

SPAR Today

Magazine

Issue 66 | August | September 2020

**SPAR has
everything for
the evening
meal**



Marie Curie charity reg. no. 207994
(England & Wales), SC038731 (Scotland).



There for you

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Planning for the future

Welcome to the August / September edition of SPAR Today.

It has been a challenging few months for us all; with far-reaching impacts few could have envisaged and prepared for. The coronavirus pandemic has disrupted the lives of millions but we continue to work on understanding what changes it could have on the future of convenience.

Undoubtedly there have been a number of short-term changes to ensure staff and public safety but there are also long-term strategic decisions to be made.

One of the biggest learning's from the Covid-19 experience to date is that we have demonstrated that we can do what we thought we could not do. We have learnt to work, trade and run our businesses in different, more innovative ways.

As we enter the second half of 2020, it will bring a new phase to trading this year. It is hoped schools will go back, additional businesses will open and people will be out and about more which may bring a little more 'normal' in some of the categories sales that have struggled during the first half of the year.

With the continued help of the entire SPAR network it is important that we all look forward and plan for the next six months. We need to build on what we have learnt; think about how our ranges and customers have changed and what it is we need to do to continue to serve our local communities in the autumn and winter.

At the same time we need to consider who will return to shop with us and how we can be 'There for them' as we enter this next phase of 2020. It is important to think about what it is we can do to keep what we have gained and regain what was temporarily lost.

But what we can guarantee is that SPAR will be there for you. Our five wholesalers with the support of your central office are prepared for whatever may come so you can focus on your store and the role it plays in your local community.

Until next time, stay well.

*Louise Hoste*Managing Director
SPAR UK Ltd

Did you know?

During the first 12 weeks of lockdown, our own label sales grew to be worth 20% of total unit sales. Symbol's declined to 11% and total convenience dropped to 9%. This highlights, that in spite of some availability issues, SPAR brand sales remained strong and provided our shoppers with good quality products at fair prices.*

*Convenience and symbol markets exclude Co-op, but do include Nisa stores

SPAR heroes independent retailers and own label in new digital campaign

Following the amazing work SPAR retailers have been doing throughout the pandemic, a new digital campaign has been launched to encourage consumers to continue supporting their local SPAR store.

SPAR Heroes

The first part of the campaign was launched in mid-May with an online video on Facebook and Instagram to show how stores continue to support their local communities. With over 2.2 million views to date the community video encourages customers not to go back to their old ways and explains how SPAR retailers and stores are there for communities. "Family owned stores on your doorstep or at the end of the phone, doing what they can to help because you're not just customers, your neighbours and these days we're more of a community than ever and we will keep being there for each other," it says.

The second part of the campaign is a series of SPAR heroes' assets highlighting and thanking the amazing store staff within the organisation. Alex Hall, Digital Marketing Manager at SPAR UK, said: "This campaign gives our stores an opportunity to build an emotional connection with the consumer, showing the real people behind SPAR, who have been going above and beyond for their local communities and will continue to do so." So far these assets have reached 4m across social media.

"These are the heroes offering their local communities more than just a shop, whether it's being open late when other stores are closed, delivering to the vulnerable and elderly or supporting local initiatives. These people are the consistently friendly faces who represent the best of SPAR," he added.



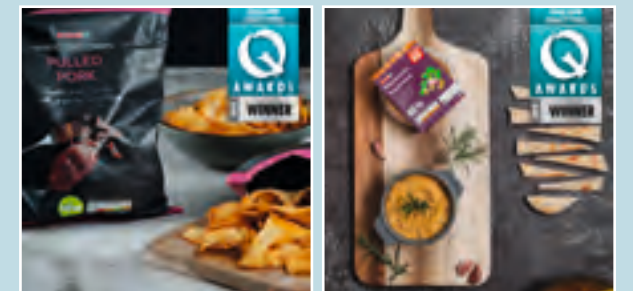
Awarding winning own label products

SPAR launched the next stage of the summer digital campaign in June, highlighting its award winning own label range of products. 2019 was a fantastic year for SPAR, having received 105 accolades for the range of food and drinks – as well as being named Local Shop Wholesaler of the Year (for the 6th year running!). And 2020 has been no mean feat either.

Throughout challenging times, SPAR and EUROSPAR stores have continued to serve customers with daily deliveries, little to no queues, and offering award-winning products.

The business is dedicated to creating fantastic value products, which is why winning awards from independent experts in their field is extremely fulfilling. By celebrating this recognition allows our customers to discover the true hero products from SPAR.

The campaign will run until 24 September on SPAR Facebook, Instagram, Twitter and Pinterest social media channels.



SPAR Wine Festival offers a huge selection of wine at great prices

SPAR is bringing its annual wine festival into stores across England, Scotland and Wales, offering a huge variety of wines at sector-leading prices.

This year, the focus of the festival will be on giving customers great value by offering a number of discounts on a wide selection of wine from leading brands to own label.

The festival event kicks off in participating stores on August 13 and will run until 2 September 2020.

There are 32 different wines included in the festival with 12 of those coming from SPAR's own label range.

A focus point of the event is the range of SPAR own label wine on offer. New products such

as the Orbis Organic range and Rios de los Andes Malbec Rosé will feature alongside the established Vine & Bloom and Perleza wines.

Key brands at the heart of the festival include customer favourites Casillero del Diablo, Wolf Blass Yellow Label and, the increasingly popular, 19 Crimes wines.

All wines included in the SPAR Wine Festival are on special offer and will be supported by in-store POS and communications across the SPAR digital network.



Did you know?

Nearly a quarter of all wine sold in SPAR is SPAR branded? This compares to under 7% within symbol stores, and 5% within the convenience market!*

Retaining customers post lockdown with exciting new own label lines from SPAR



Savoury Biscuits

UK shoppers love a biscuit! So much so that UK consumers spent £66m more in 2019 than they did in 2018.

Last year savoury biscuits doubled its 2% growth with value sales up by 4.8% in 2019. This provides a great opportunity to fill key gaps and expand SPAR's offering to include a savoury portfolio.

September sees the launch of three new savoury products including breadsticks and two exciting cracker variants; Rosemary and a Salt and Pepper. The new range launches in a modern and eye-catching design and is sure to be a customer favourite.



Food to go

With the country beginning to get back to normal and consumers on the move again, this is the perfect time to drive interest in the food to go category.

Food to go has become hugely important and is now worth over £4bn within convenience and forecourts. This is only set to continue to rise and is expected to grow by over 5% by 2024 as consumers lead increasingly busier lives and look for the convenience channel to provide food on the move.

SPAR's comprehensive Food to go offer is being refreshed in September and in P8 a number of new products across different shopping missions are being introduced in the SPAR Brand range.

