The Local Shop Report 2026

A report by the Association of Convenience Stores

#LocalShopReport

the voice of local shops

Contents

Why we are important

£49.1bn total sales

Over **£10.6bn** in GVA

£957m invested

456,000 jobs

71% of stores are run by independent retailers

Introduction

UK convenience stores are an integral part of local infrastructure. With a diverse range of products, a host of essential services, and being key community advocates, it is unsurprising to find convenience stores among the top three local businesses with the biggest positive impact in their community according to consumers.

Generating £10.6bn in GVA and over £49bn in annual turnover, the convenience sector is also a major contributor to the UK economy. This is on top of providing 456,000 people with local employment and investing more than £957m into their stores over the past year. It is, however, important to highlight the pressure these stores are under: total business rates costs for the sector have nearly doubled over the past two years and rising employment costs have led to a fifth of independent retailers taking on more hours themselves and working without taking any holiday in the past 12 months.

Local communities deeply value the support provided by their convenience stores, and retailers are fighting to balance increasing costs with maintaining value for shoppers. Convenience stores can be engines of good growth in every postcode, but they must be given the tools they need to invest in the future of their businesses.

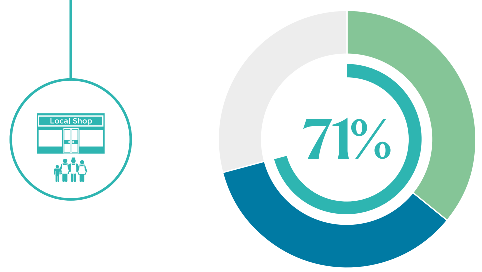
Who we are

There are **50,925** convenience stores in mainland UK

Source: William Reed 2026

Shop ownership

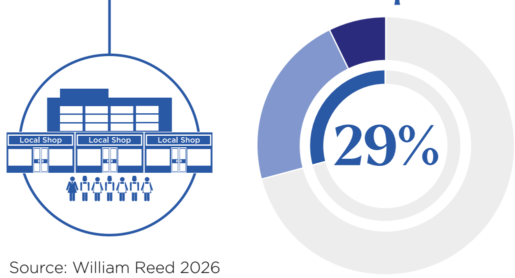
Independent retailers



36% Unaffiliated independents (including unaffiliated forecourts)

35% Symbol group independents (including franchises)

Multiples



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

7% Co-operatives

Source: William Reed 2026

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).

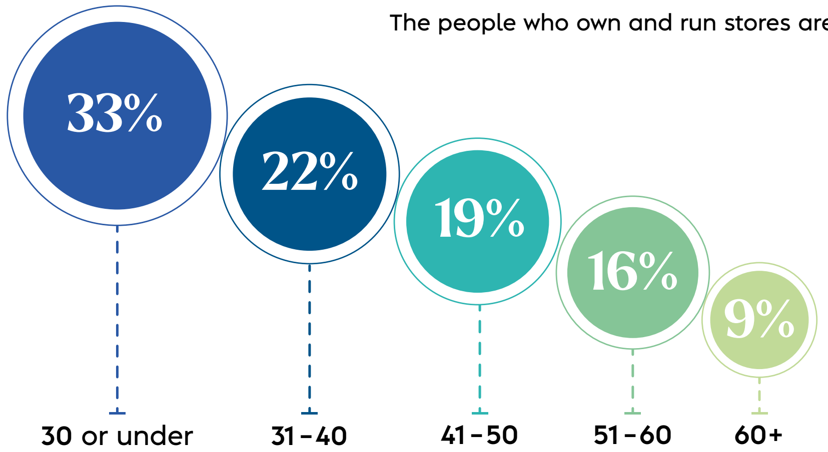
Co-operatives
Groups of stores that are owned by their members.

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

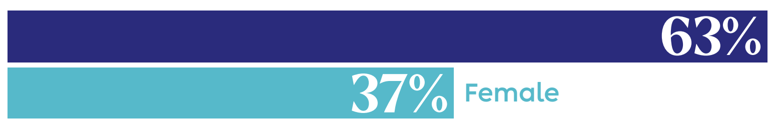
Forecourts
Convenience stores located on petrol filling stations. Forecourts are included within each of the retailer types and can be unaffiliated, symbol group, multiple or co-operative businesses.
For more information about the forecourt sector please see the ACS Forecourt Report.

