

News story: Pubs Code Adjudicator (PCA) Bulletin August 2018

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News story: Interview with the PCA Intelligence and Compliance Manager

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Press release: Pubs Code Adjudicator highlights concerns after initial analysis of first Pubs Code compliance

reports

The PCA's initial analysis of the first [reports](#) submitted by the pub companies highlighted three key themes:

- the small number of Market Rent Only (MRO) tenancies agreed
- the high number of tenancies subject to forfeiture, seizure or abandonment
- the use of legal notices to oppose the renewal of tied tenancies on their existing terms.

Mr Newby said: "The information submitted by the pub companies and the monthly MRO data being published by them confirm the picture suggested by earlier PCA research. It is a picture of tied pub tenants experiencing what they perceive to be significant barriers to exercising their MRO option in a timely and straightforward fashion.

"I have written to the pub companies and this will be the focus of the next round of bi-lateral meetings with each CEO in October. I want to get behind these figures and know what is driving the high rate of tenant departures, including the extent to which tenant churn may be preventing them from exercising their rights under the Code.

"Additionally, all tied pub tenants who have received a MRO proposal will shortly be asked to complete a PCA questionnaire setting out their experiences of the MRO process and its outcome. I will use this information and the responses from the pub companies to target further interventions to secure tenants' access to MRO."

The PCA also wants to examine whether the new rules on pre-entry information, training and business plans introduced under the Code are having the intended effect of ensuring that people taking on a tied tenancy are fully prepared and supported to succeed.

And he will be looking in detail at cases where pub companies have issued notices under section 25 of the Landlord and Tenant Act (LTA) 1954 to oppose the granting of a new tenancy to an existing tied pub tenant for any evidence of links between tenants requesting MRO and LTA proceedings to take possession.

The Code requires pub companies to provide the PCA with an annual compliance report which provides detailed and accurate accounts of how they have complied with their obligations under the Code, of any breaches raised or alleged by tied pub tenants and the steps taken as a consequence, as well as what the pub companies have done to ensure compliance with the Code.

The PCA required pub companies to submit information relating to the status of their tied estates, the management of their tied agreements, the conduct of their tied rent assessments and handling of MRO requests as well as the impact of proceedings under the LTA.

Notes to editors:

1. The compliance reports cover the period from the introduction of the Pubs Code on 21 July 2016 to 31 March 2018.
 2. Full statement from the PCA including compliance reports are available at www.gov.uk/pca
 3. Any queries should be directed to office@pubscodeadjudicator.gov.uk
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News story: Joint statement on UK, SACU and Mozambique EPA

The Honourable Ministers responsible for Trade in the UK, G Hollingbery and in SACU and Mozambique, herein represented by B. J. Kenewendo of Botswana, met in Cape Town, Republic of South Africa, today, 28th August 2018.

We welcomed the significant progress made on a future UK, SACU, and Mozambique EPA that will ensure that the parties maintain the current market access and replicate the effects of the existing EU-SADC EPA, which will ensure continuity of trade relations between the UK, SACU and Mozambique once the EU-SADC EPA no longer applies to the UK. In this regard therefore:

1. We set out today our shared understanding that inclusive trade is essential for poverty eradication and sustained growth. We agreed that the UK-SACU and Mozambique EPA must promote development and support the integration efforts of the African Continent.
2. The 2 sides commit to continue to work together towards the conclusion of a future UK, SACU and Mozambique EPA that ensures continuity in the trade relationship once the EU-SADC EPA no longer applies to the UK.
3. We recalled our roundtable discussions on trade relations post-Brexit on the 19th July 2017, wherein we agreed to explore ways to ensure that the existing trade arrangement between the UK, SACU and Mozambique currently governed by the EU-SADC EPA, will not be disrupted by the UK's departure from the EU. The UK re-affirmed its commitment to ensuring continuity of the effects of the EU-SADC EPA following the UK's withdrawal from the EU, in particular maintaining the current market access for SACU and Mozambique into the UK.
4. We welcome the significant progress our officials have made since then in the discussions on a future UK, SACU, and Mozambique EPA, that will replicate the effects of the existing EU-SADC EPA which has strong aspects of reciprocity. During this process, we recognise the UK's continuing obligations while it remains an EU Member State.

