

WHOSE CONVENIENCE?

AN ENQUIRY INTO THE SOCIAL EFFECTS OF EXTENDING WEEKEND WORKING AND SUNDAY TRADING

A PANEL OF PARLIAMENTARIANS CHAIRED BY
RT. HON LORD ANDERSON OF SWANSEA DL

1 INTRODUCTION

The Panel is a cross-party group of Parliamentarians who have come together to examine the likely social and relational effects of extending weekend working, with a particular focus on Sunday trading. The Panel comprises Rt. Hon Lord Anderson of Swansea DL (Chair), Rt. Hon Ann Widdecombe MP, Colin Breed MP, Andrew Reed MP, and Gary Streeter MP.

The Sunday Trading Act 1994, extended by the Christmas Day (Trading) Act 2004, restricts the opening hours of large shops (defined as having an internal sales area of over 280 sq. metres/3000 sq. feet) on Sundays to six continuous hours between 10 a.m. and 6 p.m. in England and Wales. They may not open at all on Easter Sunday and Christmas Day.

The Secretary of State has asked his officials to carry out a study to evaluate the economic costs and benefits of easing or removing Sunday trading restrictions in England and Wales, quantifying impacts wherever possible. The study would be followed by consultations with businesses, consumers, religious groups and employees.

There are a number of potential impacts, which the Department of Trade and Industry (DTI) study will take into consideration, including:

- The effects on retail firms in general, in particular the impact on wage costs and other variable costs, sales levels, profits, employment and trading patterns.
- The impact on consumers, which includes analysing the distributional effect on consumer spending throughout the week if shopping hours on Sunday are increased; and any changes to the amount they spend on shopping within a week if shopping hours are extended on a Sunday. Other consumer impacts include assessing the extent of consumer benefits achieved through wider product choice and increased convenience.
- Impact on small firms and competition. It should be noted that a large sized business may have retail outlets that are defined as small shops.
- Impact on the labour market.
- Potential externalities that affect other areas of the economy. For example assessing the impact on suppliers and wholesalers of retail goods.ⁱ

This brief for the ‘independent assessors’ is heavily biased towards the economic effects of further liberalising Sunday trading. There is no explicit reference to the social effects on individuals, families and children, local communities and on society as a whole.

In the light of other Government policies this bias is surprising. The Government is rightly concerned about the increased prevalence of anti-social behaviour by children and young people and looks to their parents to exercise a stronger socialising influence on them. That will be impossible if those parents are obliged to work on Saturdays and Sundays, the days when their school-age children are at home. Extending the hours during which large shops may open will almost certainly increase public expenditure by local authorities and impinge on the areas of responsibility of other Government departments. The omission of social and relational effects in the DTI terms of reference masks these wider implications and appears to breach the Prime Minister’s commitment to ‘joined-up Government’ since clearly other Government Departments and Government concerns are involved in the eventual decision.

2 THE ENQUIRY PROCESS

The Panel's examination of the likely social and relational effects of extending weekend working in general and Sunday trading in particular, is based on evidence submitted by organisations and individuals with specialist interests and experience. 96 organisations and individuals were invited to give evidence,ⁱⁱ including known supporters and opponents of further liberalisation of Sunday trading and others whose views were not previously known but whose roles and expertise seemed relevant to the Panel's concerns. 30 responded by the closing date for submissions. The submissions can all be viewed on the Relationships Foundation website: www.relationshipsfoundation.org.

The work of analysing and summarising the evidence has been undertaken by a Secretariat provided by Relationships Foundation. The Panel are most grateful to Relationships Foundation for their invaluable assistance in the preparation of the Report.

