

HMRC urges businesses to move to new customs IT platform now to continue trading

HMRC is urging businesses to move to its new customs IT platform now to continue trading, and is writing to businesses to support them with the changes.

The letters and emails include further information about making the move to the UK's single customs platform – the Customs Declaration Service – and set out the steps businesses must take now to ensure they can continue trading. They also signpost to online resources to support businesses through the process.

Whether you make your own declarations or use an intermediary, HMRC is urging you to act now to plan and make your move to the Customs Declaration Service. It can take some time to complete the preparation needed and the sooner you start, the easier it will be.

The Customs Declaration Service supports making import and export declarations when moving goods into and out of the UK. It is a resilient, reliable and adaptable IT platform, which replaces the Customs Handling of Import and Export Freight (CHIEF), and is the first step of the UK border transformation.

The CHIEF system is closing for import declarations after 30 September 2022. After 31 March 2023, the ability to make exports declarations will end and the CHIEF service will close.

Benefits of the Customs Declaration Service

The Customs Declaration Service saves businesses time by:

- allowing you to submit customs documents digitally and safely using the Secure File Upload service
- providing access to all your financial information in a single financial dashboard where you can view account statements, make payments and control standing authority
- giving real time notifications and alerts on all your customs declarations and movements
- allowing you to manage your business finances by opening a duty deferment account, make payments by card or bank transfer enabling your goods to clear without delay

Support to help you make the move

You can find more information about using the [Customs Declaration Service](#).

To help businesses and agents plan their move to the Customs Declaration Service, HMRC has published [step-by-step checklists](#).

You can also use the [Trader Dress Rehearsal service](#) to help you prepare. The service enables you to practise realistic business scenarios using your own account data, test your software and train your staff on how to use the Customs Declaration Service, all without risk. You can use this service before you make the move to the Customs Declaration Service, however we would still encourage you to make the move as soon as possible.

HMRC has also updated its guidance to [help businesses complete import declarations](#) by adding new examples for goods moved under special procedures. You can use these examples to help you complete declarations on the Customs Declaration Service for your own goods.

If businesses need extra help and guidance to meet their customs obligations, they can:

[Woodland projects across England to receive funding for jobs, training and increasing tree cover](#)

A diverse range of woodland projects across England have received £6 million from the Trees Call to Action Fund to help create forestry jobs and improve access to nature, Defra and the Forestry Commission announced today.

The successful projects include one which will provide 450 training placements for people to learn the specialist skills required when managing ancient and other veteran trees; a project to create a 60-mile wooded corridor connecting the Wye Valley, Forest of Dean and Wyre Forest that will boost pine marten populations; and the NHS Forest project which helps healthcare sites to realise the health, wellbeing and biodiversity value of their green spaces.

Grants of between £250,000 and £500,000 will support 12 projects across England in total. These include six new Woodland Creation Partnerships enabling large-scale woodland creation across rural and urban areas; two projects growing and upskilling the forestry sector workforce; and three projects encouraging community engagement with and access to trees and woodlands. The other projects include a project by the Institute of Chartered Foresters to train the next generation of forestry leaders and offer an in-depth training course to ensure the forestry sector has the capacity, skills and knowledge to manage the trees and woodlands of the future; and finally a project that will advise and support landowners in woodland management and creation.

Forestry Minister Lord Goldsmith said:

Investment in woodland creation is key to protecting our natural environment and achieving net zero by 2050.

These inspiring projects will encourage large-scale woodland creation, build the forestry sector of the future and bring people across the country closer to nature.

Forestry Commission Chair Sir William Worsley said:

This Fund will play a hugely important role in addressing the twin crises of climate change and biodiversity loss. It will also bring trees and woodlands closer to where people live, and create more green jobs in the forestry and allied sectors.

Congratulations to all the projects which will now receive funding – together we will grow trees, woods and forests to make the nation more resilient amidst our changing climate.

Eilish McGuinness, Chief Executive at the Heritage Fund, said:

These projects are taking steps to mitigate the effects of climate change and we are delighted to help make that happen. By building strong partnerships and making sure that people are trained in vital skills, we will be better placed to meet future tree planting targets. We can also enjoy the health and wellbeing benefits and the thriving nature that a natural landscape with more trees will bring.

All funded projects will build sector-wide capacity to deliver the England Trees Action Plan, the Government's long-term plan for our trees, forests and woodlands. Funding for the Trees Call to Action Fund has come from the Government's Nature for Climate Fund.

The Trees Call to Action Fund has been delivered by the National Lottery Heritage Fund in partnership with Defra and the Forestry Commission.

Sandra Dinneen, Paul Farmer, Patrick

Newberry, Susie Thornberry, and Richard Upton have been appointed as Commissioners of Historic England.

