

News story: HMRC calls on online marketplaces to sign agreement tackling VAT fraud

HMRC is today (25 April 2018) asking all online marketplaces operating in the UK to sign [an agreement](#) to help tackle online VAT fraud and errors taking place on their platforms.

Online marketplaces have transformed the way people shop and helped millions of businesses to sell their products and services.

These platforms have a responsibility to ensure their sellers understand the tax rules and prevent fraud from happening on their watch.

To assist HMRC in tackling online VAT fraud and error, the agreement asks online marketplaces to commit to:

- educating online sellers from the UK and abroad about their VAT obligations in the UK either via their own help and support or by directing them to [HMRC's GOV.UK guidance](#)
- responding swiftly when notified by HMRC that sellers are not playing by the VAT rules, and setting up a system to take appropriate action
- finding a suitable and lawful way to provide HMRC with information about their sellers, when requested

HMRC will publish the list of all online marketplaces that sign up to this agreement. If an online marketplace that signs the agreement fails to meet the commitments, HMRC will remove them from the list.

Mel Stride, the Financial Secretary to the Treasury, said:

The growth of online marketplaces has helped many businesses to sell more products across the UK and has contributed greatly to the economy.

However, there is a small minority of sellers not paying their fair share of tax, and we're committed to working with marketplaces on multiple levels to tackle tax evasion.

Jon Thompson, HMRC's Chief Executive, said:

The UK has already led the way in holding online marketplaces accountable for VAT fraud committed on their platforms.

The agreement goes even further to tackle this issue, with online marketplaces committing to helping their sellers understand their

tax responsibilities and ensuring we have the information we need to take action against those who do not play by the rules.

This agreement builds on world-leading powers, known by the term joint and several liability (JSL) rules, which hold online marketplaces accountable for VAT fraud committed by sellers on their platforms.

These were first introduced in September 2016 and were strengthened further in March 2018 – they have already gone a long way to ensure businesses selling goods to the UK online pay the VAT that is due.

Further information

HMRC will update the list of signatories regularly.

See measures announced in [Autumn Budget 2017](#) and in [Budget 2016](#).

If you're an online marketplace operator, see [the checks you need to make on sellers](#).

HMRC estimates that the tax loss from VAT fraud and error on online marketplaces was between £1 billion and £1.5 billion in 2016 to 2017.

HMRC has opened about 2,100 investigations into non-compliant overseas businesses selling via online marketplaces in the period since Royal Assent of the JSL measures in September 2016 (up to 31 January 2018). This resulted in it issuing around 1,300 JSL notices to online marketplaces by 31 January.

There is considerable evidence that the measures have been effective in tackling online VAT fraud and error. This includes about 27,550 applications to register for VAT from overseas online retail businesses since the measures were announced in March 2016 (up to 31 January 2018). This compares with about 1,650 for 2015.

[Press release: New space contracts for UK companies as Sentinel satellite lifts off](#)

The Sentinel-3B satellite, which features systems built in the UK, will join six other satellites monitoring and measuring the Earth's environment from space.

The majority of information they collect is freely available to anyone in the world so it can be used for anything from agriculture to urban planning, as

well as tackling global issues like climate change.

Ahead of the satellite's launch from Russia's Plesetsk Cosmodrome due just before 7pm today (25 April), the European Space Agency announced the UK has secured a number of contracts for future work in the Copernicus programme.

Between Airbus UK and Thales Alenia Space, the UK has secured more than €12 million worth of contracts, including important work on two missions, Land Surface Temperature and the Polar Microwave Imaging.

Sam Gyimah, Science Minister, said:

"The UK space sector is a success story and our capabilities in Earth observation satellite technology are second to none. These latest contracts confirm the vital role of British research, innovation and industry to Copernicus.

"We've been clear that we want our companies and universities to continue participating in key EU space programmes, as long as they can take part on a fair and open basis. Our leading role in the European Space Agency will not change as we leave the EU, and this Government will ensure the UK thrives in the commercial space age through our modern Industrial Strategy."