Entrepreneurs

The people who own and run stores are:

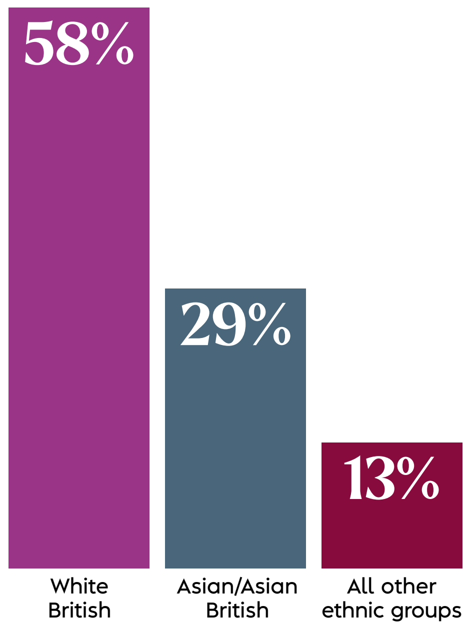


Source: Lumina Intelligence 2025-2026



Source: Lumina Intelligence 2026

Ethnicity



Source: Lumina Intelligence 2026

Where we trade

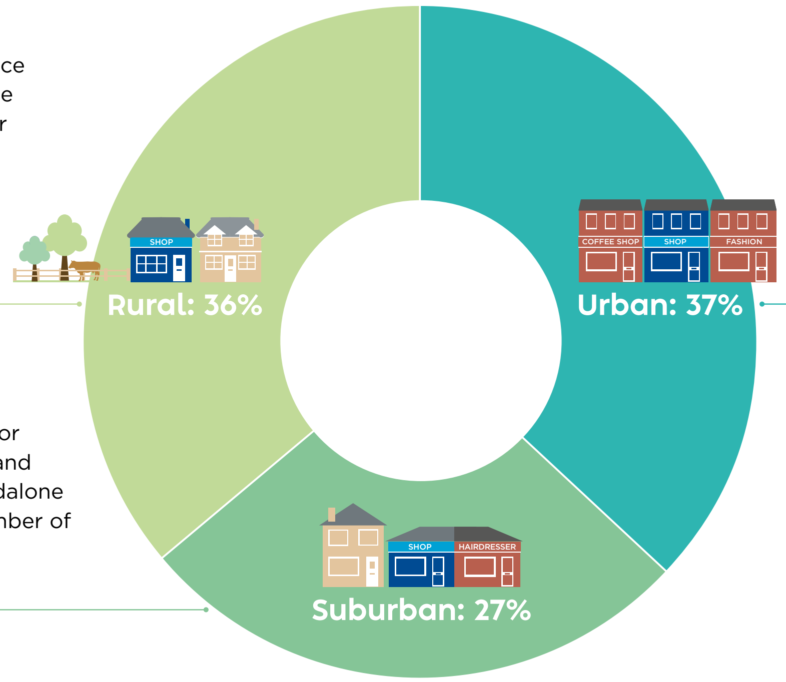
Location

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.