3 THE EVIDENCE

3.1 SUPPORT FOR LIBERALISATION

Support for an extension of Sunday trading was expressed by four of the 29 respondents and two of them gave only qualified support. **The National Consumer Council (NCC)** was the most outspoken critic of the 1994 Sunday Trading Act, dismissing the provisions relating to the 3000 square feet rule as ‘inconsistent, anomalous and out of date’. The **NCC** contended that the abolition of the rule ‘would have no social impact in terms of weekend working’. However, they then argued that there would be ‘potentially significant social benefits in allowing consumers to run their own lives and exercise informed choice for themselves, rather than using legislation to make detailed judgments about how individuals choose to organise their relationships and spend their time’. The **Tesco** submission made a similar point. **Tesco** also claimed that ‘working on Sunday is popular with many staff, particularly students and single parents – who have easier access to carers at weekends’. This is an important issue and one which is strongly contested by other submissions.

3.2 CONFLICTING VIEWS

Usdaw reported that there are 3.1 million shop workers in the UK and that surveys of their members ‘show that 92% oppose longer Sunday opening’. **Morrisons’** submission echoes this finding. **Usdaw** also claim that ‘60% of staff with caring responsibilities for children or elderly relatives struggle to find suitable care on Sundays when they have to work’. **Working Families** make the same point. **Professor Dex**, undertaking a birth cohort study of 18,353 families who had a new baby around the Millennium, has found that ‘only 12% of employed lone parents have access to childcare from a non-resident parent while they are at work’.

3.3 PREMIUM RATES

The issue of premium rates might also influence employee attitudes. **Tesco** complains that ‘the current restrictions reduce staff freedom to work the premium shifts they would otherwise choose to’. However, the **TUC** submission is concerned that one effect of extending Sunday opening hours would be to erode premium rates for shop workers undertaking weekend working. **Usdaw** observes that ‘Sunday premiums are already being cut – most shop workers are now on time and a half at most. With longer hours, wage bills will increase and more premiums will be abolished. Without premiums, retail staff are less willing to work on Sundays and more will be forced to do so for lower pay.’ **Morrisons** suggests that if additional Sunday trading is allowed, premium rates must cease. ‘If we are to become a seven day society from a retail viewpoint, we must become a seven day society from all viewpoints.’

3.4 DEMAND FOR LONGER HOURS?

A similar clash of evidence is found in relation to whether consumers want more hours for Sunday shopping. An NOP poll in 2005 for **Usdaw** found that 64% of responders did not want shops to open longer than six hours. A poll conducted for the *Convenience Store* magazine by BMRB, found 68% opposed to longer hours. The **Association of Convenience Stores (ACS)** found that 72% did not want longer hours and an NOP poll for **Keep Sunday Special** put the figure at 71%. A Bond Pearce survey for **Deregulate** found that 56% of consumers, canvassed whilst shopping on a Sunday, favoured longer opening hours. However, **ACS** questioned the

methodology used and concludes that it is 'hardly an overwhelming statement of support from the public'. **Tesco** contends that Sunday is its third busiest day in the week and that longer hours would ease the congestion in stores and car parks that make for a stressful customer experience. **Sainsbury's** is 'unconvinced that there is a strong case for such a change in the law'. Its customers 'have not been telling us that they want to see Sunday trading hours liberalised'. On balance it would seem that the customers who want the six hour rule relaxed are found amongst those who choose to shop on Sundays and do not find it a pleasurable experience.

3.5 EFFECTS ON FAMILY LIFE AND PARENTING

The strongest opposition to a relaxation of the six hour rule comes from those concerned with the likely effects on family relationships and community life. Fifteen submissions focus on this aspect, including the **TUC**, **Usdaw**, **Morrisons** and the **British Shops and Stores Association** as well as **Working Families**, **Mothers' Union**, **CARE**, and a number of religious organisations. **The National Centre for Social Research** found that 1.5 million families with dependent children have a parent who regularly works on Sundays and around 1.4 million parents with dependent children both work regularly each weekend day.ⁱⁱⁱ What effect does this have on their family life?

