



Update 1st January 2025

Compelling Cash Acceptance: International Precedents

Many countries have proactively safeguarded the public's right to use cash for everyday transactions. Those countries in purple are the UK's immediate neighbours.

- **Belgium:** shops and other businesses have been required to accept cash since measures were approved by the Federal Government in February 2024.
- **China:** for all the sophistication of digital payments in China, it has been estimated that 150 million plus Chinese citizens do not participate in such payments. This explains why the Peoples Bank of China compels all businesses to accept cash. In 2022, entities fined for non-compliance included heating companies, parking lots, insurers, restaurant chains and supermarkets.
- **Denmark:** legal measures have been in place since 1984, introduced specifically to ensure there is competition with card transactions.
- **France:** it has long been illegal for businesses to refuse cash payments. This is rigorously enforced by Banque de France. Recently, the Central Bank mandated two major supermarket chains to accept cash at self-checkouts when staffed tills were unavailable.
- **Irish Republic:** in 2024, the government announced a number of businesses would be compelled to accept cash.
- **Netherlands:** mandatory cash acceptance was adopted by the House of Representatives in Q4 2024. Final approval by the Netherlands Senate is expected on 4 February 2025.
- **Nigeria :** one of the first countries in the world to introduce a Central Bank Digital Currency, this innovation does not alter the legal position that all businesses must accept cash.
- **Norway:** early in 2024, the legal measures already in place were strengthened. All retail businesses must now accept cash payments.
- **Slovakia:** since 2023, everyone in Slovakia has the constitutional right to pay for the purchase of goods and services in cash. One of the reasons for this change was to protect against the EU-wide imposition of a Central Bank Digital Euro to replace fiat cash.
- **Spain:** in 2022, legislation came into force requiring businesses to accept cash for transactions up to 1,000 Euros.

In the United States, eight states and numerous cities have passed laws compelling businesses to accept cash.

The UK's Outlier Status: the UK is now surrounded by countries with governments of the Centre, Left and Right that recognise the public's desire and need to use cash. Those governments also understand that cash usage enhances financial inclusion, allows the less well-off to manage their budgets more effectively, stimulates local economic activity and protects privacy.

Most fair minded people would surely conclude that the UK governments stance - "it is for individual organisations to decide whether to accept cash as a form of payment" – is looking increasingly out of touch and untenable.

Why, almost uniquely to the UK, should the whims of individual organisations rank ahead of the Public Interest?