

Christine Tacon to continue as Groceries Code Adjudicator

Small Business Minister Paul Scully today (Monday 27 April) confirmed the reappointment of Christine Tacon CBE as the Groceries Code Adjudicator for a period of up to 6 months. Her reappointment will provide continuity and reassurance to the groceries sector through the coronavirus (COVID-19) outbreak.

The Groceries Code Adjudicator enforces compliance with the Groceries Code, which was introduced in 2009 to ensure a level playing field between the UK's largest supermarkets and their direct suppliers.

The adjudicator also works with supermarkets and grocers to respond to issues raised by suppliers and others. They have the power to launch investigations where there are reasonable grounds to suspect that the code has been breached and arbitrate disputes between retailers and suppliers. This work continues during the coronavirus outbreak.

To further support the sector during the coronavirus pandemic, the government has temporarily relaxed domestic competition rules so that supermarkets, their suppliers and logistics services providers can better work together to respond to the crisis. Legislation now in place enables affected businesses to work together to help keep shops open and deliver the essential supplies that people need.

Small Business Minister Paul Scully said:

Supermarkets and their suppliers are working flat out to ensure people's needs are met during this unprecedented time. We are doing everything we can to make it easier for grocery suppliers to do their job, and Christine's reappointment will provide them with some much-needed continuity and reassurance in what is a very unsettling time.

Christine Tacon, Groceries Code Adjudicator, said:

These are exceptional times and it is vital for both retailers and suppliers that there is consistency and certainty when the nation is relying on the groceries supply chain to keep supermarket shelves filled.

I want to play my part in the response to COVID-19 and so will be staying in post to provide the continuity the sector needs.

Having held the role of Groceries Code Adjudicator since its launch,

Christine Tacon has succeeded in improving compliance with the Groceries Code. The proportion of suppliers experiencing issues with the code has decreased from 79% in 2014 to 41% in 2019. Suppliers' assessments of each retailer's compliance with the code ranged from 58% to 90% being compliant in 2014 to between 81% and 97% in 2019, with 10 out of 12 retailers achieving a compliance rate of at least 90%.

Christine Tacon's second term as Groceries Code Adjudicator ends on 24 June 2020 and she had previously announced that she would not be seeking reappointment. However, in light of the coronavirus outbreak, she will now stay on beyond that date. The government launched a public appointment process on 30 October 2019 to identify a successor and expects to make a decision shortly.