The most considered submission to focus on this aspect is from **Shirley Dex**, Professor of Longitudinal Social Research at the Institute of Education, University of London. Professor Dex observes that recent analyses of the labour force 'have shown that very large proportions of mothers and fathers, sometimes both, work on Saturdays, Sundays or both weekend days'. The number would inevitably increase as a result of further deregulation. She found that '47% of partnered mothers and 49% of partnered fathers who worked on Sunday (every 2-3 weeks) said their work affected their ability to read, play and help their children with homework'. 27% of these mothers and 32% of the fathers also said that their Sunday work affected doing outdoor activity with their children. She noted that a number of studies had found significant levels of dissatisfaction amongst parents working atypical times with the time they spent with their children, a dissatisfaction shared by their children. She reports La Valle's finding that '78% of mothers who worked every Sunday, 69% of mothers who work every 2-3 Sundays and 61% of mothers who work one Sunday per month would prefer not to work on Sunday'. She concludes that the main benefit of working at weekends is the additional household income but the majority of parents who work at weekends find that it seriously interferes with their ability to have a family life.

As the **British Shops and Stores Association** recognises, 'in an environment of increasing single parent families and the problems of child truancy, this situation will do nothing to enhance the stability of the family unit'. The **Evangelical Alliance's** submission recalls that the Government consultation paper, *Supporting Families* (1998) states that 'flexible family-friendly working arrangements are essential for helping them to balance their family responsibilities with paid employment'.^{iv} **CARE** comments on the importance for children's development of their parents spending time with them, 'providing emotional support, giving everyday assistance and monitoring their behaviour and discipline. Working during weekends when children are at home for longer means missing out on their development.' The **Youth Justice Board** observes that 'the level and quality of family and parental supervision can affect youth offending' and **CARE** points to the evidence from research of the link between time parents spend with children and rates of delinquency.^v **Mothers' Union** and the **National Family and Parenting Institute** both draw attention to the importance for parents of teenagers and older children of being able to request flexible working so as to be available to their sons and daughters when they need them.

The **Keep Sunday Special** submission draws attention to the priority that the Government is rightly giving to children and responsible parenting. The Department for Education and Skills' *Parent Know How* campaign is designed to promote greater involvement by parents in all areas of their children's education from 4 to 18. The

Children Act 2004, the establishment of the Children's Commissioner and the Respect Action Plan are other expressions of this priority. The Respect Action Plan recognised that 'parenting is one of the most important responsibilities in creating a strong society based on mutual respect'.^{vi} The Action Plan seeks to extend the use of parenting contracts and parenting orders to curb anti-social behaviour in young people and proposes legislating to widen the range of agencies that can apply for a parenting order.^{vii} In light of this it would seem totally inconsistent for the DTI to create a situation in which parents with dependent children are obliged to work longer hours at weekends.

3.6 EMPLOYEE PROTECTION

Advocates of relaxing the six hour rule will remind us of the employee protection provisions in the 1994 Sunday Trading Act and maintain that no employees are obliged to work on Sundays. **Tesco** tells us that so far as they are concerned, work on Sunday is optional. 'We pay premium payments to those who choose to work and we have rigorous systems in place to make sure staff are never coerced into working shifts they are uncomfortable with.' However, **Working Families** reports that its legal helpline tells them that retail staff asked to work on Sundays are afraid that they may lose their jobs if they refuse to work at weekends. A survey of 500 shop staff by **Usdaw** found that 62% had come under pressure to work on Sundays and only 11% had used their legal right to opt out of Sunday working. The **Keep Sunday Special** submission refers to the case of a woman in Swansea who felt enormous pressure not only from her employer but also from her colleagues. She was told by a supervisor 'that it was in my interests to be part of the team.... No one else is complaining.'

3.7 EFFECTS ON OTHER FAMILY MEMBERS

'Children are not the only ones who need caring for at the weekends', **CARE** reminds us. Those with other dependents such as elderly, disabled and terminally ill relatives may have fewer options for alternative care, and their needs are more unpredictable than those of children. These workers need greater flexibility and enforced longer weekend working hours could create substantial difficulties for carers. **Keep time for children** takes the point further, recognising that couples also need quality time together to sustain their relationship.^{viii} They suggest that how parents relate to one another has implications for the happiness and emotional adjustment and educational achievements of their children. They are concerned that the average British couple spends just 15 minutes a day enjoying a social life with each other,^{ix} and, clearly, increased working at weekends will do nothing to improve this situation.

