

News story: HM Treasury and HMRC invest in customs training and automation

The government fully acknowledges the potential capacity challenges facing the customs intermediaries sector in the unlikely event of no deal being reached before the UK leaves the EU on 29 March 2019.

Therefore, HM Treasury and HMRC have designed a package of measures to support the intermediaries sector to expand ahead of March 2019. This will include a one-off investment of £8 million to support broker training and increased automation.

Financial Secretary to the Treasury, Mel Stride, said:

HM Treasury and HMRC have been engaging extensively with the customs intermediaries sector on EU exit, including customs brokers, freight forwarders and fast parcel operators. We have listened to their concerns about the extra demand for customs broker services in the unlikely event that the UK leaves the EU without a deal in March 2019.

That is why we plan to invest £8m for customs training and automation to support the sector to expand to help meet the potential increase in demand for this scenario.

This investment will involve:

1. a procurement process to establish contracts with training providers for creating and delivering new training courses and/or expanding existing material for customs brokers to assist in a no-deal scenario. The government's engagement with key intermediaries and training providers identified a lack of widely available and accessible training provision for customs brokers. It wants to support the sector to train more people, to a good standard.
2. a grant scheme to support intermediaries and/or traders with the upfront costs of training their employees. The government understands that intermediaries train their staff using both internal and/or external training provision. This element will support customs intermediaries with some of these upfront costs to make it easier to train staff.
3. a grant scheme to support investment in automation in the sector. The government understands that upfront cost is a key barrier to automation, particularly for smaller businesses. This will seek to improve the productivity of smaller intermediaries that rely on manual data input to complete customs declarations by supporting them with the set up costs

of IT solutions.

We expect the procurement process for establishing contracts with training providers to start in coming weeks, with the grant schemes to support upfront costs of training or increased automation expected to be available in late autumn.

Further details will be published on GOV.UK in due course. There is no need to contact HMRC at this stage.