

## **CMA statement on sales and pricing practices during Coronavirus outbreak**

The Competition and Markets Authority (CMA) wants to ensure that traders do not exploit the current situation to take advantage of people.

It will consider any evidence that companies may have broken competition or consumer protection law, for example by charging excessive prices or making misleading claims about the efficacy of protective equipment. And it will take direct enforcement action in appropriate cases.

In addition, the CMA will assess whether it should advise Government to consider taking direct action to regulate prices.

CMA Chairman Lord Tyrie said:

“We will do whatever we can to act against rip-offs and misleading claims, using any or all of our tools; and where we can’t act, we’ll advise government on further steps they could take, if necessary.”

CMA Chief Executive Andrea Coscelli said:

“We urge retailers to behave responsibly throughout the coronavirus outbreak and not to make misleading claims or charge vastly inflated prices. We also remind members of the public that these obligations may apply to them too if they resell goods, for example on online marketplaces.”

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## **UN Human Rights Council 43: UK statement for the Interactive Dialogue with the Special Rapporteur on the Right to Privacy**

Thank you, Madam President,

The UK supports the Special Rapporteur and his work in ensuring that international oversight regimes strike an appropriate balance between privacy and security. We also welcome the Special Rapporteur’s report examining the gendered nature of certain privacy infringements.

We were pleased to host the Special Rapporteur during his visit to the UK in 2018, and we look forward to the publication of his report. We welcome his

assessment of the UK as having “..equipped itself with a legal framework and significant resources designed to protect privacy without compromising security,” and that “the UK can now justifiably reclaim its leadership role in Europe as well as globally.”

We were also very pleased to support the Special Rapporteur’s mandate through the International Intelligence Oversight Forum (IIOF) in London in October 2019.

We look forward to our continued close work with the Special Rapporteur and stand ready to continue to share our best practices with him, as well as our international friends and partners.

Finally, we would like to ask the Special Rapporteur what more the Council can do to support States in guarding against gender based privacy infringements, including in relation to the possible use of data in a gender-biased way.

Thank you

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## [Updated media guidance will ensure easier access to court information](#)

- Updated HMCTS guidance developed alongside media
- Gives staff all the information needed to support court reporters
- Launched by Chris Philp at Old Bailey event

The [advice](#) was developed by the HM Courts and Tribunals Service (HMCTS) media working group and incorporated the views of both media representatives and court staff. This followed a 12-month series of regional roadshows organised by HMCTS and the Society of Editors.

The [guidance](#) includes a revised protocol agreed between HMCTS, the News Media Association and the Society of Editors to govern the distribution of magistrates’ courts lists, registers and documents to the media, and specific guidance to courts and tribunal staff on handling high-profile hearings.

Courts Minister Chris Philp, will officially launch this at the Old Bailey tonight (5 March 2020). The event will also include a roundtable, chaired by Joshua Rozenberg, to discuss the continued importance of court reporting in an increasingly digital justice system.

Courts Minister, Chris Philp said:

Open justice is essential to the rule of law and it is the local,

regional and national media that the public rely on to tell them what is happening in courts up and down the country.

This guidance ensures our staff have all the information they need to support court reporters in carrying out this vital work.

This is part of a wider effort to build stronger working relationships between courts and the media and maintain the principle of open justice. It comes as the government increasingly digitises court services as part of a £1bn investment in court reform to increase the accessibility and efficiency of the justice system by shaping it around the needs of those who use it.

Santha Rasaiah, Legal, Policy and Regulatory Affairs Director of News Media Association said:

It is vital that open justice is maintained in principle and in practice, whatever changes are in train. The ability of the press to access court proceedings, to access court documentation and to report the courts fully, fairly and accurately must be promoted, not eroded. This must be embedded in the development of a digitised justice system.

The NMA therefore warmly welcomed the opportunity to work with HMCTS on the update of this guidance for all court and tribunal staff and on the revision of our long established, joint protocol on supply of court lists and court registers. We value our continuing work with HMCTS in support of court reporting and open justice.

Ian Murray, Executive Director of the Society of Editors said:

It is vitally important that the media and the courts work well together to ensure that the public has confidence in the justice system.

The best way that this can be achieved is for access to the courts and judicial information for journalists to be facilitated in the most open manner.

As well as an overall summary, the guidance has been split into detailed jurisdictional advice, so staff can find exactly what they are looking for in a more timely and straightforward manner, making it easier for journalists to cover court proceedings and access case listings.

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# Home Office brings together Police and Crime Commissioners at Tackling Crime Forum

Today (Thursday 5 March) the Policing Minister Kit Malthouse is hosting the Tackling Crime Forum, speaking to Police and Crime Commissioners (PCCs) about how to tackle alcohol-related crime, county lines and serious violence.

The event will gather PCCs from across England and Wales to discuss best practice and how to improve their approach to tackling issues around serious violence, such as county lines and driving down homicide.

The event will also include external speakers such as Professor of Psychiatry Keith Humphreys, Stanford University, Dr Laura Bainbridge, lecturer in Criminology, University of Leeds and Katy Bourne, Association of Police and Crime Commissioners.