Sandra Dinneen

Sandra Dinneen is an experienced Chief Executive with roles spanning the public, private and not for profit sector. She has a background in economic growth and has led and advised on a number of successful development projects.

Sandra has a keen interest in organisational development, cultural change and commercialisation. She continues to deliver leadership development programmes and executive coaching.

Other roles include being a Non-Executive Director of the Norfolk and Norwich University Hospital Foundation Trust, a founder Trustee and Member of the Sapientia Multi Academy Education Trust and leading the Priscilla Bacon Charity to deliver a new Hospice for Norfolk.

Sandra Chairs Historic England's Business and Finance Committee and is a member of the Audit and Risk Committee.

Patrick Newberry

Patrick holds a number of non executive directorships in the financial and professional services sectors, chairing audit and risk committees. He was a partner in PwC for 25 years, working in the financial sector in the UK and globally. He also served as a member of PwC's Supervisory Board, Chair of its Strategy, Governance and International Sub-Committee and a member of the Audit and Risk Committee. He was a board member and former President (2010-2011) of the Management Consultancies Association.

In the not for profit sector, Patrick is a Trustee of the Georgian Group, Chairman of The Cornish Buildings Group, Chairman of the Cornwall College Group, Member of the Fabric Advisory Committee of Truro Cathedral and is a Fellow of the Royal Society of Arts.

Susie Thornberry

Susie is Assistant Director at Imperial War Museums where she leads public engagement for adults, young people, schools, and families across the five museums. Her extensive experience in arts, museums, festivals, and heritage includes roles with Historic Royal Palaces and Artichoke. Susie became a Commissioner of Historic England in 2018 and is a trustee of Battersea Arts Centre.

Paul Farmer

Paul Farmer has been Chief Executive of Mind, the leading mental health charity working in England and Wales since May 2006.

Paul is Chair of the NHS England Independent Oversight & Advisory Group which brings together health and care leaders and experts to oversee the current mental health long term plan for the NHS in England. He co-authored 'Thriving at Work' for the government, setting out how to transform mental health in work places.

Paul is a Commissioner at Historic England. He has an Honorary Doctorate of Science from the University of East London, is an Honorary Fellow of St Peter's College, Oxford, and The Royal College of Psychiatrists, and was awarded a CBE in the New Year's Honours 2016.

Richard Upton

Richard was the founder of the specialist regeneration property developer, Cathedral Group and was previously a co-founding Director of Mount Anvil. He has extensive experience in the field of complex regeneration projects through the UK. He was appointed as Deputy Chief Executive of U+I Plc in July 2015. Richard has served as a member of Historic England's London Advisory Committee since 2012 and has campaigned extensively for sustainable restoration of heritage buildings, including the campaign to save Smithfield Market which he successfully fought and funded; the historic market buildings will now house the new Museum of London.

Commissioners of Historic England are remunerated £4113.00 per annum. These appointments have been made in accordance with the Cabinet Office's Governance Code on Public Appointments. The appointments process is regulated by the Commissioner for Public Appointments. Under the Code, any significant political activity undertaken by an appointee in the last five years must be declared. This is defined as including holding office, public speaking, making a recordable donation, or candidature for election.

Sandra Dinneen, Paul Farmer, Patrick Newberry, Susie Thornberry and Richard Upton have declared no such political activity.

[WW2 officer's grave rededicated in France](#)

The grave of Second Lieutenant (2nd Lt) Piers Richard Edgcumbe who was killed in France whilst serving with 12th Royal Lancers, has been rededicated in France eighty-two years after he was killed.

The service, which was organised by the MOD's Joint Casualty and Compassionate Centre (JCCC), also known as the 'MOD War Detectives', was held at the Commonwealth War Graves Commission's (CWGC) Esquelbecq Military Cemetery, near Dunkirk.

Tracey Bowers, JCCC said: "To see so many here today has made this a very special ceremony. Working closely with the family, regiment, and local community during the planning of today's service has reinforced how much this case has meant to so many people. It is an honour and privilege to have been involved."

The rededication service was attended by many family members including his niece, Lady Rosamund Woodward, who said:

"For all these years, each one of us, as members of the family of Piers Richard Edgcumbe, have held in our hearts the image of the man we believed him to be. We have treasured the memories, stories and pictures handed down to us by those who knew and loved him and were closest to him during his lifetime. Now, here today, seeing his name carved into the stone of his final resting place, we feel he has, at last, come home to us.

"We are humbly grateful to the teamwork and dedication of all the amazing people who have worked towards this, and who continue their work for the families and friends of the thousands of other who also, like Piers, made the ultimate sacrifice. Thank you from all of us."

