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Retailers brace for Black Friday as they name it the worst time of the year for fraud

- Ahead of one of the busiest shopping periods of the year – Black Friday and Cyber Monday – nearly four in ten UK retailers say this is the worst time for fraud spikes.
- The new research from [payabl.](#) sees the days rank ahead of other key sales peaks, including Boxing Day and the post-Christmas January sales.
- Fraudsters stole £1.17 billion last year, with around £320 million lost to purchases made at online retailers with stolen card details.
- Both shoppers and retailers are urged to take proactive measures to reduce fraud risk.

10 November, Lisbon: Black Friday and Cyber Monday have been named by UK retailers as the worst period for increased fraud activity, new research from leading European financial technology provider [payabl.](#) finds.

In the run-up to one of the busiest weekends in the shopping calendar, nearly four in ten (37%) senior leaders in the sector identified the Black Friday and Cyber Monday weekend as the period where they are most likely to see a rise in fraudulent transactions, attempted and successful. This ranks above other peak retail periods such as the summer holidays (33%), the January sales (30%) and Boxing Day (24%).

The research, announced at Web Summit Lisbon, echoes the broader high levels of fraudulent activity in the UK, with £1.17 billion lost to fraud in 2024 and around £320 million alone lost to e-commerce purchases made via stolen card details.*

For retailers, the most common fraud types they've seen over the last 12 months are:

- **Fraudulent returns** (44%), where a fraudster seeks refunds on goods they never purchased.
- **Lost or stolen payment details** (36%), where criminals use stolen details - including credit or debit cards – to purchase items.
- **Chargeback fraud** (31%), where buyers falsely dispute legitimate transactions but keep the goods.

This is also reflected in shoppers' experiences. UK adults are most likely to identify having their credit or debit card details stolen as the type of fraud they are now most concerned about (33%).

Ugne Buraciene, Group CEO of [payabl.](#), said: *"Black Friday's promise of a bargain can unfortunately create the perfect scenario for fraudsters to exploit, with retailers and shoppers alike paying the price. For retailers, the surge in both buyers and transactions can pile on the pressure to keep up with demand to provide a seamless shopping experience while ensuring they still identify and keep customers safe from fraud. At the same time, shoppers need to stay vigilant against those who look to exploit them with offers that may simply be too good to be true."*

“As fraudsters’ methods grow more sophisticated, a single incident can not only impact a retailer’s revenue but also damage customer trust – something far harder to build back. This is why investing in smarter, more adaptive fraud prevention is so critical. The goal can’t just be to block suspicious activity, but to protect genuine customers and ensure their experience remains smooth and secure.

“This Black Friday, preparation and proactive measures will make all the difference when it comes to capturing legitimate sales while minimising the risk to customers.”

For retailers, keeping pace with the evolution of fraud is proving a constant challenge. A third (33%) say the speed at which scams develop is their biggest concern, while others struggle to balance smooth checkout experiences (31%) and effective security measures (29%). Many small and medium businesses (up to 249 employees) admit limited resources make it harder to respond (28%), and a quarter (27%) highlight the complexity of redress, including chargebacks, as a persistent issue.

In response, most retail leaders are now looking to strengthen their defences, with 84% wanting better fraud-prevention technology for their business and 76% planning to invest more in this area over the next year.

To support retailers, payabl. recently published a [new guide](#) to help businesses prepare for increased demand, offering advice on securing checkouts, reducing cart abandonment and maintaining a seamless customer experience, to help them protect both their revenue and their customers.

Notes to editors

* UK Finance, [Annual Fraud Report 2025](#)

Media contact: Seven Consultancy - payabl@seven-consultancy.com

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Methodology

Opinium Research, on behalf of payabl, surveyed 200 merchants serving European and UK markets between 11th and 22nd September 2025.

About payabl.

Established in 2011, payabl. is a leading financial technology provider with offices in Germany, the Netherlands, Cyprus, and the UK. The company offers a comprehensive range of payment products, including card acquiring, business accounts, integration to over 300 local payment methods, and POS terminals. payabl. offers its customers a high-tech, high-touch approach, providing future-proofed payment solutions to merchants from a wide range of sectors around the world. With unrivalled experience in helping clients navigate the complexity of an ever-evolving payments environment, payabl. is the trusted partner for the world’s most innovative merchants to unlock growth. To learn more, visit: payabl.com