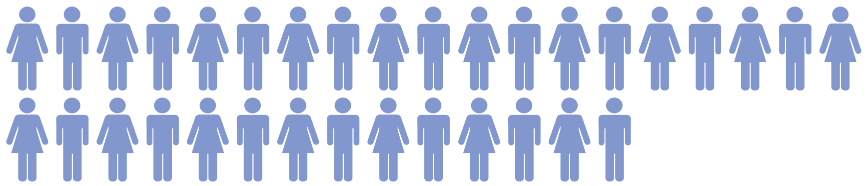


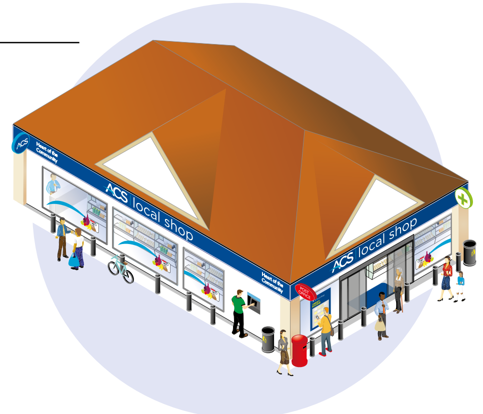
Urban

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: William Reed 2026

Populations around stores





The average convenience store has **3,299 people** within a **500m radius**

26% have **no other convenience stores** within a 500m radius

74% have **at least one other convenience store** within a 500m radius

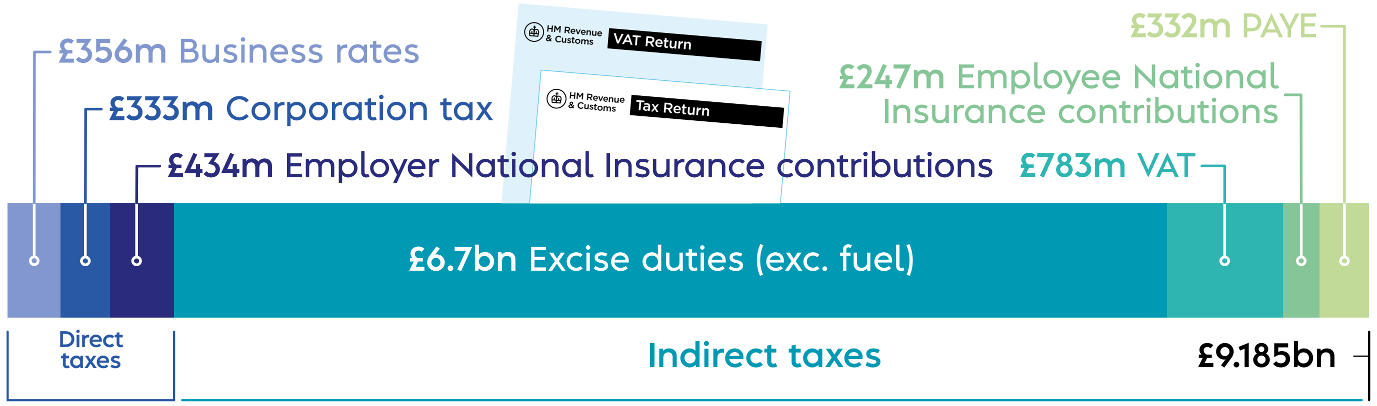
Source: CACI 2026

What we contribute to the economy

Rising operating costs are hitting local shops harder than ever. Check out our Cost of Trading Hub here:

Economic contribution

Over the last year, **the convenience sector contributed** over **£10.6bn** in GVA and over **£9.2bn** in taxes



Source: ACS 2026

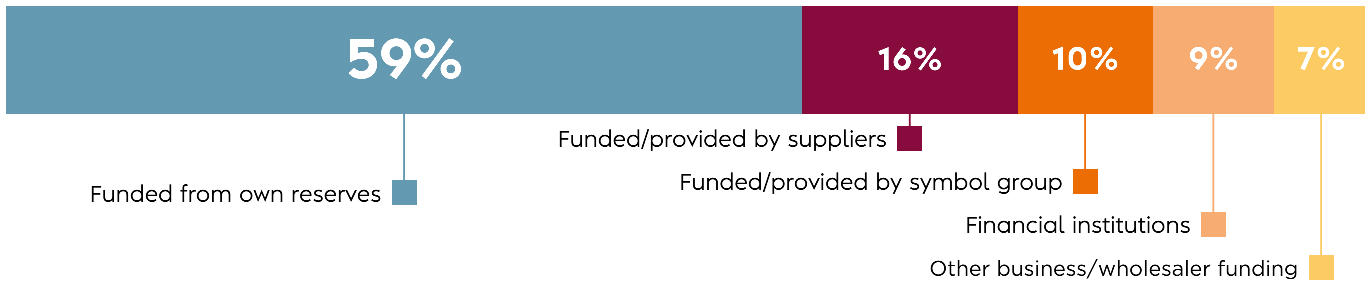
Investment

Convenience stores have invested **£957m** in their businesses over the last year

Areas of investment (of those investing)

68%	47%	42%	33%	30%
Refrigeration	Internal building maintenance	Store signage	Full store refits	Other energy efficiency measures

Main source of investment



Source: ACS Investment Tracker / Voice of Local Shops polling 2025-2026

What we sell

The **total value of sales** for 2026 is forecast at

£49.1bn

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

£54bn by 2029

Source: Lumina Intelligence 2026

Number of products sold

On average, there are around:

4,721 SKUs

(products with a unique barcode)

