

[News story: Civil news: improving quality of family advocacy online claims](#)

Changes have been made to CCMS to help improve the quality of the online claims you make under the Family Advocacy Scheme (FAS).

The idea is to make it more likely that your claim will not be rejected, so avoiding the need for work to be resubmitted.

How will the changes work?

Improvements are being made to CCMS to enforce fee scheme rules for hearings claimed under FAS. These mean that it will no longer be possible to claim:

- FAS hearing and bolt-on activities within the same category of work
- above allowed amounts per case

An example would be where a claim for a third advocates' bundle for an interim hearing is claimed. Where this happens CCMS will now display an error message and will not allow the bill to progress.

CCMS will also prevent issues such as claiming for:

- an interim hearing and final hearing advocates' bundle on the same day
- over-claiming of Counsel conference fees

Check before claiming

Counsel and providers may need to check with another where court bundles are being claimed to ensure the correct information is entered.

In the event of issues, the first action should be to liaise with the instructed parties on a case. This is preferable to calling the Legal Aid Agency to check who has claimed the bundle.

[Press release: HM Land Registry moves forward with digital conveyancing](#)

Buying and selling your home without the need for paper deeds is one step closer today as the Government approves changes to the Land Registration Rules that will further enable digital land registration.

The changes, which will come into effect on 6 April 2018, are central to HM Land Registry's ambition to become the world's leading land registry for speed, simplicity and an open approach to data which it outlines in its new [Business Strategy 2017 to 2022](#).

Chief Executive and Chief Land Registrar Graham Farrant sets out the changes to the way HM Land Registry will provide services to its customers including allowing for fully digital conveyancing documents with e-signatures.

Working closely with its customers, and launching a public consultation on the changes last year, HM Land Registry plans to use digital technology to make conveyancing simpler, faster and cheaper while enhancing the integrity and security of the register against threats from cyber-attacks and digital fraud. The rule changes will allow HM Land Registry to introduce fully digital conveyancing documents such as mortgages and transfers, in response to customers' needs.

Chief Executive and Chief Land Registrar Graham Farrant said:

Our customers are central to everything we do and we want to make dealing with us quicker and simpler by providing more services through digital technology. These changes are an important enabler for our digital transformation and I want to thank our customers for their positive responses to the consultation.

Changes were required to the Land Registration Rules 2003, with the revocation of the Land Registration (Electronic Conveyancing) Rules 2008 and the Land Registration (Proper Office) Order 2013, in order to allow HM Land Registry to continue with its digital transformation programme, and modernise and simplify its services.

The changes will benefit customers by allowing HM Land Registry to build new and more flexible statutory services that have been called for by the industry, and other electronic services will improve the assistance offered to them throughout the application process.

HM Land Registry will be contacting customers in the coming weeks to explain any changes that will affect the way they submit applications, though these are expected to be minimal, and will only affect a small number of customers.

Notes to editors

1. Read the [Government response](#) to the consultation for proposals to amend the [Land Registration Rules 2003](#).
2. HM Land Registry's mission is to guarantee and protect property rights in England and Wales.

3. HM Land Registry is a government department created in 1862. It operates as an executive agency and a trading fund and its running costs are covered by the fees paid by the users of its services. Its ambition is to become the world's leading land registry for speed, simplicity and an open approach to data.
4. HM Land Registry safeguards land and property ownership worth in excess of £4 trillion, including around £1 trillion of mortgages. The Land Register contains more than 25 million titles showing evidence of ownership for some 85% of the land mass of England and Wales.
5. For further information about HM Land Registry visit www.gov.uk/land-registry.
6. Follow us: on Twitter [@HMLandRegistry](https://twitter.com/HMLandRegistry), our [blog](#), [LinkedIn](#) and [Facebook](#).

Contact

[News story: Committee on Radioactive Waste Management \(CoRWM\) recruiting new Chair](#)

CoRWM provides independent scrutiny and advice to UK government and devolved administration ministers on the long-term management of radioactive waste, including storage and disposal. The committee's primary task is to provide independent scrutiny on the UK government's and Radioactive Waste Management Ltd's high profile programme to deliver geological disposal, together with interim storage, for higher activity wastes.

The role of the CoRWM Chair is high profile and the Chair may be required to appear before Parliamentary Select Committees. The Chair is also the committee's main point of contact with stakeholders and will represent the committee's views to both broadcasting and written media (where required).

The Chair will be appointed for a single term of 4 years, renewable for a further term at the discretion of the Secretary of State.

Further information and details of how to apply are available on the public appointments website:

<https://publicappointments.cabinetoffice.gov.uk/appointment/chair-24/>

The closing date for applications is 23:00 on 19 February 2018.

[Press release: PM meeting with US Secretary of State Rex Tillerson: 22 January 2018](#)

The Prime Minister attended a part of the National Security Adviser's meeting with the US Secretary of State Rex Tillerson at 10 Downing Street today.

They discussed the continuing depth and breadth of the special relationship.

They agreed on the importance of the international community coming together to counter Iran's destabilising regional activity, and the Prime Minister reiterated the UK's commitment to the Iran nuclear deal.

[Press release: CMA provisionally finds Fox/Sky deal not in the public interest](#)

Following a referral from the Secretary of State for Digital, Culture, Media and Sport, the Competition and Markets Authority (CMA) has been investigating the deal on two grounds: media plurality and commitment to broadcasting standards.

