

Healthy, sustainable and profitable retailing – identifying food policy and market opportunities for the convenience store sector



Thursday, 11th June 2026
10:30 – 18:00 (BST)



B200, University Building, Northampton
Square (nearest tube stop: Farringdon)

Across the UK, almost 50,000 convenience stores act as an essential source of food for their local communities and contribute 405,000 jobs and £45.2 billion each year to the British economy. Convenience stores provide essential food access for populations at risk of poor diet, including low-income families, older adults and young people. Convenience store customers frequently visit their local store multiple times a week, even daily, to pick up everyday items and benefit from valuable social interactions.

But the nutritional value of products in many UK convenience stores is limited, with the affordability of healthy foods prohibitive and the quality often poor. Working to tight profit margins and increasing dependency on consolidated supply chains drives convenience store owners to stock unhealthy products that they perceive will sell, are promoted by suppliers and will not result in product wastage or financial loss. Government policy efforts to reshape retail food settings to be healthier also focus on large retailers, which some worry may incentivise the supply of High Fat Salt Sugar (HFSS) products through the convenience sector.

The Covid-19 pandemic highlighted the important role of convenience stores in local communities. Many families became more reliant on their local convenience store and the sector used its agility in sourcing to respond to communities' needs. This illustrates how more varied supply chains can operate. Having largely reverted to mainstream supply chains under pressures of the cost-of-living crisis, there is a need to identify policy and market opportunities for a healthy, sustainable and profitable convenience store sector.

Event details:

The City St George's Food Symposium 2026 will explore policy and market opportunities for a healthy, sustainable and profitable convenience store sector. Drawing upon practical and policy insights from key actors across the convenience store sector, the symposium aims to position convenience stores not only as cornerstones of thriving communities but as key players in food systems transformation.

During the event we will:

- Gain insight into convenience store owner perspectives on the opportunities and challenges of increasing the healthiness of their product ranges
- Examine convenience store sector supply chains and key drivers of unhealthy and unsustainable product ranges
- Consider commercially viable policy interventions to increase the supply of healthy, sustainable items in the convenience store sector
- Explore opportunities to connect local, sustainably produced food to convenience stores across the UK
- Understand the needs, expectations and experiences of shoppers at British convenience stores

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Agenda

10.30 am - 11.00 am: Arrival and registration with tea and coffee

B200 Foyer

11.00 am – 11.20 am: Welcome

B200

Professor Christina Vogel (Director, Centre for Food Policy, City St George's, University of London)

11.20 am - 11.25 am: A few words from our sponsors

B200

The Master John Bennett of the Worshipful Company of Cooks

11.25 am - 11.50 am: Keynotes with Q&A

B200

Kath Dalmeny (Chief Executive Officer, Sustain)

- Opportunities for healthy and sustainable convenience stores

Ed Woodall (Chief Executive Officer, Association of Convenience Stores)

- Commercial insights and realities for the sector

11.50 am - 1.00 pm: Morning panel - What is missing for a healthy, sustainable and profitable convenience store sector?

B200

Kath Dalmeny (Chief Executive Officer, Sustain)

Dr Megan Winkler (Associate Professor, Emory University)

Ed Woodall (Chief Executive Officer, Association of Convenience Stores)

Dan Clarke (Health & Sustainable Diets Manager, IGD)

Kay Patel (Retailer, Global Food and Wine - Best One)

Chaired by Professor Christina Vogel

1.00 pm - 2.15 pm: LUNCH

The Pavilion

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2.15 pm - 3.30 pm: Workshops*

