

Press release: Car parts supplier must sell local depots to maintain competition

Euro Car Parts must now sell a depot in each of these areas to a purchaser approved by the Competition and Markets Authority (CMA), so that customers don't lose out.

Euro Car Parts bought most of the Andrew Page business in October 2016, after the company went into administration. Both companies own a network of depots across the UK from which they sell car parts to independent garages and workshops and to larger national or multi-regional customers, including repair centre chains, vehicle fleets and roadside assistance companies.

A group of independent CMA panel members identified 9 areas in England where the 2 companies were close competitors and where the merger could significantly reduce competition for local customers.

The group did not consider that larger national or multi-regional customers would be adversely affected by the merger.

Professor Alasdair Smith, Inquiry Chair, said:

Following an in-depth investigation, we have found that this merger has the potential to drive up prices or reduce levels of service for customers in 9 local areas. That's why we are requiring a depot in each area to be sold to a buyer approved by the CMA.

Outside of these areas, we did not find that the merger will further reduce competition compared to what would have happened if Euro Car Parts had not purchased Andrew Page.

The 9 local areas are: Blackpool, Brighton, Gloucester, Liphook, Scunthorpe, Sunderland, Wakefield, Worthing and York. Swindon had also been identified during the provisional findings stage, but new evidence came to light which resulted in the group deciding that competition would not be affected in this area.

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.

2. The final report can be found on the [case page](#).
3. On 10 March 2017, the CMA started its initial investigation and on 22 May 2017 the CMA referred it for a phase 2 investigation. Provisional findings were published on 14 September 2017.
4. All the CMA's functions in phase 2 merger inquiries are performed by independent inquiry groups, chosen from the CMA's panel members, and supported by CMA staff. The appointed inquiry group are the decision-makers on phase 2 inquiries.
5. The members of the inquiry group are: [Professor Alasdair Smith](#) (Inquiry Chair), [Lesley Ainsworth](#) and [Rosalind Hedley-Miller](#).
6. The CMA's panel members come from a variety of backgrounds, including economics, law, accountancy and/or business; the membership of an inquiry group usually reflects a mix of expertise and experience.
7. For more information on the CMA see our homepage or follow us on Twitter [@CMAgovuk](#), [Facebook](#), [Flickr](#) and [LinkedIn](#). Sign up to our [email alerts](#) to receive updates on merger cases.
8. Media enquiries should be directed to: press@cma.gsi.gov.uk, 020 3738 6337.

[Press release: Funding for supported housing for older people to encourage building new homes](#)

A tailored approach to protect and encourage the supply of a wide range of supported housing has been set out by government today (31 October). All long-term housing will remain in the welfare system and a proposed 'sheltered rent' for sheltered and extra care housing will keep rent and service charge at an appropriate level, protecting the housing needs of older and vulnerable people.

Local areas will be taking a bigger role in providing short-term and emergency housing through a ring-fenced grant to local authorities by April 2020, allowing vulnerable people to access secure accommodation without

worrying about meeting housing costs at a difficult point in their lives. The grant will be underpinned by a National Statement of Expectation setting out how local authorities should plan effectively for provision in their area.

Supported housing provides a home to some of the most vulnerable people in this country and the vast majority is provided for older people. The government knows the supply of these homes needs to grow as this country's ageing population means that demand is forecast to increase.

Currently supported accommodation is funded through the welfare system, including the housing costs and extra support services. These reforms will ensure:

- funding certainty for the sector, and encouraging long-term investment and new supply
- local areas have a greater role in commissioning services
- councils have a stronger role in providing the right services for their local areas

Local Government Minister Marcus Jones said:

This government is committed to boosting the supply of new homes, and helping people to live independently and with dignity for as long as possible. This is why we are giving the supported housing sector the certainty of funding they need to get building new homes.

These reforms will deliver quality and value for money, funding certainty for the sector and give local areas a greater role in commissioning services.

Minister for Family Support, Housing and Child Maintenance Minister Caroline Dinenage said:

We value the important role supported housing plays and that's why we have worked closely with providers and listened to their feedback to come up with solutions that will safeguard its future and improve support for those that need a home that is safe and secure.

The new flexible funding model and reforms will give housing providers certainty over future funding and drive up quality and provide value for money.

The supported housing sector support provides homes from older renters. It also provides a home for other vulnerable groups such as people with learning disabilities, mental ill health, homeless people and victims of domestic abuse.

The government's latest [policy statement](#) is published online including further consultation on the detailed implementation of the flexible funding models for both sheltered rent and long term supported accommodation.

The [consultation](#) on the detailed implementation of the flexible funding model for supported housing will run until 23 January 2018.

Last week (25 October 2017) the government [announced](#) that the Local Housing Allowance rate will not be applied to the social rented sector.

[News story: Science and tech at core of defence as Minister launches new strategy in Birmingham](#)

By setting out specific research areas and capability priorities, like autonomy, cyber and sensor technology, the strategy will encourage defence to be even more responsive to emerging opportunities and threats, whilst promoting more innovation and collaboration with suppliers.

The Defence Minister made the announcement while visiting Small and Medium-Sized businesses (SMEs) in Birmingham, one of the UK's up-and-coming tech hubs, at EEF's brand new facility in the West Midlands.

Defence Minister Harriett Baldwin said:

This new strategy puts world-beating science and technology right at the core of our Armed Forces. Investing millions into innovative ideas from dynamic British companies will help us defend the country in the face of intensifying threats and keep us ahead of the curve.

