

# Transformation Consultation: modernising IPO's services

The proposed changes will update the law and remove legal barriers, allowing the IPO to be more innovative and deliver world-class digital services. They will also address current inconsistencies between different IP rights.

Responses to the consultation will help shape the laws underpinning the transformation programme, helping ensure the UK's IP framework is fit to embrace the opportunities of the future.

There are two parts to the consultation – you can respond to either or both:

**Part A** focuses on proposed changes to the law to enable digital transformation of the IPO's services. The IPO is seeking evidence and views on a range of options on how legislation could be altered to better support innovation.

**Part B** focuses on proposed changes to improve the IPO's tribunal function and align processes that should work in a similar way across rights.

The consultation is a key strand of the 'One IPO' transformation programme. One IPO will provide a single, integrated system across all IP rights and vastly improved digital services.

The Government is seeking a range of evidence and views from businesses, representative organisations, and legal practitioners on proposals covering a wide range of areas, including.

- standardising some legislative requirements across IP rights
- the use of artificial intelligence and automation
- greater flexibility on fees
- improvements to the tribunals function
- the types of media that can be used in patent applications

The One IPO service will start being rolled out to the first patents customers a year from now. Trade marks and designs will be added in 2025.

Early details and demonstrations of the One IPO service have already been shared with customers for parts of the new service, including the [new IPO customer accounts](#) and the [new patents application service](#).

However, changes in legislation, not just technology, are needed to allow the IPO to deliver best-in-class services and remain fit for the future.

**Andy Bartlett, IPO Deputy CEO said:**

The One IPO transformation programme will bring the IPO into the 21st century. But changes to the law will be needed in order to

achieve true digital transformation of our services. Many of the laws that govern how the IPO operates were written for a paper-based world.

Removing barriers that prevent us from being innovative means we can provide modern digital services. It's essential that we hear from you to shape the laws that will underpin those services.

**CIPA President Alasdair Poore said:**

"We welcome these proposal and the consultation. This is an opportunity for the UK IPO to develop its services and maintain its position as a world leading intellectual property office, ensuring that it can offer businesses and their representatives services covering intellectual property, patents, trade marks and designs, which take advantage of and embrace the many opportunities of the new digital world."

**The IP Federation's President, Matthew Hitching, said:**

The IP Federation believes that digital transformation has great potential to improve access to the IPO's data and services for all users, as well as providing efficiency gains and cost savings. Our members work daily with IP offices worldwide, and we will apply those experiences to respond constructively to the consultation.

**President of CITMA, Rachel Wilkinson-Duffy said:**

The One IPO transformation project is a huge undertaking and will change the way we register and manage trade marks and other IP rights in the UK.

The consultation will last for 9 weeks, ending on Friday 6 January.

More information about the [consultation and how to respond](#) is available on our consultation website.

- 1) More information about the [One IPO transformation programme](#) is available.
- 2) Responses are invited to either or both parts of the consultation
- 3) We will summarise all responses and publish this summary on GOV.UK. The summary will include a list of names or organisations that responded, but not people's personal names, addresses or other contact details.
- 4) The IPO will also be hosting a series of meetings with stakeholders as part of this consultation process.

5) This consultation is the first to address potential legal changes needed for the IPO's Transformation programme. As the programme develops, there may be additional changes to legislation which government may consult on in the future.

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## Russia destroys Ukraine's civilian energy infrastructure: UK statement to the OSCE

Thank you Mr Chair, and my thanks to your fellow panellists, the Deputy Minister and the other speakers for sharing their thoughts today.

This week has borne witness to yet again more brutal tactics employed by the Russian Federation against the people of Ukraine. On Monday, Russia launched a series of further attacks against civilian energy infrastructure targets, reportedly leaving 350,000 Kyiv apartments without electricity and water. President Zelenskyy has outlined that almost one-third of the country's energy infrastructure has now been damaged or destroyed, and it is reported that approximately 1.5 million households were left without electricity after the Russian missile strikes on 22 October.

Putin is losing his war and is resorting to desperate measures as a result. Ill-equipped, poorly trained, and poorly-led troops are being sent by President Putin to die in a foreign country in a war they either do not believe in or do not understand.

Unable to defeat the courage of the Ukrainian army, Putin has turned his attention to defenceless Ukrainian civilians, destroying the electricity that keeps their lights on, or the heating that keeps them warm. Putin hopes that in doing so he will destroy their spirit. But as we have all seen over the past eight months, the Ukrainian people will not be so easily cowed. The Russian army continues to sink to new depths, but the Ukrainian resolve – and that of its partners – will not be overcome.

Let us be clear. Attacks disproportionately killing civilians, and destroying infrastructure indispensable to the survival of civilians, are prohibited under international humanitarian law and may constitute war crimes. President Putin, and all those who have joined him in this murderous adventurism, will be held to account.