The UK is also involved in three other missions; the L-band SAR mission, which measures soil moisture and crops for food security and precision farming, the Polar Ice and Snow Topographic Mission and the Anthropogenic CO2 Monitoring Mission.

George Eustice, Agricultural Minister, said:

"I am delighted about today's launch of Sentinel-3B, which will further increase the ability of Copernicus to monitor changes in sea level, marine pollution, and biological productivity. This closely follows the launch of the British-built Sentinel-5P in October, and reflects the growing success of the programme as the world's leading Earth Observation satellite system.

"The UK has one of the largest concentrations of Copernicus data users in Europe. The satellite data is increasingly used by the UK Government, especially the Department for Environment, Food and Rural Affairs, to monitor water and air quality, support flood recovery efforts, and deliver farming support, for example. It could also prove to be an immensely valuable tool in the delivery of our 25 year Environment Plan – a strategic priority for the UK Government.

"As the programme looks to the future, it is great to see UK companies and users successfully driving the development of Copernicus as it continues to grow in importance."

Sentinel-3B is the seventh satellite in the Copernicus programme and features several instruments, measuring colour and surface temperature over the land and ocean. It will measure the temperature, colour and height of the sea surface as well as the thickness of sea ice. These measurements are used to monitor changes in sea level, marine pollution and biological productivity.

Ben Olivier, CEO of Thales Alenia Space in the UK, said:

“The importance of the Copernicus missions in securing our ability to understand and help manage the impacts of the climate on our environment, economy and sustainable development cannot be over-stated.

“Thales Alenia Space in the UK is pleased to have secured the lead role in the next expansion mission such as CO₂ monitoring. This reflects the engineering and scientific skills that the UK contributes to collective progress and security.”

Over land, this innovative mission provides information to monitor wildfires, map the way land is used, observe vegetation state and measure the height of rivers and lakes – complementing the high-resolution measurements of its Sentinel-2 sister mission.

The satellite features systems built in the UK, including the battery and propulsion system, and draws on UK scientific expertise and experience in helping to calibrate and analyse the data obtained.

Completing the constellation of the first set of Sentinel missions, it follows the launch of Sentinel-5P in October 2017, which was built by Airbus UK, and features state of the art sensors from Teledyne E2V in Chelmsford at the core of the Dutch-built TROPOMI instrument.

Andy Stroomer, UK Business Development Director for space at Airbus, said:

“The Copernicus programme provides a hugely important contribution towards global monitoring of the environment. Airbus in the UK has been a major player in the development of satellites, ground systems and services supporting Copernicus. Contributions include: leadership of the Sentinel-5P atmospheric chemistry mission; the cornerstone radar instrument electronics for Sentinel 1; and cryogenic coolers underpinning the performance of this Sentinel 3 mission. We look forward to continuing to play key roles in future Copernicus missions.”

In orbit Sentinel-3B will join its twin, Sentinel-3A, which was launched in 2016. This pairing of satellites provides the best coverage and data delivery for Copernicus. The two Sentinel-1 radar satellites and two Sentinel-2 optical satellites operate in a similar way. Sentinel-5P is unique in the Copernicus constellation in that it is a single-satellite mission, but its extremely wide swath covers Earth every 24 hours.

Statement to Parliament: Tailored

Review of Wilton Park: written ministerial statement

I am announcing today the start of a tailored review of Wilton Park, an Executive Agency of the Foreign & Commonwealth Office.

The principal aims of [Tailored Reviews](#) are to ensure public bodies remain fit for purpose, are well governed and properly accountable for what they do.

Wilton Park is an Executive Agency of the FCO, which convenes discreet dialogue on the UK's strategic foreign policy priorities. It has shaped and delivered events since 1946 linking a global network of experts from a range of sectors, including academia, the military, civil society, business, politicians and diplomats.