For breakfast time two chilled porridge pots are launching which tap into the growing healthier eating trend, for lunchtime occasions new sub rolls and in snacking a new low-calorie jelly pot, mini lemon drizzle cake and single serve chocolate mousse will be available.

Each product will be supported with half barkers, as well as further in-store support of stripping and on SPAR radio.

Did you know?

SPAR has 89% SPAR brand participation within Food to Go? Symbol and other convenience stores have less than 50% participation.*

Halloween confectionery

Halloween food is the most shopped part of the Halloween category, with 75% of people buying themed food products during Halloween 2019.

Launching in P8, SPAR's Milk Chocolate Halloween Pumpkins provide a fantastic opportunity for the SPAR own label range. With over 70% of consumers celebrating Halloween, having a value impulse confectionery item will help consumers get into the spooky mood for Halloween 2020.



Importance of growing the evening meals range

This year SPAR Brand's annual evening meals launch sees a number of fantastic additions coming to fresh chillers in time for the autumn and winter season.

Evening meals remains a key strategic mission for SPAR, and as a footfall driver, if well stocked these customers will spend more per trip than any other mission.

New to the range are two fully loaded pizzas, capitalising on the growing Americanisation trend in the category, joined by a tweaked Garlic & Cheese flatbread to bring this product more in line with the market.

The ready meals range has also had a refresh. As well as new and limited edition rotations in the '2 for £5' offer, twin-portion ready meals in an 800g were identified as a key gap versus competitors, and these make up 17% of the total ready meals market. Three SKUs are available from P8 in top-selling cuisines and are sure to signpost SPAR as a genuine dinner destination.

P8 also sees the relaunch of prepared vegetables within the category, an area which has grown significantly. They have been redesigned with a stronger commercial offer and cheaper RSPs for SPAR shoppers to enjoy - plenty of reasons to stock the range today.

With growth of +10%, prepared veg has been outperforming the total market at SPAR. Four new lines have been added providing stores with the opportunity for incremental sales:

- SPAR Egg Noodles
- SPAR Stir Fry Mix
- SPAR Casserole Mix
- SPAR Crispy Potato Slices



Did you know?

99% of all chilled pizzas in SPAR, are SPAR branded.*

New SPAR Brand Development

Meal for 2

2 for £5

Blakemore Retail Trials Self-service Checkouts

Blakemore Retail is trialling three card-only self-service checkouts at its Bannerbrook store.

The self-scan tills were first introduced on 2nd July and are currently processing circa 30% of all transactions.

SPAR Bannerbrook Store Manager Sharon Nulty commented: "Customers have taken to using the self-service checkouts straight away.

"About a third of the 1,000 customers who pass through our store each day are now using them, and we expect this to increase further as people get more confident with them.

"The checkouts are really user-friendly, and in the long-term, when more customers can use them without staff assistance, we expect them to speed up transactions and free up time for colleagues to spend elsewhere in the store."

The self-service tills are not intended to replace traditional checkouts, with two normal tills continuing to operate alongside them.

The self-scan checkouts are also helping customers to minimise contact with others during the pandemic. Screens have been put up between the checkouts to enforce social distancing.



Blakemore Retail Introduces New Online Collaboration Platform

Blakemore Retail has introduced a new internal collaboration platform to the business to help bring store and field teams across its estate together.

All stores across the business are now signed up to Slack, an online hub designed to promote collaboration in the workplace.

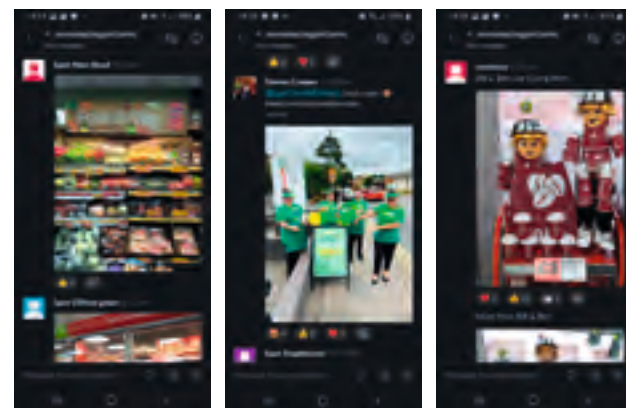
Colleagues are using it to share photos of best practice in their stores to help drive sales as well as fun photos to help drive staff engagement.

Images are being posted of store displays, point of sale and sales ideas as well as store launches and charity and community events.

Store Operations Director Chris Bacon commented: "This is a fantastic new channel for sharing ideas and excellent standards across the business.

"It's a great opportunity for teams to inspire each other, and it's really easy to use at any time, being accessible via an app or desktop."

Going forward, the online hub will enable users to organise communications by channels for group discussions around specific teams, projects or topics, and also allow for private messages to share information and files.



Blakemore Retail to Trial New Distance Learning Programme

Blakemore Retail is set to trial a new distance learning programme that will enable store colleagues to gain a personal licence holder qualification remotely for the first time.

A Level 2 Award for Personal Licence Holders (APLH) enables a person to apply for a personal licence so that they can authorise the sale of alcohol on licenced premises. Blakemore Retail requires at least two licence holders at each of its stores.

Currently when A.F. Blakemore delivers the training for this qualification, colleagues have to travel to an exam centre to undertake an assessment. However, a trial distance learning programme run by Highfield, an awarding body for licensing qualifications, will completely eliminate this need for travel.

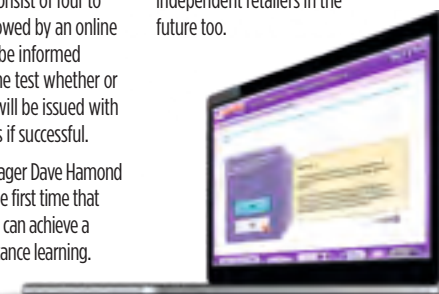
The new programme will consist of four to six hours of e-learning followed by an online examination. Learners will be informed immediately after taking the test whether or not they have passed and will be issued with a certificate within 24 hours if successful.

Business Improvement Manager Dave Hamond commented: "This will be the first time that Blakemore Retail colleagues can achieve a qualification entirely via distance learning.

"Delivering more programmes in this way will help the company to support social distancing, save time and resources, and deliver cost savings and environmental benefits as a result of minimising travel.

"If successful, more distance learning solutions could be rolled out across other divisions of AFB and used for other qualifications like food safety and health & safety."

The new training will be trialled with 50 Blakemore Retail colleagues over the coming months. If successful it could be offered to independent retailers in the future too.



