



The Vending &
Automated Retail
Association

2025
REVIEW

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A Message from

Stuart Coutts

Connect Vending and Chair of the AVA

Being Chair of the AVA over the last three years, I can honestly say has flown by and 2025 in isolation has been no different. As I have said before, we are in a golden age and the vending industry has never been so diverse or should I say the automated retail industry.

We are certainly in a new era and it is defined by innovation, resilience and adaptation. Post-pandemic consumer behaviour has accelerated a technological evolution across all sectors of the market. Also, in line with these developments, Operators have transformed the way in which they manage their fleets of machines, vehicles and stock. Real-time inventory tracking with predictive restocking alerts, data analytics and advanced IoT connectivity for our Smart Vending eco system.



Operators are successfully moving beyond snacks and drinks and into fresh meals, healthy snacks, electronics, personal care products and even high-margin items like beauty goods. This diversification taps into new revenue streams by broadening the appeal of the consumer and satisfying demand at high-foot fall environments such as airports, train stations and gyms.

Consumer expectations have also shifted considerably in 2025. Availability isn't just enough - consumers demand quality and transactional speed coupled with reliability.

As we move into 2026, the opportunities for growth are clear, smarter machines, richer product experiences and deeper integration into everyday life.

Our focus at the AVA is to support members through best practice guidance and advocacy, lobbying government departments to educate them to ensure the longevity of our industry now and in the future.

As this will be my last annual review before I hand over the baton in June 2026 to the next Chair, I close by saying how much I have enjoyed serving the membership and Board of the AVA over the last three years.

Wishing you all a successful, profitable and above all healthy 2026.



AVA

The Vending & Automated Retail Association

A Look Back at 2025

David Llewellyn

AVA Chief Executive



Market Landscape and Industry Progress

As we step through 2025, I'm struck by just how far our industry has come. The UK vending and automated retail sector has real momentum behind it. Every day, more than 400,000 machines operated by our members keep workplaces, leisure venues and public spaces running - an incredible footprint that often goes unnoticed.

What's changed most, in my view, is the experience we now offer. With machine connectivity, modern telematics and near-universal contactless payment, vending has shed the old frustrations and stepped confidently into the digital age. It's smoother, more reliable and far more aligned with how people expect to purchase on the go.

Regulation, of course, continues to shape our work. Even after Brexit, EU rules still affect many members and the UK's own agenda - spanning packaging, recycling, labour and digital commerce - adds its own layers of complexity. It reminds me constantly just how important it is that we stay connected as a sector and speak with a united voice.

Despite everything, I genuinely believe we're in a new golden age of vending. The industry has never been better positioned: built for mobility, strengthened by data and increasingly efficient technology and supported by an agile membership.

Guidance, Representation and Member Support

Throughout 2025, the focus of the AVA team has been on helping members cut through the noise. Whether through our policy work, conversations with government or day-to-day guidance, our aim is simple: to help members deliver the high standards that clients and consumers now expect.

Our **Monthly Newsletter** and **Policy Edit** remain important tools for keeping everyone up to date. If there's one thing I've learned, it's that staying informed makes us stronger and more resilient as a sector.

A Year of Change and Growth

This has also been a year of big shifts. Market size and turnover are now above pre-pandemic levels, yet costs continue to rise - from ingredients and materials to energy and labour. We've also faced an increasing wave of legislation: [EPR](#), [HFSS guidance](#), the proposed [Energy Drinks ban](#), and the ever-returning discussion of a "Latté Levy".

On top of that, mergers and acquisitions have reshaped parts of the sector, changing dynamics for many businesses.

And yet, what stands out to me most is how resilient our members remain. Nimble, adaptable and always ready to move with consumer tastes and technology trends. In many ways, we evolve just as the wider retail world evolves - after all, what we offer is simply a slightly smaller shop.

Outlook for 2026

Looking ahead to 2026, I'm confident. Our success will rest on staying engaged, making informed choices and continuing to invest in technology, people and skills. The AVA will remain firmly focused on supporting and representing you - our members - and helping build a stable, sustainable future for the industry.

Treasurer Report

Tom Williams

AVA Treasurer (Coinadrink LTD)

Being appointed AVA Treasurer last year has been an honour, and witnessing such transformative change so early in my tenure has been a privilege. I officially stepped into the role midway through the year, and I want to begin by expressing my sincere thanks to Graham Kingaby for his time and assistance during the handover, as well as his ongoing support. Graham's years of loyal service to the AVA and the wider industry deserve special recognition, his contribution has helped lay the foundation for the progress we are now building upon.



The AVA board is a diverse and dynamic group, bringing together different perspectives, but united by a common purpose: to elevate our members, champion best-in-class support and drive the industry forward with confidence and clarity. This diversity is our strength. It ensures that every decision we make is informed, balanced and focused on creating real value for our members. It's inspiring to work alongside such committed individuals who share a vision for progress and innovation.

