



# The Retailer

The Magazine for **Retail NI**



Launch of Working  
Together – Retail NI’s Plan to  
Tackle Business Crime

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## Message from the President

### Welcome to the Spring edition of The Retailer 2024

With the long-awaited return of the Northern Ireland Assembly, the team at Retail NI has hit the ground running engaging with Ministers and MLAs on key issues such as retail crime, business rates, energy cost and many other challenges facing our members businesses.

Retail NI have produced a comprehensive plan to address the huge problem of crime on our members. The report entitled 'Working Together' includes a detailed survey of members experiences of crime and seventeen recommendations for the Justice Minister, PSNI and Policing Board. Justice Minister Naomi Long MLA and Deputy Chief Constable Chris Todd launched the report at the Northern Ireland Assembly.

We have also had engagement with the First and deputy First Ministers, Economy, Finance and Agriculture, Environment and Rural Affairs Ministers.

In February we hosted our second Supplier Showcase with fifty-five companies showcasing their products and services to a packed room of Retail NI members.

Looking ahead we will be once again holding the Trade NI Reception at the House of Commons on 22nd May, with a host of Ministers, MPs and other political and diplomatic leaders attending. On 25th June, Tánaiste Micheal Martin TD will also be hosting us in Iveagh House in Dublin. If you haven't RSVP to these events email [events@retailni.com](mailto:events@retailni.com).

Not forgetting we will also be launching this years High Street Hero Awards at the Northern Ireland Assembly on 29th May. These awards promise to be bigger and better than ever before.

As ever our most important role is to help you and your business with any problems or challenges, no matter how big or small. On a daily basis we assist members with diverse problems with Business Rates, Planning, Car parking and many more.

**Peter McBride**  
(President)



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# RETAIL NI'S SECOND ANNUAL SUPPLIER SHOWCASE EVENT CELEBRATES SUCCESS

Retail NI, the driving force behind Northern Ireland's independent retail and wholesale sector, proudly kicked off its highly anticipated second Annual Supplier Showcase Event on 27th February 2024. With an even greater lineup of suppliers, it promised to be an extraordinary celebration of local producers and manufacturers.

Paddy Murney, Retail NI Chair, said: "Our Supplier Showcase was bigger and better than

ever and illustrated the support we provide to many new and existing local agri-food sector companies with their route to market with our retail and wholesale members.

"Retail NI now represents businesses, large and small, throughout our local supply chain and we are actively working with hundreds of new-start agri-food members to scale up their businesses."

The event was a unique opportunity for industry players to network, collaborate, and highlight the significant impact local businesses have on the wider economy. Guest Speaker Steve Baker MP, Minister of State for Northern Ireland, provided valuable insights into the industry's current challenges and opportunities.

He said: "I am deeply honoured to have been a participant in this dynamic event that highlighted the resilience and innovation prevalent in Northern Ireland's retail and wholesale sectors. The Supplier

Showcase orchestrated by Retail NI not only paid tribute to our local producers and manufacturers but also facilitated invaluable connections and insights crucial for the future of our business community. This extraordinary event celebrated the vibrancy and diversity of our local business landscape and served as a platform to connect, discover, and support the remarkable talent driving our economy forward."

Liam O'Connor, Sales and Marketing Director at Biopax Limited, emphasised the company's commitment to the sustainable movement in the food and drink sector: "Biopax Limited was honoured to be a key partner for Retail NI's Supplier Showcase. This event provided an invaluable platform for local businesses to showcase their products and services, and we were thrilled



L-R Paddy Murney, Retail NI Chair; Guest Speaker Steve Baker MP, Minister of State for Northern Ireland; John Lucas from Bobby's Foods and Liam O'Connor, Sales and Marketing Director at Biopax Limited.



Long Meadow Cider



Steve Baker with Biopax



Island Dairies



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Steve Baker with sponsors

to contribute to the growth and success of the Northern Ireland business community."

John Lucas from Bobby's Foods added: "Bobby's Foods was proud to stand alongside Retail NI in supporting the Supplier Showcase. We believe in the strength of local businesses, and this event was a fantastic opportunity to highlight the innovation and quality that our community brings to the retail

and wholesale sectors."

nijobfinder's Colin Maxwell concluded: "We take great pride in sponsoring one of the liveliest trade events in the retail industry. This sector plays a crucial role in job creation and significantly contributes to the local economy. Any event that recognises and applauds these efforts is truly essential." With over 50 exhibits, this year's showcase presented a diverse

array of products and services from local suppliers, showcasing the strength and resilience of Northern Ireland's business community.



# RETAIL NI LAUNCH ACTION PLAN TO TACKLE CRIME

Following an extensive survey of its members Retail NI have today launched a comprehensive action plan to tackle crime against its members at the NI Assembly. The Justice Minister Naomi Long and Deputy Chief Constable Chris Todd were keynote speakers at the event.

The report entitled 'Working Together' includes the results of a survey of over 300 Retail NI members in local villages, towns, and cities from all over Northern Ireland.

It also includes 17 recommendations for the Northern Ireland Executive & Police Service.

Survey results of Retail NI members showed:

- 67% of retail staff victim of violence and threats.
- 51% have staff who have left because of assault and verbal abuse.
- 91% have experienced shoplifting on a regular basis.
- 72% are pleased with police response but 91% of those responded were disappointed with follow up.
- 80% have never had any contact with Police and Community Safety Partnerships (PCSP) with 35% of those surveyed did not even know what a PCSP was.



Glyn Roberts, Naomi Long MLA, T/DCC Chris Todd, Paddy Murney

## Retail NI Chief Executives Glyn Roberts said:

"Our report highlights the huge impact that crime is having on our members business, their staff, and the wider economy. It is a startling statistic that 67% of those surveyed reported that their staff have been victims of assault and threats and 51% were losing staff as a result."