AFB Gives Away £30,000 with Community Cashback Scheme

A.F. Blakemore launched a Community Cashback Grant scheme across its SPAR stores to thank groups who are there for vulnerable people during the Covid-19 crisis.

The company gave away £30,000 to local charities and community groups across its trading area to help.

Group Marketing Director Sarah Ellis commented: "A.F. Blakemore has played a key role in local communities throughout the coronavirus pandemic – supplying essential goods and services via its SPAR stores, supporting RVS's Volunteer Responders scheme and helping local councils feed vulnerable people via its foodservice operation.

"At the same time the business has received a lot of great support back from local communities, and we want to say thank you to everyone doing great things for others.

"We hope that our Community Cashback grants go a small way to helping people in need.

The Community Cashback Grant scheme was launched across AFB's SPAR Facebook pages on 15th June and will run over four weeks until 9th July.

Grants were awarded to good causes across four regions, voted for by the public on a weekly basis.



New Deals of the Day App launches

A.F. Blakemore has launched a Deals of the Day app for independent retailers, to make it easier than ever for them to take advantage of special offers.

The online ordering platform will promote wholesale food and drink offers such as buy-one-get-one-free deals and discounts on case prices. Retailers can then pass these special offers on to shoppers in their stores.

The app aims to drive the performance of products across key categories but in particular to help retailers boost their impulse sales, with the deals focussing on confectionery and soft drinks.

Both SPAR retailers and Blakemore Wholesale Distribution customers will be able to download it.

A.F. Blakemore Group Marketing Director Sarah Ellis commented: "The purpose of the deals is to help create excitement and theatre in stores over the summer months, encouraging consumers to take advantage of great deals that

are created around the products.

"The benefit to retailers is enhanced profit margins on fantastic offers from us that enable them to create bold off-shelf displays of products at great retail prices that are both summer-related and key to driving incremental sales by adding to the consumer's impulse basket."

The app is fully responsive across devices and has been designed with simple navigation and visual product displays to ensure it is as user-friendly as possible.

Retailers can keep track of their spending and see how much money they are saving before they reach the checkout.

The app demonstrates the role that technology will increasingly play as A.F. Blakemore commits more investment in this area to deliver class-leading technology to retailers.



Blakemore Retail Invests in Delivery Vans to Meet Snappy Shopper Demand

Blakemore Retail has invested in six brand new delivery vans to keep up with demand for Snappy Shopper home deliveries.

The vans have been deployed to six Blakemore Retail stores in England and Wales: Brunswick Road in Flintshire; Intake in South Yorkshire; Newbold in Derbyshire; Scartho in Lincolnshire; Stoneydelph in Staffordshire; and Treherbert in Rhondda Cynon Taf.

Blakemore Retail Senior Fresh Food Coach Jamie Parkman, who is overseeing the Snappy Shopper operation, commented: "A change in shopping habits over recent months has seen customer demand for home deliveries grow significantly.

"Having the vans will enable us to keep up with this demand and increase our catchment areas so that we can serve more local communities.

"The company's investment in new vans shows its willingness and determination to evolve and adapt to a changing market, which will certainly help us stay ahead of our competitors."

A.F. Blakemore first signed up to the Snappy Shopper app in April. Customers can choose from more than 1,000 SPAR products and get them delivered straight to their door within an hour.

Blakemore Retail currently has 73 stores registered on the Snappy Shopper app. This includes

37 hub stores and 36 satellite stores. Blakemore Trade Partners also has 37 independently owned stores signed up to the app.

The business is about to launch two new pilots with Snappy Shopper, one delivering Costa coffee and the other offering a click and collect service through the app.



Keeping kids active during lockdown

The 2020 Virtual SPAR Lancashire School Games was a roaring success, with over 10,000 children taking part in the scheme between March and June.

In response to the UK's lockdown, Active Lancashire launched a ten-week virtual programme of daily sporting activities for children to enjoy with carers, teachers, parents, and even family pets! Many schools used the programme to set lockdown homework in line with the P.E. curriculum, and on the 30th June, the day 2,500 children should have been taking part in the county finals, Active Lancashire hosted a virtual sports day. Hosted on the games' website and social media channels, over 4,000 children took part with 11.5K views on YouTube and a 70% increase in visitors to the official website.

The virtual platform proved a fantastic way of keeping the SPAR Lancashire School Games alive, driving awareness, online engagement, and reaching schools that traditionally haven't been able to spare a teacher, or hire a minibus to attend physical qualifying events. Being healthy and active has never been more important and the team look forward to driving this message even further in 2021.



Northern Guild raise £345K for Marie Curie

Since March 2017, SPAR retailers, staff and customers have raised a whopping £345,000 for Marie Curie through in-store fundraising activities, collections and automatic product donations. This means that the Northern Guild has helped to fund 17,331 hours of specialist nursing care, having a significant impact on families facing terminal illness across the UK.

Andrew Barnes, Trading Director at James Hall & Co. said, "We would like to say a big thank you to independent SPAR retailers and staff across the company for supporting our fundraising initiatives, and to SPAR customers across the north of England who have



purchased sandwiches or daffodil bunches and helped to raise such a fantastic total. We are very proud partners of Marie Curie and would like to thank their teams nationwide for the incredible work they do, providing invaluable support to patients and families across the country, especially during this very difficult time."

During the 2019/20 financial year, automatic product donations from sandwiches produced by James Hall & Co. raised £67,000, and G&E Murgatroyd, James Hall & Co.'s company owned stores division, raised over £60,000 through in-store fundraising and in-kind donations.



DRIVING RAINBOWS OF HOPE ACROSS THE NORTH

James Hall & Co. decorated ten of its double decker SPAR trucks with rainbows of hope, in celebration of the company's partnership with Lancashire Teaching Hospitals NHS Foundation Trust and NHS staff up and down the country.

As well as spreading hope and positivity, the rainbows also celebrate a partnership between Lancashire Teaching Hospitals NHS Foundation Trust and James Hall & Co., who donated £250,000 to Royal Preston Hospital, for a state of the art relaxation and recuperation centre for NHS staff working at the hospital.

Karen Partington, Chief Executive at Lancashire Teaching Hospitals NHS Foundation Trust, said: "We are delighted to see the rainbows adorning James Hall & Co. trucks in support of our hospitals and the wider NHS! They serve as an uplifting reminder that we will continue to provide excellent care throughout and beyond the pandemic, as well as symbolising what we as a community have been through this year. This is yet another example of the generosity of James Hall & Co., following their incredible donation to our hospitals back in May. Thank you!"

Andrew Hall, Managing Director at James Hall & Co. said, "Many of our staff and their families live in and around Preston and have a special connection with Lancashire Teaching Hospitals. We wanted to provide a legacy for NHS staff that would reach far beyond coronavirus, and provide some respite from the challenging work they face on a daily basis.



