The Local Shop Report 2024

A report by the Association of Convenience Stores

#LocalShopReport

ACS the voice of local shops

Contents

Why we are important

£49.4bn total sales

Over **£10.8bn** in GVA

£1bn invested

445,000 jobs

71% of stores are run by independent retailers

Introduction

The UK's 50,000+ convenience stores are the embodiment of the everyday economy. Our local shops, operating in just about every postcode, provide essential goods and a growing range of services, secure and flexible jobs, and ongoing investment in technology, productivity and people. For the millions of customers that visit their local shop every day, convenience stores are not just a place to do their shopping, but a social hub and a support network, open day and night.

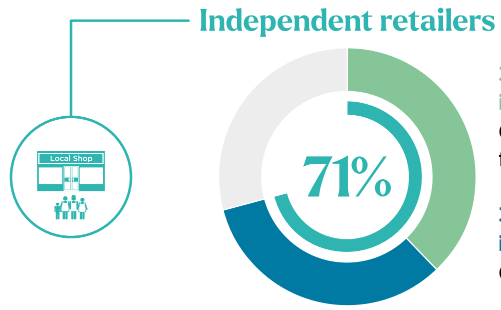
Convenience stores are engines of local growth, investing over a billion pounds in the last year in futureproofing their businesses – through new services to meet customer needs, as well as green investment to reduce their exposure to cost shocks like energy bill hikes. This is a sector that generates over £10bn in GVA for the UK economy, but more importantly, tens of thousands of pounds invested in every constituency, week-in-week-out to support other local businesses and drive inclusive growth in our communities.

The Local Shop Report provides a comprehensive overview of the people that run and work in local shops, the products and services on offer, and the customers that they serve. We believe the Local Shop Report demonstrates how essential our nation's convenience stores are, a part of the universal basic infrastructure that every successful community needs, serving places where people are proud to live, work and shop.

Who we are

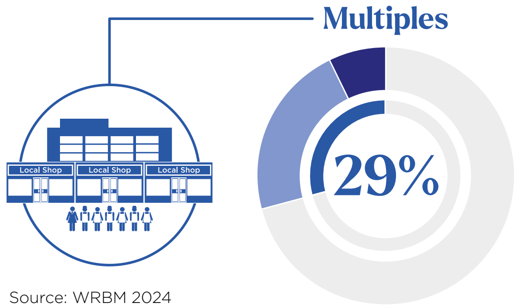
There are **50,387** convenience stores in mainland UK

Shop ownership



38% Unaffiliated independents (including unaffiliated forecourts)

33% Symbol group independents (including franchises)



22% Other multiples (including multiple owned forecourts and multiples trading under symbol groups)

7% Co-operatives

Source: WRBM 2024

Unaffiliated independents
Independent retailers operating under their own fascia.

Symbol groups
Independent retailers who trade under a common fascia e.g. Nisa. Multiple businesses can also trade under a symbol group e.g. A.F. Blakemore (SPAR).

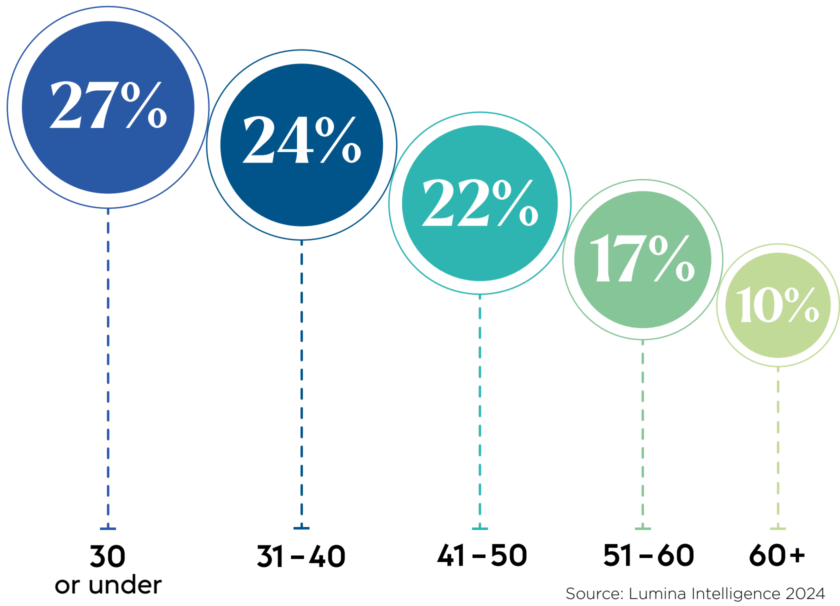
Co-operatives
Groups of stores that are owned by their members.

Convenience multiples
Retail businesses operating chains of 10 or more convenience stores under a centrally-owned fascia e.g. Tesco Express.

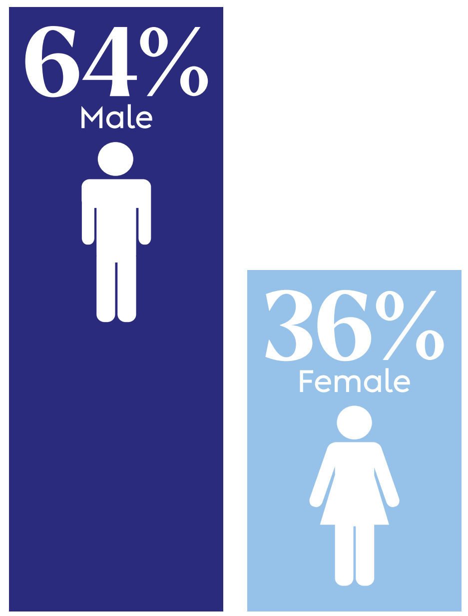
Forecourts
Convenience stores located on petrol filling stations. Forecourts are included within each of the retailer types and can be unaffiliated, symbol group, multiple or co-operative businesses.
For more information about the forecourt sector please see the ACS Forecourt Report.