"Our members are extremely frustrated with the criminal justice system and feel let down by the punishments, or the lack of, for offenders. Confidence building measures are urgently needed and visible action taken against those who are found guilty of theft and intimate shop staff."

"While we highlight how serious this problem is, our focus is on solutions. We want to reinforce



the message that a more effective partnership between business, police, Department of Justice, and the public is the only way in which we can improve this situation."

"Northern Ireland is now the only part of the UK not to have assault of shop workers as a specific criminal offence. This is top of our list of priorities for the Justice Minister to help deter criminals and to protect shop staff."



Peter McReynolds MLA



Naomi Long MLA

"Retail NI also want to see the PSNI Neighbourhood Teams properly funded and resourced to ensure our town and city centres are safe places for staff and shoppers alike."

"Technology has key role to play, and we want to see enhanced rate relief for independent retailers who invest in instore systems such as facial recognition."

## The Justice Minister Naomi Long MLA said:

"I welcome this report, which provides an opportunity for us all to take stock, review and consider the views and the range of issues facing business owners and staff in our society."

"The Department of Justice is fully committed to working with all partners, including businesses, the community and voluntary sector, PSNI, as well as other Departments and



Mukesh Sharma, Glyn Roberts, Lexi Scott, Gerardine Mulvenna

organisations to ensure that we have a community where we all feel safe to live and work.

"I condemn all abuse and violence directed at any frontline workers. No-one should face mistreatment whilst doing their job and serving the public and such attacks are wholly unacceptable and must not be tolerated. Such abuse or violence can be prosecuted under existing laws designed to protect any member of the public from harm. The introduction of further protections for these workers is something to which I am giving further consideration."

## Deputy Chief Constable Chris Todd said:

"This report provides valuable focus to our ongoing work to address the impact of crime on our business community. We recognise this impact can be severe and, as a Service, we dedicate considerable effort to working with local businesses

and partner organisations to tackle retail-related crime.

"The recommendations of this report will be considered in line with our existing proactive work on business crime which includes Safer Business Action Days and our first-in-the-UK Safe Shop staff-training initiative. However, our difficult funding environment is having a very real impact on the scope of our work including our neighbourhood policing teams. And - although the majority of those surveyed are satisfied with police response and Northern Ireland's crime rates compare favourably to the rest of the UK - sustaining this level of focus will be increasingly challenging unless the Police Service is properly and sustainably funded."

"Working Together is key; partnership working is a resource multiplier. Within the wider Business Crime Partnership, we will continue working to ensure that Northern Ireland remains a safe, attractive and prosperous place to live and do business."



# A WORLDS FIRST! ACV WITH VITAMIN D

Natural Umber is a delicious and organic apple cider vinegar, completely different to any other on the market. Fermented differently to the rest, Natural Umber has all of the same health benefits, but retains the natural sweetness of apples and tastes delicious!

Since launching in late January 2018, Natural Umber apple cider vinegar has taken the health food world by storm and have sold over 260,000 bottles. Demand is soaring as more customers discover this delicious vinegar from Ireland to the Middle East and even as far and Korea. The word is certainly spreading..... Now too with the addition of Umber Plus, the mackle family have taken one step further in providing a now recommended supplement. Vitamin D, which we naturally absorb through our skin from the sun is something we just simply don't get enough of in this country.

Apple cider vinegar has traditionally been seen as an unpleasant but vitally beneficial drink. Many people believe it can lower cholesterol, aid weight loss, relieve acid reflux, ease symptoms of arthritis, gout and many more.

Natural Umber is a genuinely delicious alternative, which doesn't require additional sweeteners or flavor's to hide the taste.

Unpasteurized, organic vinegars like Natural Umber also contain 'Mother of vinegar', a naturally occurring by-product from the fermentation process. 'Mother' is a complex structure of bacteria and enzymes, believed to bring enormous health benefits.

Produced in Northern



Ireland, Natural Umber was developed by Michael Mackle, whose family have over 70 years' experience producing apple products. "After seeing the benefits of apple cider vinegar myself, I knew there had to be a better way of creating it. Apple cider vinegar always tasted so bitter, but apples are sweet! Which is why we spent years developing Natural Umber. We're delighted with the unique flavor and look forward to bringing Natural Umber to even more kitchen tables!" says Mackle.

Natural Umber is available to buy from naturalumber.com, Also available from all Holland & Barrett's nationwide and a selected number of retailers. Check out our website for a full list of stockists.



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# BRITVIC LONDON ESSENCE

Following the rise in the popularity of consumers drinking less but better quality liquids, and the long-term trend of lighter, lower calorie and lower sugar drinks, means there has been a need for brands to broaden their product offering to include 'healthier choices' that strengthen consumer's overall drinking experience in terms of taste, serve and enjoyment.

At the forefront of this evolving category and lighter drinking movement is London Essence, a premium drinks brand producing elegantly distilled mixers designed to accentuate the finest spirits. Each expression is delicately light at under 20kcal per 100ml, low in sugar at under 4g per 100ml and is crafted without the use of artificial sweeteners, thanks to its unique use of distilled essences.

Brian Greer,  
Marketing  
Manager at Britvic



Ireland said: "Following the long-term trend towards sugar reduction across the world, and being consumers of premium drinks ourselves, we found that many "premium" options focused on natural credentials but were also very high in sugar. It's important to deliver light, natural options that also have great taste to ensure overall enjoyment."

Through its relationship with the trade experts and conversations with world leading bartenders, London Essence also recognised that high sugar mixers often overpowered the characteristics of the spirit partner, instead of enhancing them.

