

Greens warn of catastrophic consequences for small businesses from post-Brexit custom checks



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*Over one third of small businesses not ready for full post-Brexit customs checks

*Call for UK to immediately negotiate to re-join the customs union

*Demand for free business support from professional advisors

Greens are warning the weeks ahead could prove catastrophic for many small businesses as they face the introduction of full post-Brexit customs checks and changes to VAT on 1st January 2022 [1]. The grace period, allowing them to delay making customs declarations to HMRC and paying any tariffs, will end on 31st December, but more than a third of small businesses say they are not ready for the changes [2].

To prevent increased costs, paperwork and disruption to supply chains, the Green Party is calling for the UK to immediately negotiate to re-join the customs union and for small businesses to be offered free support from professional advisors.

Green Party deputy leader, Amelia Womack, said:

“The government won the last election on a false prospectus. They haven’t got Brexit done. Instead, businesses are being undone by Brexit. It’s clear that it isn’t possible to leave the EU in a way that doesn’t damage business.

“The new customs and VAT measures from January 1st will increase costs, paperwork and supply chain issues at a difficult time of year for many businesses. January will potentially be even more difficult than usual due to tougher covid restrictions and the possibility of a ‘circuit breaker’ lockdown.

“Businesses consider the UK’s new trading relationship with the EU to be their number one challenge [2], ahead of skills shortages and the economic climate. The UK’s trade deal with the EU is the first in modern history that creates more rather than fewer barriers to trade.

“Greens are clear that the problems facing small businesses could be reduced if the UK re-joined the customs union – including a unified VAT regime. We call on the government to negotiate immediately with the EU to make this happen. We also want to see small businesses offered free support from professional advisors. The paltry £20 million pot for such support has run dry [3], but businesses need support now more than ever.”

Notes

- [1] [Less than a month until full customs controls are introduced – gov.uk](#)
- [2] [A third of UK importers not ready for full Brexit customs checks – survey](#)
- [3] <https://www.customsintermediarygrant.co.uk/sme-brexit-support-fund>

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