

Mark White appointed as new Groceries Code Adjudicator

Small Business Minister Paul Scully has today announced the appointment of Mark White as the new Groceries Code Adjudicator (GCA). Mark will take up the role of GCA when the current Adjudicator, Christine Tacon, steps down from the role later in the year. In the interim period, Mark will carry out the role of the Deputy Groceries Code Adjudicator.

Christine Tacon has been reappointed for a term of up to 6 months to provide continuity to the groceries sector through the coronavirus pandemic. Mark White will work alongside her as Deputy GCA to allow for a thorough handover of responsibilities.

Small Business Minister Paul Scully said:

Mark White's extensive experience will bring valuable insight to this important role, providing support to the groceries sector through these difficult times.

I look forward to working with him to ensure a level playing field between grocers and suppliers.

Mark White said:

I am delighted to have been appointed to succeed Christine Tacon. I welcome the opportunity to build on Christine's work and as GCA my objective will be to drive forward the progress that has been made to date. As the annual survey has shown, much has been achieved, but there is still more to be done and I welcome the government's commitment in its response to the Statutory Review to work with me to help suppliers feel empowered to raise issues in confidence with the GCA and their retailers directly.

The exceptional times in which we find ourselves demonstrate the importance of a constructive relationship between the retailers and their suppliers, as well as the Code's resilience in shaping those relationships. I intend to build relationships across the sector – most importantly with the retailers, suppliers and trade bodies – while I carry out the role of Deputy to Christine in the short term. In that way, I will be in a strong position to work on future issues as her successor and the UK's second GCA.

About Mark White

Mark currently serves as a Non-Executive Chairman of Digital Reconnaissance

Limited, a cyber protocol employee reference checking company. He is also Member of the Upper Tribunal (Tax and Chancery Chamber) and of the Lower Tribunal (General Regulatory Chamber) at HM Courts & Tribunal Service where he is responsible for hearing appeals against decisions from the Financial Conduct Authority and the Ministry of Justice in a range of financial services and claims management cases.

Prior to that, Mark was the Group General Counsel, Company Secretary and Executive Board Member at Compass Group PLC. He was also Group General Counsel Company Secretary and Executive Board Member at Ferguson PLC (formerly Wolseley PLC), , Enterprise Oil PLC (now part of Royal Dutch Shell) and Rotork p.l.c. Mark was also a solicitor at Eversheds Sutherland LLP (formerly Frere Cholmeley).

At Compass Group PLC, he was responsible for legal, governance, the annual report, compliance and insurance as well as the professional development of 140 lawyers for this FTSE 30 food and support services company employing more than 600,000 people with operations in 45+ countries. He was also a pension scheme trustee, a member of the Executive Board, Disclosure and Corporate Responsibility committees and a director of multiple group companies and joint venture companies in the UK, France, the UAE, South Africa and India.

Additional Information

The Groceries Code Adjudicator is responsible for enforcing the Groceries Supply Code of Practice, which aims to ensure that large grocery retailers treat their direct suppliers lawfully and fairly. They work with designated supermarkets and grocers to respond to issues as they arise and arbitrate disputes between retailers and suppliers. They also have the power to launch investigations where there are reasonable grounds to suspect that the Code has been breached.

The GCA is operationally independent of government but is one of BEIS's key partners. The Secretary of State for Business, Energy and Industrial Strategy appoints the GCA and any Deputy and is also required to approve the GCA's annual levy.

The appointment was made in line with the governance code for public appointments.

Universities Minister speech at Festival of Higher Education

Good morning, I am delighted by this opportunity to speak at this celebration of higher education.

We have so much to celebrate, especially now. Over the last few months we have seen our HE sector really step up and innovate in the face of adversity. Putting students' wellbeing at the heart of their plans and acting quickly with innovative solutions to support learning.

In fact we have seen some fantastic examples including in practical and creative subjects. I was very impressed for example by my virtual visit of the Royal College of Music especially the staff and student feedback.

Whilst The University of Essex created a virtual residency for a theatre director, sending Virtual Reality headsets to students (some as far away as Singapore) to allow them to watch her production as if they were in the theatre.

Where as Petroleum Geoscience masters students at Imperial College, replaced their cancelled trip to the Pyreenees with a simulated overseas field trip, carrying out a regimented schedule of virtual field work. The field trip took place in an entirely new format in what is thought to be a first in a UK university setting at masters level. In fact, there have been so many fantastic examples of innovation across the board

I have also highlighted before the sterling effort Universities have made in the community fight back against Covid 19 from making and donating PPE to offering up equipment and accommodation.

