



THE LOCAL SHOP REPORT 2015

A report by the Association of Convenience Stores

ACS | the voice of
local shops

[#LocalShopReport](#)

CONTENTS

About the report	2
About ACS	2
The modern local shop	3
Summary	4
Shops	6
Sales	8
Features	10
Jobs	12
Entrepreneurs	14
Communities	16
Customers	18
Comparison	20
Methodology	22
Notes	23

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. All of our submissions to Government can be found in the Lobbying section of our website.

For more information about ACS, visit our website.

ACS.org.uk

ABOUT THE REPORT

The 2015 Local Shop Report is the fourth edition of our comprehensive report on the continuing success of the convenience sector. The report continues to build on the strength of our previous publications, providing a deep and wide ranging understanding of the people who run convenience stores, their staff and customers.

In this year's report, we have included a new chapter focused on the community value of local shops. We look at what retailers are doing in their communities, along with how convenience stores fare compared to other services on the high street.

This report brings together data from well-respected research organisations such as him! Research and Consulting, the Institute of Grocery Distribution, Nielsen, ComRes and William Reed Business Media with new research designed and commissioned by ACS. Together, this data provides our richest ever picture of the economic and social value of local shops.

#LocalShopReport



CONVENIENCE STORES – THE MODERN LOCAL SHOP

The value the convenience sector adds to the economy in Gross Value Added is just over... **£5bn** * That's over **6%** of all UK RETAIL... **

The local shop is a long standing feature of UK communities, it is however constantly evolving and changing.

The modern local shop has developed along the convenience store format. It is typically characterised as follows:

- Open for long hours, usually seven days a week, and not subject to restrictions under the Sunday Trading Act.
- Occupying a small store premises - usually smaller than 280 square metres or 3,000 square feet (see page 7).
- Stocking a broad range of product categories (see page 9).

Beyond these three defining characteristics is a significant amount of variety. Local shops operate in and serve all types of communities across the UK.

* Source: ACS Costs Barometer ** Source: ONS

Industry experts tend to categorise the industry by ownership types (for a full breakdown see page 7) – there are:

- **Co-operatives** – groups of stores that are owned by their customers, the biggest by far is The Co-operative Group, but there are a number of smaller co-operative societies operating convenience stores around the country;
- **Multiples** – chains of stores run from a head office (examples are McColl's Retail Group, BP and Tesco Express);
- **Symbol groups** – these are groups usually organised by a wholesaler that are made up of independent businesses but collaborate in joint buying and marketing initiatives (examples are Spar, Costcutter, Londis, Mace and Best One);
- **Non-affiliated independents** – these tend to be the smallest businesses in the market.

Convenience stores trade in a wide variety of locations, meeting many needs:

RURAL

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



RURAL: 39%
19,981 shops

URBAN

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



URBAN: 37%
18,909 shops



FORECOURT: 17%
8,759 shops

* Forecourts can be in urban, suburban or rural areas

SUBURBAN

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



SUBURBAN: 24%
12,634 shops

FORECOURT

In some locations providing an important commuter service and in others providing the main local shop service for the whole community.

Source: WRBM/Nielsen

Data related to overall sales is sourced from the Institute of Grocery Distribution; data related to shops is sourced from William Reed Business Media and Nielsen, data related to Customers is sourced from him! research and consulting; data relating to communities is sourced from the ACS Community Barometer conducted with ComRes. All other data is sourced from bespoke research for ACS. The full methodology is available on page 22.

SHOPS

- There are **51,524** convenience stores in mainland UK.
- **42,755** in England.
- **5,602** in Scotland.
- **3,167** in Wales.
- Scotland has more shops per head than any other part of the UK with **one shop for every 946 people**.
- **75%** of local shops are owned and operated by **small business owners**.
- **61%** of independent stores are **under 1,000 sq ft**, compared to just 17% of multiple stores.
- **65%** of independent retailers **own the premises** they operate from.

SALES

- The **total value of sales** in the convenience sector in the year to April 2015 was **£37.7 billion**.
- **Turnover** in the convenience sector **has grown by over 5%** over the last year.

Sales by ownership

- **Symbol groups*** account for **38.1%** of sales in the sector.
- **Multiple chains and co-operatives** account for **33.6%** of total sales.
- **Non-affiliated independents** account for **17.4%** of sales.

Sales by category

- **Chilled and fresh fruit and veg** accounts for **19.7%** of sales.
- **Bread and bakery** accounts for **5.3%** of sales.
- **Sandwiches** account for **2.9%** of sales.
- **92%** of stores have some form of **refrigeration in-store**.

* Symbol group means retailers – usually independents – trading together under a common brand.

COMMUNITY

- **83%** of independent retailers engaged in some form of **community activity** over the last year.
- The **South West** is the most engaged region, with **90%** involved in **community activity**.
- **Convenience stores and Post Offices** are the two services deemed to have the **most positive impact on high streets** by consumers and councillors.

FEATURES

Stores now feature a variety of services and offerings for consumers. Popular services **like mobile phone top up (80%) lottery (77%) and an alcohol licence (88%)** are staples of convenience. However, stores are also diversifying their service offering to include more technology and green features:

- **27%** of stores **use smart meters**.
- **26%** of stores **provide recycling services** for customers.
- **14%** of stores **include digital advertising screens**.

CUSTOMERS

- **78%** of customers **travel less than a mile** to use their local store.
- **58%** of customers **travel to their store by foot**, compared to **38%** who **drive**.
- The **customer base** of local shops is **56% female / 44% male**.
- **25%** of customers **use their local shop every day**.

JOBS

Convenience stores provide over **407,000 jobs** in mainland UK.

- **338,348** in England.
- **44,332** in Scotland.
- **25,063** in Wales.

Job profiles

- **63%** of staff are **women**.
- **22%** are aged **16 to 24**.
- **11%** are **over 60** years old.

31% of employees **work 31 hours per week** or more. **83%** of staff have **worked at their shop for at least one year** and **23%** have worked there for **over ten years**.

Convenience stores offer their staff valuable training and development opportunities. **35% of convenience stores offer food safety training** while **independent stores alone make first aid training available to nearly 48,000 people**.

Family employment

Amongst independent businesses, 26% employ only themselves and members of their family, while **54% employ at least one family member**.

ENTREPRENEURS

The overwhelming majority of local shops (**75%**) are **run by small business owners**. The sector is also very entrepreneurial, with **over seven in ten** being the first person in their family to own or run a convenience store and an increasingly large number (**15%**) being **30 or under**.

Among this group:

- **32%** are **women**.
- **23%** have been **in the business for more than 26 years**.
- **36%** own the business **in partnership with family members**.

Convenience store owners work very long hours, with **25% of shop owners working more than 70 hours per week** while **20% take no holiday in the year at all**.

Ethnicity

Just **over half of business owners describe themselves as White British (51%)** while **just under half are Asian or British Asian (45%)**.

There are significant variations between regions; **in London 83% of independent retailers are Asian**, whereas this number is only **12% in the South West**.

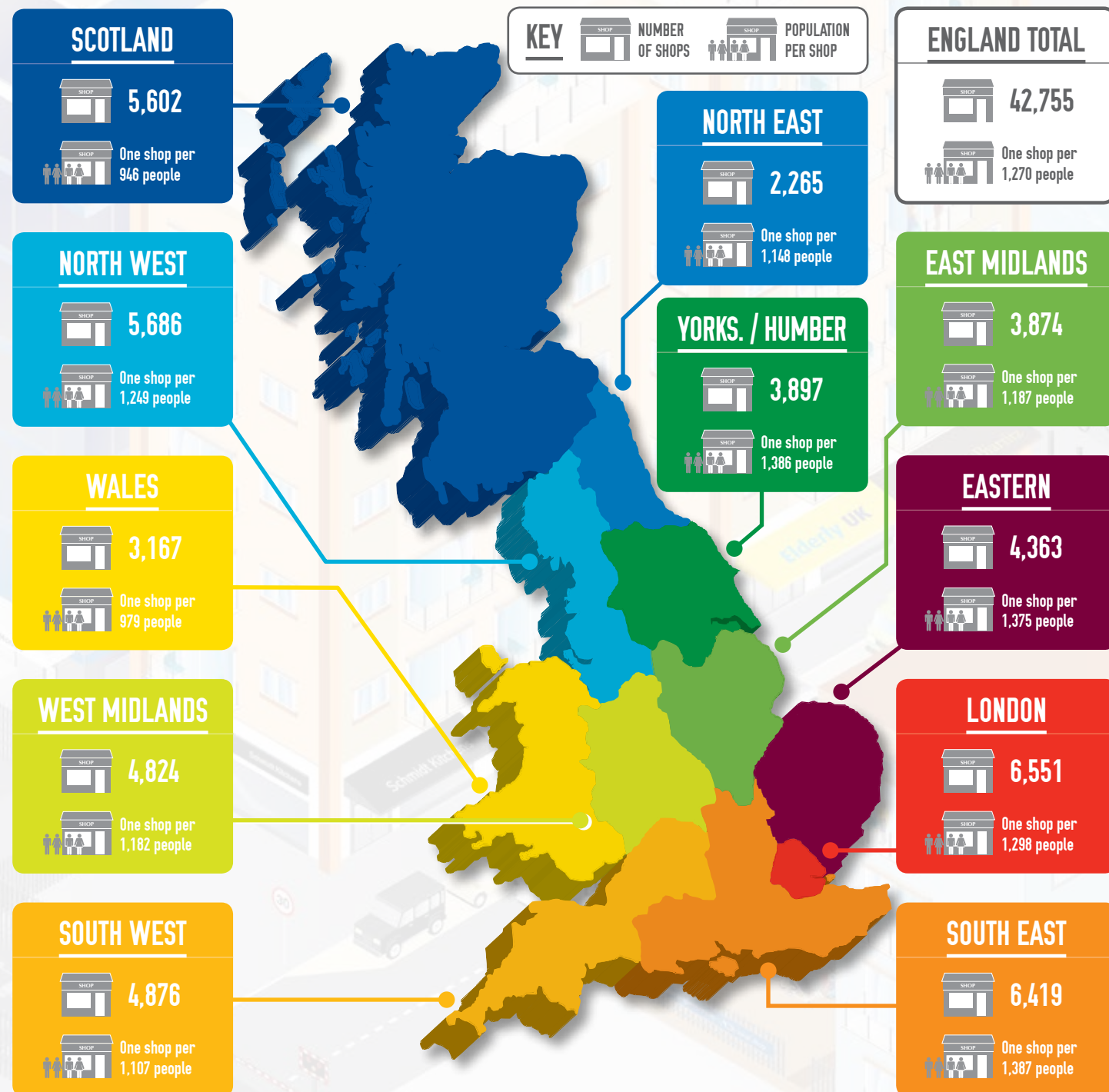
Other than English, the predominant languages spoken by retailers are Bengali, Punjabi and Kashmiri. **In Wales, 27% of retailers speak Welsh**.