Entrepreneurs

The people who own and run stores are:



Source: Lumina Intelligence 2024



Source: Lumina Intelligence 2024

Where we trade

Location

Rural

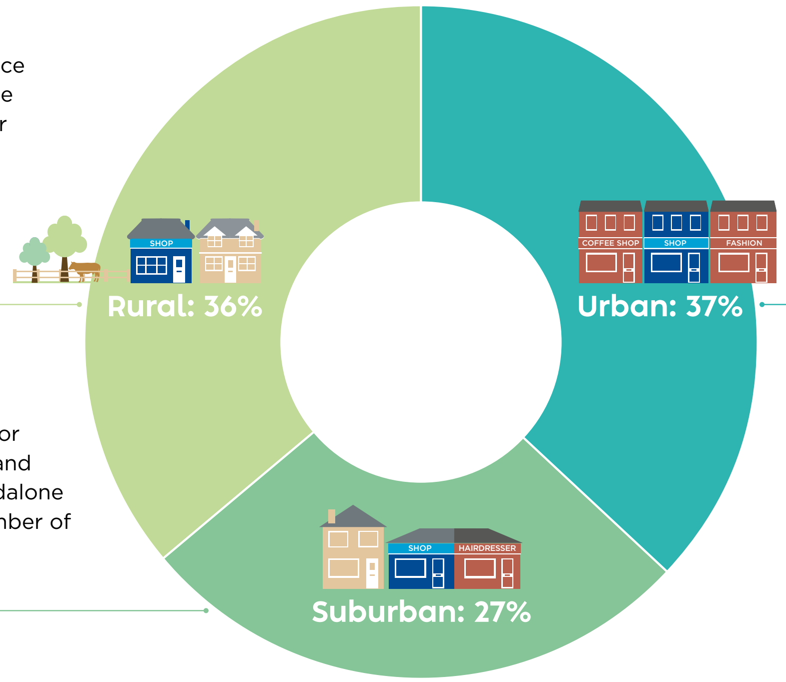
A 'traditional' convenience store, often providing the only shopping option for the local community.

Suburban

Providing a focal point for suburban communities and estates sometimes standalone or alongside a small number of other local services.

Urban

Operating as part of a mix of stores serving the needs of those living in centres and the shopping needs of workers and residents.



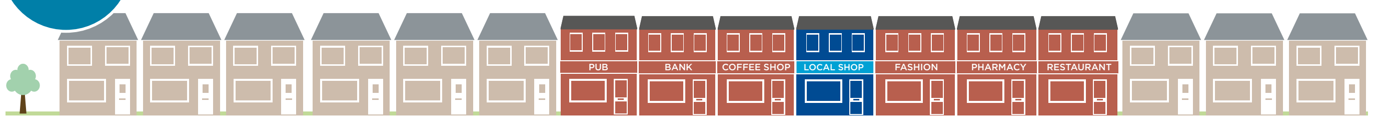
Source: WRBM 2024

Neighbouring businesses

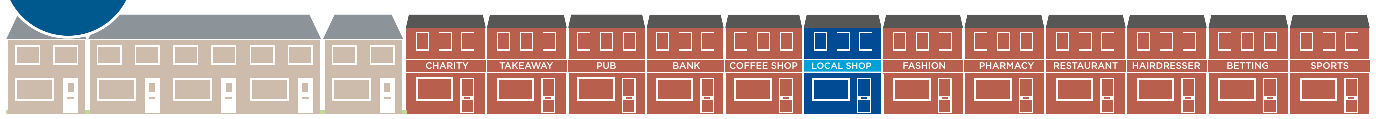
33% Isolated store
No other retail/service businesses close by.

40% Located on a small parade
Up to five retail/service businesses close by.

11% Located on a larger parade or a high street
Up to 10 retail/service businesses close by.



16% Located on a main high street or within a city centre
More than 10 retail/service businesses close by.



