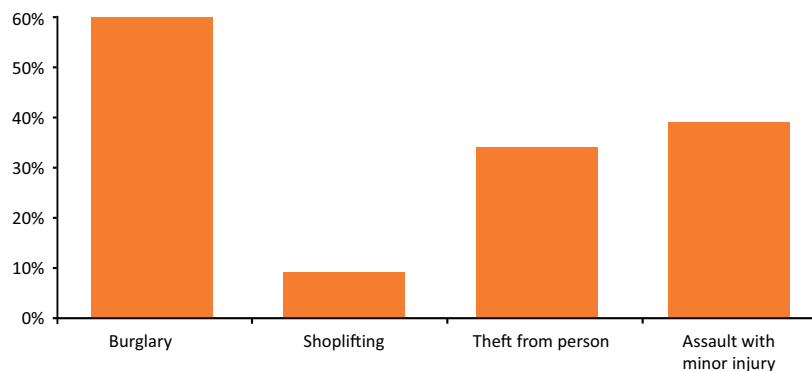
19 Office of National Statistics, 'Figure 1.9', *Focus on: Property Crime, 2012/13 – Bulletin Tables*, http://www.ons.gov.uk/ons/rel/crime-stats/crime-statistics/focus-on-property-crime--2012-13/rft-bulletin-tables-2012-13.xls (last accessed 25/2/15); and Office of National Statistics, 'Figure 1.7', *Focus on: Violent Crime and Sexual Offences, 2012/13 – Bulletin Tables*, http://www.ons.gov.uk/ons/rel/crime-stats/crime-statistics/focus-on-violent-crime-and-sexual-offences--2012-13/rft-table-1.xls (last accessed 25/2/15)

Statistics show that the overall crime rate has been falling for two decades, but this is scant consolation to the millions each year who are affected by the most common crimes. When a burglary occurs, a bike is stolen or a phone is taken from a bar or a bag, many victims will report the theft to the police, but all too often the only outcome is a crime reference number to give to their insurance company. There is a widespread resignation that nothing more can be done – these crimes are now so common that they have almost become accepted. Many victims are targeted more than once in a short period of time, once their insurance company has replaced the goods that were stolen on the first occasion.[14] Repeat victimisation is a common finding across all types of property crime.

This is, in part, due to the fact that the police often do not, or cannot, investigate in sufficient depth to bring perpetrators to justice: Victim Support – a charity that assists victims in the aftermath of crime – estimates that only one in every twenty burglaries results in a prosecution. The result is the existence of a new type of victim – a silent victim – who, however many times they suffer from property crime, simply gets on with their life, believing that nothing can be done about the crime committed against them. This needs to change.

The reduction in crime rates has slowed significantly in recent years. Further, the decline in crime has not been uniform, and has seen a growing concentration of crime being perpetrated against a smaller number of repeat victims. Last year, reductions in the national crime rate were solely the consequence of lower crime rates in a handful of police forces, masking what are actually rising crime rates in most of the country.[15] Police recorded crime figures, for example, also show a five per cent year-on-year increase in shoplifting.[16] The statistics on reporting rates are equally troubling. Only around two thirds of burglaries are reported to the police.[17] For shoplifting, the figures is less than one in ten – and that does not even include the shoplifting that goes unnoticed until stocktake.[18] It is clear that the pervasiveness of crimes such as shoplifting, burglary and theft is hidden by geographical spread, low reporting rates and under-prioritisation. The property crime epidemic sweeping Britain is going largely unaddressed.

Figure 2: Rates of reporting of certain crimes to the police (2012/13)[19]

Source: www.ons.gov.uk/ons/rel/crime-stats/crime-statistics/focus-on-property-crime--2012-13/rft-bulletin-tables-2012-13.xls

Police should not, of course, prioritise the investigation of property crimes over the investment of resources into addressing uncommon but disproportionally traumatic and violent crimes like child abuse, sexual assault and murder. However the attitudes of society generally, and the state in particular, have afforded property crime a *de facto* decriminalisation; police, along with many other bodies, can do much to address this wrong without a significant increase in resources.

There is much that can be done to reduce crime rates, and to prevent crimes from being committed in the first place. Expanding crime prevention programmes is essential to addressing the scourge of property crime in a meaningful way. Crime prevention approaches must not, however, descend into victim blaming, nor should they exacerbate the fear of crime. There is also more that can be done through the police and criminal justice system to ensure that those guilty of property crimes face penalties that appropriately reflect the harm they cause.

Box 1: Scope and methodology

In August 2011 riots engulfed communities across the country. They were sparked by the shooting of Mark Duggan by police in Tottenham, but the underlying causes lay far deeper. While the media was keen to focus on the destruction and the activity of a mindless few in many cases the victims – predominantly victims of property crime – were forgotten.

Despite the impact in terms of media coverage and political discourse Policy Exchange's crime and justice unit uncovered information that suggested that those three nights of rioting in London in 2011 barely made a blip on that month's crime rate.

The research that has contributed to this report began in March 2014 when David Lammy MP and Policy Exchange began exploring property crime – its prevalence, its causes and what can be done to address it. A 'call for evidence' was released in May, followed by a series of roundtable discussions with experts, stakeholders and academics, and private interviews. A survey was conducted in conjunction with National Federation of Retail Newsagents (NFRN) of a sample of their members, which asked about their experiences with customer theft. The results of these surveys will be discussed in following chapters.

For the purposes of this report, property crime can be broadly defined as crime that causes harm by removing or damaging a person's or a business's physical property. This includes theft and other acquisitive crime, but also vandalism and criminal damage. While cybercrime and fraud are significant categories of acquisitive crime, this report will not focus on these areas.

It is important to draw a distinction between theft with the threat of violence, violent robbery and violent crime and property crime. This report will focus on property crime and not violent crime, although there will be an extent to which an exploration of robbery will form part of a broader discussion on theft from the person, which also includes snatch theft and pickpocketing.

2
The Problem

Context: criminality in Western democracies

Broadly speaking, crime rates began to fall in England and Wales after a peak in 1995.[20] Similar patterns of crime rate peaks in the 1990s were seen across the Western world; in New York the peak was 1990, other American cities in subsequent years. Australia's peak for property crime victimisation occurred around 2001.[21]

Several theories have been posited to explain the decline in crime across multiple countries over time. Some cite environmental factors such as leaded petrol altering the development of children's brains (and a corresponding reduction in criminality after the use of leaded petrol declined).[22] Others have cited the 'Roe v Wade' US Supreme Court decision which led to the legalisation of abortion in the US, leading to fewer children being raised in 'troubled' homes. Another suggests that the increase in sentences in the US has proved to be an effective deterrent to would-be criminals. Neither the increased sentences theory nor the abortion theory explain why similar patterns in a reduction in criminality were seen across different countries – in Britain abortion was legalised earlier and the crime drop began later than in the US, and the increased sentencing seen in the US was not replicated in other countries.[23] And lead has not been proven to cause criminal inclination, nor does there seem to be any evidence that convicted criminals are more likely to have higher lead levels in their bloodstream.[24] Also, not all types of property crime have reduced uniformly; phone theft has increased, as has credit card fraud.

While there is ongoing debate on this issue among criminologists, it is likely that the reduction in crime was based on a combination of factors, about which there has been much discussion – but one important factor of note is a significant increase in security measures. Car manufacturers started to compete on the security features of their cars when regulators or consumer bodies began publishing league tables of which were the easiest to steal or steal from. Central locking, remote locking, steering wheel locks and immobilisers became standard, and car alarms were increasingly used. It is probable that the reduction in car theft had a disproportionate effect on crime rates, because it can be described as a 'keystone' crime: like firearms, cars facilitate the commission of other types of crime (such as getaway vehicles in bank robberies, or to transport stolen property away from a burglary), so reducing car theft will also reduce other crime types.

Similarly, a heightened consciousness of home security and advances in technology meant that homes were increasingly fitted with home security features; sensor lighting, deadlocks, window locks, CCTV and security alarms became

20 Office of National Statistics, 'Summary', *Crime in England and Wales, Year Ending March 2014*, http://www.ons.gov.uk/ons/rel/crime-stats/crime-statistics/period-ending-march-2014/stb-crime-stats.html#tab-Summary (last accessed 18/2/15)

21 Australian Institute of Criminology, 'Victims of Property Crime (n per year)', *Facts and Figures Online Data Tool*, http://www.aic.gov.au/dataTools/facts/vicPropertyCol.html (last accessed 18/2/15)

22 Knight, Laurence, 'The Fatal Attraction of Lead', *BBC News* 12 October 2014 http://www.bbc.co.uk/news/magazine-29568505 (last accessed 18/2/15)

23 Farrell, Graham, 'Five Tests for a Theory of the Crime Drop', *Crime Science* 2013, 2:5, http://www.crimesciencejournal.com/content/2/1/5 (last accessed 18/2/15)

24 Ross, N. (2013). *Crime*, London, UK: Biteback Publishing, pp85–86

increasingly common, protecting residents against burglary. And the increasingly widespread use of CCTV and alarmed tags probably also contributed to a reduction in shoplifting, though official data about crimes committed against businesses are not as comprehensive as for crimes committed against individuals.

> " We now know that improving security works to reduce the risk of victimisation "

While much of the 'low-hanging fruit' in crime reduction has already been picked, we now know that improving security works to reduce the risk of victimisation. That knowledge can be leveraged by policymakers, now, to achieve better outcomes for those most vulnerable chronic repeat victims of property crime.

Victims and risk

Despite the crime rate reduction from the peaks of the mid 1990s, it is certainly the case that the British public remains highly concerned about crime, and we know that the type of crime most likely to victimise most people is property crime.[25] Some worrying trends in property crime – the increased involvement of organised crime groups, for example, or the movement by career criminals away from burglary and towards theft from shops – necessitate both constant vigilance and creativity by policymakers and police forces.

Most people's experience of crime come from being a victim of theft or criminal damage; three quarters of all crimes are property crimes. Retailers invest hundreds of millions of pounds every year into preventing and fighting theft, and the prices consumers pay at the checkout necessarily include a small premium to cover these costs. Householders pay to insure their homes and cars against theft and criminal damage. Mobile phone retailers include the cost of handset insurance as a recommended purchasable extra when selling phone plans.

Property crime, as a social cost, is regressive. It hits the most deprived in society hardest; those who cannot afford to insure their possessions and who are least resilient to financial shocks are disproportionately affected. Small local businesses too, operating on small margins, are least able to absorb the costs of theft, and are obliged to pass these costs on to their customers through increased prices. In areas of deprivation and poverty this increases the cost of groceries and diminishes the ability of small businesses to compete with larger national chains. In some cases, a high rate of property crime deters business investment in deprived areas altogether.

One of the most pernicious realities of property crime in Britain is that its effects are not spread uniformly across society; rather, they are concentrated amongst a small group of vulnerable people. We have long known that young people, particularly young men, have been at a heightened risk of violent crime. But they are also far more likely than other demographic types to be the victim of theft.[26] Renters are more likely than homeowners to be victims of theft, and remarkably this is true not just for burglary but also for thefts from the person such as pickpocketing and bag snatching.[27] Students are more likely to be victims of burglary than other groups, and single people are more likely than married people to be victimised on the street or on public transport.[28]

25 Office of National Statistics, 'Summary' in Chapter 1, *Crime Statistics, Focus on Property Crime, 2011–12*, http://www.ons.gov.uk/ons/rel/crime-stats/crime-statistics/focus-on-property-crime--2011-12/rpt-chapter-1-overview.html (last accessed 18/2/15)

26 Thompson, R, *Understanding Theft from the Person and Robbery of Personal Property: Victimisation Trends in England and Wales 1994–2010/11*, Nottingham Trent University, 2014, p167

27 Thompson, R, 'How theft and robbery have changed since the 90s', *Significance Magazine*, Blackwell Publishing Ltd, 21 Oct 2014, http://www.statslife.org.uk/social-sciences/1842-how-theft-and-robbery-have-changed-since-the-90s (last accessed 18/2/15)

28 Thompson, R, *Understanding Theft from the Person and Robbery of Personal Property: Victimisation Trends in England and Wales 1994–2010/11*, Nottingham Trent University, 2014

Crime often strikes repeatedly in the same place. A key risk factor in a home burglary is the recent occurrence of another burglary nearby (within a few hundred metres). Burglars are rational actors, and tend to continue to steal from an area until risks increase or they have taken all the valuable goods that are easy to steal. Often these are places close to a burglar's own home or on a regular route; and the burglar benefits from coming to know the default layout and likely location of valuable and removable items in similar houses on a street. A burglar will even return to the scene of a previous burglary – either to steal things he or she could not previously carry away, or to steal new valuables once they have been replaced by insurance companies.[29] This happens to shops too; in Tottenham small businesses reported persistent problems with theft and criminal damage.

The National Federation of Retail Newsagents recently uncovered some highly concerning findings about repeat shoplifting victimisation through a survey of their members conducted with Policy Exchange: over half of respondents had been the victim of two or more shoplifting incidents in the preceding three months. 82 per cent of those who suffered any crime within the three-months reported being repeat victims. Indeed, there were three times as many respondents who had no shoplifting incidents than who had one: repeat victimisation is the norm, not the exception.[30]

A recent analysis by Dainis Ignatans and Professor Ken Pease on crime concentration in England and Wales over 30 years found that as crime has fallen across the board, crime victimisation has become more concentrated amongst a small group of repeat victims. Ignatans and Pease challenged the idea that a crime drop is unambiguously positive thing:

> *Inequality of victimisation challenges distributive justice. Harms as well as goods should be distributed equitably. Changes in inequality would suggest whether we should regard the crime drop as unequivocally benign (inequality-reducing or neutral) or have reservations about its benefits (inequality increasing).*[31]

The threats of increasing crime inequality, however, are ameliorated by the ability of police to concentrate on a reduced number of repeat victims. A focus on tackling repeat victimisation led to a brief dip in repeat victimisation concentration in the late 1990s – the time has come again for a renewed focus by police on reducing repeat victimisation.