I'm pleased to report that my tenure as Treasurer has started positively. The association's financial position remains strong and close to budget, which is no small achievement given the economic uncertainty we've all faced. This year demanded agility, some plans were accelerated, others adapted at short notice to respond to legislative changes. A key decision was bringing in a Public Affairs Manager, whose expertise has been invaluable in ensuring we remain proactive and influential in shaping policy. This investment has already proven its worth, enabling us to respond quickly and effectively to challenges such as the proposed energy drinks ban.

Financial pressures have increased, particularly with changes to national insurance contributions and the need to monitor and respond to multiple legislative developments. Our foresight in allocating additional funds for lobbying has paid dividends, reinforcing the AVA's role as a trusted voice for our industry. The 2026 budget continues this commitment, ensuring we have the resources, both in staffing and media partnerships, to make our voice heard where it matters most. This is not just about reacting to change; it's about shaping the future of vending and refreshment services in the UK.

One pleasant surprise has been the performance of our investments, which delivered higher gains than anticipated. These safe and successful investments provide a valuable income stream and may help support lobbying campaigns in 2026. This financial resilience gives us confidence that we can continue to protect and promote the interests of our members, even in challenging times.

In summary, the financial position for 2025 is very close to budget, a strong result given the economic climate in the UK and globally. Looking ahead, 2026 will undoubtedly bring new challenges, but we are ready. With a robust financial foundation, a united board and a clear vision, we will stand front and centre for our members, championing their interests and shaping a stronger future for our industry. Together, we can turn challenges into opportunities and ensure the AVA remains a driving force for progress.

AVA Census

The AVA 2024 Annual Census & Market Report - drawing on data from more than 150,000 machines - remains a vital resource for Operators planning sustainable growth, both in this year and beyond.

Access to the full Census & Market Report is a core benefit of AVA membership, arming operators, suppliers and service providers with the critical information and insight needed to plan for sustainable success.

The UK vending, coffee services, and automated retail sector has now seen the industry exceed pre-pandemic revenue for the first time.

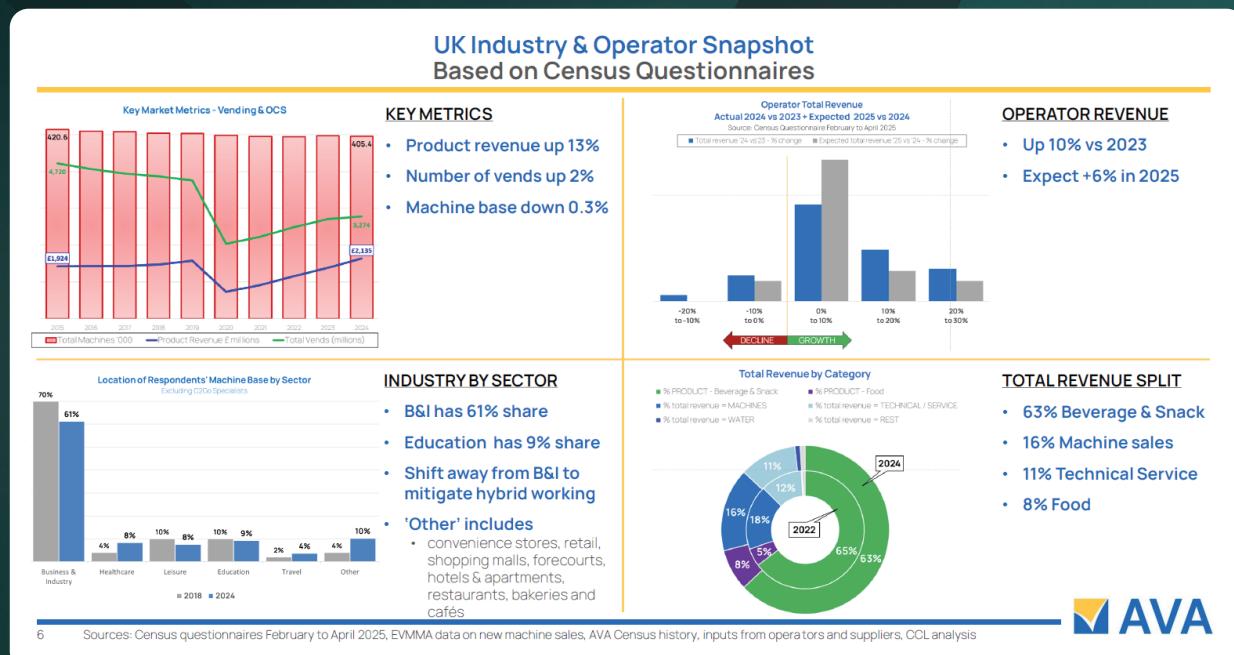
The comprehensive annual study reveals that product revenue rose by over 13% year-on-year, reaching £2.14 billion in 2024. This marks a significant milestone in the sector's path to recovery and growth following the COVID-19 pandemic. With associated categories included, the total industry value now stands at more than £3.6 billion.