Mr Chair,

We cannot stand by and contribute to Russian revenues from the sale of oil, gas and coal that fund this war. Reducing global reliance on Russian fossil fuels will accelerate our clean energy transition by bringing on clean energy

at scale. Hydrogen and nuclear energy, as well as investment in new technology such as energy storage; low carbon and electric transport; and industrial decarbonisation will lead towards a greener future.

As we approach winter, the unity of the international community and our outrage at Russia's continued disdain for human life and international law must not and will not fade away. As Ukrainian lights flicker off and temperatures drop, Ukraine is not only defending its right to exist as a sovereign country. Ukraine is defending the right of all peoples of all states to live in freedom, without fear of aggression from external authoritarian, belligerent powers. We stand by Ukraine now. And for as long as it takes.

Thank you.

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## [Russia is trying to maximise civilian hardship over winter: UK statement to the OSCE](#)

Thank you, Mr Chair. On 31 October, Russia launched a wave of missile attacks targeting hydroelectric dams and other critical infrastructure across Ukraine. Strikes were reported close to Kyiv, and in at least 10 other cities and regions. Around twenty energy facilities were hit, including hydroelectric plants in Zaprorizhzhia, Kremenchuk, and the Dniester dam close to the border with Moldova. Millions across Ukraine faced power outages and in some cities, including Kyiv, Dnipro and Zhytomyr, they lost water supply.

These have direct human costs. According to the head of the Kyiv regional hospital, all surgeries were cancelled, as surgeons could not sterilise their theatres or tools. Cities closer to the front-line, such as Nikopol, went for days without power. In Mykolaiv, where Russia cut off the city's water supplies over six months ago, residents have had to queue at distribution points near the frontline, braving frequent shelling. I want to focus my statement this week on energy, the environment and food supply.

Mr Chair, as we have flagged in previous weeks, Russia is trying to maximise civilian hardship over winter. According to President Zelenskyy, Russia has already damaged or destroyed about 40% of Ukraine's civil energy infrastructure. And we know that vulnerable groups suffer disproportionately – be it the elderly, those with medical conditions or disabilities. As President Putin will be aware, attacks which disproportionately kill civilians, and destroy objects indispensable to the survival of civilians, are prohibited under international humanitarian law. It is morally bankrupt.

Ukraine's tireless efforts to repair infrastructure and restore services have

once again demonstrated the resilience of the Ukrainian people. As Ukraine prepares for what will be a tough winter, the UK has donated 850 generators, guaranteed a £50m loan for Ukraine's electricity grid operator, and will shortly disburse £10m to the Energy Community's fund for energy equipment. We will not let Ukraine face this winter alone.

In addition to the lives lost, the environment is another victim of Russia's ongoing invasion. Four months ago, the World Bank estimated that reconstruction and recovery would cost about USD 349 billion. Of this, the decontamination of land would cost over USD 70 billion, agriculture 19 billion and energy 10 billion. The numbers today would certainly be significantly higher. Russian attacks have degraded and polluted Ukrainian land and water, which will take decades to remedy. We deplore Russia's persistent violent actions against nuclear facilities in Ukraine, including at the Zaporizhzhia Nuclear Power Plant. This significantly raises the risk of a nuclear incident, endangering the population of Ukraine, neighbouring States and the international community. In addition, as we have mentioned previously, the IAEA have been invited by Ukraine in the name of transparency, and there is no evidence to back up Russia's false allegations that Ukraine is preparing to use a "dirty bomb" – we once again call on Russia to desist from its nuclear rhetoric.

Mr Chair, the Black Sea Grain Initiative is vital to global food security, and a matter of life or death for 100 million people at risk of extreme poverty. An average of 100,000 tons of grain is exported each day under the Black Sea Grain initiative – enough to feed 5 million people for a month. We welcome an extension of this initiative. But Mr Chair – President Putin must stop weaponising food and hunger. He realised he shot himself in the foot by earlier stopping ships from entering Ukrainian ports to load up grain to feed the world. The Grain Initiative must now be extended beyond November without further Russian impediments.

Mr Chair, we will support Ukraine for as long as it takes to restore its territorial integrity, recover and rebuild. In the face of these challenges to its energy infrastructure, its environment and food supply stemming from Russia's illegal invasion – Ukraine will win. Ukraine will rebuild. And Ukraine will flourish.

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## [Bedlington recycling site fire to be extinguished](#)

Press release

An operation to extinguish an ongoing fire at a green waste composting site in Bedlington, will commence today under close supervision by the Environment

Agency.



Environment Agency officers on site monitoring the activity to extinguish the fire

A fire at Green Leaf Recycling Ltd first broke out on 31 August 2022 and Northumberland Fire and Rescue Service (FRS) attended the site to bring the fire under control.

Following advice from Northumberland FRS there has been a controlled burn of the remaining waste wood on site which has continued to generate low level smoke and odour in the area. Now that the burn is under control, Green Leaf Recycling Ltd, the site operator, will start to extinguish the fire on Thursday 3 November following advice from the fire service.