for sale in an independent convenience store throughout the year

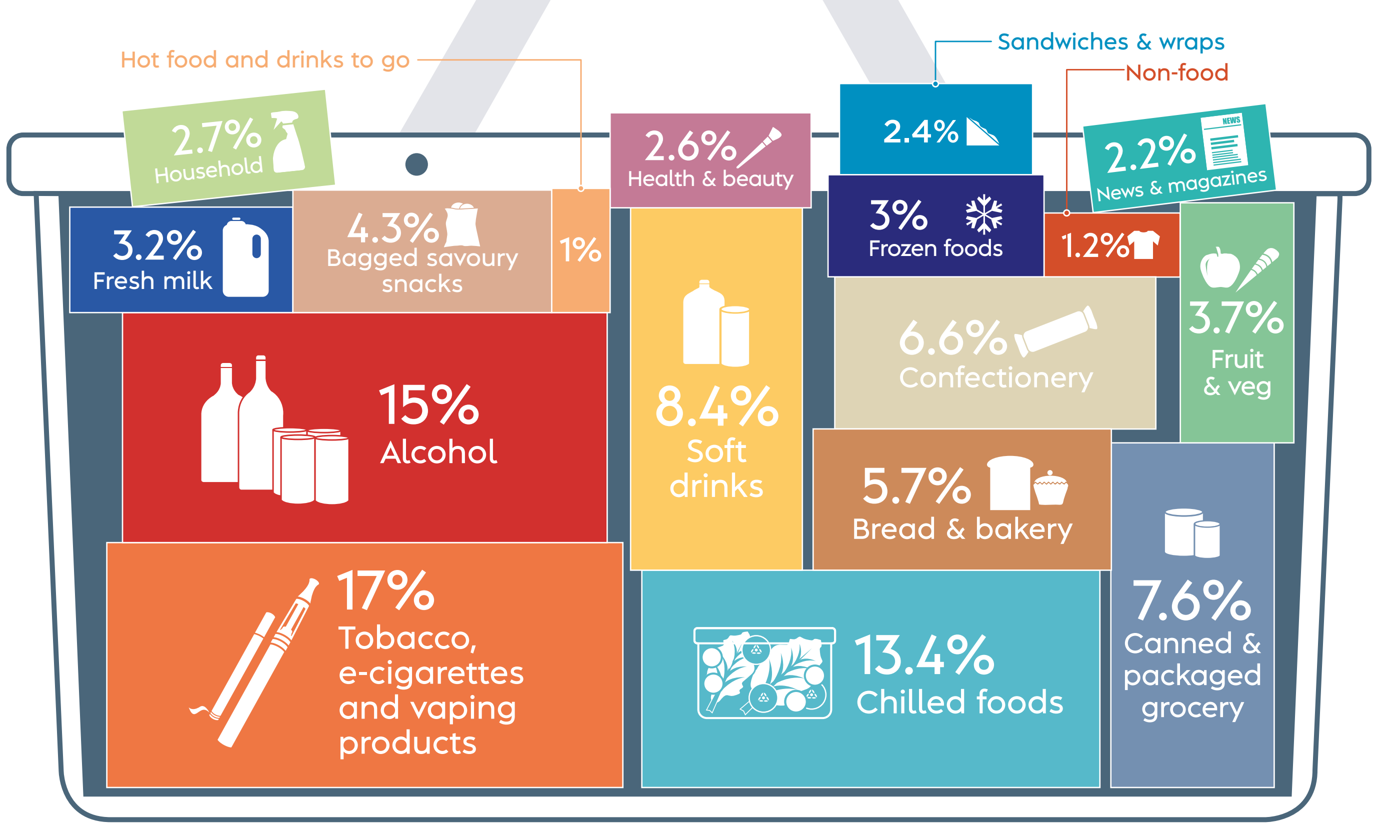
Source: Shopmate 2026 (barcodes only; excludes hot keys)

Payment methods

99%	Cash
98%	Debit card
97%	Credit card
90%	Contactless and mobile payment

Source: ACS/Lumina Intelligence 2026

Category sales: Overall market (2025)



Source: IGD September 2025 – 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:

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

85% Lottery	82% Bill payment services	82% EPoS	68% Cash back	39% Free to use cash machines
35% Digital advertising screens	35% In-store Wi-Fi	30% Home delivery service for groceries	27% Over the counter parcel service, excluding Post Office	24% Loyalty card
22% Food bank donation point	19% Self-service checkouts	17% Post office	14% Electronic shelf edge labels	12% Standalone parcel locker
10% Home news delivery	8% Bin(s) inside store	8% Charged cash machine	6% Power outlets/USB ports for customers	2% Prescription collections

Supporting customers

The percentage of convenience stores that have:

69% Wheelchair access	23% Hearing aid loops	20% First aid kit/defibrillator for public use

Energy saving

55% LED lighting	52% Chiller doors	6% Solar panels

Source: ACS/Lumina Intelligence, Shopmate 2026

Online and home delivery

Social media and online searches

Facebook	Instagram	X (Twitter)	WhatsApp	TikTok	LinkedIn
76%	43%	32%	22%	19%	15%

Source: ACS/Lumina Intelligence 2026

More customers searched for 'convenience stores near me' on Google during the week of 8th – 15th February than any other time in the last 12 months.

