# Robotic CCTV pods deployed in Northamptonshire to tackle record rise in shoplifting



## Robotic CCTV Pods to Combat Rising Shoplifting in Northamptonshire

As retail crime continues to escalate across the UK, a futuristic solution reminiscent of Daleks from "Doctor Who" is being rolled out in Northamptonshire. The new CCTV devices, dubbed Safer Pods, are set for summer deployment on English high streets, aiming to deter relentless waves of shoplifting that have plagued retailers.

The pods, which were piloted last December at Vintage Guru, a shop in Northampton, have reportedly had a significant impact in reducing opportunist theft within weeks. Julie Teckman, the shop owner, described the pods as a vital deterrent, stating, “It’s more about feeling like there is something helping you prevent crime,” as the retailer has faced increasing challenges from theft. The Safer Pods not only provide 24/7 monitored video surveillance but are also equipped with sensors that trigger alarms if tampered with, further enhancing shop security.

The urgency for such interventions has been underscored by alarming statistics. For the first time since records began in 2003, more than half a million shoplifting offences were reported in England and Wales last year, with figures reaching 516,971—a staggering 20% increase compared to the previous year. In a climate where the British Retail Consortium warns that retail crime costs businesses over £2.2 billion annually, it is clear that immediate action is required.

In Northamptonshire, local authorities are responding with a multi-faceted approach. Following the positive feedback from tech experiments like the Safer Pods, the police, fire, and crime commissioner Daniella Stone has announced plans to distribute these devices more broadly. The Northamptonshire Police have seen a marked improvement in outcomes for reported shoplifting, with a specific emphasis on engaging retailers to report incidents more diligently. A newly established three-year Retail Crime Strategy aims to foster a more hostile environment for shoplifters through enhanced collaboration between police and retail partners.

However, the issue remains complex. Increasing reports indicate that much of the shoplifting is perpetrated by young people, with retailers in Kettering noting a rise in thefts led primarily by teenage girls. This demographic shift complicates the law enforcement response, as business owners express hesitance to involve police when dealing with such young offenders. The statistics corroborate this concern, revealing a 19% increase in theft offences within certain wards.

Moreover, broader implications of this rise in drink-driving incidents highlight the severe impacts on communities. Kettering, for example, witnessed a jump from 30 to 220 serious incidents in a four-month period last year, prompting town centre manager Dan Pickard to advocate strongly for protective measures against crime.

Despite the mounting challenges, the implementation of innovative technologies like the Safer Pods signals a pivotal shift in the approach to preventing retail theft. As shops brace for an influx of these monitoring devices, the hope is that they will not only reduce theft rates but also restore the sense of safety within local communities—and perhaps, offer a new era in retail security.

## Reference Map:

* Paragraph 1 – [[1]](https://www.independent.co.uk/news/uk/crime/shoplifting-cctv-pods-dalek-police-northamptonshire-b2746389.html), [[2]](https://www.bbc.com/news/articles/c1lvdd8jl6do)
* Paragraph 2 – [[1]](https://www.independent.co.uk/news/uk/crime/shoplifting-cctv-pods-dalek-police-northamptonshire-b2746389.html), [[2]](https://www.bbc.com/news/articles/c1lvdd8jl6do), [[3]](https://www.northantstelegraph.co.uk/news/crime/northamptonshire-shoplifting-cases-up-from-200-to-550-per-month-as-cops-urge-retailers-to-report-report-report-at-launch-of-3-year-plan-4822069)
* Paragraph 3 – [[5]](https://news.sky.com/video/shoplifting-cctv-released-as-figures-reach-1000-incidents-per-day-12991242), [[6]](https://www.northantstelegraph.co.uk/news/crime/cctv-waitrose-staff-threatened-during-shoplifting-incident-in-northampton-4640134)
* Paragraph 4 – [[4]](https://www.northantstelegraph.co.uk/news/people/kettering-town-centre-shoplifting-out-of-control-and-its-mostly-schoolgirls-say-store-bosses-4359888), [[3]](https://www.northantstelegraph.co.uk/news/crime/northamptonshire-shoplifting-cases-up-from-200-to-550-per-month-as-cops-urge-retailers-to-report-report-report-at-launch-of-3-year-plan-4822069)
* Paragraph 5 – [[4]](https://www.northantstelegraph.co.uk/news/people/kettering-town-centre-shoplifting-out-of-control-and-its-mostly-schoolgirls-say-store-bosses-4359888), [[3]](https://www.northantstelegraph.co.uk/news/crime/northamptonshire-shoplifting-cases-up-from-200-to-550-per-month-as-cops-urge-retailers-to-report-report-report-at-launch-of-3-year-plan-4822069)