With that in mind, the brand took inspiration from its heritage in creating distilled essences which capture the flavour of the finest ingredients to deliver aromatic signature notes and great taste, with only a dusting of sugar.



Brian adds: "Thanks to the growing mixer market and continual product innovation, curious consumers now have plenty of options in terms of flavour and pairing. However, it is important to offer quality, taste, and versatility first and foremost. A sign of a sophisticated mixer is when they can be enjoyed in any form – with or without a spirit – to satisfy all drinking occasions and preferences. Therefore, not only do we have a fantastic range of tonics and gingers, but also a delicious selection of crafted soda's includes our Pink Grapefruit. brand"

The London Essence range is designed to bring out the best in gins, vodkas and dark spirits through Mixer varieties including Original Indian Tonic Water, Grapefruit & Rosemary Tonic, Blood Orange & Elderflower Tonic, Pomelo and Pink Peppercorn Tonic Water and Pink Grapefruit Soda in 6x150ml Can packs as well as their iconic 500ml glass range that includes the Original Indian Tonic Water, Blood Orange & Elderflower Tonic, a delicate Ginger Ale and White Peach & Jasmine Soda



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# What Makes a 'Good Job'

by Don Leeson, Chief Executive, Labour Relations Agency

On 19 February 2024 the new Minister for the Economy, Conor Murphy MLA, stood up in the Assembly to set out his Department's Economic Mission for the next three years. This included a commitment to, "increase the proportion of working-age people in Good Jobs."

This sent the airwaves buzzing, with local news programmes and commentators asking, "What is a good job?" I even heard one interviewer asking whether a job in a call-centre be a 'good job'. The answer is, of course, "it depends!" The key point being that a good job is not just about pay, important though it is, but it depends on a range of variables. Think about it: who wants a well-paid job if you find yourself working in a toxic working environment? Chances are, no matter how much you need money, you will not wish to remain in such a workplace any longer than necessary and will leave as soon as you can take yourself out of harms' way. This is an issue that the Labour Relations Agency has been working on for a while now and it is gratifying that our political leaders and commentators are taking a keen interest in this matter.

So, what makes a 'good job'?

The Carnegie UK Trust was established over 100 years ago by Scottish-American industrialist and philanthropist Andrew Carnegie to support the wellbeing of the masses. More recently, the Trust has been pre-eminent in the field of worker wellbeing and job quality. In 2018, Carnegie published the seminal guide,



'Measuring Good Work'.<sup>1</sup> This identifies seven measures of a 'good job'.

Of course, pay and benefits is one of the measures. However, the key aspect of this is an employee's satisfaction with their take-home pay, so employers do not necessarily have to be the highest payers to create good jobs (although I doubt anyone will ever turn down a pay rise!). Terms of employment are also important. Under this measure, the things that matter are job security, minimum guaranteed hours and, interestingly, no 'underemployment' (who wants to sit around all day with nothing to do!).

**Health, safety and psychological wellbeing** are, as one might imagine, another important aspect of a 'good job'.

**Job design and the nature of the work** are important components of a good job. This measure looks at the use of skills, the autonomy you enjoy in your role, opportunities to develop and progress, and critically a sense



of purpose; that your work has meaning and is valued.

**Social support and cohesion** in the workplace matters, too. How much line management support, and that of colleagues, is provided influences how you feel about your job. I discussed in an article in an earlier edition of this magazine the importance of creating a workplace where employees have the psychological safety to bring their true selves to work.

**Voice and representation** are of the utmost importance. This can be through trade union recognition and/or other means of involving employees in having a say about their terms and conditions of employment and participating in decision-making affecting their work and workplace. Research commissioned by the Labour Relations Agency shows that the level of employee engagement correlates highly with innovation, productivity and wellbeing.

Lastly, **life/work balance** is important. What value is there in having a well-paid meaningful work, if you have little opportunity to enjoy the fruits of your labour and your health deteriorates as a result!

So, getting back to the journalist's question about whether a job in a call centre – or in retail, for that matter – be good, the answer is a resounding yes, but...!

## Introducing the Refreshing Apricot Flavour

As the leading brand in the Impulse water category & flavoured water category in Northern Ireland and Ireland, we are excited to announce the launch of Deep RiverRock's newest flavour sensation: Apricot! With its vibrant and refreshing taste, Apricot is set to become the go-to choice for those seeking a delicious and thirst-quenching beverage.

We are committed to providing our customers with high-quality, innovative products that cater to their ever-evolving tastes and preferences. We have combined the natural sweetness of ripe apricots with our Deep RiverRock water to create a truly irresistible flavour experience.

Deep RiverRock Apricot is not just a drink; it's a taste of summer in every sip.

Whether you're enjoying a leisurely picnic in the park, soaking up the sun at the beach, or simply looking for a refreshing pick-me-up during your busy day, Apricot is the perfect companion for any occasion.

Made free from artificial colours and sugar, Deep RiverRock Apricot provides a guilt-free option for those looking to stay hydrated without compromising on taste.

Available from May, Apricot is the perfect way to quench your thirst and elevate your refreshment game.

Stay tuned for more exciting updates and announcements from Deep River Rock, as we continue to innovate and bring you the best in beverage excellence.





## SAFESHOP 'TRAIN THE TRAINER' EVENT

In February 2024, PSNI have trained an extra 23 officers to deliver the Safeshop package to retailers in south area. These additional officers compliment c.150 officers already trained throughout PSNI to deliver in all areas.

