

# NEWS



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## Bread sales 'will rise'

Retailers believe bread and baked goods sales will continue to grow despite a market report predicting long-term decline of these products over the next four years.

Market research conducted by analysts Mintel found total sales of pre-packed bread declined by 6% during 2014-15, attributed to price wars between supermarkets and the growth of discount chains. It also forecast a 5.3% decline in value sales and a 7% decline in volume sales for bread by 2020.

Harj Dhasee, owner of Nisa Mickleton Village Stores in Gloucestershire, said: "Volumes have been steady on loaves but value sales are down slightly.

"But we've been working with our local bread supplier and value sales are up on their products. I don't think we'll see a dramatic fall over the next five years."

Nisa store owner Peter Mann added: "Our bread sales have grown over the last year, despite the Co-op next door offering Warburtons at two loaves for £2."

## 'Time to cover up'

Campaigners in Scotland have issued a fresh call for a cover-up of sexual imagery in 'lads' mags', top shelf material and other revealing covers, claiming that they drive 'revenge porn'.

The calls come from The White Ribbon group - male campaigners working to end violence against women - who have called for a reduction in the "display and normalisation of sexualised images".

The call was welcomed by Scottish retailer Waqar Chaudry, of Milton Stores in Glasgow, who does not stock explicit titles "on a point of principle".

"I am in agreement with this call for a cover-up. These magazines debase women," he said.



## Pike's Newsagents keeps Welsh tradition alive

Meryl and David Williams of Pike's Newsagents in Porthmadog carried on the Welsh tradition of "Calennig" by inviting children to sing in store to welcome in the new year in return for treats. "This old Welsh tradition means a lot to our community. Years ago, pennies would be thrown from windows above shops and banks and children would be scrambling on the pavements trying to reach them. Some of us are doing our best to keep the tradition of 'Calennig' going," Mr Williams said.

**'Lock in lower rates'** One retailer 'gobsmacked' over potential savings of more than £7,000

# Shop around for energy - save up to 30% on bills

by Gurpreet Samrai

Retailers could be missing out on savings of up to 30% by not shopping around for the best gas and electricity deals, an independent consultant has warned.

Tom Collier, of Energy 4, told RN oil prices have hit an 11-year low, leading to reduced gas and electricity prices, but many store owners are not taking advantage of the lower rates.

It comes after Londis brand director John Pattison urged independent retailers to act now to reduce operational costs to bridge

the "significant" National Living Wage shortfall.

"Businesses could save up to 30% on their renewals. But if they don't look at their bills or can't be bothered to change supplier because it's too much hassle, they'll just carry on being rolled over with their current supplier. This means the price will keep going up," Mr Collier said.

The independent consultancy brokerage looked at four RN readers' bills. The biggest saving was calculated for Sutton retailers Hiton and

Ushma Amin, of Londis North Cheam, who have recently renewed their contract with the supplier they have been with since 2014. The saving for their store, if it took a four year contract with a different supplier, would be a total of £7,292.60 during that period.

Mrs Amin said: "I'm gobsmacked. That's a big saving that could help cover staff wages and other costs."

Mr Collier said retailers need to be aware of when their contracts are due for renewal and start shop-

ping around early for the best prices. He also advised entering longer contracts to lock in lower rates.

"You have your fridges on all the time, CCTV and lights, so there's a lot of money to be saved," he said.

"Retailers can start looking at better rates now and lock them in to start six months before their contract ends, because in a few months if the prices go up, they would've missed those savings."

● Mr Collier finds savings in four retailers' bills, *Your Issue*, page 21.

## Thinktank reveals NLW 'tough' areas

Implementing the National Living Wage will be toughest in lower-paying regions such as Sheffield, Nottingham and Birmingham, according to new analysis published by thinktank the Resolution Foundation.

The analysis shows 28% of employees in Sheffield will be affected - more than any other major city in the UK - 27% in Nottingham and 26% in Birmingham, in contrast to 13% in Oxford and 15% in Cambridge.

Politicians are being called on to help employers prepare to meet the new legislation. Adam Corlett, economic analyst at the foundation, said: "National, local and new regional politicians must work closely with employers to ensure the National Living Wage is a success."

However, Jai Singh of Sheffield's Go Local Extra in Sheffield, said: "We already pay above the National Living Wage because we expect a high level of service from our staff members, but for a store that isn't already paying it, I think it would be an issue."