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## Bibliography

1. <https://www.independent.co.uk/news/uk/crime/shoplifting-cctv-pods-dalek-police-northamptonshire-b2746389.html> - Please view link - unable to able to access data
2. <https://www.bbc.com/news/articles/c1lvdd8jl6do> - Vintage Guru, a shop in Northampton, piloted Safer Pod systems in December 2024. The owner, Julie Teckman, reported a reduction in opportunist thefts within weeks. The pods, resembling Daleks from Doctor Who, provide 24/7 monitored CCTV and act as a visual deterrent to shoplifters. They are equipped with sensors that alert authorities if tampered with. The success of this pilot led to plans for a wider rollout in Northamptonshire. Teckman emphasized the importance of visible surveillance in preventing crime and reducing the burden on staff to monitor thefts.
3. <https://www.northantstelegraph.co.uk/news/crime/northamptonshire-shoplifting-cases-up-from-200-to-550-per-month-as-cops-urge-retailers-to-report-report-report-at-launch-of-3-year-plan-4822069> - Northamptonshire Police launched a three-year Retail Crime Strategy to address the rise in shoplifting cases, which increased from 200 to 550 per month. The initiative focuses on creating a hostile environment for shoplifters and encourages retailers to report incidents promptly. A dedicated team of officers and retail partners is working together to tackle the growing issue of brazen shoplifting. The strategy includes setting up a countywide app for shops to report thefts directly and upload evidence, streamlining the reporting process and aiding in swift legal action against offenders.
4. <https://www.northantstelegraph.co.uk/news/people/kettering-town-centre-shoplifting-out-of-control-and-its-mostly-schoolgirls-say-store-bosses-4359888> - Independent business owners in Kettering reported a significant rise in shoplifting incidents, particularly involving young teenage girls. Retailers like The Bean Hive and KSN have witnessed thefts through in-store CCTV systems. Due to the age of the offenders, business owners have been hesitant to involve the police but express concern over the escalating issue. Official statistics show a 19% increase in theft offences in the William Knibb ward, with 39 reports of shoplifting in Kettering's central area in July 2023, highlighting the severity of the problem.
5. <https://news.sky.com/video/shoplifting-cctv-released-as-figures-reach-1000-incidents-per-day-12991242> - Shoplifting incidents in England and Wales have risen by 25% in the year leading up to June 2023, with figures reaching 1,000 incidents per day. In response, a new national police intelligence unit is being established to track down organized shoplifting gangs. The increase in shoplifting has prompted authorities to release CCTV footage to aid in identifying and apprehending offenders. The rise in incidents underscores the growing challenge of retail theft and the need for enhanced security measures and coordinated law enforcement efforts.
6. <https://www.northantstelegraph.co.uk/news/crime/cctv-waitrose-staff-threatened-during-shoplifting-incident-in-northampton-4640134> - Police released CCTV images of a man involved in a shoplifting incident at Waitrose in Harborough Road, Northampton. The incident occurred on May 3, 2024, when the man attempted to leave the store without paying and threatened to hit a staff member who tried to intervene. Authorities are seeking information to assist with their investigation. This case highlights the challenges faced by retailers in managing theft and the importance of community cooperation in addressing such incidents.
7. <https://www.northantstelegraph.co.uk/news/people/cctv-clue-to-theft-and-assault-which-left-kettering-shop-owner-injured-4355960> - Police released a CCTV image of a woman wanted in connection with a theft and assault at a shop in Newland Street, Kettering. The incident occurred on September 13, 2023, when the woman hid cans of alcohol in her clothing and, when challenged, opened the door forcibly, causing the shop owner to sprain her ankle. Authorities are appealing for information to assist with their investigation. This case underscores the risks faced by shop owners and staff during theft incidents and the importance of vigilance and prompt reporting.