Members of the Edgcumbe family read a poem written by Piers' grandfather in 1915 to commemorate his birth. Crown copyright.

Alongside family the service was attended by representatives of the British Embassy, serving soldiers of The Royal Lancers, including a Lance Guard together with representatives from both Eton College and Trinity College Cambridge. The service was conducted by the Reverend John Power CF, Chaplain to The Royal Lancers (Queen Elizabeths' Own).

The Reverend Power said:

"This service was a real tribute for the life of 2Lt Piers Edgcumbe, so many were included: his family, his school, his regiment as it is today, and a letter read from his grandfather really did make the occasion a celebration of his life and service to his Country"

2nd Lt Edgcumbe was traveling in an armoured vehicle, tasked with a dangerous role to conduct a reconnaissance mission and scout out enemy positions during the huge, allied evacuation to Dunkirk in May 1940. 2nd Lt Edgcumbe was killed alongside his Lance Corporal when a German tank opened fire on them.

His Commanding Officer wrote of him: "I have seldom met an officer who was so cool and brave under fire: he was adored by his men who would have followed him anywhere."

The Eton College obituary wrote: "It is impossible in a short memorial notice to give to those who did not know him any impression of his modesty, his charm of manner, his loveable nature, or his consideration for all whether old or young."

Research was undertaken by many researchers and members of the family to try and identify 2nd Lt Edgcumbe's final resting place. Following further research conducted by CWGC, the National Army Museum and JCCC, the identification was confirmed.

The headstone over the grave has been replaced by the CWGC, including a family inscription and they will care for the final resting places in perpetuity. The CWGC's Commemorations Case Manager, Mel Donnelly, said:

"It is our privilege to mark Second Lieutenant Edgcumbe's grave in Esquelbecq Military Cemetery with a new Commission headstone. It bears a moving personal inscription chosen by his family, recognising his strength and purpose. Today we join them in reflecting on his loss; we invite people all over the world to remember the bravery and sacrifice of Second Lt Edgcumbe and all the casualties from both world wars in this, our annual War Graves Week."

[Innovation fund launches to support Ukrainian armed forces](#)

Press release

The brightest minds in the UK Defence industry are being encouraged to continue developing more battle-winning ideas to help Ukraine



- Campaign launched to bolster Defence innovation in support of Ukraine's Armed Forces
- At least £25 million of funding available for successful proposals to tackle specific needs
- Focus on rapidly delivering from innovation to battleground

Defence Ministers are calling on UK industry to accelerate the development of equipment for the Ukrainian armed forces, launching a £25 million campaign fund for the design and delivery of equipment to the country across the coming months.

The competition will be focused on bolstering the existing provision for artillery, coastal defence and aerial systems.

The Government believes drawing on UK expertise across the defence industry, including from innovative small and medium-sized enterprises (SMEs), could provide battle-winning solutions for the Ukrainian forces.

Defence Procurement Minister, Jeremy Quin said:

Since Russia's brutal invasion UK defence suppliers with active support from MOD and DE&S have taken equipment from desktop ideas to the front line. This £25m plus fund is designed to capture ongoing work and support innovative ideas to meet Ukrainian defence requirements.

Recent months have shown the ingenuity and innovation of the UK defence sector. We want to ensure ongoing creativity is harnessed and directed at key requirements and all companies with a capability that can help are aware of the challenge.

Working closely with industry we have already seen innovative ideas quickly reaching Theatre. This includes capabilities such as heavy lift Unmanned Aerial Systems (UAS) and anti-tank loitering munitions, as well as adapting existing weapons systems such as integrating Brimstone for use as a ground launched weapon.

The requirements fall into four categories:

- Artillery – Procurement and manufacturing proposals to support the resupply of ammunition and the maintenance of Soviet calibre 152mm and 122mm weapon systems.
- Coastal defence – Supporting the deterrence of hostile naval forces, persistent surveillance, and delivery of attacks at range, including from autonomous or remotely-controlled vehicles.
- Military logistics and resupply – Maintenance and development of infrastructure for supply lines by sea and land, including waterways, overbridging and general Ukrainian engineering capability.
- Unmanned aerial systems (UAS) – The provision of UAS capabilities across a broad spectrum of capabilities, from lethal effects to surveillance, electronic warfare and heavy lift.

The UK has already committed more than £2.8 billion to support Ukraine through humanitarian aid and grants, as well as military kit including 120 armoured vehicles, air defence systems and more than 6,500 anti-tank missiles.

Industry organisations will need to submit proposals by June 10th, when a sift will take place to access the funding, with at least £25 million available.

The initial focus is on equipment that can be sourced and supplied in the next four months, with longer-term capability development in scope where applicable.

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