



Retail is at the heart of every Irish community

How the sector supports and improves life nationwide



retailireland.ie/community

Retail is central to the economic and social fabric of the country. It is at the very heart of every community.

The sector directly employs over 300,000 people and supports many thousands more jobs throughout the supply chain, often in small, family-run businesses. Unlike many other sectors, retail jobs are evenly spread across every city, town and village in the country. In every region, it is either the largest or second largest employer, with its share of employment typically ranging from 12% to 15.5%.

However, the positive impact of retail goes far beyond the economic benefits of the jobs it creates. Retail plays a crucial role in developing its people and improving the local communities in which it operates. It contributes to the vibrancy and prosperity of localities, and plays a major role in supporting sport clubs, community groups and charities.

Retail continues to evolve and is transforming how it operates to support environmental sustainability and the circular economy. In addition, the sector is providing much more information to consumers, so they can make smart, informed choices about how they shop, and make the best decisions for themselves and their families.

Covid has changed how we live and work, and it presents big questions as to how we revive and sustain our economy into the future. But it has also brought into clear focus the vital role that the retail sector, and those who work in it, play in our communities and the central role it must play into the future.

Brian Donaldson
Retail Ireland Chairperson



Retail and COVID-19: On the front line

1. Serving our communities

Throughout the pandemic retail has ensured that no one goes without:

- **Non-stop supply:** Despite intense pressure, retailers have ensured that shelves are kept stocked and supply chains continue to function;
- **More delivery options:** Delivery options have been expanded so that all customers, especially vulnerable groups, are fully served;
- **Improved online services:** New online ranges and services have been introduced improving access, choice and availability of goods using technology.

2. Keeping everyone safe

The retail sector has been at the cutting edge of adapting to the new challenges caused by the pandemic, leading the way in overhauling how it operates to keep everyone safe and building confidence with consumers:

- **Social distancing**
- **Face coverings**
- **Hand sanitiser**
- **Plexiglass screens**
- **Contactless payment**
- **Hygiene protocols**
- **Support for vulnerable groups**

3. Supporting best practice

The Retail Ireland Skillnet responded to the COVID-19 crisis by developing a range of free online training courses, which over 700 people completed.





300,000
people are currently
employed in the
Irish retail sector



ENGLISH MARKET
CORK

"Generations"
Coughlan Meats Since 1948

Celebrating 230 Years
1788 - 2018

Celebrating 230 Years
1788 - 2018

Celebrating 230 Years
1788 - 2018

Two-thirds
of retail workers
are employed
by SMEs

The Irish retail sector supports and encourages the development of five key factors

1. Employment and skills
2. Community and charity support
3. Vibrant towns and cities
4. A sustainable environment
5. Informed consumer choices



Retail supports quality jobs and careers in every part of the country

Jobs

Retail is Ireland's largest indigenous industry, employing over 300,000 people and accounting for 23% of the State's tax revenues accounting for up to €7 billion in tax to the State. This is more than twice that of Ireland's second largest sector, financial services. As such, retail plays a crucial role in stimulating local economies, sustaining employment and supporting lively and vibrant communities across Ireland.

Local economy

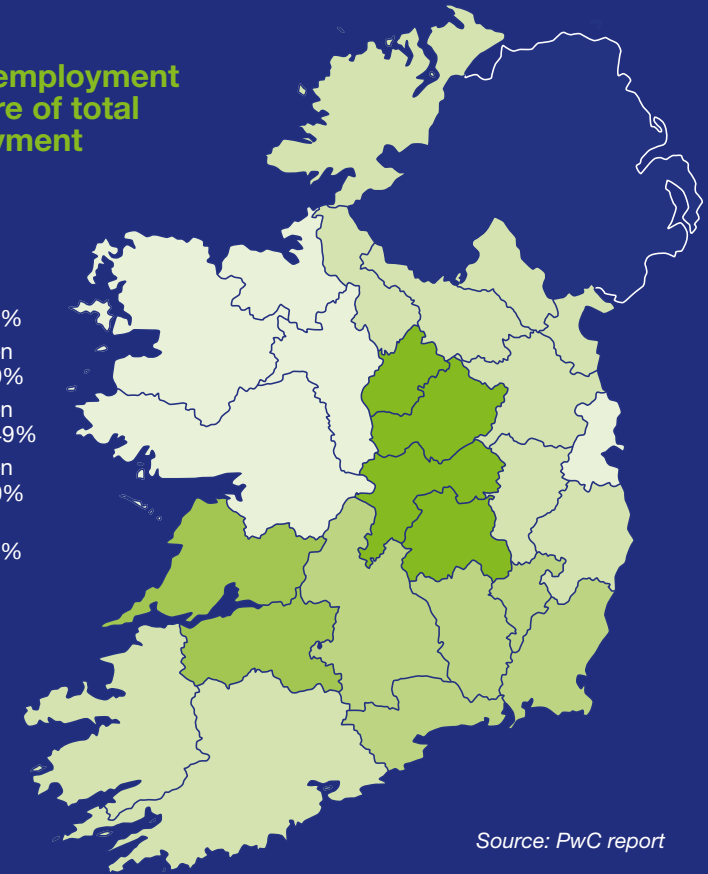
The economic activity generated in retail in turn supports local suppliers, producers and wider employment in the economy. Money spent in shops locally subsequently circulates throughout the local economy. For every €100 spend, the benefit locally can be as much as €500. The total retail wage bill for the sector was €9.4 billion in 2019, accounting for 12.3% of all earnings in Ireland. Much of this money is then spent in the local economy, supporting many more jobs and businesses.

