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Nus Ghani MP
House of Commons
London SW1A 0AA

Dear Nus

Liberalising the UK's Sunday trading laws

Thank you for the work you have been doing to encourage measures to be brought forward to enable all shops to open for longer on a Sunday in England and Wales over the next year (as is already the case in Scotland), so that more jobs are available and the economy recover from the Covid-19 pandemic.

When voting through the measure, MPs will have to ask themselves if they are really serious about reviving the economy or not, and this is clearly one of a package of measures which we know will deliver an increase in retail sales, not just in larger shops but in smaller shops nearby.

The last time that an experiment to allow all shops to open all day on a Sunday was over an eight week period leading up to and including the 2012 Olympics. **The evidence showed a year on year increases of 3.2% in retail sales** over the period, compared to just 1.6% in the month when restrictions on Sundays came back into force. Sales increased much more outside London than in London (6.2% v 2.8%).

When the Government last proposed liberalisation in 2016, it pointed to two studies which concluded that the measure would provide significant economic benefits:

- A previous report for the DTI, which concluded that extending Sunday trading rules would result in benefits equivalent to **£1.4 billion per year** (at 2006 prices).
- A 2016 comparative study by the London School of Economics of European countries, which found that the amount people spent on non-durable retail products, such as food, rose by up to **12.5 per cent** following deregulation

On jobs and workers' rights, you should be aware that:

- **No shop worker would be forced to work longer on a Sunday.** The law protects shop workers from having to work on a Sunday. Removing the restriction on opening hours would not affect this.



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- **Sunday is the most popular day to go to work for supermarket workers.** Supermarkets report that the roster for work shift requests fills up more quickly for Sundays than for any other day of the week.
- **Trade unions do not speak for shop workers who want to work on Sundays.** Many people who prefer work on a Sunday are not members of a union.
- **Working in a shop on a Sunday is particularly popular amongst women, students and carers.** They stand to earn more money, and more of them will find work, after liberalisation.

Social distancing measures caused by the Covid-19 pandemic has resulted in very long queues outside large stores on Sundays. Longer opening hours over the next year will really help. They will also help key workers, who currently only have a six-hour window on a Sunday to get to a supermarket.

You and many of your colleagues will be concerned about the fragile state of the finances of smaller shops on the high street.

- **Smaller shops need bigger shops to open.** Sunday is the second busiest shopping day of the week and most smaller shops stand to benefit from greater footfall if they choose to open alongside the larger shops for longer on a Sunday.
- **Consumers are paying more than they should.** The 1994 Sunday Trading Act was designed to prevent large shops from opening to protect small family grocery stores from the market power of the supermarket majors. Yet small format stores are now dominated by several of the majors. In 2015, *Open Sundays* compared the price of a basket of goods between convenience stores and superstores in the UK. In the case of Tesco, prices were higher by an average of 11% in their 'Metro' stores compared to the superstore equivalent.
- **Local high streets should be allowed to compete with online retail.** Online retailers did not exist when the current Sunday trading rules were written, but now they can trade 24 hours a day, 7 days a week. It is time to lift the restrictions on bricks and mortar.

If you need any more information, please get in touch or visit our website at www.opensundays.org.

Yours sincerely

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