Measuring crime

Crime in England and Wales is measured in a number of different ways. No one metric gives all the relevant information, but when compared and contrasted with each other, a clearer picture emerges.

The first measure of crime is police recorded crime (PRC). British police forces have long kept records of crimes reported, arrests made and investigations pursued. The way these records have been kept, though, has not always been consistent, and the recording of crime has evolved substantially over time in response to better crime categorisation, better reporting techniques, and changes in government management of police. Conducting historical comparisons of changes in crime rates over time, therefore, is challenging.

29 See for examples: Johnson, Shane D, et al, 'Offender as Forager? A Direct Test of the Boost Account of Victimisation' in *Journal of Quantitative Criminology,* 2009 25, pp181–200

30 NFRN and Policy Exchange Crime Survey 2014 (unpublished)

31 Ignatans, Dainis and Ken Pease. In press. 'Distributive justice and the crime drop'. In Martin A. Andresen and Graham Farrell (Eds.) *Routine Activities and the Criminal Act*. New York: Palgrave Macmillan, 2014

Police recorded crime data is problematic for a number of other reasons. One is that it is vulnerable to 'gaming': local and national governments have a history of setting goals, targets and priorities for police forces that have led to selective reporting or incorrect categorisation of crimes as police attempt to meet the goals set for them. Another is the fact that police recorded crime can, of course, only record crime that is reported by victims or directly witnessed by police. Given widespread underreporting of property crime, the picture that police have of property crime is nowhere near full. Nor is that information able to be extrapolated directly from police recorded crime: underreporting varies between crime types, demographic mix and geographical location. In January 2014 the UK Statistics Authority removed the 'National Statistic' hallmark from police recorded data because of problems with accuracy and accountability, namely that the ONS had insufficient information about the collection of PRC data to be able to warn end users of its limitations.[32]

Police recorded crime, however, does give some vital information. The records kept by police forces are highly specific as to the time, date and location at which crimes are committed. This data can be used by police, academics and others to analyse trends and map crime hotspots, and thus better target law enforcement efforts to the most problematic locations at the most problematic times of day.

The other main way of measuring crime is through the Office of National Statistics' Crime Survey for England and Wales (CSEW) and Commercial Victimisation Survey (CVS). The CSEW is an annual survey of up to 50,000 households across England and Wales, and asks questions about crimes they have experienced in the preceding twelve months.[33] Because it asks questions directly of victims and potential victims, the CSEW is able to measure all crime, rather than only that which has been reported to police. This also allows it to paint a picture of repeat victimisation.

The CSEW has been conducted annually since 1982, when it replaced the British Crime Survey as the principal means of collecting crime data. The survey is designed by statisticians who have a keen interest in gathering temporally comparable data, so CSEW crime figures from, say, 2011 are able to be directly compared with figures from 1991 without any significant loss of statistical accuracy.

One of the key limitations of the CSEW is that it collects information from individuals only, so crimes that victimise businesses are not counted by the survey. This anomaly has contributed to the perception both amongst policymakers and the general public that crimes against businesses are 'victimless' and not as serious as crimes in which an individual or a household is the victim. This perception is a dangerous fallacy, and has been a block to public policy innovation aimed at reducing shop theft.

A further limitation of the CSEW is that it does not show crime data with a local breakdown. The survey asks questions of around 40,000 individuals, and the data they report are extrapolated so as to be representative of the wider population.[34] While the sample size is sufficiently large for this method to give a statistically accurate picture of total crime in England and Wales, individual sample sizes for smaller geographical locations do not necessarily have the same effect. One cannot use CSEW data to map, for example, the ward in the London Borough of Haringey with the highest crime rate; that is a task for which police recorded crime data is far better suited.

32 UK Statistics Authority, *Statistics on Crime in England and Wales (produced by the Office for National Statistics):Assessment of compliance with the Code of Practice for Official Statistics*, Assessment Report 268, January 2014, http://www.statisticsauthority.gov.uk/assessment/assessment/assessment-reports/assessment-report-268---statistics-on-crime-in-england-and-wales.pdf (last accessed 18/2/15), pp2–3

33 In the 2013/14 survey, around 37,500 of the 50,000 households invited to take part did so – see Office of National Statistics, 'Crime Survey for England and Wales', C*rime Survey for England and Wales website*, http://www.crimesurvey.co.uk/ (last accessed 18/2/15)

34 Office of National Statistics, 'Frequently Asked Questions', *Crime Survey for England and Wales website*, http://www.crimesurvey.co.uk/faqs.html (last accessed 23/12/14)

> **There is a lack of data about business crime that can be compared year-on-year**

The CVS records incidents of victimisation of businesses rather than individuals. Unfortunately, it has not been conducted annually – a CVS was conducted in 1994, 2002, and from 2012–14. As a result, there is a lack of data about business crime that can be compared year-on-year. It is intended to be a 'snapshot' of the contemporary state of business crime in a given year, rather than a close monitor of crime rates and trends over time.[35] Further to this, the structure of the questionnaire aggregates data from wholesale and retail sectors into one group, which limits its utility. Because of the obvious shortfalls of the CVS, organisations such as the British Retail Consortium (BRC) conduct their own research into criminal victimisation of businesses within their remit. Indeed, the BRC's research is so well regarded that the CVS self consciously does not seek to duplicate the work they do.[36]

Despite the fact that no one source of data comprehensively answers all one could ask of it, when used together police recorded crime, the CSEW and the CVS show in great detail the patterns and trends of criminality in a way that can be very useful for policymakers, criminologists and law enforcement agencies. For example, rates of underreporting of various crimes can be obtained by comparing police recorded crime figures against the CSEW's total crime figures. Further, PRC data can show clusters of victimisation in a certain area, while the CSEW data can form the basis of understanding how those living within those clusters can be protected from future crime.[37]

Policing property crime

Half of burglary victims never hear back from police after reporting the crime.[38] Equally worryingly, only eight per cent of burglary victims ever get the relief of knowing that the offender has been caught and will be tried in court.[39] Police are notoriously unresponsive to reports of property crime; the most compelling reason to report a burglary is often simply to get a crime number for insurance purposes. Similarly, a report to police of a scratch down the side of your car would in most circumstances not warrant the attendance of an officer. And indeed crimes against businesses – like shoplifting – are often considered to not be taken seriously by police. When asked in a retailers' survey why they are reluctant to report crimes to police, a quarter of respondents who had been victims of shoplifting said 'the police don't come', and a similar number said 'the police aren't able to catch shoplifters'. 35 per cent doubted the police's ability to successfully prosecute shoplifters. One respondent said they were told not to report crimes because the value of stolen goods was too low, and because police had other priorities.[40] The diminution in the willingness or ability of police to respond to 'minor' crimes is bad for victims and bad for police, but it is a boon for thieves and vandals.

Local neighbourhood policing restores confidence of citizens in the police doing their job. It reduces the fear of crime and demonstrates to would-be opportunistic thieves that their offending will not be tolerated. What's more, it leverages local knowledge and local relationships to fight crime and antisocial behaviour in a way that benefits local residents.

In recent years there has been a breakdown of the neighbourhood policing model in London and across the UK. The previous model, developed in the 2000s,

35 See Home Office, 'About this Survey', *Commercial Victimisation Survey website*, http://www.commercialvictimisationsurvey.org.uk/ (last accessed 23/12/14)

36 Home Office, *Crime against businesses: Headline findings from the 2013 Commercial Victimisation Survey*, February 2014, p12 https://www.gov.uk/government/uploads/system/uploads/attachment_data/file/284818/crime-against-businesses-headlines-2013-pdf.pdf (last accessed 18/2/15)

37 See, for example, Tseloni, A. et al, 'The effectiveness of burglary security devices', *Security Journal* (advance online publication), 30 June 2014, http://www.palgrave-journals.com/sj/journal/vaop/ncurrent/full/sj201430a.html (last accessed 18/2/15)

38 Victim Support, 'One in four burglary victims say it affected their mental health', (media release), *Victim Support website*, 2 June 2014, https://www.victimsupport.org.uk/about-us/news/one-four-burglary-victims-say-it-affected-their-mental-health (last accessed 15/1/15)

39 Ibid

40 NFRN and Policy Exchange Crime Survey 2014 (unpublished)

incorporated a sergeant, two constables (PCs) and three Police Community Support Officers (PCSOs) in each ward. Budget cuts have reduced this to one constable and one PCSO. Some communities have been crying out in complaint that local police neighbourhood teams no longer attend citizens' meetings, no longer give presentations at schools and are no longer visible on the streets. This change to neighbourhood policing in London and around the country could result in the rise of 'minor' crimes like shoplifting, criminal damage and antisocial behaviour, and a diminution of public confidence in the ability of police to address these issues.

The number of specialist police crime prevention officers has also been reduced and their budgets cut in an attempt to cut costs. There is a risk that this will prove to be a false economy: failing to invest in crime prevention may put further pressure on police resources if crime increases.

Criminal justice

Beyond policing, the way in which property crime is dealt with by the criminal justice system serves simply to reaffirm how rarely such offences are deemed a priority. Low conviction rates, low disposal rates, lenient sentencing and reoffending on a huge scale have all contributed to the perception that property crimes are not taken seriously or dealt with effectively by the criminal justice system.

The proportion of property-related offences that result in an offender being brought to justice by means of a caution or conviction is extremely low. In the twelve months to June 2014, just 1.95 per cent of police recorded theft offences were disposed of with a caution and 10.7 per cent by conviction. For criminal damage and arson, the proportion of perpetrators brought to justice was a little higher – just over four per cent of offences resulted in caution and 9.85 per cent in conviction.[41]

The current Government has claimed that it is trying to tackle reoffending, yet property offences continue to be associated with unacceptably high level of repeat convictions. Repeat victimisation is a serious concern among retailers, particularly when such offences are increasingly being committed by the same groups or individual offenders.[42] For the last decade, the number of previous convictions or cautions held by offenders sentenced for theft offences has risen astoundingly: the latest figures show that over half of all offenders sentenced for theft offences have 15 or more previous convictions or cautions. This represents 62,000 offenders in 2014 alone.[43]

Furthermore, 45 per cent of offenders cautioned for theft offences had already received a caution or conviction for a previous offence. Although cautions are an important means of dealing with first time offenders and keeping them out of the criminal justice system, particularly for low level theft offences, it is inappropriate to continually use out of court disposals for persistent offenders. It is precisely this concern, expressed in Policy Exchange's 2012 report, *Proceed with Caution*, that led to the recent review of the use of out-of-court disposals and the introduction of reforms that aim to ensure persistent offenders no longer merely receive cautions for multiple offences.[44] This should see a significant decrease in the number of persistent offenders receiving cautions for theft offences in particular, which currently counts for a third of all cautions handed out.

41 Ministry of Justice, *Criminal Justice Statistics Quarterly,* June 2014 – Overview Table Q1.4 https://www.gov.uk/government/statistics/criminal-justice-system-quarterly-statistics-june-2014 (last accessed 16/2/15)

42 Research conducted by Policy Exchange of a range of retailers including interviews, roundtable discussions and a Call for Evidence

43 Ministry of Justice, *Criminal Justice Statistics Quarterly*, June 2014 – Offending Histories Table Q6f, https://www.gov.uk/government/statistics/criminal-justice-system-quarterly-statistics-june-2014 (last accessed 16/2/15)

44 Sosa, Karen, *Proceed with Caution: Use of Out-of-Court Disposals in England & Wales*, Policy Exchange, July 2012

Sentencing outcomes for perpetrators of theft offences frequently do little to either punish or deter offenders, and are widely deemed unsatisfactory by the victims of property crime. A third of all cautions handed out are given for theft offences, and figures also show that 29,000 Penalty Notices for Disorder were issued for shoplifting offences last year, only half of which were paid in full.

In other areas, however, sentencing has become somewhat harsher. For the offence of burglary, a mandatory minimum sentence of three years imprisonment must now be imposed by the charge for a 'third strike' domestic burglary, in accordance with sections 111(1) and (2) of the *Powers of Criminal Courts (Sentencing) Act* 2000. The court must impose a sentence of at least 3 years in custody, unless it is of the opinion that there are particular circumstances in relation to the offence or the offender that would make it unjust to do so.[45]

Our research has also found that many in the criminal justice system now recognise that offenders who plead guilty to handling stolen goods are likely to receive a lesser sentence than if they plead guilty for theft. Sentencing guidelines highlight how, at the very least, low level offences of theft and handling stolen goods are subject to the same punishment; for 'theft from a shop' and for handling stolen goods, courts are advised to use a starting point of a Band B fine for both, with the most serious end of the sentencing range being a low community order. It is a growing concern that the courts are dealing with handling stolen goods offences more leniently than theft.

A recent change in legislation has seen the definition of 'low level' shoplifting change. The *Anti-Social Behaviour, Crime and Policing Act* 2013 defines 'low level shoplifting' as theft of goods valued at less than £200. Defining the seriousness of a theft offence by its value is problematic. It is self-evident that the impact of a £200 theft to a large retailer is much smaller than it would be to a small, independent retailer. Many rightly argue that the seriousness of shoplifting should not be based on the value, but on the impact to the victim.

45 Crown Prosecution Service, 'Theft Act Offences', *Legal Guidance* http://www.cps.gov.uk/legal/s_to_u/theft_act_offences/ (last accessed 23/12/14)

3
Property Crime – A Typology

Because of its ubiquity, theft is the crime that many people have some direct experience of; there are an estimated 6.85 million victims of theft in England and Wales last year, representing 12.3 per cent of the population.[46] Theft from individuals tends to be treated more seriously by the criminal justice system than theft from businesses, even where the value of stolen goods is equivalent. It also captures the imagination far more than business crime, is more regularly measured (as discussed above), and more commonly studied and analysed by criminologists. This section will explore issues around some of the most common types of property crimes committed against individuals or households and against businesses.

