# London shops lock doors amid surge in shoplifting rates



Shoplifting in London has escalated to alarming levels, prompting a wave of concern among retailers and city officials alike. Notably, shops along the Strand, one of London’s iconic thoroughfares, have resorted to locking their doors during business hours to counter the surge in thefts. Shoppers often find themselves needing to knock to gain entry, a measure aimed at curbing rampant shoplifting that critics argue signals a troubling state of lawlessness in the capital. Susan Hall, leader of the Conservative group at the London Assembly, criticised Mayor Sadiq Khan for what she described as his failure to tackle the issue, warning that it damages London’s image and deters visitors.

The strategy of locked doors is reportedly inspired by a similar policy adopted by an O2 store nearby and has been visibly implemented by businesses such as the women’s clothing retailer Jigsaw, which posted notices explaining the new practice to customers. This development comes amid stark statistics from the Metropolitan Police showing that between August 2024 and July this year, London recorded approximately 86,599 shoplifting incidents. This figure underscores a sharp rise compared to previous years and aligns with a 54% increase in shoplifting offences reported in London in 2024 compared to 2023, a surge that significantly outpaces the 15% rise seen across the rest of England.

Nationally, the problem of retail theft is also intensifying. Official figures from the Office for National Statistics reveal that shoplifting offences across England and Wales reached a historic high in the year to March 2024, with over 530,000 incidents reported. This dramatic rise has elicited concern from retail leaders, with Tom Ironside, head of the British Retailers Association, describing retail theft as "spiralling out of control." In response, government measures have been proposed to address crime, including a Crime and Policing Bill introduced by Home Secretary Yvette Cooper. The bill aims to enhance police presence in over 500 town centres and increase the numbers of PCSOs and neighbourhood officers by 3,000 by spring 2026.

The Mayor’s office has acknowledged the challenges posed by rising shoplifting rates and has expressed determination to manage crime's complex causes, though critics argue that more decisive action is required. The surging theft levels are attributed partly to London’s dense concentration of shops and the pressures of the city’s high cost of living, which may be driving some of the illicit activity. Retailers continue to call for more robust policing and support to protect their businesses and maintain the city’s reputation as a safe and welcoming destination for shoppers and tourists alike.

### 📌 Reference Map:

* Paragraph 1 – [[1]](https://www.express.co.uk/news/uk/2099436/sadiq-khan-lawless-london-shoplifting), [[2]](https://www.bbc.co.uk/news/articles/cgm8enwywr1o), [[3]](https://www.standard.co.uk/news/london/shoplifting-theft-increase-sadiq-khan-data-ons-criminal-offences-b1224075.html)
* Paragraph 2 – [[1]](https://www.express.co.uk/news/uk/2099436/sadiq-khan-lawless-london-shoplifting), [[2]](https://www.bbc.co.uk/news/articles/cgm8enwywr1o), [[3]](https://www.standard.co.uk/news/london/shoplifting-theft-increase-sadiq-khan-data-ons-criminal-offences-b1224075.html)
* Paragraph 3 – [[1]](https://www.express.co.uk/news/uk/2099436/sadiq-khan-lawless-london-shoplifting), [[4]](https://www.standard.co.uk/news/crime/shoplifting-london-retail-theft-figures-police-b1208081.html), [[5]](https://www.telegraph.co.uk/news/2024/07/24/shoplifting-offences-record-high-knife-crime-police/), [[6]](https://www.itv.com/news/london/2025-04-24/shoplifting-in-england-and-wales-soars-to-highest-since-police-records-began)
* Paragraph 4 – [[1]](https://www.express.co.uk/news/uk/2099436/sadiq-khan-lawless-london-shoplifting), [[2]](https://www.bbc.co.uk/news/articles/cgm8enwywr1o), [[3]](https://www.standard.co.uk/news/london/shoplifting-theft-increase-sadiq-khan-data-ons-criminal-offences-b1224075.html), [[5]](https://www.telegraph.co.uk/news/2024/07/24/shoplifting-offences-record-high-knife-crime-police/)

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

## Bibliography

1. <https://www.express.co.uk/news/uk/2099436/sadiq-khan-lawless-london-shoplifting> - Please view link - unable to able to access data
2. <https://www.bbc.co.uk/news/articles/cgm8enwywr1o> - Shoplifting offences in London increased by 54% in 2024 compared to 2023, with nearly 90,000 incidents recorded. This surge is attributed to the city's high number of shops and elevated cost of living. The Mayor's office acknowledged the need for further efforts to address this issue.
3. <https://www.standard.co.uk/news/london/shoplifting-theft-increase-sadiq-khan-data-ons-criminal-offences-b1224075.html> - London's shoplifting cases rose by 54% in 2024, with nearly 90,000 offences reported. This sharp increase contrasts with a 15% rise in shoplifting across the rest of England. The Mayor's office expressed determination to tackle crime and its complex causes.
4. <https://www.standard.co.uk/news/crime/shoplifting-london-retail-theft-figures-police-b1208081.html> - Shoplifting in London surged by 50% in a year, with 80,041 offences recorded. Retailers express concerns over escalating retail crime, urging appropriate police responses to reported incidents.
5. <https://www.telegraph.co.uk/news/2024/07/24/shoplifting-offences-record-high-knife-crime-police/> - Shoplifting offences in England and Wales reached a record high, with 443,995 incidents recorded in the year to March 2024. This marks a 30% increase from the previous year, highlighting the escalating issue of retail theft.
6. <https://www.itv.com/news/london/2025-04-24/shoplifting-in-england-and-wales-soars-to-highest-since-police-records-began> - Shoplifting across England and Wales soared to the highest level since police records began, with 516,971 offences reported. London saw nearly 90,000 incidents, a 54% increase from the previous year, prompting intensified police efforts.
7. <https://www.met.police.uk/foi-ai/metropolitan-police/disclosure-2025/february-2025/shoplifting-offences-arrests-london-2020-2024/> - The Metropolitan Police disclosed data on shoplifting offences and arrests in London from 2020 to 2024. The information includes annual statistics on reported incidents and arrests, providing insight into the rising trend of shoplifting in the capital.