Scotland has more shops per head than any other part of the UK

75% of convenience stores are run by **INDEPENDENT RETAILERS**

SHOP NUMBERS



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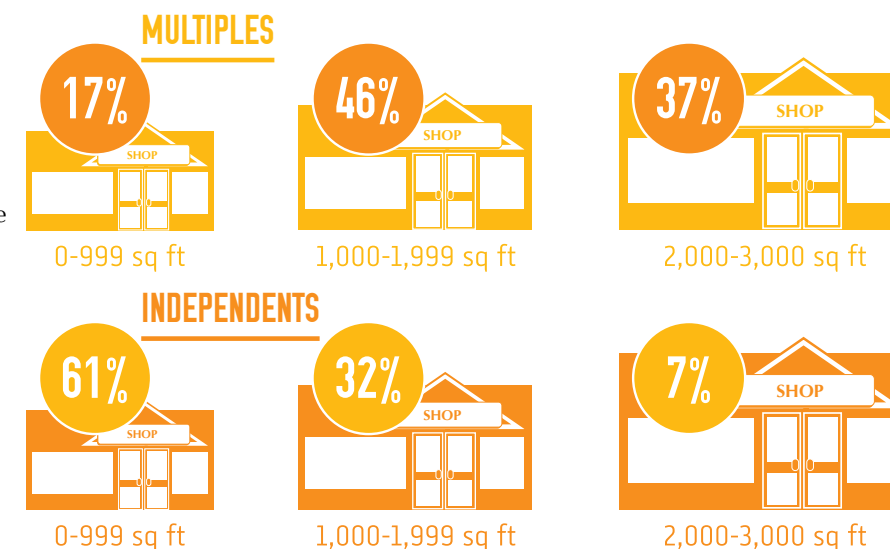
Source: WRBM/Nielsen 2015 and ONS 2014

SHOP SIZE

There is a significant difference between stores operated by multiple companies and by independent retailers. Multiple and co-operative owned stores tend to be larger, while the vast majority of independent stores are under 2,000 sq ft.

There are a small number of multiple and co-operative owned stores which are over 3,000 sq ft, but these have not been included for the purposes of this report.

Source: ACS Survey 2015

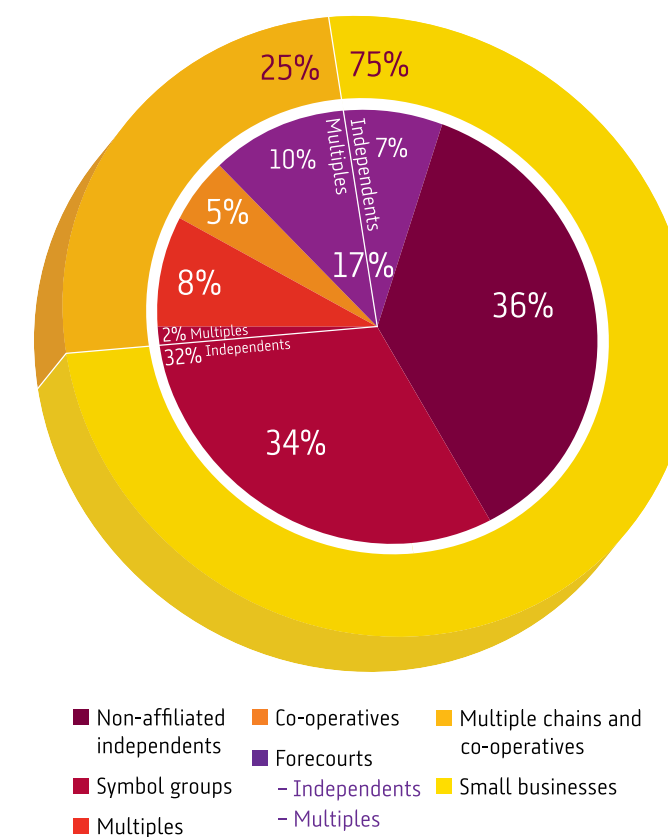


SHOP OWNERSHIP

The vast majority of shops in the convenience sector are owned and operated by small business owners or 'independents'. Together independents operate 75% of the shops in the sector.

The 'symbol' groups are predominantly groups of independent retailers trading under a common customer facing brand – familiar symbol group brands include Spar, Costcutter, Lonsdale, Nisa Local, Premier, Mace and Best One. There are more than 16,000 shops run by independent retailers that choose to trade in this way. However there are also more than 1,000 stores that trade under these brands but are chains of 10 or more stores run from a centralised head office.

Convenience stores operating on petrol forecourts are an important part of the market with a combination of multiply owned and run stores and independently owned and run stores making up 17% of the convenience sector.



Source: WRBM/Nielsen 2015

PREMISES OWNERSHIP



Source: ACS/him! 2015 (independent retailers only)



Total value of sales **£37.7 billion**
in the convenience sector in the year to April 2015

This amounts to over **ONE FIFTH**
of the total grocery market



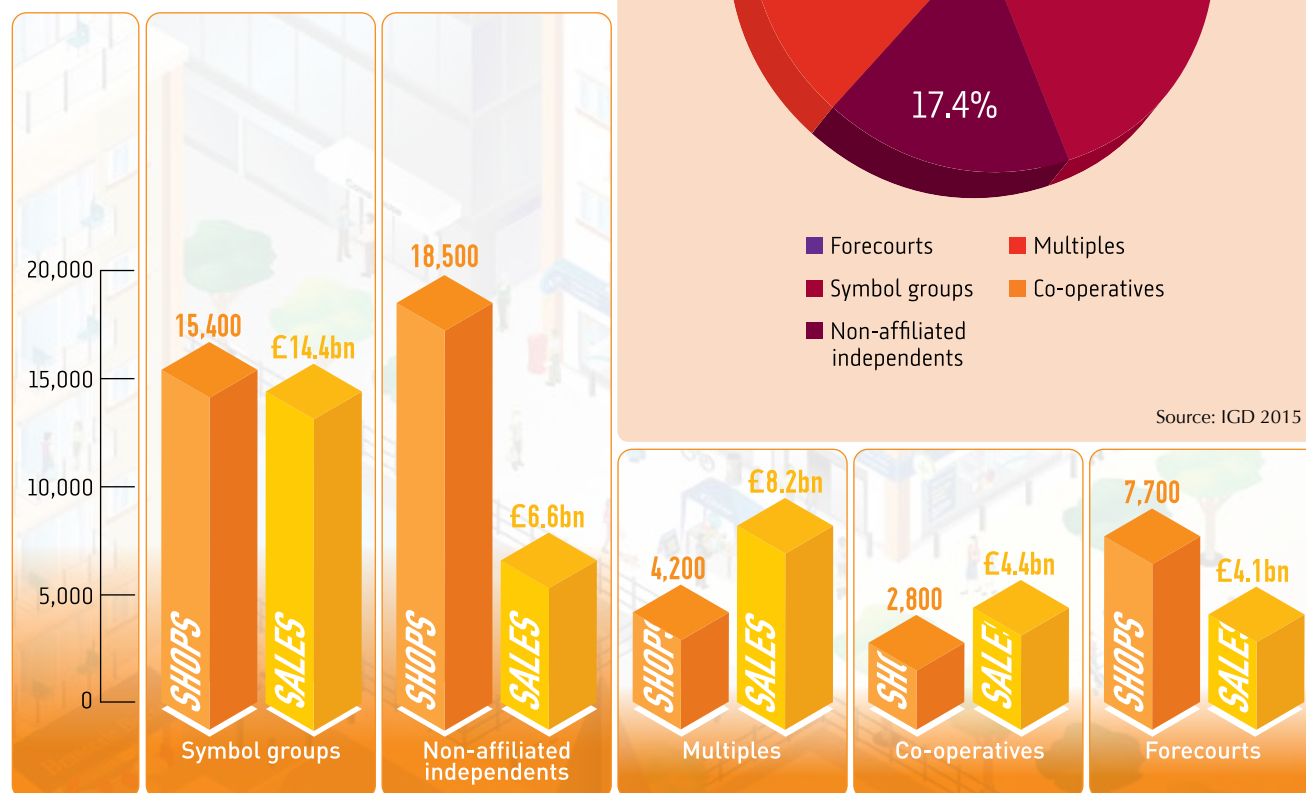
Turnover
grew by...

**OVER
5%**

between 2014 and 2015

SHOP OWNERSHIP AND SALES

Independent retailers (non-affiliated and symbol) continue to make the biggest contribution to the overall sales of the sector, in addition to having the highest number of stores by a significant margin. However, there is continued strong growth in multiple retailing which now accounts for over a fifth of the market share of the sector.



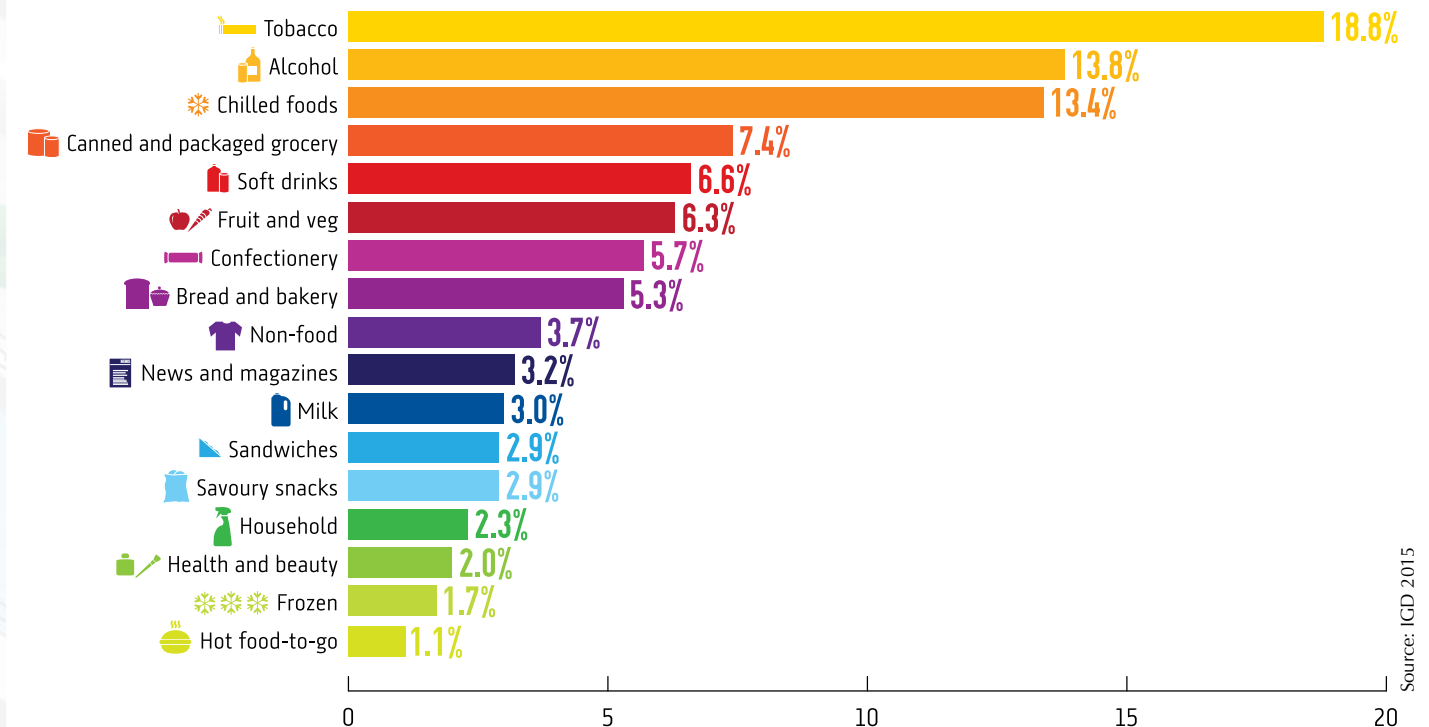
Key: Stores 2015 (1,000s) Sales 2015 (£bn)

