

Press release: Government and CMA to research targeting of consumers through personalised pricing

- New research commissioned to explore how widespread the practice of targeting consumers through personalised pricing and search results is
- Companies can use customer data and technology to offer different prices to consumers based on factors which may include geography and marital status
- Research comes as government held the first meeting of the Consumer Forum with government and regulators this week to discuss what more the government and regulators can do to protect vulnerable consumers

The government and the Competitions and Markets Authority (CMA) are to undertake pioneering new research into the practice of retailers targeting online shoppers and charging people different prices for the same items through personalised pricing, such as holidays, cars and household goods, it has been confirmed today (4 November 2018).

Personalised pricing involves customers spending different amounts when searching for the same products, tailored to the specific customer journey they have taken. The research will explore whether and how personalised pricing makes use of personal data points such as a consumers address, marital status, birthday and travel history.

The government-commissioned research, supported by the CMA, will explore how widespread this practice is, how businesses are applying it through different mediums like search engines, apps or comparison tools and the extent to which personalised pricing is preventing shoppers getting the best deals.

This week the Financial Conduct Authority also announced it will be investigating the issue of personalised pricing for car and home insurance policies after finding hidden discrimination between customers. The regulator's study will assess the scale of the issue, whom it affects, and possible solutions.

Business Secretary Greg Clark said:

Ensuring markets work fairly and in the interests of consumers is a cornerstone of our modern Industrial Strategy, and I am proud to say that our consumer protection regime is among the strongest in the world.

UK businesses are leading the way in harnessing the power of new technologies and new ways of doing business, benefitting consumers and helping them save money. But we are clear that companies should

not be abusing this technology and customer data to treat consumers, particularly vulnerable ones, unfairly.

The research we are undertaking will help us better understand how we can ensure businesses work in a way that is fair to consumers.

Andrea Coscelli, Chief Executive of the Competition and Markets Authority added:

With more of us shopping online, it's important that we understand how advances in technology impact consumers. This personalised pricing research will help us stay at the forefront of emerging technology, so we can understand how best to protect people from unfair practices where they exist.

We will also use the results of the research as part of our ongoing efforts to help vulnerable consumers.

It comes as the Consumer Forum, comprised of CEOs from sector regulators and Ministers from across government, met for the first time this week to discuss how to best work together to protect vulnerable consumers, including addressing Citizen's Advice recent super-complaint on the 'loyalty penalty', and how to ensure consumers can use their own data to get the best deals.

It will play an essential role coordinating action to help consumers and address recommendations made by the National Audit Office in its report on vulnerable consumers in regulated markets last year.

The Consumer Forum is one of the commitments from the Consumer Green Paper and its areas of focus reflects the Government's commitment to ensuring vulnerable consumers are not exploited.

The Forum, chaired by Consumer Minister Kelly Tolhurst, is made up of representatives from the CMA, Ofcom, Ofgem, Ofwat, the Financial Conduct Authority (FCA), the Civil Aviation Authority (CAA) and the Office for Rail and Road (ORR) who will sit alongside Ministers and senior representatives from BEIS, HMT, DCMS, Defra and DfT. It will meet regularly and involve consumer organisations with a particular interest in regulated markets to inform its ambitious work.

Delivering on a commitment from the Consumer Green Paper and in an effort to better support vulnerable consumers, the UK Regulators Network also this week published a report into data sharing between energy and water companies.

The report highlights the significant benefits that can be delivered to vulnerable customers from cross-sector regulatory and industry collaboration and challenges industry to go further in their collaboration, with a

continued focus to overcome challenges around customer consent, staff training and data quality.

[Press release: £2.6 million to improve lives of LGBT people](#)

The money will be used to provide training for teachers on how to spot early signs of bullying and how to intervene appropriately. It will also be used to provide resources to support teachers in delivering lessons on LGBT issues to ensure all pupils feel accepted and included.

The Government Equalities Office has already delivered the anti-bullying programme in 1,200 schools in England – ahead of its March deadline – and is now inviting voluntary and charitable organisations to bid for £1 million of further grant funding to roll out the programme in more schools.

A further £1 million will also be available for organisations to improve LGBT people's health and social care. The LGBT Survey found that at least 16% of survey respondents who accessed or tried to access healthcare services in the last year had a negative experience because of their sexual orientation, and over half of those surveyed who accessed or tried to access mental health services said they had to wait too long.

Minister for Women and Equalities Penny Mordaunt said:

“Everyone in this country should feel safe and happy to be who they are, to love who they love, and to live their lives without judgement or fear.

“That’s why this government is stepping up its work to tackle bullying in schools, to protect more children and to stop hatred from festering and growing into discrimination in adulthood.

“The aim of our Action Plan is that everyone can live safe, happy and healthy lives where they can be themselves without fear of discrimination.”

