 **Central Statistics Office**

PREMIER’S OFFICE

 **GOVERNMENT OF THE VIRGIN ISLANDS**

CONSUMER PRICE INDEX BULLETIN

 FEBRUARY 2017

Rate of Inflation at a Glance

For the month of February, the Consumer Price Index stood at 106.83, up by approximately 1.8% in comparison to February 2016. This rise was due to the increases in the annual average prices of items in the following subgroups: Communication; Health Services; Education; Recreation and Culture; Clothing and Footwear; Furniture and Household Equipment; Restaurant and Hotel Services; and Food and Beverages.

Annual Comparison

**Communication:** The prices of items in the communication subgroup increased by 9.3% as the average cost for cellular phone service, home internet and cellular phones rose by 14.3%, 5.6% and 5.1% respectively.

**Health Services:** Health services prices rose by 7.1 % mainly due an increase in the average price of pharmaceutical products (up 3.4%) and consultation of a general physician (up 3.3%).

**Education:** The average price of education increased by 6.2% due to an increase of 14.3% in the cost of tuition for primary school; 12.4% in tertiary education and 10.8% in secondary education.

**Recreation and Culture:** Prices of items in this subgroup rose by 5.7% as a result of increases in the average price of books and magazines (up 5.6%); video and computer games (up 4.9%); computers and computer software (up 1.8%); electronics (up 1.7%); and tricycles and bicycles (up 2.1%).

**Clothing and Footwear:** This group’s prices increased by 4.0% as the price of clothing and footwear increased. (up 2.9% and 2.2% respectively).

**Furniture and Household Equipment:** The 3.6% increase in this index was mainly due to an increase in the price of furniture which rose by 5.5% and household supplies by 0.9%.

**Restaurant and Hotel Services:** Restaurant and Hotel Services prices increased by 2.0% mainly due to a rise in the average price of accommodation services (up 6.3%) and meals and snacks bought out (up 3.7%).

**Food and Beverages:** The prices of food and beverage goods increased by 1.4% as a result of increases in the average price of items in the following food groups: alcoholic beverages and tobacco (up 3.5%); non-alcoholic beverages (up 2.9%); other food products (up 2.5%); fruits (up 1.9%); oils and fats (up 1.8%); and meat items (up 0.7%).

**Transportation:** Transportation prices fell by 0.5% as the average price of vehicle maintenance items declined by 8.6% and airfare by 5.5%.

**Housing and Utilities:** Housing and utility prices decreased slightly by 0.3% 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%)

**Miscellaneous Goods and Services:** Miscellaneous goods and services items recorded a slight reduction of 0.2% in prices due to a decrease in the price of personal care items (down 0.6%).

Monthly Comparison

There were no significant changes between the prices of goods and services between January and February 2017. Prices on average declined slightly by 0.1%. (See table 1)

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| --- |
| **CONSUMER PRICE INDEX: MONTHLY AND ANNUAL COMPARISONS** |
| **(January 2012=100)** |
|  |  |  |  |  |  |  |
|   |  | **February**  | **January**  | **Monthly** | **February** | **Annual** |
| **Subgroups** | **Weight** | **2017** | **2017** | **Comparison** | **2016** | **Comparison** |
| Food & Non-Alcoholic Beverages  | 147 | 108.42 | 109.62 | -1.10 | 108.25 | 0.16 |
| Alcoholic Beverages  | 14 | 108.71 | 109.49 | -0.71 | 105.94 | 2.62 |
| Clothing & Footwear | 49 | 112.99 | 113.20 | -0.19 | 108.70 | 3.95 |
| Housing & Utilities  | 298 | 101.11 | 101.00 | 0.11 | 101.39 | -0.27 |
| Furniture & Household Equipment  | 39 | 105.30 | 105.51 | -0.20 | 101.68 | 3.55 |
| Health Services  | 32 | 128.93 | 129.06 | -0.10 | 120.43 | 7.06 |
| Transportation | 128 | 98.63 | 97.72 | 0.93 | 99.17 | -0.54 |
| Communication  | 79 | 121.94 | 121.94 | 0.00 | 111.54 | 9.32 |
| Recreation and Culture | 35 | 124.90 | 124.90 | 0.00 | 118.21 | 5.66 |
| Education  | 26 | 110.84 | 110.84 | 0.00 | 104.36 | 6.22 |
| Restaurant and Hotel Services  | 49 | 103.32 | 103.32 | 0.00 | 101.32 | 1.98 |
| Miscellaneous Goods and Services  | 104 | 104.75 | 105.08 | -0.31 | 104.99 | -0.23 |
| All Groups  | 1000 | 106.83 | 106.92 | -0.09 | 104.99 | 1.75 |