

# Andrea Coscelli CBE reappointed as CEO of Competition and Markets Authority

The Secretary of State for Business, Energy and Industrial Strategy, Alok Sharma, has reappointed Andrea Coscelli as the Chief Executive Officer (CEO) of the Competition and Markets Authority (CMA) until July 2022. Dr Coscelli has held the position of CEO since July 2016, and has been an Executive Director at the CMA since 2013. Most recently, Dr Coscelli was awarded a CBE for services to Competitive Markets in the 2020 New Year Honours.

Prior to joining the CMA, Dr Coscelli was the Director of Economic Analysis at Ofcom, the regulatory and competition authority of the telecommunications, postal and broadcasting industries. He was previously a Vice President at Charles River Associates where he represented many different businesses on competition and regulation matters in various European countries.

The CMA is the UK's independent competition authority. It has responsibility for carrying out investigations into mergers, markets and the regulated industries and enforcing competition and consumer law, with the aim of making markets work well for consumers, business and the economy.

Secretary of State for Business, Energy and Industrial Strategy, Alok Sharma said:

"I am pleased to reappoint Andrea Coscelli as Chief Executive of the Competition and Markets Authority.

"His experience will be invaluable in maintaining the Authority's strong reputation both here in the UK and internationally for standing up for consumers."

Lord Tyrie, Competition and Markets Authority Chairman, said:

"It's been a pleasure to work with Andrea over the last couple of years, making the decisions that matter to people and seeing some real wins in the way big markets operate.

"Over the coming years, competition can and should work even better for the British public and meet the demands of their everyday life, which is why we will carefully monitor all sectors to ensure people truly are getting the best deals."

Andrea Coscelli, Chief Executive Officer of the Competition and Markets Authority, said:

"The last four years have been exciting, challenging and rewarding, so I greatly look forward to leading the CMA into its next phase and tackling some big projects head-on. Like many organisations, our immediate priority is Covid-19 and we will be monitoring market developments to enable us to intervene as quickly as possible, if needed. Ultimately, consumers must be

at the centre; people expect regulators to stand up for them and that's exactly what we are going to do.

"The CMA has been more active than ever recently, so we need to keep that momentum going and not be afraid to make tough decisions, particularly following our recent departure from the EU. With well-established processes and a team of skilled staff behind me, I have no doubt that we will rise to the challenge."

## **Notes to editors**

The CMA has responsibility for:

- investigating mergers which could restrict competition
- conducting market studies and investigations in markets where there may be competition and consumer problems
- investigating where there may be breaches of UK or EU prohibitions against anti-competitive agreements and abuses of dominant positions
- bringing criminal proceedings against individuals who commit the cartel offence
- enforcing consumer protection legislation to tackle practices and market conditions that make it difficult for consumers to exercise choice
- co-operating with sector regulators and encouraging them to use their competition powers
- considering regulatory references and appeals.

Its responsibilities are supported by a range of powers which are based on the Enterprise and Regulatory Act 2013.

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## **Bona Vacantia** **Referrals/Applications/Kin claims**

Please note we are currently unable to process Postal Referrals, Applications or Kin Claims and can only deal with matters by email. Please follow the guidance below for any new referrals/kin claims/discretionary grant applications and restoration repayments.

Please send any new referrals of deceased estates and dissolved company assets or cash balances by email rather than by post to the appropriate following email addresses:

Deceased person's estates to [bvestates@governmentlegal.gov.uk](mailto:bvestates@governmentlegal.gov.uk)

Dissolved company assets (not cash assets) to  
[bvcompanies@governmentlegal.gov.uk](mailto:bvcompanies@governmentlegal.gov.uk)

Dissolved company cash assets (bank accounts, etc.) to [bvcbt@governmentlegal.gov.uk](mailto:bvcbt@governmentlegal.gov.uk)

If you need to send us copies of documents, letters etc. please send us scanned copies in PDF format and attached to your email.

Please note that if you have already received confirmation of a case reference from the Bona Vacantia Division, correspondence should be emailed directly to your allocated case officer using the email address quoted on the correspondence received.