Today, Ms Mordaunt also announced:

- A new fund of £600,000 will also be available to local community groups, through a new LGBT Sector and Community Development Scheme to help them engage LGBT people in their area. Alongside this, these organisations will receive training and development to help them grow, mature and become more sustainable over time.
- An LGBT Advisory Panel to advise the Government on policy, act as a sounding board, and provide evidence on the experiences of LGBT people.

Stonewall, the LGBT Consortium and the LGBT Foundation have already been appointed to the panel given their longstanding, wide-ranging work on LGBT equality. A further nine members will be recruited through an open process that launches this week.

The LGBT Action Plan, launched in July 2018, made 75 commitments to tackle discrimination and improve the lives of lesbian, gay, bisexual and transgender (LGBT) people in the UK. It was published alongside the results of the largest national survey of LGBT people ever undertaken. The survey, which had over 108,000 respondents, shows LGBT people are experiencing prejudice on a daily basis.

NOTES TO EDITORS:

The LGBT survey was launched in July 2017.

The LGBT Action Plan can be found [here](#)

The Advisory Panel recruitment will launch this Sunday 4 November.

The grant funding will launch during the week of Monday 5 November.

Press release: PM to visit Belgium and France as part of Armistice commemorations

Prime Minister Theresa May will attend Armistice commemorations in Belgium and France next week as part of a series of events marking one hundred years since the end of the First World War.

Looking ahead to the commemorations, the Prime Minister Theresa May said:

Next week will mark one of the most significant moments in our nation's history. One hundred years after the guns fell silent on the Western Front, each and every one of us can pause to reflect on the immense sacrifices that were made by so many.

The killing fields of France and Belgium are scarred by the horrors of war, but the strength and closeness of our relationship today is a testament to the journey our countries have travelled together. I'm proud to represent the immense gratitude of our nation at these commemorations and share these moments of reflection with our friends and partners in Europe.

The Prime Minister's programme includes:

- Visiting the St Symphorien Military Cemetery in Mons in Belgium on Friday. The PM will lay a wreath at the graves of John Parr, the first UK soldier to be killed in 1914, and the last, George Ellison, who was killed on the Western Front at 9.30am before the Armistice became effective at 11am. By coincidence, they are buried opposite each other at the cemetery.
- The PM will then travel to France where she will meet President Macron in Albert, an historic town at the heart of the Somme region, which suffered significant bombardment during the First World War. The visit will give the two leaders the opportunity to reflect on the unique shared history between our two countries and the importance of the Centenary.
They will attend a working lunch before departing for a wreath laying ceremony at the Thiepval Memorial. The memorial is the site of a major annual commemorative event for the Missing of the Somme and bears the names of more than 72,000 officers and forces who died in the battle. A special wreath will be made for the occasion combining poppies and le bleuets, the two national emblems of remembrance for Britain and France.
- On Saturday evening, the Prime Minister will attend The Royal British Legion (RBL) Festival of Remembrance at the Royal Albert Hall. The event, attended by the Royal Family, will see the members of The RBL leading the nation in saying 'thank you' to all who served and sacrificed.
- The Prime Minister will attend and lay a wreath at the Cenotaph ceremony on Remembrance Sunday. German Federal President Frank-Walter Steinmeier will also attend, marking the first time a German leader will lay a wreath at the Cenotaph in an historic act of reconciliation. They will both also attend a special service at Westminster Abbey later that day.

At PMQs this week the Prime Minister said:

What Armistice gives us is an opportunity to come together to remember the immense sacrifices made in war, but also to join with our German friends to mark reconciliation and the peace that exists between our two nations today.

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Published 3 November 2018

[Press release: UK starts selection process for next Poet Laureate](#)

- Advisory panel appointed to advise on recommendation to Her Majesty The Queen
- Next poet laureate will take over from Dame Carol Ann Duffy in May 2019
- Government also announces National Poetry Competition, to increase access to poetry for young people

The process of selecting the UK's next Poet Laureate has begun with the appointment of a new advisory panel, Jeremy Wright, Secretary of State for Digital, Culture, Media and Sport, announced today.

The panel, made up of experts from across the regions and nations of the UK, includes the founder of the Bradford Literature Festival and the organiser of a showcase event with the Jamaican Poet Laureate.

It will offer its suggestions on the scope and purpose of the next Poet Laureate, with a recommendation put to Her Majesty The Queen.

The next Poet Laureate will take over from Dame Carol Ann Duffy, who was appointed in 2009, and was the first woman and first Scot to take up the post.

Representatives from the British Council, Arts Council England and Arts

Council Northern Ireland, Royal Society of Literature, Scottish Poetry Library, Literature Wales, The Poetry Society, Forward Arts Foundation, British Library and Poetry Book Society are also included in the panel.

The news comes as the Government announces the relaunch of the National Poetry Competition in schools from September next year. The competition will give young people a chance to discover more about the UK's rich literary heritage and experience the joy that comes from learning a poem.

