

Command Paper sets out the UK Government's delivery of its commitments to the people of Northern Ireland

The Government has today (Thursday 10 December) published a [Command Paper](#) setting out details of an agreement in principle on the implementation of the Northern Ireland Protocol between the Chancellor of the Duchy of Lancaster, Michael Gove, and the EU Commission Vice President, Maroš Šefčovič. The agreement in principle draws on months of UK Government engagement with businesses and technical engagement with the EU and the Northern Ireland Executive.

The paper outlines how this meets the Government's three key commitments to the people of Northern Ireland as the Protocol takes effect:

- Unfettered access guaranteed for Northern Ireland businesses to the rest of the UK market – with no export declarations required as goods move from Northern Ireland to Great Britain.
- Northern Ireland's place in the UK customs territory secured – with a new UK Trader Scheme to ensure there are no new tariffs for businesses and consumers on internal UK trade, and the means to maintain the UK's VAT area.
- Smooth flow of trade from Great Britain to Northern Ireland maintained – with critical flexibilities to maintain the flow of food supplies and medicines, and avoid the need for any new physical customs infrastructure.

The UK Government is also launching a new element of its Comprehensive Support Scheme for Traders. The Movement Assistance Scheme (MAS) will complement the existing Trader Support Service, which now has over 19,000 businesses enrolled. The MAS will provide assistance for traders moving food or agricultural products for which specific SPS controls apply – meaning the Government will cover, for example, reasonable costs for obtaining Export Health Certificates. Businesses can be assured that despite the new requirements of the Protocol, businesses will be supported to deal with new direct costs.

The deal means the whole of the United Kingdom will be able to make the most of the freedoms that come with the end of the Brexit transition period, including giving the Northern Ireland Executive the scope it needs to support its agricultural and fisheries producers outside the Common Agricultural

Policy (CAP) and the Common Fisheries Policy (CFP). It also provides a solution to the inadvertent risk of “reach back” of the Protocol’s state aid provisions to companies in Great Britain, requiring a “genuine and direct link” to commercial operations taking place in Northern Ireland.

This agreement in principle means the Protocol can be implemented in a pragmatic and proportionate way – protecting the territorial and constitutional integrity of the United Kingdom, upholding the Belfast (Good Friday) Agreement and helping to ensure there is no hard border on the island of Ireland.

The Chancellor the Duchy of Lancaster, Rt Hon Michael Gove, said:

This agreement with the EU provides stability and security for the people of Northern Ireland. We have guaranteed unfettered access for Northern Ireland businesses to the whole of the UK market, protected Northern Ireland’s place in the UK customs territory and ensured the smooth flow of trade from Great Britain to Northern Ireland.

The UK Government has been working closely with ministers and officials from the Northern Ireland Executive on the implementation of the Protocol. And we have listened to the concerns raised by Northern Ireland businesses in designing our Trader Support Service, and the complimentary Movement Assistance Scheme we are launching today.

Secretary of State for Northern Ireland, Rt Hon Brandon Lewis, said:

The Government’s top priority has been to protect the Belfast (Good Friday) Agreement and the gains made through the peace process. Our approach has been guided by this principle as we delivered against the commitments set out in our May Command Paper.

The agreement announced this week provides certainty to businesses in Northern Ireland, protects their interests and recognises Northern Ireland’s integral place in the United Kingdom.