



Jersey Competition and Regulatory Authority
Second Floor, Salisbury House,
1-9 Union Street,
St Helier,
Jersey

21 August 2023

Dear JCRA,

The Jersey Consumer Council welcomes the findings of the Jersey Competition and Regulatory Authority's Groceries Market Study consultation and draft report.

In particular, the Council welcomes the recommendation to 'improve price transparency with investment in the JCC's Price Comparison service, to encourage greater price-based competition'.

Our Price Comparison website (Jersey-Price Comparison) and app is one of our most popular services and relies upon the time and effort of our volunteer Council members, who go up and down the aisles of the Island's supermarkets every fortnight to gather the latest prices of over 100 popular products. Our office staff then input and assess this data and are responsible for gathering fuel prices (fortnightly) and heating oil prices (weekly).

With additional funding, Jersey Price Comparison could be developed and enhanced, and the range of products and local stores surveyed could be increased. We could also look at the possibility of comparing prices to other jurisdictions, such as the UK, or the possibility of carrying out more regular surveys of other products and services which are currently done on an ad-hoc basis, such as the cost of GP fees, dentist fees, car services, funeral costs and other essential services.

Our Price Comparison service is currently used by tens of thousands of Islanders, with app downloads and website visits growing every month. With greater investment, it could benefit even more consumers in Jersey.

At a time when more and more people in the Island are struggling with their growing monthly household expenses, a tool that allows consumers to make their own informed decisions, based on real and accurate data, can only be positive thing.

We recently (Navigate the rising food prices with the Price Comparison app. (consumercouncil.je) found that the rate at which our Jersey Consumer Council 'Basket of Basics' has increased over the past two years is currently sitting at a wallet-busting level. Other than potatoes, everything has shot up, giving an average increase of a staggering 25% over two years. The 14 items in our Basket of Basics, we believe, represent a core of a

lot of people's shopping – and, if these 'basic' items can climb so drastically, then it goes to show why Islanders continue to struggle every time they visit a supermarket. It also highlights the importance of our Price Comparison work – without which, Islanders would not be able to access this kind of detailed data.

With groceries, fuel and oil continuing to rise, we believe it is more important than ever that we continue to offer Islanders a reliable and regular Price Comparison service. We routinely see individual items range significantly in price from store to store. And, while Islanders can often get a feel themselves of which supermarkets are on the more expensive side, we're able to provide them with actual data to back that up – and consumers often tell us that they're surprised to see which stores have certain products at the lowest price, as it's not always the ones they expect.

The Jersey Consumer Council may not be able to control pricing, but by highlighting price differences, and letting Islanders know where items are currently cheapest, or most expensive, we can help them to vote with their feet, and to buy from those retailers who consistently offer the best prices.

On behalf of the Jersey Consumer Council



Carl Walker

Chairman