3.8 EFFECTS ON INDIVIDUALS

Several submissions express concern about the possible effects on individuals of working longer hours. **Keep Sunday Special** and **CARE** refer to work related stress that affects one in five employees and results in more than 13 million lost working days a year. '3.6 million workers usually exceed 48 hours a week; and in the UK, we work longer hours than anyone else in Europe' (**Keep Sunday Special**). **CARE** reminds us that the consequences of longer hours and work-related stress include physical and mental illness, strain on relationships and eventual 'burn-out'. 'Broadly speaking, those most likely to suffer from work-related stress are blue collar groups (those most likely to have to work weekends) but those least likely to suffer stress are the professional and managerial groups (those least likely to work weekends).'^x

One result is relatively low productivity. During the 1939-45 war Britain switched to seven day working to increase output, only to find that productivity in seven days was less than in six. **Keep Sunday Special** follows the **TUC** in suggesting that the fact that the UK is the only member state to opt out of the European Working Time Directive is the reason why our productivity compares poorly with that of most of our European neighbours.

3.9 EFFECTS ON COMMUNITIES

Nor is this solely a private matter. The **Evangelical Alliance** reminds us that families are a major building block of community and society. They argue that it is incumbent on Government to take responsibility for the holistic health of the nation and ring-fence appropriate time off for employees at weekends in the long term interests of society as a whole. They recognise that this does not necessarily have to be a Sunday. 'However, by extending the hours worked on a Sunday to make it no different from any other day of the week, makes it increasingly difficult for people to find a regular definitive, shared day off for the family, especially where all the members of the family are working.' A survey amongst the members of the **Christian Socialist Movement** endorsed the value of one day in seven being set aside for rest. Respondents were not convinced that allowing shops to open longer on Sundays would 'increase the general happiness of the nation'. The **United Reformed Church** expresses concerns about impact on 'the rhythm of life, both for the nation and for individuals and families, if there is no identified day of the week that is different from others'. **CARE** argues that a day of rest is good for society, not just for Christians: 'Individuals function better when they have a good balance between work and rest, and families and social groups function better when they spend shared and regular time together. Working longer hours prevents sustained involvement in community activity such as voluntary work and party political activity, and thus the sense of community is diminished for many.' The most likely victims will be organisations such as the Scouts, Guides and other youth groups and weekend sporting and adventure activities that require adult leadership.

The point here is not narrowly religious; it is about a healthy work-life balance and the cost of ignoring it is measured in terms of expenditure on the NHS and lower levels of productivity during the rest of the week as discussed in 3.8 above. It is also about the generation of social capital, without which a sophisticated, pluralistic society becomes unsustainable. The case for relaxing the restrictions on Sunday shopping in large stores is built on the values of consumer choice and convenience. There is nothing wrong in principle with these values but the evidence suggests that there are others, about the nature of society and the directions in which we wish to see it develop, that should take precedence over the freedom of the minority to shop whenever they feel inclined.

In **Morrisons'** worst case scenario, extending Sunday trading will mean local bus services running on weekday timetables, ending Sunday delivery curfews and more traffic congestion, noise and pollution in the vicinity of large stores. Extended shopping hours will provide more opportunity to spend money and possibly increase levels of personal debt. Even the **Federation of Small Businesses**, that sees some merit in liberalising Sunday trading, is concerned about 'the back-up infra-structure to go with it'. They suggest that more Sunday trading could mean the end of free parking in town centres on Sundays. It could also lead to banks, doctors' surgeries, public libraries and other establishments not usually open on a Sunday, being forced to open as well. Most of the submissions to this Enquiry think that this is too high a price to pay for consumer convenience and increased supermarket profits.