"Rainbows of hope have become synonymous with the coronavirus crisis. Together with Lancashire Teaching Hospitals, we loved the idea that this symbol could travel thousands of miles across the north of England, journeying from our Preston depot to over 600 SPAR stores across the north of the England. We hope that these rainbows will spread positivity and bring a smile to anyone who sees them."

New Facebook Pages for company owned stores

James Hall & Co. has created almost 150 Facebook pages to further the company's online presence and harness the power of digital marketing. Every company owned store (G&E Murgatroyd and North East Convenience Stores) now has an individual Facebook page, which is managed centrally at Bowland View, Preston. Every page is unique and aims to engage local communities by using a blend of activities including promotional offers, prize draws and store photos, with the help from in-store staff champions.

In an ever-changing environment, Facebook has enabled James Hall & Co. to be more proactive online during these unprecedented times, sharing important messages quickly and efficiently. Digital assets are also available for independent retailers on WebSPAR and via a digital WhatsApp group; ensuring digital messaging is consistent across the Northern Guild's digital channels.

The team are excited to explore Facebook's potential and the pages already seem to be having a positive impact on new and existing customers, raising awareness and strengthening the SPAR brand.



Stores fundraise for Lancashire keyworkers

A number of independent and company owned stores in East Lancashire and the Ribble Valley have been collecting for the Ribble Valley Scrub Hub, a network of volunteer sewers who have been producing made-to-order PPE for keyworkers across Lancashire.



PROUDLY SUPPORTED BY SPAR

Kindly donating spare change at the till, SPAR customers raised £427 for the Ribble Valley Scrub Hub to purchase fabric and trimmings to produce free, made-to-order PPE for NHS staff and key workers across East Lancashire and the Ribble Valley.

Independent SPAR retailer, Nigel Masters of SPAR Oswaldtwistle, said: "We were thrilled to support the Ribble Valley Scrub Hub. The time and commitment their volunteer sewers have shown over the past few months has been truly admirable, and they have had a significant impact on helping to protect our local key workers and the communities they serve."

C J Lang and Son Ltd hosts Supplier Webinar

C J Lang & Son Ltd hosted a webinar for suppliers on 10 June.

The wholesaler took the opportunity to present to its supply base and provided details on how the business has progressed over the course of the last 12 months as well as outlining the pillars on which the future strategy is built.

Over 300 delegates took part in the online webinar which was broken down into five sessions based on trading categories.

Colin McLean, CEO of C J Lang & Son Ltd, said: "The purpose of the event was to update our suppliers on the strong position the business is in. We have gone through a positive transformation over the last couple of years and we wanted to share these results and our future plans with our supply base.

"Our suppliers have worked tirelessly with us over the past few months and we are very grateful for their

continued support particularly in these challenging times.

"We are in our 'back to basics' phase in our five year strategic growth plan but the results so far are very good. We are developing our relationships with suppliers. We want them to share their NPD with us and let us bring their products to market. We have the stores, the distribution infrastructure and the geographical coverage all over Scotland to allow suppliers to do just that."

Craig Tedford, Finance Director at C J Lang provided a business update. "Over the last twelve months SPAR Scotland has grown both wholesale and retail sales achieving increases significantly above the Scottish market. Sales to independent customers have grown by 6% and retail like-for-like sales in company owned stores have grown by 7% as we develop both our customer and consumer offer," he said.



CJ Lang & Son Ltd launches new Click & Collect service

CJ Lang & Son Ltd has launched a Click & Collect service aimed at providing trade customers with a full ambient and selected chilled range.

Operating from its 180,000sqft distribution centre in Dundee, the wholesaler will provide a Click & Collect service seven days a week.

Colin McLean said: "During the pandemic, we have been in a fortunate position to be able to continue supplying our independent SPAR retailers with what they needed to provide communities with essential items on a daily basis.

"Our distribution team has been doing a phenomenal job and also provided a number of retail businesses outside of the SPAR network with product over the past 12 weeks. As a result we felt we could expand on this service and provide not only our existing independent SPAR retailers with a click and collect service but also allow other retail trade customers the opportunity to order and collect from our depot in Dundee.

"We are doing all we can to support independent retailing in Scotland and as we work with a growing number of Scottish, UK and international suppliers, we have the ability to offer retail businesses an extensive product range."

SPAR Scotland completes charity giveaway with launch of new Community Cashback Initiative

In the past 12 months SPAR Scotland has donated a total of £150,000 to local charities, community groups, foodbanks and SPAR's national charity partner Marie Curie.

Marking the 100th anniversary of the company, C J Lang & Son Ltd, gave away £100,000 to charities in the vicinity of every single one of their 114 company-owned SPAR stores where members of the public were asked to nominate their local charity to be in with a chance of winning.

In addition, the wholesale and convenience store business has donated £10,000 in SPAR shopping vouchers, cash donations and product donations to a number of foodbanks.

Marie Curie is SPAR's national charity partner and £40,000 has been donated by SPAR Scotland to help the work Marie Curie nurses have been doing to support the NHS and the vulnerable during this challenging time.

Colin McLean, CEO of SPAR Scotland said:

"As a wholesale business based in Dundee which supplies over 300 local community SPAR stores, we are pleased to be able to send donations to recipients the length and breadth of Scotland.

"We are also proud to announce our first Community Cashback Initiative where we have £30,000 to give away to local community groups and charities.

"As a local convenience store business, serving every community in Scotland we have set up our first Community Cashback Initiative recognising the work many groups and charity services are also doing to support people in local communities around Scotland. We hope a number of groups will benefit from a share of the fund.

"Thousands of fundraising events have been cancelled over the past few months and we know this injection of funds will help charities and groups continue to do their jobs. Times have changed and we want to make sure we continue to be there for our communities,"

he added.

The wholesaler and retailer will announce the details of the Community Cashback Initiative very shortly when it will donate £30,000 to charities and groups providing a variety of services to users throughout Scotland.

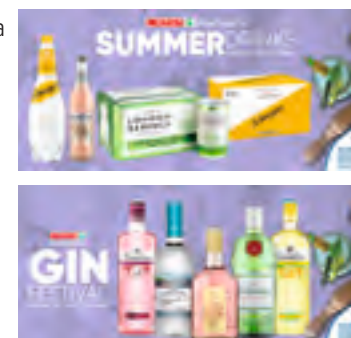


SPAR Scotland Gin Festival offers customers huge savings

SPAR Scotland stores ran a Gin Festival from 24 July until 13 August 2020. With great deals on a huge number of gins and accompanying mixers, customers had the opportunity to choose from 31 deals over the three week period.