### **Applications for Kin Claims**

Kin claims can be submitted via email. This also includes any supporting identification documents which may be required. Documents should be scanned in date order into a single PDF, including a family tree and sent to [bvestates@governmentlegal.gov.uk](mailto:bvestates@governmentlegal.gov.uk)

### **Applications for Discretionary Grants where a Company can be restored (CB2) and where a Company cannot be restored (CB3)**

Applications can be submitted via email for both types of discretionary grant. Completed forms and supporting documentation including any identification documents required should be scanned into a single PDF and sent to [bvcbt@governmentlegal.gov.uk](mailto:bvcbt@governmentlegal.gov.uk)

### **Applications for a repayment after restoration of a Company (CB4)**

Applications can be submitted via email. Completed forms and supporting documentation including identification documents required should be scanned into a single PDF and sent to [bvcbt@governmentlegal.gov.uk](mailto:bvcbt@governmentlegal.gov.uk)

If we require further information or any original documents we will contact you.

Thank you for your cooperation.

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## **The FHI remains in operation – COVID-19**

In order to safeguard the health and well-being of fish and shellfish farmers, other stakeholders, and Cefas staff, and following advice from government, the routine aquatic animal health inspection programmes have been suspended until further notice. Aquaculture production businesses (APB's) in England and Wales will not receive their customary disease surveillance and compliance inspection visits by the Fish Health Inspectorate. However,

Inspectors will be contacting APB's, endeavouring to remotely check records, complete aspects of compliance where feasible and ascertain the status of stocks onsite. We are grateful for your co-operation in this matter. We will continue to review our field programme week by week considering the current and changing situation with Coronavirus.

The Fish Health Inspectorate has essential statutory field duties that will continue to be delivered while government measures for the control of Coronavirus allow. Specifically, this is emergency response to serious exotic disease outbreaks and disease control and administrative support to the export trade while all health certification inspections are suspended at this time.

We have implemented additional sanitary measures to protect the health of stakeholders and Cefas staff while delivering this work following government advice regarding personal measures to mitigate the risk of [COVID-19](#).

Office based staff are working from home, however, our office services remain open and delivering business as usual for administration and queries relating to authorisation, registration, trade. Electronic correspondence is the preferred method and some enquiries may take longer to respond too than usual. We thank you for your co-operation at this time.

All suspicion of notifiable disease in fish, molluscs and crustacea must be reported to the FHI in the usual way.

## **Update on Fisheries Response Fund: support for aquaculture businesses**

English aquaculture businesses producing seafood for the food supply chain, will now be able to apply for grants up to a maximum of £10,000 per farm from the government's £10 million Fisheries Response Fund, administered by the Marine Management Organisation (MMO). Eligible businesses will be contacted directly by the MMO and for more information, please see the [guidance](#).

## **Guidance for fish farmers and angling**

The Fish Health Inspectorate (FHI) does not have a direct remit for fish welfare and cannot give approvals or direct guidance, this responsibility falls to [Animal and Plant Health Agency \(APHA\)](#). Any enquires of this nature need to be directed to them and you should contact your regional office for advice and direction. For movements of live aquatic animals the [Department for Environment Food and Rural Affairs \(DEFRA\)](#) have produced guidance and information for Fisheries and Aquaculture [Defra: Information and guidance](#).

## **Aquaculture – movements of live fish**

As a result of the Government's requirement to keep movements to a minimum, we have received a number of queries about whether movements of live fish from fish farms can continue.

Where the movement of fish is essential to support the food chain, for

restocking recreational angling waters (England only), or for fish welfare reasons, they can continue.

## **Recreational angling**

[Follow the government guidance on spending time outside](#)

## **Contact**

You can contact the FHI by:

Open hours are Monday to Thursday 9am to 5pm and Friday 9am to 4:30pm.

We are maintaining a 24 hour on-call rota with a duty Inspector.

As a team we would like to send our very best wishes to industry, friends and family during such challenging times and thank-you for your co-operation.