Fresh food through vending continues its strong rise, with volumes up 16% and value up 28%, now worth £73 million. Micro Markets and Smart Fridges remain two of the fastest-growing automated retail formats: Micro Markets climbed to 730 sites (up 11%), while Smart Fridges surged 56% to 1,920 units.

Cashless technology has now become the norm. Ninety per cent of pay vend machines accept cashless payments, which account for 80% of all transactions – over half of them made via mobile devices. Cashless transactions also deliver values more than 90% higher than cash.

Coffee-to-Go continues to expand, driven by broader ranges and higher-quality options, including iced drinks, premium teas and liquid-milk tabletop machines. While traditional B&I locations have softened, operators are successfully shifting toward hospitality, retail, transport and unattended retail formats to meet demand.

This reflects five years of hard graft, dedication, and resilience by AVA members, while highlighting the need for agility as the sector faces regulatory pressure, rising costs and economic uncertainty.



AVA Census

Your chance take part

Martin Colston will once again be carrying out the AVA Census as we start 2026 and we hope that all members will find time to complete and return submissions. The 2025 Census will, yet again, be essential to gauge and report on vending businesses and the sector as a whole.

For more information – contact the AVA office or Martin Colston on: martin@colstonconsultants.com

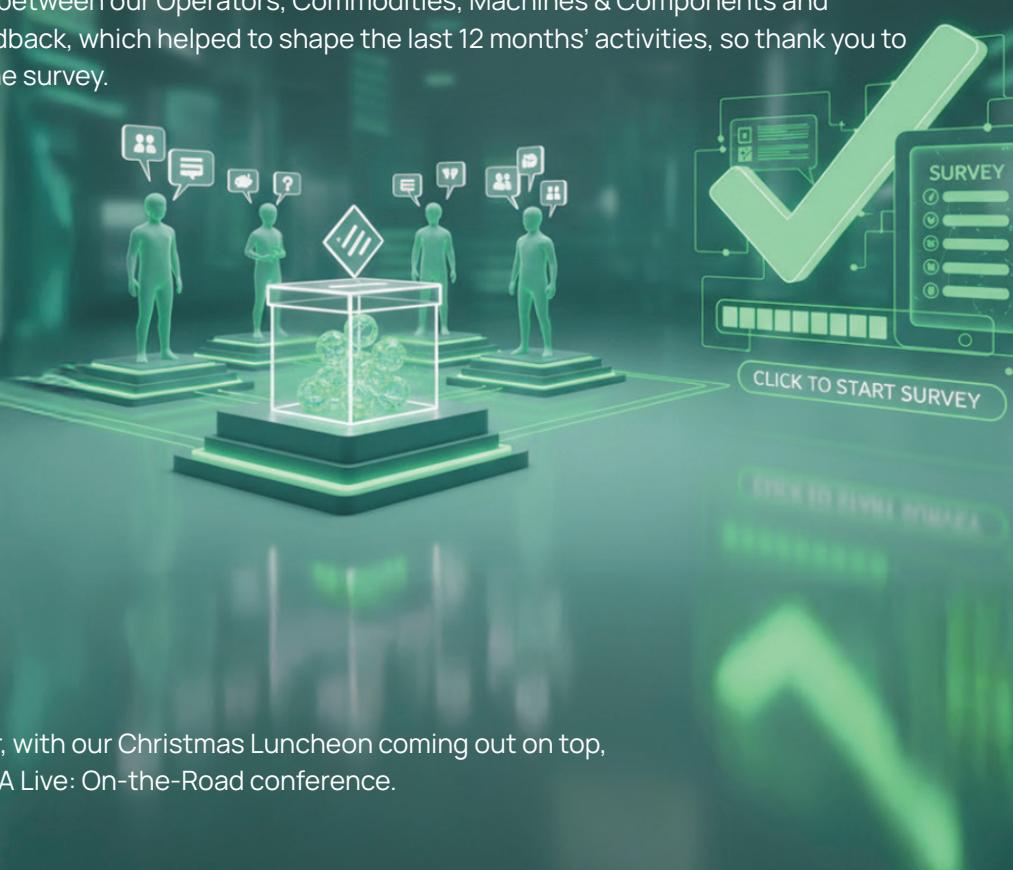


2025 Members Survey - Share your voice

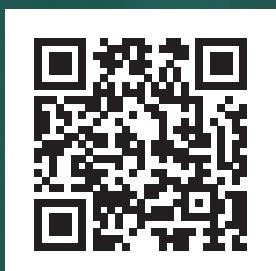
At the AVA, we believe that communication is a two-way street and value our member's feedback. We're always looking for ways to improve and truly value the opinions and insights of our members. That's why we're delighted to announce the recent launch of our 'Member Survey 2025'. Our annual survey is a great way to gather insights we can't get anywhere else, helping us to make smarter decisions, highlight trends and spot opportunities to provide an even better service.