Jeremy Wright, Secretary of State for Digital, Culture, Media and Sport, said:

Poetry has the power to connect us to people, places and ideas. It also cuts across social and cultural divides. The important role of Poet Laureate helps to record key moments in British history and celebrates our rich literary tradition.

I pay tribute to Dame Carol Ann Duffy for her dedicated service in championing poetry to the nation. I look forward to working with a new advisory panel, that reflects the whole of the UK and the new ways we consume poetry, in electing her successor.

Nick Gibb, Minister for School Standards, said:

We hope that relaunching the National Poetry Competition will inspire children to read and write poetry and learn from the way the best poets use language.

Our focus on phonics in primary schools is helping more young children open up the joys of the written and spoken word, with 163,000 more six-year-olds on track to be fluent readers than in 2012. This means the world of poetry has never been more accessible to young people.

Since the role of Poet Laureate was established in 1668, incumbents have included William Wordsworth, Ted Hughes and Sir John Betjeman.

When she completes her ten-year term in April 2019, Dame Duffy – well-known for her range of monologues, love poems, children's rhymes and plays – will have written poems to mark the deaths of Henry Allingham and Harry Patch (the last two British soldiers to fight in the First World War), the wedding of the Duke and Duchess of Cambridge, The Queen's Diamond Jubilee, and even David Beckham's injured Achilles in the run-up to the 2010 World Cup.

She has also just published 'The Wound In Time', a poem which seeks to remember those who died during the First World War, ahead of commemorations that will mark the centenary of Armistice Day next weekend.

Dame Duffy has spent much of her tenure boosting the national conversation

about poetry, carrying out a range of visits to schools and festivals, and launching the Ted Hughes Award for New Work in Poetry, which seeks to recognise excellence in poetry, highlighting outstanding contributions made by poets to our cultural life.

Following the closure of nominations in December 2018, the advisory panel will agree a shortlist of candidates for consideration by the Secretary of State for Digital, Culture, Media and Sport, before a final recommendation is put forward by the Prime Minister to Her Majesty The Queen in the Spring. A formal announcement is expected to be made in May 2019. The role will be for a ten year period.

ENDS

Notes to Editor:

The news follows National Poetry Day research recently published by [the National Literacy Trust](#), which highlighted how poetry continues to transcend social backgrounds and the changing way children engage with it, finding that:

- Children who receive free school meals are more likely to say that they read, listen to or watch poetry in their spare time (34%) than those who don't (23%)
- Almost half (46%) of all children and young people said they consume or create poetry in their spare time

Of this group:

- 47% read, listen to or watch poetry in their spare time at least once a week
- 32% of "young poetry consumers" now read poetry online or on a phone, and 31% now watch it as a video
- 68% said they read poetry because it makes them feel creative
- 66% said they write poetry because it is a great way to express themselves and their feelings
- 52% write or perform poetry in their spare time because it is different to other forms of writing they do in school

Those surveyed made a range of suggestions on how to make poetry more appealing, such as "including more narrative, making it more like a story", "make it more relevant and modern", and "find more poems about sports or video games".

Membership of the Poet Laureate Steering Group:

- Alex Higgs, Department for Digital, Culture, Media and Sport (Chair)
- Sarah Crown, Director of Literature, Arts Council England
- Cortina Butler, Director of Literature, British Council
- Molly Rosenberg, Director, Royal Society of Literature
- Judith Palmer, Director, The Poetry Society
- Sophie O'Neill, Managing Director, Poetry Book Society

- Nicola Solomon, CEO, Society of Authors
- Susannah Herbert, Executive Director, Forward Arts Foundation
- Chloe Garner, Artistic Director, Ledbury Poetry Festival
- Jamie Andrews, Head of Culture and Learning, British Library
- Lleucu Siencyn, Chief Executive, Literature Wales
- Syima Aslam, Director, Bradford Literature Festival
- Chris Gribble, Chief Executive, National Centre for Writing
- Asif Khan, Director, Scottish Poetry Library
- Damian Smyth, Head of Drama and Literature, Arts Council Northern Ireland

The Laureateship was a lifetime appointment until 1999. Following the death of Ted Hughes, it was decided that the appointment should be for a fixed term of ten years, to give more poets the opportunity to serve.

The appointment is made by Her Majesty The Queen, acting on the advice of Her Majesty's Government.

The position is honorary and it is up to the individual poet to decide whether or not to produce poetry for national occasions or Royal events.

The Ted Hughes Award for New Work in Poetry was devised by Carol Ann Duffy, and is supported by The Poetry Society to recognise outstanding contributions made by poets to our cultural life. The £5,000 annual prize money is awarded by Carol Ann Duffy, funded with the honorarium the Poet Laureate traditionally receives from Her Majesty The Queen.