Source: IGD 2015

SHOP CATEGORIES

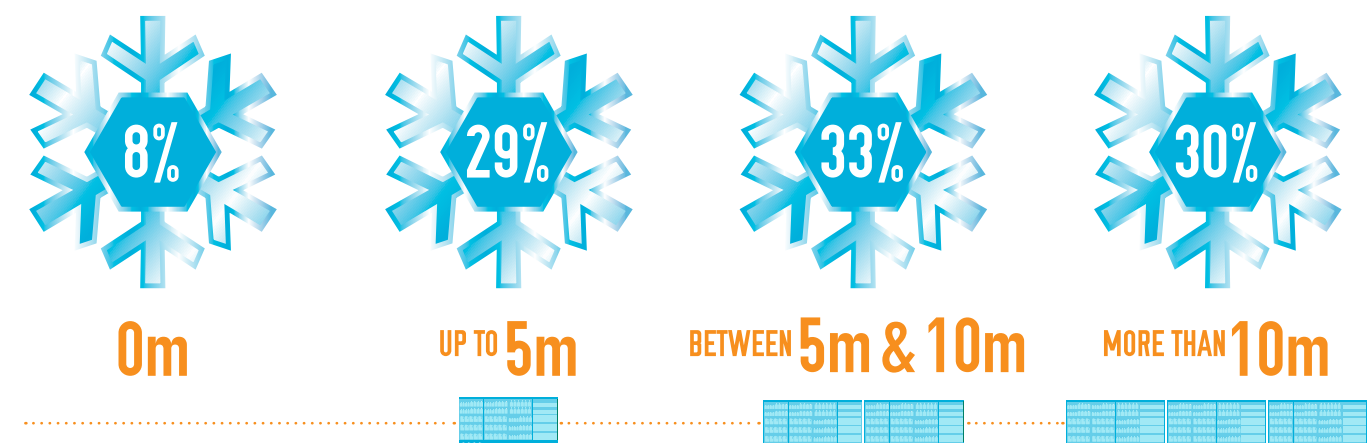
There is significant variety in the products offered in different types of store, depending on their size, location and ownership type. The chart below shows the average sales contribution made by product category.

There have been significant changes in the prevalence of these categories in-store over the last year – for more information on comparisons go to pages 20-21.



Source: IGD 2015

REFRIGERATION

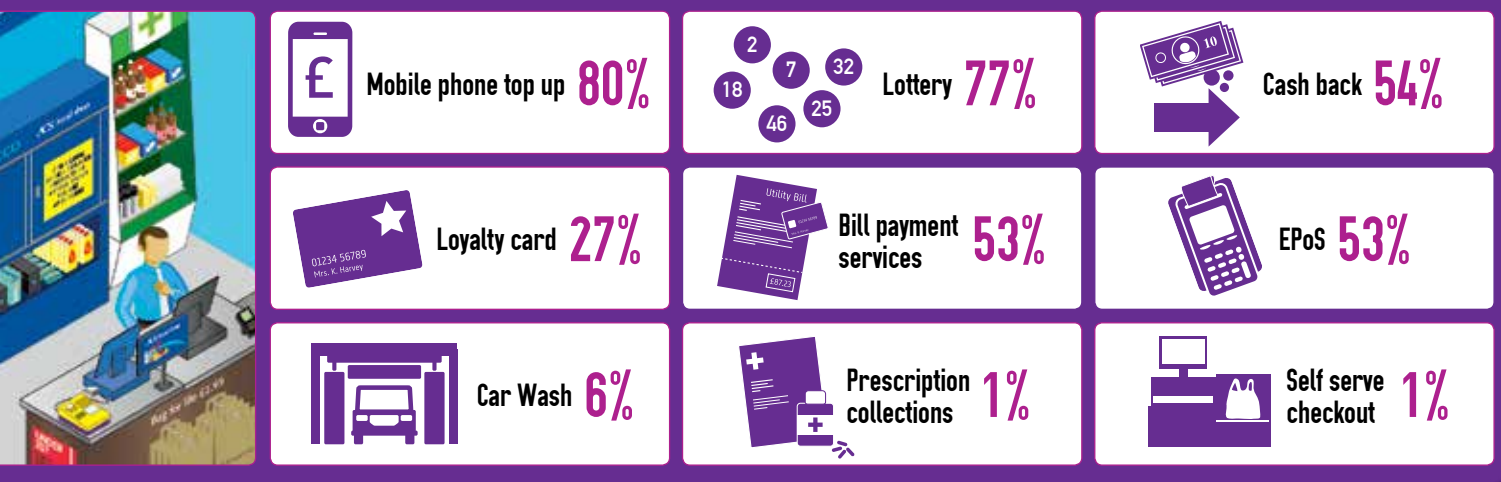


Source: ACS/him! 2015



BEHIND THE COUNTER

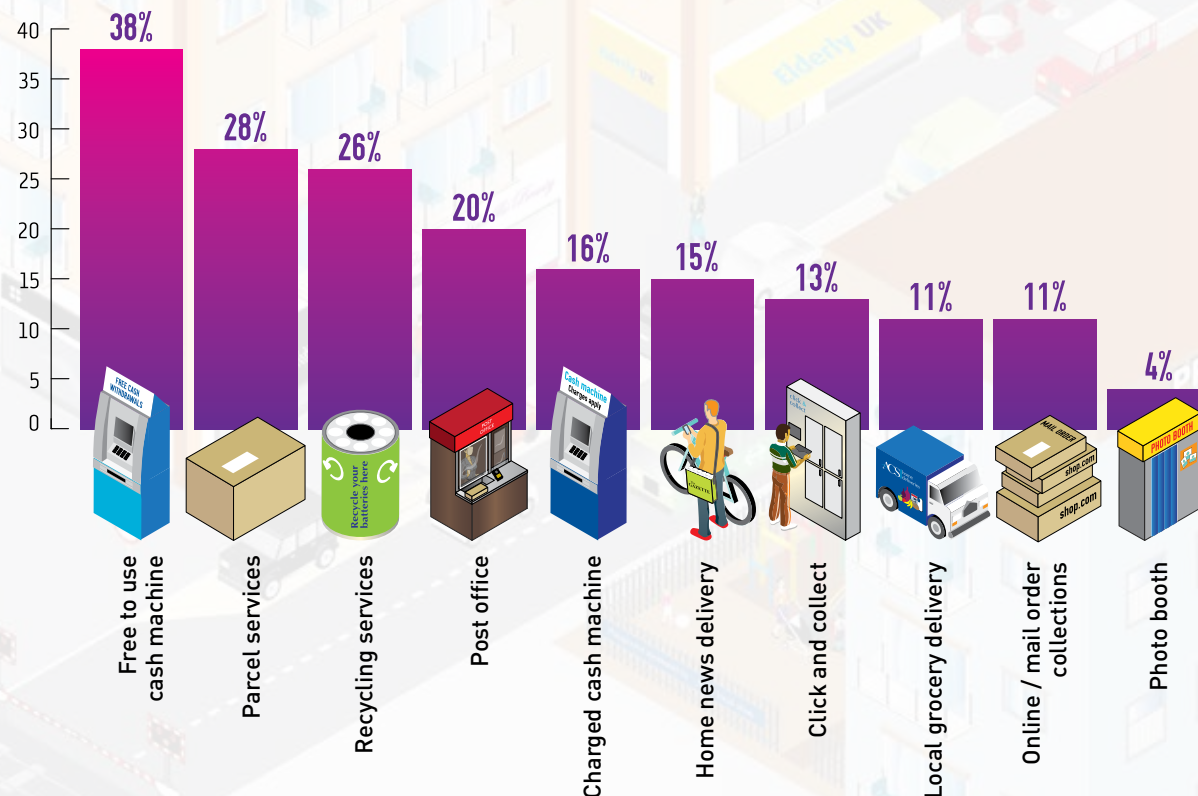
Convenience stores now offer a wide range of services and features in-store for their customers. The following data shows the percentage of the sector that incorporates each feature in-store.