The Review, the first since 2015, will provide a robust scrutiny of and assurance on the continuing need for Wilton Park – both its function and its form. If this process finds the agency should be retained in its current form and status, it will then consider how Wilton Park can deliver on its core mandate more effectively and efficiently. It will also assess the control and governance arrangements that are in place to ensure that Wilton Park and the FCO are complying with recognised principles of good corporate governance.

In conducting this Tailored Review, officials will engage with a broad range of stakeholders across the UK and overseas, including staff, management and the Board of Wilton Park. These consultations will include participating and sponsor organisations of Wilton Park events as well as partners from across UK government, foreign governments, international organisations, business, academia and the third sector.

The review will follow guidance published in 2016 by the Cabinet Office: '[Tailored reviews: guidance on reviews of public bodies](#)'. The [Terms of Reference for the review](#) can be found on gov.uk.

I shall inform the House of the outcome of the review when it is completed and copies of the report of the review will be placed in the Libraries of both Houses.

Read the [terms of reference for the Tailored Review of Wilton Park](#).

News story: Historic statue of

suffragist leader Millicent Fawcett unveiled in Parliament Square

- Millicent Fawcett, created by Turner Prize-winning artist Gillian Wearing, is the first-ever statue in Parliament Square of a woman
- Statue unveiled in a ceremony attended by Prime Minister Theresa May, Communities Secretary Sajid Javid, campaigner Caroline Criado Perez and the Mayor of London, Sadiq Khan

A statue of suffragist leader Millicent Fawcett has been unveiled in Parliament Square in a ceremony attended by the Prime Minister, Communities Secretary Sajid Javid and the Mayor of London today (24 April 2018).

Following Caroline Criado Perez's campaign, the Mayor of London commissioned Turner Prize-winning artist Gillian Wearing OBE to create the statue. It is funded through the government's £5 million Centenary Fund and is the first-ever monument of a woman, and the first created by a woman, to stand within the square.

Marking 100 years since some women won the right to vote, the statue was unveiled by 3 generations of women – Jennifer Loehnis, a descendant of Millicent Fawcett; campaigner and activist Caroline Criado Perez; Deputy Mayor for Culture and Creative Industries, Justine Simons; and 2 schoolgirls, from Millbank Academy in Westminster, and Platanos College, Lambeth.

Prime Minister, Theresa May, said:

I would not be here today as Prime Minister, no female MPs would have taken their seats in Parliament, none of us would have the rights and protections we now enjoy, were it not for Dame Millicent Garrett Fawcett.

The struggle to achieve votes for women was long and arduous and Dame Millicent was there from the beginning. For decade after decade, in the face of often fierce opposition, she travelled the country and the world, campaigning not just for the vote but on a whole range of issues.

I want to thank Gillian Wearing for creating a beautiful and fitting tribute to Dame Millicent and to everyone involved in making this happen.

For generations to come, this statue will serve not just as a reminder of Dame Millicent's extraordinary life and legacy, but as inspiration to all of us who wish to follow in her footsteps.

Communities Secretary, Sajid Javid, said:

Today's unveiling is a landmark moment, a celebration of the legacy of the women that fought tirelessly for equal rights and transformed our nation for the better.

The statue of Millicent Fawcett, now facing Parliament, will remind us all of how we must keep up the fight against inequality and injustice in everything we do.

Mayor of London, Sadiq Khan, said:

Today is an historic day. Finally, Parliament Square is no longer a male-only zone for statues. From the very first week of my Mayoralty, I supported Caroline Criado Perez's campaign to put up a statue of a woman in Parliament Square, and I'm so proud that the day of its unveiling is now upon us.

This statue of Millicent Fawcett, the great suffragist leader, will stand near Mahatma Gandhi and Nelson Mandela – 2 other heroic leaders who campaigned for change and equality. There couldn't be a better place to mark the achievements of Millicent Fawcett, in the heart of UK democracy in Parliament Square.

