

15 September 2025

The Rt Hon Wes Streeting MP
Department of Health and Social Care
39 Victoria Street
London
SW1H 0EU

Dear Secretary of State,

ACS Local Shop Report 2025

I am writing to share ACS' (the Association of Convenience Stores) Local Shop Report 2025. The report provides key insights into the convenience sector, including store and job figures, sales statistics, direct tax contributions, investments made by convenience retailers, and the profiles of owners, employees and customers utilising convenience stores.

The report demonstrates the pivotal contribution of the UK's 50,486 convenience stores to both the national economy and local communities. However, it also underscores the challenges faced by store operators, some of which are directly linked to recent government policy decisions. The sector has seen a reduction in both employment and working hours, and investment levels have fallen. We urge you to consider the ways in which policy impacts the viability of convenience retailers and their ability to continue offering essential services - such as Post Offices, bill payment facilities, and access to everyday goods - in communities across the country.

The report highlights there are 443,000 people employed in the sector. Over the past year, convenience retailers have invested £916million, most commonly directed towards refrigeration, internal building maintenance and improving IT systems. The report also highlights the growing range of services and technology that stores offer, from banking and bill payment services, to click + collect and home delivery services, and shows the vital role they play in communities and how relevant we are to our consumers. Our members sell a broad range of products, adapting to each community's needs, however for the first time since we started producing this report, we have seen a decline in sales, reflecting pressure on household incomes.

Convenience stores are fast followers of the hyper-local demands of their customers and therefore offer a diverse range of products and staples that facilitate their viability. We are committed to working with you on the practical implementation of the Ten-Year Health Plan, and are already engaging with your officials on plans for banning the sale of energy drinks to young people, building on the voluntary policies that are already in place at 80% of independent convenience retailers' stores.

We also acknowledge the objectives of the Tobacco and Vapes Bill in strengthening regulation of the vaping market and meeting the SmokeFree 2030 target. The proposed tobacco and vape licensing system could be a positive development, if it increases enforcement action against rogue traders and does not place undue burdens on responsible retailers. We welcome the recent £10 million enforcement funding announcement, but our research indicates that Trading Standards across the country need more funding. We estimate an additional £140.4 million over 5 years would be required for Trading Standards to enforce new regulations effectively.

In addition to the report, you can learn about the 66 local shops and 569 people employed by them in East Renfrewshire by looking at the attached constituency card, which also contains details of the level of investment local retailers have invested in their business. We encourage you to share your constituency data on social media to celebrate the important contribution that convenience stores make to local communities.

We would value the opportunity to meet with you to discuss the Local Shop Report and the positive role that convenience retailers bring their local economy and community. We will follow up with your office or you can contact [REDACTED] to arrange a meeting.

Yours sincerely

[REDACTED]

[REDACTED]