Last year, we had a fantastic up-take, split between our Operators, Commodities, Machines & Components and Affiliates. We gathered some excellent feedback, which helped to shape the last 12 months' activities, so thank you to everyone who took the time to complete the survey.

Looking at some of the headline results, when it came to what our most important priorities should be, almost 40% of our members said Lobbying and ensuring our industry's voice is heard should be number one, followed by Quality issues (32%) and Knowledge Support (24%). When it came to communication, interestingly, we discovered that over 90% of our members interact with us through LinkedIn, a growing trend over the last few years. And with less than 4% interacting with us through X, we made the decision to discontinue our account (sorry Elon).



Our annual events continued to be popular, with our Christmas Luncheon coming out on top, followed by our AVA webinars, AGM, and AVA Live: On-the-Road conference.



If you are an AVA member and would like to take part in the survey, you can do so by scanning the QR code.

Committee Reports

Adrian Pratt (Benders Paper Cups)

Environment Committee



2025 was another year of continuing challenge for your AVA Environment Committee representing and lobbying on behalf of the needs of the vending industry to a range of Government bodies.

This year has seen the legislation progress from proposals to implementation in [Extended Producer Responsibility](#), [Simpler Recycling](#) and [Deposit Return Schemes](#).

Plastic Packaging Tax, introduced in 2022, will increase again next April to a rate of £228.82 per tonne. Applicable to all plastic packaging with less than 30% recycled content, this threshold is unchanged following this year's Autumn Budget. Next year, Government will be consulting on changes to exclude post manufacturing waste under Mass Balance chemical recycling declarations and a certification process to qualify claims of 30% mechanically recycled content.

Many thanks to Environment Committee members in the soft drinks industry for ensuring we are challenging for the most vending industry effective solution for the Deposit Return Scheme. This is due to be introduced from October 2027. We will continue to argue for the exclusion of vending and unattended retail sites from the provision of deposit returns. The UK, Scotland and Northern Ireland scheme now has an appointed [Deposit Management Organisation \(DMO\)](#). Wales continue to progress a parallel scheme, but with the inclusion of glass. We, alongside partner trade associations, continue to argue for a common UK-wide scheme. We have responded to the separate Welsh DRS consultation. A Welsh scheme DMO is expected early in the New Year.

Data reporting for Extended Producer Responsibility is now in its second year, perhaps the single most complex and administratively demanding of legislation. 2025 saw the introduction of the first iteration of the Recycling Assessment Methodology as part of EPR. This is intended to reward more easily recyclable packaging with a lower modulated EPR fee and as an adjunct to this a threshold for Fibre Based Composites non-fibre content has also been introduced. Lobbying Government on both these issues is ongoing, as is the case for correcting the Dual Use double charging of packaging, cups in particular, classified as 'household like', but which individual business collect post use and send through business waste companies. We continue to work closely with the Alliance for Fibre-Based Packaging to increase the pressure on government to achieve the best outcome for Vending.

The ever-present threat of paper cup levies is never far away. During the course of this year, the challenge from Scotland looks to have been pushed back at least until after its devolved elections next May. The position in Ireland is equally threatening and it is thanks to the work of industry body [The Cup-Collective](#) and the very successful segregated collection and recycling of used paper cups, that the proposed cup tax has not been brought forward.

Simpler Recycling now requires segregated business waste in England and will extend to all households. In Wales, similar legislation requires the same both in business and households. Under Simpler Recycling there remains the exclusion of paper cups from household kerbside collection. This is in stark contrast to EPR that makes no such distinction for any fibre-based composites. We continue to lobby government hard to align both pieces of legislation alongside the [Alliance for Fibre-Based Packaging](#). Government has so far acknowledged the need to review and industry evidence to support the change is being prepared.

We continue to keep a watching brief across European legislation with our colleagues at the [EVA](#). Highlighting issues requiring compliance for operators working across borders. While [European Deforestation Regulations](#) have been deferred until January 2027, the Single Use Plastics Directive and Packaging Waste Regulations will have impact in Northern Ireland under the terms of the Windsor Agreement.