Skills

People are at the very heart of retail businesses. A key focus of the sector is to cultivate, develop and align the skills, talent and innovation that exists in our people and our organisations, in a way that embraces new opportunities and new ways of working. Retail jobs are changing, and will continue to change, and this has prompted a major investment in skills and career development by retailers. Retail is about exceeding the needs of consumers and creating a great experience always, it is known for the people that are involved throughout the many facets of the retail model, not just frontline workers but for the significant expertise in finance, supply chain, IT, marketing and innovation. Building a rewarding career for all is critical to the ongoing success of traditional facing and digital retail.

Retail employment as share of total employment

- Less than 17%
- Between 8-18.99%
- Between 19-19.49%
- Between 19.5-20%
- Greater than 20%



Source: PwC report



Every
€1 spent in
domestic retail
creates an extra
26c in value to
the domestic
economy

**Every €1 million
spent in retail
creates 26 jobs
directly and indirectly
in the domestic
economy**

Ibec Economics Unit



Retail Ireland Apprenticeship Programme

In 2019 Retail Ireland launched the Apprenticeship in Retail Supervision and since then the programme has gone from strength to strength. The programme currently has approximately 170 apprentices enrolled from various retail subsectors around Ireland including – Grocery, Fashion, DIY, Pharmacy, Forecourt, Convenience, Food, and Stationery. The average age of apprentices on the programme is 29 and there is almost a 50:50 gender split. The two-year programme provides retail professionals with an opportunity to develop their skills and their future career path.



**GENERATION
APPRENTICESHIP**

Retail Supervision | www.apprenticeship.ie

Retail Ireland Skillnet

Launched in 2000, the Retail Ireland Skillnet was established to develop and deliver work-based learning and education programmes for people working in the sector. Since then, it has worked with over 1,000 Irish retailers in developing their training and education programmes. It has supported over 20,000 people in the retail sector gain a recognised qualification in areas such as digital marketing, customer service, retail security and health and safety.





“ Our ambitious €1 million partnership with Aldi, will ensure a lasting impact on the most vulnerable families we are working with. These funds will help ensure our trained frontline staff can provide the intensive support families in crisis need, that our kitchens remain stocked full of nutritious food and, most importantly, our services remain free of charge for the children and families that need us.”

**Mary Gamble, Director of Fundraising,
Marketing & Retail at Barnardos**

Retail is supporting charities, clubs and community groups nationwide

Retailers are an integral part of the communities they serve and play a significant role in supporting local networks. They are often the first port of call for community groups and charities when looking for support. Countless local sports clubs and community groups across the country benefit from their ongoing sponsorships and backing, together with active involvement in promoting their services instore or at work across the country.

Penneys

In 2020, Penneys stores nationwide raised €170,000 for their charity partners through their local charity initiative, **Step Up**, despite the major disruption of Covid restrictions. The initiative allows employees to select a local charity, they would like to support. For example, in February 2021, Penneys in Letterkenny took part in 'Primark's 5K Your Way Challenge' to raise money for their partner Foyle Search and Rescue in memory of their much-missed colleague, Mark Cullen.



Maxol

Maxol has been the proud sponsor of **Ulster Mini Rugby Festivals** from 2014, where both girls and boys aged 6-12 gain their first taste of the sport and begin to learn the basic skills. Each year, approximately 1,500-2,000 children attend the festivals, held at various rugby clubs throughout the Province, before participating in a four-day Finals Festival at Kingspan Stadium in Belfast, the home of Ulster Rugby.