3.10 EFFECTS ON SMALL SHOPS

The aim of the six hour restriction on supermarket opening on Sundays was to protect the small, independent traders. The submission from the **Association of Convenience Stores** recognises that ‘the Sunday trading laws provide a point of difference that is invaluable to the viability of local shopping alternatives’. 34% of Sunday sales in small shops occur before 10.00 a.m. and after 4.00 p.m. Their fear is that abolishing the restrictions ‘may hasten the closure of many local shops’. The **Federation of Small Businesses** records that between 2000 and 2004, 7,337 independent retailers shut, suggesting that the protection given by the six hour rule has not worked. Should we bow to the inevitable dominance of the supermarkets or are there strong reasons for trying to save the small shops that are left?

Friends of the Earth are in no doubt that the onward march of the supermarkets must be stopped^{xi}. They give a long list of reasons for this. First, the small shops are better for local economies. Typically, they support local agriculture and other suppliers. ‘On average just over 50% of their business turnover is returned to the local economy, usually in the form of spending on local produce and inputs, staff wages and money spent at other local shops and businesses. This compares favourably with the supermarkets, which may siphon as much as 95% of their takings away from local areas to shareholders and distant corporations.’ Sourcing their produce locally is also more environmentally friendly than flying in produce from overseas. A survey by **Friends of the Earth** found that 94% of small, local businesses sourced produce from within a thirty mile radius, and nearly a quarter of them sourced most or all of their food locally.

The localness of independent retailers is also beneficial to local communities in so far as the owner/managers are local people who know their customers personally in many cases. To elderly people and those without their own transport this can be an important factor. These shops also recruit their employees locally. The supermarkets also claim that they create jobs for local people but **Friends of the Earth** cast doubt on how many jobs they create. They say that between 1991 and 1995 supermarket grocery retail sales grew by 12.3% but their grocery retail employment only grew by 2.7%.

In the same vein, **Friends of the Earth** question whether supermarkets really offer consumers a bigger choice than the small shops. They argue that supermarkets provide a ‘one size fits all solution to retailing but communities contain a huge diversity of people with different needs and demands’. The small shops that are losing out to the supermarkets include specialist greengrocers, butchers and fishmongers. ‘Providing genuine choice should be about making provision for this diversity, rather than stifling it.’ This submission quotes evidence from the **New Economics Foundation** survey *Clone Town Britain* that included one town that had only one independent shop – the rest were chains. **Friends of the Earth** contend that this is bad for both the consumer and for local communities and extending the hours during which the supermarkets can trade will put more small shops out of business and exacerbate the problem. Moreover, they argue that the effects are more likely to be felt by people on low incomes who don’t have the use of a car. It is clear that exemption from the current restrictions on Sunday trading is an important advantage for small stores over the giant supermarkets. To take away this advantage will surely only add to the considerable pressures they now face. Moreover, because the actions of the large stores and their impact on the small stores has been referred to the Competition Commission, it would be inappropriate for the DTI to make any decision on easing or removing restrictions on Sunday trading until the Competition Commission has reported.

3.11 EFFECTS ON THE ENVIRONMENT

CARE draws attention to the increase in energy consumption that extended working hours creates. Stores would use more electricity and water; their customers and suppliers would use more fuel. 'Although the increase may be negligible, the fact remains that there would be some increase in energy consumption and this has implications for the Government meeting its environmental commitments to achieve more sustainable patterns of consumption and production.'

3.12 THE LEGAL PERSPECTIVE

One submission came from **Paul Diamond**, a barrister who practises in the field of the Law of Religious Liberty and has represented religious issues at both domestic and international forums. He argues that the existing legal protection for people who do not wish to work on Sunday for reasons of their religious faith is inadequate. He bases his argument on the Judgment handed down by the Court of Appeal in *Copsey v WWB Devon Clays Ltd*, in which he represented Mr. Copsey. The case is complex, partly because the Court of Appeal gave three separate Judgments. Mr. Diamond's analysis of the case merits closer study than this Report can convey without reproducing it in its entirety. (It can be accessed on the web site: www.relationshipsfoundation.org).