Both SPAR Brand and Branded gins are taking part in the promotion to encourage customers to purchase and drive sales. Products taking part will be featured in-store on a licensed and ambient end.

Mark Spalding, Senior Trading Manager for C J Lang and Son Limited, said: "Our Gin Festival gives us the opportunity to highlight some of our range of fantastic quality gins. We know the festival offers customers great prices and it will help retailers boost sales. A significant amount of new gins have also been introduced to our stores as part of this local festival and we hope customers enjoy everything on offer."



Missing the Football? SPAR Scotland launches the SPAR Footie Challenge

SPAR Scotland launched an online campaign called the SPAR Footie Challenge in June.

Running until 14 July, SPAR Scotland worked with the Scottish FA on an exciting interactive football material for everyone to enjoy with the support of national team striker Lana Clelland.

Taking place on both the SPAR Scotland Facebook and Instagram pages, Colin McLean said: "We know many are missing the football and we wanted to create a bit of fun for football fans along with helping the SFA promote the players of the women's team. We hope children will be excited to take part and maybe some adults too!"

The campaign included a competition where a signed Women's National Team Shirt can be won. There will be a Q&A with SWNT player Lana Clelland, fact sheets, football challenges, quizzes and many more fun activities.

Lana Clelland said: "This has been such a challenging time for everyone but it's important to remain positive and keep active. I live in Italy and they were obviously affected badly by COVID-19 but we are beginning to come out the other side now.

"When we were forced to stay inside I kept practicing my skills indoors and have shared some challenges which hopefully encourage youngsters out there to give them a go."



CJ LANG SUPPORT DUNDEE FOODBANK AFTER BBC APPEAL

When BBC's The One Show appealed to the country for help on behalf of foodbanks, Dundee based CJ Lang & Son Ltd was quick to jump into action.

Dundee Foodbank appeared on the show earlier this week to request donations, especially tea and coffee. The foodbank were able to collect a donation of 50 cases of each product from C J Lang's depot on Longtown Road.

Colin McLean said: "Both prior to and during the pandemic, C J Lang has been supporting local communities, charities and foodbanks across Scotland.

"We are very aware of the great work our local Dundee foodbank have been doing and wanted to further support them after seeing their recent appeal."

A special mention of C J Lang's donation was made on The One Show's Thursday programme. The SPAR wholesaler for Scotland and the Lang Foundation have made significant donations to foodbanks locally and across Scotland, supporting the communities surrounding their stores.



C J Lang makes two new Executive Board Director Appointments

C J Lang and Son Ltd is pleased to announce the appointment of Louise Rogers and Sonya Harper to its Executive Board.

Louise Rogers joins as the new HR Director taking over from John Connolly who retired in July following fifteen years at the business.

Sonya Harper, who joined C J Lang as Head of Central Operations & Process Improvement in 2019, has been promoted to Central Operations Director in recognition of her significant contribution to the development of the company in terms of its business communication, processes and stock management improvements.

Colin McLean said: "I congratulate both Louise and Sonya on their appointments. The SPAR convenience business in Scotland has transformed over the past few years and I look forward to welcoming them to the Board and seeing the positive changes and direction they will bring to the business.

"I would like to thank John Connolly for his commitment and the integral role he has played in the C J Lang business over the last fifteen years. On behalf of the Shareholders and the Board of C J Lang, I congratulate him on his well-earned, upcoming retirement."



Louise Rogers HR Director



Sonya Harper Central Operations Director

Henderson Group still expanding store network despite COVID-19 pandemic

Henderson Retail has completed a £500,000 fit-out of the recently constructed SPAR Carnmoney Hill, the first of its new builds to open amidst the COVID-19 pandemic, bringing 21 new jobs to the local community.

Mark McCommond, Retail Director at Henderson Group, says it has not been without its challenges, but this new store has an important role to play in setting the new standards of shopping for Northern Ireland.

Mark commented; "we started this build back in 2019, and had originally hoped to open in May however, due to the pandemic and subsequent lockdown, we had to stop the construction and of course, adjust our plans around the future of retail here in Northern Ireland.

"We had to put safety measures in place as an essential business providing a service for our local communities. We moved fast to secure all the vital materials we needed to provide the safest possible environment for shoppers and staff, even as lockdown eases."

The store will also operate with an abundance of fresh and locally sourced products, a local butchery counter from Irvine's Chop Shop, a SPAR Bakery and

will stock 'The Chef' range of ready-prepared meals.

Mark added; "the amenities and services provided in the store are second to none, including our popular Barista Bar coffee and treats. We are also looking forward to launching our Mauds Ice Cream counter. The store will also feature self-scan checkouts as another option for customers looking for fast, contactless payment methods."

Since March 2020, Henderson Group has invested over £1 million in protective measures and communications for retailers and shoppers.



Henderson Retail has just completed the £500,000 fit-out of the recently constructed SPAR Carnmoney Hill, bringing 21 new jobs to the local community.

The store was officially opened by local resident and recently retired former SPAR store manager, Bertie Tyrrell (centre) who worked for Henderson Retail for over 20 years in a variety of store and support team roles. He was joined by his wife Kate who also worked for the company. Also pictured is store manager Andrew Mcleese (left) and area manager, Ian Mullin (right).

New defibrillators installed at SPAR NI stores takes total to 236

After four months of fundraising by staff and local customers, McBride's SPAR Hospital Road, Omagh and Daly's Service Station in Eglis, have installed new, public-access defibrillators outside their stores, taking the total number in the Henderson Group network to 236.

The stores raised £1,500 with the help of the community as part of the Henderson Group's Heart of our Community campaign, which has also helped to educate the public on the importance of CPR and early defibrillation.

The defibrillators are automatic, so no training is required for use. As soon as it is activated, the user will be talked through the process by the machine and the Ambulance Service operator on the phone.

The Heart of our Community campaign was launched in October 2015, with the full backing of the Department of Health,

Social Services and Public Safety (DHSSPS) and Dr Michael McBride, Northern Ireland's Chief Medical Officer, who commended the initiative which complements the Community Resuscitation Strategy the department launched in 2014, with the aim of improving the survival rate of out-of-hospital cardiac arrests by promoting lifesaving skills to the public.

Henderson Group also developed a dedicated website, www.heartofourcommunityni.com, which houses information about the campaign, life-saving information, and lists the stores taking part in the initiative.



McBrides: Peter McBride, owner of McBride's SPAR, Hospital Road in Omagh is pictured with store manager Laura McGee and the new defibrillator device which the store team has installed thanks to fundraising with the local community.



Daly's: Daly's Service Station in Eglis recently installed a defibrillator with money raised by their own customers donating loose change instore. Pictured are Louise Daly, Martin Daly and Micheal Kelly. Picture courtesy of Tyrone Courier.

