

Retail Review

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Prepared by
Daniel Holloway
Retail Consultant, Royal Trinity Hospice



Introduction

Royal Trinity Hospice is delighted to have been given the opportunity to deliver retail consultancy services to St Raphael's Hospice. The project objectives were to

- Conduct a diagnostic of the current shop, ecommerce, central and distribution estate.
- Review retail's position and team engagement within the wider organisation
- Provide a high-level outline and proposal for strategic retail USP
- Identify areas for improvement and growth opportunities along with actionable recommendations to optimise retail operations.
- Enhance overall profitability, operational efficiency and impact.

This document lays out a proposal for changes to the current operating model along with a suite of opportunities and recommendations around the four pillars of retail success:

- Leadership/People
- Customer Experience
- Commerciality
- Operations

The consultancy project was undertaken by Daniel Holloway with this diagnostic report and the recommendations delivered as part of 7 days work. Daniel's key contacts were Rebecca Trower and John Groom with whom he agreed the objectives and methodology. As part of his research, Daniel spent time with Sara Jane Harries, Caroline Worley, Natalie Page, Lorraine Hunt, Gordon Craig and Nick Stevens. Accompanied by John, he also visited the stores in Sutton, SDC, Carshalton, Morden, Banstead and Wimbledon Village. On each visit Daniel met with the store manager/team and gathered useful insights from those on the front line.

Executive summary

The following pages outline the findings, observations and recommendations following a review of the retail operation at St Raphael's Hospice. Key proposals include.

- Refocusing the stores around clearer store segmentation, disciplined product and pricing strategies, with stronger operational processes to ensure “right stock, right place, right price.”
- Creating a more distinct proposition across the stores and thus reducing the over-reliance on clearance formats. High street stores represent the greatest opportunity to drive income growth.
- Proposal to review underperforming stores and complex product categories to align with limited management capacity
- Targeted investment in leadership, to improve team development, strategic direction, consistent in store delivery, cultural change and commercial results.
- Introducing corporate donations.
- Investing in a structured training programme to grow capability, improve engagement, and support long-term retail growth.



High level numbers – FY 25/26

- Total income FY
 - £1,973,796 vs Budget of £2,093,611
 - (£119,815) (6%)
- Contribution
 - £345,418 vs Budget of £410,168
 - (£64,751) (16%)
- Highs & Lows (Contribution)
 - Wimbledon Village £91K, Morden £74K, New Malden £53K
 - SDC (£47K), Raynes Park (£18K), Stonecot Hill (£3K)



Store visit observations

- At its heart, St Raphael's Hospice shops are community stores, serving a tight, local catchment area with a central cause very visible to its customer base.
- Staffing in stores is tight, with a heavy reliance on volunteers
- Store managers would benefit from more operational support and localised guidance
- Inline with current charity retail modelling, the organisation has rightly split the shops into three different segments, Boutique, High Street and Clearance shops.
- Whilst splitting the stores into clusters is the right thing to do, there is inconsistency in delivery and a heavy weighting to the number of clearance stores which is impacting the overall performance of the group.
- The product presentation and customer experience within each of the segments would benefit from being more clearly defined
- Competition in many locations is fierce, both for shoppers and donations. Eg : Banstead has 6 other shops within a 5 minute walk.
- The performance across each shop varies significantly against all the key metrics; sales, profit, average unit price, average transaction value, gift aid conversion etc.
- The average unit price is a significant influencer in the performance of the stores, under indexing vs the competition on the key apparel categories.
- The Furniture and Electrical offer feels incongruous to its surroundings and provides unique operational challenges
- On the surface of it, the Boutique and Clearance stores appear to perform best
- For the FY, Raynes Park recorded a loss of £4K (before the addition of the HQ costs). The other key store recording a loss for the year is the distribution centre in Sutton (£14,641).
- The absence of corporate donations is an opportunity
- Gift Aid conversion at 23% represents an opportunity for improvement