“ We are proud that Avoca has chosen Walk in My Shoes as their charity partner at a time when looking after our mental health is more important than ever. Since the partnership was formed in 2020, it has brought about many new opportunities to promote mental health awareness to wider audiences, and we look forward to future collaborations over the coming months.”

Tamara Nolan, Director of Communications and Advocacy, St Patrick's Mental Health Services



Tesco and FoodCloud

Tesco and FoodCloud launched a ground-breaking partnership that sees all surplus food from Tesco's 151 stores redistributed to charities and community groups. This initiative supports individuals within the community, including children and youth at risk of food poverty, single parents, the elderly, those who are homeless, those who are going through drug and alcohol rehabilitation, those who are unemployed, women who are escaping domestic violence; and families with low incomes who need help to get by.





SuperValu

Supervalu is a long-standing supporter and sponsor of the national **TidyTowns** initiative which is one of the most successful local schemes in ensuring that our towns and villages are clean, liveable, and where the local community is actively engaged in the wellbeing of their communities. The SuperValu TidyTowns competition is thriving with committee entries exceeding over 800 for the last three years.



Woodies

Every year Woodies support a range of children's charities with their **Heroes** campaign. The fund-raising drive at checkouts lasts for four weeks and is run by the colleagues. Prior to Covid, there were additional activities in stores, such as book stalls. In 2020, the in-store campaign raised nearly €300,000. At the close of the four weeks the company runs a charity cycle to "collect" the money raised, this is supported by suppliers and raised an additional €150,000.



Aramark and Avoca

Aramark and Avoca support the charity **'Good Grub'**, an initiative that delivers over 75,000 nutritious fruit and vegetable parcels directly to the families of DEIS school children around Ireland. DEIS is a national programme that addresses the needs of children and young adults in disadvantaged communities. In 2020 Avoca also raised over €32,000 for St. Patrick's Mental Health Services through a Christmas Charity candle campaign.





Eason Spelling Bee 2019 Leinster winner George Mhitarjans from St. Mary's National School, Athlone, Co. Westmeath.

Aldi

Aldi's **Community Grants** programme helps fund charities and organisations that contribute vital work and services in their local communities. Each local charity is chosen by Aldi employees. A series of €500 grants, amounting to over €77,500 in total, was presented to charities across the country in 2020. The programme has contributed to 750 local organisations to date, donating over €375,000 since it began.



Eason

Eason are committed to improving literacy and fostering a love of reading among children in Ireland. Their literacy programme started in 2010 with the launch of Ireland's first national **Spelling Bee** competition which has become an annual fixture in the calendar of over 1000 primary schools nationwide. Eason have also donated thousands of books to children through their partnerships with Suas, who run one-to-one literacy mentoring programmes in disadvantaged schools, and iScoil who provide an online learning service that offers young people a pathway to learning.



Boots

Boots has been a proud partner of the **Irish Cancer Society** since 2012. Through the partnership, Boots is committed to increasing awareness, supporting people affected by cancer and promoting cancer prevention in Ireland. All funds raised by Boots go towards the Night Nursing service and to date, Boots has raised over €2 million enabling more than 6,300 nights of end-of-life nursing care for people living with cancer. In addition to their skillset, Boots Pharmacists and Beauty Advisors have undergone training designed in conjunction with Irish Cancer Society to help support and advise people living with cancer and their friends and families.



SuperValu is a long-standing supporter and sponsor of the national Tidy Towns initiative



SPAR Sales Director, Colin Donnelly, pictured with Make-A-Wish Ireland CEO, Susan O'Dwyer. Make-A-Wish Ireland is the official charity partner of SPAR Ireland.

Spar

SPAR has introduced innovative digital fundraising 'Smart Posters' to its nationwide network of more than 400 local stores, which allows customers donate directly to SPAR's official charity partner Make-A-Wish via their mobile phones. It is the first innovation of its kind in support of an official charity partner. Since the advent of the Covid-19 pandemic many people do not carry cash anymore. This is particularly significant for Make-A-Wish Ireland, as the charity does not receive any government funding and is dependent on donations from the public and the support of partners like SPAR to continue granting wishes.



Retail is central to the life and vibrancy of our towns and cities, creating jobs but also attracting visitors and tourists.

Covid restrictions have highlighted the role the right mix of amenities play in the success of our urban centres, not just as economic focal points, but also as social, community, and cultural hubs. While online platforms will continue to develop, retail is and will remain central to what our urban centres have to offer.

Over recent decades, retail has played a crucial role in the regeneration of what has been left behind, providing jobs but also transforming localities. Retail investment makes urban districts more appealing to both existing residents and visitors along with bringing new investment in the form of more businesses, services, and in turn encourages the development of commercial space, public amenities, and more public transportation.