5. We have today confirmed that we will be in a position to ensure that an Agreement can be in place between the UK, SACU, and Mozambique, as soon as the EU-SADC EPA no longer applies to the UK. This confirmation, and the future UK, SACU and Mozambique EPA, are without prejudice to the terms of the EU-SADC EPA.
6. We take note of the progress achieved regarding the UK and EU's agreement on a time-limited implementation period between the EU and UK following the UK's departure from the EU, and in particular the intention for the UK to be treated, for the purposes of EU international agreements, as an EU Member State for the duration of the implementation period between the EU and UK. The SACU and Mozambique Trade Ministers indicated that they look forward to receiving formal confirmation of the same via the proposed notification, and to continuing to receive regular updates on progress from the UK on the EU-UK negotiations under Article 50 of the Treaty of the European Union on the UK's withdrawal from the EU. SACU and Mozambique emphasise the importance of continued cumulation between all the parties in promoting continuity and to avoid disruption in trade, and urge both the UK and the EU to recognise the importance of cumulation in the discussions on a post-Brexit EU-UK arrangement.
7. Nevertheless, we recognise that it is responsible to prepare for all potential outcomes. We confirm that we are therefore taking steps to ensure that our replicated agreement can be in place, if required, immediately upon the UK's withdrawal from the EU in March 2019, in the event that no agreement is reached between the UK and EU.
8. We re-affirm that we share a strong ambition to further strengthen our partnership in the future, in order to further benefit both parties. Our EPA will form the core basis of our future economic and development relationship. We recognised that some issues have been identified that will require consideration after the UK's withdrawal from the EU in March 2019 and therefore direct our officials to prepare a built-in agenda on those outstanding issues for expeditious conclusion. We also acknowledge a range of potential issues which could help us further strengthen our partnership, and look forward to discussing those at the most appropriate time.
9. We re-affirm our intention to cooperate closely in order to ensure that the mutual benefits of a UK, SACU and Mozambique EPA are fully realised.
10. In addition, we reiterate support for a rules-based multilateral trading system, with the World Trade Organization (WTO) at its core, reaffirm the centrality of development in the WTO's work and the need to continue to fight WTO non-compliant measures that lead to protectionism and unilateralism. We remain committed to a rules-based, transparent, non-discriminatory, open and inclusive multilateral trading system and are determined to work together to further strengthen the WTO and ensure that it facilitates effective participation of all countries in the multilateral trading system.

11. Finally, we recognise that the affirmations set forth in this political understanding are not intended to be legally binding and remain 'without prejudice' to the technical discussions currently underway.
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News story: £95 million “Full Fibre” Broadband Boost for Local Authorities

Last year, the Chancellor announced more than £1 billion of funding to stimulate further and faster roll-out of full fibre networks, and drive the next generation of mobile connectivity.

As part of this, Government's £190 million Local Full Fibre Networks (LFFN) Challenge Fund was launched to boost commercial investment in networks across the whole of the UK.

Successful projects in this third round of funding will enable gigabit capable connections to key public buildings and businesses and also encourage broadband providers to create additional connections to local homes and businesses.

Minister for Digital, Margot James said:

We recently set out our ambition for a nationwide full-fibre broadband network by 2033, and initiatives like this will be instrumental in achieving that. We want to hear from any local authority interested in taking part, so we can work closely with them on their plans to help them secure funding.

The final decision on funding will be made by the Local Full Fibre Networks Investment Panel, who will assess the proposals, placing particular importance on a number of areas, including:

- Rural focus: Projects demonstrating the effectiveness of Local Full Fibre Networks delivery in rural locations and hard-to-reach areas
- 5G or Barrier Busting: Projects focused on overcoming obstacles to the commercial roll-out of fibre and 5G
- Public Sector Productivity: Projects targeting improvements to public sector services, such as enabling schools to access new cloud based educational tools, or allowing medical professionals to remotely monitor patient health
- Market Development: Projects deliberately targeting the development of the full-fibre market in a particular area, including incentivising aggregation

Following the successful first two rounds of grant funding, a new process has been designed to allocate the remaining £95 million from the Local Full Fibre Networks Challenge Fund.

There will be no fixed date for formal submissions – instead, local bodies with an interest in bidding for the Challenge Fund are invited to submit an informal expression of interest to the programme. Government officials will then enter into a dialogue with them to assess their project and where appropriate help them shape their approach.

Local bodies are now being invited to submit an [expression of interest](#)

This programme is part of the government's expanded £31 billion National Productivity Investment Fund aimed at improving productivity, which is key to raising living standards. This fund has already earmarked £740 million specifically for improving Britain's digital infrastructure, ensuring the UK is match-fit for the future as part of our modern industrial strategy.