

Sustainability agreements: CMA issues information for businesses



One of the ways in which businesses are striving to meet climate change targets or other environmental objectives is through 'sustainability agreements'. These are arrangements between businesses to work together to do things such as reduce their carbon footprint or improve the environmental standards of their products.

It is important that competition law does not become an unnecessary obstacle to sustainable development, and that businesses are not deterred from taking part in lawful environmental initiatives for fear they may breach competition law. It is also important to make sure that markets remain competitive and open to innovation.

With this in mind, the CMA has issued [an information document to help firms navigate competition law](#) as it currently stands.

The document outlines the current framework for the self-assessment of competition law risk and sets out the key points that businesses and trade associations should consider when making sustainability agreements.

Stuart Hudson, CMA Senior Director for Strategy, said:

Supporting the transition to a low carbon economy is one of the CMA's strategic objectives and we want to help businesses to achieve their sustainability goals without breaching competition rules.

That's why we've published concise information and advice for firms and trade associations on how to stay on the right side of the law when producing sustainability agreements.

The CMA has also issued [a short blog](#), outlining the current competition law debate on sustainability issues.

The CMA will also progress work in relation to its other climate change

priorities, including its [market study into electric vehicle charging](#) and its [investigation to tackle false or misleading environmental claims about products and services that affect consumers](#).

Notes to editors

1. The information issued by the CMA should not be viewed as a substitute for legal advice or relied upon as a complete statement of the law. References to formal guidance on the application of competition law can be found on the CMA's website.
2. The CMA is engaged in the global discussion about competition rules and sustainability policy. For more details see our [blog post](#).
3. Read more about how the CMA is supporting the transition to a low carbon economy in its [2020/21 Annual Plan](#).

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[Association of Chartered Certified Accountants application to cease as a recognised professional body for insolvency practitioners](#)

News story

The Association of Chartered Certified Accountants has applied to the Secretary of State for Business to give up its status as a recognised professional body for insolvency practitioners.



Section 391N of the Insolvency Act 1986

Revocation of recognition at the request of body

Notice in accordance with section 391N(3) of the Insolvency Act 1986

Association of Chartered Certified Accountants

On 20 February 2019, the Association of Chartered Certified Accountants (formerly the Chartered Association of Certified Accountants) ('ACCA') asked the Secretary of State to consider a request, made by it under section 391N of the Insolvency Act 1986, that the ACCA should cease to be a Recognised Professional Body ("RPB") for the purposes of section 391 of the Insolvency Act 1986. In October 2016, the ACCA entered into a collaboration agreement with another RPB, the Insolvency Practitioners Association ('IPA'), pursuant to which the ACCA's monitoring and complaints-handling arrangements for insolvency practitioners have been undertaken by the IPA since 1 January 2017. From 1 October 2018, the licensing of ACCA authorised insolvency practitioners was moved to the IPA. The ACCA considered that its continued recognition as an RPB was unviable and therefore requested the revocation of such recognition.

The ACCA has confirmed that:

- It notified ACCA insolvency licence holders of its intention to request the revocation of its recognition as an RPB on 11 July 2019 and 17 October 2019.
- It has completed its internal procedures to sanction and implement its decision to request the revocation of its recognition as an RPB.
- It ceased to carry out (directly or indirectly) any regulatory activities after 31 December 2019.
- Insolvency practitioners licensed by the ACCA up until 31 December 2019 are now licensed by other RPBs.

The Minister for Climate Change and Corporate Responsibility has considered this request and is satisfied that it is appropriate in all the circumstances to revoke this recognition in accordance with the procedure set out in section 391N of the Insolvency Act 1986.

Accordingly, the Secretary of State has decided to make the Insolvency Practitioners (Recognised Professional Bodies) (Revocation of Recognition) Order 2021. The Order takes effect from 1 March 2021.

The reasons for making the Order in relation to the ACCA are:

- The ACCA considers that its continued recognition as an RPB is not commercially viable.
- The ACCA has completed all internal procedures necessary for it to request the revocation of its recognition as an RPB and ceased all regulatory activities after 31 December 2019.
- Any insolvency practitioners that were licenced by the ACCA as at 31

December 2019 and wished to continue to practise are now licensed by other RPBs.

A print version of the notice is available from the Insolvency Service, 16th Floor, 1 Westfield Avenue, Stratford, London, E20 1HZ.

Lord Callanan, Secretary of State for Climate Change and Corporate Responsibility

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[Spacewalk to fit ground-breaking British kit to International Space Station](#)

Two astronauts will today undertake a spacewalk to install a revolutionary piece of government-funded technology on the International Space Station (ISS), marking the UK's first major industrial contribution to the spacecraft.

