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Gateshead Woman Dodges Jail After Stealing Nearly 100 Easter Eggs in Shoplifting Spree

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— Categories: Crime



A serial shoplifter from Gateshead has avoided another prison sentence despite stealing dozens of Easter eggs and hundreds of pounds worth of goods from multiple stores across Newcastle earlier this year.

Dawn Thompson, 49, of Adelaide Court in Gateshead, appeared before Newcastle Magistrates' Court this week for sentencing after admitting to three counts of shop theft and one public order offence.

Despite her previous record, District Judge Kate Meek handed Thompson an 18-month community order instead of a prison sentence, citing her ‘recent progress.’ “Because you have had a chunk of time out of trouble and there has been some good progress made on your behalf, I’m going to give you a community order,” the judge stated.

As part of her sentence, Thompson must pay a total of £315.15 in compensation to the affected stores and has been banned from entering any Sainsbury’s, Waitrose, or Co-op locations for the next six months.

The court heard that Thompson, a repeat offender with a history of custodial sentences, carried out a string of thefts in April and May 2025, including the large-scale theft of Easter chocolate.

Prosecutor Paul Coulson outlined the incidents, beginning with the theft of 94 Easter eggs worth £164.50 from Sainsbury’s on Falconar Street in Shieldfield on April 3. Just two days later, Thompson took two bottles of whiskey valued at £66.50 from Waitrose in Jesmond. The spree continued on May 12 when she targeted a Co-op in Ryton, stealing a combined £500 worth of items, including alcohol, milk, and baby nappies.

Alongside the thefts, Thompson also faced a charge of using threatening behaviour at a Shell garage, where she made threats when confronted, further compounding her offences.

During the court proceedings, Thompson admitted to using her Personal Independence Payment (PIP), a government benefit for those with disabilities or long-term health issues, to fund her crack cocaine use. When asked about the comment made to a probation officer that she had bought crack as a “treat”, she replied in court: “I paid for it out me PIP. It’s how I deal with my problems. I’m waiting to go for counselling.”

Defence solicitor Ian Wilson told the court that Thompson was now in stable accommodation and had shown signs of change, highlighting that she had not committed further offences since May. “Although (sic) it is only since May, she’s proud she managed to stay out of trouble and not re-offend,” he said.

Thompson also revealed she is now on a methadone programme, indicating a step towards tackling her long-standing drug issues.