

Alternative Food Survey

To gain consumer information on certain subjects such as student spending and our newsletters, over the last year we've shared surveys through our social media accounts and website. Most recently we asked you about the cost of eating alternative foods when out.

Our survey results showed that nearly two-thirds of people who consume non-dairy milk, gluten free or vegan options, do so for personal preference i.e. taste, environmental or animal welfare, and the remainder for medical reasons such as allergy, intolerance or Coeliac disease.

Nearly 40% of replies stated that alternative food requests are not always available at the usual cafes, restaurants or hotels they visit. From the responses we received, it appears that in almost every case, consumers are charged more when requesting non-dairy milk, gluten free or vegan options. The price difference varies widely depending on the venue, with well over half of you advising that prices are up to 15% more than the 'usual' menu choices. The remainder of you reporting that prices could be over that.

We asked that considering dairy free and gluten free products can cost more to purchase, whether it was reasonable to be charged more so venues could recuperate their costs. Nearly 40% said yes it was fair with the rest answering no, and many providing your comments on why.

Three quarters of respondents were aged between 25-54 years. Of those who provided their total household income, 45% earned up to £40,000 with 51% earning between £40,000 - £80,000.



THE CONSUMERS' CHAMPION

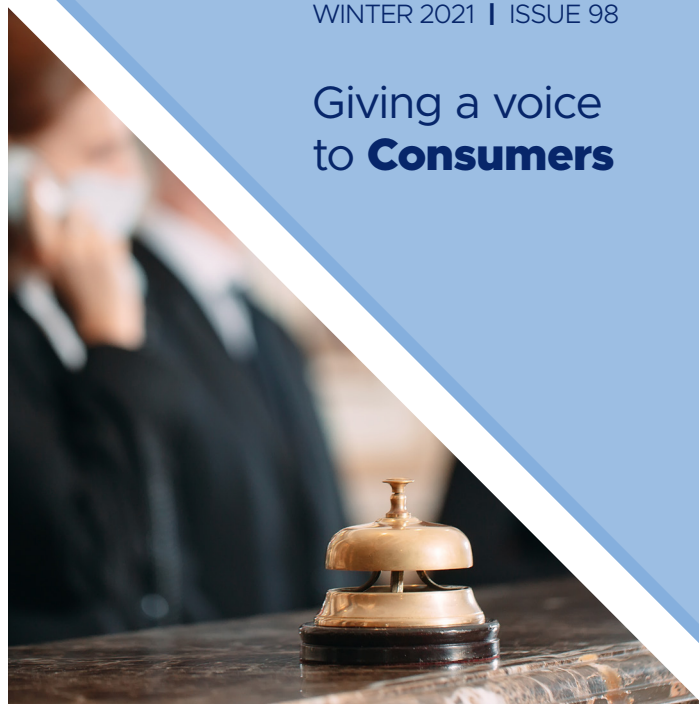
We investigate and publicise anomalies in consumer affairs and aim to provide Islanders with accurate and timely information to help make

#InformedDecisions



WINTER 2021 | ISSUE 98

Giving a voice
to **Consumers**



JCC Covid Pledge

We launched this initiative in our summer edition in the hope that the hospitality and event sector would provide consumer protection when bookings had to be cancelled or rescheduled due to Covid.

We are mindful the sector has been severely hit and many companies are struggling, and we are pleased to announce that the first seven venues have pledged to support consumers and help give them confidence to make bookings at their venues.