Source: Lumina Intelligence 2019-2023

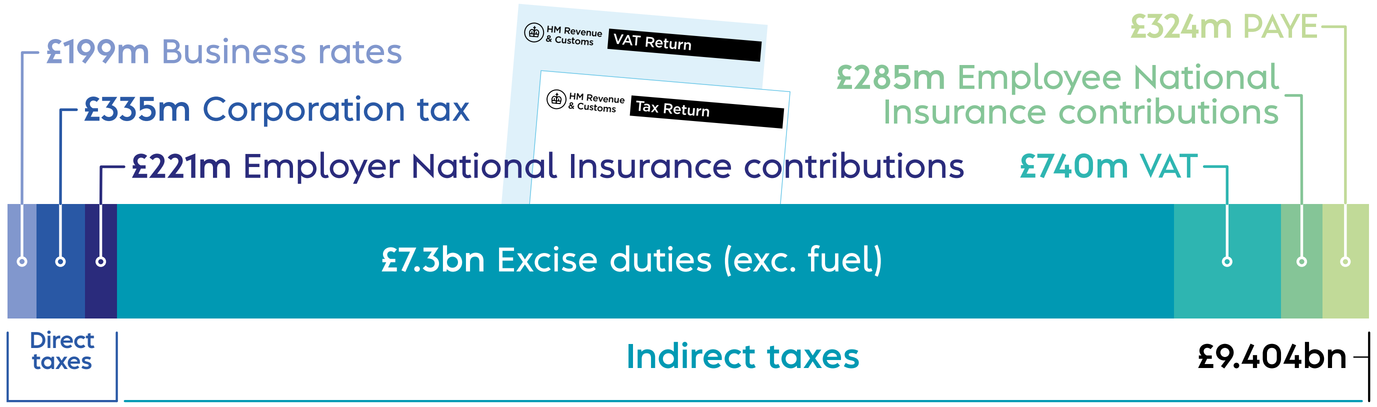
What we contribute to the economy

We track convenience sector investment throughout the year. Check out our Investment Tracker here:

SCAN ME

Economic contribution

Over the last year, the convenience sector contributed Over **£10.8bn** in GVA and over **£9.4bn** in taxes

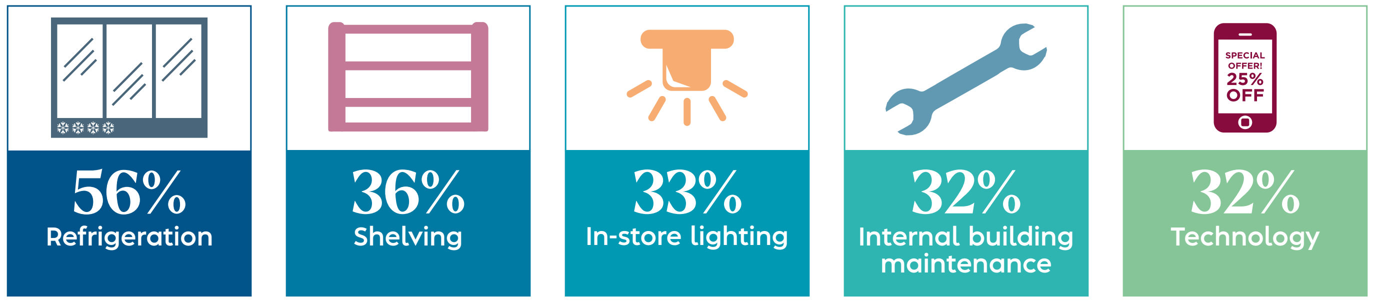


Source: ACS 2024

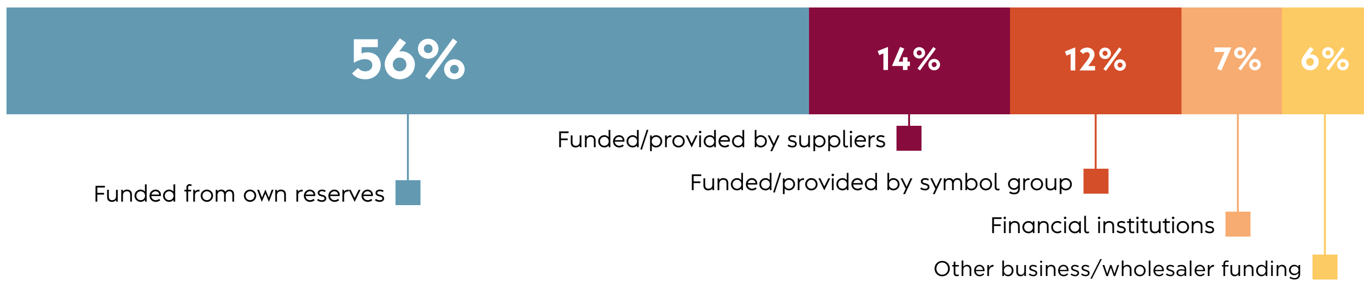
Investment

Convenience stores have invested **£1 billion** in their businesses over the last year

Areas of investment (of those investing)



Main source of investment



Source: ACS Investment Tracker / Voice of Local Shops polling (2023-2024)

What we sell

The **total value of sales** for 2024 is forecast at

£49.4bn

The **convenience sector** is expected to **grow** to

£54.6bn by 2027

Source: Source: Lumina Intelligence 2024

Number of products sold

On average, there are around:

4,632 SKUs

(products with a unique barcode)