However, a key point he makes in his conclusion is the need for Parliament to recognise and address 'the uncertainty granted by multiple religious rest days in a multi-faith society and the effect on already over-burdened economic enterprises'. If he is right that the position of Christians who do not wish to work on Sundays is uncertain, then the Department of Trade and Industry need to review the employee protection clauses in the 1994 Act before extending the hours in which large stores may open on Sundays so as to conform to Article 9 of the ECHR and the Employment Equality (Religion and Belief) Regulations 2003.

But even if Mr. Diamond is wrong, employers would be well advised to act carefully in relation to employees who refuse to work on Sundays for religious reasons. As another review of the *Copsey* case concludes, 'Claims by employees that working practices interfere with their religious beliefs must be taken seriously. If no attempt is made to accommodate religious beliefs, it is likely that a decision will be unfair (both Rix LJ and Neuberger LJ were firmly of this view).'

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3.13 RELIGIOUS PERSPECTIVES

Six of the 29 submissions came from religious organisations, though it is significant that none of them is concerned only with the effects on their faith community of extending Sunday trading. Indeed, the **Hindu Forum for Britain** favours such an extension and suggests that, 'In this increasingly secular age, setting a day aside for religion should be abandoned altogether.' Paradoxically, they 'would welcome a day within the week which is set aside for spiritual reflection – a day for practicing one's religious beliefs, attending a place of worship and spending time with one's family'.

All the submissions from Christian organisations recognise that Britain is a multi-faith society but do not see this as an argument for deregulating Sunday trading. It is secularism, not the presence of other faith communities, which is seen to be eroding the atmosphere of Sunday; and it is secularism taken to an extreme which is the enemy of the multi-faith society. These organisations recognise the difficulties created by the fact that different faith communities have different holy days but reject the secularist conclusion that there should be no Sabbath

(and no Sabbath equivalent) for society as a whole. They see this as an attempt to eliminate religion from the public sphere. Attempts to privatise religion run counter to the spirit of Article 9 of the European Convention and Article 13 of the Human Rights Act, which safeguards the right to practice religion in public and in community with others.

The **Keep Sunday Special** submission comes at this issue from a different angle. They applaud the Government's efforts to rid society of discriminatory behaviour and to recognise human rights and the contributions of minorities. They argue that the case for further liberalising Sunday trading has to be reviewed against this background. If Christians are discriminated against by limiting their freedom to worship on Sunday 'in order to privilege the minority that actively want to shop and trade on Sundays, the Government will be putting the clock back so far as non-discrimination is concerned'. However, both **Keep Sunday Special** and the **Evangelical Alliance** express concern for people of other faiths as well as Christians. **Keep Sunday Special** states, 'In a truly tolerant society, the special needs of Jews to worship on Saturday and Moslems to attend Friday prayers are just as important. Respect for religious liberty is indivisible, however much we may disagree with one another about specific beliefs.'

4 CONCLUSIONS

4.1 The DTI was guilty of a major error of judgement when it set the terms of reference for reviewing the scope for extending Sunday trading on such a narrow economic base. The Prime Minister promised the nation ‘joined-up Government’ but this exercise has been anything but that. To ignore the social effects of extending Sunday working was to ignore the implications for at least five other Government Departments – the Department for Education and Skills, the Home Office and the Office of the Deputy Prime Minister, in particular, but also, to a lesser extent, the Health and Transport Departments, not to mention the devolved administration of Wales. The impact on parents and the time they have with their children – of all ages from 4-18 – has to be a major factor in this review. So, too, must be the impact that extended Sunday work could have on juvenile anti-social behaviour and increased expenditure by local authorities. The effects of a poor work-life balance on health should not have been overlooked, nor should the possible impact on local transport and energy consumption. It is our view that to leave these factors out of consideration was an oversight that urgently needs to be corrected before any decision on extending the hours of Sunday work and trading is made.

4.2 It seems clear from the evidence submitted to us that at least 70% of the public do not want any more hours for Sunday shopping. Equally, the evidence tells us that a large majority of those working in the retail sector do not want to work longer hours on Sundays. We suspect that what the TUC and others say about the likely ending of premium rates would make it even harder to persuade employees to work longer hours at the basic rate of pay.

