

# Wenzel’s Theft Reduction Support Report

Location: Ealing Broadway

Date of Operation: Tuesday 29th April 2025

Deployed Officers: Plain Clothes Team

Duration: 08:00 – 14:00

## Background

Following concerns raised by Wenzel’s staff regarding persistent, daily shoplifting from their Ealing Broadway branch, a covert operation was requested by Make It Ealing BID to assess and respond to the ongoing issue.  
  
Staff reported that thefts occur as early as 5:30 AM and continue throughout the day. Offenders—often homeless individuals, but not exclusively—are entering the premises and walking out with sandwiches, drinks, and other items, without any attempt to pay. Many offenders appear to be repeat visitors who are aware that there is no security presence, and that staff are unlikely to intervene. The general perception among offenders is that the shop is an “easy target.”

## Operation Summary – 29/04/2025

A targeted covert deployment was carried out from 08:00 to 14:00. During this time:  
- 8 confirmed thefts were intercepted and prevented.  
- 2 additional attempted thefts were deterred due to the visible presence and intervention of the team.  
- All stolen goods were recovered and returned to the store.  
- Police attended during the day to gather information on two known offenders for Community Protection Notice (CPN) proceedings.  
  
One detained individual openly admitted he was stealing because it was “so easy” and even stated he was “glad he finally got caught.”

## Key Observations

- Offenders typically remain in the store for under 60 seconds.  
- Staff presence consists of two female workers with no training or means to safely challenge theft.  
- Shoplifters are aware of the lack of deterrents and act accordingly.  
- Theft is not limited to vulnerable individuals; members of the general public are also taking advantage.  
- Wenzel’s has two functional CCTV cameras and management is supportive of providing footage when required.  
- Incidents are rarely reported to the police, limiting the possibility of longer-term solutions such as Community Protection Notices, habitual offender tracking, or increased local enforcement.

## Recommendations

1. Stagger Stocking of High-Theft Items:  
 Avoid fully stocking high-risk items such as cold drinks at opening time. Refill shelves closer to peak periods when footfall and staff presence are higher.  
  
2. Consistently Report All Thefts to Police (Online):  
 Reporting every incident, even when low in value, builds a data trail that supports broader police intervention and establishes a clear pattern of ongoing theft.  
  
3. Engage with Local Council or Make It Ealing for Additional Signage/Warnings:  
 Visible signage stating that theft is monitored and prosecuted, even if symbolic, can deter opportunistic offenders.  
  
4. Explore the Use of Entry-Control Measures:  
 Consider installing a basic deterrent system like a door buzzer during off-peak hours.  
  
5. Staff Safety and Awareness Training:  
 While it’s not the staff’s job to physically intervene, a short awareness session could help them feel safer, more informed, and better able to respond appropriately to theft.

## Conclusion

The situation at Wenzel’s Ealing Broadway site is concerning and persistent. The sheer frequency and shamelessness of the thefts highlight a deep-rooted vulnerability being openly exploited. While the value of stolen items may be relatively low per incident, the cumulative impact on staff, morale, and business sustainability is significant.  
  
The operation on 29th April was a one-off proactive deployment, arranged at the request of Make It Ealing BID. Our team dedicated an entire day to the premises, intercepting eight thefts and deterring two further attempts. We trust this report demonstrates the extent of the issue, while also providing practical, low-cost recommendations to help the store tackle its ongoing theft problem.  
  
While we will not be carrying out further dedicated deployments, we hope the store takes forward some of the measures outlined to better protect their stock and staff.



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