for sale in an independent convenience store throughout the year

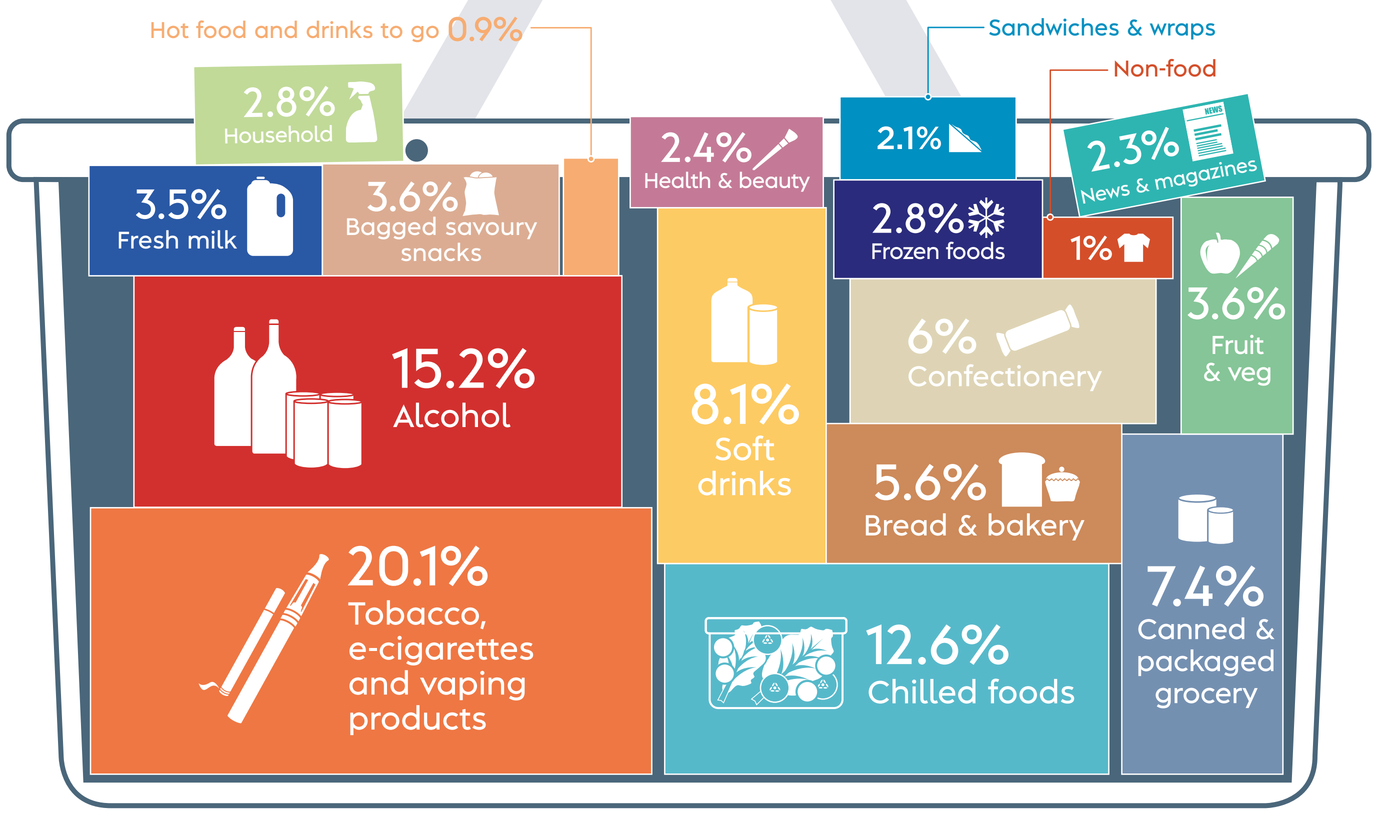
Source: Retail Data Partnership 2024 (barcodes only; excludes hot keys)

Payment methods

99%	Cash
98%	Debit card
97%	Credit card
90%	Contactless and mobile payment
40%	Card not present transactions

Source: ACS/Lumina Intelligence 2024

Category sales: Overall market (2023)



Source: IGD September 2023 – data refers to overall convenience market

The services and technology we offer

Sign up here for weekly updates on interesting research affecting the convenience sector:

SCAN ME

The percentage of stores in the convenience sector that provide each service is as follows:

87%	Mobile phone top-up
86%	Lottery
82%	Bill payment services
77%	EPoS
71%	Cash back
53%	Store website
42%	Free to use cash machines
37%	Click and collect service (e.g Collect Plus)
37%	In-store Wi-Fi
34%	Digital advertising screens
34%	Local grocery delivery
27%	Food bank donation point
24%	Parcel collection point
21%	Click and collect services for groceries
21%	Loyalty card
20%	Post office
17%	Home news delivery
17%	Self-service checkouts
16%	Recycling bins
12%	Electronic shelf edge labels
10%	Charged cash machine
4%	Prescription collections
2%	Photo booth
1%	Key cutting

Supporting customers

The percentage of convenience stores that have:

69%	Wheelchair access
24%	Hearing aid loops
15%	First aid kit/defibrillator for public use

Energy saving

55%	LED lighting
53%	Chiller doors
33%	Smart meters
5%	Solar panels

Source: ACS/Lumina, Retail Data Partnership, 2024

Online and home delivery

Social media and online searches

Facebook	Instagram	X (Twitter)	TikTok	WhatsApp
74%	43%	34%	15%	13%

Source: ACS/Lumina Intelligence 2024

More customers searched for 'convenience store' on Google during the week of Christmas (25th – 31st Dec) than any other time in the last 12 months.