Source: Google Trends 2026

Home delivery

47% of **independent retailers** currently offer **home delivery**

Of stores who currently offer home delivery

42% partner with another platform to offer deliveries (e.g., Deliveroo)

31% partner with another platform to take orders (e.g., Snappy Shopper)

11% offers home delivery via phone orders

10% offer home delivery for vulnerable customers

6% offer home delivery through a store website

Of stores offering these services:

74% have no delivery charge

74% have no premium pricing

83% have no minimum spend

Average minimum spend: **£10**

Of those who **don't** offer delivery:

9% used to offer home delivery but do not currently offer this service

10% do not offer home delivery but plan to do so in future

80% do not offer home delivery and have no plans to do so

Average delivery charge: **£3**

Source: ACS/Lumina Intelligence 2026

How we source products

Hear exclusive conversations with retail leaders about working with suppliers in our Trading With videos:

How independent retailers source their products

62% I get the majority of products delivered

3% I use both, but get more products delivered

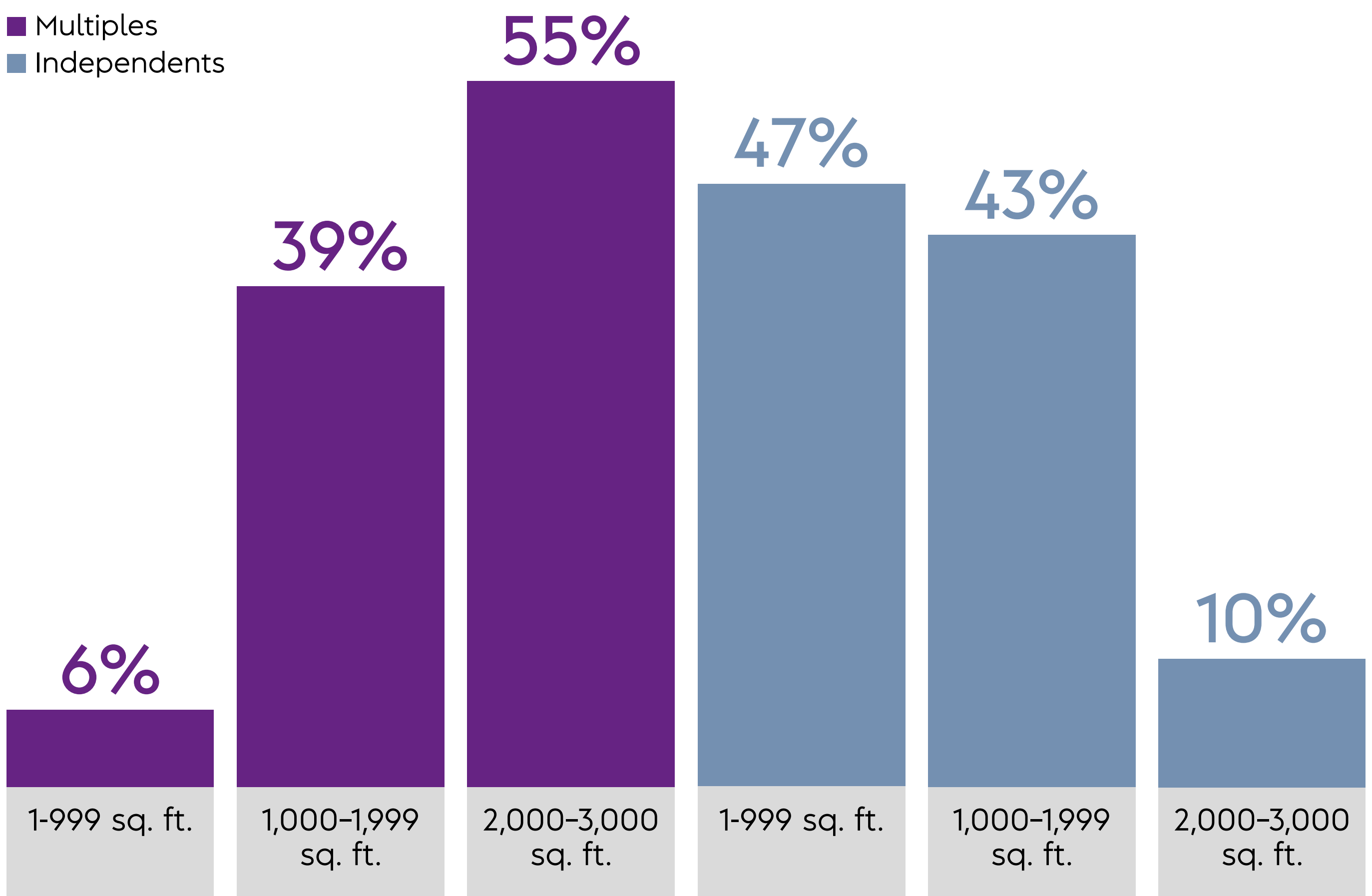
8% I use both roughly equally

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

20% I get the majority from a cash and carry

Source: ACS/Lumina Intelligence 2026

Sales space in-store



Source: ACS/Lumina Intelligence 2026

How we operate

89% of independents operate **one store**

8% of shop owners work more than **60 hours** per week

