



ACS Submission: Robbery Guideline Consultation

ACS (the Association of Convenience Stores) welcomes the opportunity to respond to the Sentencing Council's consultation on robbery sentencing guidelines. ACS represents 33,500 local shops across the UK including Spar UK, Costcutter Supermarkets, Nisa Retail and thousands of independent retailers.

Retail crime is one of the biggest operational challenges that our members face and robbery accounts for a significant proportion of this. According to ACS Crime Report 2014¹ there were 172 robberies in 2013 based on a sample of 3,500 retail premises. The average cost of a robbery was £1,792, costing the sector an estimated £4.1 million.

However, robberies have a much bigger impact on retailers and their staff due to the violent nature of these offences. ACS Crime Survey showed 28 recorded incidents of weapons, including knives and firearms, being used. There were also 511 incidents of violence resulting in injury reported by retailers. ACS is currently collecting data for the 2015 Crime Report and will share the revised data with the Sentencing Council once the survey is completed.

ACS supports the Sentencing Councils revised sentencing guidelines for robbery and the assessment of harm and culpability. ACS welcomes that the sentencing guidelines recognises not only the loss of financial sums but also the impact on retailers, their staff and the community they serve.

ACS has provided comments on the relevant consultations questions below:

Q19. Are there any additional harm factors that should be added?

The Sentencing Council should consider how the operational disruption caused by a robbery can be included in the harm factors. For example the loss of goods or sums of money may be of less value compared to the day(s) the store needs to close or the additional cost incurred by the retailer to cover and support staff after the robbery.

Bringing together both the 'unsophisticated' and 'highly sophisticated' robberies into one set of sentencing guidelines may devalue the definition of "high value goods" – the size and type of business should be distinguished in guidelines and at the forefront of a magistrates/ courts deliberations. Convenience store owners stock a wide range of general grocery products and the highest value items are likely to be alcohol and tobacco products. There are limited parallels between a convenience store and a jewellers yet the guidance does not include an assessment of business type.

The Sentencing Council's guidelines rightly distinguish between commercial robberies and robberies in dwellings. However, in the convenience sector 77% of the industry is run by independent business owners, some of whom will live in connected premises to their businesses. It will be an individual assessment for magistrates/courts whether this would constitute an increase in harm and culpability factors and a higher starting point for sentencing.

For further information on ACS' submission please contact Edward.woodall@Acs.org.uk or call 01252 515001.

¹ [ACS Crime Report 2014](#)