Committee Reports

Chris Skipper (N.V.C.S. Ltd)

Technical Committee

2025 has been a busy and constructive year for the AVA Technical Committee and I've been pleased to see real progress across several key areas that directly affect operators, engineers and suppliers.

The Committee addressed a wide portfolio of operational, regulatory and training priorities throughout 2025. A major focus was the redevelopment of the Engineers' Electrical Safety Awareness training. The old BTEC-based format put too much pressure on delegates, so the shift to a practical, face-to-face two-day course has been extremely welcome (see later in the Report).

Food Hygiene and Health & Safety training has also evolved, with new slides added on allergen management, cross-contamination and working safely at height – especially relevant for operators working out of vans. These are small updates, but they make a real difference to frontline teams.

The long-awaited Industry Guide to Good Hygiene



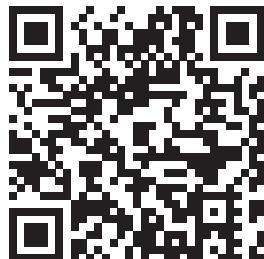
Practice has moved closer to completion, albeit after further delays in approvals from the Food Standards Agency and Food Standards Scotland. We now expect publication in early 2026 – hopefully.

Regulatory updates have dominated discussions this year – particularly BPA, PFAS, eco-design rules, UKCA/CE marking and the EU Cyber Resilience Act. While much remains uncertain, we are keeping a close eye on developments to ensure members receive clear and timely guidance.

Cashless payment chargebacks remain a challenge for some operators, especially at universities, although the volume appears to be declining. We are now gathering best practice from suppliers to help members defend disputes more effectively.

AVA Technical & Operations Webinar

The committee arranged a well-attended webinar covering a range of topics – this can still be viewed (in useful bitesize pieces) on the [AVA YouTube Channel](#).



We will be holding another Technical & Operations webinar in September 2026 – keep an eye out for detail.

Overall, 2025 has been a year of steady progress – practical, collaborative and focused on supporting AVA Members where it matters most.

Committee Reports

Carl Hunter (Kepak Ltd)

Commodities Committee

Restarting the AVA Commodities Committee

Why Your Voice Matters Now



Our industry is changing fast and the numbers tell a pretty clear story. In 2024, UK vending, coffee services and automated retail grew more than 13%, hitting £2.14 billion in product revenue – over £3.5 billion once related categories are included. Fresh-food vending is accelerating too, now worth £73 million and climbing sharply. And with forecasts suggesting the wider vending-machine market will grow at around 7% annually, we're heading into a period of real opportunity.

But growth comes with its own pressures. Legislation keeps shifting. Supply chains and costs remain unpredictable. Consumer habits are moving, locations are evolving and competition isn't slowing down. In short: the challenges are no longer 'occasional' – they're constant.

That's exactly why now is the moment to bring back a fully active, ongoing AVA Commodities Committee.

Historically, the group has met on an ad-hoc basis. Today, we need something much more consistent. Under strict anti-competitive guidance, a full-time committee would give us space to share insight, compare market data, coordinate our responses to regulatory changes and ensure that, when needed, we speak to government and other stakeholders with a unified and credible voice. It's also a chance to collaborate on the areas shaping our future: fresh-food vending, smart technology, sustainability, micro-markets and more.

If your company is part of the Commodities Group, your involvement would mean quarterly collaboration meetings, regular market briefings, and the opportunity to help shape industry-wide proposals. Whether you're an operator, supplier, manufacturer, service provider or location partner, your experience genuinely makes a difference.

This is a moment of growth, but also one of responsibility. By coming together, we can build a stronger, more resilient, better-represented industry – and ensure the next phase of vending and automated retail is shaped by the people who know it best.

If you would like to participate then please get in touch with Scott.Sherlock@the-ava.com



Some examples of recent and ongoing legislation:

Scotland's long-standing Healthy Living Award and Healthcare Retail Standards - once the backbone of healthier food provision in council venues and hospitals - were effectively suspended during the pandemic, leaving service providers to "maintain standards" voluntarily. Now, Public Health Scotland (PHS) is developing new [Eating Out, Eating Well](#) guidance, with early proposals including strict calorie limits on products sold through vending and automated retail. The AVA is actively engaging with PHS and Food Standards Scotland to ensure vending is not used as a regulatory scapegoat and that any calorie thresholds are practical, evidence-based, and consistent with the wider food environment.

Alongside this, major regulatory change is accelerating across the UK. The [Deposit Return Scheme](#) is back on the agenda, with England, Scotland, Northern Ireland - and potentially Wales - moving towards a joint implementation date of October 2027. The AVA now sits on the consultative group with the Deposit Management Organisation (DMO UK), pressing to ensure that the operational realities of vending and unattended retail points are not overlooked in system design and rollout.

