

Press release: Pubs Code Adjudicator data – six months on

From 21 July to 21 January, the Enquiry Line set up by the Pubs Code Adjudicator (PCA) to provide information about the Pubs Code has received 435 enquiries. 91% of the enquiries were from tied pub tenants or their representatives.

The top issues raised by callers were:

In the same period the PCA also received 121 referrals for arbitration, 42 more since November 21st. The top issues that have been referred are:

- whether a full response had been given by a pub-owning business to a request for an MRO Proposal
- duties of the pub-owning business in relation to Rent Assessment Proposals

Mr Newby said:

Calls are continuing to be received by the PCA at a high rate and referrals for arbitration are still rising. This is a very significant level of engagement from tied pub tenants.

I am receiving a great deal of information and I am building a good picture of what is happening in the industry and the issues to prioritise but to strengthen that picture more information is helpful.

If I am to take action on Code-related issues it needs to be evidence-based and I would encourage tenants to come forward with that evidence where they believe they have experienced inappropriate practices. I would urge them to contact the Enquiry Line confident that their identities will be protected.

He added:

The figures I have released today also demonstrate the scale of the task for the PCA. I am working with my team to deal efficiently and effectively with the referrals. In recent weeks I have increased my office resources to support this work and I expect some of the early cases to be completed shortly.

I am committed to resolving all arbitrations without undue delay. However, some are complex cases and as the legislation is new, many are the first of a kind.

They cannot be completed overnight and each party must be given an opportunity to make their case. Individual cases and the requirements of the parties will be different in each case. There can be no one size that fits all in terms of the length of time a case will take.

Mr Newby said he had also held a wide range of meetings with tenants, their representatives and stakeholder organisations:

A major part of my role is to raise awareness of the new rights and protections tied pub tenants have under the Pubs Code and to encourage compliance from the industry.

I have held a wide range of meetings to spread the message and the vast majority of responses I have received have been positive and encouraging. I am always willing to meet interested parties who wish to engage constructively and support the PCA's mission to create a fair and lawful environment for tied pub tenants.

Notes to editors: The Pubs Code came into force on 21st July 2016. Its two key principles are that there should be fair and lawful dealing by pub-owning businesses in relation to their tied tenants and that tied tenants should be no worse off than if they were free of tie.

The Pubs Code Adjudicator is responsible for promoting and enforcing the Code. The PCA Enquiry Line is open Monday to Thursday, 9:30am to 5pm and Friday, 9:30am to 4pm on 0800 528 8080. Fact sheets explaining the Pubs Code are available on the [PCA website](#)

For further information contact Sheree Dodd office@pca.gsi.gov.uk

Press release: South East lawyers asked to help raise competition law awareness

Around 260 law firms headquartered in the South East of England will be encouraged to share the Competition and Markets Authority's (CMA) easy-to-use competition law information with their small and medium-sized enterprise (SME) clients.

The information is intended to help SMEs recognise anti-competitive practices, comply with competition law and report suspicions of illegal anti-competitive activity.

The approach is part of the CMA's ongoing drive to boost awareness of, and compliance with, competition law, following the launch of its [competing fairly in business: advice for small businesses](#) materials and the South East of England is the latest region chosen as a target for the awareness-raising drive.

The consequences of breaking competition law can be very serious. Recently, a managing director of an online poster supplier was [disqualified](#) for 5 years after the company was found to have been part of an online price-fixing cartel.

Furthermore, businesses can be fined up to 10% of their annual turnover and people involved in cartels can face up to 5 years in prison.

But [research](#) shows that businesses' understanding of competition law in the area is low:

- only 59% of businesses surveyed in the South East of England knew that price-fixing can lead to imprisonment
- only 33% of businesses surveyed in the South East of England knew that it is unlawful to set the price at which others can re-sell their product
- only 7% of businesses surveyed in the South East of England had run training sessions on competition law

The CMA has also commissioned [further research](#) which revealed that most small businesses have a shared ethical sense that certain anti-competitive practices, such as price-fixing, are unfair or wrong and want to do the right thing.

Ann Pope, CMA Senior Director of Antitrust Enforcement, said:

The victims of anti-competitive activity can often be other businesses, so knowing what illegal behaviour looks like and how to report it can help small and medium-sized businesses protect themselves.