Burglary

Almost everyone has either been a victim of burglary or knows someone who has. Of these victims, very few will have seen the perpetrator caught and pursued through the courts; estimates suggest that only one in every twenty burglaries will have a criminal justice outcome.[47] The most common experience is that victims report a break in to the police, give a statement, get a crime number for their insurance claim, and then never hear about the matter again. Indeed, only around two thirds of burglaries are reported to the police, leading to the suspicion that police records of burglary are mostly a measure of insurance penetration.[48]

The development of heightened home security consciousness has been a key contributor to the fall in burglary rates in England and Wales since the mid-1990s. The growing affordability of home security alarms and CCTV, and the growing use of window locks, door deadlocks, and security lighting have made burglary a lot harder, more time consuming and riskier than it was. Both attempted burglary and burglary itself have decreased as these measures have become more common. The effectiveness of strengthened home security measures will be discussed in more detail below in the section about target hardening homes.

Another key factor in burglary reduction is likely to have been the use of 'designing out crime' principles in all new social housing and many new private housing developments through the Association of Chief Police Officers (ACPO) Secure By Design hallmark. Designing out crime uses principles around physical security, natural surveillance and thoroughfare mapping to create physical spaces that reduce the risk of criminality. It has been shown time and again to significantly reduce victimisation with only a marginal increase in cost.[49] Designing out crime will be discussed in more detail below in the section on crime prevention.

Victims of burglary respond in different ways. A small proportion of victims may simply shrug it off as an inconvenience and a hassle. Others find the idea

46 See Office of National Statistics, 'Table A3', *Crime in England & Wales, year ending March 2014 – Appendix tables*, http://www.ons.gov.uk/ons/rel/crime-stats/crime-statistics/period-ending-march-2014/rft-table-2.xls (last accessed 18/2/15); Nominal figure extrapolated from table prevalence rates multiplied by national populations of England and Wales appearing at: Office of National Statistics, 'Key Points', *Annual Mid-year Population Estimates, 2013*, http://www.ons.gov.uk/ons/rel/pop-estimate/population-estimates-for-uk--england-and-wales--scotland-and-northern-ireland/2013/stb---mid-2013-uk-population-estimates.html (last accessed 18/2/15)

47 Research conducted by Policy Exchange of a range of retailers including interviews, roundtable discussions and a Call for Evidence

48 Ross, N. (2013). *Crime*, London, UK: Biteback Publishing, p116

49 Armitage, Rachel and Leanne Monchuk, 'Sustaining the crime reduction impact of designing out crime: Re-evaluating the Secured by Design scheme 10 years on' in *Security Journal,* 2010, p7

of a stranger breaking into their house and rummaging through their personal possessions to be an intolerable violation of the sanctity and safety of their home. Children are particularly vulnerable as victims of burglary – recent research has suggested that the trauma to children is just as great if they are not in the home at the time of the break in as if they are at home.

Some types of individuals and households are more likely to be victims of burglary than others. Risk of victimisation is connected with living in a deprived area. This is particularly pernicious as the most deprived often cannot afford insurance, and are the least able to absorb the financial costs resulting from theft. Houses with more than three adults have a higher risk of burglary, as do renters. Detached houses in higher income areas are at low risk of burglary victimisation compared to their neighbours in nearby terraced housing, whereas detached houses in deprived areas are significantly more likely to be burgled than nearby terraces.[50] In an interview, student leaders drew attention to the fact that students experience quite high victimisation rates for burglary – probably because they tend to feature a number of risk factors including shared accommodation, substandard housing conditions with low levels of security, unfamiliarity with the community in which they live, no insurance, youth, and valuable assets in the form of computers and phones.

Repeat victimisation is also a common phenomenon. This is perversely logical: criminologists have described burglars as practicing the 'optimal forager' method of target selection.[51] A burglar will burgle homes nearby or convenient to them, and will keep burgling those same homes until there is nothing left to steal. Once a home has been burgled, an offender knows the layout of the home, where the valuable are kept, and what resources he or she will need to steal the items that were missed in a previous incident. Unless precautions are taken by a victim, it is likely that they will be able to replicate their method of entry. Nearby homes, too, suffer an increased risk of victimisation, particularly where they have a similar layout to a previously victimised home.[52] Criminologists have calculated that households are at highest risk of burglary if there has been another burglary within 400 metres within the last six weeks.[53]

Snatch theft, pickpocketing and phone theft

'Theft from the person' is a broad term that encompasses three connected but distinct types of stealing:

- **'Stealth' theft** – pickpocketing or theft of an item while the owner is looking away or distracted. As well as taking wallets from victims' pockets, this can include taking a mobile phone left on a café table while the owner is engrossed reading a menu, or taking the purse out of an open handbag while the victim is browsing a rack of clothing.
- **'Snatch' theft** – where an item is taken from a victim using only as much force as is required to separate the owner from their possession, for example bag-snatching or taking a mobile phone from someone's hand in a nightclub.
- **Robbery** – the use of violence or the threat of violence to coerce a victim to hand over possessions to an offender.

50 Bowers, Kate J. et al, 'Victimisation and Re-victimisation Risk, Housing Type and Area: A study of Interactions' in *Crime Prevention and Community Safety: An International Journal*, 2005, 7(1), pp7–17

51 See for examples: Johnson, Shane D, et al, 'Offender as Forager? A Direct Test of the Boost Account of Victimisation' in *Journal of Quantitative Criminology,* 2009 25, pp181–200

52 Bowers, Kate J. et al, 'Victimisation and Re-victimisation Risk, Housing Type and Area: A study of Interactions' in *Crime Prevention and Community Safety: An International Journal*, 2005, 7(1), pp7–17

53 Fielding, Matthew and Vincent Jones, 'Disrupting the optimal forager: predictive risk mapping and domestic burglary reduction in Trafford, Greater Manchester' *in International Journal of Police Science and Managemen*t, 2012 Vol. 14, No. 1, pp 30–41

Theft from the person offences such as snatch theft and pickpocketing remain an issue, and are particularly problematic in cities and larger towns. A phenomenon peculiar to London has been the recent spate of moped-mounted thieves snatching handbags or mobile phones from the hands of unsuspecting bystanders. These have been particularly difficult for police to pursue, given the ability to drive a moped (unlike a police car) down narrow pedestrian thoroughfares and the offenders' reckless attitude towards the safety of those nearby.

Recent research into snatch theft, pickpocketing and robbery illuminates who the crimes affect and offers some explanations as to why.

The research reports on an in-depth analysis of the CSEW records from 1994 to 2010/11 conducted to identify the characteristics of victims of thefts from the person. The strongest determinants of risk of victimisation were age, sex and marital status. Conventional wisdom holds that young men are at the highest risk of victimisation of crime generally, and are also most likely to be an offender. However, this study found that young unmarried women had the highest risk of victimisation of theft from the person.[54] Nevertheless, unmarried young men were much more likely than any other group to be the victims of *attempted* theft from person or robbery.[55] This discrepancy between sexes may be based on a number of factors. One is that women are more likely than men to carry their possessions in handbags, rather than in pockets, which means they can be taken from an unwary victim unnoticed.

> **Most incidents happened in public places such as shopping centres and high streets, and the majority of offences occurred during the day**

Income of the victim is not a significant factor in likelihood of victimisation of theft from the person.[56] Surprisingly, though, housing tenure is. Renters were at a moderately higher risk of victimisation than those who owned their own home.[57]

'Stealth' theft was found to be more common than 'snatch' theft over the period studied. Most incidents happened in public places such as shopping centres and high streets, and the majority of offences occurred during the day.[58] The principle commodities targeted were cash, wallets and purses, credit and debit cards, and mobile phones.[59] The attractiveness of cash as a target of theft is unsurprising; it does not have to be sold on to a fence for its value to be realised. Research shows that mobile phone theft has fluctuated during the period studied: it increased in line with the increased prevalence of mobile phones, then reduced and has recently started rising again.[60] Credit and debit card theft has declined in prevalence (probably as a result of the establishment of 'chip and pin' devices as standard) but still remains high.[61]

Unlike burglary, theft from the person has a low rate of repeat victimisation. This instinctively makes sense: thieves target strangers on the street, and the chances of a thief running into the same victim more than once are minimal (unlike a burglar targeting the same house more than once). But also unlike burglary and most other crime types, there was no significant reduction in rates of 'theft from the person' offences from the mid-nineties.[62] This is in part attributable to the emergence of a new valuable commodity that almost everyone carries around at all times: the mobile phone.

Over 90 per cent of British adults own a mobile phone, and two thirds of these are smart phones. There are now more mobile phone subscriptions in the

54 Thompson, R, *Understanding Theft from the Person and Robbery of Personal Property: Victimisation Trends in England and Wales 1994–2010/11*, Nottingham Trent University, 2014, p166

55 Ibid, p167

56 Ibid, p180

57 Ibid, p180

58 Ibid, p229

59 Ibid, pp112–116

60 Ibid, Table p115, also see p117, pp121–124

61 Ibid, p117

62 Office of National Statistics, 'Figure 13: Trends in CSEW other household theft and theft from the person, 1981 to 2013/14', *Crime in England and Wales, Year Ending March 2014*, http://www.ons.gov.uk/ons/rel/crime-stats/crime-statistics/period-ending-march-2014/stb-crime-stats.html#tab-Theft-Offences—Other-Theft-of-Property (last accessed 18/2/15)

UK than there are people.[63] Mobile phones grew rapidly in prevalence across the developed world during the 1990s and 2000s, as they became both smaller and cheaper to produce; so much so that 16 per cent of British adults now live in mobile phone-only households, that is, they do not have a wired telephone installed in their home.[64]

Figure 3: 'Theft from person' offences did not experience the huge reduction since 1994 that can be seen in the total crime rate, mostly due to mobile phone theft[65]
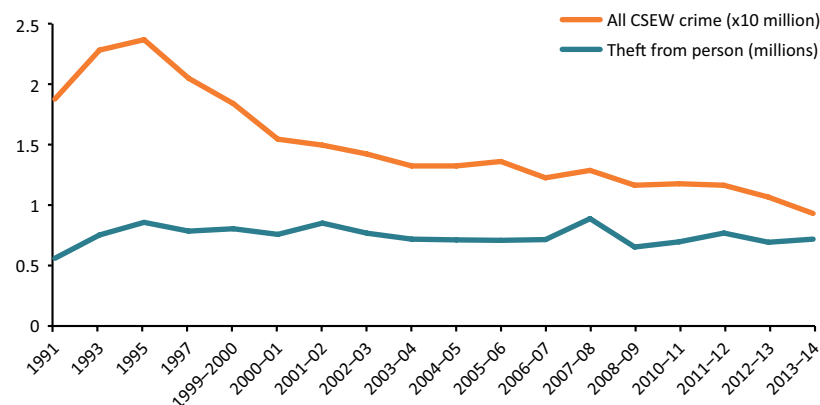
Source: www.neighbourhood.statistics.gov.uk/HTMLDocs/dvc188/index.html

63 Ofcom, 'Phones', *Facts and Figures*, 2014, http://media.ofcom.org.uk/facts/ (last accessed 13/1/15)

64 Ibid

65 Office of National Statistics, 'Crime in England and Wales, 1981–2014', *How has crime changed over the last 30 years?*, http://www.neighbourhood.statistics.gov.uk/HTMLDocs/dvc188/index.html (last accessed 25/2/15)

66 Laycock, G, 'The UK Car Theft Index: An Example of Government Leverage'. Chapter 17 in Maxfield, M. and Clarke, R.V. (ed.), *Understanding and Preventing Car Theft – Crime Prevention Studies*. Devon, UK: Willian Publishing, 2004 edition, 25–44 (see p 34–35 in particular)

67 Home Office and Rt Hon Theresa May MP, 'Mobile phone theft paper highlights models targeted by thieves', 7 September 2014 https://www.gov.uk/government/news/mobile-phone-theft-paper-highlights-models-targeted-by-thieves (last accessed 23/12/14)

68 Travis, Alan, 'Emergency services "will have to be integrated", warns Theresa May', *The Guardian*, 3 September 2014, http://www.theguardian.com/uk-news/2014/sep/03/emergency-services-integrate-theresa-may (last accessed 18/2/15)

In two roundtables on property crime held by the author and Policy Exchange in the lead up to this report, and in private conversations with criminologists, it was suggested that phone manufacturers are aware of the risks of phone theft, but do little to redesign their products to reduce their attractiveness or vulnerability to thieves. A similar dynamic was seen in the security of motor vehicles until government action forced a change in the 1990s using the Car Theft Index. The Index was a 'league table' of cars, rated according to their vulnerability to theft. It helped consumers to make a more informed choice as to which car was more or less likely to be broken into or stolen, and it has been credited with the increased inclusion of security devices on cars, which directly led to a reduction in car theft.[66] It is encouraging, therefore, that the Home Secretary recently announced that she intends to create a similar index focusing on mobile phones.[67]

Smart phones are necessarily more valuable than their 'non-smart' ancestors, and are still tradable commodities; their theft remains a key issue. In a speech to the Reform think tank in September 2014 the Home Secretary drew attention to organised crime operations which shipped stolen smart phones abroad for resale.[68] For some years there has been much research about 'kill switches' that can permanently disable a stolen smart phone remotely, rendering it valueless to a thief. Technology rolled out by Apple in its latest smart phone operating software, combined with the firmware in its most recent model of iPhone, is encouraging in its ability to remotely disable phones through the 'Find My iPhone' capability. Smart phones using Android software have a similar capability. The new technology is robust enough to deter all but the most experienced experts, and so will reduce the attractiveness of phone to opportunistic and even

most organised criminals. As the smart phone disabling software rolls out over coming years, analysis of resultant change in criminal behaviour around phone theft will be vital in assessing its effectiveness.