Meanwhile, the [Department of Health and Social Care](#) is consulting on an outright ban of high-caffeine energy drinks from all vending machines as part of its pledge to prohibit sales to under-16s. The AVA has raised strong objections, highlighting that over 80% of UK vending machines operate in closed environments where under-16s have no access. Despite this, the government signals a preference for a blanket ban simply for ease of enforcement - disregarding the disproportionate impact on our sector.



Engineers' Training Programme

David Bamford

AVA Membership Services Manager



A major focus in 2025 has been the redevelopment of the Engineers' Electrical Safety Awareness training. The previous BTEC-aligned format deterred uptake due to portfolio requirements. A new two-day, face-to-face model was introduced with a third-party tutor, covering 13 technical areas including fault-finding. Early sessions in Manchester and Bristol were scheduled, with options for Scotland under review. Initial attendee responses have been consistently positive.

To enquire about availability of our training programmes or for more information, please contact
David.Bamford@the-ava.com

Responses from Senior members and the delegates

"We recently sent one of our engineers onto the AVA electrical course, which he enjoyed and found it to be educational, as it was tailored towards the vending industry. We will be aiming to get another place booked on the next course for others to attend."

Terence Doran
Owner, Snax Vending.

"The Electrical Safety Awareness course that our engineer attended was very well organised and informative and the engineer reported that he really enjoyed it and thought it was excellent. We'll be sending our other engineers on the next one."

Adam Barnard
Head of Operations, Westways Vending.

"The lesson was really good and well delivered by someone with a vast and good knowledge of all electrical systems, which is perfect for delivering the safety information best."

Course attendee.

Quality Audits / ISO Accreditation



Many members agreed that the reassurance for customers and clients provided by AVA Quality Accreditation is one of the most important elements of membership. Increasingly, AVA members are wanting to take this further.

Many use outside auditors to achieve ISO 9001:2015 accreditation, but recently several Operator members have moved across to AVA ISO accreditation and auditing. Not only are AVA audits tailored specifically to the vending industry and its operations, but they are less expensive too.

Find out more here: [Quality Assurance - AVA \(the-ava.com\)](http://Quality Assurance - AVA (the-ava.com))

Quality Service in Focus

To strengthen the value of AVA membership and highlight the 'Badge of Quality Service' it represents, we launched a targeted advertising campaign across leading industry publications. These adverts underline the high standards upheld by AVA Operators, delivering a clear and compelling message to both current clients and prospective customers.

We encourage Operators to use these materials when submitting tenders or engaging with existing clients, reinforcing the credibility and assurance that AVA membership provides. This has become even more important as organisations such as TUCO have now made AVA membership a mandatory requirement within its latest Tender Framework, further cementing its industry significance.

You can view the adverts here

HEFMA

hefma.co.uk

hefma pulse NOV/DEC 2024

THE FACE OF AUTOMATED RETAIL FACILITIES
ALSO IN THIS ISSUE: TRAINING & EQUIPMENT • MAINTENANCE • SCOPE 3 EMISSIONS

Vending solutions for healthcare: choose reliability

By David Llewellyn, chief executive of The Vending & Automated Retail Association (AVA)

So, why partner with an AVA member?

- **High quality AVA products:** When you see the AVA logo you know it's the mark of quality and performance for our members' customers and a major selling point for your members' products.
- **Member quality service:** Our members provide a high level of service and support to their members' customers and a major selling point for your members' products.

AVA members are trusted. They all align with the following statements:

- **Quality guaranteed:** AVA members agree to uphold their services to a high level of quality and performance for their members' customers.
- **Customer service:** AVA members agree to provide a high level of customer service to their members' customers.
- **Compliance:** AVA members agree to comply with the regulations.

PROJECTS: AVA members believe in the importance of environmental and energy efficiency projects, such as waste reduction, recycling, and energy efficiency.

ENVIRONMENTAL ASSURANCE: AVA members are committed to the protection of the environment and energy efficiency, and are leading the way in sustainable practices.

ADAPTABLE TO YOUR NEEDS: AVA members are adaptable to the needs of their members' customers, providing a range of products and services to meet their needs.

PUBLIC SECTOR CATERING

publicsectorcatering.co.uk

CHOOSING TO PARTNER WITH THE RIGHT VENDING OPERATOR

By DAVID LLEWELLYN, CHIEF EXECUTIVE OF THE VENDING & AUTOMATED RETAIL ASSOCIATION (AVA)

With an emphasis on quality and reliability, AVA members are trusted partners for the food and beverage industry. Our members' customers are some of the most demanding in the sector, and AVA is committed to ensuring that they receive the highest quality service and products. AVA members are also committed to environmental and energy efficiency, and are leading the way in sustainable practices.

PROTECTION: AVA members believe in the importance of environmental and energy efficiency projects, such as waste reduction, recycling, and energy efficiency.

