Co-op Fresh, Chilled & Frozen Supplier Q&A

Organisation & Ways of Working

Will details of regional buyers for local and regional suppliers be shared?

Local and regional supplier opportunities are managed within our category teams. This approach enables opportunities to be considered alongside wider category requirements and customer needs, ensuring local and regional propositions complement the overall category strategy.

As suppliers, what is the best way to engage with Co-op buying teams?

Your buying team contact remains the primary route for engagement. We are focused on establishing clear ways of working that support productive collaboration, including agreed communication methods, meeting cadence and key business touchpoints.

Senior buying teams can sometimes be difficult to access. Who is the best person to contact?

Your existing buying team contact remains the most appropriate starting point. We continue to review how we engage with suppliers to ensure communication is clear, consistent and effective.

How should suppliers approach meetings involving multiple stakeholders?

We recognise the importance of involving the right colleagues at the right time. Suppliers can help by clearly outlining meeting objectives, required decisions and desired outcomes in advance. This helps ensure the most appropriate representatives are engaged.

What advice would you give suppliers to help drive mutual growth?

The most effective conversations are those rooted in customer insight and category opportunity. We encourage suppliers to bring Co-op-specific recommendations supported by strong evidence, customer understanding and a compelling growth opportunity for both businesses.

Health & Customer Strategy

Given changing attitudes towards food and UPFs, what is Co-op's goal for health?

Health is increasingly considered as part of everyday category decision-making rather than as a separate initiative. The role of health will vary by category, but customer needs, value, quality and commercial performance remain important considerations in shaping future propositions.

Health hasn't been a key topic today. Where does this fit into the strategy, particularly in Food To Go?

Health remains an important consideration across our categories and propositions, including Food To Go. Our approach is to balance customer needs, convenience, quality, value and choice, ensuring health is considered alongside other factors that influence category decisions.

Category Development

What is Co-op's approach to World Foods and Plant-Based Ready Meals?

Both areas remain important parts of category development. Future ranging decisions will continue to be informed by customer demand, local relevance and category growth opportunities. Suppliers are encouraged to bring customer insight and market understanding to support these conversations.

Does meat-free remain an area of focus?

Yes. Meat-free continues to play an important role within category strategies. Our approach is focused on ensuring the right products are available in the right stores to meet customer demand while supporting sustainable category growth.

How do Bakery and In-Store Bakery fit within the Fresh strategy?

Bakery and In-Store Bakery form part of the wider Fresh, Chilled and Frozen category approach. Our focus remains on understanding customer needs, supporting growth opportunities and working collaboratively with suppliers to develop relevant propositions.

Shopper Understanding & Insights

Can more information be shared on shopper segmentation?

Yes. We recognise the value of helping suppliers better understand our customers and shopper segments. Additional information will be shared through existing supplier communication channels, and category-specific insight will continue to be discussed through category engagement forums and strategy sessions.

Can more detail be shared on shopper behaviours, category engagement and customer missions?

We recognise the importance of customer insight in supporting category growth. We will continue to provide relevant customer and shopper information through supplier engagement channels and category discussions where appropriate. Suppliers are encouraged to work with their Co-op contacts to understand how available insight can support joint business objectives.

Cross-Category Opportunities

You mentioned moving towards customer missions rather than siloed categories. What does this mean?

Our ambition is to consider customer needs and shopping missions more holistically across categories where appropriate. This means encouraging greater collaboration across teams when opportunities arise that can deliver improved customer outcomes and category growth. Any opportunities will continue to be assessed through normal commercial and governance processes.

How do suppliers bring forward cross-category opportunities?

We welcome opportunities supported by customer insight that demonstrate how products can meet shopper needs, drive category growth and enhance the customer proposition. Relevant opportunities should be discussed with the appropriate category contacts.

How do we best work with Co-op across multiple categories when opportunities fall outside existing plans?

We encourage suppliers to bring forward customer-led and insight-driven opportunities. Where a proposal demonstrates clear customer relevance and mutual value, we will ensure it is considered by the appropriate teams.

Merchandising & Seasonal Opportunities

What plans are there to flex space seasonally to create destination categories?

We continually review how best to meet customer needs throughout the year, including seasonal events and shopping occasions. Decisions relating to merchandising and space allocation are made based on customer insight, category performance and operational considerations.

How can cross-category merchandising opportunities be explored?

Customer missions and shopper needs remain important considerations when evaluating merchandising opportunities. Suppliers should bring forward customer-led insights that demonstrate how proposals could deliver value for shoppers and category growth.

Store Operations & Proposition Development

What is Co-op's approach to developing Hot Food To Go operations?

We continually review opportunities to improve customer experience, operational effectiveness and productivity across our Hot Food proposition. We welcome supplier ideas and innovation that support these objectives.

A significant amount of promotional space has been allocated to newer propositions. What is the long-term approach?

As with any proposition, we regularly review performance, customer feedback and category opportunities to ensure store space is being utilised effectively. Our objective is always to deliver the best possible outcome for customers while supporting overall category growth.

Data & Supplier Collaboration

Are there plans to make availability and waste data available to suppliers?

We continually explore opportunities to improve access to insight and information that supports collaboration with suppliers. Any future developments will be communicated through established supplier engagement channels as appropriate.

Produce & Quick Commerce

What have been the key drivers of Produce performance and Quick Commerce growth?

Customer demand for convenience, quality, value and relevant ranges continues to shape performance across these channels. We encourage suppliers to bring customer insight and innovative solutions that support evolving shopping missions and customer expectations.

Disclaimer

This document has been prepared to summarise questions raised during the IGD 2026 Supplier Session. The responses provided are intended as general guidance only and reflect the information available at the time of the event. The content should not be interpreted as contractual commitments, commercial agreements, future listing commitments, investment plans, procurement decisions, pricing commitments, or guarantees of future activity. Suppliers should continue to discuss specific commercial opportunities with their usual Co-op contact.

To ensure compliance with competition law, confidentiality obligations and good commercial practice, certain responses have been edited, consolidated or reframed prior to publication.