The potential consequences of breaking the law are very serious. That is why it is important that all businesses know what to look out for and report suspected breaches to the CMA.

Legal advisers to SMEs are ideally placed to help raise awareness of competition law among their clients.

Nikki Burns, Chair of FSB Thames Valley said:

It's good to see the CMA raising awareness among small businesses of the rights they possess under competition law. Anti-competitive practices harm many small businesses across the Thames Valley and the South East.

We must create an environment where all small firms recognise and report anti-competitive behaviour and are not afraid to speak out. Helping small businesses identify all the forms that anti-competitive practices can take is a good starting point.

Notes for editors

1. The CMA is the UK's primary competition and consumer authority. It is an independent non-ministerial government department with responsibility for carrying out investigations into mergers, markets and the regulated industries and enforcing competition and consumer law. For CMA updates, follow us on Twitter [@CMAgovuk](#), [Flickr](#), [LinkedIn](#) and [Facebook](#).
2. Media enquiries should be directed to Simon Belgard (simon.belgard@cma.gsi.gov.uk, 020 3738 6472).

[News story: UK Government leads Burns Night celebrations around the world](#)

Scottish Secretary David Mundell and Foreign Office Minister Sir Alan Duncan will host tonight's reception, where guests will be welcomed by bagpipes, enjoy a whisky tasting, and listen to Scottish folk singer Katy Thompson, who will perform 'My Heart is in the Highlands' and 'My Love is Like a Red Red Rose'. In addition, Ryan Hunter, 2nd year BA Acting student from at the Royal Academy of Dramatic Art, will recite Burns' poem 'A Mans A Man for A' That'.

[Address to a Haggis](#)

The video shows UK Government staff and Scottish service personnel including Major Jonny Rourke, Lieutenant Colonel Gordon Mackenzie, Bombardier Steven Cunningham and Chief Petty Officer John Boyle reciting Burns' most famous work, the 'Address to a Haggis'.

Secretary of State for Scotland, David Mundell said:

This week the whole country will celebrate the life and work of Robert Burns, one of Scotland's greatest cultural icons. His works are justly famous right across the globe. From Ayrshire to Atlanta, and from Cumbernauld to Canberra, on Wednesday Burns' work will be celebrated in homes and Burns societies all over the world.

Burns' legacy remains relevant around the world, and as someone from Dumfries, Burns has always played an important part in my life. On Burns Night, I will be promoting Scotland's fine produce at a reception with the Foreign and Commonwealth Office. And, of course, toasting the Bard with a wee dram of "guid auld Scotch."

Foreign Office minister Sir Alan Duncan said:

The clue is in the name – my father and many Duncans before us were born and brought up in Wick, Caithness, so I'll be in my Duncan tartan tonight.

Burns' enduring global influence demonstrates the impact of Scottish culture around the world and I know that Burns night will be celebrated all over – not just by British troops, embassies, aid workers and expats, but by people from many countries throughout the world. It shows us that Burns' appeal is as strong as ever.

[News story: Italy vs Wales rugby match in Rome: consular advice](#)

From:

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Part of:

The Italy and Welsh Rugby teams will meet in Rome for their RBS 6 Nations Rugby Tournament on 5 February 2017 at 3pm.

The Consular Services of the British Embassy Rome have advice for Welsh supporters travelling to see the match.

Travelling rugby fans normally prepare well for their trips, don't get into fights, don't overindulge, don't lose their passports and don't normally come to our attention. Keep it up!

However, to avoid getting into trouble, here's a bit of advice:

- check that your passport is valid for your whole trip to Italy;
- make sure that you bring your [European Health Insurance Card \(EHIC\)](#) – this proves your entitlement to free/reduced cost health care if you need medical attention;
- the EHIC does not replace comprehensive [travel insurance](#) though, so make sure you're insured. Insurance could cover the entire cost of hospitalisation, and repatriation should that become necessary;
- keep an eye on your possessions at all times: pickpockets operate in large crowds and on most public transport.