The Safeshop scheme is a free training package that is bespoke to your retail environment, with a focus on how good customer service also inhibits retail theft. The training also keeps staff safety at its core, particularly for those retail locations with low staff numbers and lone workers as well as building linkage with your local neighbourhood policing team. To arrange this training please contact either your local crime prevention officer or [businesscrime@psni.police.uk](mailto:businesscrime@psni.police.uk)

## WORKING WITH NATIONAL BUSINESS CRIME CENTRE & NATIONAL BUSINESS ACTIVITY DAYS - FRIDAY 27TH MARCH 2024

PSNI are a partner on the National Business Crime Centre. A wealth of crime prevention information is available on the prevent section (nbcc.police.uk), with support ranging from cyber enabled crime to Anti-social behaviour to safeguarding and more!

Plans are also in place to run a NI wide Safer Business Action Day (SaBA) on Friday 27th March

2024, whereby specific focus will be placed in supporting and dealing with business crime.

This will be cross cutting and range from activity in shopping centres, high streets & small retail locations to removing the road network from travelling criminals through work of interceptor teams.

Your local district teams will be reaching out in due course around this. If you are keen to be involved, please contact [businesscrime@psni.police.uk](mailto:businesscrime@psni.police.uk)

## IMPORTANCE OF REPORTING CRIME

Whilst retail theft figures are showing an increase, anecdotally we hear around incidents which go unreported to policing. Whilst aware of pressures on your time it is of utmost importance that we receive your report of incidents impacting of your business.

These reports allow us to progress criminal justice outcomes, preventing further targeting of your business, and also allow enhanced patrolling in your area as well as opening doors for support and guidance around specific crime types from subject matter experts. This also prevents potential further offending in the wider area and also presents as best opportunity to divert and support offenders as required.

## WHEN AND HOW DO I REPORT?

Crime in action/offender nearby – 999

Delayed report (occurred a time ago and offender not present) – 101/Online report

Should you need any further advice or guidance around any area of business crime, please reach out to the business crime team [businesscrime@psni.police.uk](mailto:businesscrime@psni.police.uk)

**SAFE SHOP SCHEME**

Keeping People Safe

The Safe Shop Scheme is an initiative that has been developed to support retailers to tackle crime, staff safety and in particular shoplifting. It provides:

- Practical training for managers and sales staff working in retail outlets.
- It provides information on the techniques that shoplifters use and also explains the law, so that staff know what they can and cannot do to Keep People Safe.
- Bespoke delivery in the retail premises, either before the shop opens or after it closes, so as not to interfere with trading hours.
- Content around staff safety when travelling to and from work and when dealing with elevated levels of tension from public whilst at work.

Safe Shop Scheme was developed and piloted by officers in Foyle & Belfast City Centre, Neighbourhood Policing Team.

Feedback from retailers and staff continues to be positive, with increased confidence and vigilance typically assisting in a reduction in reported instances of shoplifting, whilst also helping achieve better evidence. This package ensures better criminal justice outcomes, provides best practice around staff safety and ensures connections created with local policing teams.

Retailers are provided with a pack which will assist with further internal staff training and as an aide memoire for the staff team ongoing.

This scheme is currently provided at no charge by PSNI.

Crime Prevention Officers have been trained to deliver the Safe Shop Scheme. Retail outlets across Northern Ireland are being encouraged to avail of the training by ringing 101 and asking for their local Crime Prevention Officer.

**CALL THE POLICE 101**  
ON AN EMERGENCY ALWAYS CALL 999

# 518 years serving local communities across Northern Ireland



Throughout 2023, fifteen SPAR, EUROSPAR and ViVO stores celebrated milestone anniversaries, totaling to 518 years of serving their local communities.

Stores from all across the country had major celebrations last year, including Strabane, Islandmagee, Killylea, Ballymena, Ballymoney, Magherafelt, Omagh, Enniskillen and Carryduff.

All stores share a passion for their local communities, providing top quality products and services to their shoppers. Many of the stores are owned and run by families who have close ties to the communities they serve, creating a hub within their communities. It was important to the stores to celebrate their milestone anniversaries alongside their shoppers, from special offers to giveaways, community fun days to charity fundraisers, the stores got their shoppers involved as a thank you for their loyalty over the years.

Many of the stores have had major refurbishments totaling over £5 million since opening, thanks to significant investments from store owners. They have expanded and developed their offering and services for their local communities, including Post Offices, PayPal, the popular Barista Bar Coffee on the go offering, hot food-to-go, installations of Delish deli counters, in-store bakeries and extensive ranges of fresh food and local produce.

During their service, the retailers alongside their shoppers have fundraised for a number of local charities including SPAR's charity partner Marie Curie and EUROSPAR and ViVO's charity partner Cancer Fund for Children. In addition, the store teams often go the extra mile to arrange their own fundraising activities, both instore and



further afield, in aid of chosen charities which are close to their hearts, including Air Ambulance NI and Cancer Focus.

Two family run independent stores, Rooney's EUROSPAR Enniskillen, which is owned and run by Martin and Angela Rooney, and McCann's SPAR Belcoo, owned and run by Eugene and Brenda McCann, both celebrated the incredible milestone of 50 years in business.

Patrick Doody, Sales and Marketing Director at Henderson Group, commented, "A focus on community is part of the SPAR, EUROSPAR and ViVO brands' ethos, which is consistent across all stores. The dedicated

store teams often channel their time and efforts into supporting local community groups, fundraising for charities and sponsoring their local sports teams.

"The stores go above and beyond meeting the needs of their shoppers and that is why they are successful, with so many stores celebrating impressive anniversaries of serving their local communities across the country.

"I want to congratulate all stores who celebrated milestone anniversaries last year, it is an amazing achievement and we're very proud of every store and their team. We are all looking forward to marking many more significant anniversaries in 2024."



# SuperValu and Centra's £40K Big Community Giveaway supports 40 local groups with £1K donations

SuperValu and Centra brought 2024 to a close by awarding a total of £40,000 to community groups across Northern Ireland as part of their Big Community Giveaway, with groups nominated by customers.