Environment Agency officers will be closely supervising the work done by Green Leaf Recycling Ltd to ensure there is minimal impact on the environment to bring this incident to a conclusion.

This operation is expected to take a few days to complete and may cause a temporary increase in smoke and odour coming from the site until the fire is completely extinguished.

The material on the site is clean waste wood which poses a low risk to health and the environment, however, people are advised to keep windows and doors closed if they are affected by this.

The green waste composting activities at the site are authorised by an Environmental Permit issued by the Environment Agency.

If you have any queries relating to this then please contact the local Regulated Industry team at [ne-waste@environment-agency.gov.uk](mailto:ne-waste@environment-agency.gov.uk).

If local residents have environmental concerns they should contact the Environment Agency's 24/7 hotline on 0800 807060.

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# Social media users set to benefit from new hidden advertising protections

- New principles for platforms to follow to protect users
- Influencers told gifts must be disclosed as well as payment
- Brands warned that compliance is their responsibility too

Everyone involved in creating content and posting this on social media must take responsibility to ensure all ads are labelled correctly.

Working alongside the Advertising Standards Authority (ASA), Ofcom, social media companies and content creators, the Competition and Markets Authority (CMA) has produced a suite of resources designed to help those publishing and sharing paid promotions to comply with consumer protection law. This work builds on [commitments made by Instagram in 2020](#) to tackle hidden advertising on its site.

Three separate guides set out the expectations for social media platforms, brands and influencers about being open and upfront when it comes to paid promotions, as well as explaining the roles and responsibilities of the different regulators of online advertising.

George Lusty, CMA Senior Director of Consumer Protection, said:

Hidden adverts are illegal and harmful. They could persuade people to spend money on things they might not buy if they knew the endorsement was paid for, which is even more concerning now people's finances are squeezed.

Transparency is everyone's responsibility – from social media platforms to brands and influencers. Those not already doing their part should get up to speed with the law now, to make sure people can quickly and easily identify paid-for content. Following our guides will help them with this.

The 'Compliance Principles' set out how social media platforms should prevent and tackle hidden advertising appearing on their sites. These principles apply to all social media platforms and the CMA expects them to be followed. Platforms such as TikTok, YouTube, Twitter, Snapchat, Pinterest and Twitch have engaged constructively with the CMA in drawing up the guidelines.

The principles require platforms to be proactive in tackling hidden advertising, including by:

- Providing their users with tools to label commercial content and to report suspected hidden advertising

- Improving information to content creators and influencers about what to label as a paid-for endorsement
- Improving policies and taking action where hidden advertising is found
- Using technology to identify suspected hidden advertising for action

## Guidance for businesses/brands

The guide helps make brands aware of their responsibility to tackle hidden advertising. This includes:

- being clear with influencers who they pay or send gifts to that they must label these posts in an obvious way
- taking action where this does not happen – for example, contacting influencers who are promoting products or services on their behalf and asking them to remove or amend posts to accurately reflect the commercial relationship

The guidance is clear that when posts are shared as part of a wider campaign, businesses themselves can be held accountable for misleading customers, as well as influencers.

## Guidance for influencers

The CMA's guide reminds content creators that misleading customers through hidden adverts could be in breach of consumer protection law and that people should be able to recognise an advert as soon as they view it. This includes when influencers are paid to post, when they receive gifts and when they post on behalf of a brand they own or are employed by. Posts should clearly display that they are paid-for endorsements using #Ad or #Advert and not use unclear terms, such as: #gift, #gifted, or #spon, among other ambiguous hashtags.

Separately, the CMA and ASA's existing 'Guide for influencers' sets out clearly what influencers need to do when sharing paid-for and promoted content online.

The ASA can [take action to ban undisclosed ads by influencers](#) and, where an influencer appears unwilling or unable to abide by the rules, impose further sanctions.

Guy Parker, Chief Executive of the ASA, said:

We welcome this guidance, which adds to the existing resources the ASA and CMA have produced to help platforms, brands and influencers stick to the rules. Platforms have an important role to play in making sure advertising content is clearly recognisable. We will continue to work closely with the CMA in this key area.

For more information on the CMA's work to improve transparency of paid-for endorsements on social media platforms, visit the [social media endorsements](#)

[case page](#) including the CMA's guides.

## **Notes to editors:**

1. All media enquiries should be directed to the CMA press office by email on [press@cma.gov.uk](mailto:press@cma.gov.uk) or by phone on 020 3738 6460.
2. Currently, only a court can decide if consumer protection law has been broken. On 22 April 2022, Government announced that it intends to legislate to give the CMA the power to enforce consumer protection law directly – meaning, to make a legal finding that a company has breached consumer law. Amongst other things, this would enable the CMA to fine companies for breaches. To note – this has not yet been passed into law.
3. If in doubt about their legal obligations, content creators and businesses should seek legal advice.