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UK stores locking up chocolate to stop theft – 2nd March 2026

Level 4

Shops in the UK are taking extreme action to stop shoplifters from stealing chocolate. Stores are locking chocolate in plastic boxes. Customers must ask a member of staff to unlock the box. One supermarket said it is using "boxes on products which are regularly targeted" by thieves. Another store said chocolate theft was a "massive issue" and costs thousands of pounds a week. It said some shoplifters "literally swipe the whole shelf" of chocolate.

Chocolate is the latest target of criminal gangs. A store association said "prolific offenders" are stealing chocolate and selling it on the black market. Only alcohol is stolen more often. Another association said chocolate was now a "high value" target, so stores are installing anti-theft devices. There were more than 5.5 million reported incidents of shoplifting in the UK last year. Sadly, there are 1,600 of violent attacks against shop workers every day.

Level 5

Shops in the UK are going to extreme lengths to stop shoplifters from stealing chocolate. Stores are locking chocolate bars in plastic security boxes. Customers must ask a member of staff to unlock the box if they want to buy one. One leading supermarket said it has begun using "boxes on products which are regularly targeted" by thieves. Another popular store, the Co-op, said chocolate theft was a "massive issue". It said: "In a particular shop, one individual could cost us thousands of pounds in a week." It added that some shoplifters "literally swipe the whole shelf" of chocolate.

Chocolate is the latest target of criminal gangs. A convenience store association said chocolate is being stolen by "prolific offenders" and then sold on the black market. A spokesman said only alcohol was stolen more often in 2025. Another association said: "Chocolate is now a target, deemed to be 'high value,' so retailers have installed anti-theft devices." There were more than 5.5 million reported incidents of shoplifting in the UK last year. In London, only five per cent of these ended up in the courts. Sadly, there are 1,600 of violent attacks against shop workers every day.

Level 6

Shopkeepers in the UK are having to go to extreme lengths to stop shoplifters from stealing chocolate. The candy is being locked in plastic security boxes. Customers wishing to purchase a chocolate bar must ask a member of staff to unlock the box. One leading supermarket chain said it has begun using "boxes on products which are regularly targeted" by thieves. A spokesperson for another popular store, the Co-op, told the BBC that chocolate theft was a "massive issue". He said: "In a particular shop, one individual could cost us thousands of pounds in a week." He added that some people would visit a store and "literally swipe the whole shelf" of chocolate.

Chocolate is the latest target of criminal gangs. The UK's Association of Convenience Stores said the candy is being stolen by "prolific offenders" and then sold on the black market. The Co-op spokesman said chocolate was the product most often stolen from its stores in 2024, and was only second to alcohol in 2025. Another retail association said: "Chocolate is now a target, deemed to be 'high value,' so retailers have installed anti-theft devices to prevent it from being stolen." There were 5.5 million reported incidents of shop theft in the UK last year. In London, only five per cent of these end up in the courts. Disturbingly, there are 1,600 daily incidents of violence against shop workers.