A world-leading centre for life sciences, Birmingham has over 36,800 digital jobs, with over 550 startups created from 2011 to 2015, making it a fertile ground for new ideas for UK Defence and Security.

Last year saw the department's direct spend with smaller business increase by over 10%. Many have benefitted from the MOD's £800 million Innovation Fund, with the department committed to spend 1.2% of its rising defence budget on science and technology.

The Defence and Security Accelerator (DASA) is one way the finances are channelled, harnessing innovative ideas to give the UK a strategic advantage in Defence and Security through themed competitions and an 'Open Call' for

Innovation.

Since its launch, the DASA has assessed nearly 700 proposals from almost 400 organisations and has successfully awarded its defence portion of the 'Open Call' budget for this year.

Ideas have included computer games to help military units develop more effective tactics, a device to reduce the noise of aircraft and vehicles and a redesigned geolocation tracker.

Over 40% of submissions received were from SMEs that have not engaged with defence before, reflecting the success of the MOD efforts to make it easier for SMEs to win defence business, maximising the innovative solutions they can offer the Armed Forces.

Last month the Defence Minister announced the launch of the MOD's new Supplier Portal, which brings together for the first time a range of useful information for new and prospective suppliers in one place.

A new Twitter channel, @defenceproc, is also being used to provide regular updates to suppliers on opportunities and events that the MOD is supporting, whilst the department also launched two simplified, plain English short-form contracts for use in lower value less complex procurements last year, reducing the existing baseline terms and conditions from 18 pages to three.

The new Science and Technology Strategy will be led by the MOD's Chief Scientific Adviser Hugh Durrant-Whyte, who joined this year following a career at the forefront of the robotics sector in Australia.

[News story: APHA awarded funding for brucellosis vaccine development](#)

APHA has received \$100,000 in the AgResults' Brucellosis Vaccine Prize competition, aimed at incentivising the development of a vaccine that is effective, safe and viable for use against *Brucella melitensis* in small ruminants across the developing world.

The award is for Phase 1 of the vaccine development and was given based on the agency's scientific soundness, suitable research and appropriate manufacturing capabilities.

The team, led by Dr John McGiven, is now working on Phase 2, by developing a proof of concept vaccine that meets efficacy and safety requirements.

The [Brucellosis Vaccine Prize competition](#) is designed, funded and managed by AgResults, and implemented by the Global Alliance for Livestock Veterinary

Medicines (GALVmed). The competition has three phases and could run for up to 10 years.

A total of \$30 million is available to entrants, with 3 milestone payments at different stages, potentially adding up to the total of \$26 million for one entrant. See the [competition's website](#).

Brucellosis is a costly disease that affects many animals including ruminants (for example cattle, sheep, goats and buffalo) and causes abortions, infertility and decreased milk production.

It is endemic in a number of developing countries, and the toll on smallholder farmers in South Asia and Sub-Saharan Africa is particularly devastating.

Wholesale vaccination of livestock can be a cost-effective way of controlling the disease and limiting its impact on both human and animal health.

However, the existing brucellosis vaccines are not safe or efficacious enough to use effectively in developing countries. Current vaccines are unsafe for use in pregnant animals, have variable efficacy, and can harm humans.

The most protective vaccines also cause cross reactions in diagnostic tests for the disease. A new vaccine that addresses these shortcomings would deliver lasting benefits to human and animal health.

Dr John Mc Given, R&D Project Leader at the OIE Reference Laboratory for Brucellosis at APHA said:

We feel the AgResults competition elevates recognition of the significance of this insidious and debilitating disease. For many years we have been focusing on improved methods for the serodiagnosis of brucellosis and this research revealed to us a route towards a new type of vaccine against brucellosis. This competition gave us additional incentive to pull these innovative concepts together in the belief that we can make a big difference to brucellosis control.

Andrew Soldan, Head of APHA Scientific (the commercial services of APHA) said:

I think the prize competition is a fantastic idea; in the discussions I've already had with vaccine companies it has created a level of interest which I think is a testament to the fact that it's already started to have an effect. It's certainly raised the level of interest within the industry, both the research community and the vaccine companies.

To find out more about the award, listen to [Andrew Soldan's interview](#) on the

competition's website.

News story: Civil news: checklist for CLA escape fee claim 1 forms

Checklist issued for use with CLA EC-CLAIM 1 on civil escape case billing in CLA cases.

A checklist for CLA escape cases is now available to help ensure you are paid as quickly as possible when billing for work in this area.

We decided to introduce this new checklist for consistency with the approach adopted in the other escape case categories.

Our checklists are relied on by our processing teams and were introduced to try and reduce the number of rejected claims.

But they are also useful for providers because they detail:

- our requirements
- documentation we need
- guidance on form completion and payment rules

Are there any changes to the process?

There are no major changes to the case submission requirements. The introduction of the checklists for CLA escape cases:

- adds clarity to the process
- standardises the format and approach for all controlled work escape case claims

How to use checklists

We recommend that the checklists are used as a pre-submission check. If the checklist is correctly used the required information will be submitted for assessment and the matter will not be rejected.

If the checklist is not used and your claim is rejected, you can use the checklist to help ensure that there will be no further rejects.

Further information

[EC-Claim 1: escape fee case claim form](#) – to download new civil checklist