

Healthy retail

Hints and tips on healthier choices

**Retail
Order:**
1899



healthyretail.org

Sales receipt

Welcome more customers.....	££££s
Small change makes a big difference.....	££££s
Map the customer journey.....	££££s
Keep customers loyal.....	££££s
Increase net profit.....	££££s
Doing the right thing.....	££££s
More than just a shop.....	££££s
Total savings: ££££££s	



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UKRI Healthy Ageing Challenge



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ILC retail guides

This guidance on **Healthy retail: hints and tips on healthier choices** should take approximately **6** minutes to read. It gives you the basics on why it's important to make healthier choices, and how everyone can benefit: customers, workers and retailers.

We've created this series of guides to help retailers understand how they can respond to an ageing population, and why being inclusive makes commercial sense. Welcoming a wider range of customers and workers opens up new opportunities for businesses.

Everyone's entitled to a healthy, happy and long life - but the ageing process affects us all differently. Retailers have a key role to play in enabling customers and staff to live healthier, more active later lives. Making shopping environments more accessible supports independence, helps us stay fit, and ensures that people who have a health condition, disability or caring responsibility can maintain access to the products and services they want.

This guide is about how and why retailers can provide **healthier choices and alternatives** for consumers. It includes some information about why choices matter to health, and why customers can find it confusing or difficult to **spot healthier choices**. Finally, it lists some ways that retailers can help us all find and create healthier choices. Working together, retailers can benefit from customers who buy products and services that keep us healthy in later life.

ILC has created these guides to help transform the way the retail sector sees and serves older people. We believe that encouraging inclusive shopping spaces is better for everyone, **no matter our age or ability**.



The facts

Healthy eating's getting harder

The UK's poorest areas have only **10% of all food stores**, yet 34% of all amusement arcades, 30% of bingo halls and 29% of all gaming arcades



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London's Tower Hamlets has **42 fried chicken shops** for every secondary school in the borough

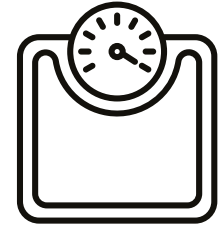


Calorie for calorie, healthier foods are nearly **3 times as expensive** as less healthy ones



Obesity is soaring

26% of children aged 10-11 are obese in the UK's poorest areas, compared with 11% in the wealthiest



Retail Order: 1237 |



The NHS spends more than



£6 billion per year

on **obesity-related diseases**

Obesity and weight-related conditions will cost society



£9.7 billion per year by 2050

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Staying active matters

During the pandemic

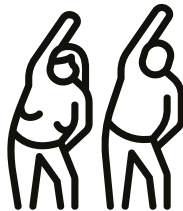
1/3 of leisure centres faced closure.
Of the leisure centres that remained open 80%
said they'd have to cut services

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Walking just **21 minutes every day**
could reduce your risk of heart disease by up
to 30%, improve your health generally, and
even reduce anxiety



By age 17-18, fewer than **3 in 10**
girls say they are 'sporty'
compared to 6 in 10 boys



Retail Order: 5691 | 

Why does this matter?

Exercising regularly and forming good nutritional habits helps us physically and mentally. The World Health Organisation says that optimal nutrition during a child's first two years **fosters healthy growth and improves cognitive development**. It also reduces the risk of becoming overweight or obese and developing diseases like diabetes, heart disease, strokes and cancer.

Having parents or carers who model healthier choices when we're young gives us a good start in life. But not everybody gets that chance – and even those who do can slip in later life.

The businesses, organisations and retailers who shape the environment around us have a social and moral duty to ensure that it's inclusive, accessible and offers healthy choices. When they do, they may find that customers come back again and again – improvements to the shopping environment have been shown to increase footfall.



Our health really matters

Poor health is one of the biggest reasons that we start to spend less as we get older. **People with a walking difficulty spend 14.5% less on average** than those with better mobility. Physical inactivity is linked to over 20 chronic conditions and diseases, and responsible for **one in six deaths** in the UK.

Physically active people report being happier, less anxious, and having a stronger sense of social integration – and **activity can be as effective as antidepressants** in treating mild depression. Across the G20, countries with healthier populations see people **spend, work, volunteer and care more** for their communities and neighbourhoods.

Healthier choices are a challenge

Especially during a cost of living crisis, consumers have to make hard choices – like whether to buy healthier, more nutritious, but more expensive food, or to heat their home.

Meanwhile supermarket promotions like buy-one-get-one free deals alienate customers who live alone or don't have transport to get these purchases home. These distractions sometimes hide the healthier options. Customers with health conditions, older customers, or those who live alone, need better options.

Healthiness is about more than food

There's no state limitations on fast food outlets. Newham, one of the poorest areas in London, had **258** fried chicken shops across 9 square miles, that's over 28 chicken shops per mile.

Hidden healthier choices aren't just about food. The **gambling sector** is currently exploiting loopholes to encourage unhealthy choices. In order to limit the public's exposure, current legislation limits the number of betting machines allowed per shop to four. But these businesses will often open multiple shops in poorer areas, each with four machines, a practice known as '**clustering**'. At one point Newham had 80 betting shops with **18 in a single street**. The poorest areas are being given the worst choices.

Older shoppers still aren't catered for

In an ageing world – where 1 in 4 people in Europe and North America is set to be aged 65 or over by 2050 – older people still see their choices as limited.