From disability charities and community playgroups to

sports clubs and health and wellbeing organisations, groups from Belleek to Bushmills and Draperstown to Downpatrick received their £1,000 donation before Christmas, to help fund a range of good works projects.

Desi Derby, Director of Marketing at SuperValu and Centra said: "At SuperValu and Centra, we're committed to supporting local and we were absolutely delighted to award a total of £40,000 among groups and charities across Northern Ireland through our Big Community Giveaway.



Owner of SuperValu Shantallow Declan Corry (left) welcomes Jennifer McCollum (second left) from the Dunluce Family Centre to the store to receive a donation of £1,000 from the SuperValu and Centra £40K Big Community Giveaway. They are joined by store manager Steven McGreanery (right) and parent Bronagh McGonagle plus children Isaac McCollum, Alara and Bria McDaid.



Helen Coulter (left) and Joanne Trainor (right) from Down Community Transport welcome Clare Watson from Watson's Centra Portaferry (second left) and Stephen Smyth from Smyth's Centra in Newcastle, who presented the group with a donation of £1,000 as part of SuperValu and Centra's £40K Big Community Giveaway.

and help these local groups continue their great work in their communities."

In Co. Down, £1,000 was awarded to Down Community Transport whose chairman Francis Casement said: "We are thankful to Centra and SuperValu for this generous donation. It will be a lifeline for us to continue to provide our Dial-a-Lift service for those who live in rural areas and who need to travel to local medical and hospital appointments, as well as shopping and social

groups. Thank you to those who nominated us as well."

In Derry~Londonderry, representatives from the Dunluce Family Centre visited SuperValu Shantallow to receive their donation. Jennifer Jennings from the group said: "At a time of high cost of living, families are being forced to heat, not eat. This donation will help elevate food poverty that families are facing at a crucial time."

Among the beneficiaries were the Mid Ulster Community First Responders; Foyle Search and Rescue; Emerge Counselling Services in Lisburn; Bushmills United Youth FC; Dungiven Men's Shed; Kells and Connor Youth Club; Full Circle Martial Arts in Belfast; Diverse Youth NI; Cruse Bereavement; TinyLife; Children's Heartbeat Trust; Little Rascals Community Playgroup in Limavady; Carrickfergus and Larne Children's Contact Centre; Lost Paws NI; The Fitzone Foundation in Craigavon; Omagh Futsal Academy; Fermanagh Brightstarz; North Down and Ards Women's Aid; and Noamh Aodhan GAC in Derrylin.

The initiative was sponsored by Ballygowan, Boyne Valley Group, Hartleys, Lucozade and Walkers and kindly supported by Musgrave's retail partners.





# ASSAULTS ON SHOP STAFF MUST BE A SPECIFIC OFFENCE IN NORTHERN IRELAND

The Prime Minister has announced that assault of shop workers will now be made a specific criminal offence in England and Wales (already applies in Scotland), Retail NI has called for Northern Ireland to be included in the new law.

**Retail NI Chief Executives Glyn Roberts said:**

“This is a welcome announcement by the Prime Minister given the huge increase in the physical and verbal abuse of shop workers in England and Wales”.

“Northern Ireland is now the only part of the UK not to have such laws to deter criminals and to protect shop staff”.

Retail NI has launched a comprehensive report on the experiences of our members relating to business crime. It outlines what the Department of Justice and PSNI need to do to tackle it.

“Top of our list is for this law to include Northern Ireland”.

“Our shop staff deserve no less”.



## REVAL 2026

Land & Property Services will soon begin to issue letters or emails to businesses, inviting them to complete a Rent & Lease Questionnaires (RALQs) as part of the Reval2026.

The letters should start to arrive with you around the 8 April 2024.

All RALQs can be completed online. Key dates

- The valuation date for Reval2026 is 1 April 2024.
- LPS asks that all RALQ information is submitted by 30 June 2024.
- The information collected will be used to develop a New Valuation List.

