

[Edition 20: News from the Adjudicator](#)

With the end of 2019 fast approaching this is a good opportunity to bring readers up to date with my activities including how I am working with the retailers to help them embed a whole-organisation approach to Code compliance. I also wanted to alert those with an interest in the GCA to my upcoming webinar and encourage you to save the date for a number of events at which I will be speaking. Don't forget I am always ready to meet suppliers individually at these events.

Webinar, videos and other information online

On Wednesday 11 December at 11am I am hosting a webinar to provide an update on my work and answer your questions. The webinar is open to all retailers and suppliers with an interest in the Code and I hope many of you can join me. Please [register to receive webinar joining instructions](#). The webinar will begin with a short introductory presentation on my current activities and then there will be plenty of time to ask questions. Please feel free to ask these anonymously if you prefer.

I have had feedback that it would be useful to [find all information relating to particular Code-related issues in one place](#). As a result I have added a new page on the GCA website, setting out material relating to particular paragraphs of the Code. Do take a look at this to find out more about the Code.

I also speak about specific aspects of the Code in a series of [new bite-size videos on the GCA YouTube channel](#). The videos cover:

TJ Morris Limited now covered by the Code

On 3 September 2019 [the Competition and Markets Authority \(CMA\) designated TJ Morris Limited](#), trading as Home Bargains. I welcome this announcement and look forward to working with Home Bargains. I have had introductory meetings with their Code Compliance Officer (CCO) and visited their Head Office in Liverpool to meet the wider team including their buyers. [Contact details for their CCO](#) have been added to the contact list page on the GCA website.

The CMA considers designation of additional retailers on an annual basis and I would encourage suppliers to contact the CMA directly if they believe there are other retailers that should come under the Code.

Update on work with the retailers

Following the announcement I made at this year's conference, I have been working with each of the designated retailers to ensure they are taking a proactive approach to ensuring Code compliance is embedded at all levels in each business. I want to see this approach consistently reflected in all their internal systems and processes.

As part of this exercise, the designated retailers (with the exception of TJ Morris due to the timing of their designation) have each explained to me how their practices, systems and behaviours are designed to meet their obligations under the Code. I will be following up with the retailers shortly.

I am still working with Co-operative Group Limited (Co-op) on their implementation of the recommendations I made following my investigation – you can [read the Co-op investigation report here](#). Co-op is required to report to me on a quarterly basis about its progress in following my recommendations.

I have recently raised two new areas with the retailers. I have been working with the original 10 designated retailers following supplier concerns raised about retailer requirements that they use particular crate and tray suppliers and pay associated charges either to those companies or to retailers as handling charges. In addition, I have asked retailers to provide information to me about buying alliances and other arrangements they may have, to ensure that they have considered how the Code could apply to the different arrangements they may have in place. I will be working on these issues with each retailer to understand their processes further and to ensure the retailer has considered them from the perspective of Code compliance.

In November, I held my one-to-one meetings with each of the designated retailers' CCOs. These meetings are now held three times a year, with the next series planned for February 2020. You can [read a summary of the November meetings](#).

I have also just completed my 2019 meetings with the chairs of the audit committees (or equivalent) of the retailers. I see these meetings as a valuable part of the retailers' whole-organisation approach to Code compliance. We discussed the latest GCA survey results and the retailers' Annual Compliance Reports.

The quality of the Annual Compliance Reports continues to improve and the number of supplier issues recorded by retailers also increased again, indicating that there is better recording by retailers of issues that arise. Eight retailers reported more issues than in the previous year. The two top Code issues raised by suppliers this year are delay in payments and De-listing. A significant number of issues have been resolved in favour of the supplier, at 71% for issues related to delay in payments and 69% for issues related to De-listing.

It is good to see that the information retailers are putting into the public domain has also improved, including retailers being more transparent about issues raised by suppliers.

I think the retailers can still go further and in the meetings with CCOs and audit chairs, I explained that there is scope for better and more detailed recording of issues raised by suppliers. This would enable retailers to capture the broadest range of useful supplier information. I would like retailers to continue to focus on how they collect and record information about Code-related issues raised in their business.

I continue to encourage suppliers to get in touch to tell me about their experiences by emailing Enquiries@GroceriesCode.gov.uk or calling 0207 215 6537.

I also would like to welcome Faye Williams as my new Head of Office – she can be contacted at Faye.Williams@GroceriesCode.gov.uk.

Warmest wishes for a successful Christmas and New Year.

Christine Tacon

Meet the CCO

Matthew Wilson, [the CCO for Waitrose Limited has answered questions about his role](#) at the retailer and tells us what he hopes to achieve over the next 12 months.

Save the date

Christine Tacon is speaking at a number of events around the UK about her role, her priorities and recent developments – see some upcoming dates below.

Details	Event	What's happening
11 December 2019, 11am	GCA Webinar	Join Christine Tacon as she provides an update on her work and answers questions about the Code. Register your interest in the webinar.
13 January, 2pm; London	GCA meeting with trade associations	Meeting with relevant trade associations to discuss the work of the GCA.
21 January, London	Food Manufacture Business Leaders Forum 2020	Presentation – Christine will be talking about her work as GCA. More information about the Forum is available.
4 February, 9.30am, London	FDF Sales Director Forum	Presentation – Find out about Christine's priorities and progress. To register go to FDF's website.
5 March, from 8.30am, Kenilworth	British Frozen Food Federation (BFFF) annual conference	Presentation – Christine talks through her work as GCA and how she has achieved change in the UK groceries sector. Please book through BFFF.
11 March, Oslo	The FOOD conference	Presentation – Christine talks through her work as GCA and how she has achieved change in the UK groceries sector.
25 March, 9am, London	The Westminster Nutrition Forum	Christine is the keynote speaker. Full details of the event are now available.

The Adjudicator and her team are keen to attend supplier events. If your

organisation is planning an event then please contact Enquiries@GroceriesCode.gov.uk to discuss whether someone from the GCA office can attend. It would be helpful if you would provide details of the event including timing and location as well as the audience involved.