4.3 We are deeply concerned about the likely effects of extending Sunday trading on children and their parents. The evidence submitted to us comes from an impressively wide range of organisations and from people with real experience and understanding of the difficulties of balancing parental responsibilities with employment. It is crucial that weekend working arrangements must not ignore the importance of parents spending quality time with their children, especially those of school age. We are not convinced that child care is easier to arrange at weekends; the evidence seems to point in the opposite direction. Moreover, lone-parents taking weekend work for the premium rates may be less able to pay for child care, and less motivated to work, if these rates no longer apply.

4.4 The effects on couples of longer hours working on Sundays is another matter that should not be ignored. Couples need time to invest in their relationships and the evidence of divorce and relationship breakdown suggests that we already have a major problem as a nation. One in four children under the age of 16 experiences the trauma of family break-up, which in some cases impairs their own capacity subsequently to make and sustain close relationships.

4.5 We are also concerned at the evidence of work related stress and are convinced that the price we pay as a nation for working long hours, both in terms of ill health and lost productivity, is too high. It would be foolhardy to exacerbate these problems by cajoling employees to work even longer hours at weekends. Our minds and bodies need time to rest and be renewed.

4.6 We are disturbed by the suggestions that the employee protection provisions in the 1994 Act are inadequate and we note that the evidence is legal as well as anecdotal. A tolerant society must operate with sufficient flexibility that employees are not pressured to act contrary to their beliefs and consciences.

4.7 The effects of extending Sunday trading on small shops and local communities should also have been part of the DTI review. It is not mere sentimentality to resist the transformation of town centres by the gradual

elimination of small independent traders. We are alarmed at the rate at which independent retailers are closing down. The case made for extending Sunday shopping is built around the goal of consumer choice. Reducing that choice to one of choosing between three or four supermarkets is a hollow choice. Small, local shops offer a relational quality of service that the big stores generally fail to match.

4.8 The effects of extended trading hours on energy consumption and the environment, though probably modest, should not be ignored.

4.9 The recent decision by the Office of Fair Trading to refer the grocery sector to the Competition Commission is an indication of widespread unease over recent trends in this sector on *economic* grounds. That unease is matched by similar concerns about the *social* effects of these trends. It would be quite wrong for the Government to adopt a one-eyed approach, and wholly right for them, consistent with other policies and concerns, to be very wary about extending Sunday trading laws.

5 RECOMMENDATIONS

The Panel recommends:

- 5.1** That the Department of Trade and Industry (DTI) widens its view of the potential effects of easing or removing Sunday trading restrictions in England and Wales to include the social effects.
- 5.2** That the Secretary of State for Trade and Industry consults with Ministerial colleagues in other Government Departments likely to be concerned with the social effects of extending weekend working and Sunday trading.
- 5.3** That the DTI takes full account of the evidence of opinion amongst the general public, employees in the retail sector and relevant trade unions, before deciding whether or not to ease or remove Sunday trading restrictions.
- 5.4** That the DTI takes full account of the potential impact of easing or removing Sunday trading restrictions on families, couples and local communities, as well as small independent retailers and the faith communities.
- 5.5** That the DTI consult with the TUC, specific trade unions representing retail employees and bodies representing the full range of retail traders, as well as their legal advisers, regarding ways of strengthening employees' rights not to work on Sundays for reasons of parental, relational and community responsibilities, as well as conscience and belief.
- 5.6** That the DTI should defer any decision on easing or removing Sunday trading restrictions until after the Competition Commission has completed its inquiry into the supermarket sector and published its report.