## **Helpful guidance**

You may find the following information pages helpful, this includes contacts for [APHA](#) to report animal welfare issues and government information for businesses.

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# **[Response to the recommendations of the Public Accounts Committee following the inquiry on HMRC Standard Report](#)**

We have carefully considered the [recommendations of the Committee of Public Accounts](#), sent via letter on 30 October 2019, following the [inquiry on the HMRC Annual Report and Accounts on 21 October 2019](#).

This memorandum sets out the government's response to each of the committee's recommendations.

## **Tax gap**

### **Recommendation**

HMRC should establish a stretching annual target for reducing the size of the tax gap. This should be in place by 1 April 2020.

### **Government response**

The government does not accept the committee's recommendation.

HMRC maintains its long-term strategic ambition to drive down the tax gap and accept that it is right to be assessed on movement in the tax gap over time. The department continues to measure and publish estimates of the tax gap and agrees with the committee that this provides important information to monitor HMRC's long-term performance in managing tax compliance.

However, in line with the government's previous comments on the matter, HMRC believes that tax gap reduction is not suitable as an annual performance target. This is because it cannot be measured in a timely way and cannot directly inform resource deployment and other operational decision making.

Nonetheless, HMRC is fully committed to work to both prevent growth of, and tackle, the existing tax gap. This is already reflected in HMRC's long established compliance yield targets, which drive decisions on policy and operational compliance interventions. Compliance yield captures the impact of HMRC's activity to tackle the tax gap in a timely and practical way.

The department uses a range of operational targets, which are set each year by HM Treasury (HMT) ministers, to focus on performance. HMRC will continue to keep the basket of measures and targets under review in discussion with HMT.

## **Maintaining the relevance of the tax system**

### **Recommendation**

HMRC should set out how it will tackle the risks arising from the growth in self-employment, including:

- how it will support these individuals to get their tax affairs right
- how it intends to support taxpayers in selecting tax agents that have demonstrated high professional standards

### **Government response**

The government accepts this recommendation in part.

An increasing share of the workforce are self-employed, rather than employees. Typically, the self-employed declare their income and pay their tax through Self Assessment instead of having their tax deducted by a third party under Pay As You Earn (PAYE).

Strategically, HMRC is constantly looking for new ways to ensure these customers' tax affairs are right and reduce the opportunities for them to get things wrong.

93% of Self Assessment customers file their tax return online and HMRC continues to make it easier for customers to file accurate returns this way by using upstream methods to promote compliance such as prompts, nudges and pre-population of the Self Assessment tax return where HMRC holds the data.

As set out in the response to a recent call for evidence, HMRC is also

expanding the range of help for gig workers and other self-employed people, including YouTube clips, webinars and interactive guidance. For example, HMRC is currently testing new interactive guidance for customers to help them better understand the tax implications of the money they're earning and when they need to tell us about income, and also ensure they don't complete a Self Assessment return unless they need to.

HMRC is also exploring the scope for greater use of withholding, which is already a core feature of the UK tax system. As part of this, HMRC has established an industry working group to take forward the announced work on VAT Split Payment. HMRC will also explore options for further practical steps to enable more real-time data-sharing and payment, drawing on recent work by the Office for Tax Simplification.

HMRC currently offers a pilot Making Tax Digital service for self-employed customers who pay Income Tax through Self Assessment. Under Making Tax Digital, self-employed customers use software to record their income and expenses as they go.

Their software prepares a quarterly summary update, which is sent to HMRC when the customer approves it. The software also prepares the end-of-year information, which the customer can adjust if necessary, and submits it to HMRC.

This helps the self-employed get their tax affairs right by helping them keep on top of their business administration as they go, reducing the opportunity for mistakes in calculating or copying figures. It also removes the need for them to submit a Self Assessment return.

This pilot is open to around one million sole trader businesses and landlords with straightforward affairs, and HMRC continues to develop the service so that it can be used by more self-employed people.

Self-employed customers who are registered for VAT can join the Making Tax Digital for VAT service (those with turnover above the VAT threshold are required to do so), and will already be benefiting from greater digitisation, including reducing the risk of making some types of error.

