

Mergers between window blind companies raises competition concerns

Hunter Douglas is a leading global supplier of window coverings, which generated global sales of \$3.6 billion in 2018. Hunter Douglas owns and operates a wide range of window coverings businesses, including Blinds2Go and Hillarys in the UK. 247 Home Furnishings Ltd also sells a range of window coverings, including curtains, shutters and blinds, across the UK.

Hunter Douglas originally obtained a minority interest in 247 Home Furnishings (247) in 2013, although this was not publicly disclosed at the time. The CMA's investigation has therefore considered the impact of this initial deal alongside Hunter Douglas's subsequent purchase of the entire shareholding in 247 last year.

Hunter Douglas and 247 are 2 of the leading suppliers of online made-to-measure blinds in the UK. This is a growing market in which customers 'click to order' their own bespoke blinds online but do their own measurement and fitting. Since its establishment in 2000, Blinds2Go has become by far the largest retailer of online made-to-measure blinds in the UK. 247 is one of the other largest companies in this market and competed closely with Blinds2Go. Most other specialist retailers are much smaller and less well-established than the merging businesses, and competition from large retailers of window coverings, like Next and John Lewis, is limited. The CMA therefore found that the merger could leave customers for online made-to-measure blinds with few alternative suppliers.

Colin Raftery, CMA Senior Director said:

Sales of blinds online continue to increase, with people in the UK spending over £150 million on made to measure blinds last year.

Hunter Douglas's Blinds2Go business is already by far the largest supplier, so any deal that results in it buying up one of its closest competitors clearly gives cause for concern.

As competition from other suppliers appears to be limited, we're concerned that the merger between these two companies could leave people paying more or receiving lower quality products or customer service.

Hunter Douglas and 247 Home Furnishings Ltd must now address the CMA's concerns within 5 working days. If they are unable to do so, the two-stage deal will be referred for an in-depth (Phase 2) investigation.

For more information, visit the [Hunter Douglas N.V. / 247 Home Furnishings Ltd merger inquiry](#) web page.

For media enquiries, contact the CMA press office on 020 3738 6460 or press@cma.gov.uk.