HEALTHIER HANDMADE RANGE DEBUTS IN THE CHEF EXPANSION FOR HENDERSON WHOLESALE

Henderson Wholesale has launched 13 new products for the professionally handmade The CHEF range.

It brings the number of recipes developed for the range to over 50, with this latest expansion including health-conscious bowls which will be made fresh every day using the best fresh ingredients.

Neal Kelly, Fresh Foods Director at Henderson Group said; "Over the past few months, the way we've been buying and cooking food has changed dramatically. With fewer options for takeaway and eating out, shoppers have turned to higher quality pre-prepared meals that takes the work out of prepping a tasty meal.

"These are quality meals, handmade locally in our own kitchen with professional finesse. Each Under 500 calorie meal is portion controlled to ensure the correct amount of protein and carbohydrates to make a well-rounded meal."

The handmade pulled pork, smokey mixed bean chilli, spinach and noodles is one of seven in the new Under 500 Calorie range from SPAR's own brand The CHEF.



Henderson Retail debuts its first Electronic Shelf Edge Price Display Labels

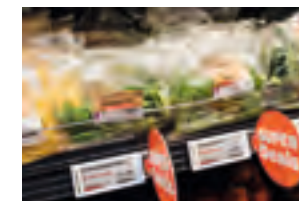
The recently renovated EUROSPAR Glenwell in Glengormley is the site at which Henderson Retail will trial their new digital shelf edge pricing, created by Henderson Technology.

The community supermarket unveiled its £665,000 extension and complete store refurbishment.

The investment also includes Henderson Technology's Electronic Shelf Edge Labels and two additional self-scan checkouts which aim to enhance store efficiency and give customers a choice between traditional service or self-service payment options.

Mark McCommond, Retail Director at Henderson Group said the technology will help retailers utilise their resources more effectively in-store and give customers more choice: "EUROSPAR Glenwell has expanded ranges, additional services, it is open 24 hours a day, which means efficient staffing is crucial to ensure a smooth running of the store. The implementation of Henderson Technology's Electronic Shelf Edge Labels and self-scan checkouts will not only give our retailers greater efficiency but will make shopping easier for customers."

The Henderson Retail trial will last for



12 weeks at EUROSPAR Glenwell, before potentially being rolled out to other EUROSPAR Supermarkets in the company's network.

Mark continued; "There is the potential to invest £2m to establish this tech innovation across our company owned network of EUROSPARs. Three independent retailers have already installed the technology and are experiencing benefits which range from increased profits to savings from no longer needing to print the original card labels. This is a significant step forward in the future of retail and we're excited to be introducing it in our store estate."



SPAR NI stitches up a plan for the Big Community Sew

SPAR and EUROSPAR NI, NI Scrubs and Business in the Community recently announced a collaborative partnership through the Business Response Network to make and distribute 20,000 face covering for local communities.

Angeline Murphy from the NI Big Community Sew explains: "The stitching mission all started with NI Scrubs, where over 26,000 scrubs were produced for frontline NHS and care staff. Individually, I fundraised over £32,000 for the group to help purchase fabric for the stitchers. The volunteer army of stitchers met the demand for scrubs and filled the stop gap that existed at the time.

"With some money remaining we are looking towards the vulnerable in the community and we want to get face coverings to those in most need."

Bronagh Luke, head of corporate marketing, Henderson Group explains why they got on board, saying: "Our SPAR and EUROSPAR stores are in the heart of every community in Northern Ireland, with each one a hub for their local area. We support our neighbours throughout the year, however in the past few months we have developed new initiatives which

have helped local charities and organisations adjust through this challenging time with our Community Cashback Grant, which saw 16 organisations receive a share of £20,000.

"Utilising some of our Post Offices as pick up and drop off points makes this collaboration even easier to navigate for everyone involved. It's an honour to help and be part of this very important initiative for our local communities."

Lisa McIlvenna, deputy managing director, Business in the Community adds:

"It's heartening to see everyone working so hard to serve and support some of the most vulnerable members of our community and encouraging that businesses like SPAR and EUROSPAR are stepping up to the mark to support their local communities. I am proud to be supporting Angeline and the NI Big Community Sew."



Lorraine Rossborough; Bronagh Luke, Henderson Group; Angeline Murphy, Big Community Sew and Lisa McIlvenna, Business in the Community

Appleby Westward Unveils Flagship Company-owned SPAR Store

Appleby Westward has unveiled a flagship company-owned convenience store for the region after a major redevelopment project.

The 3,000 sqft SPAR store in Bridport, Dorset, a former Woolworth's store in the town's busy East Street, has been redeveloped throughout in a £265,000 capital investment programme.

The store is one of 90 company-owned SPAR shops run by Appleby Westward and has been transformed from front to back as part of a major modernisation.

Innovations include a food-to-go hub and workstations at the front of the store where customers can sit, eat, relax, phone and drink coffee. There is a phone charging point, a new vape stand and a wide selection of free-from products. The store's Subway franchise has been repositioned and, although separate, gives the impression of it being part of one big SPAR shop.

Other new features for customers include Preal Shakes, Skwishee Slush machine, Chicago Town Pizzas, Rollover Hot Dogs, Cook Frozen Meals and Costa Coffee. A wide range of fresh fruit and vegetables, fresh flowers, and dispensed milk in recyclable bottles from Trewithen Dairy in Cornwall are also available.

Self-service tills are also a new feature in store, which offers a comprehensive selection of beers wines and spirits with local and premium wines, ciders and a new gin station. A broad range of frozen foods and chilled products are available, and promotions are prominent throughout the

store, with Meal Deals available on food-to-go products

Steve Goswell, Store Director for Appleby Westward's company-owned stores said: "The customer reaction has been fantastic, and our store manager Tim Muhl and his team love the new look, which has transformed our customer offer throughout.

It's very impressive visually with a striking and creative use of graphics in what is the flagship model in our store portfolio."

Appleby Westward plans to use the Bridport store as a model on which its independent retailers can base their own future store developments.



Village shop makes dreams come true for Michelle

Working in her father's village shop on the Mendip Hills in Somerset, Michelle Appleyard dreamt of running her own store one day.

And her dreams came true earlier this year when Michelle and her husband Jason, a farm arable contractor, bought the village shop in High Littleton near Bath and turned it into a SPAR store, thanks to her dad putting her in touch with Appleby Westward's David Slade.

Her father Peter and mother Judy moved their independent shop at West Harptree under the SPAR banner five years ago and have not looked back since. Peter recommended SPAR to Michelle, and after getting the keys to the shop at the beginning of February, she and her husband set about modernising the business in a co-investment scheme with Appleby Westward.