- **Workshop 1: Building the demand for health in convenience stores - the customer voice (C316)**
 - *Ayesha Chowdhury* (youth consumer voice), *John Norton* (adult consumer voice) and *Dominic Watters* (PhD Researcher)
- **Workshop 2: The realities of running a convenience store - learning from store owners (C318)**
 - *Raj Sukhdev* (RJS convenience) and *Kay Patel* (Global Food and Wine - Best One)
- **Workshop 3: Reshaping supply chains - what helps and hinders a healthy convenience store sector? (C320)**
 - *Stephanie Rice* (Rice Marketing and Good Food Retail Network) and *Antony So* (Food Systems Policy Analyst)
- **Workshop 4: Getting local and sustainable food into convenience stores - harnessing alternative supply chains (C315)**
 - *Rachel Jones* (Sustain) and *Julia Kirby-Smith* (Better Food Traders)
- **Workshop 5: Raising the policy profile - policy options for healthy, sustainable and profitable convenience stores (C313)**
 - *Gillian Boundy* (Southwark Council) and *Dan Clarke* (IGD)

*Delegates select workshop on the day

3.30 pm - 3.45 pm: COFFEE/NETWORKING BREAK

The Pavilion

3.45 pm - 4.45 pm: Afternoon panel - Building a convenience store sector that benefits everyone

B200

Ayesha Chowdhury (Youth consumer voice)

Claire Hislop (Public Health Scotland)

Julia Kirby-Smith (Better Food Traders)

Stephanie Rice (Rice Marketing and Good Food Retail Network)

Raj Sukhdev (RJS convenience)

Chaired by Dr Sarah Muir (University of Southampton)

4.45 pm – 5.00 pm: Roundup and closing remarks

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5.00 pm – 6.00 pm: Drinks reception and networking

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Posters

How is Antioxidant availability in UK-grown wheat affected by Conventional, Regenerative and Organic farming methods; and in what way can policy respond to findings that impact human health?

- James Aufenast, City St George's, University of London

Business rates relief as a local authority policy tool to promote healthy food retail

- Finlay Craig, City, St George's
- Other authors: Christina Vogel, City St George's, University of London; Christopher Yap, City St George's, University of London; Peter Jelfs, Brunel, University of London
- <https://doi.org/10.6084/m9.figshare.32605359>

Health Choices Start on the Corner: Reimagining Young People's Use of Convenience Stores

- Morgan Mason, University of Southampton
- Other authors: Amelia Bird, University of Southampton; Natasha Green, University of Southampton; Christina Vogel; Kathryn Woods-Townsend, University of Southampton; Janis Bird, University of Southampton; Sarah Muir, University of Southampton
- <https://doi.org/10.6084/m9.figshare.32605188>

Retailers and snacking practices among young women with overweight and obesity in an LMIC

- Made Nadera, University of Nottingham
- <https://doi.org/10.6084/m9.figshare.32605257>

Evaluation of changes in the nutrient profile of pre-packaged cakes between 2013 and 2024: A repeated cross-sectional and interrupted time series analysis

- Jizhao Niu, Queen Mary University of London
- Other authors: Kawther M Hashem, Queen Mary University of London
- <https://doi.org/10.6084/m9.figshare.32605338>

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From message to mouth: the effects of message framing on consumer willingness to try, and responses to, insect-based foods

- *Datin Shah, City St George's, University of London*
- *Other authors: Katy Tapper, City St George's, University of London; Carsten Allefeld, City St George's, University of London; Christian Reynolds, City St George's, University of London; Roger Highfield, Science Museum*

Beyond top-up shopping: developing a citizen-science audit of convenience-store readiness for affordable healthy meal solutions

- *Amanda Shiach, Queen Mary University of London*
- <https://doi.org/10.6084/m9.figshare.32605377>

Understanding less sustainable grocery purchasing behaviours: who buys unsustainably and what is in their baskets?

- *Aili Sui, University College London*
- *Other authors: Thijs van Rens, University of Warwick; Oyinlola Oyeboode, Queen Mary University of London*
- <https://doi.org/10.6084/m9.figshare.32605281>

Four Visual Pillars: Redefining Food Insecurity

- *Dominic Watters, University of Southampton*
- <https://doi.org/10.6084/m9.figshare.32605233>

Understanding the System Drivers of Primary School Meal Provision Across the UK: A Participatory Systems Mapping Approach

- *Telma Zahirian Moghaddam, Cardiff University*

This event is generously supported by:



*The Worshipful Company of Cooks
of London*