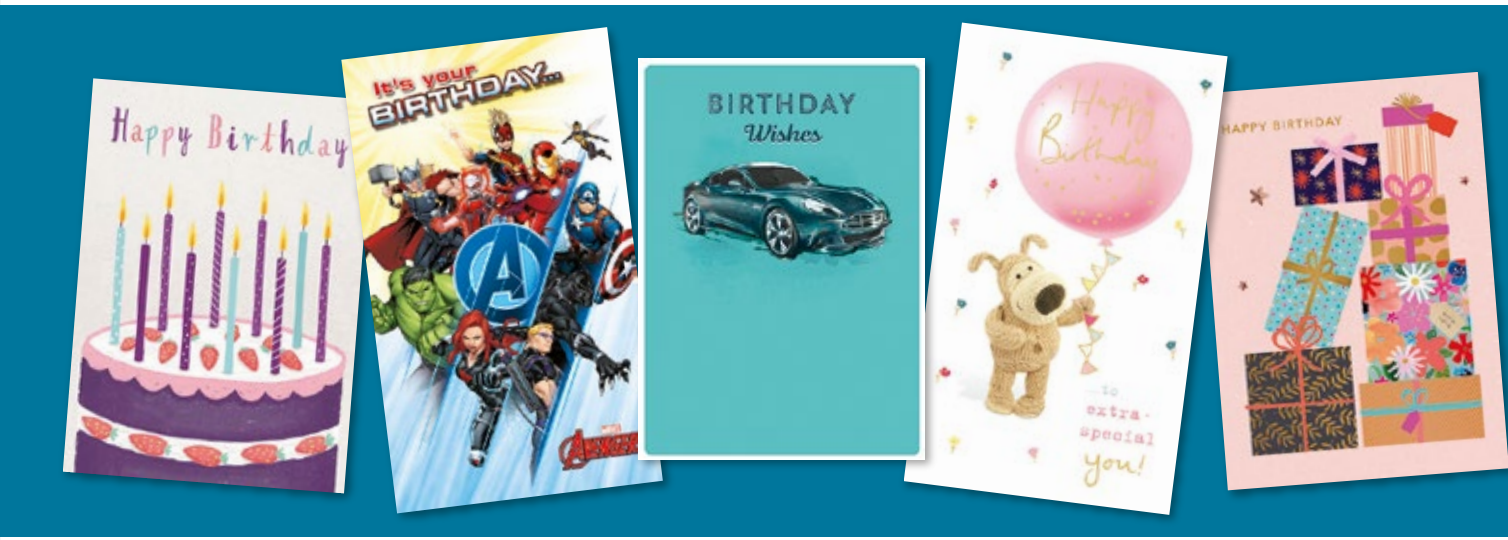


- The New Valuation List will take effect for billing purposes on 1 April 2026.

LPS has created a Reval2026 website with some information about the process and answers to frequently asked questions. The website can be found here:

<https://www.finance-ni.gov.uk/landing-pages/ni-reval2026>

The website also contains a link to contact the Reval2026 team. This is a simple online form which will allow LPS to triage the query and pass it through to the valuer dealing with that area/type of property. This is the most efficient manner to contact Reval staff.



## HAPPY CUSTOMERS MEAN HAPPY CARD SALES

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# TRADE NI WESTMINSTER RECEPTION

The Trade NI Northern Ireland Reception has been confirmed for Tuesday 22nd May 2024

Trade NI the alliance of the three largest trade bodies, Retail NI, Manufacturing NI and Hospitality Ulster, is set to host a significant Northern Ireland

showcase event in Westminster in May which will include Embassies from around the world, MP's, MLA's and local NI Businesses

The event in association with DWF and Titanic Quarter will be addressed by several senior

Government Ministers and will highlight why Northern Ireland is the ideal location to live in, invest in and do business in.

To attend contact Joelene Poole via email [joelene@retailni.com](mailto:joelene@retailni.com)



An Alliance of Hospitality Ulster, Retail NI and Manufacturing NI

Ian Paisley MP  
invites you to:

**THE NORTHERN IRELAND RECEPTION**  
**Wednesday 22nd May 2024 , 2pm – 4pm**  
**Terrace Pavilion, House of Commons**

Speakers will include senior Government Ministers  
and Shadow Cabinet Ministers

RSVP [joelene@retailni.com](mailto:joelene@retailni.com)

Entrance via Cromwell Green visitors' entrance  
Entrance closes at 10:00pm weekdays when either House is sitting and 8:00pm at all other times, incl. weekends

Please allow up to 30 minutes to clear security • Smoking/e-cigarettes not permitted • No parking facilities available  
Admittance upon presentation of invitation only • Guests are advised to bring personal photo identification



[www.retailni.com](http://www.retailni.com)



# RETAIL ROUND UP

## Executive Revenue Raising

After Mid and East Antrim Council voted to increase its business rates by nearly 12%, Retail NI has urged the Executive and other Councils not to target businesses as a way to implement further revenue raising.

### Retail NI Chief Executive Glyn Roberts said:

"It is an absolutely disgrace that Mid and East Antrim Council voted through a massive rate increase of nearly 12%. Why should our members and other small businesses in Mid and East Antrim have to bail out an inept council for its inability to balance its own budget?"

"Independent retailers and small businesses are already paying the highest business rates in the UK and this Council has made an already bad situation worse by this shameful decision".

"Mid and East Antrim's senior leadership team and the Councillors who voted for this increase have serious questions to answer"

"In England small businesses are getting a 75% reduction in their rates to assist with the Cost of Doing Business Crisis. Despite the UK Government giving Northern Ireland this funding as part of the Barnett Consequential, our local small businesses are unlikely to see a single penny of reduction in their rates bills with the money going



instead of the Stormont black hole"

"Why should independent retailers and small businesses in Northern Ireland be so unfairly treated in comparison to their English counterparts? Our local business sector shouldn't be targets for additional revenue raising at the Council or Executive level".

"At the very least the Finance Minister should freeze the non-domestic Regional Business Rate and begin a fundamental review of our broken and antiquated rating system"

## RETAIL NI MEMBER GETS ROYAL VISIT

Arcadia Delicatessen, a Lisburn road business of over 90 years standing, is delighted to represent small independent retail businesses on this wonderful occasion of a Royal Visit. Small family businesses are important to the local community and we were thrilled to welcome Her Majesty The Queen. Laura and Mark Brown spoke to Her Majesty about the role small independent retail business play in maintaining a sense of community and social cohesion and about the importance of shopping local. ARCADIA DELICATESSEN has been part of the retail offering of Belfast's

Lisburn road since 1933 It is a third generation family business with grandmother Eileen Brown running the business originally, followed by her son, William Son Mark and his wife, Laura have two daughters Matilda (16) and Dolly (13) who accompanied them in the shop to highlight the strong family ethos behind the business. Three generations of the Brown family were also present. The shop is a traditional style delicatessen selling cheese, charcuterie, pasta, olives and all sorts of delights. With a small, but long-standing and dedicated, team of eight staff they are honoured to be a well-loved part of the local



Arcadia & Queen Camilla

high street. Great Customer and renowned poet, Michael Longley recently described this part of the Lisburn rd as 'the centre of his universe'. Mark and Laura's daughter, Dolly presented a posy of locally grown spring flowers to The Queen created by local florist Allison Hood.