Called ColKa for 'Columbus Ka-band Terminal', the UK Space Agency-funded system will revolutionise scientists' ability in the UK and Europe to access the results of their space-based experiments, from investigations into the effects of radiation on seeds to biomining research. The results will help unlock benefits for all of us, from understanding how our bodies and muscles age to furthering our understanding of illnesses like cancer and Parkinson's Disease.

This giant leap forward for research carried out in the Columbus module will allow astronauts and researchers to benefit from a dedicated link back to Earth at home broadband speeds. Currently, results are returned to Earth on a hard drive, which could take months to receive, with data sometimes being lost in transit. The new terminal will enable results to be delivered to scientists just a day or two after the data is recorded – allowing scientists to process information much more quickly and adjust experiments if they see any problems with the data, such as an unclear image.

NASA's Victor Glover and Michael Hopkins will venture outside the space station for 6 hours to mount the UK-built large suitcase-sized device to the European Space Agency's Columbus module on the ISS.

Science Minister Amanda Solloway said:

This mission to install pioneering UK-built technology in space exemplifies how government backing is helping our most innovative companies push the boundaries of what we can achieve in space as well as back home on Earth.

Strengthening the speed at which data can be transmitted from space will bring enormous benefits to scientists and researchers across Europe, helping them progress vital research faster, while opening up numerous commercial opportunities for UK firms as we build back better.

The ColKa antenna during testing. Credit: ESA – M. Cowan

Tethered to the ISS by a retractable steel cable, the astronauts face challenging conditions as they work to install the terminal, orbiting Earth at an altitude of 250 miles.

The astronauts will go without food for hours as they work in the harsh thermal vacuum of space, where the temperature can be as hot as 120 degrees Celsius in the sunlight, down to minus 160C when the Sun is out of sight.

The data will be transmitted to a ground station at Harwell Campus, Oxfordshire, near ESA's European Centre for Space Applications and Telecommunications, and from there it will be transferred to the Columbus Control Centre and user centres across Europe.

Columbus was conceived and designed over 20 years ago, when the internet was in its infancy. The laboratory was launched to the Station in 2008 and uses the Station's network and NASA's infrastructure for communications with the Columbus Control Centre.

David Kenyon, Managing Director at MDA UK based in Harwell, which designed and built ColKa using the RAL Space clean rooms on the Harwell Campus, said:

We are extremely excited that ColKa is being brought into service. This system is our first flight system developed through MDA UK, and we now have equipment for another seven flight missions, including four lunar systems, under development in Harwell. ColKa will bring tremendous benefit to all our ESA astronauts, scientists and projects.

The contract was awarded to MDA UK following the UK Space Agency's investment of £40m in ESA's space exploration programme in 2012. In November 2019 the UK committed £180 million to the European Space Agency's global exploration programme, which, along with the lunar gateway and lunar communications, will include bringing back the first samples from Mars and support the US ambition to have a sustainable presence on the Moon.

To date, UK scientists have been involved in 17 cutting-edge experiments that have taken place on the ISS and 33 others that are currently being developed and readied for future flight. In total, more than 2,700 investigations from researchers in 108 countries have been accomplished aboard the orbiting facility.

The UK's space sector is going from strength to strength, employing around 42,000 people and carrying out world-class science while growing the economy.

[Funding boost to get young people get into work](#)

Employers can now apply for a £1000 cash boost to help them take on new trainees, Apprenticeships and Skills Minister, Gillian Keegan has announced today (27 January).

The new scheme will support young people to gain the skills and experience they need from the very start, helping them to get a job, an apprenticeship, or pursue further study. The cash boost – which is available until 31 July 2021 – will help businesses with the cost of providing a high-quality work placement for a trainee. This includes providing facilities, uniforms or helping with travel costs. Businesses offering new traineeship opportunities will receive the £1,000 bonus for every trainee they take on with up to a maximum of 10 trainees. Employers can claim the cash incentive for all work placements that have been completed since 1 September.

The highly successful traineeship programme has already helped nearly 120,000 young people get on the path to a great career since 2013. Recent figures show that 66% of trainees get a job, take up an apprenticeship or go on to further study within 6 months of completing their programme, and today's announcement will expand the scheme even further, giving thousands more young people the opportunity to gain the skills they need to start a new career as we build back better from the pandemic. This will support this country and our businesses to fill and create more jobs, giving young people a better start while boosting productivity.

The programmes last between 6 weeks and 12 months, and focus on developing vital employability skills, alongside additional English, maths and digital skills, combined with a work placement lasting a minimum of 70 hours. Young people have completed work placements in a range of exciting industries including construction, education and health and social care.

