

220,000 businesses urged to move onto new single customs platform

More than 220,000 businesses are being contacted by HMRC to urge them to move to the UK's new streamlined customs IT platform, if they're not already using it. To continue importing goods, businesses must use the Customs Declaration Service to make import declarations, after 30 September this year.

HMRC is writing to more than 220,000 VAT-registered businesses with [information on how to move onto the Customs Declaration Service](#), if they are not already using it.

The Customs Declaration Service has been running since 2018 and should now be used for making import declarations when moving goods into the UK. The service will replace the old Customs Handling Import and Export Freight (CHIEF), representing a significant upgrade by providing businesses with a more user-friendly, streamlined system that offers greater functionality.

This marks the first step towards the government's vision of a Single Trade Window, which will have considerable benefits for businesses through reduced form-filling, better data use across government and a smoother experience for users.

Businesses with a customs agent must make sure they are ready to make their import declarations on the Customs Declaration Service by 30 September. Those without a customs agent must set themselves up to make their own declarations using software that works with the system before the 30 September deadline.

Lots of businesses use a customs agent to make declarations on their behalf. If businesses want to hire one, they can find a [list of customs agents](#) on GOV.UK. This list is regularly updated to show which agents are ready to use the Customs Declaration Service.

Larger businesses, such as freight forwarders and hauliers, must start working with their software developer, community service provider or agent to begin the migration process now.

Carol Bristow, HMRC's Director General for Borders and Trade, said:

There is only just over three months to go until CHIEF closes for import declarations and all businesses will need to use the Customs Declaration Service instead. It is incredibly important that businesses move across to the system as soon as possible. There is plenty of support and guidance available to help businesses make the move.

It takes businesses time to move across onto the Customs Declaration Service depending on the size and nature of their business so they must start the process now to ensure that they are

fully set up ahead of the 30 September deadline.

Postal operators, such as Royal Mail, will continue to make customs declarations on behalf of UK small businesses who receive goods from abroad by post, and inform them of any tax or duty owed.

To help all businesses and agents prepare for the Customs Declaration Service, more information is available on GOV.UK, including a [Customs Declaration Service toolkit and checklists](#), which break down the steps traders need to take. Traders can also register or check they have [access to the Customs Declaration Service](#) on GOV.UK and access live [customer support services](#) for additional help.

The Customs Declaration Service will become the UK's single customs platform after 31 March 2023, replacing CHIEF. After 31 March, businesses will have to use the Customs Declaration Service to make export declarations for goods they send out of the UK.

There is more information about using the [Customs Declaration Service](#) on GOV.UK.