



CICRA media release

10 October 2012

CICRA welcomes more competition in Jersey's school uniform market

CICRA (the Channel Islands Competition and Regulatory Authorities) has praised Jersey schools for the work they have done to offer parents more choice and reduce the cost of school uniforms.

Following complaints that suggested certain exclusive agreements between schools and suppliers resulted in higher uniform costs, CICRA launched an extensive review in 2010 to look at how school uniforms were sold locally, and issued guidance last year to Jersey schools to ensure that parents and carers could purchase school uniforms at the best possible price.

CICRA chief executive, Andrew Riseley, said: "Parents and carers of students in Jersey are required to purchase school uniforms and, with about 13,000 children attending school locally, ensuring this can be done at the best possible price is therefore very important.

"A recent review by CICRA shows that schools have made significant progress over the last 12 months in encouraging competition in the supply of their uniforms.

"With very few exceptions, schools have worked hard to ensure they are taking all possible steps to offer parents choice and help lower the cost of school uniforms. Some schools have reduced the number of uniform items that must display the school logo and the majority of school uniforms are now supplied by at least two retailers. In other cases, the school badge can be bought separately and sewn on to generic items such as shirts, jumpers and blazers.

“This promotes competition among retailers which will hopefully lower costs,” Mr Riseley said.

In one example of competition lowering prices for parents/carers, a second retailer has been introduced and this has resulted in one item of clothing at one school being sold £13 cheaper by that retailer. Two schools will soon embark on a competitive tendering process for the exclusive supply of the uniform for a time specific period, which is acceptable under the provisions of the law.

While CICRA welcomes the positive changes made, Mr Riseley said that there appeared to be some parents and carers that were unaware of new uniforms suppliers.

“We would encourage the schools to inform the parents and carers of the changes that have been made to their uniform supply arrangements,” he said.

CICRA worked closely with the Department for Education, Sport and Culture and with the individual schools, both public and fee-paying, who co-operated fully with the review. CICRA has continued to provide the department and individual schools with advice this year.

In certain circumstances exclusive supply agreements may infringe the competition law because they limit the number of suppliers from whom certain goods can be purchased. This can restrict competition and result in increased prices for consumers. If businesses have any concerns that their supply agreements may be infringing the law, they are advised to contact the CICRA for advice.

A copy of the guidance is available at: www.cicra.gg/competition/market_studies.aspx

A review of the arrangements for the supply of school uniforms in Guernsey is on-going.

ENDS

NOTES TO EDITORS:

All enquiries should be directed in writing to CICRA Chief Executive, Andrew Riseley, in Guernsey at the Guernsey Competition and Regulatory Authority (formerly the Office of Utility Regulation), Suites B1 & B2, Hirzel Court, St Peter Port, Guernsey GY1 2NH or in Jersey at the Jersey Competition Regulatory Authority, 2nd

Floor, Salisbury House, 1 - 9 Union Street, St Helier, Jersey JE2 3RF. Alternatively email info@cicra.gg.

About CICRA:

The Channel Islands Competition and Regulatory Authorities or 'CICRA' is the name given to the Jersey Competition Regulatory Authority (JCRA) and the Guernsey Competition and Regulatory Authority (GCRA) (formerly the Office of Utility Regulation). The JCRA was established under the Competition Regulatory Authority (Jersey) Law, 2001, and the GCRA was established under The Regulation of Utilities (Bailiwick of Guernsey) Law, 2001, as amended by The Guernsey Competition and Regulatory Authority Ordinance, 2012. In Jersey, the telecoms and postal sectors are regulated by the JCRA, which is also responsible for administering and enforcing the Competition (Jersey) Law 2005. In Guernsey the telecoms, postal and electricity sectors are regulated by the GCRA, which is also responsible for the administration and enforcement of the Guernsey competition law since it came into force on 1 August 2012.

By working together and sharing resources and expertise between the islands, CICRA strives to ensure that consumers in all the Channel Islands receive best value, choice and access to high quality services.