



Road Fuel Monitoring Team
Competition and Markets Authority
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28 October 2025

Re: Fuel Finder draft guidance on the CMA's enforcement functions - for consultation

The Consumer Council welcomes the opportunity to respond to the CMA's draft guidance on its enforcement functions in respect of the Fuel Finder.

The Consumer Council is a non-departmental public body (NDPB) established through the General Consumer Council (Northern Ireland) Order 1984. Our principal statutory duty is to promote and safeguard the interests of consumers in Northern Ireland.

We are also a designated super-complaints body set up under the Enterprise Act 2002 and the Financial Services and Markets Act 2000 Order 2013.

Under both Acts, if the Consumer Council believes any feature or combination of features of a market in the United Kingdom (UK) is, or appears to be, significantly harming the interests of consumers, we can raise a super-complaint on behalf of consumers to a number of regulators including the CMA.

The Consumer Council welcomes the progress made on implementing the open data scheme which is a significant and welcome extension of the type of transparency the Consumer Council has sought to create for Northern Ireland consumers through our [Fuel Price Checker](#).

We also agree with the CMA's proposed approach to enforcement and provide some further information in our response to individual questions below.

Q1. Do respondents have any comments on the CMA's proposed targeted and proportionate response to enforcement?

The Consumer Council is supportive of this approach.

We raised concerns in our response to the initial consultation on the open data scheme for road fuel prices¹ that there may be occasions, particularly with small motor fuel traders (MFT's) where there are limited staff with a range of responsibilities. Therefore,

¹ Consultation on open data scheme and ongoing monitoring function for road fuel prices, 12 March 2024, Department for Energy Security and Net Zero

the circumstances on the day of instances of late reporting need to be considered. There may also be rare occasions when, for example, when phone line or internet connections are not working (perhaps due to severe weather conditions and these are more likely to affect MFT's in rural, remote locations).

We would expect that these issues would tend to be informally addressed by the aggregator (VE3) but, if escalated, would be considered by the CMA on a case-by-case basis.

Q2. Do respondents view the balance of informal and formal action to be appropriate?

We agree that the examples used of instances where informal or formal action would appear to be a reasonable balance. We suggest, however, that consideration be given to defining what might constitute "significant impact on consumers".

Q3. Do respondents have any comments on the factors we propose to take into account when considering penalties?

No comment.

Q4. Do respondents have any comments on the CMA's proposed approach to complaints relating to the exercise of the CMA's functions under the Regulations?

No comment.

Q6. Is the guidance clear on the CMA's proposed approach? If not, where would further clarification be helpful?

Yes.

Q7. Do you have any further comments which the CAA should consider as part of this consultation?

It would have been helpful if VE3's proposed guidance on how they will operate the scheme was published before this draft consultation on the CMA's enforcement role. Given that it is anticipated that the Fuel Finder will be in place before the end of 2025, early publication of this guidance is essential for MFT's to understand the processes they must follow. The complaints handling process, also to be outlined within their guidance, must be clear for consumers to better enable understanding and engagement.

We trust the points raised in our response will be useful and we would welcome further discussion.

Yours sincerely

Consumer Council for Northern Ireland