

DVLA retains customer service accreditation for 12th consecutive year

Gaining accreditation against Global Standard Version 7 recognises DVLA's contact centre as an industry leader, with a commitment to driving service excellence for its customers.

DVLA's Contact Centre is the largest single site contact centre in government, handling around 24.5 million enquiries every year and employing around 1,100 people at its purpose-built operations centre in Swansea. Independent external assessors met with staff, senior leaders and other key stakeholders at the centre last year to benchmark DVLA's operation against the CCA standard in various categories and gather evidence to support DVLA's accreditation.

In order to achieve 'Version 7' of the CCA Global Standard, DVLA took a refreshed approach to assessing its customer service operation, focusing on digital and technological development, as well as giving greater emphasis to the voices of DVLA customers and staff.

Continuous focus on customer experience, robust processes, and continuous staff development and engagement were among the key strengths highlighted by the CCA in their assessment.

The CCA's assessment report noted that:

The DVLA Contact Centre is organised and well managed through strong leadership and excellent people development, with opportunities for people to progress across a number of different areas both operationally and through the support teams.

There is clearly a genuine desire for people at all levels to deliver strong performance results and support colleagues through training and development opportunities.

The 'Version 7' accreditation comes in a year that has seen significant achievement by staff at DVLA's contact centre, with the most recent CCA Excellence Awards seeing teams and individuals recognised with Gold CCA Global Standard Achievement awards. 2019 also saw DVLA being presented with a prestigious Princess Royal Training Award for a training programme developed in-house for new and future operational leaders, in which contact centre staff participated.

Tony Ackroyd, DVLA Director of Operations and Customer Service, said:

I'm delighted that we've achieved this acclaimed accreditation for the 12th year in a row. Together with the individual and team achievements recognised by the CCA, the accreditation report confirms what a great job our contact centre staff do on a daily basis.

A particular highlight from my point of view is the high level of staff engagement noted in the report. Great training and opportunities for our staff to progress are at the core of our values and underpin our commitment to improving best practice, as we aim to provide a world-class service for the tens of thousands of customers we're in contact with every day.

Notes to editors

The CCA is the leading authority on customer contact strategies and operations. [Find out more about the CCA Global Standards.](#)

At the CCA Excellence Awards in November 2019, DVLA's Marc Richards won the Gold CCA Global Standard Achievement Award for Individual of the year 2019. DVLA's Customer Channel Management Team (CCMT) won the Team of The Year Award.

Of the DVLA contact centre staff surveyed as part of the CCA accreditation assessment:

- 93% said the organisation was committed to training and development
- 87% said they were actively encouraged to raise improvement suggestions and ideas
- 91% said their feedback was valued
- 92% said their manager supported them with personal development goals

[Transport Secretary hails new horizons for rail travel across Europe](#)

- Transport Secretary Grant Shapps welcomes new direct Eurostar rail connection between London and Amsterdam
- passengers will no longer have to disembark in Brussels to clear passport control before continuing their journey to London
- new non-stop journey will have environmental benefits and increase efficiency

Grant Shapps today (4 February 2020) welcomed a new direct Eurostar rail connection between the Netherlands and the UK which will help improve journeys for passengers and businesses.

Speaking after watching the first return journey arrive from Amsterdam to London St Pancras station this morning, Mr Shapps praised the new service, which will mean passengers returning from Amsterdam or Rotterdam will no longer have to interrupt their journey and get off the train at Brussels to go through UK border controls.

The more efficient route will also bring benefits for the environment by incentivising passengers to choose the greener option, with Eurostar estimating their trains produce between 80 and 90% fewer emissions than the equivalent short haul flight.

Secretary of State for Transport Grant Shapps said:

We're continuing to invest in modern, efficient transport links with the continent so our businesses and tourism industry can flourish.

The days of passengers being forced to decamp from the train at Brussels to file through passport control will soon be over, as we look forward to direct, return, high-speed services to Amsterdam and beyond.

The announcement comes on the day that the [government launches the next UN climate conference COP26](#) with a year of climate action and announces new action to reach its legally binding target of net zero UK emissions by 2050.

Eurostar has carried over half a million passengers (570,000) from London to Rotterdam and Amsterdam since first launching the service 2 years ago. This number is expected to grow significantly following the launch of the return service and will mean that the UK will have seamless high-speed rail links with 3 major European cities.

Minister for Security, Brandon Lewis, said:

I'm very pleased to see today's announcement from Eurostar. Our new agreement with our EU neighbours will make the journey from Amsterdam as quick and seamless as possible, while keeping borders secure.

The UK's ongoing cooperation with international partners shows, without doubt, that the UK is open for business with Europe and the rest of the world.