The emergency numbers in Italy are:

- 112: Carabinieri
- 113: police
- 118: emergency ambulance
- 115: fire brigades

Practical information:

- the venue for this match will be the Olympic Stadium in Rome. Kick-off time is at 3pm, Italian time. The Stadium opens at 1pm. You should try to arrive early as access to the stadium might take some time and certainly before 2pm;
- a fan zone at Parco del Foro Italico (next to the Stadium) is open from 10am on Sunday;
- there is no parking at the Stadium so don't arrive by car;
- disabled car parking spaces are located outside the Carraia Nord, in [Largo Ferraris IV](#), where you will be directed to the Tribuna Tevere to access the Stadium;
- Italian police and stewards will conduct ticket checks and security screening. You might be required to show an original identity document. Any items that could be used as a weapon, like glass or plastic bottles, are not permitted inside the stadium;
- note also that musical instruments, large umbrellas and items of luggage are not permitted inside the Stadium;

How to get to the Olympic Stadium:

- take Metro Line A to Flaminio/Piazza del Popolo and walk to the Stadium (4.5 Kms) for about 30 minutes, or you can take tram no. 2 from Flaminio which drops you close to the Stadium. Alternatively take bus 910 from Roma Termini, get off at Piazza Antonio Mancini, then walk through the park, over the Bridge Duca D'Aosta and you'll see the Stadio Olimpico;
- combined Metro and bus/tram tickets can be purchased from most tobacconists, bars, or vending machines at metro stations and major bus stops and cost €1.50 each. Please note that bus and tram tickets must be stamped in the small yellow ticket machine found on buses and trams as soon as you start your journey. Failure to do so will result in a fine, if checked by an inspector.

If things go wrong and you need consular assistance, call us on +39 06 4220 0001.

Check out our [Italy travel advice](#) before you go.

News story: Innovation to drive affordable energy and clean growth under Industrial Strategy

- research and innovation lead to new products, services, and more effective ways of doing business with a lower carbon impact
- to get every part of the UK firing on all cylinders we need to deliver an energy infrastructure system fit for the 21st century
- investment in innovation will help to commercialise our world-leading ideas and place UK companies at the forefront of developing low carbon growth solutions

The [Industrial Strategy green paper](#) highlighted the government's commitment to minimise business energy costs and support the competitiveness of UK companies as we pursue our climate change targets in the most cost effective way.

Today Minister of State for Climate Change and Industry Nick Hurd attended the [Rushlight Awards](#) where he announced funding for a series of energy innovation projects. The funding boost of £28 million will be invested in smart systems, industrial energy reduction and offshore wind demonstrating our commitment to building a low carbon, low cost future. This forms part of the government's commitment to double support for energy innovation, up to £400 million per year in 2021.

More details of the government's Energy Innovation Programme and funding are available from the [GOV.UK Energy Innovation page](#).

This financial support follows on the government's vision to ensure the UK continues to be the global leader in science and research. The [Industrial Strategy green paper](#) identifies that we need to do more to commercialise the world-class ideas and discoveries made in Britain, and put the UK and British companies at the forefront of innovation.

Minister for Climate Change and Industry Nick Hurd said:

Innovation in energy will play an important role to shape our low carbon future to rebuild an outdated energy system. That's why we've increased our financial support, helping to create jobs and

opportunities for people across the UK.

Our Industrial Strategy green paper seeks views on how we can support these emerging technologies, ensuring we drive growth and develop international partnerships across our world leading research, science and innovation sector.

Under the new investment, up to £9 million will be spent on a competition to reduce the cost of energy storage, including electricity, thermal, and power-to-gas storage and up to £600,000 for feasibility studies for projects that can store energy on a large scale, for use when it's needed.

Up to £7.6 million will be available for advancing energy demand side response technologies that can help both private and public sector organisations reduce energy use in peak times.

To reduce the cost of energy for industry, the government will invest around £9 million in a competition for 'industrial energy efficiency accelerator'. The competition would help to find new ways of improving the energy efficiency of UK industry, helping to develop industry-specific options for a low carbon future.

Today's announcement reaffirms our financial support to the sector after the investment of £2 billion a year by 2020-21 in research and development and £23 billion in high value investment through National Productivity Investment Fund was introduced at the Autumn Statement. The funds will address our key economic challenge of raising business productivity, helping to support business and research collaborations to explore opportunities to transform industries.