"I loved the day to day running of my parents' store in West Harptree and used to dream of owning my own store one day," said Michelle. "We could not have chosen a better location and it's really become a great success despite the stress of opening it right at the start of the coronavirus crisis."

The store they bought was formerly Dando's convenience shop, which had been in the Dando family for nearly 75 years. Michelle has kept a photo of Graham and Dilys Dando on display behind the till for customers to see.

She and Jason gutted the store, refurbishing the building throughout and putting in new floors, ceilings and electrics before the Appleby Westward merchandising team moved in to create the full SPAR convenience offer.

Customers are delighted with the new look store and sales are running at £20k a week, four times more than when the SPAR opened for business. Lockdown saw the store's business expand rapidly with a home delivery service for High Littleton residents and villages in the surrounding area delivered by Michelle and her staff.

Dando's had a strong reputation locally for its sandwiches and Michelle has developed that by expanding the store's overall food offer. "Our home-baked products are a key attribute with quiches, coleslaw, cakes, bread pudding and we even boil our own ham in-store," said Michelle. "Moving to SPAR was a great decision and we have rapidly found ourselves performing way ahead of our business plan."



New Latestop store launched under SPAR fascia

Convenience retail company Latestop has launched another west country store under the SPAR banner in partnership with Appleby Westward.

The store in Bath follows the opening last year of a new SPAR store in Shaftesbury by the Latestop team of Greg Gardner, Mark Vinnicombe and Kevin Farley, with three other stores in South Gloucestershire, Bournemouth and Taunton also under the SPAR banner and awaiting redevelopment. The Latestop team operate a further two convenience stores in the south west with Costcutter.

Developed on a greenfield site in Ensleigh, Bath, the new store is already outstripping its sales budget. "It has a sales area of 3,000 sq. ft. and has been fitted to a very high standard," said Greg. "Given the location and demographics of the area, it gave us the opportunity to plan it as a true 'top up' neighbourhood store.

"We are championing local products, as well as including many specialist products along with a wide range of Cook Frozen Foods, a dispenser offering fresh west country milk in

reusable glass bottles, Costa Coffee, a fizzy slush machine and a full bake-off which supplements and complements the full standard convenience store offer."

The strength of the SPAR brand was one of the deciding factors when Latestop formed a trading partnership with Appleby Westward. "This relationship is now flourishing as the opening in Bath marks our fifth store with Appleby Westward," said Greg.

"Having set the store up with an above average space allocation for chilled foods, in-store bake off and fruit and vegetables, it was gratifying to see the store not only far outstrip its sales budget, but also see these sections far exceeding their expectations at the expense of lower margin categories. Customer reaction has been excellent and the store benefits from a very solid core catchment area."



Major fleet investment for Appleby Westward

Appleby Westward has replaced its whole fleet of nine 26-tonne DAF delivery vehicles in a major £1m investment programme.

Appleby Westward's Logistics Director Del Phillips said: "Fleet replacement is a huge financial investment for the company with each vehicle valued at over £120,000 and it will enhance the quality of our delivery service to SPAR stores throughout the south west region.

"At the same time, as well as improving our service levels we are doing everything we can to protect the environment and reduce our carbon footprint."

The new DAF Prime Mover vehicles all have the latest Euro 6 compliant diesel engines, active cruise control, Brigade 360° cameras, lighter body and chassis components, industry-leading locks and alarms, on board weighing systems, high visibility mirror protectors, LED day running lights and reversing alarms.

"These driving aids and additional equipment will help reduce the stress on our drivers and give them more time to concentrate on important things like other road users," said Del.

Bread, milk & PPE – How Marie Curie nurses are benefitting from local SPAR stores



SPAR wholesaler Appleby Westward has become a vital part of Caring Services throughout the COVID-19 crisis. The South West of England had presented a 'logistical nightmare' to Marie Curie as colleagues, volunteers and even relatives of nurses were forced to travel hours by car to deliver huge quantities of essential PPE for nurses to safely visit patients. This meant a considerable amount of time and funds spent, particularly when the team were forced to use couriers.

This was until Appleby Westward volunteered the use of their drivers to collect PPE from the Marie Curie Tiverton office and deliver it to SPAR stores closest to every Nurse's home, just in time for them to collect easily from store. This service quickly became known as SPAR's 'PPE Click & Collect' service!

An incredible 250 Nurses and their patients are now benefitting from Appleby Westward's support, with an average of 60,000 pieces of PPE being delivered every, single week.

Karen Burfitt, Marie Curie's South West Regional Nursing Manager said: "You have literally saved us hours of planning, coordinating and travelling. You have prevented nurses getting anxious as their shift loomed and they waited for the kit to arrive. You have stopped nurses having to stay up, rather than getting some much-needed rest before a shift, for someone to drop off the PPE.

"You have helped prevent us having to cancel the care of a dying person, saved us having to make a phone call to an exhausted wife to say sorry no one is coming tonight because we couldn't get the right PPE to the right nurse. You have saved me and my team from additional stress and worry. I cannot thank you enough. This has been a massive part of our jobs and lives for many weeks. You have enabled us to catch our breath - albeit briefly."

Del Phillips, Appleby Westward's Logistics Director, said: "As part of every community we serve, Appleby Westward and our SPAR retailers are proud to support Marie Curie, providing a logistics solution to ensure vital PPE reaches their nurses working in communities during these difficult times. And we are grateful to our stores for playing such an important role in this initiative."



Llamas you say? Alpaca my bags!

Deep in the throes of Zoom fatigue? It might be time to add some excitement to your video calls and virtual work meetings. You could just change up your virtual background... or you could organise for an alpaca to join your chat!

Marie Curie is now offering the chance to book in 20-minute virtual 'meet and greet' sessions with his herd of alpacas, in return for a suggested donation of £100 to Marie Curie! If you want an alpaca to Zoombomb an important work call, you can email fiona.bushby@mariecurie.org.uk to book it in, as long as you also commit to a donation to the charity.

Marie Curie's Support Line is Changing

With Coronavirus effecting so many in the UK, more people are experiencing the loss of some close to them, often for the first time. That's why Marie Curie has changed its Support Line to make sure we can be there for as many people as possible who may have lost someone, or who are bereaved...

- **Now open daily** - Since lockdown, our Support Line is open 7 days per week - Monday to Friday from 8am to 6pm and Saturday and Sunday from 11am to 5pm. It's available to anyone who needs our help.
- **Bereavement support service** - We have now launched our brand new over-the-phone bereavement service, to offer more in-depth support for those who have been affected by loss. You can find more information at www.mariecurie.org.uk/help/support
- **Check-in and chat** - People are finding it harder to get the help and support they need and may feel more lonely and isolated. Our Check-in and chat is a new befriending call-back service where people are matched with one of our volunteers to receive ongoing support and a friendly ear when they just need to talk.