Scenario planning

- The following slide illustrate the sensitivity in St Raphael's current store performance; I have outlined two scenarios.
 - Scenario 1 – Shows a 3% drop in income and a 3% increase in costs
 - Scenario 2 – Shows a 5% drop in income and a 5% increase in costs
- Scenario 1 sees overall contribution drop by £96K to £248K
- Scenario 2 sees overall contribution drop by £161K to £184K

Sales & Profit Scenario Analysis

	Banstead	Cars' ton	Cheam	Ebay	Morden	New Malden	Pop Ups	Raynes Park	Rosehill	SDC	Stonecot Hill	Sutton	Wimb'	Total Shops
Income	136,781	149,392	165,280	16,201	232,859	178,885	58,395	86,694	160,091	198,177	88,617	160,755	283,459	1,915,586
Staff Costs	57,640	49,314	65,249	3,617	82,764	60,583	0	47,017	53,118	128,273	44,002	62,234	67,618	721,429
Property Costs	39,642	27,638	42,851	0	33,775	32,424	1,519	29,946	28,732	63,166	25,661	46,296	70,572	442,222
Other DC	9,646	9,841	14,666	542	12,794	9,750	7,055	13,831	9,393	21,378	8,804	11,879	18,502	148,081
Total Store Costs	106,928	86,793	122,766	4,159	129,333	102,757	8,574	90,794	91,243	212,817	78,467	120,409	156,692	1,311,732
Cont before HQ	29,853	62,599	42,514	12,042	103,526	76,128	49,821	-4,100	68,848	-14,640	10,150	40,346	126,767	603,854
Allocation of HQ	19,516	18,913	23,066	1,630	29,003	22,553	5,363	14,213	20,126	32,911	13,380	22,515	35,246	258,435
Contribution	10,337	43,686	19,448	10,412	74,523	53,575	44,458	-18,313	48,722	-47,551	-3,230	17,831	91,521	345,419
Income Drop 3%	132,678	144,910	160,322	15,715	225,873	173,518	56,643	84,093	155,288	192,232	85,958	155,932	274,955	1,858,118
Income Drop 5%	129,942	141,922	157,016	15,391	221,216	169,941	55,475	82,359	152,086	188,268	84,186	152,717	269,286	1,819,807
TS Costs rise 3%	110,136	89,397	126,449	4,284	133,213	105,840	8,831	93,518	93,980	219,202	80,821	124,021	161,393	1,351,084
TS Costs rise 5%	112,274	91,133	128,904	4,367	135,800	107,895	9,003	95,334	95,805	223,458	82,390	126,429	164,527	1,377,319
Contribution 3&3	3,026	36,600	10,807	9,801	63,657	45,126	42,449	-23,638	41,182	-59,881	-8,243	9,396	78,316	248,599
Contribution 5&5	-1,848	31,877	5,046	9,394	56,413	39,493	41,110	-27,187	36,155	-68,101	-11,584	3,773	69,513	184,053

Charity Retail Association – Selling price data

Median average selling price for donated goods, Jan-Dec 2025

	£5.21	Womenswear
	£6.00	Menswear
	£2.47	Children's
	£1.65	Media
	£3.26	Bric-a-brac / household
	£1.50	Books
	£9.28	Electrical goods
	£16.01	Furniture
	£2.38	Books
	£14.09	Electrical goods
	£45.67	Furniture
	£1.73	Books
	£2.8	Clothing
	£2.42	Bric-a-brac / household
	£1.19	Books and media
	£4.67	Womenswear
	£5.60	Menswear
	£2.52	Children's
	£1.62	Media
	£2.98	Bric-a-brac / household
	£1.15	Books
	£10.83	Electrical goods
	£40	Furniture

St Raphael's	Total £	Cheam £	Morden £
Womenswear	4.28	9.97	2.56
Menswear	4.50	12.18	2.83
Childrenswear	2.32	3.23	1.54
Books	1.48	1.63	1.07
Media	1.73	2.33	1.16
Bric	3.39	5.41	1.97
Electrical	10.31	16.06	3.21