21% take **no holiday** per year

Opening hours

Typical convenience stores are open
7am until **10pm**

15% are open **24** hours

4% Closed on Sunday

Average opening hours
14 Monday to Saturday
13 Sunday

Premises ownership

Multiples	20% Own	80% Rent
Independents	51% Own	49% Rent

Employment of family members

25% of retailers employ at least one family member

75% of retailers employ no family members

Source: ACS/Lumina Intelligence 2025-2026

Time in business

Five years or less	43%
Six to 10	18%
11 to 15	12%
16 to 20	8%
21 to 25	6%
26 years or more	13%

All data on this page source: ACS/Lumina Intelligence 2026 unless stated otherwise

Our colleagues

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

Convenience stores in mainland UK provide over
456,000 jobs

Colleagues in the convenience sector **worked** a combined
9.7m hours
a week over the last year

Source: ACS/Lumina Intelligence 2026

Colleagues in the convenience sector are

65% Female
34% Male
1.0% All other gender identities

15% of colleagues are under 24 years old

77% of colleagues are 25-60 years old

Hours worked

0-16 hours	17-30 hours	31-40 hours	40+ hours
20%	29%	32%	19%

Source: ACS/Lumina Intelligence 2025

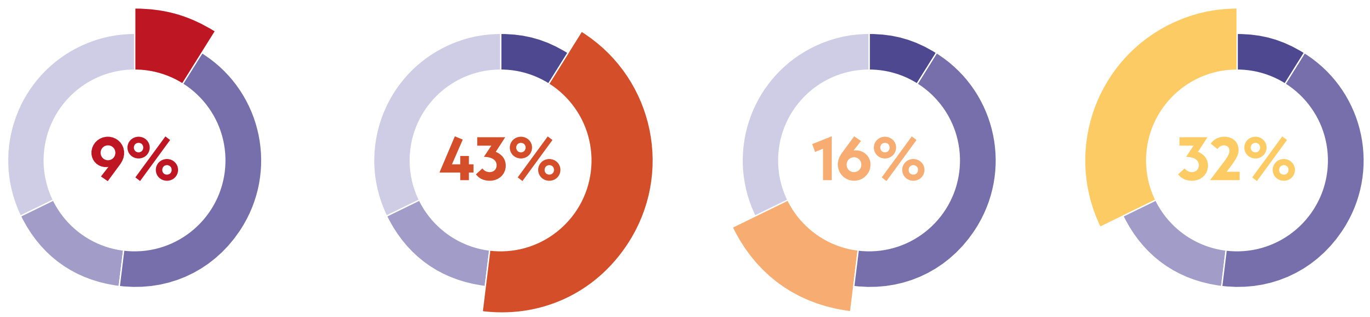
Travel to work

Average travel cost
£2.80 per day

Average travel time
14.7 minutes

46% either walk or cycle to work

Length of employment



Satisfied with their job	69%
Employed on a permanent contract	97%
Feel very secure or somewhat secure in their jobs	77%

