

[News story: CMA sets out priorities for year ahead](#)

Over the past 12 months the Competition and Markets Authority (CMA) has brought several major pieces of work to successful conclusion, including a market study into [legal services](#) and its 2 market investigations into the [energy](#) and [retail banking](#) markets.

In its fourth year, as set out in its [annual plan](#), the CMA will build on its progress to date, intervening in markets where necessary to ensure people, including the hardest-pressed in society, are offered the best possible deals when buying goods and services.

The CMA enters 2017/18 with a substantial portfolio of ongoing work. It is pushing ahead with studies into sectors that have long been central to many people's lives (like [care homes](#)), alongside growing and evolving areas of the economy ([digital comparison tools](#)) as well as investigating concerns that consumers' rights are being ignored ([online gambling](#)).

The CMA has already sharply stepped up its enforcement against anti-competitive practices. It opened 10 new civil competition enforcement cases in the past year – more than twice its annual target – imposed [multi-million pound fines](#) on pharmaceutical companies charging the NHS excessive prices for vital medication and secured the UK regime's first [Company Director disqualification](#) for a competition law breach. In the coming year, the CMA commits to further increasing the pace, scale and impact of its enforcement, without sacrificing hard-won improvements to rigour and fairness.

Alongside enforcement, the CMA will continue to use communications tools to raise awareness of the law, minimise the burden of complying (especially for smaller firms) and encourage complaints when firms see unfair practice by others.

The CMA will also continue to operate an efficient and effective mergers regime, building on the improvements already made to the efficiency of its end-to-end processes. It will also continue to conduct regulatory appeals with rigour and independence as required, to ensure an efficient and stable regulatory regime which encourages long-term investment in the UK economy and is ultimately beneficial for consumers.

The CMA is committed to supporting growth in the UK economy. There is a [body of evidence](#) that competition, and competition policy interventions, boost productivity and in 2017/18, the CMA will continue to help tackle the UK's long-standing productivity problem by supporting conditions that enable innovative businesses that treat their customers well to emerge and succeed.

The CMA remains an expert advocate and a strong voice for competition, including in its role as a trusted adviser with policymakers and regulators in the UK and internationally. As the UK prepares to leave the European Union

in 2019 and as the government forms its new economic strategies, this role will be more crucial than ever.

The CMA is prioritising further improving its effectiveness and its efficiency. It aims to do so by using all its resources – physical, financial and intellectual – as efficiently as possible and by learning from its experiences to date. This includes, in relation to market investigations and following a thorough internal review the CMA is [currently consulting](#) on, proposed changes to the way it carries out these complex projects.

David Currie, CMA Chairman, said:

“Our primary duty is to promote competition for the benefit of consumers, and in the year ahead we will continue to protect them from anti-competitive practices, from harmful unfair trading practices and where markets are not working for them, right across the UK.

“Wider developments will have a bearing on our work this year, notably the UK’s planned exit from the EU and new government economic strategies. In the period ahead we intend to remain a strong voice for competition and consumers, working as a trusted adviser to government.