

UNITED KINGDOM · GROCERY

What AI tells shoppers about UK supermarkets

We asked ChatGPT, Google AI Overviews and Claude the questions shoppers actually ask about price, quality, complaints and suppliers — then counted who they named, and how they spoke about them.

Shoppers are asking the machine, not the search results page

54%

of UK adults now use AI tools

ChatGPT, Copilot or Gemini. It rises to 79% of 16–24s and 74% of 25–34s.

Ofcom, April 2026

5×

growth in UK visits to ChatGPT

1.8 billion UK visits in eight months, up from 368 million the year before.

Ofcom, December 2025

48%

of tracked searches return an AI Overview

Up 58% year on year. The answer now sits above the links.

BrightEdge tracker, early 2026

The take-home: a shopper asking “which supermarket is cheapest?” increasingly gets one answer naming a handful of brands, not ten blue links. Whatever that answer says is what they hear — and no one on the comms team wrote it.

Five things shoppers actually ask about

Each subject put to all three assistants, repeatedly. Who came out of it well, and who came out of it badly.

THE SUBJECT

COMES OUT WELL

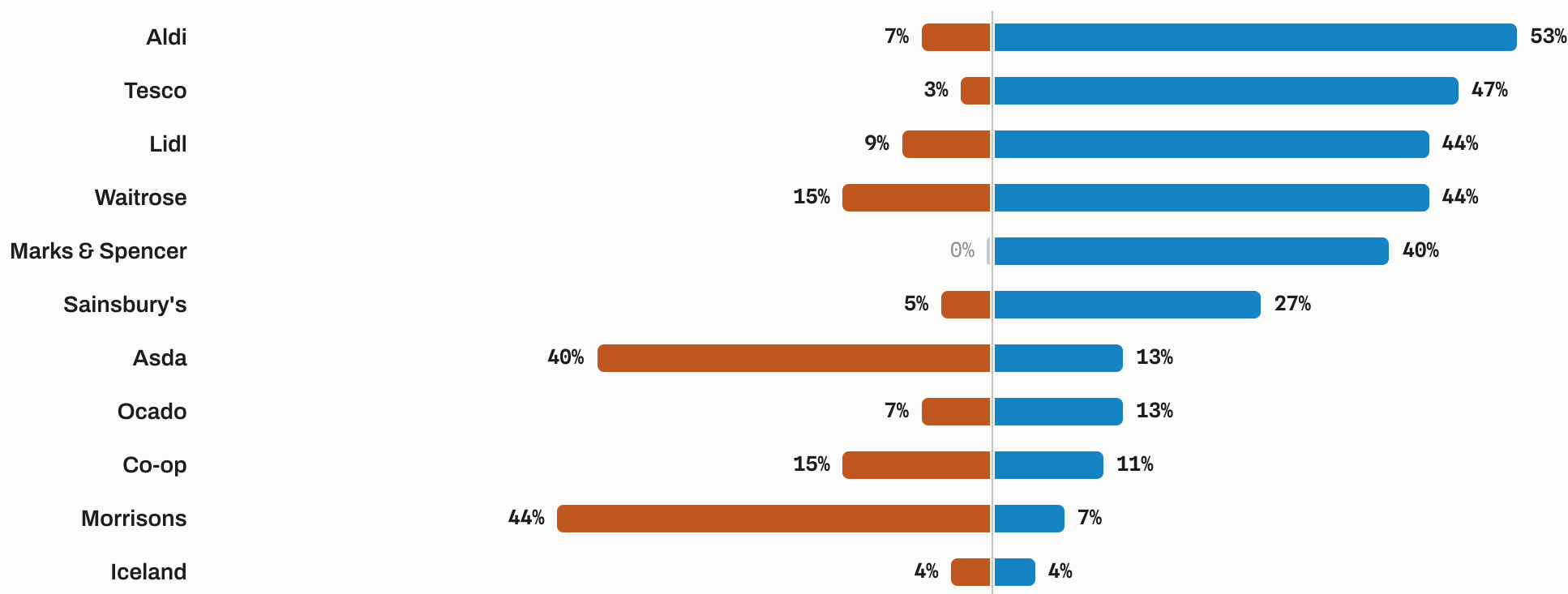
COMES OUT BADLY

“Which supermarket is cheapest for a weekly shop?”	AldiLidl	WaitroseOcado
“Which are best and worst for quality and value?”	AldiLidl	AsdaMorrisons
“Who handles complaints best and worst?”	M&SWaitrose	AsdaMorrisons
“Who treats farmers and suppliers best?”	WaitroseTesco	Morrisons
“Are supermarkets profiteering from food prices?”	No grocer praised	No grocer singled out

The take-home: Aldi and Lidl win the money questions. Waitrose and M&S win the service ones. Asda and Morrisons are criticised on both quality and complaints. And on food prices, no grocer comes out of it either way.