LICENSING



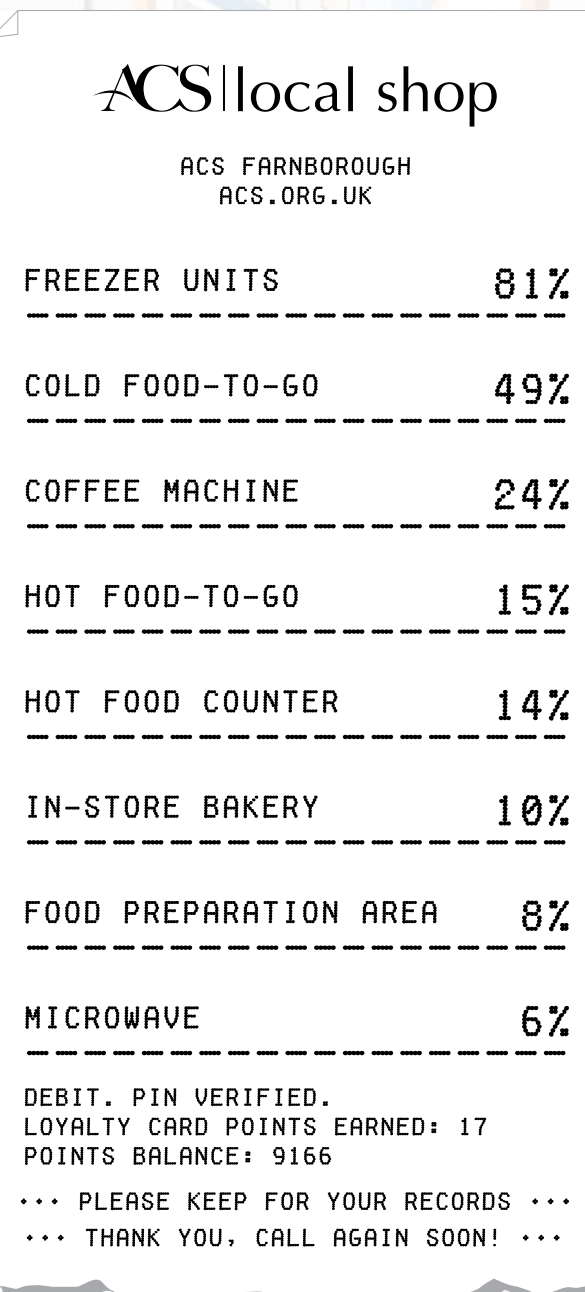
SERVICES



IN-STORE



FOOD AND DRINK



TECHNOLOGY





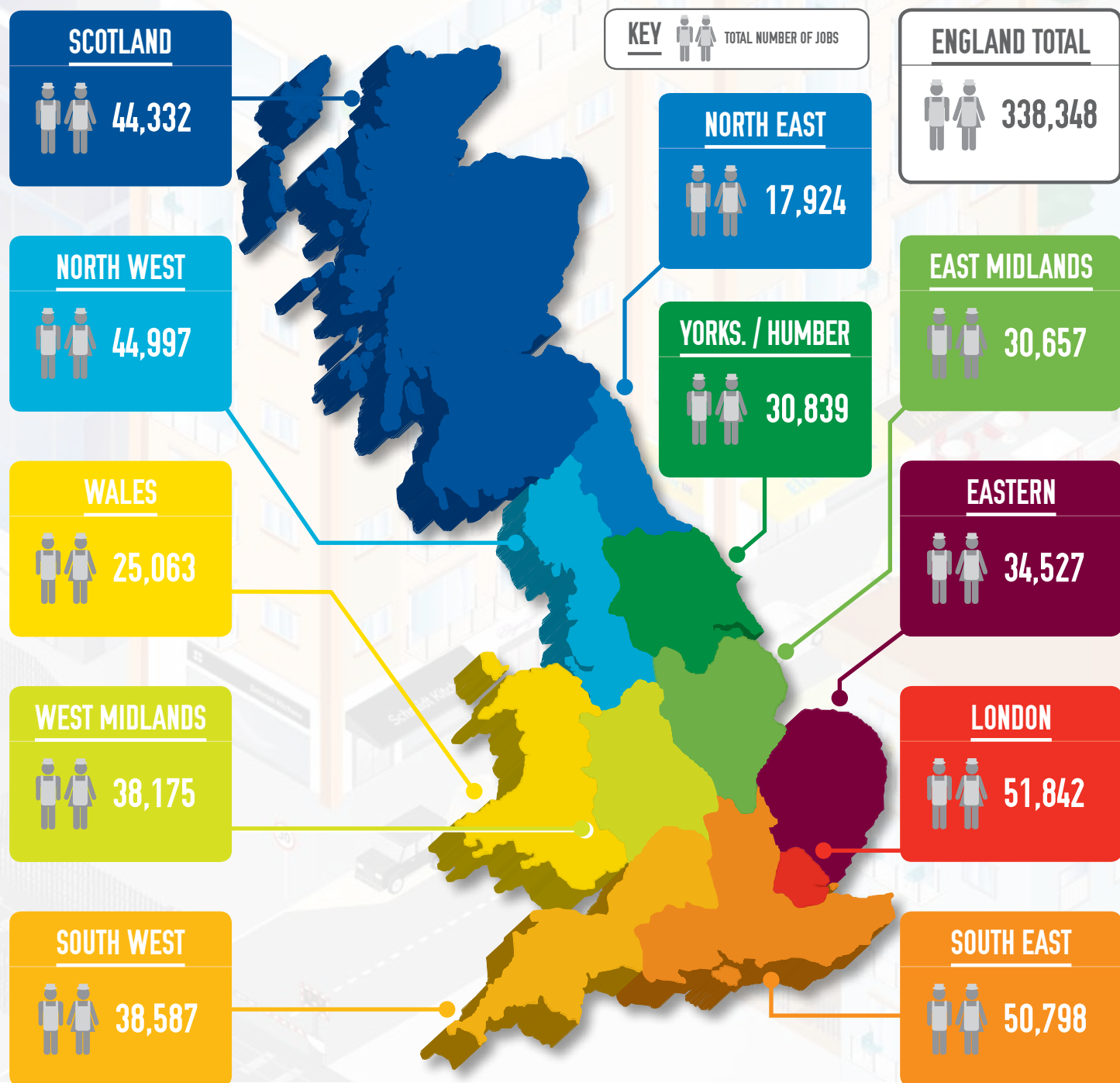
Convenience stores provide over **407,000** jobs in mainland UK



Independent shops alone make first aid training available to nearly...

