

Submission 21 - Fit Footwear

Good afternoon

Thanks for your letter regarding the retail review.

I would like to reply to your request for feedback as follows:

I have been trading at this current location for approximately ten years and have seen a huge difference in shopping habits.

Like most businesses located in St Helier, we have problems of accessibility with parking not being freely available and costing too much.

We sell to adults and children and constantly hear our customers complain about this. Online retailing has created a way for people to buy easily and get goods delivered to their front door in a matter of days.

They are also offered a much bigger choice and competitive prices than small local businesses could ever compete with.

The only way we can fight back is to offer superior customer service.

This means for some of our over 60's, offering them 10% discount and the chance to come in for a chat, as well as buying something.

For many, we are possibly the only people they speak to all day.

For parents, it means making sure all kids' footwear is high quality and properly fitted.

Unfortunately, we have some who feel it's OK to let me measure, suggest suitable styles and fit their children and then ask me the name of the shoe and size so they can see if they can buy them cheaper on Amazon. In some cases, they check on their phones whilst they are in the shop! Not sure what the answer is to that...

As far as what the government can do to help. I would like to see GST removed from children's footwear- in the UK VAT isn't applicable.

This means to remain competitive, I have to absorb the 5% myself.

My landlord increases my rent annually and does the bare minimum to keep the building in a good state of repair.

I would also like to mention how difficult it is to find part-time staff.

I need people who can work weekday afternoons but, as soon as they realise it would only be about 16 hours weekly, nobody is interested.

This would mean earning about £150 weekly. They tell me they can earn more by not working!

Kind regards

Audrey

Audrey Laurens-Chalmers
Fit Footwear Central