Theft from and of cars

Theft from and of cars is perhaps one of the great crime prevention success stories; the reduction in both of these crimes provide a usefully instructional model for crime reduction across other crime types.

Like all types of theft, car theft increased in line with the growing ubiquity of car ownership. When cars were rare and unusual, they were difficult to steal. Anyone driving a car would stand out from a crowd and would be easily identifiable and traceable, both of which are abhorrent to thieves. But when cars became commonplace not only were there more cars to steal but the risks involved with stealing them also diminished.

Automotive manufacturers put a lot of effort into innovating their products to compete with each other – power steering, electric windows, heaters, car radios. Sometimes these competitive innovations were about driver or passenger comfort, or about car performance or price. As consumers became more conscious of car safety there was increasing competition around safety features like seatbelts and airbags. Innovation in anti-theft protection for cars, however, only emerged after governments started releasing league table assessments of various vehicles' vulnerability to crime. Armed with information about the likelihood of their prospective new car being stolen, consumers demanded from car manufacturers better systems to prevent it. From the late 1980s through to the early 2000s cars began to be variously fitted with alarms, immobilisers, central locking and steering wheel locks – and eventually these became standard features on new cars. In tandem with this, car radio securing improved – often the radios were fitted into the car itself so they could not be removed without destroying them – and built-in radios became so ubiquitous as to no longer be valuable enough to steal.

The result of these changes was that the reduction in crime from the mid-1990s was precipitated by an enormous reduction in car theft. Not only did car theft lead the reduction in crime in its own right, but it has been suggested that it also helped to reduce other crime types. Theft of cars can be described as a 'keystone' crime (after the keystone in a stone archway, which will cause the collapse of the whole arch if removed), because stolen cars facilitate the commission of other types of crime.[69] If criminologists, policymakers and law enforcement officials work together to identify other types of keystone crimes, and find ways of significantly reducing them, they will be able to disproportionally cut crime victimisation.

69 Farrell, Graham, 'Five Tests For A Theory Of The Crime Drop' in *Crime Science*, 2013, 2:5, p11

Figure 4: Vehicle-related theft and total crime in England and Wales, 1991–2004[70]
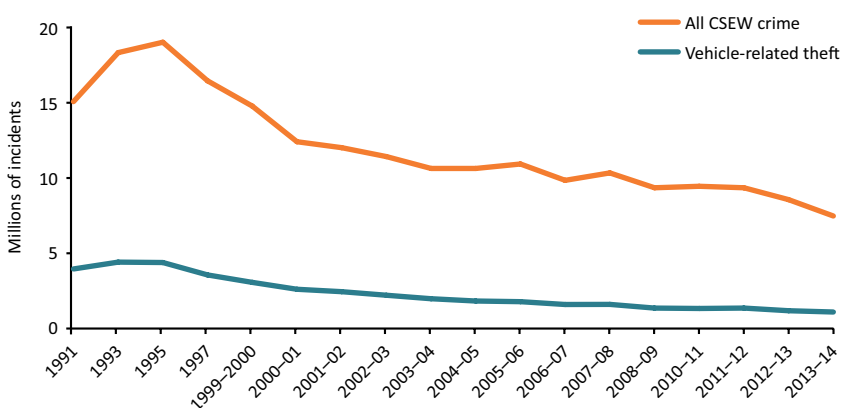
Source: www.neighbourhood.statistics.gov.uk/HTMLDocs/dvc188/index.html

70 Office of National Statistics, 'Crime in England and Wales, 1981–2014', *How has crime changed over the last 30 years?*, http://www.neighbourhood. statistics.gov.uk/HTMLDocs/ dvc188/index.html (last accessed 25/2/15)

71 Metropolitan Police, Financial year table '2012–13', *Crime Mapping: Data Tables, Year End Figures (Fixed)*, Metropolitan Police Website, http://maps. met.police.uk/tables.htm (last accessed 13/2/2015)

72 This solution rate relates to police recorded crime, rather than all crime of that type. It should be noted that the reason for the high detection rate for handling is because of a very low reporting rate. Victims of handling are victims of theft, who often do not know their stolen belongings have been fenced. Police typically only become aware of and record a handling offence when they have already discovered the offender.

73 A study in the rise of cycling in Britain in the last decade is available at: Peck, Chris, '2001 to 2011 – cyclist numbers change significantly', *CTC Website*, 26 August 2013 http://www.ctc.org.uk/blog/ chris-peck/2001-to-2011-cyclist- numbers-change-significantly (last accessed 13/1/15)

74 City of London Police, 'Bicycle Security', *City of London Police Website*, https://www. cityoflondon.police.uk/advice- and-support/bicycle-security/ Pages/default.aspx (last accessed 13/1/15)

Bicycle theft

Over 20,000 incidents of bicycle theft were reported to the Metropolitan Police in 2012–13.[71] According to the Met's own data, only 474 of these thefts were solved, a rate of just under 2.3 per cent. This compares to rates of just over seven per cent for theft of a motor vehicle; around 12 per cent for burglary from a dwelling; almost 48 per cent for theft from shops; and 93.7 per cent for handling of stolen goods.[72] While the expectation would be that the bulk of stolen bicycles are taken from the streets, in reality a large number are taken from garages or the public areas of apartment buildings where they are only semi-secured.

More concerning is the fact that the Met received substantially more reports of bicycle theft in 2012–13 than it did in 2000–01 (when 14,470 bikes were reported stolen) – this increase was during a period during in which overall crime fell significantly (in the case of theft of motor vehicle, it fell by about two-thirds). It could be argued that the increase is in part due to growing ubiquity of bicycles, and an increased incidence of bicycles being covered by insurance. Growing public interest in cycling events like the Tour de France, political efforts to promote this mode of transport, and the increased demand for high-end bicycles mean their use is increasingly widespread.[73] With high insurance penetration comes a greater likelihood of reporting the theft of a bicycle to police, as a police crime number is usually required to make an insurance claim.

Much of the advice offered to cyclists about how to reduce their risk of bicycle theft involves how to securely lock a bicycle in public areas. The City of London Police advises cyclists to lock their bike with at least two high quality locks. Importantly, though, police advice now instructs bicycle owners to also lock their bicycle at home, and exhorts cyclists not to buy a stolen second-hand bike.[74] Most police forces also offer bicycle registration schemes so they can identify a stolen bicycle's owner should it be recovered from thieves. All of these can reduce a cyclist's risk of having their bicycle stolen, but a recent invention by a group of Chilean university students is being touted as the world's first 'unstealable' bicycle. The bicycle's frame folds out so that it can be secured – with the seat pole

– around a fixed object.[75] There is no chain to cut through; to steal the bike a thief would have to destroy the bike. This type of innovation has the potential to give cyclists the sort of built-in protection against theft that automotive manufacturers began to fit to cars in the 1980s and 1990s. As with car design, enhanced security features for bicycles can have a real effect on reducing theft.

Criminal damage

One of the most compelling images from the 2011 London riots was of shop windows smashed, cars overturned and burnt out, and buildings in flames. While this was of course an extreme case of criminal damage, even outside the context of a riot we have grown accustomed to seeing spray-painted tags on blank walls or shutters, and scratched nicknames on bus windows. Criminal damage to houses and cars is particularly traumatic; both tend to have a certain emotional attachment, and both are expensive to fix: putting a scratch down the length of a car can be done with a key or a 10p coin, but can cost hundreds of pounds to repair.

> "Criminal damage to houses and cars is particularly traumatic; both tend to have a certain emotional attachment, and both are expensive to fix"

The CSEW records about two million incidents of vandalism, criminal damage and arson in the year to December 2013.[76] Encouragingly, this is less than half the number of incidents experienced annually two decades ago, with a big chunk of that reduction in the last two years. It is possible that the extent of the destruction wreaked during the 2011 riots galvanised mainstream young people in Britain against the idea that criminal damage, arson and vandalism are acceptable and harmless ways to 'rebel'.

Shoplifting/customer theft

Of all property crimes, shoplifting is one the most invisible, underreported and costly to society. The British Retail Consortium (BRC), which is comprised of predominantly larger retailers and represents half the retail sector by turnover, conducts an annual crime survey of its members. This survey estimates that only nine per cent of shoplifting incidents are reported to the police. For clarity, that is nine per cent of the shoplifting incidents that retailers are aware of; a large number of suspected shoplifting incidents are not discovered until stocktake, by which time it is impossible to prove the cause of the stock shrinkage.

Underreporting is a problem because it means that police do not know where crimes are taking place. Crime figures, according to both the CSEW and police recorded crime data, have been reducing since the mid-1990s. But the CSEW does not include shoplifting, and police are recording only a fraction of the shoplifting crimes being committed. Police allocate resources and plan crime strategies around crime 'hotspots'. If police don't know where the crimes are happening because of underreporting, they do not have an accurate picture of offending in any given location. As a result, they may be allocating resources inappropriately.

The reasons that retailers do not report shoplifting offences to the police vary, but mostly centre on not having time and not having faith in police to solve the crimes and bring the perpetrators to justice.[77] This is a particular challenge for small retailers and sole traders, who do not have the resources to prevent offending, catch shoplifters in the act, and pay for staff time to give evidence

75 Readhead, Harry, 'This bicycle is apparently the world's first "unstealable bike"', *Metro*, 3 September 2014 http://metro.co.uk/2014/09/03/this-bicycle-is-apparently-the-worlds-first-unstealable-bike-4855197/ (last accessed 18/2/15)

76 Office of National Statistics, 'Table 17a' and 'Table 18a', *Crime in England & Wales, year ending December 2013 – Bulletin tables*, http://www.ons.gov.uk/ons/rel/crime-stats/crime-statistics/period-ending-december-2013/rft-bulletin-tables.xls (last accessed 18/2/15)

77 NFRN and Policy Exchange Crime Survey 2014 (unpublished)

and make police statements. Further, uncertainty around a shopkeeper's rights in detaining shoplifters caught in the act and fear of violence stops many retailers from challenging a potential thief even where they have strong suspicions.

Many retailers believe that a combination of legislation, judicial attitudes and prosecutorial practice have led to a de facto decriminalisation of shoplifting. Most shoplifters are given police Cautions or Penalty Notices for Disorder; they usually won't even see the inside of a magistrates' court until they've been caught for the seventh, eighth or ninth time. When they do come before a court the magistrate will probably pass down a sentence of a fine, at least half which go unpaid.[78] Given that only nine per cent of shoplifting incidents are reported to police in the first place, it is clear that a thief can steal prolifically with little risk of arrest or real punishment, and even where a punishment is imposed can often ignore it and continue to offend.

This effect has been magnified by the passage of the *Anti-social Behaviour, Crime and Policing Act* 2014, which (inter alia) sets the threshold of a 'serious' shoplifting offence at goods to the value of £200. While we can point at clothing or electronics retailers to justify that threshold, it has the effect of virtually decriminalising theft from smaller retailers such as newsagents and convenience stores. With the median value of a shoplifting incident from a convenience store at around £40, the setting of a monetary threshold stratifies the seriousness of theft from different types of shops, essentially signalling that the justice system does not care about theft from smaller stores.[79]

As with most types of property crime, the social costs of shoplifting are regressive – they hit poorest communities hardest. Small local businesses in more deprived areas, operating on small profit/loss margins, are least able to absorb the costs of theft and are obliged to pass these costs on to their customers through increased prices. In areas of deprivation and poverty this needlessly and unfairly increases the costs of groceries and diminishes the ability of small businesses to compete with larger national chains. In addition crime often strikes repeatedly in the same place. Repeat victimisation of shops means the same businesses get hit over and over again; in Tottenham small businesses report a steady drumbeat of theft and criminal damage – of which the 2011 riots were merely an extreme case. There is a risk that this will cause even more high street shops to close, to be replaced with yet more betting shops and pawnbrokers.

According to the National Crime Agency (NCA), organised acquisitive crime (that is, theft by organised criminals) cost the UK £1.75 billion in 2012–13.[80] Traditionally, organised acquisitive crime has tended to focus on cash-in-transit theft or metal theft. However experiences in the United States, and anecdotal evidence from British retailers, suggest that organised crime groups (OCGs) are increasingly turning to shoplifting as a low-risk way of making money (either to augment or replace their traditional drug dealing or arms trafficking). Organised crime groups in Britain have been known to shoplift high value goods from department stores across several different police force areas, in the hope that the various forces will not work together on 'minor' crimes like shoplifting. As a result, organised criminals thrive in a policing environment that deprioritises shoplifting. Unchecked, this will create significant problems in tackling organised crime in the coming decades.

78 Neyroud, Peter and John Shaw, *Criminal Fines Compliance: What the evidence tells us about achieving compliance and the role of the police*, G4S, 2013, http://www.apace.org.uk/var/files/1381503057_89%2013%20-%20G4S%20Criminal%20Fines%20Compliance.pdf (last accessed 18/2/15)

79 Association of Convenience Stores, Written evidence on the *Anti-Social Behaviour, Crime and Policing Bill* (Session 2013–14), http://www.publications.parliament.uk/pa/cm201314/cmpublic/antisocialbehaviour/memo/asb34.htm (last accessed 18/2/15)

80 HM Government, *Serious and Organised Crime Strategy*, October 2013, https://www.gov.uk/government/uploads/system/uploads/attachment_data/file/248645/Serious_and_Organised_Crime_Strategy.pdf (last accessed 18/2/15), p15

Box 2: Effectiveness of security devices against shop-theft[81]

The National Federation of Retail Newsagents and Policy Exchange conducted a crime survey of the NFRN's members; around 400 responses were received and the data analysed. The intention was to assess retail security using a framework that has previously been applied to home and car security. The assessment identifies which combinations of security measures offer the best protection against crime.

The survey asked if a retailer had been the victim of shoplifting in the last three months, and what security measures it uses to attempt to reduce its risk of theft. Measures included CCTV, electronic security tags, mirrors, signs warning that shoplifters would be prosecuted, putting expensive goods behind the counter, policies about schoolchildren and staff training.