Digital record keeping has wider benefits for the self-employed beyond better tax compliance. For example, the Enterprise Research Centre (2018) found that for microbusinesses, web-based accounting software delivered productivity increases of 11.8%.

HMRC is also supporting taxpayers by seeking to remove tax agents with poor professional standards from the market, and are working with the professional bodies and representative groups to identify what more can, and should, be done to raise standards within the tax advice market. The government has announced that a call for evidence will be published to support this work.

HMRC is currently updating guidance on the 'Get help with tax' content on GOV.UK to support taxpayers in choosing a professional and reputable tax agent. This is in addition to ongoing work to improve content and navigation

for tax agents themselves.

## **Making Tax Digital**

### **Recommendation**

In preparing for the Spending Review, HMRC should reevaluate the case for Making Tax Digital in light of the delays in implementing the Income Tax and Corporation Tax components of the programme.

### **Government response**

The government accepts this recommendation.

At Spring Statement, the then government announced that it would not be extending mandation of Making Tax Digital to other businesses or taxes in 2020, in order to focus on supporting businesses to transition to the new VAT service.

Progress in rolling out the Making Tax Digital VAT service has been encouraging, with over 1.3 million businesses having signed up, over 2.3 million VAT returns having been successfully submitted using Making Tax Digital-compatible software and over £26 billion in payments having flowed through the service.

The benefits that these kinds of tools can bring to businesses are clear, and over a quarter of VAT-registered businesses with turnover below the VAT threshold have chosen to join Making Tax Digital voluntarily.

Now that the VAT service has been launched, the government is reviewing plans for Making Tax Digital going forward. As part of that process HMRC is revisiting the business case to ensure that it reflects experiences from the roll-out of the service to date.

## **Customer service performance**

### **Recommendation**

HMRC should set targets that provide a broader overview of customer performance by 31 March 2020 at the latest.

### **Government response**

The government partially accepts this recommendation.

Over the past year HMRC has published more operational and customer experience data and HMRC will continue to publish further information in the coming months. HMRC has introduced this data to increase transparency, giving a broader view of the service HMRC offers and our customers' feedback of their experience interacting with us.

HMRC has been developing a new customer service performance framework this



year, which will inform which measures are appropriate for external target setting going forward. HMRC agrees with the recommendation to set targets with a broader overview of customer experience but does not agree that HMRC should be setting new targets by March 2020 for reporting in 2020 2021.

New measures identified will first need to be shadow run to baseline performance and establish what good performance looks like. Net Easy and Once and Done survey results are 2 such measures which HMRC has been publishing since Quarter 1 of 2019 to 2020. HMRC will continue to develop the performance framework and shadow run any potential new measures identified across next year with a view to introducing new targets in 2021 to 2022.

## **Recommendation**

HMRC should set out the results of its review of recruitment practices and what measures it has put in place to ensure it has the capacity and capability to deliver on its customer service performance targets.

## **Government response**

The government accepts this recommendation.

HMRC has continued to review and refine recruitment processes as part of an ongoing ambition to improve the experience for candidates and to drive better business outcomes.

Changes and improvements include:

- revised, more appealing job adverts, supported by enhanced marketing, attraction and outreach activity, aimed at driving up candidate numbers and reaching all diversity groups
- replaced verbal and numeric testing, which was impacting candidate numbers and leading to up to 50% of candidates deselecting themselves from the process, with situational judgement testing – this has resulted in higher candidate retention through the recruitment process and has delivered strong candidates into the business
- improved communications to candidates, including introduction of social media groups and newsletters as candidates on board to make them feel like part of the organisation before they arrive
- worked closely with the recruiting business areas to improve planning process, leading to swifter, smoother progress through the recruitment process, which has led to a 20-day improvement in our time to hire candidates, and has reduced candidate drop-out rates from 20% to 8%

HMRC continues to review and refine our process to drive down the time it takes us to hire, and to further improve the quality of candidate experience.

## **Tax credits**

### **Recommendation**

HMRC should write to all current tax credit claimants to inform them whether

they have accumulated debt as a result of overpayment and, if so, how much is owed.