And we certainly should celebrate that our world class scientists and researchers at the University of Oxford are at the forefront of vaccine development

I want you to know that I understand how hard this time has been for both University leaders and staff. This period has been hard for everyone but having to make such fundamental changes in course delivery almost overnight has been no mean feat!

Nor has it been easy to ensure students have all the support they need – but you have risen to the challenge. And I understand that financial uncertainty has added to those pressures. Which is why we announced our 4th May stabilisation package, the university research support package in June, and why we announced extra support in the form of the Restructuring Regime.

In doing so, we will be acting to support students, to protect our world-class research base and in recognition of the critical role that universities play in their local regions and economies.

Today I thought I would share a little about my journey. I entered politics to create opportunities and unlock potential. I was the first in my family to go to university. So, I know directly the power of university to open up opportunities and to transform lives.

However, we must always keep in mind that it is not the only path. As I have said before, there should be no one size fits all policy – for some FE will support their goals more or an apprenticeship will catapult their ambitions whilst for others HE will be transformative.

Let us however remember that we should rightly be proud of our Universities. Our Universities do play an instrumental role in their local communities and regions and with 4 of the world's top 10 universities we are leading the way in terms of academic knowledge and research.

I have seen the power of opportunities and I was blessed to be granted them myself. I also know what it is like for doors to shut and my mission is to enable them to open for those with the grades to unlock them.

Now is the time for a new era in which our world leading sector will go from strength to strength. One with a focus on the individual, on skills, on rigorous academic standards and on outcomes to fill our productivity gap, fuel our economy and create opportunities.

I must say that I was delighted the Office for Students took firm action in early July to stamp out conditional unconditional offers. The registration condition is of course only temporary – but I want to see the practice ending for good. Because again I don't want to see students making decisions that are not in their best interests. There is no justification for such practices.

Of course, this was only on a minority of courses. And I want to stress this point and it is exactly why we continue to be world leading: the majority of students get a good outcome from their studies and gaining real benefit from their degree.

We all know, and I certainly do, our academics want what's best for their students. Our attention to student wellbeing as well as learning is one of the reasons why we attract students from around the globe. We have seen that very clearly over recent months, when time and again our higher education sector has stepped forward to play a vital role in the response to COVID-19, whether that is moving courses online or enhancing their support for the disadvantaged.

I also want to celebrate the fantastic reputation that our higher education sector has internationally. It is quite right that the UK is increasingly a destination of choice for top students from across the world. And I am determined to build on that and have thrown my full support behind the sector. In fact, in recognition of the impact COVID-19 is having on international students, I have made the case across Government to ensure we are as flexible as we can be.

These flexibilities include enabling international students to complete blended learning for the upcoming academic year. We have also confirmed that undergraduate and master's graduates, will benefit from two years of leave in the UK to work, or look for work, under the new, globally competitive, Graduate route, when it is introduced in Summer 2021. And on 1st July we announced that PhD graduates will benefit from three years of leave.

I am also delighted to have announced Sir Steve Smith as the new International Education Champion, delivering on a key action in Government's 2019 International Education Strategy. Sir Steve will assist with opening up

opportunities and tackling challenges to attract international students, support export growth and make new global connections.

I want to do two things in the remainder of my time here today. Firstly, I want to continue to make clear the passionate importance I place on achieving genuine social mobility. And secondly how I believe now is the time to build on the recent innovations that universities have been developing.

I truly believe we need to focus on genuine social mobility. True social mobility is when we put students and their needs and career ambitions first – be that in higher education, further education or apprenticeships.

University was always my dream and it transformed my career options – and I want this option to be open to all those qualified by ability and attainment. Ethnicity, parental affluence or where a student is from should not be a barrier or even a factor.

Nuffield foundation research shows that high ability disadvantaged students are less likely to attend the most selective courses than more advantaged peers with similar grades. We must ensure that all those who have the ability, attainment and desire to pursue higher education are given high quality options that will lead to the good graduate jobs that will transform their lives.

But we need to remember that the focus isn't just about getting young people to university, but about making sure they are on good quality courses that lead to graduate jobs.