In most cases, each of these security measures does not exist in a vacuum; a combination of measures is used. As such, it makes sense to identify which combination of security measures offers the best protection against shoplifting. Such an analysis would be useful for retailers in deciding how to invest in target hardening their shops.

The analysis gives a 'Security Protection Factor' (SPF), which denotes the protective factor of each combination of security measures. For example, if a particular combination of security measures had an SPF of five, that would mean a shop with that combination of security measures would be five times less likely to be the victim of shoplifting compared to a shop with no security measures. An SPF of one would mean it is just as likely to be the victim of low security. An SPF of 0.5 would indicate that the shop is half as protected as no security (therefore twice as likely to become a shoplifting victim).

The results of the analysis are shown below. Because of the small sample size, there are two graphs. Figure 5 indicates combinations that were shared by more than ten newsagents in the survey. Figure 6 shows combinations that were shared by more than five but fewer than ten newsagents.

Figure 5: Security protection factor of combinations of security measures aimed at preventing shoplifting (where there were 10 or more cases of each particular combination)
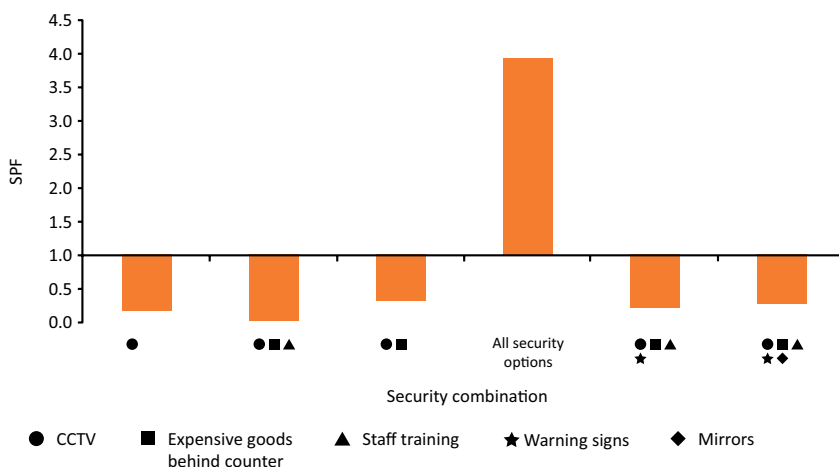
● CCTV   ■ Expensive goods behind counter   ▲ Staff training   ★ Warning signs   ◆ Mirrors

Source: Tseloni, Andromachi and Emily Evans, *Effectiveness of security devices against shop-theft within the sample of Newsagents surveyed by Policy Exchange*, unpublished, 2015

81 Tseloni, Andromachi and Emily Evans, *Effectiveness of security devices against shop-theft within the sample of Newsagents surveyed by Policy Exchange*, unpublished, 2015

Figure 6: Security protection factor of combinations of security measures aimed at preventing shoplifting (where there were 5–9 cases of each particular combination)

Source: Tseloni, Andromachi and Emily Evans, *Effectiveness of security devices against shop-theft within the sample of Newsagents surveyed by Policy Exchange*, unpublished, 2015

These results are surprising in that they show that most combinations of security are actually linked to higher shop theft risk compared to no security. The main exception, however, is 'all security measures', which, according to the Figure 5, above, gives four times more protection against shoplifting than having no security.

This is big news indeed. The fact that some combinations of security correlate to greater rather than less shoplifting victimisation will mean retailers will have to comprehensively re-think how they protect their businesses.

There is a risk that the small sample size, and overrepresentation of shoplifting victims, has distorted the results. There is a case, therefore, for further research in this area to be conducted with bigger data sets and corrections for area, population and demographic effects. This would give a more comprehensive and accurate picture of the types of security that are most effective at preventing shoplifting. Nevertheless, while the small sample size makes it difficult to make comparisons at the margins, one would expect to see a marked difference in any combination that proved effective. The fact that no combination other than 'all security measures' indicated a significant improvement in protection suggests that retailers can be sure that implementing all of these security measures will make a difference.

Theft by employees

Many retailers will say they suffer more losses from employee theft than from shoplifting. While shoplifting is more common, typically the values of theft by shoplifting are much smaller than theft by employees; in 2012–13 the average cost of a shoplifting incident was £177, whereas the average employee theft in the retail sector was £1200.[82] Even the most lowly cashier or waiter in a shop or restaurant is given a great deal of trust around money, and so the potential for

82 British Retail Consortium, *Retail Crime Survey 2013*, January 2014, http://www.brc.org.uk/downloads/2013_BRC_Retail_Crime_Survey.pdf (last accessed 18/2/15), p4

theft is significant. For any employee, the intimate knowledge of their employer's practices, processes and policies means that they are able to identify weaknesses that could be exploited. Diligent employees will seek to draw these weaknesses to the attention of management or to change them; unscrupulous employees may take advantage of them for illegal gain.

Employee theft includes a large number of offences, some of which are so commonplace as to be almost acceptable. 'Cooking the books' to embezzle money is considered a gross breach of trust and a significant financial crime, whereas appropriating stationery from the office or printing personal documents on the office printer is tolerated in many workplaces. Waiters and bar staff are known to give free drinks to friends dining at their restaurant. Shop clerks can 'forget' to scan items at the checkout, or misuse gift cards to give themselves or friends and family free vouchers to spend at their shop.[83]

Many of the measures put in place to stop customer theft and shoplifting do not prevent employee theft. Electronic or dye tags do not prevent employee theft of stock, given employees have the means of removing them. Security measures like CCTV or monitoring customers' behaviour require staff cooperation, so can easily be overcome by employees themselves. And overt demonstrations by management that it does not trust employees – such as pointing CCTV cameras at the cash register or checking employees' bags as they leave the store – can erode morale and end up costing companies more. This may be why only 40 per cent of employee theft incidents are reported to the police.[84]

> "Security measures like CCTV or monitoring customers' behaviour require staff cooperation, so can easily be overcome by employees themselves"

It is not all bad news, however. The growing use of electronic strip plastic gift cards instead of handwritten vouchers means that the sale of each gift card can be tracked to a time and place, and compared with till takings and receipt records. There is an electronic 'trail of breadcrumbs' that can implicate employees who do the wrong thing. A big problem experienced by retailers when they catch shoplifters is being given an incorrect name and address or fake identification; this problem cannot occur with employee theft; the employer already knows who the employee is and where he or she lives. As well as this, the age of austerity has led to many companies re-evaluating their expenses policy and significantly reining in how much employees can get away with.

Burglary, ramraids and criminal damage

Burglary of businesses is recorded by police as 'burglary other than of a dwelling', and so the police figures combine it with burglary of sheds and garages. The BRC's crime survey provides us with better data relating solely to burglary from retailers. Retailers experience a high rate of burglary; in 2012–13 there were ten burglaries for every 100 stores, with an average cost to retailers of £2000 per incident. Around 60 per cent of retail burglaries are reported to police, which is around the same rate as for home burglaries.[85]

The cost of attempted burglary is also substantial: 42 per cent of criminal damage done to retail premises is caused by attempted burglary. Given that the average cost to retailers of criminal damage incidents is around

83 There is a comprehensive discussion on employee theft in Thomas Gabor, *'Everybody Does It!' – Crime by the Public*, University of Toronto Press, Toronto, 1994, pp75–84

84 British Retail Consortium, *Retail Crime Survey 2013*, January 2014, http://www.brc.org.uk/downloads/2013_BRC_Retail_Crime_Survey.pdf (last accessed 18/2/15), p20

85 Ibid, p23

£2000 – the same as for successful burglaries – attempted burglary is no less of an issue.[86]

Indeed criminal damage is much more prevalent than burglary: in 2012–13 there were approximately 60 criminal damage incidents per 100 stores. But, unlike burglary, only 20 per cent of incidents are reported to police. And contrary to the common stereotype of destructive youths causing malicious damage, only 17 per cent of criminal damage incidents are caused by antisocial behaviour.[87]

'Ram raids' combine the worst excesses of burglary and criminal damage, and involve the destruction of property with vehicles as part of attempts to steal goods or cash. It has become more common in recent years in London particularly.

86 Ibid, p 25

87 Ibid, p24

4
The Response

All criminal justice agencies, particularly the police, are dealing with tight budget constraints. This is likely to continue beyond the next round of spending cuts across public services. It is therefore understandable that there may be a reluctance to perceive this as an appropriate time to prioritise property offences, when the majority of such crimes involve goods of low value. In an age of austerity it would be impractical to mandate that the police must investigate every shoplifting offence, or to suggest the courts should impose disproportionately harsh sentences for these low level offences. Nevertheless, it is clear that the deprioritisation of property crime has become so significant as to approximate decriminalisation: attitudes must change if we are to arrest this development.

Ameliorating the worst excesses

The role of insurance

The vast bulk of middle-class Britons are insulated from the worst excesses of property crime victimisation by insurance. The costs of insuring against theft are relatively small; crime rates are relatively stable over the short to medium term, and so an insurance company's expected liabilities are relatively easy to predict (especially when compared with fire or flood risk).

Home contents insurance has been credited for the rate of reporting of crimes like burglary. To make an insurance claim burglary victims need a crime number, which they get from police when they report the crime. Presumably, therefore, there is a chronic underreporting of burglary amongst communities with low insurance penetration; this probably accounts for the estimated 40 per cent of burglaries that go unreported.

There is a paradox of need, though, for those without insurance. Britain's poorest and most deprived communities are at greater risk of burglary or other theft victimisation, yet they are less able to afford insurance, and less able to absorb the financial shocks of crime. This problem is getting worse: a survey of social housing tenants found that 53 per cent of respondents had home contents insurance coverage in 2012, whereas in 2014 the figure had declined to 39 per cent.[88] There is a systemic inequity – a regressive social tax – caused by property crime in poorer communities, and innovative solutions around encouraging greater insurance policy adoption would serve to address that inequity.

Several insurance companies offer low cost, no-excess home contents insurance products, for less than £1 per week. Affordability is less of an issue than access. Given their tenants are some of the poorest people in the country, social housing

88 *The* Quids In! *Reader Survey 2014,* Social Publishing Project Ltd, Bath, 2014, p23

providers should offer home contents insurance to their tenants as an optional extra when letting their properties, absorbing the cost into the rent. Insurance purchased in bulk by a social landlord on behalf of their tenants would also be cheaper and easier to administer (from the insurer's point of view) than individual policies. Similarly, local government authorities could provide crime prevention advice – including the recommendation to purchase home contents insurance – to residents as they register for council tax or for the electoral roll.

Supporting victims

Of course, not all the trauma of crime victimisation is financial. The emotional trauma of a burglary or snatch theft can be severe and ongoing, significantly reducing the victim's quality of life. It is essential that the state continues to fund services for victims of crimes, and enhance the way they are treated by police, government agencies, and the criminal justice system.

Victimisation of property crimes has by far the biggest effect on fear of crime, and this effect is 'persistent and pervasive', according to a study by The Australia Institute.[89] Two years after a burglary, victims still do not feel as safe as they did before the incident.[90] The study also shows that the most effective form of recovery from the trauma of crime is social – that is, group therapy.[91] The model of support from organisations like Victim Support, in which victims volunteer to support other victims, is therefore ideal in assisting victims of crime in moving past their trauma. Victim Support recently conducted a survey on the trauma of burglary on children. The survey found, amongst other things, that the trauma felt by children was the same irrespective of whether they were at home at the time of the burglary or not. This means that the continued provision of victims' services, and the enforcement of the Victims' Code, is vital to reduce the worst impacts of crime (including property crime) on its victims.

> "The most effective form of recovery from the trauma of crime is social – that is, group therapy"

The burglary of a shop is traumatic for that shop's owner or manager and their staff. Shoplifting victimisation is a major stressor of retail management, as owners and managers balance the security of their stock and business model against the safety of their team. The Victims' Code allows for store managers to be treated as crime victims, but this is not extended to any other staff that may be witnesses or ancillary victims of the crime. The Victim's Code should be amended to acknowledge the trauma of business crime on workers and to ensure victims of it are treated as such.

An American police chief, responding to this report's call for evidence, recounted a victims' support initiative he started in his area, whereby police – both uniformed constables and detectives – would conduct regular follow-up visits to crime victims. This was in addition to the support services offered by various charities and government contractors. He argued that the follow-up visits were useful to police; it helped to build a trusting relationship with the community and assured victims they were more than just statistics on a spreadsheet or 'cases' that police were eager to close. Further, in the weeks following their victimisation many victims recall further details or discover additional items missing; information that they can then easily pass on to the police to assist any investigation.

89 Barker, David, *Feeling Safe Again*, The Australia Institute, Canberra, September 2014, (http://www.tai.org.au/content/feeling-safe-again)

90 Ibid

91 Barker's study uses Australian experiences, however there is nothing to suggest that the emotional response to crime by Britons would differ significantly.

A 21st century criminal justice system

There has been no settlement in Britain of the purpose of the criminal justice system, so the political focus oscillates between deterrence (the threat of sanction causes people not to commit a crime), punishment (offenders are given a proportionate punishment by society for wrongdoing), rehabilitation (maladaptive criminal tendencies and lifestyles are corrected), and deferral (offenders do not commit crimes while inside prison). There is disagreement amongst criminologists about the deterrent effect of the courts and prisons system; the effect is hard to describe as strong or compelling. Rehabilitation – as measured by post-incarceration recidivism – is not very effective. While the deferral effect is strong, it is only worthwhile when you take into account that any given offender has and would commit a large number of unobserved or undetected offences for each conviction they receive.

In relation to property crime specifically, issues with sentencing mean the criminal justice system is not delivering justice: chronic repeat offenders are treated in the same way as first time offenders, receiving a caution or a low sentence such as a fine, conditional or absolute discharge in the majority of cases. Victims have little faith that offenders will either be brought to justice, or that if they are brought before the courts they will receive an appropriate punishment.