48,000 people

CONVENIENCE STORE SECTOR JOBS

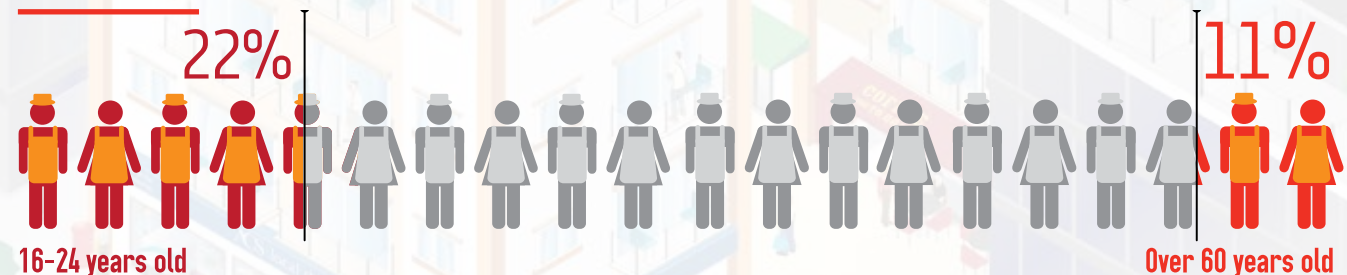


PEOPLE

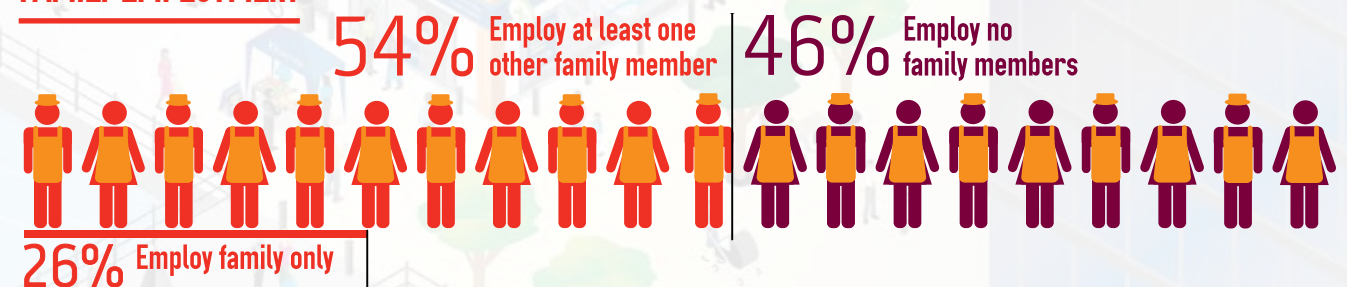
GENDER PROFILE



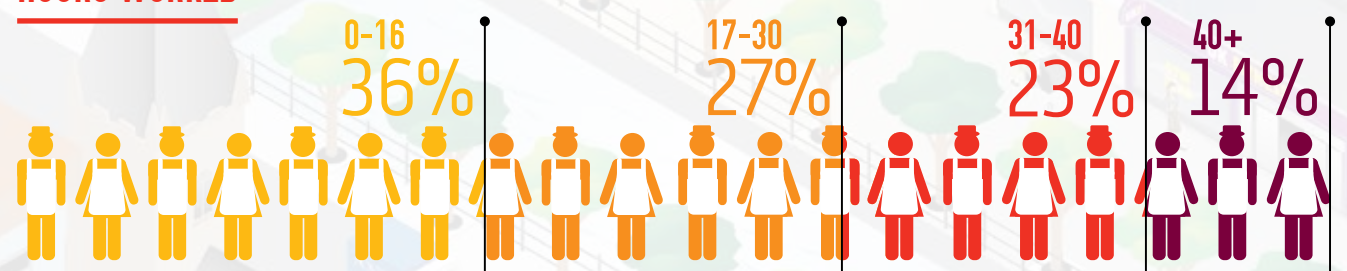
AGE PROFILE



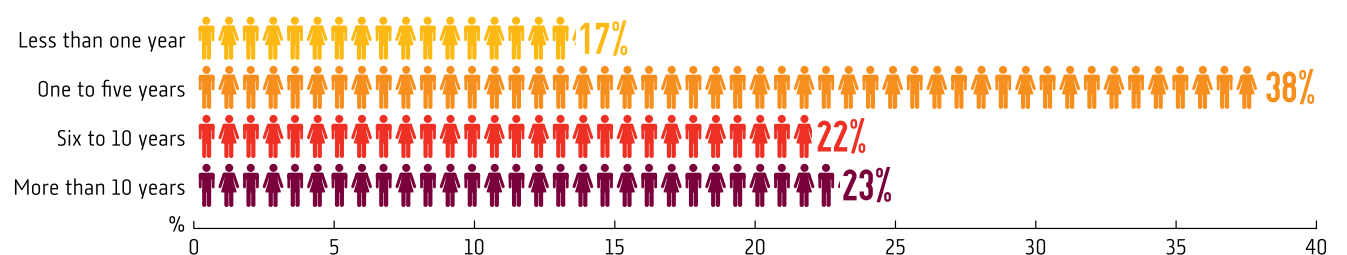
FAMILY EMPLOYMENT



HOURS WORKED



LENGTH OF EMPLOYMENT



All data on this spread – source: ACS/him! 2015



25%

of shop owners work more than 70 hours per week

23% have been in the business for more than **25 years**

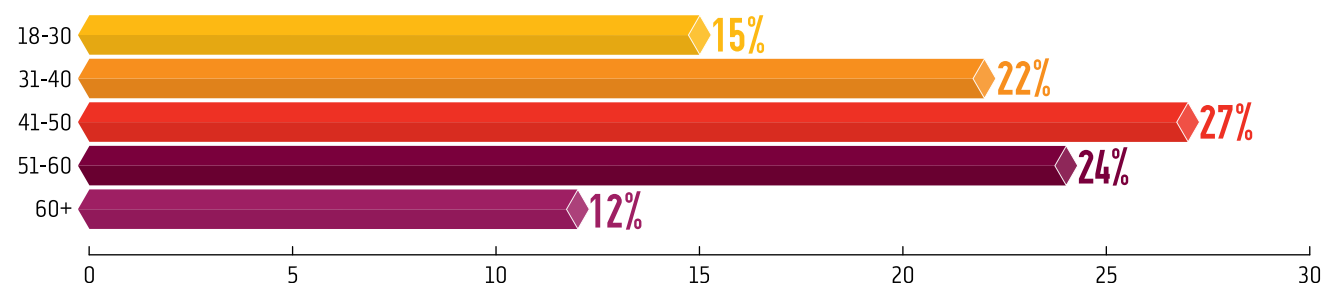
36%

of businesses are owned by family partnerships

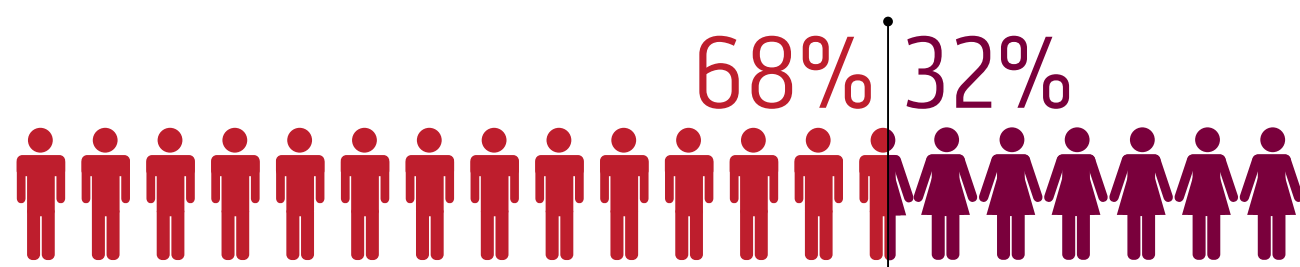
20%

of shop owners take no holiday per year

