



Slow start to festive period as UK consumers continue holding back grocery spend at top four supermarkets

Grocery sales slow for the second consecutive month, rising by just +1.1% in the last four weeks

London, 12 November 2019. UK supermarkets have experienced a slow start to the festive period. Grocery sales continued to weaken for the second consecutive month, slowing to just +1.1% growth in the last four weeks, reveals data released today by [Nielsen](#).

While grocery sales increased by almost £500m in the last 12 weeks¹, all of the big four supermarkets (Tesco, Sainsbury's, Asda and Morrisons) experienced a decline in sales. Their combined market share fell to just below 64%, compared with 67% this time three years ago.

As a result, almost 73% of incremental sales in the last 12 weeks were made at discounters Aldi and Lidl.¹ Sales at M&S continued to improve by +2.1%, Iceland by +3.5%, and growth at the Co-operative remained strong at +3.4%.


However, despite the slow start, grocery spending is expected to rebound in the next four weeks, as the roll out of retailers' high profile Christmas advertising campaigns continues to take effect and boost the festive shopping momentum. The digital launch of Sainsbury's Nectar loyalty scheme and the launch of Tesco's Clubcard Plus, is also expected to encourage shoppers to make big savings and help regain sales at this crucial seasonal shopping period.

Mike Watkins, Nielsen's UK Head of Retailer and Business Insight, said: "The in store promotional activity ahead of the festive period, from Halloween to retailers' money off vouchers, clearly proved less effective with consumers as grocery sales largely fell flat in the last four weeks at the big four supermarkets."

Watkins continues: "Whilst the economy remains Brits' number one concern, rising food prices and global warming are climbing up the agenda, and are all motivating shoppers to spend differently. Moreover, with the continued uncertainty around Brexit and now a general election on the horizon, shoppers are increasingly adopting a savings mindset."

Watkins concludes: "What's more, over half of UK shoppers now prefer to save any spare cash rather than spend it², and are also switching spend to the discounters and high street value retail chains. This has caused a relatively slow uptake to the promotions in the last few weeks, but we can expect the shopping momentum to pick up as the seasonal period draws closer and shoppers embrace the festive spirit."

Table: **12-weekly** % share of grocery market spend by retailer and value sales % change



| | % share, 12 weeks to 02 Nov 2019 | % share, 12 weeks to 03 Nov 2018 | % sales change vs. same 12 weeks year ago |
|------------------------------|--|--|---|
| TESCO | 26.4% | 26.8% | -0.2% |
| ASDA | 13.6% | 13.9% | -0.6% |
| SAINSBURY'S | 14.5% | 14.7% | -0.2% |
| MORRISONS | 9.4% | 9.7% | -1.5% |
| CO-OPERATIVE | 5.1% | 5.0% | 3.4% |
| WAITROSE | 4.1% | 4.1% | -0.3% |
| MARKS AND SPENCER | 3.2% | 3.2% | 2.1% |
| ICELAND | 2.3% | 2.3% | 3.5% |
| ALDI | 9.5% | 8.8% | 9.5% |
| LIDL | 6.3% | 5.6% | 13.8% |

The figures in the table are based on 12 weeks sales through to **02 November 2019** compared with the same 12 week period in 2018

Source: Nielsen Total Till, Nielsen Homescan.

Notes

Unless otherwise stated all data is Nielsen Total Till

¹ Nielsen Homescan Total FMCG

² The Conference Board® Global Consumer Confidence™ Survey in collaboration with Nielsen Q3 2019

About Nielsen Homescan Total Till

The Nielsen continuous 14,500 GB household panel is geo-demographically balanced and designed to measure household purchasing through a wide range of channels. It includes all food and drink and non-food spend (e.g. household, personal care, clothing, electrical, cards and stationery, toys, music, general merchandise, etc.) It represents the total amount paid (after all coupons and vouchers), found on the till receipt.

About Nielsen

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