One retail sector loss prevention officer based in the West Midlands suggested that the profile of shoplifters is changing; she reported an increasing proportion of theft of cuts of meat or bread or other food items, and posited these were thefts of need rather than of greed or to fuel a drugs habit. This aligns with reports by Police and Crime Commissioners and front-line officers of an increase in food theft.[92] Nevertheless, the changing nature of shoplifting has led to the development of some innovative crime fighting systems. For example a pilot was conducted by local retailers in Nottinghamshire partnering with a civil recovery firm and local police called the Business Crime Assessment Unit. The unit – funded by local businesses – was a phone call centre that would establish the identity of apprehended shoplifters, search their records to see if there any previous offences, and recommend to the shop whether to deal with the offence through civil recovery, restorative justice (including education programmes), turning the offender to the police or a combination of these.

There has been some ambivalence by retailers about a user-pays service that replaces reporting directly to police. However given the scale of shoplifting and the incredibly low reporting rate, innovative new programmes to address the issue – and deal more effectively with offenders – are an unambiguously good thing. Indeed, there has been interest expressed in the BCAU model by other police forces, so the service may be expanded upon, or conducted in a more joined-up way.

Innovative prevention

To meaningfully and sustainably tackle property crime, policymakers must do more to foster crime prevention, both as an active police activity and in society more generally. Police forces across the UK, facing constricted budgets, have drastically cut their numbers of crime prevention officers and 'designing out crime' officers. The Home Office no longer runs a crime prevention website

92 See, for example, Crossley, Lucy, 'Shoplifters are being sent to food banks instead of court as police fear hunger is behind the rise in offences across Britain', Daily Mail, 7 July 2014, http://www.dailymail.co.uk/news/article-2683029/Shoplifters-sent-food-banks-instead-court-police-fear-hunger-rise-offences-Britain.html (last accessed 16/2/15); or, BBC, 'Food bank advice for shoplifters in north Wales', *BBC News Online*, 3 July 2014, http://www.bbc.co.uk/news/uk-wales-north-west-wales-28146230 (last accessed 16/2/15); or, Bryan, Hannah, 'Benefit sanctions often to blame for increase in food thefts, says police commissioner', *The Northern Echo*, 10 October 2014, http://www.thenorthernecho.co.uk/news/11528906.Benefit_sanctions_often_to_blame_for_increase_in_food_thefts__says_police_commissioner/ (last accessed 16/2/15)

to advise citizens how to reduce their risk of crime victimisation – indeed it appears to have abrogated responsibility for assisting citizens in reducing their risk of property crime victimisation. And recent proposed changes to building codes threaten to further erode the requirement for security to be designed into new building, be they commercial or residential. It is time that Government, local authorities, Police and Crime Commissioners and chief constables see that preventing crime is vital to the state's relationship with its citizens, and is central to the covenant between police and policed: it is the foremost of Sir Robert Peel's nine principles of policing. In a time of austerity and budget cuts, preventing crime is the only sustainable way of operating on a smaller budget while still detecting the same proportion of reported crimes. It should also therefore be seen as an investment in the police forces' long term fiscal sustainability.

Target hardening homes

Target hardening refers to the practice of making a target of property crime – a home, a bicycle, a car – more difficult to steal or steal from. The practice ranges from concealment to locks to constant monitoring. And it can be very effective at reducing a household's risk of crime victimisation.

Studies in the UK into target hardening of homes have been conducted by Professor Andromachi Tseloni of Loughborough University in partnership with others, based on data from the CSEW over a number of years. Professor Tseloni's research looked at the combination of different target hardening techniques that gave the strongest protection against home burglary. She found that burglar alarms were not as effective at preventing burglary as anticipated. The most effective reasonable[93] combination of security measures is called 'WIDE': Window locks, Internal lights on a timer, Deadlocks or Double door locks, and External lights activated by a motion sensor. This combination could be installed in a home for a few hundred pounds – while this amount is not negligible it is certainly cheaper than installing an alarm system or CCTV. Further, it gives a protection factor of 30 (that is, a home is 30 times less likely to be burgled if it has these features installed than if it does not).[94]

The increasing awareness of the need for security measures in homes forms part of the 'security' theory of the steep and widespread international crime drop seen across the Anglosphere from the early 1990s. Similar to the evolution in security features for cars, security features for homes became more sophisticated and proliferated. The reduction in the cost of home security systems led to their increasing use; double locks, security screens, window locks and motion sensor lights became so common as to no longer feel overt, invasive or disrupting to quality of life. And a reduction in burglary followed.[95]

The increase in the use of security measures, however, has left some people behind: renters. Renters are the main sector of society that is not able to alter their home; they cannot always add a security alarm system or extra locks, nor can they fit a sensor-activated external light. Renters tend to be poorer and from more deprived sections of society, which means they are already at increased risk of burglary victimisation; their inability to fit appropriate security measures means they are condemned to continued and repeated burglary. Students also face crime victimisation risks as tenants. Students' typical absence from their usual home during Christmas and Easter breaks makes rented student accommodation

93 Some combinations provided higher protection, but they were very complex, or included CCTV and other expensive additions. They also have the potential to make homes feel like fortresses, which can exacerbate the fear of crime.

94 Tseloni, Andromachi et al, 'The Effectiveness of Burglary Security Devices' in *Security Journal,* 2014

95 Farrell, Graham, 'Five Tests For A Theory Of The Crime Drop' in *Crime Science*, 2013, 2:5

a burglar's paradise; the fact that their housing often has few extra security measures compounds their risk of becoming victims of property crime.

The Private Rented Sector in England and Wales is currently under-regulated; the balance of power between tenants and landlords has been tipped too heavily in landlords' favour. It is not uncommon to hear stories of Rachmanist landlords refusing repairs, or issuing eviction notices to 'problematic' tenants who ask for too much maintenance (sometimes as an example to their neighbours). While renters can request that their landlord install additional security features, there is currently no obligation on landlords to do so, and many renters are reluctant to request anything but the most essential repairs. For this and a variety of other reasons there has been an increasing appetite among some groups in British politics to regulate the private rented sector more stringently. In the next round of regulation there should be a measure that obliges landlords to install 'WIDE' target hardening measures on their stock (that is, window locks, internal lights on a timer, deadlocks or double locks on external doors, and external lights activated by a motion sensor). The best way to do this is to apply a legal obligation on landlords to install such measures if requested on currently-tenanted properties, but also to legally require them to be installed before any new lease can be signed.

Such an obligation on landlords is already extant with fire safety (there is a requirement to fit smoke detectors) and for electrical safety (there is requirement to fit RCD switches). It follows that similar requirements about crime safety should also apply. In the state of Western Australia similar regulation requiring a minimum security standard in privately rented housing has recently been enacted.[96] The regulations do not exactly follow the WIDE requirements, but they do require windows to be secured, second locks on external doors, and external lighting. It remains to be seen how effective these measures are in reducing burglary in Western Australia – the regulatory change is too recent to enable comprehensive study of its effectiveness so far. There is no reason why similar regulation cannot be enacted in Britain that more closely follows the WIDE model of target hardening, which has already been proven to be effective here.

Target hardening shops

Shops and commercial premises can be target hardened similarly to homes. The best means of reducing risk of crimes against business vary depending on the business in question, but there are real commercial as well as moral imperatives for their use. Warehouses and offices can use the same or similar methods of target hardening as homes, and mobile workers (such as tradesmen) can ensure they protect their business by keeping their vehicle secure. But retail premises are particularly problematic; the same practices that put goods on display for customers to peruse also put them in temptation's way for potential thieves to steal them.

Shops can put their most valuable items behind the counter or under glass; they can install mirrors and CCTV, or rearrange their layout to ensure maximum natural surveillance; they can put electronic tags that cause a sensor to beep if not removed at sale, or dye tags that spill dye all over goods if removed without the special tool. Shops can engage security guards, or train their staff in customer service, their legal rights in challenging those they suspect of shoplifting, and how to do so safely. They can put shutters on their windows overnight, and double lock their door when closed.

96 Government of Western Australia, Department of Commerce, *Changes to Residential Tenancy Law – Minimum Levels of Security*, 2013, Perth, Western Australia http://www.commerce.wa.gov.au/sites/default/files/atoms/files/minimumsecurityrta.pdf (last accessed 18/2/15)

Working with the National Federation of Retail Newsagents, Policy Exchange conducted a crime survey of small independent retailers to try to apply the target hardening data analysis to shops that has previously been applied by Professor Tseloni to homes. The survey asked retailers how often they were the victims of shoplifting, and what security measures they had in use at the time of the shoplifting incidents. The author is grateful to Professor Tseloni and her team for their assistance in analysing the data, the results of which are at Box 2, above.

Designing out crime

Designing out crime is the use of planning and architecture to reduce the risk of crime victimisation. It is most effective at reducing property crime, but can also have an effect on reducing violent crime. As an architectural 'movement' is quite practical and straightforward; its success or otherwise is eminently measurable, so it has been refined and improved over time.[97]

The principles involved in designing out crime are not difficult to comprehend. The practice either makes it physically more difficult or more risky to commit a crime. It utilises natural surveillance, clear demarcation of private as opposed to public space, and directs foot traffic away from areas of low surveillance. For example, designing out crime principles would allocate vehicle parking outside the windows of heavily-used rooms of a house (such as the living room or kitchen) to allow for natural surveillance. It would ensure driveways are made of a different material to the road, and that property boundaries are clearly marked. According to its principles, true cul-de-sacs are more secure than through roads, but 'leaking' cul-de-sacs (where there is a park or pedestrian passageway at the 'closed' end) are less secure. The average increase to the cost of a home using designing out crime principles has been estimated as only around £200, making it a more-than-worthwhile investment.[98]

Each police force has traditionally had designing out crime capability, however their numbers have been drastically reduced in police force austerity budget cuts – so much so that some forces now only have one or two designing out crime officers. The role of a designing out crime officer is to give advice to architects and designers about how to reduce risk of crime in plans, and to advise council planning departments on whether prospective new developments conform to the principles of designing out crime. The reduction in officers, therefore, means fewer housing or commercial developments will be built to design out crime, and so crime rates may rise.

Despite the reduction in their number across the country, there are some local policing areas that are applying innovative solutions to finance the retention (and expansion) of designing out crime capability. The Hampshire and Isle of Wight PCC Simon Hayes, for example, has created a paid-for service, whereby developers seeking planning permission for developments over a certain size threshold can pay for their plans to be assessed by designing out crime officers, and to accept their recommendations before final planning approval is given. Greater Manchester Police has teamed up with local councils to ensure that their user-pays service is a compulsory part of the planning process; the system works well precisely because the councils' planning departments, the Police and Crime Commissioner and the police are working together to achieve a common goal.

97 Armitage, Rachel et al, 'What is Good about Good Design? Exploring the Link between Housing Quality and Crime' in *Built Environment*, Vol 39 No 1, 2013, pp140–161

98 Armitage, Rachel and Leanne Monchuk, 'Sustaining the crime reduction impact of designing out crime: Re-evaluating the Secured by Design scheme 10 years on' in *Security Journal,* 2010, p7

This is a classic case of balancing crime prevention priorities with shrinking public sector budgets. Variations on this user-pays model could be rolled out in all police force areas. Indeed, given that designing out crime uses a set of universal principles, local police force areas could take advantage of economies of scale by pooling resources into a common design service. It is similarly vital that planning departments within local authorities ensure designing out crime is part of the suite of measures developers and architects must use to meet the needs of planning approval.

There is currently some uncertainty as to the ongoing ability of local government authorities to require new developments to conform to strict 'designing out crime' standards. The Department of Communities and Local Government recently attempted to scrap a number of 'red tape' measures, including the ability of local councils to require new developments to conform to the 'Secure by Design' standard. It appears this attempt was unsuccessful following the intervention of the Home Office, but constant vigilance is required in this area by those who want to cut crime to ensure the continuing viability of the 'designing out crime' project.

Police crime prevention

Policing has three main strands of operation: Intelligence, Operations and Prevention. Intelligence of course involves the collection and analysis of information in pursuit of the force's goals, while Operations is the classic visible policing role that is exciting and makes for good television. Prevention, by comparison, is unsexy and mundane. And unfortunately in British policing it is too often relegated to being a 'second order' priority. No Chief Constable in Britain has risen to his or her position through a career in crime prevention. There has been a cut in the number of crime prevention officers in forces across the UK, so there will often now be only one or two per force. Their budgets are low and there is little promise of a career pathway in the field. The only reason any of them make any headway in their goal of preventing crime is because many of them are passionate about cutting crime in their local community.

> **No Chief Constable in Britain has risen to his or her position through a career in crime prevention**

Sir Robert Peel, in founding the Metropolitan Police, enumerated nine principles of policing, the first of which lists the primary purpose of policing as the prevention of crime and disorder, and the ninth of which argues that the true test of police efficiency is not a display of police action, but the absence of crime and disorder.[99] While of course policing theory and practice has moved on some way since the 1820s, the fact that Peel's principles are still so frequently cited by police leaders means that there is still cogency in them. While of course citizens demand that police provide assistance when they are the victims of crime, it makes little sense for that to be a higher priority than preventing them from becoming crime victims in the first place. The time has come for police forces to take crime prevention more seriously, both through organisational management – improving the internal prestige and career value of crime prevention officers and improving crime prevention resourcing – and by taking advantage of new techniques and technologies to better be able to prevent crime victimisation.

99 For a brief explanation of the Nine Principles see http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Peelian_Principles

Crime prevention officers provide advice to citizens on target hardening and public safety. This can include playing a role in cocooning a community following a burglary. As presented above, homes in a 400 metre radius are at heightened risk for six weeks following a burglary. Those homes immediately surrounding the burgled house bear a sizeable chunk of that risk, and so investing in better door locks, window locks, lighting, and perhaps alarms and CCTV for those homes can significantly reduce that risk. Assigning extra policing resources (such as extra patrols or stakeouts) as part of a cocooning strategy can also assist in catching and prosecuting the burglars.

