

3,500 businesses risk losing ability to import goods

More than 3,500 businesses risk significant delays to importing goods if they don't move to the UK's new streamlined customs system now.

Businesses submitting import declarations must use the Customs Declaration Service from 1 October 2022, when the Customs Handling Import and Export Freight (CHIEF) system will close for import declarations.

Businesses should check that their customs agents are ready to use the Customs Declaration Service. Those without a customs agent must set themselves up to make their own declarations using software that works with the system.

Many businesses are already using the Customs Declaration Service, however around 3,500 businesses are yet to move.

It can take several weeks to be fully set-up on the Customs Declaration Service so those waiting to register risk being unable to import goods to the UK from 1 October.

Julie Etheridge, HMRC's Director of Programme and Operational Delivery for Borders and Trade, said:

There are now only 2 months left until businesses must use Customs Declaration Service for imports. Businesses need to move now or risk being unable to bring their goods into the UK.

Registering takes time so businesses should start moving to the Customs Declaration Service to ensure a smooth transition and avoid disruption to their business.

To help all businesses and agents prepare for the Customs Declaration Service, declarants are being contacted by phone and email to inform them of steps they need to take. Further information is available on GOV.UK, including a [Customs Declaration Service toolkit and checklists](#), which break down the steps traders need to take.

Traders can also register or check they have [access to the Customs Declaration Service](#) on GOV.UK and access live [customer support services](#) for additional help.

Once registered, businesses which use a Duty Deferment Account will need to set up a new Direct Debit Instruction for the Customs Declaration Service by 30 September. If this is not set up, the Duty Deferment Account will no longer be usable, and individual immediate payments will need to be made each time an import declaration is made.

CHIEF will close for export declarations on 31 March 2023, with businesses being required to use the Customs Declaration Service to send goods out of the UK.

Action taken following dry conditions in Lincs and Northants

Following a dry spring, most river flows and groundwater levels are 'below normal' or 'notably low'. Impacts of this weather are already being felt in Lincolnshire and Northamptonshire with river flows becoming lower, causing problems for wildlife and river users.

Prolonged dry weather is a natural event. It occurs as a result of low rainfall for an extended period of time. Once prolonged dry weather is declared actions are taken to minimise impacts on the environment and the risk of further deterioration.

The Environment Agency have been monitoring the situation and reviewing the range of dry weather indicators, including groundwater levels, river flows and soil conditions. It is working with partners across the area, including internal drainage boards and water companies to ensure the situation is managed effectively.

Abstraction licence holders in the affected areas may receive notice to restrict the amount of water they can take. This may include taking reduced quantities or only abstracting at particular times, depending on local circumstances.

Thomas Enright, a drought manager for Environment Agency in Lincolnshire and Northamptonshire, said:

We continue to monitor our key river, groundwater and reservoir sites using telemetry, and are liaising with water companies to understand any emerging concerns.

We are also working with farmers, businesses and other abstractors to manage water availability. We need to ensure that they get the water they need to be resilient while maintaining our protection of the environment.

We are closely monitoring the developing incident and produce regular reports on the water situation, available on www.gov.uk.

In the lead up to this announcement the Environment Agency has been monitoring weather forecasts and hydrology. Field teams have been busy

sampling to check for the impacts of dry weather on the ecology. They have also been meeting with water companies so any necessary actions can be taken.

We can all do our part to use water wisely and manage this precious resource. If you are using water in the garden, take some simple steps such as fitting a trigger to your hose or using a bucket to wash the car or water plants. For more water saving tips visit [Waterwise](#).

If people see any environmental impacts due to dry weather, such as fish in distress, please report it to the Environment Agency 24/7 on 0800 80 70 60.

Additional information

- The last time Lincolnshire and Northamptonshire moved to prolonged dry weather status was in July 2018.
- The last time Lincolnshire and Northamptonshire declared drought was in June 2011. This drought resulted from 7 to 8 months of exceptionally dry weather and lasted through to 2012. It was declared as an environmental drought.
- Our regulatory role involves issuing and regulating abstraction licences and drought permits. It also involves imposing abstraction restrictions and scrutinising water company drought plans to ensure they are robust and fit for purpose.
- Water companies plan for the expected increase in demand and reduction in effective rainfall over the warmer months and decide themselves on proposing water restrictions. We work closely with the companies to ensure they follow their drought plans.

