**Central Statistics Office**

PREMIER’S OFFICE

**GOVERNMENT OF THE VIRGIN ISLANDS**

CONSUMER PRICE INDEX BULLETIN

APRIL 2017

Rate of Inflation at a Glance

For the month of April, the Consumer Price Index stood at a price relative of 106.82. This position leaves the index up by approximately 1.7% in comparison to April 2016 (105.04), but down by approximately 0.2% in comparison to the previous month March 2017.

The upward movement in the annual index was due mainly to the increases in the prices, fees and charges of items or services in the following subgroups: Communication; Miscellaneous Goods & Services; Education; Recreation and Culture; Alcoholic Beverages; Clothing and Footwear; Transportation; Furniture and Household Equipment; and. Health Services.

The 0.2% decline from the previous month to month index came mostly from the decline in the following subgroups: Food & Non-Alcoholic Beverages; Clothing & Footwear; Furniture & Household Equipment; Health Services and Restaurant & Hotel Services.

Annual Comparison

**Communication:** The increase prices of services such as: cellular phone plans and service (14.3% increase), home internet fees (5.6%) and cellular phone devices (5.1%) caused a 9.3% increase in the Communication subgroup.

**Miscellaneous Goods and Services:** Miscellaneous goods and services subgroup recorded a 6.4% increase due to the movement in the price of personal care items (shampoo, deodorant, toilet soap, toothpaste and lotion).

**Education:** TheEducation group increased by 6.2% due to the increase of tuition for primary school 14.3%; tertiary education fees 12.4% and secondary education fees 0.8%.

**Recreation and Culture:** The subgroup rose by 3.7% as a result of increases in the prices of books and magazines (up 5.6%); video and computer games (up 4.9%); computers and computer software (up 1.8%); electronic appliances (up 1.7%); and tricycles and bicycles (up 2.1%).

**Alcoholic Beverages:** The Alcohol subgroup reflected a 3.5% increase as prices of all alcoholic indicated some change in prices as government looks to the increase in fees and charges on alcohol.

**Clothing and Footwear:** This group’s prices increased by 3.1% as the price of clothing and footwear increased (up 2.9% and 2.2% respectively).

**Transportation:** Transportation subgroup raised by 3.1% as the price of fuel, vehicle maintenance items (8.6%), taxi fare (11.1%); and airfare (5.5%) all reflected upward movements.

**Furniture and Household Equipment:** The 0.7% increase in this subgroup was mainly due to an increase in the price of furniture which rose by 5.5% and household supplies by 0.9%to a less effect.

**Health Services:** TheHealth services subgroup continues to reflect an increase in the index as it move by 0.7 % mainly due to prices for pharmaceutical products (3.4%) and consultation by a general physician (3.3%) are still high.

**Negative or Non-movement in the Index subgroups.**

The following subgroup had little or no effect on the general outcome of the index as changes within this subgroup were not significant to change the outcome.

**Restaurant and Hotel Services:** Restaurant and Hotel Services subgroup declined by 0.2% mainly due to a fall in the prices of accommodation services (down1.5%) and meals and snacks (down 10.8%).

**Food and Non-Alcoholic Beverages:** The prices of food and beverage decline by 2.9% as a result of the average price of items in the following food groups: bread & cereals, fresh or frozen meats, eggs, fruits, vegetables, sugar and condiments.

**Housing and Utilities:** Housing and utility subgroup decreased slightly by 0.8% mainly due to a decline in the cost of rent for owner occupied housing (down 33.4%); and material for household maintenance (down 9.3%).

Monthly Comparison

While there was a positive or increase within the annual comparison of the price index, the index reflected a negative growth between March 2017 and April 2017 (See table 1below) as the index fell by 0.2%. This negative growth was contributed to by the following subgroups: Food and Non-Alcoholic Beverages (-1.7%) Clothing and Footwear (0.2%); Furniture and Household Equipment; Health Services and Restaurant and Hotel Services (0.7%).

***TABLE 1***

***CONSUMER PRICE INDEX: MONTHLY AND ANNUAL COMPARISONS***

***Base Period January 2012 =100***

|  |  |  |  |  |  |  |
| --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- |
|   |  | **April**  | **March**  | **Monthly** | **April**  | **Annual** |
| **Subgroups** | **Weight** | **2017** | **2017** | **Comparison** | **2016** | **Comparison** |
| Food & Non-Alcoholic Beverages  | 147 | 105.70 | 107.57 | -1.74 | 108.81 | -2.86 |
| Alcoholic Beverages  | 14 | 109.47 | 109.04 | 0.39 | 105.76 | 3.51 |
| Clothing & Footwear | 49 | 112.78 | 112.99 | -0.19 | 109.33 | 3.15 |
| Housing & Utilities  | 298 | 101.15 | 101.05 | 0.10 | 101.97 | -0.81 |
| Furniture & Household Equipment  | 39 | 104.51 | 104.54 | -0.03 | 103.75 | 0.73 |
| Health Services  | 32 | 128.86 | 128.93 | -0.06 | 128.34 | 0.41 |
| Transportation | 128 | 97.20 | 96.35 | 0.87 | 94.26 | 3.12 |
| Communication  | 79 | 121.94 | 121.94 | 0.00 | 111.54 | 9.32 |
| Recreation and Culture | 35 | 123.69 | 123.69 | 0.00 | 119.34 | 3.65 |
| Education  | 26 | 110.84 | 110.84 | 0.00 | 104.36 | 6.22 |
| Restaurant and Hotel Services  | 49 | 102.59 | 103.32 | -0.71 | 102.79 | -0.19 |
| Miscellaneous Goods and Services  | 104 | 111.20 | 111.15 | 0.05 | 104.49 | 6.42 |
| **All Groups**  | **1000** | **106.82** | **106.99** | **-0.16** | **105.04** | **1.69** |