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Date: 09/11/2026

Standing with Lancashire businesses

Our businesses are vital to our communities, our economy and our high streets. It's an important part of my role as Police and Crime Commissioner that your businesses, employees and customers feel safe, supported and confident that crime affecting them is taken seriously.

This is at the heart of the way Lancashire Constabulary polices our town centres and retail parks, cities and rural areas throughout the year. However, I wanted to take the opportunity at the start of National Safer Business Action Week, which also coincides with the Union of Shop, Distributive and Allied Workers' (USDAW) Respect for Shopworkers Week, to reiterate this commitment, highlight some of the work being done to tackle crime that impacts businesses, and look at what's next.

Operation Vulture has been in action across the county for over two and a half years as Lancashire's response to retail crime. It has seen encouraging results, with 565 people arrested for 867 offences in twelve months to mid-October.

The operation has seen a proactive, intelligence-led approach to offences such as shoplifting and theft, violence against shop workers and, alongside Operation Centurion, anti-social behaviour.

I joined the campaign for a new offence for anyone assaulting a retail worker, which I was pleased to see passed as part of the Crime and Policing Act, and we need Government to announce a date for when this comes into force, so this can become an additional way our officers can enforce against offenders.

But we know that we can't take for granted the impact that these issues continue to have on businesses and individuals across Lancashire. Keeping the conversation going between myself, the force and businesses is vital, and that's why I launched the Safer Lancashire Business Partnership earlier this year – a forum created to strengthen joint efforts against crimes affecting retailers and businesses.

It's why I also continue to meet with Business Improvement Districts, Chambers of Commerce and businesses directly, to listen to their concerns and ensure these inform the work of my Office and my conversations with the Chief Constable.

Policing alone cannot tackle the root causes of crimes that affect our high streets and town centres. That's why I continue to work with Members of Parliament, Community Safety Partnerships and other local organisations to invest cash taken from criminals back into Lancashire's communities to help tackle crime and make our streets safer.

We also know all too well the increasing risk to businesses of any size, in any industry, from cybercrime. From fraud to the hacking of digital systems, the threat is real and will only grow, which is why I invested in a UK-first, business-focused Cyber Attack Hydra Simulation, being delivered by the University of Lancashire and designed for small and medium-sized enterprises across the county.

This is just a snapshot of the work being done, often behind the scenes, to address the issues that matter most to businesses in our great county. We know that there is always more that can be done, but I want to assure you that we are on your side, and I will continue to stand with you as we work together to tackle retail crime.

Yours sincerely



Clive Grunshaw

Police and Crime Commissioner for Lancashire