Source: Google Trends 2024

Home delivery

47% of **independent retailers** currently offer **home delivery/click and collect orders**

Of stores who currently offer home delivery/click and collect services:

34% offer home delivery through a third-party app, e.g. Deliveroo, SnappyShopper

20% offer home delivery through a store website

17% offer home delivery for customers who order over the phone

11% offer home delivery for vulnerable customers

6% offer a click and collect service (or similar)

Of stores offering these services:

55% have no minimum spend

50% have no delivery charge

71% have no premium pricing

Of those who don't offer delivery:

7% used to offer home delivery but do not currently offer this service

14% do not offer home delivery but plan to do so in future

79% do not offer home delivery and have no plans to do so

Source: Voice of Local Shops polling February 2024

How we source products

We ask topical questions to retailers throughout the year in our Voice of Local Shops survey. Find out more here:

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How independent retailers source their products

58% I get the majority of products delivered

7% I use both, but get more products delivered

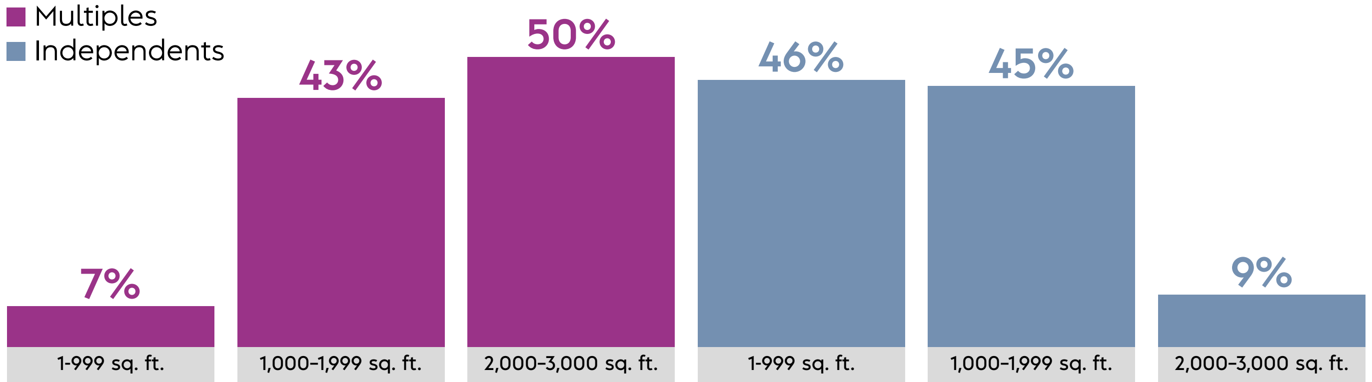
14% I use both roughly equally

7% I use both, but get more products from a cash and carry

15% I get the majority from a cash and carry

Source: ACS/Lumina Intelligence 2024

Sales space in-store



Source: ACS/Lumina Intelligence 2024

Use of online wholesaler platforms

47% Ordering products for delivery

11% Comparing prices of products

9% Click and collect service for products

2% Category advice

49% Do not use online wholesaler platforms

Source: ACS/Lumina Intelligence 2024

How we operate

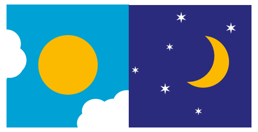
89% of independents operate **one store**

5% of shop owners work more than **70 hours** per week

18% take **no holiday** per year

Opening hours

Typical convenience stores are open



7am until **10pm**

7% are open **24** hours

4% Closed on Sunday

Average opening hours

13.6 Monday to Saturday

13.1 Sunday

Premises ownership

Multiples	22% Own	78% Rent
Independents	50% Own	50% Rent

Employment of family members

25% of retailers employ at least one family member

75% of retailers employ no family members

Time in business

Five years or less	49%
Six to 10	17%
11 to 15	11%
16 to 20	8%
21 to 25	4%
26 years or more	10%

All data on this page source: ACS/Lumina Intelligence 2024

Our colleagues

Find out more about the people working in the sector through our comprehensive Colleague Survey here:

SCAN ME

Convenience stores in mainland UK provide over **445,000 jobs**

Colleagues in the convenience sector **worked** a combined **9.8m hours** a week over the last year

Colleagues in the convenience sector are

65% Female

35% Male

0.1% All other gender identities

78% of colleagues are 25-60 years old

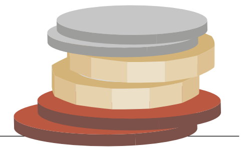
Hours worked

0-16 hours	17-30 hours	31-40 hours	40+ hours
18%	32%	32%	19%

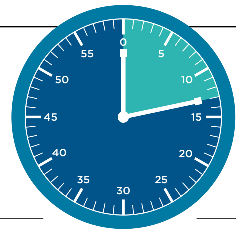
Source: ACS Colleague Survey 2023-2024

Travel to work

Average travel cost **£2.24** per day

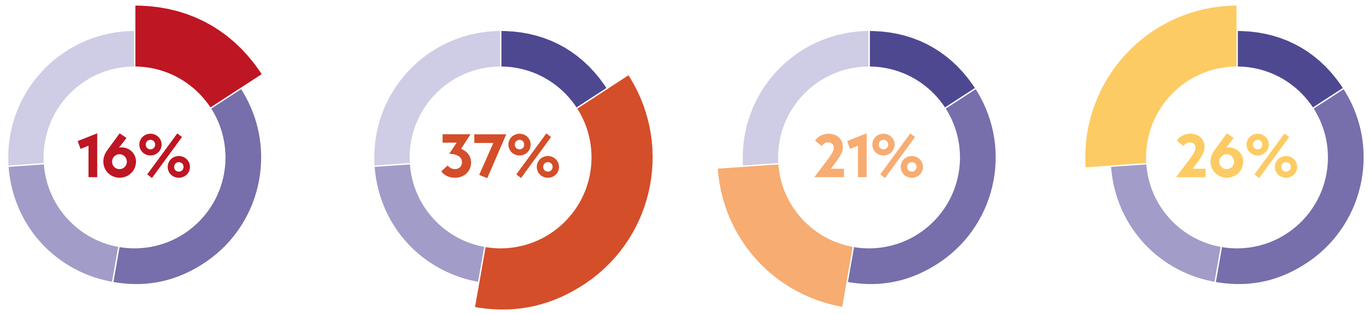


Average travel time **13 minutes**



38% Walk/on foot

Length of employment



Less than one year	16%
One to five years	37%
Six to 10 years	21%
More than 10 years	26%