- CHATEAU LA CHAIRE
- JERSEY HERITAGE
- JERSEY WAR TUNNELS
- LA ROBELINE CIDER
- RADISSON BLU
- SAMARES MANOR
- THE DOLPHIN HOTEL

With vaccination rates so high, we hope that the impact of Covid on your bookings is now far less than it was earlier in the year. However, should you have any problems please get in touch and we'll try to help. We look forward to highlighting more hospitality venues in the next edition, as they too sign up to our Covid Pledge. To see the details of what the pledge provides you, log on to consumerCouncil.je

consumerCouncil.je

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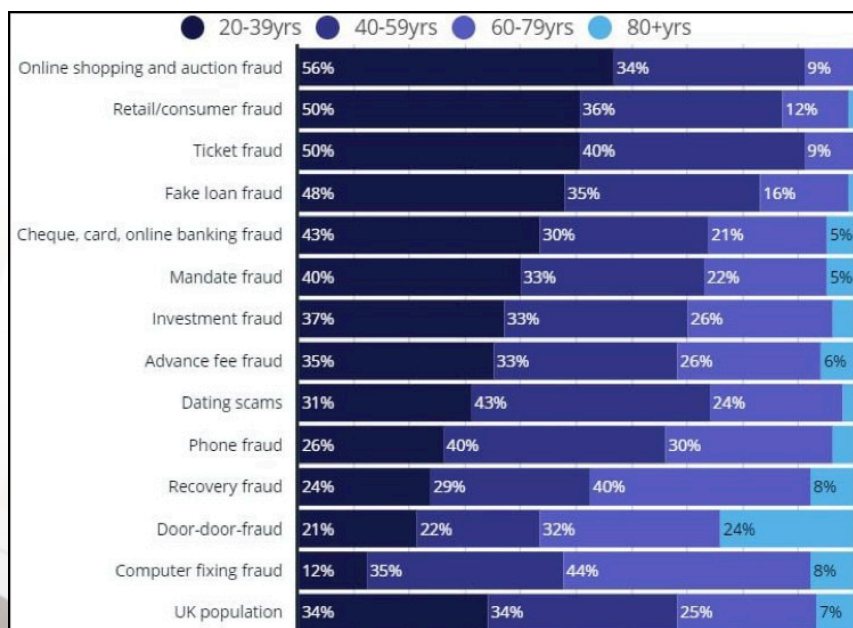
Scams

Think scammers only fool the elderly?

This chart produced by Which? UK breaks down the type of scams and age range they are likely to target, highlighting that younger people are at just as much risk.

Scammers and fraudsters don't take time off over Christmas. Indeed, they take advantage of the fact that many of us are preoccupied with preparations, hoping we won't take time to check what we've been emailed, sent or asked to provide over the phone.

Never give personal information or details about your computer, to someone who has contacted you out of the blue, either by phone, email, message or text. If you're concerned, get in touch with the usual numbers and email addresses from the company's official website or branch.



Christmas Budgeting

We hope that Christmas this year will be a much happier celebration than it was in 2020, when so many of us were separated from our loved ones.

Preparations for the big day can be overwhelming and there's no denying it hits the pocket hard so you may find our 'Christmas Budget Planner' helpful. It lists everything you might need for Christmas Day itself, as well as the whole festive period, from food and drinks to decorations and party clothes and, of course, the present list.

To find the planner and our Christmas tips, go to our website **consumercouncil.je** and search for 'budget'.



Your Rights at Christmas

No matter how much we try to get the right present for someone, it may not be quite what they wanted or might even be faulty. Knowing your consumer rights will help protect you and make changes easier.

The Supply of Goods and Services (Jersey) Law 2009 protects consumers if goods you purchased new, in a sale or even second-hand, are faulty/damaged, or not what was advertised or matching the description.

- If goods are found to be faulty within a reasonably short period of time after being purchased, a consumer is entitled to a full refund or compensation. You may request the item to be repaired or replaced, which is at the seller's discretion to accept.
- If the gift is unwanted, companies often have a 'goodwill' returns policy which may offer either a refund, exchange or credit note. This is not required by law so before you buy, we strongly recommend that you check with the seller first and be aware of any time restrictions.
- Consumers often have additional rights for online returns with some companies covering the cost of postage. If not, you should not be expected to pay for returning faulty goods.
- Gift vouchers may be an easy choice but there are risks. In recent years, many retailers have collapsed, and vouchers will often not be honoured. They usually have a strict expiry date in which the voucher must be used, or the value will be forfeited and the gift giver's money wasted.
- Always get a receipt for everything you buy, as this is often required as proof of purchase if there is a dispute, or when returning or exchanging items.
- Further information can be found at www.gov.je/StayingSafe/ConsumerProtection/ShoppersRights and the Trading Standards team are always willing to provide advice on the law and how best to proceed.