All data on this page source: ACS Colleague Survey 2026 unless stated otherwise

Who we serve

How customers get to store

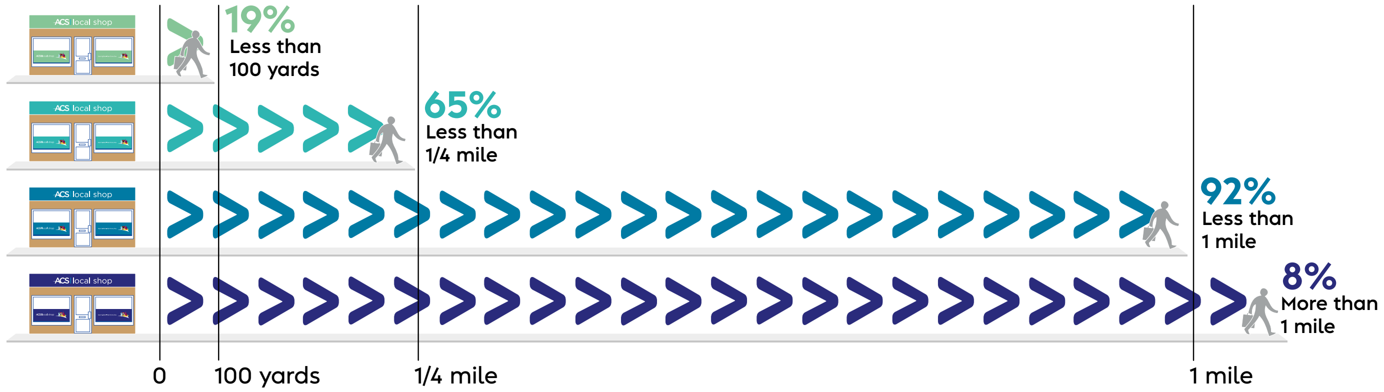
56%
Walk or cycle

37%
Drive

4%
Public transport

Source: Lumina Intelligence CTP 2026

Distance travelled to store



Source: ACS Community Barometer 2026

If their **local shop was no longer there**, **34%** of shoppers would have to travel **2 miles** or more to find another local shop

Source: ACS Community Barometer 2026

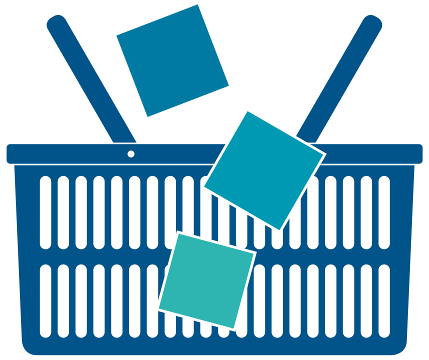
The average customer visits their **local store**
2.3 times per week

Source: Lumina Intelligence CTP 2026

33%
know the people running and working in their local shop very well or quite well

Source: ACS Community Barometer 2026

Purchases



The average basket size is
2.8 items

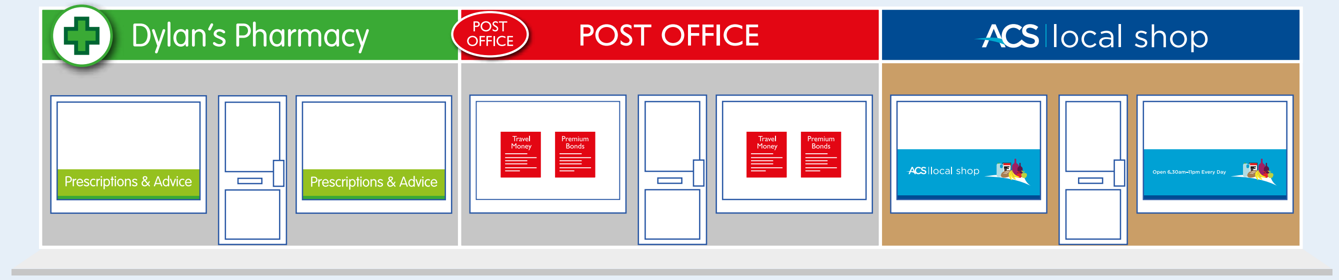
The average spend is
£8.60

Source: Lumina Intelligence CTP 2026

Our communities

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

Most positive impact on the local area



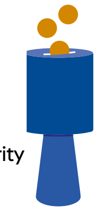
1. Pharmacies
2. Post offices
3. Convenience stores

Source: ACS Community Barometer 2026

Community activity

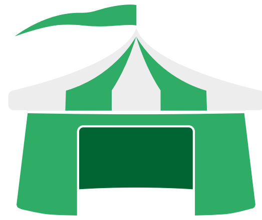
78% **of independent** retailers engaged in some form of community activity in the past year

55%
Collected money for a national or local charity

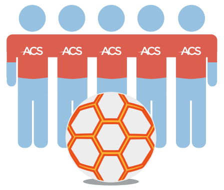


36%
Donated to a food bank

12%
Provided funding, or in-kind support, to a community event



11%
Provided sponsorship to a local sports team or other community activity



7%
Participated in litter picking or other local environmental campaigns

5%
Participated in community, council or local business association meetings or project

Source: ACS Voice of Local Shops polling 2025-2026

Community owned shops

There are
467
community owned shops trading in the UK

With a
98%
5-year survival rate

Providing employment for
2,000
people in full and part-time positions

With around
14,000
volunteer positions created

Source: Plunkett UK 2026

Methodology

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

1. Independent Retailer Survey – A sample of 1,650 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 15th June and 10th July 2026. 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. The results of this survey relate to a sample of 7,561 stores.

The results of these two surveys have been collated according to the proportion of independents and multiples in the convenience market, to determine overall results for the sector. Some results have been averaged over two years to account for natural fluctuations in the data.

