# Theft of intimate items in Northern Ireland highlights deeper social and economic issues



Concerns around theft in retail environments, particularly involving intimate items, have resurfaced in Northern Ireland following recent incidents that have left local communities stunned and deeply concerned about the implications of such crimes. One notable case involves a woman charged with shoplifting sex toys from a local Superdrug, an event that has prompted discussions about the nature and motivations behind similar thefts in various locations.

The community was left reeling after authorities announced the charges against the woman, highlighting a troubling trend. Last year, two Belfast men were sentenced with suspended prison terms after they were caught on CCTV stealing £700 worth of sex toys from a shop, showcasing a broader issue of pilfering that extends beyond casual shoplifting to more calculated acts of theft. The men had initially intended to fight the charges but ultimately pleaded guilty, reflecting a legal landscape where the consequences can vary significantly depending on individual circumstances and prior offences.

Moreover, these incidents are not isolated to Northern Ireland. In Middlesbrough, a woman stole £500 worth of similar products, claiming she believed her haul was only worth approximately £100. This discrepancy raises questions about the motivations behind such thefts, often linked to financial desperation and a lack of resources. Legal outcomes can be severe; she was sentenced to a cumulative 26 weeks in prison for multiple thefts, highlighting how the justice system is responding to repeated offences in retail theft.

Other incidents across the UK further illustrate this worrying trend. A couple in Sunderland was caught stealing a strap-on vibrator, receiving conditional discharges and a nominal financial compensation order. In Dundee, another woman was found guilty of taking two adult toys while under the influence of drugs, adding another layer to the concerning nature of theft associated with substance abuse.

Shoplifting, particularly involving items meant for personal and intimate use, not only raises ethical questions but also affects retailers who are increasingly concerned about loss prevention. Some stores report that such thefts not only lead to financial losses but can also create discomfort for employees and customers alike within the shopping environment.

This pattern of theft, particularly around intimate items, necessitates a multifaceted response that includes community awareness, support for individuals facing economic hardship, and potential reform in policies addressing retail crime. There is an urgent need for discussions around how communities can unite to tackle the root causes of such desperate acts, allowing for more compassionate responses rather than just punitive measures.

These incidents serve as alarming reminders of the ongoing challenges facing both retailers and communities, as they navigate issues of theft, personal responsibility, and the socio-economic circumstances that often drive individuals to commit such acts.

### Reference Map

1. Paragraphs 1, 2, 3, 4, 5, 6

Source: [Noah Wire Services](https://www.noahwire.com)

## Bibliography

1. <https://m.belfasttelegraph.co.uk/news/courts/larne-woman-charged-with-stealing-sex-toys-from-a-superdrug/a144854563.html> - Please view link - unable to able to access data
2. <https://www.bbc.co.uk/news/uk-northern-ireland-32708404> - Two Belfast men, Gary McCann and Aaron McCrory, were given suspended prison sentences for stealing £700 worth of sex toys from a city shop. They also broke into Soho Books, Gresham Street, and took £800 in cash. The men had planned to contest the charges but pleaded guilty to burglary and theft. CCTV footage showed them filling a rucksack with sex toys and paraphernalia before leaving without paying at the end of their shift last October. They were recorded returning on the same night and entering without permission, stealing cash during that raid. The judge suspended their five-month jail terms for 12 months, considering their guilty pleas and the circumstances of the case. ([bbc.co.uk](https://www.bbc.co.uk/news/uk-northern-ireland-32708404?utm_source=openai))
3. <https://www.gazettelive.co.uk/news/teesside-news/woman-stole-500-worth-sex-26140729> - Carla McLay, 31, stole £500 worth of sex toys and condoms from a Boots store in Middlesbrough. She entered the store on January 2, 2023, and took items from the sexual wellbeing aisle, making no attempt to pay. The stolen goods were not recovered. McLay admitted to the theft, stating she had no means to pay for the items. Her lawyer claimed she believed the total value was around £100. She was sentenced to 26 weeks in prison for five other shop thefts and an additional 12 weeks for this offence, to run concurrently. ([gazettelive.co.uk](https://www.gazettelive.co.uk/news/teesside-news/woman-stole-500-worth-sex-26140729?utm_source=openai))
4. <https://www.irishmirror.ie/news/weird-news/man-woman-caught-stealing-kinky-5807672> - Jason Maginnis, 22, and Terry Remmer, 21, were caught stealing a 'Ride'em Cowboy strap-on vibrator' from an Ann Summers store in Sunderland. CCTV footage showed Maginnis removing the vibrator from its box and placing it in Remmer's handbag. They left the store without paying for the item. Both admitted theft from a shop and were sentenced to a 12-month conditional discharge. They were each ordered to pay £19 in compensation towards the cost of the vibrator and a £15 surcharge. ([irishmirror.ie](https://www.irishmirror.ie/news/weird-news/man-woman-caught-stealing-kinky-5807672?utm_source=openai))
5. <https://www.thecourier.co.uk/fp/news/dundee/2574200/dundee-woman-34-admits-stealing-adult-toys-ann-summers/> - Alison Devlin, 34, admitted stealing two adult toys worth £10 each from the Ann Summers shop in Dundee. The theft occurred on November 8, 2022, while she was under the influence of drugs. Devlin also admitted a second charge related to entering the home of a 76-year-old man with the intent to commit theft. Sentence was deferred until May 2, 2023, to carry out a restriction of liberty order assessment. ([thecourier.co.uk](https://www.thecourier.co.uk/fp/news/dundee/2574200/dundee-woman-34-admits-stealing-adult-toys-ann-summers/?utm_source=openai))
6. <https://www.irishnews.com/news/northernirelandnews/2021/07/30/news/woman-jailed-for-shoplifting-spree-2403524/> - Beverly McNeilly, 41, was jailed for nine months after a shoplifting spree in Belfast city centre. Over a nine-month period, she stole thousands of pounds worth of goods, including perfume, clothing, jewellery, and cosmetics. The offences began in October 2020, with McNeilly targeting various retailers. She pleaded guilty to theft and multiple counts of burglary of a non-dwelling. ([irishnews.com](https://www.irishnews.com/news/northernirelandnews/2021/07/30/news/woman-jailed-for-shoplifting-spree-2403524/?utm_source=openai))