



# Community Barometer 2025

A report from the Association of Convenience Stores

Introduction

The ACS Community Barometer provides new insight into how people feel about the services that are local to them, the impact that they have on their communities, and which services are most needed in the future.

We conducted a UK-wide survey of 2,000 consumers in June 2025 that asks the following key questions:

- Which of the following types of services do you think are the most essential for your local area?
- Which of the following types of services do you believe have the most positive impact on your local area?
- Which of the following types of services do you believe is most important in supporting the local economy?
- For each of the following types of services, please indicate whether you think that it would be beneficial for your local area to have more or less of these types of services, or if you think the number should remain the same.
- What are the main reasons for visiting your local shop?

The local services that we look at in the Community Barometer are as follows:

Convenience Stores	Non Food Shops	Coffee Shops	Pawnbrokers
Specialist Food Shops	Pharmacies	Petrol Stations	Charity Shops
Banks	Restaurants	Fast Food Shops	Gym or Sports Facilities
Post Offices	Pubs/Bars	Vape Shop	Hairdressers

By looking at how people view the value of different services in their local communities, we have generated insights that could inform decision making in national and local government, as well as helping convenience retailers as they consider how to make investments in their business in new services for their local customers.

More information about the methodology for this research, as well as previous versions of the Community Barometer are available on the ACS website at [www.acs.org.uk](http://www.acs.org.uk)

Most Positive Impact



For the second consecutive year, Post Offices, pharmacies and convenience stores make up the top three services that have the most positive impact in a local area.

This metric is very much determined in the eye of the beholder - for some the presence of a Post Office locally will contribute to the perception of a traditional parade or village that has a positive impact on house prices in the area (commonly known as the Waitrose effect), while for some the positive impact is determined more directly by the jobs that the business creates, the services that it provides, and the reaction that a new store or the threat of the closure of an existing store elicits in the community.

Other services ranked:

- 4th: Pub/bar
- 5th: Coffee shop / cafe
- 6th: Bank
- 7th: Restaurant (▲1)
- 8th: Specialist food shop (▲1)
- 9th: Gym/Sports centre (▼2)
- 10th: Fast food/takeaway (▲1)



## Most Essential



The top three most essential services remain unchanged for 2025, which is unsurprising given their performance in other areas as well as top performing all-rounders in this report.

The importance of these three services is not necessarily just down to the services they provide - online alternatives are available for all three - but for the consultative and trusted status they have in the community. When local people need to talk to someone they trust, they tend to gravitate toward these services.

### Other services ranked:

- 4th: Bank
- 5th: Petrol station
- 6th: Pub / bar
- 7th: Coffee shop/cafe (▲1)
- 8th: Restaurant (▲3)
- 9th: Specialist food shop (▼2)
- 10th: Fast food / takeaway

## Most Important in Supporting the Local Economy



The top three services in this category are the same as they were last year, but pubs and bars have taken the top spot from convenience stores in 2025.

These are all services that are prolific job creators in communities across the country, but they're also jobs that have a low barrier to entry for people who are looking for something local and flexible.

### Other services ranked:

- 4th: Coffee shop / Cafe
- 5th: Post Office
- 6th: Pharmacy (▲1)
- 7th: Bank (▼1)
- 8th: Specialist food shop (▲1)
- 9th: Fast food / takeaway (▼1)
- 10th: Petrol station

## Most Wanted Services



The services that are most wanted on high streets are typically those that are the hardest to find, or that have recently closed in significant numbers. Despite the shift to online banking and the perception that cash is less prevalent, banks have been the number one most wanted service among consumers for several years running.

The most wanted list of services is a good blueprint for convenience retailers when looking at ways to diversify their offer locally. We have seen examples of convenience stores featuring all of the top eight most wanted services, often because of a lack of other provision locally.

### Other services ranked:

- 4th: Restaurant (▲2)
- 5th: Post Office (▼1)
- 6th: Pharmacy (▼1)
- 7th: Convenience store
- 8th: Coffee shop / cafe
- =9th: Pub / bar (▲2)
- =9th: Petrol station

## What Does Your Local Shop Mean to You?

1. Picking up additional bits of shopping through the week to top up the main shop
2. Dropping off or collecting parcels
3. Using Post Office services
4. Getting additional bits of shopping because they're the only shop that has what I need
5. Getting cash out from a cash machine
6. Doing the main shop for the week
7. Buying lottery tickets or scratchcards
8. An opportunity to get out of the house and see other people
9. Paying bills over the counter / topping up electricity (e.g. Paypoint)
10. Using other services, such as laundry, dry cleaning etc

## How Local Shops Benefit the Community

**32%**

of consumers know  
the people running or  
working in their local  
shop quite well or  
very well

**63%**

of consumers have  
to travel less than a  
quarter of a mile to  
get to their local shop

**36%**

of consumers would  
have to travel two to  
three miles or more for  
essential groceries if  
their local shop wasn't  
there

**39%**

of consumers believe  
that their local shop  
helps to reduce  
loneliness in their  
community

## The UK Convenience Sector: Key Facts

- » There are **50,387 convenience stores** in mainland UK
- » Convenience stores **employ over 445,000 people** across the UK in secure, flexible jobs
- » **71%** of the UK convenience sector is run by independent retailers, either on their own or supplied by a symbol group
- » **27%** of people running convenience stores are **aged 30 or under**
- » Convenience stores generated **over £49bn in sales** in 2024
- » Convenience retailers **invested over £1bn** over the last year
- » **80%** of independent convenience retailers engaged in some form of **community activity** over the last year

### About ACS

The Association of Convenience Stores is the voice of the UK's 50,000+ local shops, supporting its members through effective campaigning, comprehensive advice and innovative networking opportunities. ACS' core purpose is to engage with Government on the issues that make a difference to local shops.

For more information about the Community Barometer, please contact Rosie Wiggins at [Rosie.Wiggins@acs.org.uk](mailto:Rosie.Wiggins@acs.org.uk)