# Lib Dems propose law compelling supermarkets to disclose shrinkflation on packaging



Amidst rising concerns about "shrinkflation," the Liberal Democrats have proposed legislation requiring supermarkets to disclose when they reduce the size of packaged goods while raising prices. This initiative emerges as part of a broader push to enhance consumer transparency, driven by mounting public outcry over deceptive pricing practices.

Recent research from Compare the Market indicates that commonly purchased items, including digestive biscuits, butter, crisps, and chocolate bars, have not only decreased in size but also seen increases in unit costs. This troubling trend has garnered significant attention, particularly given the backdrop of an ongoing cost-of-living crisis that has squeezed household budgets across the UK.

Clive Jones, the Lib Dem trade spokesman, underlined the urgency of the situation by stating, “The scourge of shrinkflation needs to be exposed.” He expressed concern that consumers are being short-changed: “Shoppers have been hammered during a cost-of-living crisis, all while massive companies and big supermarket chains are forcing them to pay more for less.” This sentiment is echoed by recent surveys indicating that nearly 80% of UK consumers are worried about shrinkflation, with many believing these practices to be blatant rip-offs.

International responses to shrinkflation may serve as a model for the UK. For example, French supermarket chain Carrefour has taken proactive steps by implementing warning labels on products affected by shrinkflation. These labels explicitly inform customers when a product’s size has decreased but its price has risen, thereby putting pressure on manufacturers to reconsider their pricing strategies. The effectiveness of this initiative appears to resonate with UK consumers who are clamouring for similar transparency in product labelling.

Furthermore, findings from a survey by Barclays show that 81% of UK shoppers express concern over shrinkflation. This growing apprehension has affected buying habits, with 29% of consumers opting to purchase their favourite products less frequently and 18% switching to brands that haven't altered their sizes. Such behavioural shifts indicate a significant consumer backlash against the lack of transparency among retailers.

The proposed legislation aims to amend the Product Regulation and Metrology Bill, requiring that any changes in product size be clearly communicated to shoppers for a minimum of 60 days. This proposal is part of a wider push by the government to regulate unfair commercial practices and ensure consumers are well-informed. A spokesperson for the Department for Business and Trade affirmed the commitment to consumer protection, stating, “We’re bringing in strict new laws next year to make sure businesses use clearer labelling for prices on supermarket shelves.”

In parallel, there has been criticism in Parliament directed at supermarkets for their lack of transparency regarding shrinkflation. Labour MP Barry Gardiner highlighted the necessity for consumers to be informed about product downsizing, further amplifying the call for changes in communication practices between retailers and consumers. As such, the upcoming vote in the House of Commons will be crucial, potentially setting a precedent for consumer rights amidst an evolving economic landscape.

In a climate where consumer trust is wavering, the proposed legislative changes could serve as a stepping stone towards greater accountability in the retail sector. Ultimately, the goal is not only to safeguard consumer interests but also to instigate a shift in corporate behaviour towards fairness and transparency in product pricing.

### 📌 Reference Map:

* Paragraph 1 – [[1]](https://www.irishnews.com/news/uk/calls-to-legally-require-supermarkets-to-reveal-shrinkflation-to-customers-SCMBWPDSGBOL3KZRT4BNT4YMLY/), [[4]](https://www.telegraph.co.uk/business/2024/03/04/food-companies-must-be-forced-to-display-shrinkflation-labe/)
* Paragraph 2 – [[1]](https://www.irishnews.com/news/uk/calls-to-legally-require-supermarkets-to-reveal-shrinkflation-to-customers-SCMBWPDSGBOL3KZRT4BNT4YMLY/), [[2]](https://www.grocerygazette.co.uk/2023/09/13/shrinkflation-warning-labels/), [[5]](https://www.standard.co.uk/news/politics/supermarkets-inflation-shrinkflation-smaller-food-manufacturers-hunt-b1159397.html)
* Paragraph 3 – [[3]](https://www.theguardian.com/business/2023/sep/14/carrefour-puts-shrinkflation-price-warnings-on-food-to-shame-brands), [[6]](https://www.standard.co.uk/business/money/more-than-80-of-shoppers-concerned-about-supermarket-shrinkflation-survey-b1093478.html)
* Paragraph 4 – [[4]](https://www.telegraph.co.uk/business/2024/03/04/food-companies-must-be-forced-to-display-shrinkflation-labe/), [[6]](https://www.standard.co.uk/business/money/more-than-80-of-shoppers-concerned-about-supermarket-shrinkflation-survey-b1093478.html)
* Paragraph 5 – [[1]](https://www.irishnews.com/news/uk/calls-to-legally-require-supermarkets-to-reveal-shrinkflation-to-customers-SCMBWPDSGBOL3KZRT4BNT4YMLY/), [[5]](https://www.standard.co.uk/news/politics/supermarkets-inflation-shrinkflation-smaller-food-manufacturers-hunt-b1159397.html)