Please note the CRA data is Jan to Dec '25, where as the St Raphael's data is April '25 to March '26

Observations

- Currently Womenswear & Accessories make up 48% of St Raphael's sales with Menswear a further 11%. Bric makes up 22%. With a combined total of over 80% of the business, getting these categories right is critical to the overall success.
- There are significant differences in the ASP between locations with the company average below that of the sector in all apparel areas
- In the key category of Womenswear, 7% of the units sold are in Boutique stores, 14% in High Street stores, with 78% sold in Clearance outlets
- Rebalancing the sales mix by store, though selling less units through clearance stores and more in high street stores would have a significant effect on overall performance



Market positioning for each cluster of stores

- I believe there is a compelling opportunity to improve the performance of the stores by strengthen the segmentation of the three distinct shop groups. Whilst all trading under the St Raphael's brand, the three segments should tell uniquely different stories and allow for a targeted product assortment and bespoke customer experience in each location
- Broadly speaking St Raphael's is seeing the strongest performance in the clearance and boutique stores, the former driven by price and the latter by volume. These stores work to a point, though do have opportunities for improvement. The biggest opportunities however lie in the high street/community stores. At present, all stores, regardless of segmentation, sell pretty much all product categories, I believe this should be reviewed, which I will outline over the next few pages.
- I believe there is an opportunity to put much clearer water between the three segments and therefore significantly impact the average selling prices, volumes and overall sales performance of each shop.
- Boutique stores should focus exclusively on the fashion conscious, sustainable shopper. These stores would showcase the top end of St Raphael's offer and would be designed, stocked and have the environment of a premium charity retail offer
- High Street stores should focus on being treasure troves, full of variety and opportunities, with great prices front of mind.
- Clearance stores should focus on variety, value and affordability.
- The three groups of stores would each have different “personalities” that would be reflected primarily through the product assortment and price, though also through the staffing model, environment and customer experience.
- eBay/Ecommerce should be reserved exclusively for unique pieces where a wider audience is needed to maximise the selling price

Boutique Stores

Curated, Conscious, Chic

“Step into our boutique stores for a handpicked selection of higher-end donated fashion, with womenswear leading the way. We blend quality style with purpose, layering in beautiful homewares, lifestyle pieces, and accessories – all thoughtfully presented to inspire sustainable, stylish living”

Store Profile	Boutique Stores
Stores	- Wimbledon Village, Cheam
Product Level	- High end
Product Assortment	- Womenswear, Accessories, Menswear – Seasonally appropriate only - Decorative Lifestyle Home
Customer Positioning	- Product driven, quality over price - Sustainable shopper - Storytelling is key
Environment	- Calm, boutique feel, black hangers, focus on service - No damaged stock for sale
Staffing	- Fashion and sustainability enthusiasts
Discounting	- Never, always reprice individually

Community Stores (High Street)

Great Finds, Great Prices, Great Cause

“Our community stores are local treasure troves, offering something for everyone – from fashion and homeware to toys, books, and more. With friendly prices and ever-changing stock, these stores bring value, variety, and heart to the high street”

Store Profile	Community Stores
Volume	Banstead, Carshalton, Raynes Park, Stonecot Hill
Product Level	- Mid level
Product Assortment	- Womenswear, Accessories, Menswear & Childrenswear - Books, Bric and Media (Heavily curated)
Customer Positioning	- Product is the driver for entering the store, value is the driver for purchase
Environment	- Great product at great prices
Staffing	- Community centred mindset
Discounting	- % Promotional rails for selected events



Clearance Stores

Everyday Value, Everyday Impact

“Designed with value front and centre, these stores are all about affordable essentials and hidden gems. With all categories represented, they’re the go-to for smart shopping that supports real community engagement”

Store Profile	Clearance Stores
Volume	- Morden, New Malden, Rosehill & Sutton
Product Level	- Low, though never soiled/damaged
Product Assortment	- Womenswear, Accessories, Menswear & Childrenswear - Books, Bric and Media
Customer Positioning	- Price is the driver for entering the store, price is the driver for purchase
Environment	- Value driven - Innovative deals, offers and promotions to drive footfall
Staffing	- Loves energy, pace (organised) chaos!
Discounting	- Clearance rails price pointed to clear stock/Innovative offers

Opportunities

As part of reimagining the organisation, several key operational activities and initiatives will support the transition and expediate the growth. The opportunities focus on the four critical areas that influence retail performance.