## Retail NI CEO Meets the PM

Retail NI CEO Glyn Roberts met the Prime Minister Rishi Sunak. He had useful discussions on devolution returning and the challenges facing all of our members.



Glyn Roberts & Rishi Sunak MP

## Appointment of New Ministers

Retail NI welcomed the appointment of new Executive Ministers back in February.

### Following the appointments Retail NI Chief Executive Glyn Roberts said

"A restored Executive and Assembly is long overdue but

very welcome nevertheless."

"The hard work starts now with Ministers hitting the ground running making speedy decisions on public sector pay, a multi year Budget and a draft Programme for Government"

'Huge challenges are ahead, but with restored political stability and a new spirit of partnership within the Executive, Business and wider civic society, we can make Northern Ireland a region of opportunity.'

"Let's get to it"

## OFCOM Call for Postal Service to be Modernised

Ofcom has called for the postal service to be modernised due to the decline in letter volumes over the last decade.

Royal Mail (RM) have legislative requirements set under the Universal Service Obligation (USO). These requirements have not changed since 2011, despite the increasing financial unsustainability within the letters market.

Ofcom's findings show that consumers prioritise reliability over speed and frequency, therefore their two

recommendations to change the USO are:

1 - Change the speed, so letters take up to three days or longer

2 - Change the frequency, change the number of delivery days to 3 or 5

Ofcom has justified these options by stating that the USO does not meet modern consumer needs and therefore is driving price increases. However these changes are likely to save RM £150-650m.

Any individuals or business who rely on the Royal Mail letter service, and do not agree with the options put forward can respond to Ofcom's call for input via this link: <https://www.ofcom.org.uk/consultations-and-statements/category-1/the-future-of-the-universal-postal-service>

Ofcom have also announced that they are holding Stakeholder events around the country, including Belfast Register your interest in attending - Stakeholder events on the future of the universal postal service ([eventogy.com](http://eventogy.com))



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### AWARD WINNING DESIGN



## Strengthening engagement processes with businesses central to delivering NI's energy transition



SONI (System Operator for Northern Ireland) is the Electricity Transmission System Operator for Northern Ireland. We manage the transmission system, or the 'Grid' as it is better known, to bring electricity to every part of Northern Ireland.

From our control centre in Belfast, we manage the electricity grid to ensure that power can flow safely, securely, and reliably from where it is generated to where it is needed. In addition to managing the Grid in real time, our expert engineers are responsible for planning ahead to ensure our energy infrastructure meets the needs of the future.

In short, SONI is required to balance Northern Ireland's future energy ambition with today's needs. As we work to deliver a cleaner energy future, we must ensure the security of supply for homes, farms, and businesses that consumers have come to expect. This will mean additional works in local towns, villages, and cities across Northern Ireland to ensure the crucial development of this infrastructure.

SONI are committed to ensuring this is done with the buy-in from local business and other key stakeholders which is why we are seeking views on our approach to engaging with key stakeholders, including

local communities, landowners, energy industry stakeholders and the business community as we work to deliver the energy transition.

The Northern Ireland Energy Strategy and the Climate Change (Northern Ireland) Act 2022 sets a legal target of 80% of electricity consumed coming from renewable sources by 2030. To enable more renewable energy to be integrated onto the power system, SONI has to strengthen and enhance the grid infrastructure.

The organisation recently consulted on its draft Transmission Development Plan, which sets out the grid infrastructure upgrades needed over the next ten years. We understand that no-one knows an area like those who work in it and provide services to the local community, which is why with only six years until 2030, we are working to enhance how we engage businesses right across NI, from small local retailers to large manufacturers. To support a review of the grid operator's engagement processes, we have issued a "Call for Views" to review our approach to public engagement through our Public Engagement Model.

We understand that businesses are a key stakeholder

at the heart of this unprecedented change in our electricity system and that's why SONI is leaving no stone unturned to ensure we are engaging and working collaboratively as best we can in delivering our part of the energy transition.

We want to ensure that SONI's grid development process remains a consultative, collaborative, and deliberative one; we already go far beyond what is required by planning policy, but we want to know what else we can do to enhance it further. Our goal is to find the best possible solution through understanding stakeholders' concerns and affording them the opportunity to help shape our plans.

Businesses can respond to our Call for Views via our online consultation portal, which closes on 29 March 2024, 17:00: <https://consult.soni.ltd.uk/browse>

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We understand that everyone has unique health needs. Our corporate programmes are tailored to work with companies, employers, and employees, to benefit all! Inclusion of a diagnostic health programme enables proactive consideration of the impact of a good health review, and if required, lifestyle changes that will both benefit employee and employer.

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## HOW IT WORKS

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office location at your preferred time and date.

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Workforce Analytics delivered to Employer – After conducting a through analysis, receive a comprehensive report summarising key findings to assist you in taking action to help improve the health of your workforce.

As well as emphasising the care your company has for its employees, corporate health packages have been shown to reduce illness, increase productivity, increase revenue and have a positive impact on mental health.

Contact [jason.webster@randoxhealth.com](mailto:jason.webster@randoxhealth.com) for more information.



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# PLANNING TO BUILD? CONTACT NI WATER FIRST



It doesn't matter if your plans are large or small, you must talk to NI Water before you submit your planning application. That is the advice from NI Water as it launches a campaign to highlight the steps developers, small builders and individuals planning to build or extend must follow.

Davy McGrath, Head of Developer Services, NI Water, explained: "Developers, builders and individual households are already seeing the impact of our constrained sewer network with multiple planning applications being recommended for rejection. Therefore, it is vital anyone trying to build contacts us early so we can review their plans to see if there are short term local solutions that can be implemented.