Satisfied with their job	68%
Employed on a permanent contract	98%
Feel very secure or somewhat secure in their jobs	83%

All data on this page source: ACS Colleague Survey 2024 unless stated otherwise

Who we serve

How customers get to store

57% Walk/on foot

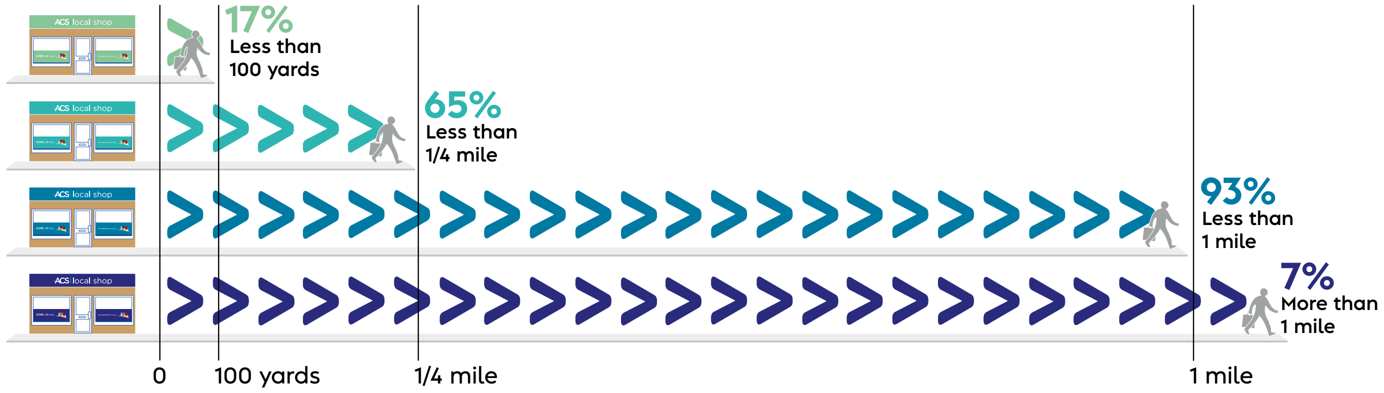
36% Drive

4% Public transport

2% Other

Source: Lumina Intelligence CTP 2024

Distance travelled to store



Source: ACS Community Barometer 2024

If their **local shop was no longer there,** customers would have to travel **1.62 miles** to find another local shop

Source: ACS Community Barometer 2024

The average customer visits their **local store** **2.7** **times per week**

Source: Lumina Intelligence CTP 2024

30% know the **people running and working in their local shop very well or quite well**

Source: ACS Community Barometer 2024

Purchases

The average basket size is **2.8** items

The average spend is **£8.04**

Source: Lumina Intelligence CTP 2024

Our communities

Our Community Barometer has more detail on the contribution that convenience stores and other services make locally:

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Most positive impact on the local area

1. Post offices 2. Pharmacies 3. Convenience stores

When thinking about local businesses, shoppers said **convenience stores** were **the most important in supporting the local economy**

Source: ACS Community Barometer 2024

Community activity

80% **of independent** retailers engaged in some form of community activity in the past year

60% Collectedmoney for a national or local charity

43% Donated to a food bank

15% Provided sponsorship to a local sports team or other community activity

15% Provided funding, or in kind support, to a community event

6% Participated in community, council or local business association meetings or project

5% Participated in litter picking or other local environmental campaigns

Source: ACS Voice of Local Shops polling 2023-2024

500m The average convenience store has **4,428 people** within a **500m radius**

Source: CACI

Community owned shops

There are **425** community owned shops trading in the UK

With a **92%** survival rate

Providing employment for **2,000** people

With around **12,000** volunteer positions created

Source: Plunkett Foundation 2024

Methodology

New primary data for the Local Shop Report was undertaken by ACS in the form of two surveys:

1. **Independent Retailer Survey** – A sample of 2,128 independently owned convenience store businesses in the UK. ACS commissioned Lumina Intelligence to aid in the design and delivery of the survey. The survey was carried out over the phone by BCC Marketing between 17th June and 2nd August 2024. The telephone survey gathered responses from unaffiliated independent convenience stores, independent forecourt stores and independent stores that are part of a central buying or marketing group (known as 'symbol' groups). These are represented in the survey in the same proportion as they are represented in the market. The survey covers the nine regions of England, along with Wales and Scotland.

2. **Multiple Retailer Survey** – ACS conducted an online survey of its multiple chain members. This survey was based on the questions asked in the Independent Retailer Survey, where relevant, to ensure consistency and accuracy of results. This survey returned results relating to a sample of 5,383 stores.

The results of these two surveys have been collated and figures for independents and multiples have been combined according to the proportion of stores in the market, in order to determine overall results for the sector.

William Reed Business Media (WRBM) – Store numbers and sector data
WRBM continually updates data through re-registering customers thereby adding changed recipients, closures, and new stores. This is through postal, telephone research, online delivery and events, plus the ongoing work of the editorial teams on its brands Convenience Store, Forecourt Trader a nd The Grocer.

