

CMA publishes update on COVID-19 Taskforce

News story

The CMA has today published an update from its COVID-19 Taskforce, set up to monitor and respond to consumer and competition problems arising from the pandemic.



As part of the [Taskforce's work](#), it asked the public for information about businesses behaving unfairly, for example retailers charging unjustifiably high prices or making misleading claims about their products or services.

Some of the highlights in the update include:

- As of 19 April, the CMA had received just under 21,000 COVID-19 related complaints, of which 14,000 have come via its dedicated online form.
- The CMA has written to 187 firms accounting for over 2,500 complaints about large price rises for personal hygiene products, such as hand sanitiser and food products.
- Complaints relating to cancellations and refunds now account for 4 out of 5 complaints being received.

The number of businesses complained about is smaller than the number of complaints. The 14,000 complaints received via the CMA's online form refer to just 6,000 individual businesses – around one in a thousand of the private-sector businesses operating in the UK.

The Taskforce is continuing to collect evidence, including about unjustifiable price rises further up the supply chain. Next week the CMA will set out further steps on how it intends to tackle issues around cancellations and refunds. The majority of businesses are behaving in a reasonable way at this time, but the CMA will not hesitate to take enforcement action if there is evidence that businesses have breached competition or consumer protection law

[View the full update here.](#)

For more information on the CMA's work on COVID-19 visit the [CMA Coronavirus \(COVID-19\) response](#). Further updates on the Taskforce's work will be published in due course.

For media queries, contact the CMA press office on 020 3738 6460 or press@cma.gov.uk.

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[More Britons to return from Nigeria on UK charter flights](#)

Press release

900 more British travellers stranded in Nigeria are set to return home on three flights chartered by the UK Government.



Once completed, these additional flights will bring the total number of people flown back to the UK from Nigeria on Government charter flights to around 2,000, following flights arranged last week from Lagos and Abuja to London.

Details of the new flights are as follows:

- Tuesday 28 April: Abuja – London
- Friday 1 May: Lagos – London
- Tuesday 5 May: Lagos – London

The additional charter flights have been arranged for British travellers, and their dependents, whose primary residence is the UK. Priority is given to the most vulnerable travellers, for example people with health conditions.

Minister of State for Africa, James Duddridge, said:

Our next phase of UK Government charter flights will mean another 900 British travellers are able to return home from Nigeria. We appreciate this has been a difficult time and will continue to work closely with the Nigerian authorities to support those wishing to return to the UK.

British travellers should visit the [Nigeria Travel Advice pages](#) for further information.

The UK Government is working with the airline industry and host governments across the world to help bring back British travellers to the UK as part of the plan announced by the Foreign Secretary Dominic Raab on 30 March – with up to £75 million available for special charter flights to priority countries, focused on helping the most vulnerable travellers.

So far, charter flights have returned British travellers from India, the Philippines, Ecuador, Bolivia, Nepal, Ghana, Tunisia, Algeria and Peru.

Notes to editors:

1. The charter flights are for British nationals who normally reside in the UK and their direct dependants.
2. Details regarding flights, luggage allowance and costs are available on the Nigeria Travel Advice page.

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[Foreign Office statement on Iran satellite launch](#)

Press release

Statement regarding the launch of a satellite by Iran, using ballistic missile technology.



A Foreign Office spokesperson said:

Reports that Iran has carried out a satellite launch – using ballistic missile technology – are of significant concern and inconsistent with UN Security Council Resolution 2231. The UN has called upon Iran not to undertake any activity related to ballistic missiles designed to be capable of delivering nuclear weapons. Iran must abide by this.

We have significant and longstanding concerns, alongside our international partners, over Iran’s ballistic missile programme, which is destabilising for the region and poses a threat to regional security.

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[Engineering new normals](#)

Throughout our organisation we’re having to rapidly adapt to new ‘normals’, whether this means unexpectedly working from home or getting used to new ways of working to maintain social distancing in the workplace.

For some, like Sellafield Ltd’s Product Development Manager Mark Taylor and his team, it’s often a bit of both.

What would a ‘normal’ day at work look like to you before the Covid-19 pandemic?

The Product Development department is part of the wider Engineering & Maintenance directorate, focussed on a range of activities including rapid prototyping, testing and innovation to make commercially-available solutions that help us manage the UK’s nuclear legacy.

A lot of my time is spent coaching other engineers and speaking to a wide range of colleagues from across the business to understand their problems and how we can help. As a result, my time is split between office working and being on plant or in our workshops.

For the last year we've been concentrating on developing our capability, including the growth of a 3D print hub that came online just before the lockdown.

How have things changed for your team in recent weeks?

In terms of production we've switched to fully supporting Sellafield Ltd's response to Covid-19, transforming parts of our workshop into a production line to manufacture face shields for the NHS and helping to ensure quality control based on a number of designs, using different manufacturing techniques.

As with many teams across our organisation, the major change for us is that lots of our people are now working from home or having to approach things very differently when they come in to work.

What has it meant for you personally?

It's meant working with an even wider range of stakeholders than I normally would, from the multi-agency support team and the NHS to areas of the business I don't usually work with.

I'm avoiding going into the workplace where possible, meaning I'm working from home most of the time. When I do go into the workplace, I'm careful to observe the measures we've put in place to maintain social distancing; like making sure we stay 2m apart and setting up in separate offices in groups of two.

It takes some adapting to, but we're used to strict safety rules and procedures at Sellafield. I find it's often the simple encounters that are the most difficult – you realise how far 2m is when you have to pass someone on the stairs or in a narrow corridor.

How are you finding the changes?

This is obviously a situation none of us saw coming but the rapid response from our organisation and industry has been amazing. I'm really grateful that my team and I have the opportunity to lend our brains, hands and equipment directly to the response effort and that hundreds of colleagues are doing the same. From our graduates and contractors to people on industrial placements, everyone is pulling together to give their support wherever they can.

The things I miss are the people, seeing the iconic Sellafield skyline each morning and just walking through the workshops watching things being made every day.

We're all still getting used to the technological and psychological

challenges of working from home – video conferencing will never replace face-to-face contact – but this definitely has some advantages. Having the time and space to think, away from the day-to-day distractions, has been a great experience. I’m also spending a lot more time with my family and now my dog gets to join me in my office. I’ll certainly consider working from home more often in the future.

As a team we’re also finding that, with much of our project work on hold, we have more time for the things we often don’t get around to. Normally it can be difficult not to get immersed in the details of the projects we’re involved in – we’re engineers after all – but we now have some space think more strategically about the improvements we’ll make once we get back to the office.

Every day has its challenges but it’s important to look for the positives and appreciate just how far we’ve come and how much we’ve achieved in such a short space of time.

[Lord Hodge: Technology and the Law](#)

News story

Technology and the Law. The Dover House Lecture 2020. Lord Hodge, Deputy President of The Supreme Court, 10 March 2020.



Lord Hodge, Deputy President of the Supreme Court of the United Kingdom, delivered the 2020 Dover House lecture on the evening of 10 March 2020.

The text of his lecture, titled “Technology and the Law” is available for [download as a PDF](#).

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