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The Co-operative Food points the way to more convenient payment services in the community

The Co-operative Food has underlined its commitment to the communities in which it trades with a four-fold increase in PayPoint availability in its stores across the UK.

The community-based retailer, which is the UK's largest PayPoint operator, handling more than one million transactions each week, now has approaching 12,000 tills upgraded to process bill payments.

With a store in every postal area and longer operating hours, The Co-operative Food - which has approaching 2,800 stores, and handled over £1bn of PayPoint transactions last year - has worked with PayPoint to extend its offering, enhance the service and drive down transaction times for customers paying their bills at the same time as putting their groceries through the checkout.

More than four million households in the UK have around 7.5 million pre-payment gas and/or electricity meters that can be 'loaded' at PayPoint terminals. The service also handles bill payments for water, telecoms, TV Licensing, housing associations and transport operators plus local authorities and other public sector bodies.

Cheryl Marshall, Service Delivery Director, The Co-operative Food, said: *"We are delighted to have worked with PayPoint to further increase the scale and scope of this offering. PayPoint is not only a convenient payment method for many customers but, for the more vulnerable in society or for those in rural communities, it can often prove to be a vital service. As a convenience retailer, in addition to providing the daily food requirements of our customers, it is important that we make a positive contribution to the communities in which we trade."*

Seamus Smith, Managing Director of PayPoint UK, added: *"We are thrilled at extending and enhancing the PayPoint service with The Co-operative Food, with the service now available in most of its stores. Independent research constantly shows just what a valuable service PayPoint is to customers; for example, more than 30 per cent of transactions take place outside traditional working hours, including Sundays and bank holidays. This illustrates the massive contribution that community-based retailers such as The Co-operative make locally through their convenience stores, which are at the heart of their communities."*

ENDS

Notes to Editors:

The Co-operative Group is the UK's largest mutual business, owned by nearly eight million members. It is the UK's fifth biggest food retailer operating across the country with almost 2,800 local, convenience and medium-sized stores. Amongst its other wholly-owned businesses are the UK's number one funeral services provider, the third largest pharmacy chain, a growing legal services operation and a major general insurer. As well as having clear financial and operational objectives, the Group, which operates 4,500 outlets and employs approaching 90,000 people, is a recognised leader for its social goals and community-led programmes.

PayPoint is a leading international provider of convenient payments and value added services

through its branded retail network across the UK of over 26,100 local shops, where it processes energy meter pre-payments, cash bill payments, mobile phone top-ups, transport tickets, BBC TV licences, cash withdrawals and a wide variety of other payment types on behalf of major consumer service organisations in the utility, housing, water, telecoms, media, financial services, transport, retail, e-commerce, gaming and public sectors. Through its uniquely strong combination of local shops, internet and mobile distribution channels, PayPoint handles over £14 billion from 760 million transactions annually for more than 6,000 clients and merchants.

Further information:

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