

# PUBLIC POLICY ENGAGEMENT

For reporting purposes, 'engagement' is restricted to instances where we've raised or supported a significant initiative, for instance responding to a Government or Parliamentary consultation, or a significant campaigning activation.

In addition to the public policy engagement noted below, we have also engaged directly with elected representatives in order to support them in representing their constituents' interests, and to use our insight and perspective to develop effective public policy. Over the course of 2025, we responded to 287 pieces of correspondence with elected representatives.

As a politically neutral business, we engage with elected representatives and mainstream political parties across the political spectrum to advance our public policy priorities and our advocacy campaigning agenda. Every year, that includes meeting with elected representatives, including hosting visits and events.

ISSUE	AUDIENCE	ENGAGEMENT	POLICY POSITION
<b>Corporate</b>			
<b>Group</b>	UK Parliament (Business and Trade Select Committee, Economic Security Sub Committee)	We gave oral evidence to the Committee on cyber security	We shared learnings from our 2025 cyber attack and made recommendations for policy change
<b>Group</b>	UK Government (National Cyber Security Centre)	We provided a foreword from our CEO, Shirine Khoury-Haq for the NCSC Annual Review	We shared learnings from our 2025 cyber attack and encouraged other organisations to take action
<b>People policy</b>	UK Government	We called for statutory Bereavement Leave to be included in the Employment Rights Bill	We believe that individuals should be given time away from work to grieve
<b>People policy</b>	UK Government	We called for Pregnancy Loss to be recognised as a bereavement and for statutory leave to be included in the Employment Rights Bill	We believe that pregnancy loss is a form of bereavement and that individuals should be given time away from work to grieve
<b>People policy</b>	Low Pay Commission	We submitted written evidence to the LPC on future National Living Wage policy	We believe that workers should be paid the same irrespective of their age
<b>People policy</b>	Department for Business and Trade (DBT)	We submitted a consultation on leave for bereavement including pregnancy loss ('Make Work Pay')	We support the proposed changes to legislation around two weeks statutory bereavement leave (including for pregnancy loss). We do believe legislation should go further however, ensuring leave for pregnancy loss is paid
<b>People policy</b>	Industry and UK Government	Women's Business Council	We have joined the WBC to promote gender equality in the workplace
<b>Business Rates</b>	UK Government (HMT)	We responded to the <i>Transforming business rates</i> consultation	We argued for a fairer, modernised system that reduces the burden on community retailers and supports long-term investment in the high street
<b>Business Rates</b>	UK Government (HMT)	We provided a submission to HM Treasury ahead of the Autumn Budget	We urged reform that unlocks inclusive growth - easing cost pressures on retailers and creating a fair and predictable system that supports vibrant high streets and the communities they serve