Cheaper broadband on the way

Consumers in Jersey could soon benefit from cheaper fixed broadband prices, due to a review of the wholesale price for access to JT's fibre network.

The review, carried out by the Jersey Competition Regulatory Authority, focused on the price at which JT sells access to its network to other broadband providers in the Island.

From the 1st October the wholesale price of JT's product has been reduced, with a sliding scale of further reductions over the next five years.

And, as a direct result of the review, more competition will be entering the market, with Airtel-Vodafone announcing that they will now start offering their customers fixed broadband products.

This could be good news for consumers because it should result in more competitively priced options, and more choice. The Covid pandemic highlighted that internet access is now a fundamental part of Islanders' private and professional lives and the outcome of the review will encourage innovation and a more competitive market.

All of the licensed telecoms companies have welcomed the review and the JCRA anticipates that the savings will find their way into Islanders' pockets very soon. Tim Ringsdore of the JCRA said "We're delighted with the outcome of the review and the response of the telecom companies. We now anticipate lower prices for consumers and that supports the government's aim of controlling price inflation."

The new pricing and increased competition should enable Islanders to shop around for the best deals to suit their needs.

The full details of the Review are available on the JCRA's website www.jcra.je and useful advice about what to do at the end of your broadband contract can be found on the website www.broadband.co.uk.



GST

While the news that the online amount you can spend before GST is added will be dropping from £135 to £60 on 1 January 2023 may have seemed inevitable to most, it is still nonetheless disappointing. We stand by our message to government that the continued lowering of the de minimis level will not force more Islanders to shop locally. More can be done, in terms of free shoppers' parking, free weekend bus journeys and more, to entice more of us to spend our pounds in the Island.

What we are interested in, though, is whether or not you are finding it easier to have the VAT removed when shopping online? When representing

consumers in consultation talks with the Treasury on this matter, we managed to receive a guarantee that when online retailers were going to be asked to apply GST for Jersey on their websites, they would also remind them not to charge VAT. We have not been given any evidence that this request was undertaken, but would like to know if more UK retailers are removing the VAT.

Get in touch and let us know please.



Fuel Prices

We have seen fuel prices rise sharply across the summer and autumn, particularly as demand for travel and transporting goods resumes following a year or more of Covid restrictions.

In the last 12 months, the average price for a litre of unleaded petrol or diesel has increased by 33p. The average car fuel tank takes approximately 55 litres, meaning consumers are paying around £18 more to fill their car. Not only are we noticing a big difference at the pump but we will also start feeling the ripples of these rises right down to the goods we put into our supermarket baskets.

And it is almost a double blow for Islanders as everything we buy in Jersey must also be shipped here.

While there is little the Island can do when it comes to global energy trends and demands, we are most

concerned that, at the time of writing, the price per litre of our petrol is within a penny or two of being level with the prices in the UK.

We know that 6p per litre was added as a 'green tax' last year, but that still should not be enough to bring our prices level. After all, the UK fuel price also includes VAT at 20%. Therefore, we feel some more clarity and price breakdown in the fuel market would allow consumers to see if they are being fairly charged for their fuel.

We hope to be able to update you in a bulletin next year.

You can check fuel prices on our [pricecomparison.je](https://www.pricecomparison.je) website or free downloadable app, which are updated every two weeks. The prices of heating oil are updated weekly and groceries and household items bi-weekly.