I hope this statue sparks further change across society – driving forward gender equality and inspiring women and girls across the capital and the UK. My huge thanks to Caroline, for her passionate campaigning and to Gillian Wearing – who has brought Millicent Fawcett and her legacy to life through this magnificent work.

Caroline Criado Perez also spoke at the ceremony, talking about her campaign for the statue, which included a change.org petition signed by almost 85,000 people. Following the endorsement of the campaign from both the Prime Minister and the Mayor, the Suffrage Statue Commission selected Turner Prize-winning artist Gillian Wearing to create a statue of suffragist leader Millicent Fawcett.

Artist, Gillian Wearing OBE, said:

I want to take this opportunity to thank everyone who has worked on this sculpture and plinth. It was so heart-warming to see the care and attention that went into the work. I can only say I am truly grateful.

I hope those viewing the work will be able to appreciate this along with being able to celebrate Millicent Fawcett along with all the other suffrage supporters and activists also honoured.

Campaigner, Caroline Criado Perez OBE, said:

When I went for a run in Parliament Square two years ago and first noticed that all the statues there were of men I could never have imagined quite how perfectly the dream would eventually be realised.

Gillian Wearing's design is everything I could ever have wanted – and more – for the first statue of a woman in Parliament Square.

I'm so grateful to everyone who worked so hard on this campaign to make this happen. It's been a brilliant team effort, and one I'm so proud to have played a part in.

The statue unveiling is one of the many events taking place this year to celebrate the centenary year of suffrage. The Government Equalities Office has allocated £5 million to mark the centenary of voting rights for women in 2018. This fund will support projects that raise awareness of this crucial milestone, educate young people about its significance, and inspire people to build a diverse political system that reflects the nation it serves.

So far, over £600,000 has been awarded from the Women's Votes Centenary Grant Scheme to standout schemes across the country, including projects that train women to become leaders in their communities, and events that celebrate the lives of prominent suffragettes.

The unveiling of the Millicent Fawcett statue is a major event in the Mayor of London's [#BehindEveryGreatCity](#) campaign, which celebrates the role of women in the capital. Alongside Fawcett, the names and portraits of 59 women and men who campaigned for women's suffrage are inscribed on the plinth.

The unveiling ceremony was presented by BBC broadcaster Mishal Husain and featured poet Theresa Lola, performances from the cast of *Sylvia* and the Suffragist Singers and an adaptation of Millicent Fawcett's 1918 Victory Speech* by award-winning actress, Helen McCrory OBE.

The statue was commissioned by the Mayor of London with 14-18 NOW, Firstsite and Iniva to commemorate the centenary of the Representation of the People Act 1918, through the government's national centenary fund.

To mark the day of the statue unveiling, Google Arts & Culture is collaborating with its creator, the artist Gillian Wearing and the Mayor of London to show the spirit and stories of the suffrage campaigners on a new online platform at g.co/roadtoequality.

Further information

*Adapted for a transcript of Millicent Fawcett's Victory speech in March 1918 published in *The Common Cause* (Newspaper first published in 1909, that supported the policies of the National Union of Women's Suffrage Societies, "the organ of the women's movement for reform'.) *Looking Backwards*, by Mrs. Henry Fawcett

Previous press releases

- 2 April 2017, [Millicent Fawcett to be honoured with first statue of a woman in Parliament Square](#)
- 13 April 2017, [Gillian Wearing announced as artist of Suffragist statue](#)
- 19 September 2017, [Green light for Millicent Fawcett statue in Parliament Square](#)
- 27 December 2017, [Sadiq Khan launches #BehindEveryGreatCity gender equality campaign](#)
- 6 Feb 2018, [Mayor marks centenary of women's suffrage](#)

Background on government's centenary fund

In 2017, the government announced a £5 million Centenary fund to coincide with International Women's Day.