Eurostar has had direct services from London to Amsterdam and Rotterdam since April 2018 but the government is finalising an agreement with France, Belgium and the Netherlands to enable passport checks to be conducted at juxtaposed border controls on departure in the Netherlands.

Juxtaposed border controls are reciprocal arrangements, underpinned by

bilateral treaties that deliver a high level of border security. They enable border fluidity, maintain security and allow goods and passengers to undergo entry checks prior to arrival at their destination.

UK statement on the Joint Initiative on Services Domestic Regulation

Thank you, Chair.

This is the first statement that the United Kingdom is making in the WTO following the United Kingdom's exit from the European Union on the 31st of January.

Of course, the United Kingdom has been involved in this organisation and its predecessor since the very beginning.

Many things have changed since the General Agreement on Tariffs and Trade was signed in 1947, by the United Kingdom and 22 other countries, here in Geneva. But one thing has not – and that is the United Kingdom's commitment to global trade. The United Kingdom has long been a strong believer in the role of the multilateral trading system to unlock growth, reduce poverty and open markets for least-developed, developed and developing countries alike. The stability and predictability of this system remains vital to all of us, and the United Kingdom is committed to supporting the international institution that underpins it.

There are big challenges facing the WTO today. It is important that these are addressed, and the United Kingdom will play its part in doing so. None are bigger than the transformations that have been reshaping global trade in the 21st century. One of the most important of these has been the growth in the global trade in services, from banking, to transport, to IT services. This has far outstripped the growth in the trade of goods in recent years. According to UNCTAD, Africa saw a 10% increase in trade in services in 2018, as did Asia. Even the developed countries, which have seen growth in goods trade stagnating, saw a 7% increase in trade in services in 2018.

In the United Kingdom, services are the predominant driver of our economy. They contribute 80% of GDP, and employ roughly 26 million people. We are the second largest exporter of services in the world. Our professional business services sector generated more than £88 billion in exports in 2018, and we are proud of the contribution they make, enabling businesses and governments around the world to better access the global economy by providing legal, financial, accounting, and other services. One of the United Kingdom's priorities in the WTO will be to increase this global trade in services, to the benefit of least-developed, developed and developing countries, by making services markets more open, more transparent, and more competitive.

Unfortunately, attempts in the WTO in recent years to free up trade in services by agreeing common rules, further unlocking its enormous potential, have come to nothing. Ambitions in the Doha round were scaled right back early on. The separate Trade in Services Agreement negotiations here in Geneva stalled at the end of 2016.

That is why the Joint Initiatives, launched in 2017 at the 11th Ministerial Conference in Buenos Aires, are so important. Transparent, flexible, and open to all Members, they offer the WTO another chance to transform global trade in the 21st century in the way the GATT did in the 20th century; not by replacing multilateral agreements, but by providing the vanguards that can open the way for them.

For all these reasons, the United Kingdom will be a leading supporter of the Joint Initiative on the Domestic Regulation of Services. Indeed, it is particularly fitting that our first WTO statement since leaving the European Union is in the area of services.

This Initiative addresses the barriers that directly affect businesses seeking to offer services around the world. Individuals and firms often lose valuable time applying and waiting for licences from host regulators. Frequently, they have to invest large amounts of money upfront in order to navigate the different and sometimes unpredictable regulatory landscapes. Money that smaller operators can ill afford.

Streamlined procedures for qualifications and licensing, and increased transparency, of the sort that is being discussed in this Initiative, would benefit a broad range of services providers – especially micro, small and medium sized enterprises. The costs and uncertainties associated with trading internationally could be significantly reduced. This would empower innovative firms of all sizes to expand their business overseas, further expanding the global trade in services and the value it creates for citizens.

Chair, we would like to thank you for all your hard work over the last year. We would also like to thank the European Union and Australia for driving forward this agenda.

We are only a few months away from the 12th Ministerial Conference. I am here today to urge all of you to redouble your efforts, and to offer the United Kingdom's support in resolving the small number of issues that stand in the way of agreement.

It is not an exaggeration to say that the credibility of the WTO, indeed the future development of the global trading system hinges on the success of these Initiatives. That is why the work in this room is of such significance.

As part of the European Union, the United Kingdom supported the EU Delegation to the WTO in playing a leading role in this Initiative. Outside the European Union, we look forward to working closely and constructively with our EU colleagues, and with all of you, in bringing this important Initiative to a successful conclusion.

Thank you, Chair.

[Open now: 2020 groceries sector survey](#)



Take part in the seventh annual Groceries Code Adjudicator (GCA) survey of the groceries sector. The survey is an important source of information for the GCA about current retailer practices and changes over the past 12 months.

Open until 29 March, the survey allows the GCA to collect the most comprehensive set of views on current Code-related issues facing suppliers.