If you ever need to speak to someone for support, our services are open. Just call 0800 090 2309 or visit <https://www.mariecurie.org.uk/help/support>



The SPAR spirit of solidarity and partnership has never been stronger and with over 370,000 colleagues, the worldwide SPAR family has responded with selfless dedication during the Covid-19 pandemic.

As a worldwide brand, SPAR has continued with its strong tradition of acting better together and continues to meet the needs of the local communities.

Spain

SPAR Spain has continued growing during 2020 with a string of store openings in different formats. Throughout the lockdown period, Grupo Upper in Almería has maintained its expansion policy. Valvi Supermercados opened two new SPAR Supermarkets along the Costa Brava in Tossa de Mar and Calella de Palafrugell. SPAR Gran Canaria opened a new 160m² SPAR store in Telde el Goro, near its Distribution Centre.



Austria

SPAR Austria reached a record-breaking market share of 35.6% in April 2020, outperforming its domestic competitors, according to market researcher Nielsen.

SPAR CEO Dr Gerhard Drexel said: "There is the decades of collaboration with our Austrian, regional and local partner suppliers from industry, trade and agriculture. We are also committed to offering attractive prices for all of our customers in Austria.

"A particularly important component of the success is the hard-working and competent SPAR retailers and the colleagues in all areas of the company, be it in sales, logistics or administration. This has been particularly evident in the past few weeks. We are extremely proud of them."

China

SPAR China expanded its store network with four new locations in June, two each in the provinces of Shandong and Guangdong.



Sri Lanka

Offering a limited range online during the curfew period when stores were closed, SPAR Sri Lanka has reopened its doors. Customers are now enjoying accessing the broader range available in stores. However, with so many shoppers adopting online ordering, SPAR Sri Lanka is planning to extend its e-grocery solution to a fuller offer.



Botswana

During the recent lockdown, SPAR stores in Botswana have provided funding for a range of education related initiatives for children. Fundraising campaigns have taken place for reading books, coloured pencils, stationery, shoes, uniforms, school tracksuits and sporting equipment.

The Botswana Society for the Deaf welcomed the donation of 15 Smart Tablets, a Smart TV, and school uniforms. One local SPAR Supermarket funded the reparations for a preschool in a village for all the ceilings, the installation of new toilets, and the purchase of mattresses for the children to sleep on. Several SPAR Supermarkets in Botswana have also supported the opening of vegetable gardens.



Hungary

SPAR Hungary's INTERSPAR Tata has been named 'Store of the Year' in the hypermarket category by Store Insider magazine. The INTERSPAR is equipped with environmentally friendly technologies inside and out. The 5,200m² hypermarket has a unique horizontal supporting structure with beams and ceiling panels made entirely from wood. The use of environmentally friendly materials is complemented with environmental friendly technologies. SPAR Hungary also installed ozone-friendly cooling systems and refrigerator doors and energy-efficient LED-lighting.

There for the future

Ethical considerations are becoming increasingly important to consumers who want to be sure that the places they shop behave responsibly. Customers want to be sure that businesses treat people with respect, have minimal impact on the planet and give back to their local communities.

With this in mind, SPAR UK is publishing its Corporate Social Responsibility (CSR) policies on the SPAR UK website. The focus is on three pillars: Sustainability; Health & Wellbeing and Community, with specific policies and initiatives to support these pillars. These include policies on product sourcing and ingredients such as chicken, fish and palm oil, as well as plans to reduce plastic packaging.

In terms of Health & Wellbeing, the aim is to help customers live healthier lives. SPAR is doing this by reducing calories, sugar and salt in our own brand products and supporting local sports events. From a community perspective, as well as raising a fantastic amount of money for Marie Curie, all RDC partners and retailers do a tremendous amount to give back to local communities.

Head of CSR at SPAR UK, Cath McIlwham, said: "Customers are showing greater interest in the ethical credentials of businesses and it is important that we are transparent and give customers reassurance that they are making the right choice when they shop at SPAR.

"As a collection of family-owned businesses with a long history, we've always been responsible retailers, but now is the time to tell our customers more about our values and how that is reflected in the products that we sell. We need to demonstrate that we are there for our customers and their communities – now and in the future. Not only is it the right thing to do, it also makes good business sense," she added.



GroceryAid Launches School Essentials Grant for Colleagues in Need

The School Essentials Grant launched by GroceryAid aims to reduce the financial impact on parents working in our industry when children go back to school in September.

In a recent survey by The Children's Society it was reported that increased school uniform costs are leaving many low-income families struggling to cope and forced to cut back on food and other essential items. The report also highlights the impact on children wearing the wrong uniform that includes pupils being bullied, feeling left out or even excluded from school.

To help, GroceryAid has launched a School Essentials Grant to help families purchase the school necessities required for the start of the new school term. The grant is £150 per school-aged child (up to three children), if the applicant can evidence that they are in receipt of Child Benefit and meet the eligibility criteria. The grant will close on the 30th September or when the fund has been used, whichever comes first.

Mandi Leonard, GroceryAid Welfare Director said: "GroceryAid's School Essentials Grant will help to alleviate some of the financial strain on low income families at the start of the new school year, particularly in these unprecedented times. On average families spend around £337 on secondary school uniform each year with primary school parents paying as much as £315 a year per child."

GroceryAid has been at the heart of the food and drink industry, providing emotional, practical and financial support since 1857 for grocery colleagues.



National Lottery New Retailer Hub

The award-winning National Lottery Retailer Hub website has been enhanced with new features and tools to make selling The National Lottery easier and more profitable for Camelot retail partners!

The enhancements include personalised data, such as how much a particular store has raised for Good Causes, their National Lottery sales figures and the amount of commission earned – all of which is accessible at the touch of a button. The Retailer Hub also has a new e-learning and training platform, where SPAR retailers can take part in tailored training and new regular learning modules.

In addition, up until the end of September, SPAR stores are now able to score their store against ten Site, Stock, Sell questions each month by uploading images to The National Lottery Retailer Hub. These will then be reviewed by Camelot Retail Sales Executives and rewards will be earned when retailers score 8, 9 or 10/10. Each time they score 8 or above, they are entered into a quarterly prize draw. For more information on how stores can earn rewards please visit The National Lottery Retailer Hub.

SPAR retailers can register to Camelot's award-winning website today by visiting www.tnlretailerhub.co.uk, clicking 'sign up' and entering all the relevant details, including a retailer number, name and email address. This will provide access to all the tools, features and latest National Lottery retailer updates.



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