ISSUE	AUDIENCE	ENGAGEMENT	POLICY POSITION
<b>Business Rates</b>	Welsh Government	We responded to the <i>Measures to address avoidance of non-domestic rates</i> consultation document	We supported stronger, targeted measures to prevent deliberate business rates avoidance while ensuring legitimate community-based operators are not unfairly penalised
<b>Business Rates</b>	Welsh Government	We responded to the <i>for non-domestic rates differential multipliers</i> consultation document	We supported differential multipliers but warned that thresholds and rates must be set differently to ensure they actually help - not disadvantage - high street retailers
<b>Regulation</b>	Department for Business & Trade	We submitted written evidence to the DBT Call for Evidence on regulatory reform and growth	We argued for a more co-ordinated, proportionate approach to regulation that reduces cumulative burdens, makes retail a priority area for reform, and supports investment, growth and thriving high streets
<b>Future of High Streets</b>	Scottish Affairs Committee	We submitted written evidence to the Scottish Affairs Committee's inquiry on the Future of Scotland's High Streets, drawing on Co-op's experience as a community-based retailer operating across Scotland	We called for a holistic high street strategy that recognises the cumulative burden on community retailers, with business rates reform as central to sustaining town centres, local economies and rural communities
<b>Food</b>			
<b>Responsible retailing</b>	The Law Commission	We responded to the <i>Business tenancies: the right to renew</i> consultation paper	We called on the Law Commission to recommend that the existing model of security of tenure should not be reformed
<b>Responsible retailing</b>	UK Government (Department for Environment, Food and Rural Affairs)	We responded to the <i>Land use in England</i> consultation document	We called on the UK Government to ensure that the future Land Use Framework addresses climate change and supports food production as mutually reinforcing goals
<b>Responsible retailing</b>	UK Government (Department for Business & Trade)	We responded to the <i>Groceries Code Adjudicator (GCA): statutory review, 2022 to 2025</i> consultation document	We provided feedback on the role of the Groceries Code Adjudicator
<b>Responsible retailing</b>	UK Government (Department for Environment, Food and Rural Affairs)	We provided evidence to the Farming Profitability Review	We provided written evidence of how we work with the farmers in our supply chain to Baroness Batters and her team
<b>Responsible retailing</b>	UK Government (Department for Environment, Food and Rural Affairs)	We responded to the <i>Expanding the role of the private sector in nature recovery</i> call for evidence	We encouraged the UK Government to ensure that there is close partnership and strong ambition from both the public and private sectors in investing in nature
<b>Responsible retailing</b>	UK Government (Department for Environment, Food and Rural Affairs)	We responded to the <i>Late payments consultation: tackling poor payment practices</i> consultation document	We welcomed measures that would level the playing field and ensure that suppliers - especially small businesses - are paid promptly and fairly
<b>Responsible retailing</b>	UK Government (Department for Business and Trade)	We responded to the <i>Responsible Business Conduct</i> survey	We welcomed the opportunity to engage with the UK Government as it considers how best to ensure that businesses address human rights abuses and environmental harms
<b>Waste and Resources</b>	Welsh Government	We responded to the <i>Delivering a Deposit Return Scheme for drinks containers in Wales</i> consultation document	We urged the Welsh Government to legislate to enable a fully aligned, interoperable Deposit Return Scheme to launch across the United Kingdom in October 2027
<b>Waste and Resources</b>	Welsh Government	We responded to the <i>Single Use Plastics ban</i> consultation document	We urged the Welsh Government not to ban the sale of compostable carrier bags, while supporting the remainder of their proposals
<b>Public Health</b>	UK Government (Department for Health and Social Care)	We responded to the <i>Tobacco and vapes: evidence to support legislation</i> call for evidence	We shared our responsible retailing practices, including our experience of operating a licensing scheme and our responsible vape sourcing policy, highlighting opportunities for Government to strengthen existing legislation to tackle youth vaping

ISSUE	AUDIENCE	ENGAGEMENT	POLICY POSITION
<b>Public Health</b>	UK Government (Department for Health and Social Care)	We responded to the <i>Banning the sale of high-caffeine energy drinks to children</i> consultation document	We highlighted our longstanding voluntary restrictions on high-caffeine energy drinks, welcoming this change. We shared insight from colleagues regarding restrictions to areas that cannot be accessed by under 16 year olds
<b>Life Services</b>			
<b>Funeralcare</b>	House of Lords	Assisted Dying Bill	We shared insight with peers highlighting how the bill has encouraged members of the public to talk more openly about death and dying
<b>Funeralcare</b>	UK Government and Parliament	At-need regulation	We believe that statutory regulation is needed to ensure high standards of care for the deceased
<b>Funeralcare</b>	Law Commission	New Funerary Methods	We believe that new funerary methods should be introduced, particularly if they have the potential to be more environmentally sustainable
<b>Funeralcare</b>	Law Commission	Burial and cremation	We shared our views on rules around burial, cremation and ashes, making suggestions as to where legislation could be relaxed and tightened to improve services for families and ensure dignity and respect for the deceased
<b>Funeralcare</b>	Scottish Government	Scottish Licensing	We support the introduction of licensing of the sector in Scotland to promote high standards of care
<b>Safer Colleagues, Safer Communities Campaign</b>			
<b>Retail Crime</b>	Members of Parliament	Support for USDAW's Respect for Shopworkers Week, raising awareness of the importance of taking action against violence and abuse against shopworkers	With legislation coming onto the statute book, we will need effective enforcement of the new offences by police and the courts
<b>Retail Crime</b>	UK Government	We gave oral evidence to the Public Bill Committee for the Crime and Policing Bill, emphasising the importance of measures such as designating violence and abuse against shopworkers as a specific offence	Providing evidence in support of proposed legislative measures that will protect our colleagues is crucial to ensure they become law
<b>Social Mobility Campaign</b>			
<b>Apprenticeships</b>	UK Government	During National Apprenticeships Week we called on Government and Skills England to collect Socioeconomic Background [SEB] data on apprenticeship starts	We believe that SEB data is needed to understand whether apprenticeships are open to all, regardless of their background
<b>Workplace Savings</b>	UK Government	Our trial of auto-enrol workplace savings was cited in a Nest Insight report calling for regulatory change	We believe that auto-enrol workplace savings can promote financial resilience
<b>Access to Food</b>	UK Government	In partnership with Barnardo's, we called on UK Government to encourage retailers to allow 16 and 17 year olds access to discount schemes	We believe that access to value should not be limited by age
<b>Local Food Partnerships</b>	UK Government (DEFRA) and Local Authorities	In partnership with Barnardo's, we published a report assessing the number of Local Food Partnerships in the UK and calling on LAs to establish them	We believe that Local Food Partnerships can promote community access to food
<b>Social Mobility</b>	Social Mobility Committee (Lords)	We provided written and oral evidence to the Committee	We believe that employers have a role to play in promoting social mobility but there are actions the Government can take
<b>Social Mobility</b>	Equality and Human Rights Commission	We responded to a consultation on the Code of Practice following the Supreme Court decision on the definition of sex in the Equality Act 2010	We believe that employers have a duty to ensure that all colleagues are treated with dignity and respect in the workplace