ENVIRONMENTAL ASSURANCE: AVA members are committed to the protection of the environment and energy efficiency, and are leading the way in sustainable practices.

ADAPTABLE TO YOUR NEEDS: AVA members are adaptable to the needs of their members' customers, providing a range of products and services to meet their needs.

CONTRACT catering

contactcateringmagazine.co.uk

Why partner with an AVA member?

- When you see the AVA logo, you know it's the mark of quality and performance for your members' customers.
- It is the mark of quality and performance for our members' customers as a badge of guaranteed service.

At AVA, we provide guidance, training and support to help our members to ensure that their customers receive a high level of service.

Our 160 members manage over 460,000 vending & automated retail stands across the country.

The role of AVA is to promote, protect and enhance the vending industry. By providing a standard of service that you can follow, we deliver excellence in all areas of its work.

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TUCO

tuco.ac.uk

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Membership Benefits

The AVA (Vending & Automated Retail Association) logo signifies a commitment to quality and adherence to a strict code of conduct and standards. Achieving AVA Quality Accreditation communicates to potential customers that a company follows quality guidelines, maintains trading standards, and is a trustworthy and credible business.

The accreditation enhances company standing, adds weight to sales presentations, and provides a competitive edge when tendering for new business. Being part of the AVA also means access to a range of business support services, including legal guidance, health and safety assistance, and expert advice, all included in the membership fee.

AVA members benefit from technical support on various matters, such as HACCP, Coshh, and food safety. The association offers training, including health and hygiene for staff, adherence to quality standards, and specialised electrical training for engineers.

The AVA serves as a valuable knowledge source, providing industry statistics, technical advice and information on legislative changes. Additionally, the AVA represents the vending industry's voice, influencing legislation, protecting businesses from negative press or harmful regulations and fostering networking opportunities to facilitate connections within the industry.

AVA: The Vending & Automated Retail Association is a trade body of the vending industry in the UK which represents all sectors of the industry, manufacturers, distributors, commodity, suppliers and operators



NETWORKING

Many networking opportunities through regional meetings, events, and social functions



RECOGNITION

Our reputation in the industry gives recognition, and the AVA logo is a guarantee of quality so customers have more confidence in vending service suppliers, knowing they are accredited AVA members



LOBBYING

AVA represents the voice of the industry to the government and opinion leaders lobbying on key issue to protect member's interests and raising standards



INFORMATION

The AVA provides legislative technical and legal advice, as well as sharing key data from the vending census exclusively to members. We also have technical experts who can share their knowledge and provide leading training courses

Learn more by visiting www.the-ava.com/joining-the-ava/



Business Support Service

Free advice & guidance



- **The Tax Service:**
 - Advice line to Tax & VAT advisors



- **The HR Service:**
 - Unlimited advice line
 - 400 free, downloadable employment documents



- **The Health & Safety Service:**
 - In addition to Membership Services Manager
 - Advice line H&S specialists
 - Over 100 free, downloadable documents



- **The Legal Service:**
 - Unlimited advice line to legal advisors
 - 200 free, downloadable documents

Members have unlimited access to the AVA Business Support Service, an essential service that is designed to support and protect your business.

That's the good news... the even better news is the service is **FREE** for members to access.

The AVA Business Support Service – What Is It?

- Advice Line – unlimited access to experienced advisors offering practical advice on HR, employment law, health & safety, legal issues plus tax and VAT matters
- Website – access to over 700 template documents covering HR, employment law, health and safety and legal matters. The website also includes an HR and H&S Health Check

How Do I Access the Service?

- Advice Line – call 0116 243 7589. You will be asked for your name and company name

Or

- Log in to the AVA Members' Area of the AVA website
- Go to the Membership Benefits / AVA Business Support Service page
- Login to the Business Support Service page

What Can I Use the Service for?

To help you resolve any issues you have with HR and employment law, health & safety, legal or tax.

You don't have to wait until you have an issue or a serious problem before you call. The advice line will help answer any questions you may have.

AVA Advocacy

Scott Sherlock

AVA Public Affairs Manager

The AVA team is looking forward to 2026, and what we can achieve, but before that, let us look back at 2025 to remind ourselves about the significant regulatory and policy changes that our industry faced.

At the beginning of the year, the [Deposit Return Scheme \(DRS\)](#) legislation for England and Northern Ireland was passed, and it is scheduled to commence in October 2027. The DRS will apply a refundable deposit on single-use drinks containers, including aluminium, steel and PET plastic. With the aim to reduce litter and increase recycling rates, consumers will be required to return containers to designated points to reclaim their deposit. It will be managed by the, UK Deposit Management Organisation Ltd, a not-for-profit, business-led body. As a reminder, vending and unattended retail locations are currently exempt from having to manage returns and refunds.