In fashion, for example, **consumer choices reduce as we get older**. Our body shapes change with age, but our desires, needs and personalities don't. But the fashion industry doesn't always reflect this – the options for older bodies aren't as wide. It doesn't have to be this way. Marks and Spencer had a celebrity womenswear campaign for several years. Their ads featuring Twiggy (the 1960s model otherwise known as Dame Lesley Lawson OBE) were hugely successful. One Twiggy ad featured a blouse that sold more in a week than any other product in the history of M&S. Older shoppers were happy and so were retailers.

Another example is **household appliances** – finding good choices for those with dexterity issues can be a challenge. But well-designed ergonomic kitchen utensils are a form of preventative measure that support healthier living. And an inclusive approach means they should be integrated into a mainstream offering.



What can you do?



Bring healthy food forward

The ILC estimates that 1 in 10 people living at home, aged 65 and over, are malnourished or at risk becoming so. In 2019, the UK had five times more older people living in severe poverty than we did in 1986. Cost and accessibility shouldn't reduce access to nutritious food. Everyone should have access to affordable fresh fruit and vegetables, and calcium rich-foods. More single food portions, such as refillable pulse and cereal dispensers, or smaller wine bottles 'for one', would allow shoppers to buy only what they need and make it easier to get purchases home.

The major supermarket chains currently run twice as many local stores as big out-of-town outlets. These smaller stores tend to have higher prices and fewer basics. If they were to offer their basic brands at all stores, customers would have **access to low-cost, nutritious food wherever they shop.**

Research by Which? showed that supermarket own-brand prices have risen by over 20%, while other brands have risen only 12.5% - cost of living crisis could be a barrier to helping customers make healthy choices.

Supermarkets could make a difference, for example by using their **loyalty schemes to nudge people towards healthier foods.** Rewarding customers for healthier choices could encourage better eating habits. And research shows that healthier people feel able to shop more in later life.



Inspire healthier choices

Best practice

US homeware and furniture store **Pottery Barn** offers well designed, functional, beautiful items that are also suitable for customers with limited mobility. Desks have open storage. Vanity sinks have grab rails. Unbreakable acrylic glasses sit on lovely marble dining tables. And they offer a free design service, either instore, online or at home.

Each online display includes wheelchairs in every picture to show accessibility. This retailer has looked at a poorly served market, and found a commercial opportunity to respectfully offer people with disabilities a better choice.

Best practice

Iceland Food Club is helping 20 million people who struggle to get credit from mainstream institutions. This club offers interest-free microloans in partnership with Fair For You, an award-winning, charity-owned ethical lender. 92% of club members were able to end or reduce their use of food banks; over 80% stopped borrowing from high-cost loan sharks; **71% said they were less likely to fall behind bills** like rent or council tax; **65% said their diet had improved**; and **57% reported a reduction in stress, anxiety and depression** about their finances.

Iceland examined their customer demographic and ensured that the services they offer meet their needs. Offering an **ethical credit choice** to those exposed to exploitative moneylenders has improved the lives of Iceland customers who have limited alternatives.



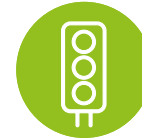
Redesign shop layout

The Royal Society for Public Health (RSPH) has designed **an alternative supermarket layout**. This includes a kitchen demonstration area, recipe cards and advice, devotes additional space to fruit and veg and suggests that promotional gondola ends feature healthier food options.

The design work was part of a study that also recommended introducing a healthiness rating for stores, based on the proportion of healthy and unhealthy products stocked, along with business rate reductions for supermarkets and retailers who take health seriously. You can [download the study to see their alternative healthier layout](#) for the benefit of your customers.

Best practice

In 1990, Sam Farber designed the first OXO peeler for a pair of hands he loved more than his own. Sam's wife Betsey had mild arthritis that made using old-fashioned metal peelers a struggle. They knew there had to be a better way. Over the past 30 years, they've moved from re-designing a basic everyday product to creating a range of inclusive homeware and opening three international offices. You can [read more about the Oxo journey here](#).



One for the future

The food 'traffic light' system used by supermarkets foods shows levels of fat, saturates, sugars and salt. But who actually understands how the red, amber and green levels work in relation to choosing a healthy diet?

Each serving (150g) contains

Energy	Fat	Saturates	Sugars	Salt
1046kJ 250Kcal	3.0g LOW	1.3g LOW	34g HIGH	0.9g MED
13%	4%	7%	38%	15%

of an adult's reference intake

Typical values (as sold) per 100g:697kJ/167kcal

The retail industry is currently developing QR code-like '**2D barcodes**', which are web-enabled to allow huge amounts of information to be attached to product packaging.

In addition to inventory management data, these new codes could carry consumer information like detailed nutritional values and provenance information, to help customers make **healthier, more sustainable choices**.

Best practice

P&T Retails newsagents in Stoke Newington, London put fruit-filled baskets beside their sweets to offer customers an alternative **healthy snack choice** for at least half the price. This offer is extended to fresh grocery options such as eggs, onions and garlic.



These guides were written by Ailsa Forbes, Retail Impact Fellow at the ILC.

The Retail Impact project is supported by the [University of Stirling](#) and [UK Research and Innovation \(UKRI\)](#) as part of the UK Government's Healthy Ageing Challenge.

We've put all the information about this ILC project online. You can find more details about the information in this guide, along with further advice and the references for all our facts and stats.

Find it at: healthyretail.org. healthyretail.org

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About the ILC

The International Longevity Centre UK (ILC) is the UK's specialist think tank on the impact of longevity on society. The ILC was established in 1997, as one of the founder members of the International Longevity Centre Global Alliance, an international network on longevity. We have unrivalled expertise in demographic change, ageing and longevity. We use this expertise to highlight the impact of ageing on society, working with experts, policy makers and practitioners to provoke conversations and pioneer solutions for a society where everyone can thrive, regardless of age.

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