The launch of the incentive scheme follows the announcement in July 2020 by the Chancellor, as part of his Plan for Jobs, of an additional £111 million investment to support the largest-ever expansion of traineeships so more young people have the skills and confidence they need to get on in life.

Chancellor Rishi Sunak said:

My number one priority is to support, protect and create jobs, which is why for the first time ever we're giving businesses £1,000 to cover the cost of trainee work experience, because we know that traineeships are a proven way to give young people the skills and opportunity, they need to be ready for work.

We also know that our young people will be vital in the national effort to recover from the pandemic, so I urge businesses to seize this opportunity and help us harness the talent of our young people and offer hope for the future.

Gillian Keegan, Minister for Apprenticeships and Skills said:

We're pulling out all the stops to help young people get the skills and confidence they need to progress. This cash boost will help employers of all sizes provide more traineeship opportunities, to invest in their workforce so they can rebuild and grow, giving young people a vital route to start their apprenticeship journey, get their first job or go on to further study.

I strongly encourage as many employers as possible to apply now and take advantage of this fantastic offer so more young people can gain the skills they need to progress in their careers as we build back better from the pandemic.

Louise Powell, Head of Apprenticeships, Specsavers said:

We began offering Traineeships in September to provide an opportunity for young people to experience a real working environment and for our store partners to recognise the young talent available. So far we have had 16 Trainees and 10 of those have now been offered a job with 9 about to start their Apprenticeship. We have a further 24 vacancies and we have been amazed at the continuing quality of candidates presented by our partner Qube throughout".

This new cash boost is in addition to the apprentice scheme announced last year, which offers employers £2,000 for each new apprentice they hire aged under 25, and £1,500 for apprentice aged 25 and over. This includes taking on an apprentice who has been made redundant. More than ten thousand employers have already taken up the offer, which is available until March 2021, so businesses can create even more opportunities and give more people the life

changing chance to start a great career.

The government's £2 billion Kickstart Scheme is also creating hundreds of thousands of new, fully subsidised jobs for young people across the country.

Together, these schemes will ensure that more of our young people are given the opportunities they deserve, helping them to secure the experience and skills that they need to get a job or start further education or training, while boosting productivity and filling more jobs.

[Kiwi women given the chance to be British High Commissioner for a day](#)

World news story

British High Commissioner to New Zealand Laura Clarke is calling on young women aged 17 to 25 to apply for the annual 'Be British High Commissioner for the Day' competition.



UK Government

The winner will have the opportunity to become an 'honorary High Commissioner' and get an insight into what it is like to be an Ambassador or

High Commissioner, and lead a diplomatic mission.

She will accompany Laura Clarke on an exciting programme to mark International Women's Day on 8 March, including meeting with influential leaders and taking over the mission's social media pages.

To apply, applicants need to submit a one-minute video to the [UKinNZ application portal](#) setting out how they think we can we learn from the COVID-19 pandemic to build a more gender-equal society.

Applications open from Friday 22 January to Monday 22 February, with the winner announced shortly afterwards.

HE Laura Clarke, British High Commissioner to New Zealand, said:

This competition is a great opportunity for young New Zealanders to meet inspiring women and learn about some of the exciting issues we work on – from negotiating trade agreements to tackling climate change.

It gives our future female leaders the chance to not only see what life is like inside a diplomatic mission, but to be given a platform to talk about how we can improve the lives of women and girls globally.

I encourage any young Kiwi women with an interest in international affairs and tackling gender inequality to apply.

Last year's competition winner was University of Otago student Kate Hellings, who sat in on various meetings with leading women and attended the High Commission's annual International Women's Day Wonder Women function at Laura Clarke's official residence, Homewood.

Kate Hellings said:

I encourage all young women who would think about applying to be High Commissioner for the Day to really take the time to think about how they can improve gender inequality in New Zealand. Not only did I get to meet some of the most amazing females in the industry, but the British High Commission team made the most amazing programme for me.

I was honoured to be selected as it is an extremely valuable and educational experience, and one that I will not forget.

The winner will need to be available for the duration of the day on Monday 8 March 2021. If the winner is not based in Wellington, flights and accommodation will be covered by the British High Commission.

Notes to editors

- British High Commissioner Laura Clarke is the UK Government's representative in New Zealand. She was appointed in January 2018 and was the youngest person to be appointed the role.
- She was recently awarded an OBE for services to foreign policy in the 2021 New Year's Honours.
- A panel at the British High Commission will select the winner of the 'Be a High Commissioner for a Day' competition, who will be announced on UKinNZ social media channels.
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