

**BLOG**

# **Understanding Pushouts: A Growing Threat to Retail in the UK**

## **Understanding Pushouts: A Growing Threat to Retail in the UK**

Published  
September 12, 2024



Retail theft continues to be a major issue for UK stores, with “pushouts” emerging as a particularly damaging form of theft. But what is a pushout, and how can retailers protect themselves?

### **What is a Pushout?**

A pushout occurs when a thief fills a shopping trolley with merchandise and exits the store without paying. This brazen form of theft relies on the thief’s ability to leave quickly, often counting on the assumption that staff won’t notice or react in time. This can result in the loss of significant amounts of merchandise in a single incident.

### **Why Are Pushouts So Dangerous?**

Pushouts cause major losses for retailers because they involve large quantities of unpaid goods, leading to financial damage. The impact goes beyond just lost inventory, however. Pushouts also disrupt store operations, forcing staff to divert attention from customer service and routine duties. Additionally, confronting a thief during a pushout can lead to safety risks for both staff and customers, a situation most retailers wish to avoid.

### **How Pushouts Happen**

Pushouts often involve some of the following tactics:

- **Using Emergency Exits:** Thieves may use side or fire exits that are not closely monitored.
- **Distracting Staff:** Accomplices may create distractions to divert staff attention, allowing the thief to exit without being stopped.
- **Blending In:** Some pushout thieves attempt to blend in as legitimate customers by using self-checkout points, pretending to scan items but walking out without paying for high-value goods.

### **Preventing Pushouts: Solutions for UK Retailers**

Tackling pushout theft requires a combination of smart technology, staff training, and visible deterrents. Here are the most effective strategies for preventing pushouts:

- **Pushout Prevention Technology**

One of the most effective ways to prevent pushouts is to implement Pushout Prevention Technology, such as Gatekeeper Systems’[Purchek®](#) technology. This system is designed to stop trolleys from leaving the store unless they’ve been authorised at the checkout.

Here’s how it works:

- **Automatic Trolley Locking:** If a thief tries to exit the store with unpaid items, the system detects this and automatically locks the trolley wheels, stopping the theft in its tracks. This is a non-confrontational solution, ensuring the situation is handled without risking the safety of staff or customers. Gatekeeper Systems’ [Purchek®](#) technology is a powerful deterrent, as it not only prevents pushouts but also operates discreetly, keeping the shopping experience smooth and seamless for paying customers.

- It is especially valuable because it eliminates the need for physical intervention, which can escalate situations and create safety concerns.
- **Maximising Safety with Purchek® Investigative Services.**

Beyond simply preventing theft, Purchek® can also help retailers maximise their security efforts with Theft Investigative Services. This service offers deeper insights into theft behaviours, helping retailers to better understand the methods used by thieves and improve their security response.

- **Comprehensive Theft Analysis:** Every pushout attempt is recorded and analysed, helping retailers identify patterns such as the times of day when thefts are more likely to occur or repeated theft attempts by the same individuals.
- **High-Definition Video Event Classification:** Purchek® captures each pushout event in high-definition, classifying incidents to help retailers validate their return on investment (ROI) and providing actionable insights for improving security.
- **ROI Measurement and Continuous Optimisation:** Retailers can track how often Purchek® prevents theft and how much merchandise is saved, making it easier to quantify the value of the system. Regular optimisation services ensure the system remains up-to-date and effective against evolving theft strategies. With Purchek® Theft Investigative Services, retailers gain not just protection, but also critical insights into how theft occurs in their stores, empowering them to take a proactive stance in reducing shrinkage.

## Staff Training & Awareness

While technology plays a crucial role, human vigilance is equally important. Ensuring staff are trained to recognise potential pushout attempts is essential in deterring theft before it happens.

- **Training on Theft Behaviours:** Employees should be trained to identify suspicious behaviours, such as loitering near exits, unattended trolleys, or customers who attempt to exit without completing their purchases. Being able to spot these signs early allows staff to intervene or notify security before a pushout occurs.
- **Empowering Employees:** Empowering employees to act when they notice something suspicious, whether it's notifying a manager or discouraging behaviour with a polite inquiry, can often be enough to prevent theft. Staff training should focus on raising awareness without creating a confrontational or uncomfortable shopping environment for legitimate customers.

## Visible Deterrents

Creating visible deterrents in the store environment is another effective strategy. Even basic measures can dissuade would-be thieves from attempting a pushout.

- **Clear Signage:** Displaying signage about anti-theft measures such as trolley locking systems or surveillance cameras near store exits can serve as a powerful psychological deterrent. Most pushout thieves are opportunistic and are less likely to attempt theft if they know the store has systems in place to catch them.

- **Visible Security Presence:** Having security staff stationed near the exits or walking through the store can deter pushout attempts. Many thieves will reconsider if they see an active security presence, as they often target stores with less visible deterrents.

### **The Future of Pushout Prevention**

Retailers are increasingly turning to advanced systems like Gatekeeper Systems' Purchek® technology to strike the perfect balance between effective theft prevention and a smooth shopping experience for customers.

With integrated technology, detailed insights from investigative services, and a vigilant, well-trained staff, retailers can reduce the risk of pushouts while maintaining a welcoming environment. By investing in these comprehensive theft prevention solutions, retailers in the UK can effectively reduce losses and ensure their operations run smoothly, protecting both their bottom line and the overall safety of the store.

## **About Gatekeeper**

Gatekeeper Systems' expanded product suite of intelligent cart solutions offers solutions for EVERY retailer's needs to minimize merchandise loss, reduce asset and labor expenditures. Gatekeeper's loss prevention and cart containment solutions utilize patented locking technology to put an end to cart-based shoplifting, shopping cart loss, and uninformed decision-making. Cart management solutions increase safety and reduce labor costs by maximizing productivity while simultaneously resulting in a positive store image. Intelligent pushout theft prevention solutions stop thieves and their cart full of unpaid merchandise from leaving the store. Customizable technology allows retailers to defend their entire store or just a high loss department based on the store's unique layout. Business Intelligence solutions provide increased visibility for informed decision making. Increase efficiency, optimize fleet size, and perfect the entire customer shopping experience with store and enterprise-level analytics.