ISSUE	AUDIENCE	ENGAGEMENT	POLICY POSITION
Social Mobility	Office for Equality and Opportunity	We responded to a consultation about the introduction of mandatory ethnicity and disability pay gap reporting	We believe that pay gap reporting promotes social mobility but should, in the future, include SEB data
Social Mobility	Office for Equality and Opportunity	We responded to a consultation on the reform of equality law	We believe that the socio-economic duty should be commenced and that the public sector duty should be implemented effectively
<b>Climate Justice campaign</b>			
Climate Justice	Industry, Finance and Government Leaders	Net Zero Council	We have been pleased to act as industry co-chair of the Government's Net Zero Council as we believe collaboration and co-operation is essential if we're to seize the opportunities presented by the transition to Net Zero
Climate Justice	Members of Parliament	Zero Hour - Climate and Nature Private Members' Bill	We encouraged our member owners to contact their MP and urge them to support the Climate and Nature Bill at its second reading
Climate Justice	Members of Parliament	The Act Now, Change Forever Mass Climate Lobby	Co-op member owners and colleagues joined thousands of people in Westminster pressing for practical and tangible action to address the climate and nature crises
Climate Justice	Members of Parliament	Great Big Green Week	We supported the UK's largest grass roots climate activation, with events in communities up and down the country
Climate Justice	Members of Welsh Senedd and Scottish Parliament	The Act Now, Change Forever Devolved Mass Lobby	We encouraged our member owners in Scotland and Wales to contact their MSPs to press for action to address the climate and nature crises
Climate Justice	Members of Parliament	Fairtrade Fortnight	We called on elected representatives to support the Fairtrade Foundation's 'Brew it Fair' campaign
<b>Peace &amp; Co-operation Campaign</b>			
Peace and Co-operation	UK Government	5,445 members signed the petition to double the funding for co-operative development	We believe in greater government investment in co-operative development because co-ops create long-term, community-led stability in regions affected by conflict
Peace and Co-operation	UK Parliament (International Development Committee)	We responded to the <i>Future of UK aid and development assistance</i> consultation	We advocated for UK aid policy to embed co-operative models as practical tools for peacebuilding, local empowerment and resilient economic recovery, as well as to recommit to the 0.7% ODA target
Peace and Co-operation	Members of Parliament	Co-op members sent 1,297 letters in support of our campaign to their MPs	We encouraged MPs to champion co-operative approaches as a constructive, community-driven response to division, conflict and instability
Peace and Co-operation	UK Government (Foreign, Commonwealth and Development Office and Department for Business and Trade)	Wilton Park international summit on the Reconstruction of Gaza	We are seeking to ensure the UK backs co-operatives as a core part of Gaza's reconstruction, helping communities rebuild livelihoods in a locally owned and sustainable way