1. **Leadership & People** – to build a strong, engaged and high performing team driven by St Raphael's organisational values
2. **Commerciality** – to strengthen financial performance and strategic decision making
3. **Operations** – to enhance efficiency, processes and overall effectiveness
4. **Customer Experience** – to elevate satisfaction and loyalty through exceptional service, along with engagement for the wider charity.



Leadership & People

Recruitment & Retention	Training & Development	Volunteers
1. Add in an Area Manager to manage all day to day operational matters 2. Review headcount and ensure that boutique stores are prioritised with appropriate numbers of and experienced sales teams. 3. Create centres of excellence within each group of stores to set up and show what great looks like. Use these to train and educate.	1. Design training modules for all retail managers covering Leadership, Commerciality, Customer Experience and Operations 2. Introduce bespoke Customer Experience training for boutique store teams 3. A programme of events, activities and communications, engaging the shops teams with the wider organisation would improve inter departmental working.	1. Define an optimal volunteer rota by store and work towards aligning to model 2. Ensure an effective recruitment process is in place to align the needs of the volunteer with the needs of the store 3. Design a modular training programme to develop volunteer's skills and experience

Commerciality

Sales & Profit	Product Assortment	Donor Strategy
1. The key to St Raphael's growth lies in improving the AUP/ATV in all stores. 2. A sales density exercise will support space/sales alignment 3. Improving Gift Aid is an opportunity; a robust training programme along with operational changes should be designed.	1. Smarten up stores to create a real point of difference vs competition 2. Always lead with fashion in all stores 3. Review minimum price points in all stores and for all categories	1. Introduce a corporate donations function 2. Target specific local businesses and engage with community groups for donations 3. Advertise for specific product lines with urgency

Retail Operations

Pricing	Distribution	E Commerce
1. Review product assortment by store cluster and ensure that there are clear lines of understanding 2. Create a more thorough price guide to assist stores and create consistency 3. Use bundles to increase ATV and clear stock in the clearance stores	1. The current stock movement system needs reviewing to ensure that the right stock is in the right place. 2. Agile movement of stock is critical for this project to work. 3. Review driver capacity to ensure ease of stock movement around the business	1. Conduct a deep dive review on all hidden costs associated with the eBay operation. 2. Review current listings to ensure only unique/commercial pieces are listed 3. Set a minimum price point for all ecommerce stock

As an aside, I would lose the “Window” revenue line. Trade for the year is significant at £76K, though untraceable beyond “window” Furniture would appear to be included in Bric, which also makes sales difficult to analyse

Customer Experience

Brand Positioning	In Store Experience	Social Media
1. Undertake a customer survey to understand motivations and trends for shopping and donating at St Raphael's. 2. Define brand through each of the store segments 3. Increase the emotional as well as functional messaging to stores	1. Always lead in with womenswear/clothing. Home/Bric should be strong, but towards the back of the store 2. Conduct a St Raphael's "senses" review (on the back of the survey) 3. Windows must tell one story and not try to be too many things.	1. Agree marketing calendar and SLA's with central comms team 2. Dial up social content and messaging specifically around core categories 3. Focus on unique/vintage pieces that reinforce brand authority

Volunteers

Like many charities, volunteers play a critical role in the running of the stores at St Raphael's and their contribution is invaluable. There are however a couple of call outs, that need to be reflected upon to ensure the stores are as commercially run as possible.