Independent sales category data – Retail Data Partnership
The Retail Data Partnership supplies EpoS systems to independent retailers throughout the UK. Independent sales data is collected by receiving sales data back from around 3,000 sites each day that cover £1.8bn of sales each year.

Overall sales category data – IGD
The Institute of Grocery Distribution (IGD) supplies sales data for the overall convenience sector, as part of the IGD UK Convenience Market report. Data in the ACS Local Shop Report is taken from September 2023.

ACS Economic Report
ACS commissioned Retail Economics to provide an economic overview of the convenience sector in 2018. ACS have updated the figures for 2024 based on revised data.

Convenience Tracking Programme 2024 – Lumina Intelligence
This programme is a survey of over 20,000 convenience shoppers conducted at the 'moment of truth' in-store.

Community Barometer
Populus surveyed a nationally representative online sample of 1,000 UK adults aged 18+, in May 2024. Respondents were surveyed using a questionnaire designed by ACS.

For more Community Barometer results please visit the ACS website or email rosie.wiggins@acs.org.uk

ACS Voice of Local Shops
A quarterly telephone survey with a sample of independent retailers, covering the nine regions of England, along with Wales and Scotland. The data used represents a sample of 1,100 retailers. The sample consists of unaffiliated, symbol group and forecourt independents which are represented in the survey in the same proportion as they are in the market. Lumina Intelligence aid in the design and delivery of the survey.

ACS Investment Tracker – Data obtained in the form of two surveys:
ACS Voice of Local Shops survey – Questions are asked relating to the amount retailers have invested over the past quarter, what they have invested in and how they have funded their investments.

Multiples Investment Tracker survey – A sample of over 3,000 multiple stores in the UK. Questions in the Multiple Investment Tracker survey are based on the questions asked in the Voice of Local Shops survey, where relevant, to ensure consistency of results.

The results of these two surveys are collated and combined according to the proportion of independent and multiple stores in the sector. The ACS Investment Tracker averages have been taken from May 2023 to Feb 2024.

ACS Colleague Survey
An online survey with a sample of 896 staff working within the convenience sector. The fieldwork was conducted between 8th January and 16th February 2024. For more Colleague Survey results please visit the ACS website or email rosie.wiggins@acs.org.uk

Community Shops – Plunkett Foundation
The number of community owned shops is obtained from the Plunkett Foundation database.

The number of people within 500m of a convenience store is obtained from CACI's Acorn segmentation model.

All other data on community shops is obtained from the Plunkett Foundation report 'Community Shops 2024'. The report is based on statutory data sourced from the Financial Conduct Authority and Companies House; electronic questionnaires and follow up telephone surveys; together with information held by Plunkett on every community shop.

References

Who we are (page 3)
- **Total number of convenience stores in mainland UK** – Figure sourced from WRBM.
- **Shop ownership** – ACS calculation based on figures sourced from WRBM.
- **Entrepreneurs** – Data obtained from the ACS Independent Retailer Survey and reflects independent retailers only (including those who own symbol stores and forecourts). 'Prefer not to say' responses were excluded from analysis.

Where we trade (page 4)
- **Location** – Rural/urban/suburban split sourced from WRBM. Definitions are based on population density and are derived from postcode data:
  - Urban (density above 30 people per sq. km)
  - Suburban (density 10-30).
  - Rural (density 0-10).
- **Neighbouring businesses** – Data obtained from the ACS Independent Retailer Survey and reflects independent retailers only (including those who own symbol stores and forecourts).

What we contribute to the economy (page 5)
- **Economic contribution** – ACS calculation based on 2024 data, methodology originally sourced from ACS Economic Project conducted by Retail Economics in 2018.
- **Annual investment** – Average investment per store was obtained quarterly from the Voice of Local Shops survey for independent retailers and from the Multiples Investment Tracker survey for multiples. Respondents were asked to estimate the cost of investment in their store over the last three months. The average investment per store was then multiplied by the number of stores for each store type in the sector (figures taken from WRBM) and added together to give an investment figure for each quarter. Quarterly results were added together to provide an annual amount invested.
- **Top areas of investment** – For unaffiliated independents and independent symbol groups the data was obtained from the Voice of Local Shops survey and for multiples, results were obtained from the Multiple Investment Tracker survey. Results for unaffiliated independents, symbol group independents and multiples were collated and combined according to their proportion of stores in the market. Averages were calculated from the surveys running from May 2023 to February 2024.
- **Sources of investment** – Data was obtained from the Voice of Local Shops survey and refers to independent retailers only (including unaffiliated and symbol group independents). Averages were calculated from the surveys running from May 2023 to February 2024.

What we sell (page 6)
- **Total value of sales and growth** – Figures sourced from Lumina Intelligence.
- **Average SKUs** – Figures sources from the Retail Data Partnership 2024. Data refers to independent sales data only, up to March 2024.
- **Overall category sales** – Figures sourced from IGD, referring to H1 2023.

The services and technology we offer (page 7)
- All data on this page obtained from independent and multiple retailer surveys. Results for independents were collated between the ACS/Lumina Independents survey, REL SmartSpotter data collected in May 2024, and figures provided by the Retail Data Partnership. Combined independent results were then collated with responses from multiples and weighted according to their proportion of stores in the market to determine overall results for the sector. This data reflects an average of 2023 and 2024 results, as two-year averages to account for any variations in sampling and methodology changes.