Cork

In June 2020 Cork City Council partially pedestrianised Princes Street in an initiative to revive local businesses and improve the shopping experience. Restaurants, bars, and cafés transitioned to outdoor dining and the improved the consumer experience lifted economic activity in the wider area. Such adaptability of Cork City Council and local businesses to reimagine their local economy highlights the crucial role the experience economy plays in our cities and town centres, and the benefits of a mix of traders.

Limerick

Limerick City and County Council and Clare County Council are developing a retail strategy that aims to relaunch the region as a competitive and attractive retail centre. Measures include broadening the retail offering and improving the consumer experience of visiting the city centre. The approach recognises the central role of retail in revitalising and reimagining our urban centre.



The
retail sector
accounted for
€1.84bn
or 17% of all
corporate tax
paid in 2019



“ Through Repak’s Plastic Pledge, 135 businesses, that place over 60% of all plastic packaging placed on the market, have implemented programmes to reduce and prevent waste, and increase reuse and recyclability. This has led to over 23,000 tonnes of plastic packaging being removed from the market between 2018 and 2020.”

Seamus Clancy, CEO Repak

The retail sector is taking a lead role in promoting and delivering an environmentally sustainable economy.

There is a lot more to do, but the sector is making enormous strides in reducing its carbon footprint and promoting sustainable sourcing and trading practices. From using renewable energy, low energy equipment, building with recycled materials, cutting the amount of plastic, to championing the circular economy and compostable products, tackling environmental issues is now a both a social and commercial priority.

Promoting recycling

Many retailers host recycling centres, with returns for glass and used clothes. Retail has played a leading role in the growth in packaging recycling and recovery from under 15% in 1998 to 90% in 2016.

Repak and the 'Plastic Pledge'

Irish retailers are members of Repak, which in 2019 paid €30m in fees to directly fund household recycling bins, bottle banks, recycling centres and commercial waste packaging nationwide. For every €1 of members fees received, 79c is spent on recycling (57c on household recycling and 22c on commercial

recycling), 3c on Recovery (Energy from packaging waste), 4c on Education & Communication and 14c on Repak overheads.

In June 2020, Ireland had surpassed every recycling and recovery target set for it by the European Union, for the 22nd year in a row, with recycling rates as follows:

- Plastic at 35% (EU target 22.5%)
- Paper at 82% (EU target 60%)
- Metals at 85% (EU target 50%)
- Glass at 78% (EU target: 60%)
- Wood at 81% (EU target 15%)

Ireland's main retailers are part of Repak's 'plastic pledge' which aims to reduce plastic packaging waste. In 2019 Ireland's plastic packaging waste was reduced by 1,000 tonnes.

1. **Prevent Waste:** Focus on prevention of plastic packaging waste by minimising single use packaging and promoting packaging reuse where possible.
2. **Support Circular Economy:** Support Ireland to deliver the Circular Economy Package plastic recycling targets of 50% of all plastics by 2025 and 55% of all plastic packaging by 2030, as set by the European Commission.
3. **Simplify Polymers:** Reduce complexity within the plastic packaging supply chain by simplifying polymer usage and eliminating non-recyclable components in all plastic packaging by 2030.
4. **Use Recycled:** Help build a Circular Economy for used plastic packaging by increasing its use with a recycled content.
5. **Avoid Food Waste:** Ensure the reductions in use of plastic packaging do not jeopardise our opportunities to achieve Ireland's goal of a 50% reduction in food waste by 2030 as set out in Ireland's food waste charter.



85%

of retail business
have less than
10 employees

Retailers provide a wide range of products that consumers need, but also help them make informed choices about how they shop.

They empower today's increasingly conscientious consumer with comprehensive product information and choice. Advances in mobile, web and product labelling technologies are used to make this information more easily available to consumers.

- **Clear labelling:** Retailers have worked to significantly improve the information available to shoppers about what they are buying. Clear and extensive nutritional labelling makes it easier for consumers to make healthy food choices.
- **Fresh food traceability:** The safety and security of food supply chains is a priority for retailers. Food is tracked through all stages of production, processing and distribution so that consumers can shop with confidence.
- **Code of conduct for children's clothes:** Irish retailers have committed to the responsible sale of children's clothes. The code states that slogans and imagery must be age appropriate and marketing should be directed at parents, not children.
- **Responsible sale of alcohol:** Retailers have worked closely together over the last 12 years through the Responsible Retailers of Alcohol in Ireland (RRAI), putting in place a robust code of conduct governing the sale, marketing and advertising of alcohol. New public health rules will build on these measures into the future.



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