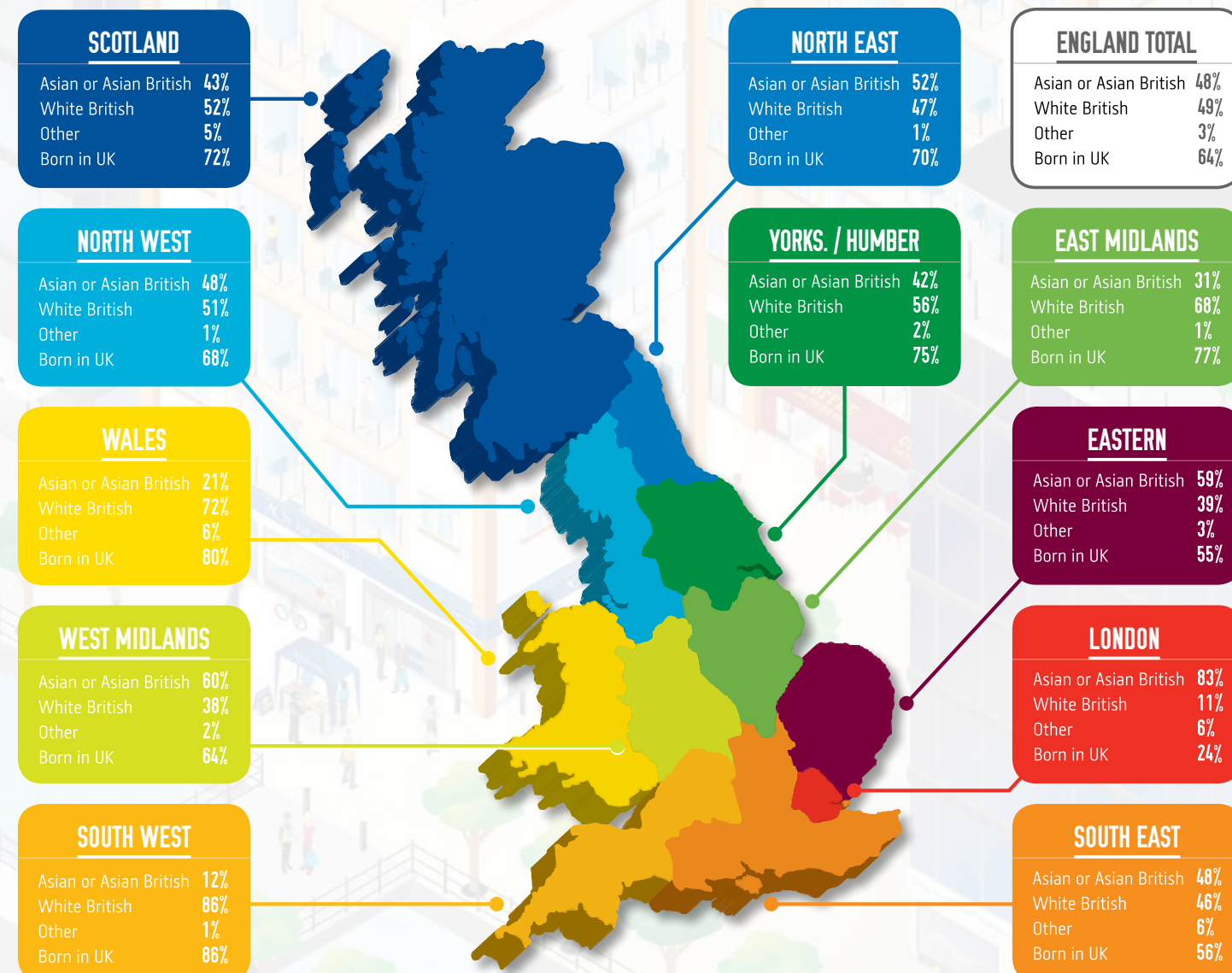
OWNERSHIP AGE PROFILE



OWNERSHIP GENDER PROFILE



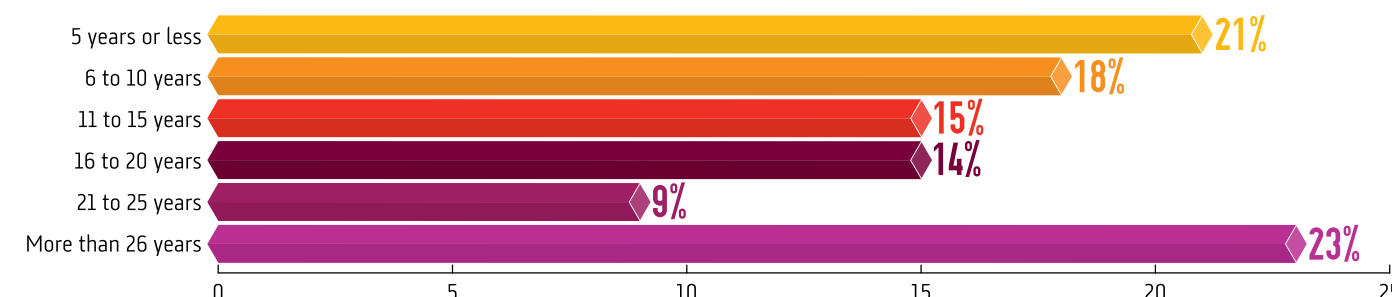
ETHNICITY OF OWNERS



BUSINESS PROFILE



TIME IN BUSINESS

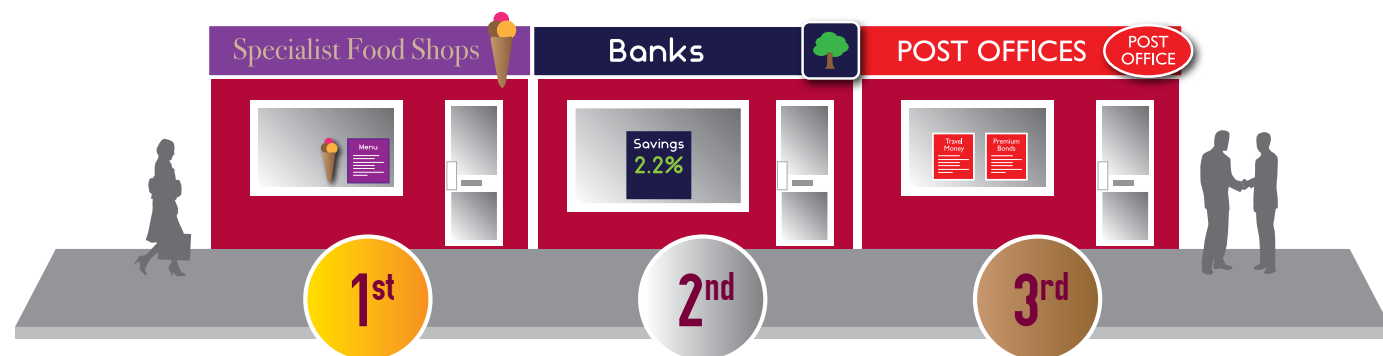




MOST POSITIVE IMPACT ON LOCAL AREA



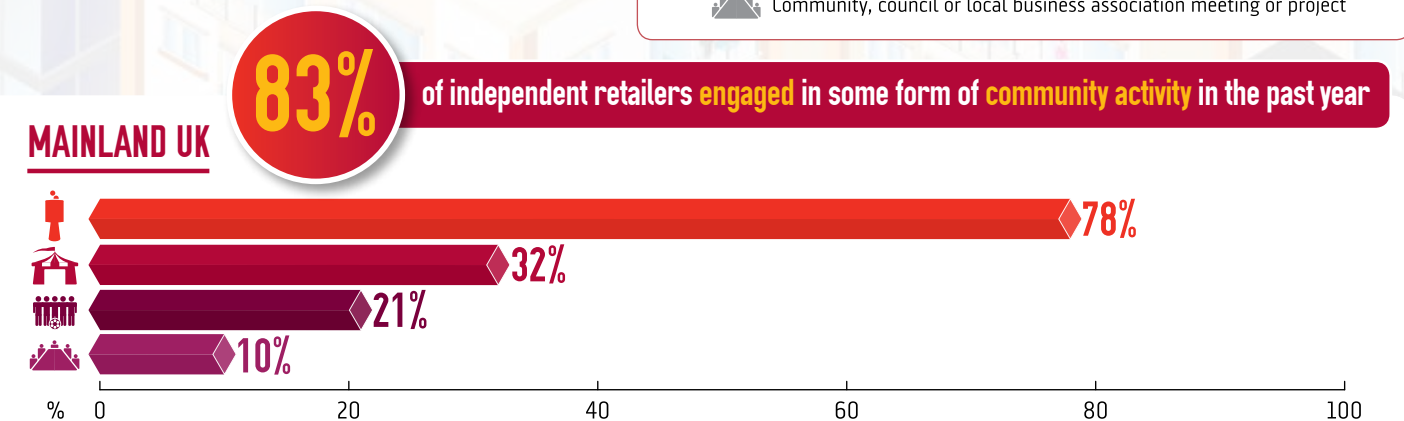
TOP THREE MOST WANTED SERVICES



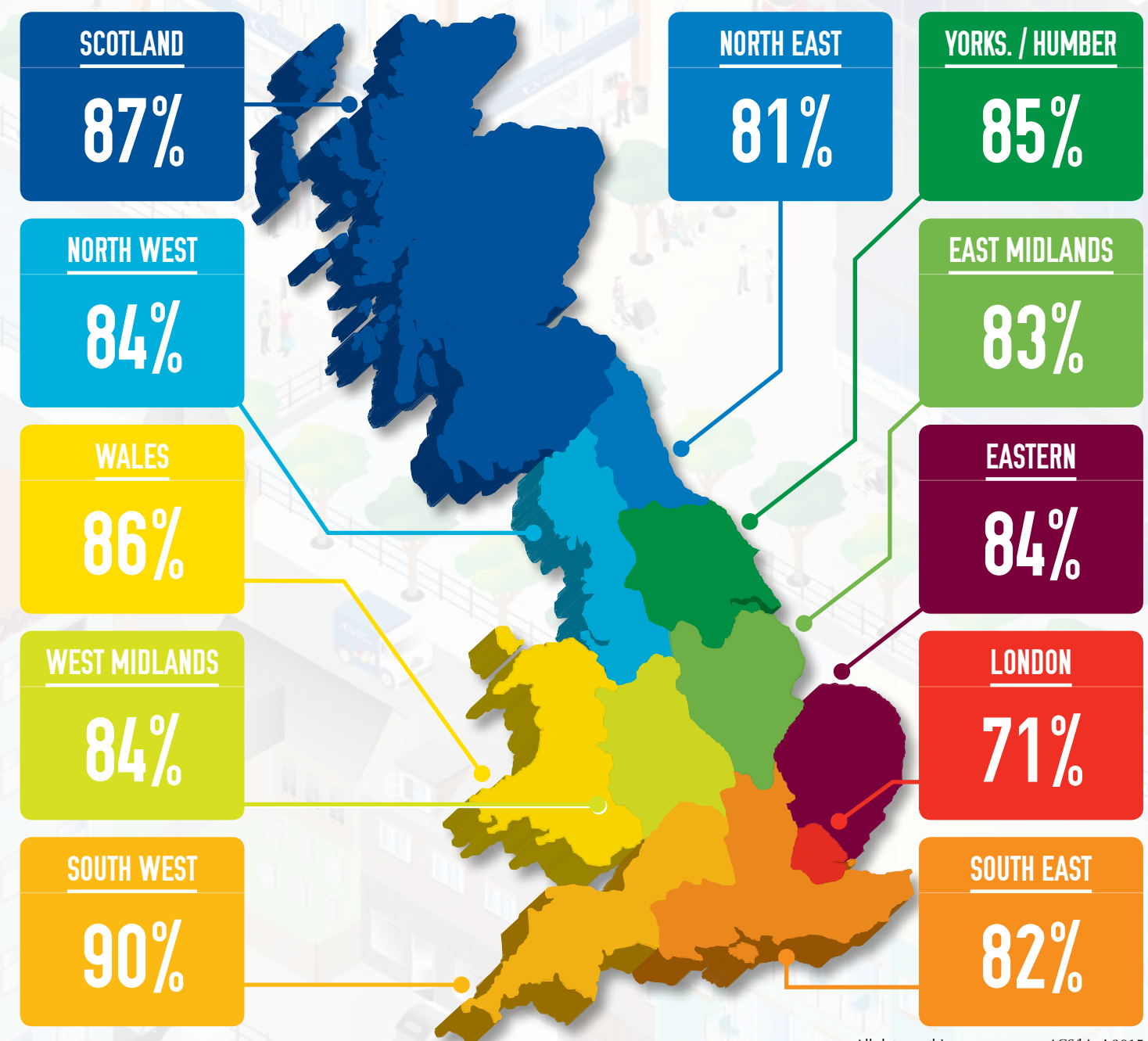
COMMUNITY ACTIVITY

- KEY**
- Collecting money for a national or local charity
 - Providing funding, or in kind support, to a community event
 - Providing sponsorship to a local sports team or other community activity
 - Community, council or local business association meeting or project

