

Andrew Featherstone
Commander
Frontline Policing

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Dear Partners,

You may have seen the recent coverage of the Metropolitan Police Service's latest intensification, Operation Zoridon. I am writing to provide further detail on the operation and how it fits into our wider strategy to protect London's high streets and support the businesses and communities they serve.

Retail crime is a serious issue. It causes real harm to shop workers, undermines legitimate business and economic growth, contributing to wider criminality and anti-social behaviour. While we are beginning to see improvements in detection and enforcement, the threat posed by Organised Crime Groups exploiting retailers remains significant. These groups are not only stealing from major retailers—they are reselling stolen goods through smaller outlets, undercutting honest traders and driving up costs for Londoners.

Operation Zoridon is the Met's largest ever targeted response to this challenge. It is a coordinated, intelligence-led effort to dismantle the criminal networks behind shoplifting and the illegal resale of stolen goods. These networks are sophisticated, often linked to wider offending including drugs and violence, and they are using legitimate business fronts to operate with impunity.

Last week, we deployed over **300 officers** to **more than 120 commercial premises** across London. We made **32 arrests**, recovered **over £500k in stolen items**, and with partners served **nine emergency closure notices**. These actions were delivered in partnership with Trading Standards, the London Fire Brigade, Immigration, and other agencies. We are now working with the criminal justice system to ensure these closures are made permanent.

This work builds on a successful pilot in South-West London earlier this year, where officers used warrants, licensing checks, and deployed SelectaDNA property marking to disrupt supply chains. That pilot led to 15 arrests and the seizure of over £150,000 in stolen property. We are now scaling this model across the capital.

This month, a prolific shoplifter was sentenced to 12 months in prison after committing 99 offences, costing one retailer £107,000. He is now banned from every store of that retailer nationwide and from entering the Borough of Kensington and Chelsea for five years. This is the kind of outcome we are determined to replicate.

We are clear in our intent: if a business is operating as a front for criminal activity, it will be shut down. We are applying emergency closure orders and pursuing permanent closures through the courts in line with current legislation.

We are asking the courts to support our position, that those who enable organised crime under the guise of legitimate trade should not be allowed to continue.

This is a long-term commitment. We are seeing early results, including a **163% increase in solved shoplifting cases** and a **14% reduction in neighbourhood crime** this year. But we know that lasting change requires partnership. We cannot do this alone.

We continue to work closely with retailers to improve reporting and access to CCTV, which is helping us build stronger cases and secure convictions. We are also investing in neighbourhood policing, putting more officers into local teams, increasing patrols, and using innovative technology such as live facial recognition to identify and arrest prolific offenders. We are launching our Autumn Plans shortly, continuing our focus on neighbourhood crime while expanding our efforts to address issues within the Night-Time Economy (NTE). This plan builds on the strong success of our recent Summer Plan, which focused on deploying high-visibility policing across 20 identified crime hotspots. We achieved significant results including an 18% reduction in knife crime, nearly a 10% drop in theft and over 1,300 arrests.

We are asking for your continued support, whether through sharing intelligence, encouraging reporting, working with us to strengthen local responses or providing digital evidence such as CCTV footage of incidents. Currently, only around 15% of digital evidence is returned to us for shop thefts, which significantly impacts our ability to solve these crimes. By increasing the sharing of such evidence, alongside partnership working, we can protect London's high streets, support our retail workforce, and ensure our communities remain safe, and resilient.

Yours sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read 'Andy Featherstone', written in a cursive style.

Andy Featherstone
Commander – Frontline Policing
Metropolitan Police Service