Who the assistants back, and who they argue with

Share of AI answers that speak **well** of each grocer, and share that speak **badly** of it.



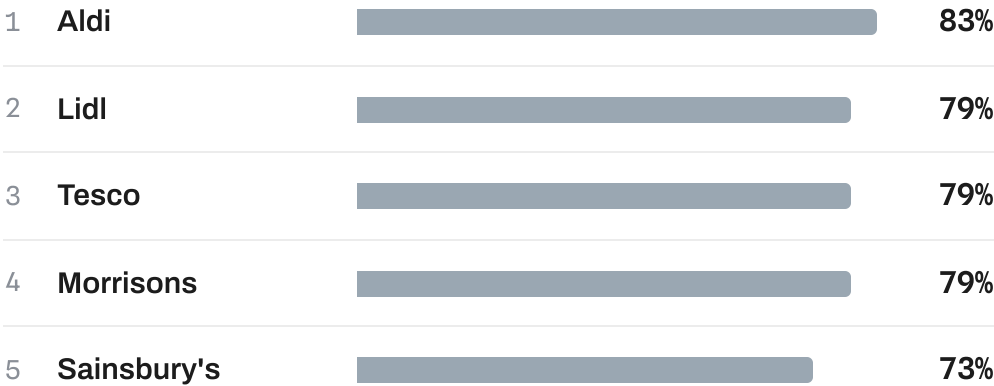
The take-home: Aldi is the assistants' default recommendation, and M&S is the only grocer never spoken of badly. Morrisons and Asda are the two the assistants actively warn shoppers about — not because they are invisible, but because of what is said when they appear.

Being named is not the same as being recommended

The five grocers AI names most often, against the five it speaks well of most often.

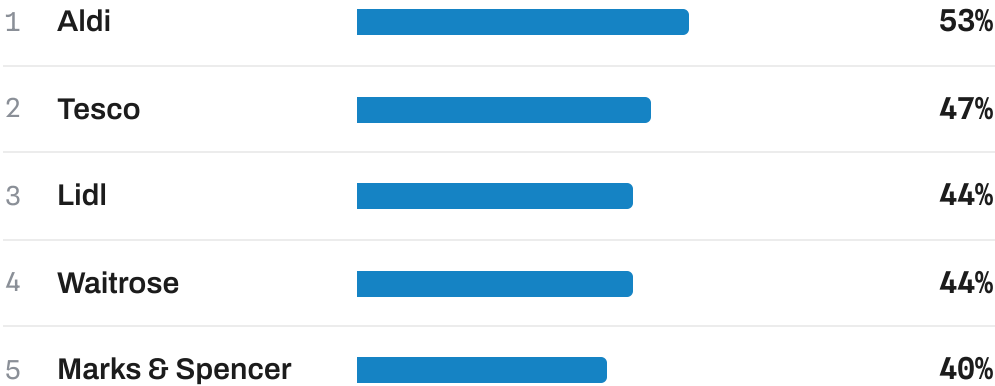
NAMED MOST OFTEN

Share of answers naming each grocer



SPOKEN WELL OF MOST OFTEN

Share of answers speaking well of each grocer



The take-home: Morrisons is named in as many answers as Tesco, and appears on neither recommendation list. Visibility in AI is easy to win and easy to misread — a brand can be everywhere in the answer and still be the cautionary example in it.

No supermarket has one reputation. It has five.



100%

Aldi owns the cheapest shop.

Named in every answer about the cheapest weekly shop, and spoken well of in every one.

87%

Asda and Morrisons are the two AI warns shoppers about.

Criticised in 87% of answers on quality, and 87% on complaints.

93%

Waitrose is two brands at once.