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## Bibliography

1. <https://www.irishnews.com/news/uk/calls-to-legally-require-supermarkets-to-reveal-shrinkflation-to-customers-SCMBWPDSGBOL3KZRT4BNT4YMLY/> - Please view link - unable to able to access data
2. <https://www.grocerygazette.co.uk/2023/09/13/shrinkflation-warning-labels/> - In September 2023, UK supermarkets were urged to implement warning labels on products affected by 'shrinkflation', a practice where product sizes decrease while prices remain the same or increase. This call followed similar actions by French supermarkets, such as Carrefour, which began labelling products that had reduced in size but increased in price. The initiative aimed to inform consumers and pressure manufacturers to reconsider their pricing strategies. The article highlights the growing concern over transparency in product sizing and pricing within the retail sector.
3. <https://www.theguardian.com/business/2023/sep/14/carrefour-puts-shrinkflation-price-warnings-on-food-to-shame-brands> - In September 2023, French supermarket chain Carrefour began placing labels on products that had decreased in size but increased in price, a practice known as 'shrinkflation'. The labels read: 'This product has seen its volume or weight fall and the effective price from the supplier rise.' Carrefour's move aimed to pressure major consumer goods suppliers like Nestlé, PepsiCo, and Unilever to address the issue ahead of contract negotiations. The initiative sought to inform consumers and encourage manufacturers to rethink their pricing policies.
4. <https://www.telegraph.co.uk/business/2024/03/04/food-companies-must-be-forced-to-display-shrinkflation-labe/> - In March 2024, a survey by Barclays revealed that nearly 80% of UK consumers were concerned about 'shrinkflation', where product sizes are reduced without a corresponding decrease in price. The survey indicated that consumers wanted food manufacturers to disclose such changes on labels. This concern was echoed by the consumer rights group Which?, which found that items like tea bags, crisps, and mouthwash had shrunk in size without lowering prices. The article discusses the growing demand for transparency in product labelling to protect consumers.
5. <https://www.standard.co.uk/news/politics/supermarkets-inflation-shrinkflation-smaller-food-manufacturers-hunt-b1159397.html> - In May 2024, UK supermarkets faced criticism in Parliament for not being transparent about 'shrinkflation', where product sizes are reduced while prices remain the same or increase. Labour MP Barry Gardiner questioned Food Minister Mark Spencer on why consumers weren't informed when products were downsized. The discussion highlighted that many consumers felt deceived by these practices, with around 75% believing shrinkflation was a 'rip-off'. The article underscores the need for clearer communication between retailers and consumers regarding product changes.
6. <https://www.standard.co.uk/business/money/more-than-80-of-shoppers-concerned-about-supermarket-shrinkflation-survey-b1093478.html> - In July 2023, a survey by Barclays found that 81% of UK shoppers were concerned about 'shrinkflation', where product sizes decrease without a corresponding price reduction. The survey revealed that 29% of consumers were buying their favourite products less often, and 18% switched to brands that hadn't changed their sizes. The article highlights the widespread consumer apprehension over shrinkflation and its impact on purchasing habits, emphasising the need for transparency and fair pricing in the retail sector.
7. <https://www.telegraph.co.uk/news/2023/08/05/super-shrinkflation-food-giants-cut-sizes-raise-price/> - In August 2023, reports emerged of 'super-shrinkflation', where food manufacturers reduced product sizes while increasing prices. Examples included Hellman's mayonnaise, which decreased from 800g to 600g and rose in price from £3.29 to £3.75, and McVitie's digestive biscuits, which reduced from 27 to 24 biscuits per pack while increasing in price. The article discusses the consumer impact of these practices and the broader implications for the food industry, highlighting the need for greater transparency and fairness in product pricing.