MAINLAND UK



TOTAL COMMUNITY ACTIVITY BY REGION

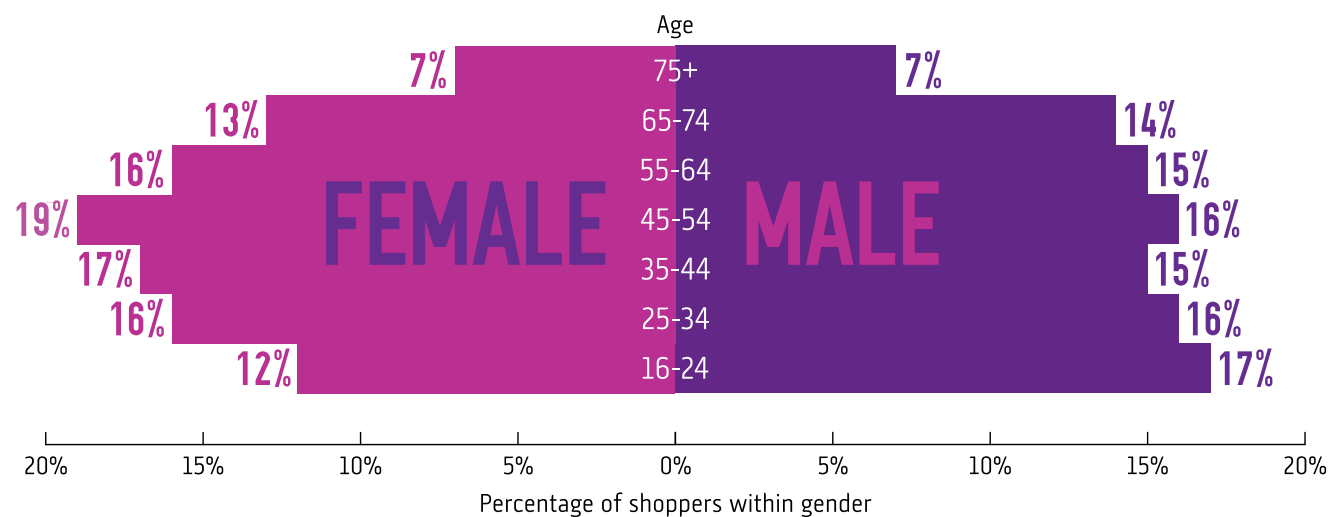




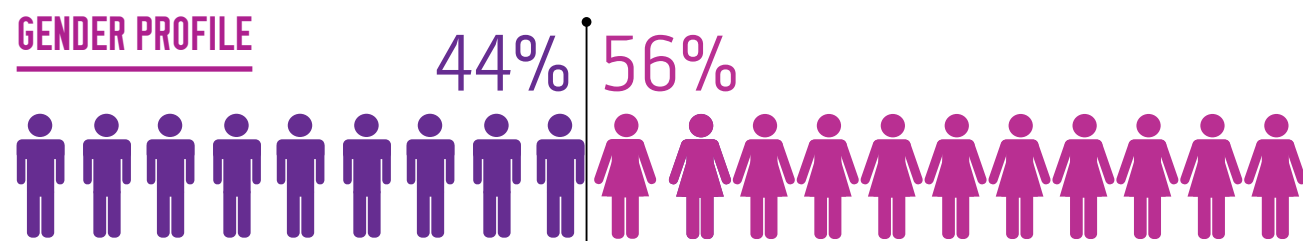
* Source: him! CTP 2014

CUSTOMER PROFILE

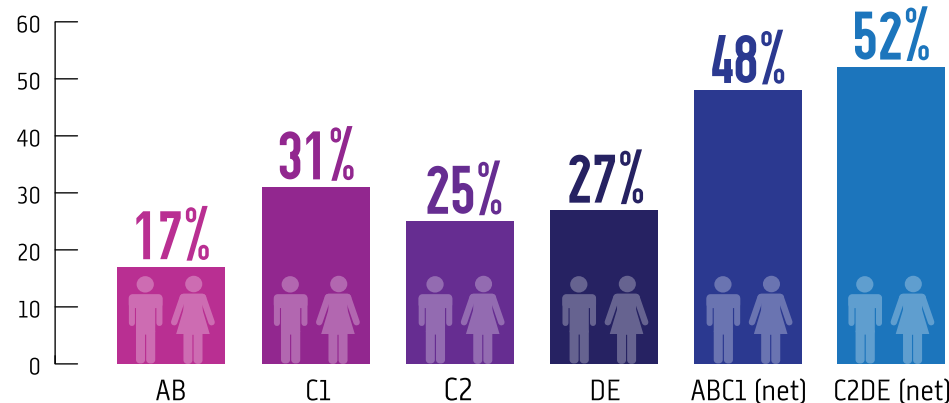
AGE OF POPULATION / AGE OF SHOPPERS



GENDER PROFILE

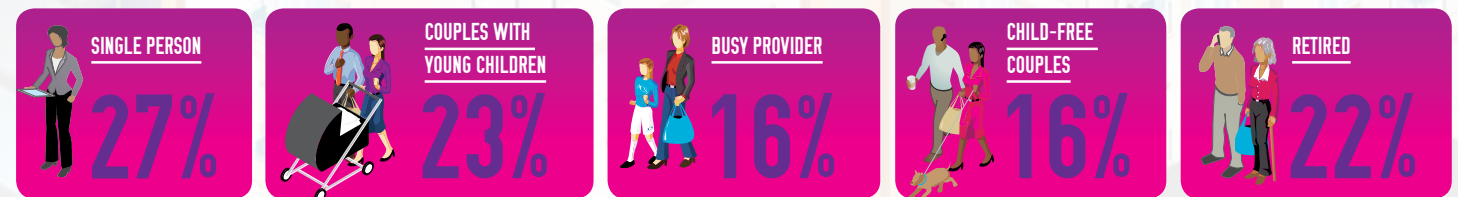


SOCIAL GROUPS

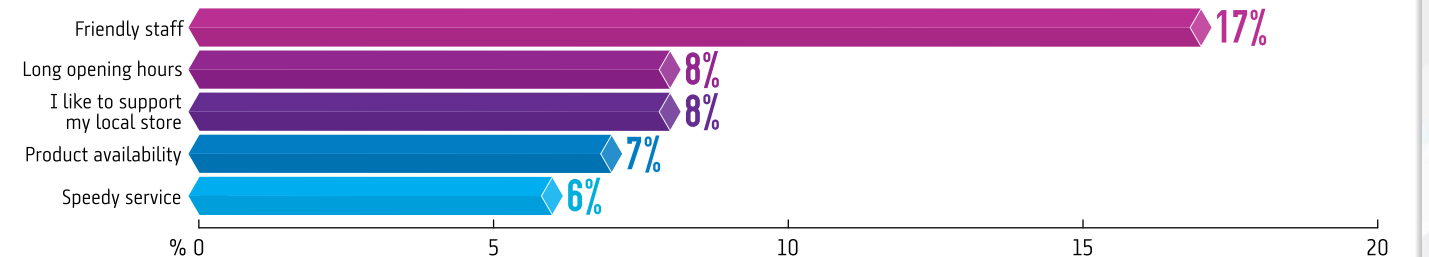


All data on this spread – source: him! CTP 2015 unless stated otherwise

SHOPPER PROFILES



TOP FIVE DRIVERS TO STORES



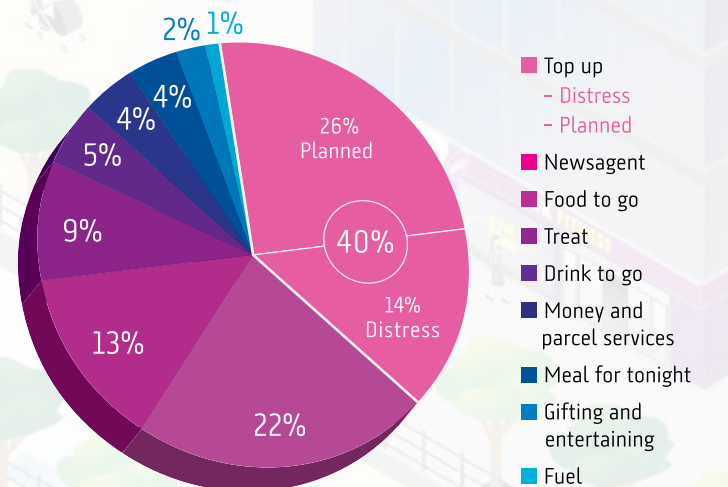
MODE OF TRAVEL TO STORES



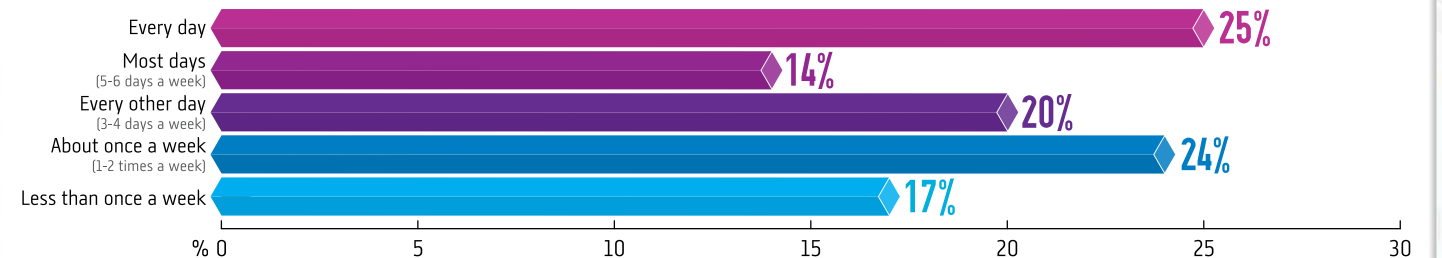
DISTANCE TRAVELLED TO STORE



SHOPPER MISSIONS

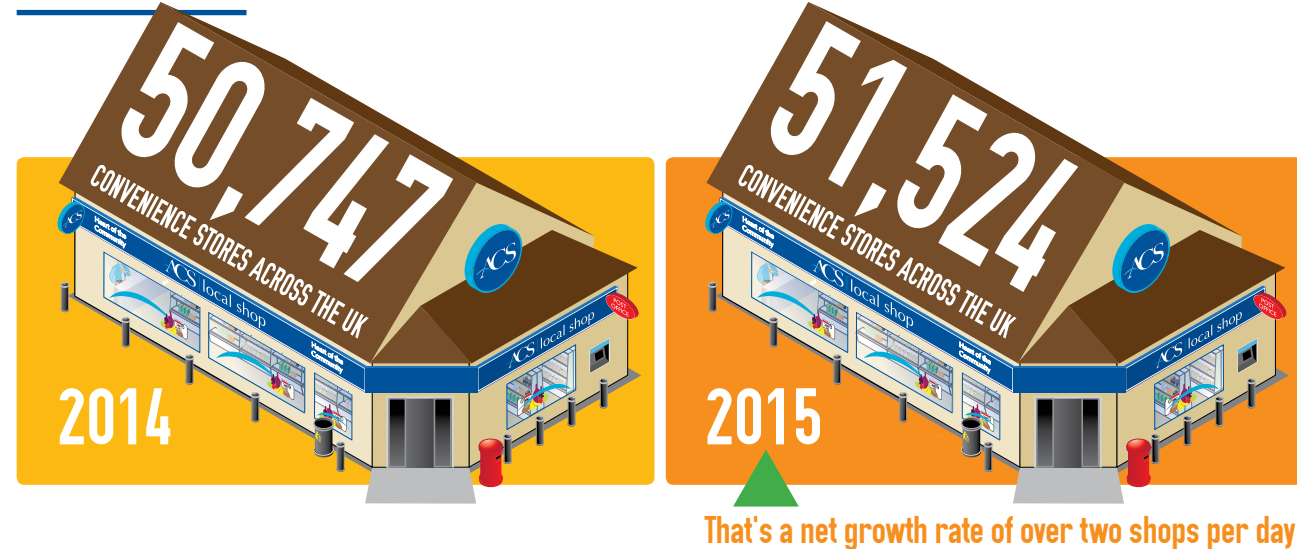


VISIT FREQUENCY

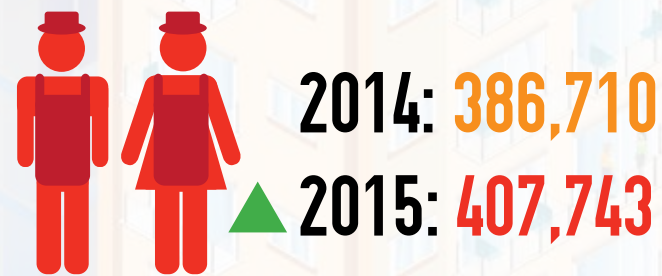


This page shows some of the significant changes between 2014 and 2015 Local Shop Reports. More detailed comparisons of the two reports are available to ACS members. Contact details are on the back page of this report.

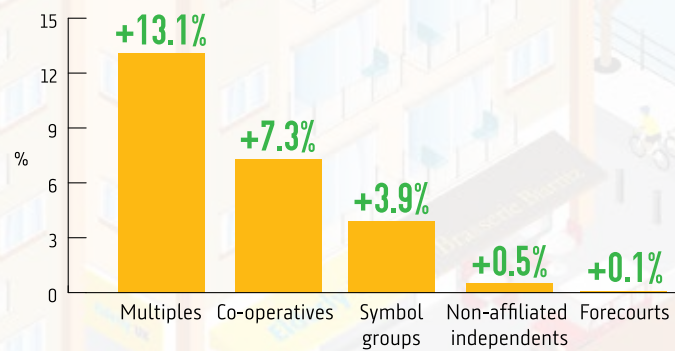
STORE NUMBERS



JOBS

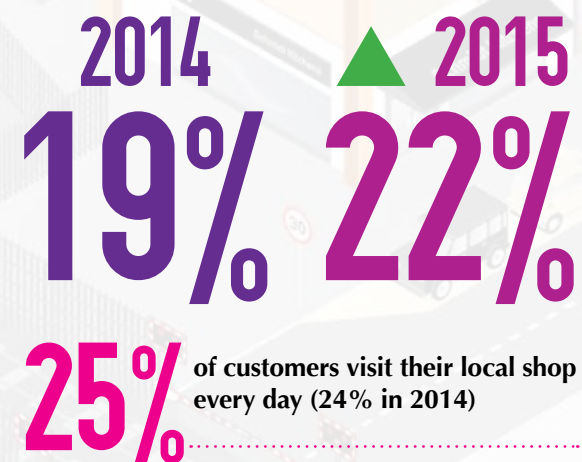


SALES



DISTANCE TRAVELLED TO STORE

Customers travelling more than a mile:



