

WHAT DO LOCAL SHOPS NEED FROM THE NEW GOVERNMENT?



Convenience stores are essential community businesses that constantly adapt to serve the changing needs of their communities. People use their local shops to access everyday groceries, but increasingly we deliver essential services like access to cash, parcel services, and bill payments.

As Britain changes to meet the challenges of the future, convenience stores will continue to be at the heart of communities. We offer resilience and familiarity in hard times, a place to connect as we go about our daily lives, and a source of local, secure, and flexible work for thousands of people across the country.

Here is what local shops need from the new government to keep serving Britain:

■ Tackle violence, abuse, and theft against local shops to deliver safer communities:

There were **76,000 incidents of violence** in local shops last year, and almost **9 in 10 shopworkers have experienced verbal abuse**. If we want safer communities, we need to tackle the repeat offenders that commit crimes and the rogue businesses that trade irresponsibly on high streets and local shopping parades.

What we need:

- Police forces with the resources to respond to violent and prolific offenders that target local shops.
- A standalone offence for attacks on shopworkers that serve our communities day in, day out.
- More funding for trading standards to close down businesses that trade outside of the law.

■ Support local shops and high streets to adapt to changing consumer needs by incentivising investment:

Local shops need to offer the widest range of products and services to remain viable and relevant. This means our regulatory and tax systems must support investment and keep pace with changing consumer trends. Convenience stores currently pay **£209million in business rates annually** and face **a raft of new regulatory challenges in 2025**. We need support to meet these challenges and keep delivering for our communities.

What we need:

- Reduce the overall burden of business rates on bricks-and-mortar businesses by reforming the rates system to account for online businesses.
- Support through regulatory frameworks and the tax system to incentivise investment to help us deliver essential community services like free-to-use cash machines, recycling services, and parcel services.

■ Assist local shops to continue to deliver local, secure, flexible employment opportunities:

Over **437,000 people work in local shops** across the country. We provide secure, local, flexible employment opportunities, enabling shopworkers to flex their working hours around childcare, studying, and other caring commitments. As responsible employers, we welcome action to ensure fair employment opportunities and safe working conditions.

What we need:

- Enable the Low Pay Commission to set national living wage rates independently of political targets, while still accounting for economic factors impacting employers and employees.
- Recognise employers that deliver genuinely two-sided flexible employment opportunities and target sectors that profit from insecure working practices.
- Support investment in jobs and skills by increasing employer national insurance contribution thresholds and the employment allowance to reduce the cost of employment.

For more details on these recommendations to support local shops and high streets, visit www.acs.org.uk

WHY LOCAL SHOPS ARE IMPORTANT



Reach into communities

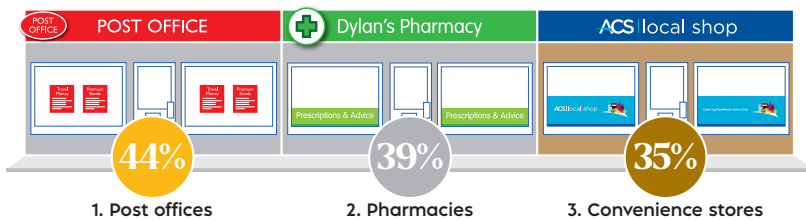
There are **49,388** convenience stores in mainland UK

Source: WRBM 2023

37% of stores are isolated with no other retail/service business close by



Most positive impact on the local area



1. Post offices

2. Pharmacies

3. Convenience stores

Source: ACS Community Barometer 2023

79%

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

Source: ACS Voice of Local Shops polling 2022-2023

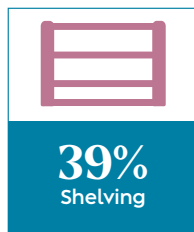
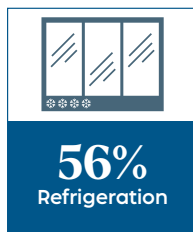
Investment

Convenience stores invest around

£646m

in their businesses every year

Source: ACS Investment Tracker / Voice of Local Shops polling (2022-2023)



Over the last year the sector contributed over **£10.6bn** in GVA

Source: ACS / Retail Economics 2023

Employment

Convenience stores in mainland UK provide over

437,000 jobs

Source: ACS/Lumina 2023

98% are employed on a permanent contract

83% of employees in the convenience sector feel secure in their current jobs

Source: ACS Colleague Survey 2023

Services



Source: ACS Investment Tracker / Voice of Local Shops polling (2022-2023)

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

ACS | the voice of local shops