To take an example, black children are more likely to go to higher education than white children. By age 19, 59.9% have entered from black ethnic groups, compared to 38.2% from white ethnic groups .

But they are less likely to progress through their course, obtain upper class degrees, and go on to get a graduate job.

Only 85% of undergraduate entrants in England in 2017/18 from black ethnic groups had continued in higher education a year later, compared with 91% of white entrants.

Only 60% of qualifiers in 2018/19 from black ethnic groups obtained a 2:1 or above in their degree, compared with 82% of white qualifiers .

Only 69% of graduates in 2016/17 from black ethnic groups were in highly skilled employment or higher further study six months after graduating, compared with 74% of white graduates .

So it's too simplistic to just look at the numbers of a group going to university. True social mobility is not getting them to the door, it's getting them to the finish line of a high quality course that will lead them to a graduate job.

And as I've said before, that's why I want to see universities doing even more to raise standards and aspiration in schools. That can be sponsoring

schools, supporting a robust curriculum, running summer camps, or appointing student ambassadors to act as role models: universities have the potential here to make a tremendous difference in opening up opportunities.

And while I'm thrilled by the number who are already doing so, I'd like even more high tariff universities to be coming forward to open maths schools.

There are plenty of outstanding organisations that support the sector to support disadvantaged students to achieve. For example, Generating Genius, equips students with STEM knowledge and skills, to support talented students from BAME backgrounds to secure places at top universities and in top businesses. Another excellent example is Zero Gravity, a digital platform which connects state school students from low income backgrounds with undergraduate mentors. The mentors support those students in their journey to highly selective universities by encouraging them and helping them through the university application process. And although it launched only a month ago, thousands of undergraduate mentors have already signed up.

And we can get there because as have such a dynamic, innovative and student-focused HE sector here in the UK.

This is a festival of higher education, and I celebrate the fact we have some of the best universities in the world. We are an international leader for research and development.

I have no hesitation in praising the dedication of higher education teaching and research staff across all four nations of the United Kingdom.

They have responded to the challenges of COVID with astonishing innovation. I'm inspired by some of the initiatives I've seen to support mental health, such as universities offering additional student check-in services, where staff have volunteered to provide direct support to students. Others have enhanced their feedback and online wellbeing services.

Now is the time for the sector to build on these innovations. This event is hosted by Buckingham, the home of the two-year degree, I also want the sector to think more about how it delivers learning differently. Sadly, the three-year bachelor's degree has increasingly become the predominant mode of study. But that doesn't suit all students. Many young people would like to earn while they learn.

This fits into my wider message here today – that now is the time to innovate. If COVID has taught us one thing in reference to the HE sector it is how flexible it is – lets utilise this flexibility. Now is the time to build on the recent innovation we have seen.

With degree apprenticeships that meet employer demand, accelerated degrees, more emphasis on part time learning that links with labour market needs and skills gaps, building on online offerings designed during COVID and also more provision at Levels 4 and 5 offering Higher Technical Education or apprenticeships.

The economy and labour market needs have dramatically changed over the last

few decades and it is now the norm for people to have multiple careers. Now is the time and the opportunity for the HE sector to upscale its flexible offering to support upskilling and reskilling.

I want to look at how we can support our universities to become more flexible to this – and more accessible. And rest assured, I want to support you in this mission.

One thing that I'm determined to look at is how we can do more as a Government to enable universities to offer more modular provision.

We know this can be tremendously desirable to adult learners looking to upskill, and it is likely to be more important than ever as the economy recovers from coronavirus.

I will work with you to make this happen because now is the time – the time for innovation and change – change that will safeguard our universities' world leading reputation, continue to raise the quality bar and also feed our economy to tackle our productivity gap and most importantly create opportunities.

So to conclude, our universities have so much to offer this country. They play a critical role in transforming the lives of students, in producing outstanding scientific research and in their local economies and communities. All this is why I care deeply about higher education.

I will continue to champion the sector – Whether that's making sure that the UK is a welcoming and readily accessible destination for international students, or extolling the virtues of our high quality courses. Now really is the time for true social mobility and innovation.

[Water industry: green economic recovery](#)

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Teachers set for biggest pay rise in fifteen years

Teachers are set to receive their biggest pay rise in fifteen years in a landmark pay deal for the sector.