- Whilst without doubt volunteers play a vital role in keeping stores running and creating a welcoming community feel, they are most effective when complementing, rather than replacing, a strong core of paid staff.
- In my experience, volunteers certainly bring passion and ideas to the shop and achieve the greatest impact when directed to work within the charities agreed strategy.
- Careful coordination of volunteer hours helps ensure stores are well-supported during busy periods, while avoiding gaps or overstaffing at quieter times.

For volunteering to work best, there needs to be a clear understanding of how each party benefits from the experience. With clear guidance, structure, and communication, volunteers can feel confident in their roles and make a meaningful contribution to both the store and the wider hospice mission.



Key recommendations & considerations

1. The biggest opportunity to drive income is to get the right stock in the right place at the right price. This involves defining the store cluster/segmentations more clearly, with the focus on high street stores.
2. Across the estate, focus on product: improve price architecture and consistency, integrity within clusters, stock movement between stores and a uniformed RAG price.
3. Create a USP in the product presentation in stores to include VM, Assortment and Staffing, most important in Boutique & HS stores
4. Review viability of Raynes Park & Stonecot Hill remaining open
5. Review all stock/kit being held outside of shops, particularly in SDC, off site warehouse and the Big Yellow store, with a view to streamlining. Can the space in Wimbledon Park be used?
6. Decide on the viability of continuing to sell Furniture & Electrical items (hidden costs and management time)
7. Remodel the SDC to a (higher end) community store (window on the world)
8. To improve the quality, shift the emphases of donations, towards stores rather than the DC (personal and local)
9. Along with bringing in a Head of Retail, also invest in an Area Manager to manage the day-to-day operational matters.
10. Introduce a Corporate Donations function
11. Keep focussed on the core retail offer, beware of distractions with hidden costs (Eg: Furniture, Electrical, Events)
12. Produce and deliver a suite of training modules for shop managers to support leadership, commercial, operational and customer development.

Note: The people/cultural impact of undertaking this transformation should not be underestimated. A full and complete comms plan should be designed and communicated prior to any action being taken.

Investment prioritisation

What	Why	How
Introduce an Area Manager	To manage the day-to-day operational challenges along with coaching and training.	This would be an additional headcount
Introduce a Stock & Logistics Function	Having the right stock in the right place at the right price would be a big win	Could this be undertaken by the current PT Ops Manager (if an Area Manager was introduced)
Introduce a Corporate Donations Function	Introducing CD's is an excellent way of elevating both the financial performance and brand awareness	Could this be absorbed by someone in Fundraising initially
Increase staffing in shops	To drive financial performance, (sales and GA) customer experience and operational efficiencies	I would start in the Boutique stores, with the intention of creating consistent 7 day a week cover.

Size of the prize

- Current costs that need urgent consideration include
 - Raynes Park currently making a £4K loss before HQ costs
 - SDC currently making a £14K loss before HQ costs
 - Big Yellow stores currently costing £800 p/a (figure TBC)
- By altering the operating model, revenue opportunities open up, including
 - By shifting the AUP of Womenswear from £4.28 to the CRA average of £5.21 would net an additional £150K p/a
 - By shifting the AUP of Menswear from £4.50 to the CRA average of £6.00 would net an additional £73,500 p/a
 - Introducing Corporate Donations significantly improves the AUP as well as total retail sales. RTH currently have a CD business of £1.3M p/a
 - With improved staff training and execution, Gift Aid could bring in an additional £50K p/a

Conclusion

- During my time in stores, I met committed teams, who were looking for additional central support. The staff were enthusiastic and dedicated and would benefit from clearer processes, guidance and training.
- There is some great product in the stores, though sometimes in the wrong price and often at the wrong price. By focussing on a product and pricing strategy, there is a big opportunity to increase the AUP and therefore overall sales.
- Listening to staff, volunteers and customers the charity is loved, widely respected and its work appreciated. With more structure, consistency and guidance, the stores are well placed to grow both commercially as well as enhance the community impact for the wider organisation.

