

HMRC extends customs grant funding deadline

HM Revenue and Customs (HMRC) has extended the deadline for businesses to apply for customs support funding to 31 January 2021.

The scheme, first announced in September 2019, had been due to close on 31 January 2020. To date, applications have been made for around £18.5 million out of a possible £26 million – meaning there is at least £7.5 million left to claim from HMRC.

As well as supporting recruitment and improved IT capability, the money applied for so far could potentially fund nearly 15,000 training courses to help traders submit customs declarations.

Jesse Norman, Financial Secretary to the Treasury, said:

The UK will be leaving the single market and customs union at the end of 2020, and businesses will need to prepare to submit customs declarations.

Customs agents, freight forwarders and fast parcel operators can take advantage of the extended period by applying for grants to help them scale up and get ready.

Customs processes can be handled by a business directly, but most businesses currently trading outside Europe use a customs agent.

From 1 January 2021, the way businesses trade will change, and they'll need to prepare for life outside the EU, including new customs arrangements. For example, businesses will need to make customs declarations to import and export goods between Great Britain (GB) and the EU once the UK is outside of the EU's customs territory.

Under Government plans to introduce innovative Freeports, a full customs declaration would not be required to move goods into a Freeport. This could potentially save businesses time and makes it easier to import goods.