

OpenVoiceNews U.K.

Transparent. Unbiased. Yours.

Fluffy Targets: How Jellycat Toys Became a New Prize for Criminals

July 3, 2025

— Categories: Crime



Once just cute and cuddly gifts, Jellycat soft toys have become the focus of a surprising new crime wave across the UK. With their rising popularity and collectability, opportunistic thieves and organised criminal gangs are stealing these plush toys from independent shops.

Jellycat toys, known for their soft textures and quirky designs, have taken social media by storm, with fans of all ages eager to collect them. The craze has even reached Buckingham Palace. The Prince and Princess of Wales were recently gifted two Jellycat toys at a royal garden party, with Prince William joking, “These are like gold dust, my children go crazy for these things.”

But this soaring demand has come with a cost. Retailers across the country, including garden centres and bookshops, are reporting a growing number of thefts. The toys are often stolen in bulk and later appear on online marketplaces like eBay, Vinted, and Facebook selling groups, sometimes marked up to £200 for the larger models.

Just last week, Dorset Police appealed for help after a woman stole nearly £250 worth of Jellycats from a bookshop in Christchurch. In another case, West Mercia Police arrested a woman linked to thefts at two garden centres in Worcestershire. And in February, a woman in Norfolk admitted to stealing nearly £3,000 of Jellycat toys from multiple shops.

These incidents are not isolated. In March, a garden store in Somerset was hit by a ram raid, with around 300 Jellycats allegedly stolen. CCTV footage from a Dorset nursery showed a woman pushing a pram while allegedly stealing several toys.

Retailers are feeling the impact. Charlie Groves, owner of Groves Nursery in Bridport, said: “It’s just another sought-after good criminals are turning to. There’s a clear cost to all this.”

The Jellycat brand, founded in 1999 by brothers Tom and Will Gatacre, started at a London trade show and quickly gained popularity in top department stores. Today, the company limits its UK stockists to 1,200 for a better shopping experience. Unfortunately, this exclusivity also adds to the toys’ value and appeal among resellers.

Katy Bourne, retail crime lead for the Association of Police and Crime Commissioners (APCC), said Jellycats are now among the most stolen retail items. She encourages shops to report thefts to a national police information-sharing system called Project Pegasus.

According to the Office for National Statistics, shoplifting in the UK reached record highs in 2024, with over 516,000 offences, a 20% rise from the previous year. As the value of Jellycats continues to climb, their status as collector’s items may turn them from treasured toys into prime targets for crime.