

5<sup>th</sup> July 2018



Draft London Food Strategy SME  
Food and LEAP Team, DEE PP 19A  
City Hall  
The Queen's Walk  
London  
SE1 2AA

To Whom It May Concern

### **ACS Response to Draft London Food Strategy Consultation**

ACS (the Association of Convenience Stores) welcomes the opportunity to respond to the Mayor of London's consultation on the draft London Food Strategy. ACS is a trade association, representing 33,500 convenience stores across the UK. Our members include the Co-Op, One Stop, Costcutter and thousands of independent retailers. In London, there are 6,256 convenience stores, employing 46,479 people.

We acknowledge that convenience stores have a crucial role to play in increasing access to healthy foods, as set out in the draft London Food Strategy. Convenience stores sell a range of grocery products and provide a number of services to their local communities. There is a significant variety of products offered in-store, including fruit and vegetables, ambient grocery and chilled foods. However, as recognised by the strategy, there are challenges to increasing access to healthy food. Convenience retailers typically follow consumer trends and have been increasing and promoting healthier ranges in-store. In a recent ACS survey of 1,210 independent convenience retailers, 16% of retailers stated that their sales of fruit and vegetables had increased, 15% reported that they had increased their range of fruit and vegetables and 15% had increased the number of promotions on fruit and vegetables in their store compared to the previous year.

ACS has been working with the Food Foundation on their project, Peas Please, to encourage retailers to stock more fruit and vegetables in their stores. As part of our work with Peas Please, ACS worked with Food Foundation to develop guidance to convenience retailers to help them optimise sales of healthier food in their stores, which is available here: <https://foodfoundation.org.uk/retailer-toolkit/>. We are also working to promote awareness of the work of Veg Cities to convenience retailers located in Birmingham, Brighton and Cardiff, and sponsored a new award at three convenience sector award ceremonies which recognised convenience retailers who increase sales and encourage consumption of fresh fruit and vegetables.

We welcome that the draft London Food Strategy looks to increase the uptake of Healthy Start vouchers across London. Currently 22% of independent convenience retailers in London accept Healthy Start Vouchers, while 45% are aware of the Healthy Start scheme but do not offer it in their business. ACS will shortly be launching a campaign to encourage retailers to accept Healthy Start vouchers and will be producing guidance for retailers, posters for retailers to display in-store and an animation for retailers which will set out the benefits of participating in the Healthy Start scheme, which we will share with the Food and LEAP team.

ACS has made contact with officials in the Mayor's Regeneration and Economic Development Team that are working on the development of the Good Food Retail Plans and have offered our support to raise awareness amongst convenience retailers about the relevant elements of the London Food Strategy. For more information, please contact Julie Byers, ACS Public Affairs Manager by emailing [Julie.Byers@acs.org.uk](mailto:Julie.Byers@acs.org.uk) or calling 01253 515001.

Yours sincerely

James Lowman  
Chief Executive

Association of Convenience Stores Limited  
Federation House, 17 Farnborough Street  
Farnborough, Hampshire GU14 8AG

T 01252 515001 [@ACS\\_Localshops](https://www.acs.org.uk)

[www.acs.org.uk](http://www.acs.org.uk)