Further investment in digital transformation of UK's legal sector

- £4 million to modernise UK legal sector through technology
- Drive to keep sector at global forefront of legal services
- Investment to boost access for individuals and businesses

A new £4 million investment will deliver a second phase of the LawtechUK programme, supporting modernisation through the development of new technology like machine learning and data analytics tools.

This will help ensure the UK retains its competitive global edge, create jobs and boost access to legal services for individuals and businesses through technology.

LawtechUK is a government-backed initiative, launched in 2019, with an initial £2 million investment to transform the UK legal sector through technology, providing resources, programmes and courses to promote new ways

of delivering and accessing legal services via digital solutions.

Justice Minister Lord Bellamy QC said:

A thriving lawtech sector will help ensure the UK continues as a world-leading legal services centre and attracts the very best talent.

This investment will support the market to develop the technology it needs to drive modernisation and deliver first-class legal services.

The LawtechUK programme has been delivered by growth platform Tech Nation in collaboration with the Ministry of Justice and the LawtechUK Panel, a board of industry experts.

The previous funding for Tech Nation has already seen results like the launch of the Lawtech Sandbox – a research and development programme for UK entrepreneurs and start-ups to test and develop products or services looking to address the legal needs of businesses and society.

One start-up to benefit from the sandbox is Legal Utopia, an app designed to help people understand their legal issues and access lawyers.

Director of LawtechUK Alexandra Lennox said:

Technology has the potential to transform business' and peoples' experience of law, meet unmet legal needs and support professionals to deliver the next generation of legal services.

We have seen great progress towards this future since LawtechUK's inception and this next phase of funding will build on those important foundations, helping cement the UK's position as a global hub for technology and law.

Lawtech Amplified Global also participated in the Sandbox.

Founder of Amplified Global Minesh Patel said:

Accelerators, incubators and sandboxes are a lifeline for start-ups bringing novel solutions into the market. It's fantastic to hear about the next series of MoJ funding, which will enable pioneering solutions to push the boundaries within the legal space.

Without the Lawtech Sandbox, an organisation of our size and stage would have found it really difficult to be working, or even engaging, with a telecoms giant and the cross section of stakeholders and regulators that we did.

The LawtechUK programme has rapidly accelerated our growth and helped us to get the product to market quicker than we could have ever imagined.

LawtechUK aims to improve understanding and awareness of legal technology and has produced a free online learning and research hub as well as a website to allow the sharing of experiences of remote alternatives to traditional court hearings.

The investment will also continue to support and promote the work of the LawtechUK's Jurisdiction Taskforce to ensure English law keeps pace with technological developments – helping the UK to maintain its place as an international hub for emerging technologies. This builds on previous work to increase market understanding of smarter contracts and digital assets by showcasing real life examples of where these technologies are being used.

Tech Nation will continue to deliver the LawtechUK programme until December 2023. Details of a competitive process to award the next stage of funding will be announced in the autumn. The new provider will deliver the programme from January 2023 to March 2025.

Notes to editors:

- The objectives of the funding will aim to build on the brilliant work delivered so far by LawtechUK in order to:
 - Increase innovation and the adoption of lawtech in the delivery of UK legal services.
 - Support the growth of the lawtech sector in the UK.
 - Enable English and Welsh law and the UK's jurisdictions to become the foundation for emerging technologies, by supporting and promoting the UK Jurisdiction Taskforce's work.
 - The LawtechUK Panel was established in 2018 by the Secretary of State for Justice and acts as the advisory board to LawtechUK. Made up of senior figures from industry, government, academia, judiciary, regulators and the legal technology community, its members take an active role in LawtechUK's work programme.
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[Pubs Code Adjudicator launches its three-year strategy](#)

News story

The Pubs Code Adjudicator has today published its strategy outlining its focus over the next three years



The Pubs Code Adjudicator (PCA) has published its strategy for delivering its priorities over the next three years, making sure the Code works to rebalance the tied pub industry. The [strategy](#) sets out what the PCA aims to achieve in the short, medium and long term and what success will look like.