[Hear Christine talk about the importance of the survey](#)

The GCA is seeking experiences and views from suppliers and others in the sector on how the regulated retailers are complying with the Groceries Supply Code of Practice. All information provided is treated in strict confidence.

Answers are collated and analysed by YouGov and respondents are not identified to the GCA without having given consent.

The results will be announced on the GCA website in June.

If you have any questions about the survey, please email enquiries@groceriescode.gov.uk.

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[Edition 21: News from the Adjudicator](#)

Welcome from the Groceries Code Adjudicator

GCA 2020 Survey

Since my appointment as GCA I've encouraged suppliers to tell me about their experiences with the regulated retailers in my annual survey. I launched my seventh survey on 4 February: My term of office ends in June 2020, so this will be my final survey. In 2019 I received over 1,500 survey responses and I hope you'll take the time to [complete the survey](#) again this year in large numbers. It closes on 29 March.

Your views about all the regulated retailers are very important to me, so please be as frank as possible when you complete the survey and encourage your colleagues to do the same. This year the survey includes Home Bargains following their designation by the Competition and Markets Authority.

I find the survey immensely valuable, as do the retailers, in identifying the issues the groceries sector is facing. I have used the results from the survey to guide my work with the retailers and this year the retailers asked me to repeat it even though it will not be me taking the work forward, so they can see where their efforts have been noticed and identify areas where they can make further improvements.

YouGov carries out the survey on my behalf and everything you tell me is treated in strict confidence. Respondents are not identified to me without having given their consent. This year I am not holding a conference to announce the results, but they will be published in June on my website www.gov.uk/gca and in my final newsletter.

10 years of the Groceries Supply Code of Practice

The Code came into force on 4 February 2010. Since then there have been many changes, including the creation of my role in 2013 to oversee its operation, and the later designation of three additional retailers. My role is to interpret the Code as well as to monitor and enforce compliance with it, so the Code has evolved. If you haven't yet been trained in the Code, I strongly urge you to find a trainer and get trained. You can [see a list of training providers on my website](#).

Update on work with Co-operative Group Limited (Co-op)

I have published my view on the progress made by Co-op towards following the recommendations set out in my investigation report. I was pleased to note the continued progress that has been made. I recognise the significant work that has gone into making changes to implement the recommendations.

My work with all the retailers

My regular one-to-one meetings with retailers take place over the next few weeks. You'll be able to read a summary of these meetings on my website by the end of the month.

Christine Tacon

Online resources

Following feedback that it would be useful to have all information relating to particular Code-related issues in one place, a new page has been added to the website called [Code provisions and related GCA action](#). It sets out published GCA material relating to particular paragraphs of the Code. Do take a look at this section of the website to find out more about the Code.

On [the GCA YouTube channel](#) you can also find Christine speaking about specific aspects of the Code including: De-listing, delay in payments, variation of supply agreements and forecasting and promotions in a series of bitesize videos.

If you experience a Code-related issue with a retailer, go to the GCA website and YouTube channel to find out more information.

Save the date

Christine Tacon is speaking at several events around the UK about her role, her priorities and recent developments – upcoming dates are below.

Details	Event	What's happening
12 February 9am Your desk	GCA Webinar	Your opportunity to hear more from Christine about her work with the retailers and to ask any questions you may have. Register your interest online.
2 March 2.30pm The GCA office, London	BBG member briefing	Christine will be updating members of the British Brands Group on her work as the GCA. Please contact John Noble jn@britishbrandsgroup.org.uk if you would like to attend.
5 March 8.30am Kenilworth	British Frozen Food Federation (BFFF) annual conference	Presentation – Christine talks through her work as GCA and how she has achieved change in the UK groceries sector. Please book through BFFF.
11 March 8.30am to 3pm Oslo, Norway	The FOOD conference	Presentation – Christine talks through her work as GCA and how she has achieved change in the UK groceries sector. Details available soon
16 March Midday Your desk	GCA webinar	Your chance to ask Christine any questions you have about the work of the GCA or the Code. Register your interest for this webinar online.
18 March 11am to midday The GCA office, London	Young Foodies briefing	Christine will be talking Young Foodies members to update them on her work as the GCA and the importance of getting trained in the Code. Please speak to Bryony Defraize Dash bryony@youngfoodies.co.uk if you would like to attend.

25 March 9am The
Central London Nutrition Westminster Christine is the keynote speaker. [Read full
Forum details of the event.](#)

The Adjudicator and her team are keen to attend supplier events. If your organisation is planning an event, please contact Enquiries@GroceriesCode.gov.uk to discuss whether someone from the GCA office can attend. It would be helpful if you would provide details of the event including timing and location as well as the audience involved.