When done well, crime prevention should be used to gather and utilise intelligence. Officers who build relationships with institutions in the community – businesses, religious groups, community organisations – are well placed to know who knows what is happening in the local area. This is why local neighbourhood policing is so important, and why 'broken windows' policing, particularly getting police officers out of cars, was so effective.

Further, hotspot policing can have a real impact in cutting crime, if approached from a crime prevention viewpoint. Hotspot policing utilises crime statistics and maps to see patterns in criminal behaviour. Sometimes crimes are the result of environmental factors that can be easily changed to reduce future crime risk. For example, a hotspot showing a spate of muggings in a particular pathway may be an indication that that pathway needs better lighting and a CCTV camera. Or a series of car break-ins in one car park could be addressed by cutting a hedge lower to provide better passive surveillance from a nearby building.

Property marking has a long history in attempting to reduce theft: from etching a coat of arms onto a carriage to branding livestock, or sewing a child's name into his or her school uniform. The idea is that if the ownership of a particular valuable good is easy to see, then anyone else in possession of that good is at risk of being easily identified as a thief. The point of property marking should not just be so goods can be returned to their owners when they've been stolen: that would have no crime prevention utility. Indeed several police crime prevention officers interviewed for this project argued that much of the time theft victims did not want their property returned. There was a sense that goods recovered from thieves were somehow 'tainted' or a painful reminder of victimisation. Further, where insurance payouts had replaced stolen goods, the ownership of recovered stolen goods was ambiguous and problematic. Property marking, therefore, should be a tool to make thieves wary of stealing particular goods; it should make thieves frightened that the markings on the property will be used to catch them, convict them, and deprive them of their ill-gotten gains.

Many readers may recall their local police attending their school to etch serial numbers into bicycles. These were designed to be irremovable, or at least difficult to remove without damaging the bicycle. Any found bike, therefore, could be checked against a registry of serial numbers to establish ownership. While well meaning, the practice was not incredibly effective; if an offender stole a bicycle for personal use he or she already knew it was stolen. If the stolen bike was sold on, the buyer – having just paid a sum of money for a bicycle – would have no incentive to check for a serial number to find out if it were stolen. Only when police would find a bicycle as part of a larger cache of stolen goods would they check a registration number to establish ownership.

Similar to the bicycle marking scheme, police crime prevention packs developed a similar system where they would hand out pens whose ink could only be seen under an ultraviolet light. Users could mark their valuables with this invisible pen, in the hope that, if recovered, police could shine a UV light on any valuable to establish its ownership. One flaw with the system is that it does not work on all valuable goods: jewellery is typically too small to mark with a UV pen. Another key problem is that if a thief has her own UV light and pen, she will be able to identify the marked goods, then go over them with a UV pen and effectively scratch out the markings. Further, there remains the problem, identified above with bicycle markings, that there is no incentive for anyone – from thief to fence to final purchaser – to check for property markings. Ultraviolet pens do not prevent crime because thieves are not frightened of them.

Private sector innovation

Technology has come some way in improving how people can mark their property, and the systems that support property marking's role as a crime prevention tool. The starkest examples of innovation and best practice come from the private sector (this is possibly a function of the deprioritisation of crime prevention in police forces). At any rate, private sector investment in crime prevention partially mitigates the fiscal constraints on public sector innovation.

Box 3: Private sector crime prevention case study 1 – Smartwater

Smartwater is an ink-like liquid product visible only under ultraviolet light, but which has a unique forensic signature that links it to one registered user. Each user's liquid is forensically different to other users, so marked goods can be traced back to their owner from just a trace sample of the product. It is used to mark property or to mark criminals; it cannot be washed off clothing, skin or hair. Because the unique code is inherent in the liquid's chemistry, it can be discreetly applied to jewellery, and even cash if required.

What makes Smartwater unique is that it is used as part of a holistic subscription service that is designed to deter criminals. A large part of Smartwater's operations go into working with local police to conduct 'sting' operations, to prove to local thieves how effective Smartwater is at convicting thieves, then advertising Smartwater's effectiveness widely. For example, they will set up a sprinkler system in a jewellery shop that sprays would-be burglars with the liquid when the motion sensor is activated. When analysed later, the thieves cannot deny being at the scene, as they are covered in ultraviolet glowing liquid directly traceable to the crime scene. The goal is to make thieves frightened of targeting homes or businesses that are protected by Smartwater – meaning the window sticker with the Smartwater logo is as powerful a deterrent as the liquid itself.

Smartwater works to protect households and businesses through their subscription service. In many cases they can tailor their approach to ensure maximum protection or deterrence. They also partner with local police forces to tackle crimes like burglary in high-crime areas, and claim to have contributed to localised domestic burglary reductions of up to 94 per cent (in Sittingbourne, Kent).[100]

---

100 Smartwater, *Crime Reduction Statistics*, 2014 http://www.smartwater.com/clear_resources/21_1413281082-d-SW_Statistics_EMAIL.pdf (last accessed 23/12/14)

Box 4: Private sector crime prevention case study 2 – Recipero

Recipero is a British company that seeks to harness the power of the internet and large databases to fight property crime. They operate a number of complementary websites, the most famous system involving Immobilise, CheckMEND and the National Mobile Property Register (NMPR).[101]

Immobilise is a property registration website, on which users can record their valuable possessions. A user can upload a photograph, description, serial number and other information about their valuables onto one national database. The database forms the 'back end' to the NMPR, which is used by police to establish ownership of recovered stolen or lost property. It also forms the basis of CheckMEND, a website that can be used by everyone, from public and private sector lost property offices to second hand retailers and members of the public purchasing goods through eBay or similar websites, to check if items they propose to purchase are in fact stolen.

The Recipero system works because of two main factors:

● It is a national database: rather than being a database of bicycle etching numbers kept by the local police station, a national database means that criminals can no longer just cross police force boundaries to dispose of stolen goods.

● It is used by second hand retailers: police work closely with second hand retailers to check their goods have cleared CheckMEND before they purchase them. If police can prove a second hand retailer had the means to check if a good they purchased was stolen, did not check, purchased it, and it was stolen, that retailer could be prosecuted for handling stolen goods. By offering pawnbrokers a way to check if things are stolen, they take away the excuse that they had no way of knowing it was stolen.

The system relies heavily on information added to it by consumers through the Immobilise website, so it has to offer a service to consumers that has a realistic chance of restoring their goods to them and prosecuting offenders.

The model works on the idea that destroying the markets used by thieves to dispose of stolen goods will reduce theft. If second hand dealers no longer purchase stolen goods, thieves cannot safely 'get rid' of what they steal. This completely changes the calculus around whether or not to steal; goods whose value can no longer be realised will no longer be targets for theft.

While there is some discomfort amongst police crime prevention officers about the fact that this database is privately owned, they tended to agree that the model offered by Recipero, which focused on working together to enact a nationally consistent approach to fighting property crime, was a positive and effective weapon against thieves.

Corporate security policies

There is much businesses can do to address crimes against them. Indeed, the biggest retailers employ security managers at the senior corporate level, and invest heavily in developing sophisticated and effective ways to reduce their losses through shoplifting and employee theft. The unfortunate growth of hacking and online credit card fraud means that security managers' duties are added to.

101 See Recipero, 'About the Immobilise System', *Immobilise website*, https://www.immobilise.com/about (last accessed 18/2/15)

The best operations include multiple layers of security, including physical security in the form of security guards, electronic tagging for valuable goods, dye tags, mirrors and CCTV. One British academic, Martin Gill, studied the preventive effects of various shop security measures by interviewing 'professional' shoplifters from various countries about their modus operandi.[102] He found that security measures like electronic tags slow thieves down but can be worked around. CCTV and mirrors limit the space in which a thief can secrete items he or she intends to steal. Guards are of mixed utility, depending on how engaged they are with their duties and where they are physically placed. Having a guard on patrol through a shop (rather than just a static sentry at the entrance) was found to be particularly worrying to thieves. While none of the security measures completely prevent all theft, together they make it more difficult for a shoplifter to successfully steal goods, thus reducing losses from theft.

One security manager said the most effective way to prevent shoplifting was good customer service; if a shop clerk suspected a customer may be attempting to steal, offering them assistance in selecting other goods to buy was very effective in scaring them off. Some retailers actively encouraged their staff to volunteer as Special Constables; such a practice ensured there was often a staff member at the store who knew how to appropriately and safely arrest a shoplifter. Others invited police to hold 'surgeries' or have a mobile police desk co-located in

❝The best of these systems link in with local police❞

their store.[103] This meant police could be visible in the local community, but also meant would-be shoplifters were scared away from their task by the prospect of swift arrest. It is also common for retailers on a high street to form into networks and be in radio contact with each other, so they can inform one another if there is a shoplifter around. The best of these systems link in with local police. When businesses work together with police and with the community to tackle customer theft, the monetary and emotional impact on retailers is diminished.

A nationally consistent approach

Crime prevention in England and Wales currently does not have any national oversight, which is partly as a result of the low value placed on crime prevention and partly because there is no national police force. But there is not even a national government crime prevention website; the Home Office used to run one but it was discontinued. Central government quitting the field is inexcusable: the Home Office should reinstate a crime prevention advice website as a matter of priority.

One of the most useful ways of achieving better practice in crime prevention is through information sharing between forces about pilots, trials and evidence bases. There should be a national body – in the College of Policing, for example – that is a hub for information, conducts training and conferences and facilitates the experimentation of new ideas. Policy Exchange's 2013 report *Rebooting the PC* recommends the establishment of 'Hubs for Innovation in Policing' – one of them should be devoted to innovation in crime prevention.[104]

Local crime prevention officers should of course be empowered to do what works locally, and to try new approaches. But there should be a national oversight body to ensure best practice across all police force areas and to share what is learnt in local experiments.

102 Gill, Martin, *Shoplifters on shop theft: implications for retailers*, Perpetuity Research and Consultancy International Ltd, Leicester, 2007

103 Research conducted by Policy Exchange of a range of retailers including interviews, roundtable discussions and a Call for Evidence

104 Innes, Martin, *Rebooting the PC*, Policy Exchange, London, 2013, p10

5
Conclusion

Most of us have been victims of property crime, and we quietly cope with it. We make an insurance claim, tighten our security practices and maybe become a little more cynical. But for those most at risk in society – the deprived and marginalised, and the chronic repeat victims – the relentlessness of criminality cripples their lives. Many victims suffer acutely. The inequality of victimisation harms already-deprived communities and turns high streets into wastelands. The criminal justice system's permissiveness becomes, to them, a torment and an insult.

Perceptions of the victimlessness of property crime have led to their *de facto* decriminalisation. Police are thought not to investigate, so organised criminals, allured by the low risk and reliable returns, are increasingly turning to shoplifting to make money. Even where police do investigate these organised shoplifting incidents, they are confounded when offenders cross police force area boundaries, and the criminals get off scot free.

An attitude remains amongst police and the criminal justice system that it is 'not my problem'. The attitude has become so pervasive as to have been internalised by many victims: shopkeepers stop reporting shoplifting incidents because police do not attend; burglary and pickpocketing victims only report the crimes to get a crime number for insurance, and they do not expect police to catch and prosecute offenders.

This report has offered an assessment of the problems associated with property crime in the UK, from repeat victimisation and regressive harm to the risk of organised acquisitive crime and diminution of crime prevention. A number of recommendations for reform have been offered that will go some way to addressing some of these problems. It is now up to policymakers, police and public servants to read, assess, implement and improve on these recommendations.

Through better information sharing, leveraging of data and statistics, and meaningful cooperation between the public and private sectors there is great potential for us to ensure the continuation of the long term fall in property crime well into the future.

References

Australian Institute of Criminology, 'Victims of Property Crime (n per year)', *Facts and Figures Online Data Tool*, http://www.aic.gov.au/dataTools/facts/vicPropertyCol.html (last accessed 18/2/15).

Armitage, Rachel and Leanne Monchuk, 'Sustaining the crime reduction impact of designing out crime: Re-evaluating the Secured by Design scheme 10 years on' in *Security Journal*, 2010.

Armitage, Rachel et al, 'What is Good about Good Design? Exploring the Link between Housing Quality and Crime' in *Built Environment*, Vol 39 No 1, 2013, pp140–161.

Association of Convenience Stores, Written evidence on the *Anti-Social Behaviour, Crime and Policing Bill* (Session 2013–14), http://www.publications.parliament.uk/pa/cm201314/cmpublic/antisocialbehaviour/memo/asb34.htm (last accessed 18/2/15).

Barker, David, *Feeling Safe Again*, The Australia Institute, Canberra, September 2014, http://www.tai.org.au/content/feeling-safe-again (last accessed 18/2/15).

Barrett, David, 'Rapes now at their highest ever level, ONS figures reveal', *The Telegraph*, 16 October 2014 http://www.telegraph.co.uk/news/uknews/crime/11165613/Rapes-now-at-their-highest-ever-level-ONS-figures-reveal.html (last accessed 18/2/15).

BBC, 'Food bank advice for shoplifters in north Wales', *BBC News Online*, 3 July 2014, http://www.bbc.co.uk/news/uk-wales-north-west-wales-28146230 (last accessed 16/2/15).

Bowers, Kate J. et al, 'Victimisation and Re-victimisation Risk, Housing Type and Area: A study of Interactions' in *Crime Prevention and Community Safety: An International Journal*, 2005, 7(1), pp7–17.

British Retail Consortium, *Retail Crime Survey* 2013, January 2014, http://www.brc.org.uk/downloads/2013_BRC_Retail_Crime_Survey.pdf (last accessed 18/2/15).