The most trusted on suppliers — and criticised on price in almost half of price answers.

93%

M&S wins on service without ever competing on price.

Best of any grocer on complaints, and never named on the cheapest-shop question at all.

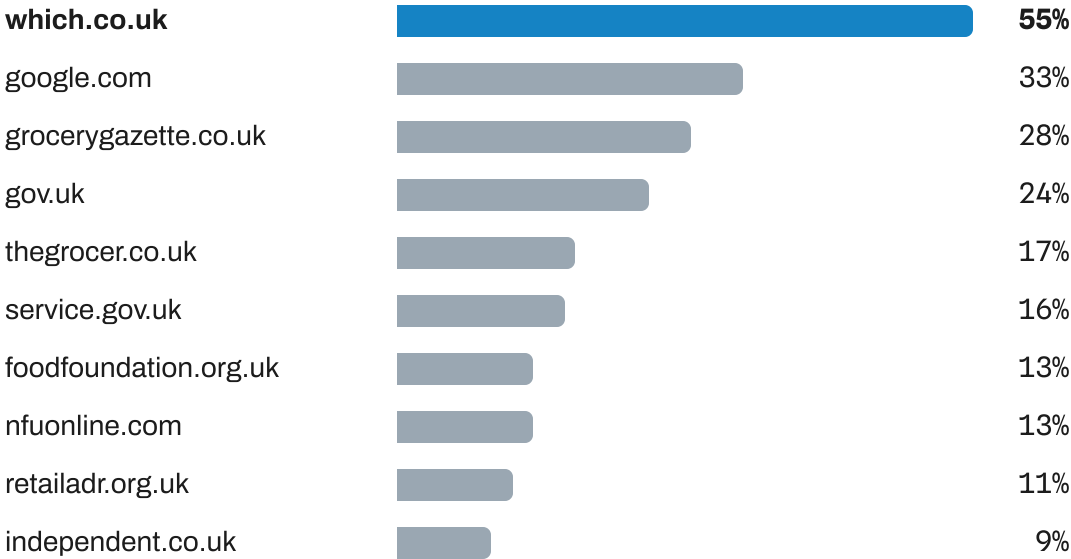
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Nobody owns the profiteering question.

Asked whether supermarkets profit unfairly from food prices, AI singles out no grocer at all — for praise or for blame.

One consumer champion writes half the answers

Share of AI answers citing each site.



THE BLIND SPOT

4%

is the most any grocer's own website is cited

Every supermarket's own site put together shapes a fraction of what the assistants say. Which?, the trade press and government pages do the rest.

The take-home: the answer is assembled from third-party evidence, not from brand-owned content. If a grocer wants a different answer, the work sits with the sources the assistants trust — not with its own homepage.

The answer is becoming the shop

Today AI tells shoppers where to go. Soon it will do the going.

NOW

It recommends

The assistant names a few supermarkets. The shopper reads the answer, then goes off and buys wherever they like.

BEING BUILT NOW

It starts shopping

Google, OpenAI, Amazon, Microsoft and the big commerce platforms are all building ways for an assistant to use a retailer's site itself — searching, checking stock, filling a basket — with the shopper never clicking anything.

WHAT THAT CHANGES

The recommendation is the sale

When the assistant does the shopping, being the name it trusts stops being an impression and starts being the transaction.

The take-home: this is early, and nobody has settled how it will work — there are rival versions from Google, OpenAI, Amazon and others, and none is switched on by default. What is not in doubt is the direction, or that it runs on the same evidence this report measures. Whoever the assistant already trusts is who it will buy from.

Opportunities for your communications team

01 Focus on the sources AI cites most

Which?, Grocery Gazette and The Grocer feature in this study. Their role in AI answers could help inform where to focus relevant campaigns and supporting evidence.

02 Use AI findings alongside customer insight

The themes AI repeats may offer another perspective on how shoppers see the brand. Comparing them with existing customer research could highlight useful areas to explore.

03 Make recent progress easier to find

Clear, dated evidence of improvements could support more current coverage. Relevant examples might include product quality, availability or customer service.

04 Build on the strengths that matter to your brand

The findings vary by subject. Choosing a few relevant topics could help focus communications activity and provide a basis for tracking change over time.

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hello@omniscan.ai