

Individual responses to Invitation to Comment on the potential designation of Aldi and Lidl under the Groceries Market Investigation (Controlled Land) Order 2010

Respondent A

To whom it may concern,

I am responding as an individual to your invitation to comment on the potential designation of Aldi and Lidl under the Groceries Market Investigation (Controlled Land) Order 2010. Please see my comments addressing the key issues you want to explore below:

1) Please provide any information which you think is relevant to our assessment of whether Aldi or Lidl should continue to be considered Limited Assortment Discounters or be designated as Large Grocery Retailers under the Order. In particular:

a) Do Aldi and Lidl offer a range of Groceries that is significantly more limited than that offered by the Large Grocery Retailers?

Yes, there are significant limitations to the range of groceries provided by Lidl (I cannot speak for Aldi but surmise that the same applies). Some examples include:

- A limited selection of spices, spice blends, and cooking oils are available (e.g. I need to source seed oils and blends like ras al hanout elsewhere)
- International cuisine and cooking products are extremely limited (e.g. I need to source staples such as sesame oil, miso paste, and rice wine vinegar elsewhere)
- A limited selection of dried grains and pulses are available (e.g. rice options only include white and brown, and I am unable to source bulgar wheat, spelt, or dried pulses)
- Toiletries and cleaning supplies are kept within very limited ranges (e.g. I am unable to source electric toothbrush heads, floss picks, and drain declogger)

b) Do Aldi or Lidl offer their products at a lower price than Large Grocery Retailers?

Yes, of this I am certain as this is the basis for my decision to shop at Lidl rather than larger retailers (see below).

c) What do you consider to constitute a full range of Groceries?

As a rule of thumb, I would consider a full range of groceries, particularly in such a highly populated and culturally diverse area as London, to cover a weekly food shop without requiring an extra trip to another supermarket unless for a particularly uncommon/specialist ingredient.

d) Do you consider that Aldi or Lidl stock a full range of Groceries?

No. I can call to mind a number of groceries which I am unable to source at Lidl but previously have had no problem finding at a larger supermarket, including saffron, avocado oil, ras al hanout, silken tofu, gochujang, miso paste, fresh roasting herbs, polenta, dried kidney beans, bulgar, floss picks, and pasta flour.

2) Has there been, or could there be, any impact on competition or to consumers from Aldi and Lidl remaining outside the scope of the Order? We

are particularly interested to hear of any examples where retailers have been unable to open a grocery store because Aldi or Lidl are not designated under the Order.

As a consumer, I would suspect that there is a positive impact to consumers from Aldi and Lidl remaining outside the scope of the Order. In the last two years, I have adjusted my personal and household spending habits to include Lidl as my primary source of food and groceries, even though geographically there are other larger supermarkets nearer and more accessible to home. The chief driving force behind this change has been the desire to reduce grocery bills amidst a cost of living crisis that has continued since late 2021: In this time, I have observed price increases in larger supermarkets that exceed the rise of inflation, where Lidl's prices remain more closely in line with pre-pandemic levels, adjusted for inflation. Any perceived trade-offs for shopping at Lidl (such as less access to brand name products and a more limited range of groceries) is far outweighed by the benefits that its affordability provides. If the designation of Aldi and Lidl under the Order would require changes to their business practice which result in additional costs being shouldered by the consumer, I am certain that I am not the only consumer who would be negatively impacted.

I hope these comments are useful in informing your consultation.