REFERENCES

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- i Consumer & Competition Policy Directorate, DTI, January 2006
 - ii See list of those invited to give evidence
 - iii Keep time for children briefing October 2004
 - iv *Supporting Families* 1998, paragraph 3.7
 - v *Parenting and Delinquency at Ages 12-15: Number 3*, The Edinburgh Study of Youth Transitions and Crime, The Centre for Law and Study, Edinburgh University
 - vi *Respect Action Plan 2006*, produced by COI on behalf of the Respect Task Force
 - vii *National Family and Parenting Institute Briefing on the Work and Families Bill*. Carena Rogers, February 2006, paragraph 4.2
 - viii They quote the statistic that marital conflict accounts for up to 40% of children's emotional and behavioural difficulties
 - ix *ONS Time Use Survey*. Office of National Statistics, July 2004
 - x Source given as *Hard Labour: Stress, Ill-health and Hazardous Employment Practices*, London Hazards Centre 1994
 - xi *Good Neighbours? Community impacts of supermarkets*. Friends of the Earth briefing, June 2005
 - xii *Employment Bulletin*, Bircham Dyson Bell, Autumn 2005

LIST OF THOSE INVITED TO GIVE EVIDENCE

Association of Directors of Social Services	London Institute for Contemporary Christianity
ASDA	London School of Economics
Association of Convenience Stores Ltd	Marks and Spencer Group plc
Baptist Union	Mental Health Foundation
Barnardo's	Methodist Conference
British Chambers of Commerce	Mothers' Union
British Hardware Foundation	Musgrave Budgens Londis
British Shops and Stores Association	Muslim Council of Britain
CARE	NAHT
Care for the Family	NASUWT
Catholic Bishops Conference of England and Wales	National Association of Community Family Trusts
Centre for Policy Studies	National Centre for Social Studies
Chartered Institute of Personnel & Development	National Consumer Council
Chief Rabbi, Office of the	National Council for One Parent Families
Childline	National Family and Parenting Institute
Children's Society	Network of Sikh Organisations UK
Christian Peoples Alliance	New Economics Foundation
Christian Socialist Movement	NSPCC
Church of England	NUT
Confederation of British Industry	One Plus One
Conservative Christian Fellowship	Parentalk
Consumers Association	Parenting Education and Support Forum
Co-operative Group (CWS) Limited	Policy Research Bureau
Daycare Trust	Positive Parenting
Dex, Professor Shirley	Pre-School Learning Alliance
Deregulate	Raisingkids
Diamond, Paul (Barrister)	Relate
Edmonds, John	Roberts, Ceridwen
Evangelical Alliance	Rural Shops Alliance
Family Matters Institute	Sainsbury's Supermarkets Ltd
Fathers Direct	Salvation Army
Federation of Small Businesses	Save the Children
FIEC	Sure Start
FOCUS	Tesco Stores Ltd
Full Time Mothers	The National Federation of Women's Institutes
Global Change Ltd	Thomas Coram Institute
Hindu Forum of Britain	Time for the Family
IKEA UK	Tomorrow Project
Institute For Social & Economic Research	Trades Union Congress
IPPR	Tripp, Dr John
John Lewis Partnership	UNISON
Joseph Rowntree Foundation	United Reformed Church
Keep time for children (Relationships Foundation)	University of Exeter
Kingfisher plc	Usdaw
Lancaster University Management School	Wm Morrison Supermarkets plc
Learning Skills Council	Work Foundation
Liberal Democrat Christian Forum	Working Families
Local Government Association	Youth Justice Board

LIST OF RESPONDENTS

Association of Convenience Stores Ltd
British Hardware Foundation
British Shops and Stores Association
CARE
Care for the Family
Catholic Bishops Conference of England and Wales (did not give permission for their response to be published)
Christian Socialist Movement
Deregulate
Dex, Professor Shirley
Diamond, Paul (Barrister)
Evangelical Alliance
Family Matters York
Federation of Small Businesses
Hindu Forum of Britain
Joseph Rowntree Foundation
Keep Sunday Special
Keep time for children (Relationships Foundation)
Kingfisher plc
Marks and Spencer Group plc
Methodist Conference
Wm Morrison Supermarkets plc (did not give permission for their response to be published)
National Consumer Council
Rural Shops Alliance
Sainsbury's Supermarkets Ltd
Tesco Stores Ltd
Trades Union Congress
United Reformed Church
Usdaw
Working Families
Youth Justice Board

Details of these responses can be viewed on the Relationships Foundation website at:
www.relationshipsfoundation.org

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The report is also available in electronic format at:
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