British Retail Consortium, 'Policies and Issues: Retail Crime', *BRC Website*, http://www.brc.org.uk/brc_policy_content.asp?iCat=48&iSubCat=646&spolicy=Retail+Crime&sSubPolicy=BRC+Retail+Crime+Survey (last accessed 13/1/15).

Bryan, Hannah, 'Benefit sanctions often to blame for increase in food thefts, says police commissioner', *The Northern Echo*, 10 October 2014, http://www.thenorthernecho.co.uk/news/11528906.Benefit_sanctions_often_to_blame_for_increase_in_food_thefts__says_police_commissioner/ (last accessed 16/2/15).

City of London Police, 'Bicycle Security', *City of London Police Website*, https://www.cityoflondon.police.uk/advice-and-support/bicycle-security/Pages/default.aspx (last accessed 13/1/15).

Crossley, Lucy, 'Shoplifters are being sent to food banks instead of court as police fear hunger is behind the rise in offences across Britain', *Daily Mail*, 7 July 2014, http://www.dailymail.co.uk/news/article-2683029/Shoplifters-

sent-food-banks-instead-court-police-fear-hunger-rise-offences-Britain.html (last accessed 16/2/15).

Crown Prosecution Service, 'Theft Act Offences', *Legal Guidance* http://www.cps.gov.uk/legal/s_to_u/theft_act_offences/ (last accessed 23/12/14).

Davenport, Justin, 'Bike raiders bag a huge haul', *Evening Standard*, 18 August 2014, p9.

Farrell, Graham, 'Five Tests for a Theory of the Crime Drop', *Crime Science* 2013, 2:5, http://www.crimesciencejournal.com/content/2/1/5 (last accessed 18/2/15).

Farrell, G., Tseloni, A. and Tilley, N. (2011) 'The effectiveness of vehicle security devices and their role in the crime drop', *Criminology and Criminal Justice, An International Journal*, 13: 21–35.

Fielding, Matthew and Vincent Jones, 'Disrupting the optimal forager: predictive risk mapping and domestic burglary reduction in Trafford, Greater Manchester' in *International Journal of Police Science and Management*, 2012 Vol. 14, No. 1, pp 30–41.

Thomas Gabor, *'Everybody Does It!' – Crime by the Public*, University of Toronto Press, Toronto, 1994.

Gill, Martin, *Shoplifters on shop theft: implications for retailers*, Perpetuity Research and Consultancy International Ltd, Leicester, 2007

Government of Western Australia, Department of Commerce, *Changes to Residential Tenancy Law – Minimum Levels of Security*, 2013, Perth, Western Australia http://www.commerce.wa.gov.au/sites/default/files/atoms/files/minimumsecurityrta.pdf (last accessed 18/2/15).

HM Government, *Serious and Organised Crime Strategy*, October 2013, https://www.gov.uk/government/uploads/system/uploads/attachment_data/file/248645/Serious_and_Organised_Crime_Strategy.pdf (last accessed 18/2/15).

Home Office, 'About this Survey', *Commercial Victimisation Survey website*, http://www.commercialvictimisationsurvey.org.uk/ (last accessed 23/12/14).

Home Office, *Crime against businesses: Headline findings from the 2013 Commercial Victimisation Survey*, February 2014, p12 https://www.gov.uk/government/uploads/system/uploads/attachment_data/file/284818/crime-against-businesses-headlines-2013-pdf.pdf (last accessed 18/2/15).

Home Office and Rt Hon Theresa May MP, 'Mobile phone theft paper highlights models targeted by thieves', 7 September 2014, https://www.gov.uk/government/news/mobile-phone-theft-paper-highlights-models-targeted-by-thieves (last accessed 23/12/14).

Ignatans, Dainis and Ken Pease. In press. 'Distributive justice and the crime drop'. In Martin A. Andresen and Graham Farrell (Eds.) *Routine Activities and the Criminal Act*. New York: Palgrave Macmillan.

Innes, Martin, *Rebooting the PC*, Policy Exchange, London, 2013.

Johnson, Shane D, et al, 'Offender as Forager? A Direct Test of the Boost Account of Victimisation' in *Journal of Quantitative Criminology*, 2009 25, pp181–200.

Knight, Laurence, 'The Fatal Attraction of Lead', *BBC News* 12 October 2014 http://www.bbc.co.uk/news/magazine-29568505 (last accessed 18/2/15).

Laycock, Gloria, 'The UK Car Theft Index: An Example of Government Leverage'. Chapter 17 in Maxfield, M. and Clarke, R.V. (ed.), *Understanding and Preventing Car Theft – Crime Prevention Studies*, Devon, UK: Willian Publishing, 2004 edition, pp25–44.

Metropolitan Police, Financial year table '2012–13', *Crime Mapping: Data Tables, Year*

End Figures (Fixed), Metropolitan Police Website, http://maps.met.police.uk/tables.htm (last accessed 13/2/15).

Ministry of Justice, *Criminal Justice Statistics Quarterly*, June 2014 – Offending Histories Table Q6f, https://www.gov.uk/government/statistics/criminal-justice-system-quarterly-statistics-june-2014 (last accessed 16/2/15).

Ministry of Justice, *Criminal Justice Statistics Quarterly*, June 2014 – Overview Table Q1.4 https://www.gov.uk/government/statistics/criminal-justice-system-quarterly-statistics-june-2014 (last accessed 16/2/15).

MOPAC, 'London Comparison against the National Crime Picture, *MOPAC Crime Dashboard*, (see the graph 'Crime % change against previous financial year, Rolling 12 months to September 14'), 2014, https://www.london.gov.uk/priorities/policing-crime/data-information/crime-dashboard (last accessed 13/2/15).

Neyroud, Peter and John Shaw, *Criminal Fines Compliance: What the evidence tells us about achieving compliance and the role of the police*, G4S, 2013, http://www.apace.org.uk/var/files/1381503057_89%2013%20-%20G4S%20Criminal%20Fines%20Compliance.pdf (last accessed 18/2/15).

NFRN and Policy Exchange Crime Survey 2014 (unpublished).

Ofcom, 'Phones', *Facts and Figures*, 2014, http://media.ofcom.org.uk/facts/ (last accessed 13/1/15).

Office of National Statistics, 'Summary' in Chapter 1, *Crime Statistics, Focus on Property Crime*, 2011–12, http://www.ons.gov.uk/ons/rel/crime-stats/crime-statistics/focus-on-property-crime--2011-12/rpt-chapter-1-overview.html (last accessed 18/2/15).

Office of National Statistics, 'Figure 1.9' in Bulletin Tables, Focus on Property Crime 2012–13, http://www.ons.gov.uk/ons/rel/crime-stats/crime-statistics/focus-on-property-crime--2012-13/rft-bulletin-tables-2012-13.xls (last accessed 25/2/15).

Office of National Statistics, 'Figure 1.7', *Focus on: Violent Crime and Sexual Offences*, 2012/13 – *Bulletin Tables*, http://www.ons.gov.uk/ons/rel/crime-stats/crime-statistics/focus-on-violent-crime-and-sexual-offences--2012-13/rft-table-1.xls (last accessed 25/2/15).

Office of National Statistics, 'Table 1A', in *Crime in England & Wales, year ending September 2013 – Appendix tables*, http://www.ons.gov.uk/ons/rel/crime-stats/crime-statistics/period-ending-september-2013/rft-appendix-tables.xls (last accessed 18/2/15).

Office of National Statistics, 'Summary', *Crime in England and Wales, Year Ending March 2014*, http://www.ons.gov.uk/ons/rel/crime-stats/crime-statistics/period-ending-march-2014/stb-crime-stats.html#tab-Summary (last accessed 18/2/15).

Office of National Statistics, 'Crime Survey for England and Wales', *Crime Survey for England and Wales website*, http://www.crimesurvey.co.uk/ (last accessed 18/2/15).

Office of National Statistics, 'Frequently Asked Questions', *Crime Survey for England and Wales website*, http://www.crimesurvey.co.uk/faqs.html (last accessed 23/12/14).

Office of National Statistics, 'Table A3', *Crime in England & Wales, year ending March 2014 – Appendix tables*, http://www.ons.gov.uk/ons/rel/crime-stats/crime-statistics/period-ending-march-2014/rft-table-2.xls (last accessed 18/2/15).

Office of National Statistics, 'Key Points', *Annual Mid-year Population Estimates*, 2013, http://www.ons.gov.uk/ons/rel/pop-estimate/population-estimates-for-uk-

-england-and-wales--scotland-and-northern-ireland/2013/stb---mid-2013-uk-population-estimates.html (last accessed 18/2/15).

Office of National Statistics, 'Figure 13: Trends in CSEW other household theft and theft from the person, 1981 to 2013/14', *Crime in England and Wales, Year Ending March 2014*, http://www.ons.gov.uk/ons/rel/crime-stats/crime-statistics/period-ending-march-2014/stb-crime-stats.html#tab-Theft-Offences-–-Other-Theft-of-Property (last accessed 18/2/15).

Office of National Statistics, 'Table 17a' and 'Table 18a', *Crime in England & Wales, year ending December 2013 – Bulletin tables*, http://www.ons.gov.uk/ons/rel/crime-stats/crime-statistics/period-ending-december-2013/rft-bulletin-tables.xls (last accessed 18/2/15).

Office of National Statistics, 'Crime in England and Wales, 1981–2014', *How has crime changed over the last 30 years?*, http://www.neighbourhood.statistics.gov.uk/HTMLDocs/dvc188/index.html (last accessed 25/2/15).

Peck, Chris, '2001 to 2011 – cyclist numbers change significantly', *CTC Website*, 26 August 2013 http://www.ctc.org.uk/blog/chris-peck/2001-to-2011-cyclist-numbers-change-significantly (last accessed 13/1/15).

Pettit, Josh, 'Raid on smash-and-grab gang linked to Dorchester robberies, *Evening Standard*, 15 October 2014, p9.

Philby, Charlotte, 'Pawnbroking: the business that always does well in hard times', *The Independent*, 3 April 2013, http://www.independent.co.uk/news/business/analysis-and-features/pawnbroking-the-business-that-always-does-well-in-hard-times-8558926.html (last accessed 18/2/15).

Readhead, Harry, 'This bicycle is apparently the world's first "unstealable bike"', *Metro*, 3 September 2014, http://metro.co.uk/2014/09/03/this-bicycle-is-apparently-the-worlds-first-unstealable-bike-4855197/ (last accessed 18/2/15).

Recipero, 'About the Immobilise System', *Immobilise website*, https://www.immobilise.com/about (last accessed 18/2/15).

Ross, N. *Crime*, London, UK: Biteback Publishing, 2013.

Social publishing project, *The* Quids In! *Reader Survey 2014*, Social Publishing Project Ltd, Bath, 2014.

Sosa, Karen, *Proceed with Caution: Use of Out-of-Court Disposals in England & Wales*, Policy Exchange, July 2012.

Thompson, Rebecca, 'How theft and robbery have changed since the 90s', *Significance Magazine*, Blackwell Publishing Ltd, 21 Oct 2014, http://www.statslife.org.uk/social-sciences/1842-how-theft-and-robbery-have-changed-since-the-90s (last accessed 18/2/15).

Thompson, R, *Understanding Theft from the Person and Robbery of Personal Property: Victimisation Trends in England and Wales 1994–2010/11*, Nottingham Trent University, 2014.

Travis, Alan, 'Emergency services "will have to be integrated", warns Theresa May', *The Guardian*, 3 September 2014, http://www.theguardian.com/uk-news/2014/sep/03/emergency-services-integrate-theresa-may (last accessed 18/2/15).

Tseloni, Andromachi and Emily Evans, *Effectiveness of security devices against shop-theft within the sample of Newsagents surveyed by Policy Exchange*, unpublished, 2015.

Tseloni, A. et al, 'The effectiveness of burglary security devices', *Security Journal* (advance online publication), 30 June 2014, http://www.palgrave-journals.com/sj/journal/vaop/ncurrent/full/sj201430a.html (last accessed 18/2/15).

UK Statistics Authority, *Statistics on Crime in England and Wales (produced by the Office for National Statistics):Assessment of compliance with the Code of Practice for Official Statistics*, Assessment Report 268, January 2014, http://www.statisticsauthority.gov. uk/assessment/assessment/assessment-reports/assessment-report-268--- statistics-on-crime-in-england-and-wales.pdf (last accessed 18/2/15).

Victim Support, 'One in four burglary victims say it affected their mental health', (media release), *Victim Support website*, 2 June 2014 – https://www. victimsupport.org.uk/about-us/news/one-four-burglary-victims-say-it- affected-their-mental-health (last accessed 15/1/15).

Victim Support, 'Half of all crimes going unsolved', (media release), *Victim Support website*, 17 July 2014 – https://www.victimsupport.org.uk/about-us/ news/half-all-crimes-going-unsolved (last accessed 15/1/15).

Wikipedia, *Peelian Principles*, http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Peelian_Principles (last accessed 13/1/15).

Research conducted by Policy Exchange of a range of retailers including interviews, roundtable discussions and a Call for Evidence.

Acknowledgements

Two thirds of all crime in England and Wales is property crime, yet victims have little faith in the ability of the criminal justice system to address it. Only one in every ten shoplifting incidents is reported to police, and half of burglary victims never hear back from police after reporting a crime.

Large swathes of property crime go unreported and unrecorded. Moreover, even where crime is reported to police, few expect the report to end in an offender being caught and prosecuted. The failure of the criminal justice system has led to a de facto decriminalisation of property crime that has a regressive effect on some of our most vulnerable communities. It may also be contributing to the emergence of organised crime groups' involvement in shoplifting and theft, because it now offers similar returns and carries much lower risk than dealing drugs.

This report offers a suite of recommendations aimed at revitalising the way governments, police, the judicial system and the private sector combat property crimes. These include suggestions around local policing and crime prevention, criminal sentencing and supporting those at heightened risk of victimisation such as renters and students.