William Reed – Store numbers and sector data
William Reed 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 and The Grocer.

Population around stores – CACI up to Date Demographics
Number of stores within 500m of a convenience store – CACI Location Dynamics Spine

Independent sales category data – Shopmate
The Shopmate supplies EPoS systems to independent retailers throughout the UK. Independent sales data is collected by receiving sales data back from around 4,200 sites each day that cover £3.5bn 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 2025.

ACS Economic Report
ACS commissioned Retail Economics to provide an economic overview of the convenience sector in 2018. ACS have updated the figures for 2025-26 based on revised data.

Convenience Tracking Programme 2026 – Lumina Intelligence
This programme is a survey of over 20,000 convenience shoppers conducted at the 'moment of truth' in store.

Community Barometer – More in Common
The Community Barometer report is put together from the findings of an Omnibus poll of 1000 UK consumers about their local area, conducted by More in Common in July 2026.

ACS Voice of Local Shops
A biannual 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:
1. 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.

2. 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 fieldwork covering the 12 months up to April 2026.

ACS Colleague Survey
An online survey with a sample of 686 staff working within the convenience sector. The fieldwork was conducted between 14th January and 27th February 2026.

Community Shops – Plunkett UK
The number of community owned shops is obtained from the Plunkett UK database. All other data on community shops is obtained from the Plunkett UK report 'Impact Report 2026'. 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 all known rural community owned businesses.

References

Who we are (page 3)
- **Total number of convenience stores in mainland UK** – Figure sourced from William Reed.
- **Shop ownership** – ACS calculation based on figures sourced from William Reed.
- **Entrepreneurs** – Data obtained from the ACS Independent Retailer Survey and reflects independent retailers only (including those who own symbol stores and forecourts).

Where we trade (page 4)
- **Location** – Rural/urban/suburban split sourced from William Reed. 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)
- Population around stores - Data obtained from CACI's Acorn segmentation model. More information can be found at https://acorn.caci.co.uk/

What we contribute to the economy (page 5)
- **Economic contribution** – ACS calculation based on 2025-26 data, methodology originally sourced from ACS Economic Project conducted by Retail Economics in 2018.
- **Annual investment** – Average investment per store was obtained 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 six months. The average investment per store was then multiplied by the number of stores for each store type in the sector (figures taken from William Reed) and added together to give an investment figure for each six-month period. Results were added together to provide an annual amount invested.
- **Top areas of investment** – Obtained from the Voice of Local Shops survey for independent retailers and from the Multiples Investment Tracker survey for multiples. 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 fieldwork covering the 12 months to April 2026.
- **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 fieldwork covering the 12 months to April 2026.

What we sell (page 6)
- Total value of sales and growth – Figures sourced from Lumina Intelligence.
- Average SKUs – Figures sources from Shopmate 2026. Data refers to independent sales data only, up to March 2026.
- Overall category sales– Figures sourced from IGD, referring to H1 2025.

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 and REL SmartSpotter data collected in May 2026. 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. These data reflect an average of 2025 and 2026 results to account for any variations in sampling.

Online and Delivery (page 8)
- **Social media** – Results for independents were collected from the ACS/Lumina Independents survey. These 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. These data reflect an average of 2025 and 2026 results to account for any variations in sampling.
- **Google trends** – Data refers to the search 'local shops' in the UK. Trend data was sourced in August 2026.
- **Delivery** – Data obtained from the ACS Independent Retailer Survey and reflects independent retailers only (including those who own symbol stores and forecourts).

How we source products (page 9)
- **Product sourcing** – 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 were asked 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 William Reed). 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.

  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): 4.41
  - Independently owned symbol stores (excluding forecourts): 9.21
  - Independently owned forecourts: 10.53
  - Multiples (Inc. co-operatives, forecourt multiples, multiply owned symbol stores): 16.67
  - Sector average: 8.96

- **Hours worked** – Data obtained from the ACS Colleague Survey 2025.
- Remaining data on this page obtained from ACS Colleague Survey 2026.

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 2026.
- Remaining data on this page obtained from Lumina Intelligence Convenience Tracking Programme 2026.

Our Communities (page 13)
- **Most positive impact** – Data collected from ACS Community Barometer 2026. 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, covering the 12 months to April 2026, and reflects independent retailers only (including those who own symbols stores and forecourts).
- **Community shops** – number of community owned shops obtained from Plunkett UK 2026 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, Tik Tok and Instagram
Association of Convenience Stores on LinkedIn, Facebook and YouTube

#LocalShopReport

ACS | the voice of local shops