

Greens warn of catastrophic consequences for small businesses from post-Brexit custom checks



Green Party

21 December 2021

*Over one third of small businesses not ready for full post-Brexit customs checks

*Call for UK to immediately negotiate to re-join the customs union

*Demand for free business support from professional advisors

Greens are warning the weeks ahead could prove catastrophic for many small businesses as they face the introduction of full post-Brexit customs checks and changes to VAT on 1st January 2022 [1]. The grace period, allowing them to delay making customs declarations to HMRC and paying any tariffs, will end on 31st December, but more than a third of small businesses say they are not ready for the changes [2].

To prevent increased costs, paperwork and disruption to supply chains, the Green Party is calling for the UK to immediately negotiate to re-join the customs union and for small businesses to be offered free support from professional advisors.

Green Party deputy leader, Amelia Womack, said:

“The government won the last election on a false prospectus. They haven’t got Brexit done. Instead, businesses are being undone by Brexit. It’s clear that it isn’t possible to leave the EU in a way that doesn’t damage business.

“The new customs and VAT measures from January 1st will increase costs, paperwork and supply chain issues at a difficult time of year for many businesses. January will potentially be even more difficult than usual due to tougher covid restrictions and the possibility of a ‘circuit breaker’ lockdown.

“Businesses consider the UK’s new trading relationship with the EU to be their number one challenge [2], ahead of skills shortages and the economic climate. The UK’s trade deal with the EU is the first in modern history that

creates more rather than fewer barriers to trade.

“Greens are clear that the problems facing small businesses could be reduced if the UK re-joined the customs union – including a unified VAT regime. We call on the government to negotiate immediately with the EU to make this happen. We also want to see small businesses offered free support from professional advisors. The paltry £20 million pot for such support has run dry [3], but businesses need support now more than ever.”

Notes

[1] [Less than a month until full customs controls are introduced – gov.uk](#)

[2] [A third of UK importers not ready for full Brexit customs checks – survey](#)

[3] <https://www.customsintermediarygrant.co.uk/sme-brexit-support-fund>

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Greens call for closure of large venues to protect the NHS amid rising Omicron cases



Green Party

17 December 2021

With record numbers of Covid cases recorded for the second day running, the Green Party has called for large venues, which currently require Covid passes to be accessed, to be closed, and called for additional safety measures in the hospitality sector.

Green Party co-leader Adrian Ramsay said,

“As the government’s scientists have said, unless we reduce the spread of Omicron, the NHS risks being overwhelmed not because of people going into hospital but by the large number of NHS staff who themselves have to isolate due to Covid.

“To prevent that happening, large events that currently require Covid passes to be accessed should be closed, to reduce the rate of transmission among large crowds. Those venues required to close, such as large music and sporting venues, should receive appropriate support.

“We welcome the strengthening of social distancing measures to ensure hospitality venues are safe that are being introduced in Wales and we believe these should be extended to England as well. But with a virus that is doubling in less than two days it makes no sense to delay these until after Christmas. The Government must not repeat the mistakes of earlier in the pandemic by once again being too slow to respond.”

Adrian Ramsay also called for financial support for the hospitality sector and criticised the Government’s failure to take responsibility for the impact of its own advice on businesses and the financial impact on individuals. He said:

“By putting responsibility for doing the right thing onto individuals and onto small businesses but without any financial support, the Government is leaving them high and dry.

“The current lack of clarity and lack of a support package is making life

impossible for our hospitality sector. And given how many workers are employed without proper sick pay, the lack of financial support for self-isolation amounts to punishing people for following the rules.”

“After nearly two years of chaos in their pandemic response, it’s time the Government took a clear line and ensured that our much-loved hospitality venues get the support they need, including through grants, business rate relief and flexibility on loan repayments, and that people aren’t penalised for doing the right thing.”

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[Greens celebrate North Shropshire result](#)



Green Party

17 December 2021

The Green Party candidate in the North Shropshire by-election, Duncan Kerr, has congratulated Helen Morgan on winning the seat, and said that growth in the Green vote share is a result of the hard work of Green councillors in the area.

Duncan Kerr is a Green councillor on Oswestry Town Council, where the Green Party won 12 of the 18 seats in May, taking the council from the Tories.

Councillor Kerr said:

“I congratulate Helen Morgan for winning this seat from the Tories. It is clear from the size of this win that people in this constituency have had their fill of Tory incompetence and neglect as well as years of mismanagement by Conservative controlled Shropshire Council.

“However, when it comes to local politics, the Green Party continues to provide the real alternative to the Conservatives in North Shropshire. From

fighting fracking to defending NHS services; opposing cuts to youth services and protecting heritage assets like the Oswestry Hillfort from development, the Green Party has been active in the constituency for a decade.

“Greens took control of the Town Council from the Tories in spectacular style in May, and we also won two of the four seats on Shropshire County Council. Labour did not win a single seat in North Shropshire and the Lib Dems lost the only seat they had.

Green Party co-leader, Carla Denyer, said:

“Nationally, Greens are regularly polling as the third party. We’re going from strength to strength, gaining more and more support in all parts of England and winning seats from all parties. When Greens bring their hard work and positive solutions to an area there’s no such thing as a safe seat.

“It is clear that people care deeply about the climate crisis, inequality and defending public services. As we have seen in Scotland and most recently Germany, when Greens are in power, policies to deliver environmental, social and economic justice are implemented.”

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[Changes to Human Rights Act an attack on democracy say Greens](#)



Green Party

14 December 2021

Responding to [proposed changes to the Human Rights Act](#) that Dominic Rabb is announcing today, Green Party spokesperson on Democracy and Citizen Engagement, Zack Polanski said:

“This is the latest attack on democracy by this government. Whilst Dominic Raab makes a variety of spurious claims about his proposed changes it’s very

different to the reality. This is yet another attempt by a draconian government to whip away rights that help people achieve justice.

“This is the extremist political ideology of Brexiteers like Dominic Rabb. For them, taking back control always meant a power grab; one that seeks to override the vital rights protected by the European Court of Human Rights.”

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