"Warnings about our struggling infrastructure were clearly highlighted with the phrase 'no drains, no cranes'. We are now seeing these warnings come to fruition.

"Therefore, it is vital you engage early with NI Water when planning to build or extend."

This can be done by filling out a Pre-Development Enquiry Form. This will help NI Water to identify any potential issues with plans that we can help resolve in advance of submitting your planning application.

If you apply for planning permission in an area where there are capacity issues, we will have to recommend



the application is turned down until you engage with us. This is to ensure we can continue to protect the environment. So please, engage with us early to avoid delays to your project and potential disappointment if your application is refused.

Further information on how to engage with the Developers Services Team and the 'Pre-Development Enquiry Form' can be found at [niwater.com](http://niwater.com).



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# ‘NORTHERN IRELAND OPEN FOR BUSINESS AND INVESTMENT READY’,

## Trade NI tells US audience at key event in Washington DC

Trade NI - the alliance of Retail NI, Manufacturing NI and Hospitality Ulster - told a high-powered audience of US business leaders and politicians that Northern Ireland is ready for new investment as it pitched its pathway for greater economic prosperity in the region.

The call came as the alliance hosted one of the largest and most influential business events ever to focus on the Northern Ireland economy at the National Press Club in Washington DC on 14th March 2024.

The Trade NI led gathering welcomed over 120 guests from the business community on both sides of the Atlantic with speakers including Conor Murphy, Minister for the

Economy, Joe Kennedy III, US Special Envoy to NI for Economic Affairs and Chris Heaton Harris, the Northern Ireland Secretary of State.

**Speaking jointly, the leadership of Trade NI, Stephen Kelly, Manufacturing NI, Glyn Roberts, Retail NI and Joel Neill, Hospitality Ulster said:**

“This event is about contributing, in a meaningful way, to the collective drive for greater economic growth and prosperity for Northern Ireland. To create economic success you need the right conditions locally, but you also need to go out into the world and find and attract



**Peter Curran, Chris Heaton Harris MP, Gareth Planck**

those in the business community who are willing to invest in our region and our people.”

“Renewed stability in our devolved institutions has given everyone a much needed confidence boost and has reinvigorated attention on Northern Ireland as an exciting economic zone which benefits from dual access to the EU and GB markets and a favourable investment community in the USA.”

“This is the right time to set out our stall to those here in the US who have supported us all in Northern Ireland for so long, not just through the peace process but in creating economic prosperity before and after the signing of the Belfast / Good Friday Agreement. Our message is clear - Northern Ireland is a great place to live, work and do business, and we have huge economic potential that we want our American friends to help us fulfil.”



**Stephen Kelly, Gareth Planck, Peter Curran, Andrea Haughian**



**Stephen Kelly, Suzanne Wylie, Andrea Haughian, Cathy Gormley-Heenan & Joel Neill**



**Andrew Elliott, Brian Murphy, Mike Nesbitt MP, Jonathan Buckley MLA**



**Stephen Kelly, Richard Hogg, Joe Kennedy III, Chris Heaton Harris MP, Glyn Roberts, Conor Murphy MLA, Joel Neill**

### They added:

“The warm reception we have had from the US business leaders and decision makers here today has been so encouraging. We know that the work done today alone won’t bear fruit overnight, but we are thrilled to be able to play our part in setting out our stall for greater economic development and expect many new conversations to be opened.”

**Economy Minister, Conor Murphy MLA said:**

“Today’s Trade NI reception has ensured that the North secured a significant presence in Washington DC this week. The US is our most important inward investor, outside of Europe it is our largest trading partner and

increasing numbers of US visitors are enjoying our retail, tourism, and hospitality offer.”

“Today has given us the opportunity to increase investment, trade, and tourism. We share a language, a large diaspora, and a skilled workforce. Hundreds of US firms have successfully made us their home on the other side of the Atlantic and now, with our unique dual market access, we are the perfect location for US firms to expand their businesses.”

“We will be following up on new connections made which will strengthen our economic bonds as we create good, regionally dispersed jobs, increase productivity, and meet our shared net zero challenge”.

**Kieran Donoghue, Chief Executive, Invest NI said:**

“Northern Ireland has vast untapped potential. We have a skilled workforce, a steady pipeline of talent from our higher and further education institutions, dual market access, and high performing industry clusters like tech, cyber security, and health and life sciences. But there is so much more we can achieve.”

“This industry led event builds upon and directly supports the work my team are doing in the US.

Thank you to the Trade NI alliance for pushing forward this initiative and providing a platform to tell potential investors, first hand, just how good Northern Ireland is to start and scale up a business or as a location for international expansion.”

**Gareth Planck, Partner, Eversheds Sutherland said:**

“This is such a timely event as the restoration of the Executive has created renewed confidence in Northern Ireland generally. The business and investment community in the US are sharpening their focus on the region as an economically exciting location.”

“The size and impact of this event proves that there is interest in Northern Ireland and a spirit of optimism that many have not felt for some time. We are ready to support new US based FDI through our global network and local offices in Belfast and Dublin as we collectively place fresh emphasis on economic prosperity for the benefit of Northern Ireland.”

**Brian Murphy, Managing Partner, BDO Northern Ireland said:**

“We are very proud to support Trade NI in its work in Belfast, Dublin, London and now in the US. A vibrant, growing private sector is vital if we are to ensure a strong future for Northern Ireland’s economy and communities. Northern Ireland is a region transformed over the past two decades creating prosperity for all. It’s now time to super charge that effort.”

There is a lot of global goodwill for our region and continued attraction of those who can influence the future growth of our economy is so important. We must harness the opportunity in front of us, ensuring a path is set that will allow us to be the best we can be over the next 5 to 10 years to gain a more fruitful prosperity dividend.”



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