To date, £1.2 million has been awarded to 7 Centenary Cities and towns in England with a strong suffrage history to help inspire a new generation with the legacy of women's campaign for equal representation. Manchester has chosen to spend a portion of their funding to commemorate Emmeline Pankhurst, as only the second woman alongside Queen Victoria, to be represented with a statue in the city. The 7 Centenary Cities are Bolton, Bristol, Leeds, Leicester, London, Manchester, and Nottingham.

In February, the Minister for Women and Equalities Amber Rudd announced £1.5 million would make up a Women's Suffrage Centenary Grant Scheme for bids of up to £125,000 for projects running throughout the centenary year to encourage communities to celebrate and to help make modern politics more accessible. Over 600,000 has been awarded to stand out scheme across the country including projects that train women to become leaders in their communities, and events that celebrate the lives of prominent suffragettes.

A new [Celebrating Votes for Women](#) web page will help people find out more about getting involved in centenary events through the year. The page includes links to information about the history of the suffrage movement and details of how to apply for a grant, as well as an events hub to show what is happening across the country.

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Please use this number if you're a journalist wishing to speak to Press Office

0303 444 1209

Social media – MHCLG

Twitter – <https://twitter.com/mhclg>

Flickr – <http://www.flickr.com/photos/mhclg>

LinkedIn – <http://www.linkedin.com/company/mhclg>

Press release: Queen approves appointment of President of the Family Division

Her Majesty The Queen has been pleased to approve the appointment of The Rt Hon Sir Andrew McFarlane as the President of the Family Division from 28 July 2018. This appointment follows the retirement of Sir James Munby on 27 July 2018.

Sir Andrew McFarlane was called to the Bar in 1977 and took Silk (Queen's Counsel) in 1998. He was appointed a Recorder in 1995, a Deputy High Court Judge in 2000 and a High Court Judge in the Family Division in 2005.

He co-wrote Children Law and Practice which coincided with the enactment of the Children Act 1989 in 1991, and he has been noted for his speeches and lectures around the country on all aspects of child law.

His expertise resulted in his selection as the only legal member of the Family Justice Review (Norgrove) and as the judicial representative for the current sector-led review financed by the Nuffield. The review is due to report this summer.

Sir Andrew has held or holds leadership posts including Chairman of the Family Law Bar Association, Chairman of the Clergy Discipline Commission and President of the Clergy Disciplines Tribunals. He was Family Division Liaison Judge for the Midland circuit until his appointment as a Lord Justice of Appeal in 2011 where he is the Supervising Lord Justice for Family Cases.

The appointment

The appointment of the President of the Family Division was made by Her Majesty The Queen on the advice of the Prime Minister and the Lord Chancellor following the recommendation of an independent selection panel chaired by Lord Burnett of Maldon, the Lord Chief Justice.

The other panel members were:

- the President of the Supreme Court
- Baroness Hale
- three lay Judicial Appointments Commissioners namely, Professor Lord Kakkar (Chairman of the Judicial Appointments Commission), Dame Valarie Strachan and Mr Andrew Kennon

The President is the Head of the Family Division of the High Court of Justice and may sit as of right in the Court of Appeal, the High Court and the Family Court either alone or as part of a panel. He is also Head of Family Justice, Head of Probate, President of the Court of Protection and chairs both the Family Procedure Rule Committee and Family Justice Council.

The exercise

This selection exercise was run under the relevant sections of the Constitutional Reform Act 2005 as amended by the Crime and Courts Act 2013.

In accordance with section 70 of the Constitutional Reform Act 2005, as amended by the Crime and Courts Act 2013, the panel determined the selection process to be followed. As required by the Crime and Courts Act 2013, the Lord Chancellor was consulted as part of the selection process.

In accordance with s.10 (3) of the Senior Courts Act 1981, the selection exercise was open to all applicants who satisfy the judicial-appointment eligibility condition on a 7-year basis, or are judges of the Supreme Court of the United Kingdom, Court of Appeal, or High Court.