In developing this strategy, 35 in-depth interviews were conducted with sector stakeholders in April and May this year. These contributions were considered along with the findings of the PCA's recent annual tied tenant survey and PCA staff workshops.

The strategy promotes stronger partnership working across the industry to better understand current issues, problem solve and raise awareness of how the Code can support tied tenants. The PCA will also continue to develop its approach as a professional regulator and work with its arbitration services partner, the Chartered Institute of Arbitrators, to deliver a quality arbitration service.

Fiona Dickie, Pubs Code Adjudicator, said;

"I am pleased to introduce the PCA's first ever strategy at a time of significant challenge for the industry. I am committed to achieving positive change for tied tenants and we are already seeing progress. We can achieve even more by collaborating with others and this will underpin the PCA's work over the coming year.

"I would like to thank Glow Innovation for helping us undertake this valuable work, as well as everyone who has contributed their views. I now look forward to discussing the initiatives set out in our strategy."

[Insolvency Service newsletter – Summer 2022](#)

Business Minister addresses Insolvency Live!

Our flagship stakeholder event, Insolvency Live!, took place on Tuesday 5 July and this year, we were pleased to welcome [Business Minister, Lord Callanan](#).

This was a hybrid event, the first since before the pandemic with the option to meet in-person. Delegates had the choice to visit Broadway House in Westminster or join us online and both could take part in Q+A. After the past few difficult years, it was wonderful to see so many people in the room, as well as online.

Business Minister, Lord Callanan, has responsibility for insolvency on behalf of the government and spoke at the event. During his speech, the minister praised the insolvency profession for their valuable contribution to the economy and country, while also formally launching [a call for evidence on the Personal Insolvency Review](#).

Other presentations given on the day included insolvency expert [Dr John Tribe](#) who took a look at the cost of living and its impact on the personal insolvency framework; our customer services and insight team shared how the agency is using insight to improve our customer experience; and the team behind the Director Education Project talked about their efforts to develop [education and guidance materials](#) for directors to help them better understand their duties and prevent avoidable insolvencies.

The day ended with a Q&A panel with senior leaders. If you would like to receive a copy of the slides or provide any feedback on the event, please email stakeholder@insolvency.gov.uk.

Insolvency Service transitions to regional hubs as part of efficiency drive

Over the next five years, the Insolvency Service is set to [transition to regional centres](#), reducing the number of our offices while maintaining high standards of customer service and delivering better value for money.

Currently, the Insolvency Service operates from 22 different office locations across England, Wales and Scotland.

To enhance value for money for the taxpayer while maintaining excellent customer service, the Insolvency Service announced in May it would reduce its number of offices to 11 Regional Centres.

Existing offices in Cardiff and Edinburgh will be maintained. The move to regional centres will deliver savings of more than £20 million over the next 10 years.

Insolvency policy development: personal insolvency review and UNCITRAL model laws

July saw the Insolvency Service launch two important policy initiatives that will help inform the government's thinking around supporting individuals in financial distress, as well as plans to implement two international model laws into UK law.

At Insolvency Live!, the Business Minister formally launched a [call for evidence](#) seeking stakeholders' views on the personal insolvency framework. The last fundamental review of personal insolvency was carried out 40 years ago and the government is seeking evidence on the overall purpose of the framework, how it currently supports those in financial difficulty and how it is funded, and whether it serves the needs of debtors and creditors in the 21st century.

We are keen to hear from our stakeholders about their thoughts on the personal insolvency framework and the deadline to submit your response via [Smart Survey](#) or email PIR.CFE@insolvency.gov.uk is 24 October 2022.

The Insolvency Service is a member of the United Nations Commission on International Trade Law, a working group looking to further develop model laws in complex areas such as company and insolvency law that promote best practice and consistency.