## **Government response**

The government accepts this recommendation.

HMRC agrees that tax credits claimants should be informed of their overpayments and this is already incorporated into current processes.

Firstly, it is worth noting that tax credits is an annual system, with end of year reconciliation. This means that awards are adjusted in-year to ensure that they receive the correct amount by year-end as often as possible.

Where a customer reports a change during the year that has a material effect on their entitlement, they are notified with a revised Award Notice, which sets out their new payment amounts along with any adjustments that are necessary. Therefore, it is only possible to advise a claimant of the amount that they have been overpaid at the end of the annual cycle or where they leave tax credits (whether to claim Universal Credit, or to no longer claim these benefits).

There are therefore 2 points where HMRC is able to notify claimants of their overpayment position, and contact is built into this process:

- where an overpayment is due after the award is finalised: where there is still an overpayment after making in-year adjustments, HMRC writes to customers once their award has been finalised as part of the renewal process with a Statement of Account showing the overpayment amount, which will be recovered from the on-going award. This Statement of Account also shows any other overpayments (whether from previous years or different awards to the same person) that are still due
  - where a claimant leaves tax credits and is not moving to Universal Credit: following the end of financial year 'finalisation' the claimant is advised of their current tax credits position. Where they do not have a continuing tax credits award, and they have an overpayment, a Notice to Pay letter is sent to the claimant. This letter details the amount owed and invites the customer to repay the debt, in full or by instalments
  - where a claimant leaves tax credits and is moving to Universal Credit: when a claimant moves to Universal Credit with a tax credits debt, they are issued with an Individual Debt Statement with details of the debt that they will take with them, including the award periods to which it relates and how Department for Work and Pensions may seek to collect it
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# New technology challenge to support people who are isolating

The funding will be available to innovators who can find digital ways to support people who need help during the coronavirus (COVID-19) outbreak.

The 'Techforce19' challenge aims to support those who need to stay at home for several weeks and need help. This could include people who need mental health support or who have social care needs.

Funding of up to £25,000 per company is available.

The programme is looking for digital solutions that can be launched in the next few weeks, and could include:

- providing remote social care – for example, by locating and matching qualified carers to those in need
- optimising the volunteer sector – for example, by developing tools to recruit, train and coordinate local volunteers into clinical and non-clinical workers
- improving mental health support – for example, by making it easier to discover and deliver mental health services and support
- any other solutions to ease pressures on services and people during this time

This technology will supplement existing support for those who may be most affected by staying at home for long periods of time.

The programme is being launched by NHSX and managed by PUBLIC, a GovTech venture firm. PUBLIC will not receive any payment for running this competition.

For more information on the programme and how to apply, visit [techforce19.uk](https://techforce19.uk).

The government has strongly advised everyone to reduce social interaction to help minimise the spread of the virus, especially those aged 70 or over, people with underlying medical conditions or pregnant women.

Those considered most at risk of having serious complications from the virus, for instance people receiving treatment for cancer, have also been asked to stay at home for 12 weeks as part of efforts to shield them from the virus.

Health and Social Care Secretary Matt Hancock said:

Staying at home and avoiding contact with others will be absolutely necessary in reducing the spread of this virus and ultimately it will save lives.

However, we know isolation is not easy – especially for older people, those who live alone, have mental health problems or those who care for others.

If people cannot leave the house, we need to quickly find ways to bring support to them and today I am calling on the strength of our innovative technology sector to take on this challenge.

Techforce19 will mobilise the UK's incredible reservoir of talent to develop simple, accessible tools that can be rolled out quickly and help tackle the effect of social isolation.

I am calling on our brilliant tech sector to take on this challenge.

Matthew Gould, Chief Executive of NHSX, said:

Tech can play an important role in helping the country deal with the challenges created by coronavirus. This competition is focused on the problems created by isolation, which lend themselves to digital solutions.

It will allow NHSX to accelerate the development of those solutions, so within weeks they can help those in isolation suffering from loneliness, mental health issues and other problems.