

Amazon opens Britain's first '4-star' non-food store

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The '4-star' store is Amazon's first physical shop selling non-food products in Britain.

Amazon on Wednesday expanded its chain of physical shops selling non-food products to Britain, opening a new outlet southeast of London that

will compete with local stores.

The US conglomerate's "4-star" [store](#) in the Bluewater shopping mall in Kent is stocked with items such as electronics, toys and books that have at least a 4-star rating from Amazon's UK customers.

The online retail giant in March launched its first non-US Amazon Fresh convenience store in London, where customers choose groceries and simply walk out, while a tracking system charges their shopping to their [bank accounts](#).

The e-commerce company already has six such grocery stores in the UK, and 32 in the United States.

There is also one Amazon Salon in central London, which allows customers to use immersive technology to try different hair styles and colours before getting a cut.

Amazon was already strongly placed in Britain before the pandemic, with growing dominance in the delivery sector.

During lockdown, it benefited hugely from the closure of non-essential bricks-and-mortar retail as well as from fundamental changes to consumer shopping habits.

The latest UK launch "will send a warning to the industry that competition could become even more fierce", said analyst Richard Lim, of Retail Economics.

"Despite some of the challenges presented by supply chain disruptions and the impact of Brexit, Amazon has always played the long game," he told AFP.

"A [physical presence](#) will provide loyal customers with a frictionless path to purchase, offering them the chance to touch, feel, experience and pick-up online orders in-store."

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