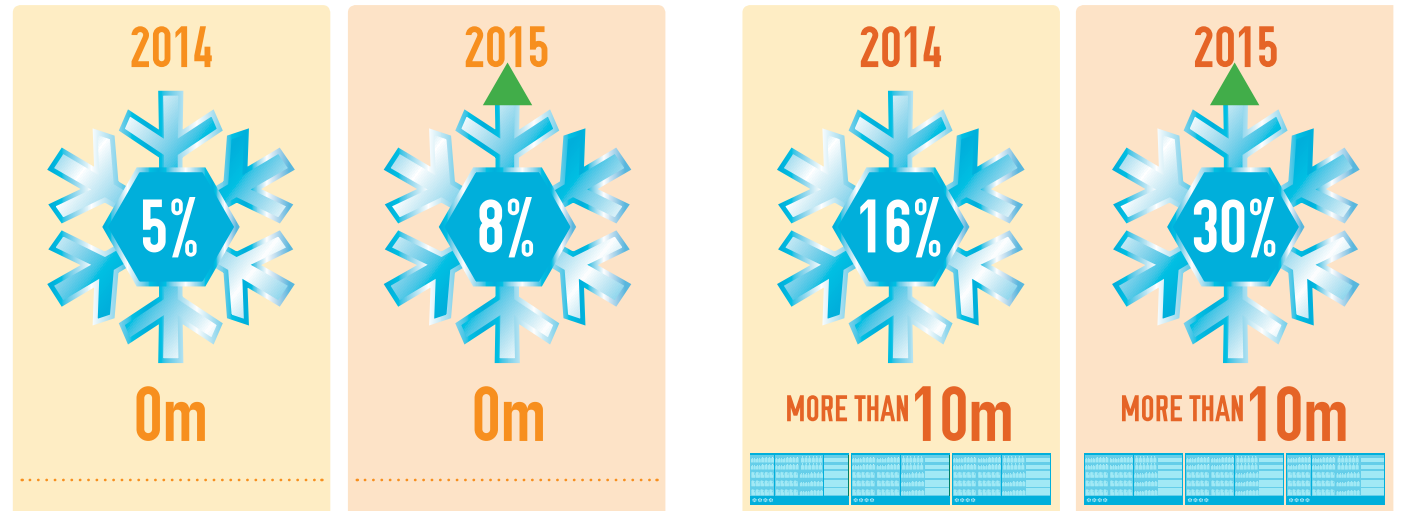
AVERAGE SPEND



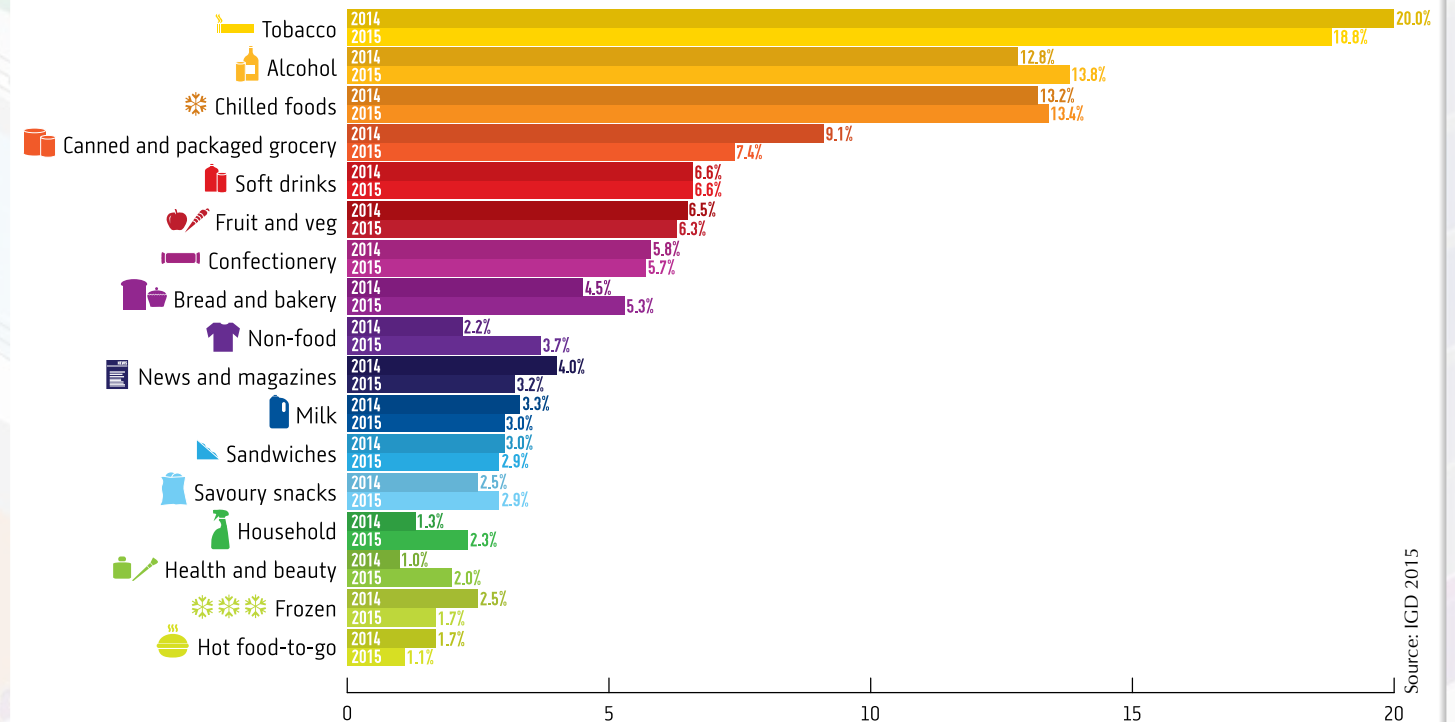
ENTREPRENEURS



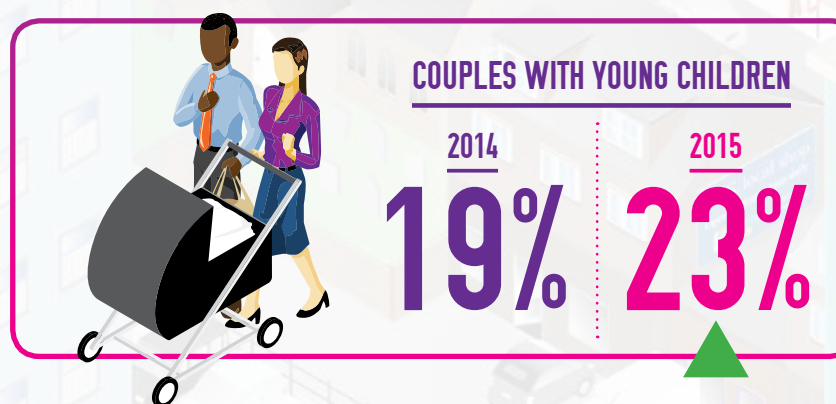
REFRIGERATION



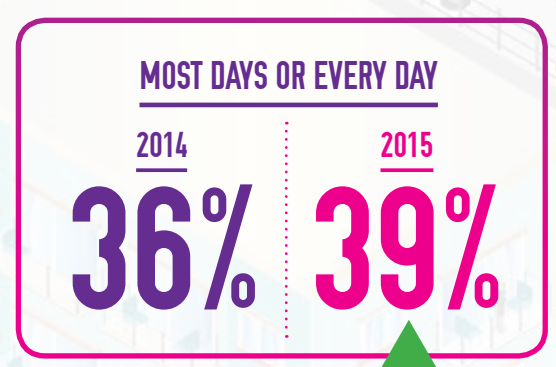
SHOP CATEGORIES



FASTEST GROWING SHOPPER PROFILE



VISIT FREQUENCY



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 2,420 independently owned convenience store businesses in the UK. ACS contracted him! research and consulting to aid in the design and delivery of the survey. The survey was carried out over the phone by BCC Marketing between 25th June and 16th July 2015. The survey gathered responses from non-affiliated independent convenience stores and independent stores that are part of central buying or marketing (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 as set out in the report, each returning 200 responses. A copy of the survey questions and responses is available on request by emailing peter.fairfax@acs.org.uk

2. Multiple Retailer Survey – Multiple Retailer Survey – ACS conducted a 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 related to a sample of 4,999 stores. A copy of the survey questions and responses is available on request by emailing peter.fairfax@acs.org.uk

The results of these two surveys collated and combined figures for non-affiliated independents, symbol group members and multiples according to their proportion of stores in the market, in order to determine overall results for the sector.

Nielsen and William Reed Business Media sector data

Nielsen utilises cross referencing data from trade associations, retailers, suppliers and customer lists. This is supplemented by gap analysis and wide-search primary research.

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.

Convenience Retailing 2014 report – Institute of Grocery Distribution

This report is compiled by the IGD based on the sales data up to the end of 2014.

Convenience Tracking Programme – him! Research and Consulting

This programme is a survey of over 20,000 convenience shoppers conducted at the 'moment of truth' in-store. References are to the 2015 survey (unless otherwise referenced).

Population data – The Office of National Statistics

Data is taken from mid-2014 UK Population Estimates.

Communities data – ComRes

ComRes interviewed 2,067 adults in Great Britain online between 22nd May and 25th May 2015. ComRes is a member of the British Polling Council and abides by its rules. Data tables are available online on the ComRes website.

References

The Modern Local Shop (page 3) – Percentages for 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).

Gross Value Added is the value of goods and services produced in an area, industry or sector of an economy. This was calculated by calculating the GVA as a percentage of sales for typical shops using the ACS Costs Barometer and multiplying this by the total value of sales as given in the IGD Convenience Retailing 2015 Report.

Shops (page 6-7)

- Store numbers-figures sourced from WRBM. These figures were divided by the mid-2014 ONS regional population estimates to obtain population per shop.
- When calculating store size, don't know responses have been excluded.
- Store Ownership – ACS calculation based on figures sourced from WRBM.
- Premises Ownership – this figure relates to independent retailers only and is based on their response to the questions in the survey.

Sales (page 8-9)

- Store ownership/share of sales – figures sourced from the IGD Convenience Retailing 2015 Report. IGD have restated the size of the convenience channel to ensure that all sales attributed to it are meeting IGD's convenience store definition. This has resulted in some smaller stores now being represented as CTNs in the 'Other' channel.

- Sales/market share – figures sourced from the IGD Convenience Retailing 2015 Report.
- Shop categories – figures sourced from the IGD Convenience Retailing 2015 Report.
- Refrigeration – ACS Independents and Multiples surveys asked respondents to estimate how much refrigeration they provided in-store. Results for non-affiliated independents, symbol group members and multiples were collated and combined according to their proportion of stores in the market in order to determine overall results for the sector.

Features (page 10-11)

- All numbers: ACS Independents and Multiples surveys asked respondents to list which of a selection of services were offered in-store. Results for non-affiliated independents, symbol group members and multiples were collated and combined according to their proportion of stores in the market, in order to determine overall results for the sector.

Jobs (page 12-13)

- Jobs – Per store employment figures obtained from ACS Independents and Multiples surveys. Results for non-affiliated independents, symbol group members and multiples were collated and combined according to their proportion of stores in the market, in order to determine overall results for the sector.

Figures for jobs per region were calculated by obtaining an average employment figure per store and multiplying this by the number of stores in each region. 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:

- Independents (non-affiliated and independently-owned symbol stores, excluding forecourts): 5.49.
- Independent forecourts (including independent-owned symbol forecourts): 5.75.
- Multiples (inc. co-operatives, forecourt multiples, multiple-owned symbol stores): 17.72.
- Whole sector average: 7.91.

- People – Data for age and gender statistics, family employment, hours worked, length of employment and employee lifestyles was obtained from ACS Independents and Multiples surveys.

- Qualifications – ACS Independents and Multiples surveys asked respondents to list which qualifications were offered to staff. Results for non-affiliated independents, symbol group members and multiples were collated and combined according to their proportion of stores in the market, in order to determine overall results for the sector.

Entrepreneurs (page 14-15)

- All data in this section obtained from ACS Independents survey and reflects statistics for independent retailers (including those who own symbol stores) only.

- Asian or Asian British category combined results received for each of the following categories: Asian or Asian British, Indian, Pakistani, Bangladeshi, any other Asian background.

Communities (page 16-17)

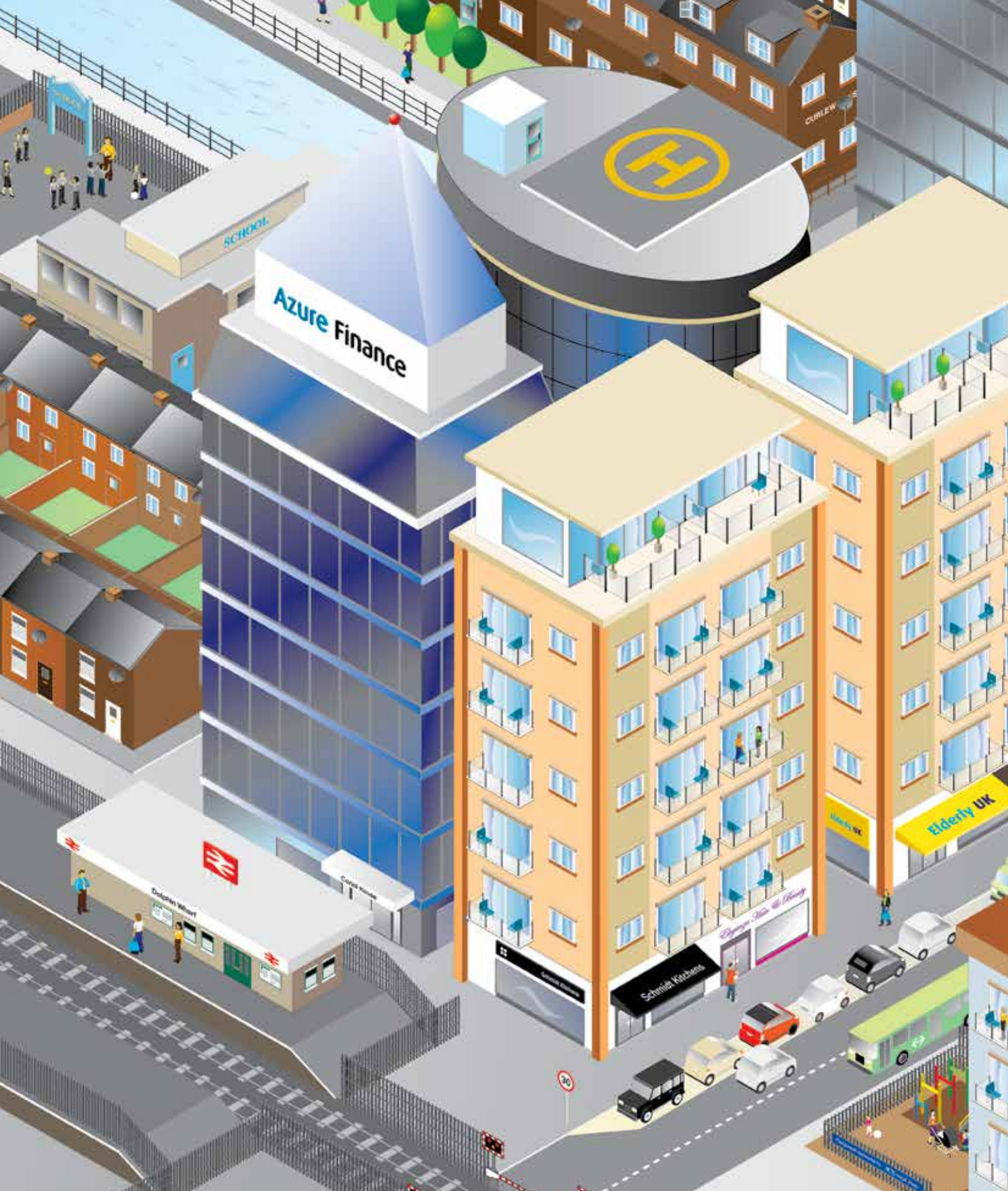
- Most positive impact - Members of the public were given the question and request "Which of the following types of services do you believe has the most positive impact on your local area? Select the three which you think have the most positive impact". Data were weighted to be nationally representative of the population in Great Britain. Answers were then ranked to reflect national opinion.

- Top three most wanted services – Members of the public were given the following request "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". Data were weighted to be nationally representative of the population in Great Britain. Answers were then ranked to reflect national opinion.

- Community activity of shopkeepers – Data was obtained from averaging results from the most recent four ACS VOLS surveys (May 2014 to May 2015) and reflects statistics for independent retailers (including those who own symbol stores) only.

Customers (page 18-19)

- All data in this section was obtained from him! CTP 2014.



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