Another key development is the Government's [Simpler Recycling](#) initiative, effective from April, which mandates businesses with more than 10 employees to separate general, dry and food waste, along with adherence to [Extended Producer Responsibility \(EPR\)](#) rules. These measures raise costs for our operators, who must manage packaging waste and recycling obligations within the Circular Economy framework.

Health policy has been extremely controversial for us. In September, the Government launched a consultation on their proposal to introduce a blanket ban on the sale of high-caffeine energy drinks from vending machines. While we are supportive of the Government's aim to protect young people, the ban, if introduced, will have a devastating impact on our industry. We have projected a minimum £43 million loss. A blanket ban is the completely wrong course of action because it will strip adults of their choice to purchase high-caffeine energy drinks in entirely adult-only environments. The consultation closed at the end of November and the AVA responded by making our views clear. We are enormously grateful to all of our members that responded to the consultation. The more voices speaking out against it, the better chance we have to make the Government listen to us. With that said, if you haven't done so already, please do write to your local MP to express your concerns. Just get in touch and I can provide a template letter and advice: scott.sherlock@the-ava.com.

Employee-related legislation has also become more stringent. Increases in the National Minimum Wage and National Insurance contributions, along with the expected [Employees' Rights Bill](#), have raised operational costs across our industry. In November, Chancellor Rachel Reeves delivered her second budget. One key change for our industry is that pre-packed milkshakes and coffees, which are high in sugar, will be hit with an extra tax from 2028. This is another additional cost that will impact our industry.

As we move forward into 2026, please be assured that the AVA team and I, as Public Affairs Manager, will be monitoring all policy developments and legislation changes that are relevant to our industry. Should you ever have any questions or just want to speak about a current regulation issue, please do not hesitate to contact me at scott.sherlock@the-ava.com. I very much look forward to bringing you further updates and you can always find them in The Policy Edit section of the Members' Area on the AVA website.



Communication & Events

Paul Fitzjohn

AVA Communication & Events Manager

Paul Fitzjohn, AVA Communication & Events Manager

The AVA hosts a wide array of events throughout the year. This includes training and education courses, regional meetings under the AVA Live: On-the-Road banner, as well as some amazing social and networking opportunities. Here are details of upcoming events to mark in your diary.



KEEP IN TOUCH WITH ALL THE AVA AND INDUSTRY EVENTS - CHECK FOR UPDATES AND NEW ADDITIONS IN OUR CALENDAR

The landscape for the AVA over the last 12 months has once again been a period of change and challenge. From changes to sustainability legislation, providing consultation on Good Hygiene Practices to welcoming new members, delivering enhanced Safety Awareness courses and several networking opportunities, 2025 has been a busy year. We're all looking forward to what lies ahead in 2026 and beyond, however, first we're going to take a look back at last year.

Over the course of the year, we've kept our members up to date with key developments and industry news through our monthly newsletters. And in July, we launched the first edition of the Policy Edit, a monthly round-up of what's going on at Westminster, our engagement with MPs and updates on how you can have an impact on the decisions being made. This advocacy work reflects the AVA's broader mission: ensuring members' voices are heard in policy debates and safeguarding the future of automated retail.

We understand that communication with our members is a two-way street, so it was great to receive your feedback through our annual Members Survey. It provided us with some great feedback on the events we hold, where you would like to see us lobby on your behalf and how we communicate with you, with LinkedIn proving to be very popular with members, but not so much X, so it had to go. Speaking of social media, you can keep up to date with all the goings-on at the AVA by following us on [LinkedIn](#), [Instagram](#) and [YouTube](#). If you've not yet completed the 2025 Member Survey, you can do so by scanning the QR code on page 7.

The AVA's events calendar has always been a highlight and 2025 was no exception. From our golf days held in Wetherby and Surrey to our sold-out Christmas Luncheon at the prestigious 8 Northumberland Avenue in London, our members enjoyed opportunities to network, celebrate achievements and share insights. Our Electrical Safety Awareness course received a make-over, redeveloping the look and feel with a new face-to-face format. We were out on the road with our Live @ Parts Town UK event, held our [AGM & Sustainability](#) webinar online and in October, we held our [Technical & Operations](#) webinar, all of which proved to be very popular.

Looking ahead, 2026 promises even more. Having recently joined the team, I'm looking forward to leading our [calendar](#) of events, delivering favourites such as the golf days and Christmas Luncheon, as well as working with our board and members, listening and learning to be able to deliver even greater value.

As we step into 2026, members can look forward to a year of connection, learning and celebration. Whether it's tackling industry challenges or enjoying a round of golf, communication will be key, making sure our members feel supported, informed and part of something bigger.







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