Online and home delivery (page 8)
- **Social media** – Results for independents were collated between the ACS/Lumina Independents survey, REL SmartSpotter data collected in May 2024, and figures provided by the Retail Data Partnership. Combined independent results were then collated with responses from multiples and weighted according to their proportion of stores in the market to determine overall results for the sector. This data reflects an average of 2023 and 2024 results, as two-year averages to account for any variations in sampling and methodology changes.
- **Google trends** – Data refers to the search 'local shops' in the UK. Trend data was sourced in August 2024.
- **Delivery** – Data was obtained from the Voice of Local Shops survey conducted February 2024 and refers to independent retailers only (including unaffiliated and symbol group independents).

How we source products (page 9)
- **Product sourcing and use of wholesaler platforms** – Data obtained from the ACS Independent Retailer Survey and reflects independent retailers only (including those who own symbol stores and forecourts).
- **Store size** – Data obtained from ACS/Lumina Independents survey and Multiples surveys.

How we operate (page 10)
- **Stores operated, hours per week and holiday** – Data obtained from the ACS Independent Retailer Survey and reflects independent retailers only (including those who own symbol stores and forecourts).
- **Opening hours** – Data obtained from ACS/Lumina Independents survey and Multiples surveys. Both independent and multiple respondents what time of day they open and close for the different days of the week. Results for independents and multiples were collated and combined according to their proportion of stores in the market, to determine overall results for the sector. Average number of hours open includes stores closed on Sunday or open 24 hours. Opening and closing times however exclude those closed on Sunday or open 24 hours.
- **Premises ownership** – Data obtained from ACS/Lumina Independents survey and Multiples surveys.
- **Family employees and time in business** – Data obtained from the ACS Independent Retailer Survey and reflects independent retailers only (including those who own symbol stores and forecourts).

Our Colleagues (page 11)
- **Jobs** – Per store employment figures obtained from ACS/Lumina Independents survey and Multiples surveys. An average number of staff per store figure was calculated for both independent and multiple retailers. The average number of staff per store was then multiplied by the total number of stores in the sector (based on figures from WRBM). Results for independents and multiples were collated and combined according to their proportion of stores in the market, in order to determine overall results for the sector.

  The average employment figure was calculated by dividing the total number of jobs in the sector by the total number of stores in the sector. The following averages were identified for jobs per store in each retailer type:

  - Unaffiliated independents (excluding forecourts): 4.38.
  - Independently owned symbol stores (excluding forecourts): 8.99.
  - Independently owned forecourts: 9.92.
  - Multiples (Inc. co-operatives, forecourt multiples, multiply owned symbol stores): 15.87.
  - Sector average: 8.72.

- **Ages of colleagues** – Ages of colleagues and hours worked - Data obtained from the ACS Independent Retailer Survey and Multiples survey. Combined results were weighted according to their proportion of stores in the market to determine overall results for the sector.
- Remaining data on this page obtained from ACS Colleague Survey 2024.

Who we serve (page 12)
- Data relating to customers relationship with convenience colleagues and how far customers would have to travel if their shop was no longer there was obtained from ACS Community Barometer 2024.
- Remaining data on this page obtained from Lumina Intelligence Convenience Tracking Programme 2024.

Our communities (page 13)
- **Most positive impact** – Data collected from ACS Community Barometer 2024. Respondents were asked: "Which of the following types of services (if any) do you believe have the most positive impact on your local area? Select up to three." Answers were ranked to reflect opinion.
- **Community activity** – Data was obtained from averaging the results from the most recent ACS VOLS surveys (May 2023 to February 2024) and reflects independent retailers only (including those who own symbols stores and forecourts).
- **Proximity within 500m of a store** – Data provided by CACI using Acorn population segmentation.
- **Community shops** – Number of community owned shops obtained from Plunkett Foundation 2024 database.

Throughout the report, where percentages do not add up to 100%, this is due to rounding.

For more information about The Local Shop Report please visit the ACS website or email rosie.wiggins@acs.org.uk

Acknowledgements

This report would not have been possible without the support of a number of industry and research organisations that have helped by providing data. These sources are referenced alongside the relevant sections of the report, and those organisations are:

About ACS

The Association of Convenience Stores is a trade association representing local shops across the UK.

We represent our members through effective lobbying, industry leading advice and networking opportunities for retailers and suppliers.

Our membership includes a diverse range of convenience store retailers, from stand-alone family run independent stores to symbol groups and multiple convenience stores. These retailers operate in neighbourhoods, villages, on petrol forecourts and in city centres.

ACS' core purpose is to lobby Government on the issues that make a difference to local shops.

We represent the interests of retailers on a range of issues, including business rates, energy, regulation, planning, alcohol and many more.

ACS produces several reports throughout the year, looking in detail at different aspects of the convenience store sector, all of which are available free to members.

We can also provide further breakdowns of the Local Shop Report data to members. Please contact Rosie Wiggins at rosie.wiggins@acs.org.uk for further details.

For more information about ACS, visit our website.

ACS.org.uk

Contacts

For more details on this report, contact Rosie Wiggins via email at rosie.wiggins@acs.org.uk

Our website www.acs.org.uk **Our social media** @ACS_localshops on X / Twitter and Instagram
Association of Convenience Stores on LinkedIn, Facebook and YouTube

#LocalShopReport

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