Kit Malthouse, Minister for Crime and Policing said:

The rise in serious violence is deeply concerning and we can only tackle it by working together and giving Police and Crime Commissioners the tools to reduce crime at a local level.

Today's forum is an invaluable opportunity to explore new and innovative ways to address this issue and I look forward to seeing ideas develop into action.

Katy Bourne OBE, APCC Chair, said:

PCCs are completely committed to tackling serious violence, county lines and alcohol related violence and abuse.

Whilst we may have different approaches and successful models working across England and Wales, today's forum is a welcome opportunity to learn more about what types of intervention and preventative measures work best, as we set a clear direction to reduce crime.

In addition, the Home Office today published its own research into the analysis and trends of homicides in England and Wales as an evidence base for discussions.

Trends and Drivers of Homicide looks at the long-term trends in homicides and the factors influencing these trends to better understand the recent rise in this type of crime and inform policy. The research draws on both

international data and academic literature on drivers of homicide trends.

The report makes a number of findings, including that the increase in homicides has been driven partly by drug related cases and partly by terrorist incidents.

Recent homicide trends were also dominated by male-on-male cases, and England and Wales were found to have similar trends to most other developed nations.

The Tackling Crime Forum is just one way the government is taking action to tackle the rise in serious violence.

The Home Office has recently announced a package of new measures to tackle county lines, the recruitment of 20,000 new police officers over the next three years, the biggest increase in funding for policing in a decade and has made it easier for police to use stop and search powers to take weapons off our streets.

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## [Government sets out next phase of strategy to combat bovine tuberculosis](#)

The government has today set out plans for the next stage of its strategy to eradicate bTB, including field trials of a cattle vaccine, plans to vaccinate more badgers against the disease and improved testing to intercept bTB earlier.

As a result of a globally significant breakthrough by the Animal and Plant Health Agency, the government will now accelerate the work towards deployment of the cattle vaccine within the next five years.

The commitment is [part of the government's response to an independent review](#) of its 25 year bTB strategy, led by Professor Sir Charles Godfray.

bTB is one of the most difficult and intractable animal health challenges that England faces today. More than 30,000 cattle are slaughtered each year due to infection from bTB and a cattle vaccination could become a powerful tool in the battle against the disease following the necessary testing and approvals to ensure its safety and efficacy.

Independent scientific analysis has shown that badger culling has resulted in significant reductions in the spread of the disease to cattle with disease incidence coming down significantly in the two areas analysed, with reductions by sixty-six and thirty-seven percent. However intensive culls, which currently cover fifty seven percent of England's High-Risk Area for the disease, are only one phase of the long-term bTB strategy to eradicate the disease by 2038.

As wider preventative measures are introduced, the response to the Godfray review sets out an intention to begin to phase out intensive badger culling.

Improvement of the cattle testing regime is also a key component of the strategy to combat bTB. Today's response makes clear the government's determination to have more sensitive testing which will intercept the disease earlier and remove it from cattle herds quicker.

Environment Secretary George Eustice said:

Bovine TB is a slow-moving and insidious disease leading to the slaughter of over 30,000 cattle every year and considerable trauma for farmers as they suffer the loss of highly prized animals and valued herds.

The badger cull has led to a significant reduction in the disease as demonstrated by recent academic research and past studies. But no one wants to continue the cull of this protected species indefinitely so, once the weight of disease in wildlife has been addressed, we will accelerate other elements of our strategy including improved diagnostics and cattle vaccination to sustain the downward trajectory of the disease.

The government intends to start deploying badger vaccination in areas where the four-year cull cycle has ended, alongside ongoing surveillance of the disease in badgers in that area. After the infection in the badger population is dealt with by culling followed by badger vaccination, it will allow other measures such as cattle vaccination to be more effective. This is the combined approach needed to achieve the government's goal of eradicating the disease by 2038.

However, the government will retain the ability to introduce new cull zones where local epidemiological evidence points to an ongoing role of badgers in maintaining the disease.

UK Chief Veterinary Officer Christine Middlemiss said:

This ground-breaking research carried out by APHA has enabled us to embark on the first step of the field trials required to license the cattle vaccine and test it.

Whilst there is no single way to combat this damaging and complex disease, cattle vaccination will be a new tool for our multi-pronged approach to tackle it and importantly prevent it, providing vital support to our farming communities.

Bovine TB presents a global challenge and the UK can harness its world-leading science to develop solutions such as vaccination that could also be valuable to other countries.

The latest statistics on bTB in England show the overall number of new herd incidents of the disease down by 9% in the last year (to Nov 2019), a 10% reduction in the number of herds not officially free of the disease and a 4% reduction in the total number of animals slaughtered due to the disease. Full details of these statistics are available [here](#).

Surveillance testing for the disease, already mandatory in England's High Risk Area (HRA), will also be increased in frequency in two (HRA) counties – Shropshire and Staffordshire – from annual to six-monthly from later this year. It is expected this will be extended to all parts of the High Risk Area from 2021.

The Government response also sets out plans to step up engagement with partners across the livestock industry to develop the bTB strategy further. It contains a detailed action plan for the next five years.

The full Government response has been published online and is available to read [here](#).