The UK has already implemented into UK law, one model law on cross border insolvencies. The UN working group has produced two further internationally recognised model laws that promote the recognition of court judgements and to efficiently manage the insolvency of corporate group insolvencies. If and when the UK implements these new model laws, it will be amongst the first countries to do so and will signal the UK's ongoing commitment to mutual cooperation and international best practice.

The [consultation](#) ends on 29 September 2022 and we are encouraging all responses to be sent by email for the attention of Andrew Shore via Policy.Unit@insolvency.gov.uk.

Forward Thinking conference – call for papers

Following the success of the [inaugural Forward Thinking conference](#), the Insolvency Service is planning the next conference to be held on Friday 18 November 2022.

The theme for this year's event is [Forward Thinking: Insolvency Response in uncertain times](#) and we are inviting colleagues, partners and anyone else with an interest in insolvency to submit their abstracts for an academic or technical paper for presenting at the conference.

The aim of the conference is to provide a platform for insolvency academic research and technical discussions, facilitate a stronger link between academia, the insolvency sector and policy makers, and encourage feedback from interested parties.

Deadline for submission of abstracts – maximum 500 words – is Wednesday 31 August and if you have any queries or would like to host the event, please contact conference@insolvency.gov.uk.

Insolvency Service publishes research reports

The Insolvency Service commissioned three separate pieces of research connected to realising the [5-year strategy](#) under the theme of strengthening our system regulation and improve the insolvency framework.

All three reports were produced by external bodies and are available on GOV.UK:

Angela Crossley, Director of Strategy, Policy and Analysis, said:

While the reports did not announce government policy or legislative changes, they have been vital in helping the agency understand what has been working and where there might be areas for improvement in some of our key areas.

Do you want to become a Diversity and Inclusion Champion?

In June, the Insolvency Service and R3-led Diversity and Inclusion Steering Group announced a campaign to build a network of advocates to champion diversity and inclusion in the insolvency profession.

This will be a voluntary role where [Diversity and Inclusion Champions](#) will act as role models, working alongside the Steering Group to share best practice, boost awareness, and inspire and lead change that will make a difference to employers and their talented teams.

The Diversity and Inclusion Steering Group is still welcoming further applications. To find out more about what the role entails, please email Insolvency.Diversity@insolvency.gov.uk.

Deputy Official Receiver recognised for learning

and development excellence

Kevan Glaysher, a Deputy Official Receiver based in our Manchester office, won a special achievement award at the Operational Delivery Profession Awards 2022 after he was nominated by colleagues for [delivering excellent learning and development](#) and improving the skills of others.

Following 25 years in the banking industry, Kevan joined the Insolvency Service in 2009 as a trainee examiner. As he progressed his career, Kevan went onto mentor new trainee examiners and to this day remains heavily involved in mentoring his colleagues in the Manchester Official Receiver office, while carrying out his duties as a Deputy Official Receiver.

Colleagues nominated Kevan because they wanted to celebrate his achievements in training and developing his colleagues.

Tackling financial wrongdoing: successful enforcement results

Over the last few months, the Insolvency Service has continued to tackle misconduct where there has been abuse of government bounce back loans. At the end of June, the agency saw its [first successful criminal prosecution](#) of a bounce bank loan fraudster after pizza takeaway boss, Abdulrazag Zagroba, was jailed for 2 years after he fraudulently claimed a £20,000 Bounce Back Loan.

More recently, the Insolvency Service successfully secured the [first four disqualifications](#) using new powers to tackle directors from dissolving companies and walking away without paying their debts. All four directors were disqualified after they secured bounce back loans before dissolving their companies to avoid paying their liabilities back.

Other cases of note include:

Latest from the insolvency blog

Another great way to find out what's going on at the Insolvency Service is to [subscribe to our blog](#) feed where you get a different perspective of our colleagues' work, as well as some insights about what they get-up to when they're not in the office.

Professional Support Lawyer, Matt Pope, hosted a learning and development event in our Birmingham office and has provided an account following what leading insolvency expert, His Honour Judge Abbas Mithani QC, said about [disqualifications from a judge's point of view](#).

Other recent blogs