The Education Secretary has today (21 July) accepted all the recommendations from the independent School Teachers' Review Body to raise the starting salary for new teachers by 5.5% and increase the upper and lower boundaries of the pay ranges for all other teachers by 2.75%. These recommendations are equivalent to a 3.1% increase in the overall pay bill.

This represents the first step to delivering the Government's commitment to increase teachers' starting salaries to £30,000 by 2022/23, with a 5.5% increase worth between £1,341 and £1,677, depending on location.

Education Secretary Gavin Williamson said:

We want to make teaching attractive to the most talented candidates by recognising the outstanding contribution teachers make to our society.

This is why we are introducing the biggest pay rise the profession has seen since 2005, with above-inflation rises to the pay ranges for every single teacher in the country, ahead of introducing a £30,000 starting salary by 2022.

Inspirational teachers change millions of lives by giving our children the drive and desire to learn, and reforms to teacher training, early career support and teachers' pay are key to the Government's plans to improve school standards.

The pay increase is equivalent to £1,250 on average for teachers and £1,970 on average for headteachers.

This means the minimum starting salary for a qualified teacher in 2020/21 will rise to £25,714 outside of London, rising to £32,157 in inner London.

The School Teachers' Review Body has also recommended the introduction of advisory pay points on the main and upper pay range to support schools to adopt a pay structure which best supports recruitment and retention. This sets out a possible pathway of pay progression through which teachers can be recognised and rewarded as they build their expertise in the classroom.

This year's pay award will be affordable for schools on average across the country, thanks to the Government's investment in core schools funding,

increasing by £2.6 billion this year, £4.8 billion in 2021-22 and £7.1 billion in 2022-23, compared to 2019-20.

Funding to cover past increases to teacher pay and pensions, currently worth £2 billion in separate grant funding, will also be included in the national funding formula from 2021 rather than paid separately, reassuring schools that the funding will continue to be provided in their core budgets.

Yesterday (20 July) the Education Secretary confirmed that next year, mainstream school funding will increase by 4% overall. The national funding formula continues to distribute this fairly, based on the needs of schools and their pupil cohorts. The formula ensures that every school will receive more money for every pupil next year. On average, schools are attracting over 3% more per pupil in 2021-22 compared to in 2020-21.

This announcement comes as almost 900,000 public sector workers, including doctors, teachers and police officers, will see above-inflation pay rises this year.

[Government sets out draft agenda for a 21st century tax system](#)

As part of the Treasury's long-term tax digitisation plan – designed to boost national productivity, make it easier for businesses and people to pay tax and reduce avoidable errors and fraud – HMRC's Making Tax Digital programme will be gradually extended.

At present, businesses above the VAT threshold of £85,000 are covered by the system, which requires them to keep digital records and provide VAT returns through software. Since it was introduced in 2019 more than 1.4 million businesses have joined the programme, submitting over 6 million returns.

From April 2022, the programme will be extended to all VAT registered businesses with turnover below the VAT threshold (£85,000), and from April 2023, it will apply to taxpayers who file income tax self-assessment tax returns for business or property income over £10,000 annually.

Financial Secretary to the Treasury, Jesse Norman, said:

We are setting out our next steps on Making Tax Digital today, as we bring the UK's tax system into the 21st century.

Making Tax Digital will make it easier for businesses to keep on top of their tax affairs. But it also has huge potential to improve the productivity of our economy, and its resilience in times of

crisis.

Making Tax Digital changes will affect the way that taxes are reported, not the level of tax that is collected. It will help to minimise avoidable mistakes – which cost the exchequer £8.5 billion in 2018-19.

The long lead-in time will allow businesses, landlords and agents time to plan. It also gives software providers enough notice to bring a range of new products to market, including free software for businesses with the simplest tax affairs.

Over 30% of smaller VAT-registered businesses, who are not yet required to use Making Tax Digital, have chosen to do so voluntarily because of the wider benefits the digital tools offer, including fewer errors and increased productivity.

Other countries have already done this – Denmark introduced a digital system back in 2014, and digital reporting is now well-established and has reduced the amount of time businesses spend on their tax affairs.

The extension is part of a number of announcements which deliver on government commitments and give taxpayers clarity over the future direction of travel. As part of this, the government is today also publishing draft legislation for the next Finance Bill, a regular annual publication.

Notes

To see all new announcements and immediate effect measures please see here [Written Ministerial Statement](#)

To see draft Finance Bill 2020-21 legislation and supporting documents [Finance Bill](#)