The CMA has provisionally found that Fox taking full control of Sky is not in the public interest due to media plurality concerns, but not because of a lack of a genuine commitment to meeting broadcasting standards in the UK.

The media plurality concerns identified mean that, overall, the CMA provisionally concludes that the proposed transaction is not in the public interest.

Further detail is set out below.

Media Plurality

Media plurality goes to the heart of the UK's democratic process and as such is given protection in law.

The CMA has provisionally found that if the deal went ahead, as currently proposed, it is likely to operate against the public interest. It would lead

to the Murdoch Family Trust (MFT), which controls Fox and News Corporation (News Corp), increasing its control over Sky, so that it would have too much control over news providers in the UK across all media platforms (TV, Radio, Online and Newspapers), and therefore too much influence over public opinion and the political agenda.

The MFT's news outlets are watched, read or heard by nearly a third of the UK's population, and have a combined share of the public's news consumption that is significantly greater than all other news providers, except the BBC and ITN.

Due to its control of News Corp, the Murdoch family already has significant influence over public opinion and full ownership of Sky by Fox would strengthen this even further.

While there are a range of other news outlets serving UK audiences, the CMA has provisionally found that they would not be sufficient to moderate or mitigate the increased influence of the MFT if the deal went ahead.

Broadcasting standards

The CMA's investigation also examined a range of evidence to understand whether Fox, Sky and the MFT have a genuine commitment to broadcasting standards in the UK. Here, it has provisionally found that Fox taking full control of Sky is not likely to operate against the public interest.

Its investigation has provisionally concluded that, overall, Fox has a genuine commitment to broadcasting standards in the UK. It is an established broadcaster here, having held licences for over 20 years. The CMA took account of the policies and procedures Fox has in place to ensure broadcasting standards are met.

It found that while there were issues with the compliance arrangements at Fox News when it was broadcasting its unedited simulcast international feed into the UK, this did not outweigh the detailed and effective policies and procedures that Fox has in place in relation to its UK focused channels.

The CMA also provisionally found that Sky has a good record in this regard, consistently complying with broadcasting regulation. It also has comprehensive and effective policies and procedures in place to ensure broadcasting standards are met.

Its investigation took account of the fact that before 2012 there were serious shortcomings at the MFT controlled newspaper the News of the World, which had failed to comply with both press standards and the law.

However, News Corp has subsequently put in place processes and procedures to address these. The CMA has provisionally found that, since then, its newspapers' record of compliance with press standards does not raise concerns.

The investigation also considered the recent allegations of sexual harassment against Fox News employees in the United States.

While these are serious, the CMA has provisionally found that these are not directly related to the attainment of broadcasting standards and do not call into question Fox's or the MFT's commitment to broadcasting standards in the UK.

Anne Lambert, Chair of the independent investigation Group, said:

Media plurality goes to the heart of our democratic process. It is very important that no group or individual should have too much control of our news media or too much power to affect the political agenda.

We have provisionally found that if the Fox/Sky merger went ahead as proposed, it would be against the public interest. It would result in the Murdoch family having too much control over news providers in the UK, and too much influence over public opinion and the political agenda.

Our in-depth investigation also considered whether the deal would be against the public interest regarding broadcasting standards. Due to their existing track record in the UK, and the range of policies and procedures the companies involved have in place to ensure broadcasting standards are met, we did not find public interest concerns in this regard.

Next steps

The CMA has now set out a series of potential options for addressing these problems identified in its [public remedies notice](#).

It also now welcomes responses from interested parties to its [provisional decision](#) and proposed [possible remedies](#), including in view of the announcement by Fox on 14 December 2017 that it had agreed the sale of certain assets, including its interests in Sky, to The Walt Disney Company.

These will be carefully considered before the CMA's report is finalised and provided to the Secretary of State for Digital, Culture, Media and Sport by 1 May 2018. He will then make the final decision on the proposed deal.

Notes to 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. On 20 September 2017 the Secretary of State for Digital, Culture, Media and Sport referred the proposed deal to the CMA for investigation under the Enterprise Act 2002 (Protection of Legitimate Interests) Order 2003.

The CMA appointed an inquiry group – formed of independent panel members with a variety of backgrounds – to investigate, decide and report on the question set out in the reference.

3. The inquiry group has until 1 May 2018 to provide the Secretary of State its final report. The final decision regarding the questions addressed in the CMA's report will be made by the Secretary of State following receipt of the report.
4. There is now a 3-week consultation period on the provisional findings, during which time anyone may make submissions to the CMA. Submissions should be made to FoxSky.Submissions@cma.gov.uk and received by Tuesday 13 February 2018. There is a 2-week consultation period on the notice of possible remedies. Submissions on this should be made to FoxSky.Submissions@cma.gov.uk and received by Tuesday 6 February 2018.
5. The CMA's [case page](#) sets out an explanation about its process, including the steps followed, the submissions received, hearings held, documents published, and upcoming deadlines.
6. Fox is a Delaware corporation, listed on the NASDAQ Global Select Market. It is a global media company and currently holds approximately a 39% stake in Sky. Sky is a public company, listed on the London Stock Exchange. Like Fox, News Corp is a Delaware corporation listed on the NASDAQ Global Select Market. News Corp owns 100% of News UK and Ireland Limited (News UK was previously known as News International). Its portfolio includes The Times, The Sunday Times, The Sun and The Sun on Sunday, all their respective websites and a number of UK radio networks including TalkSport and Radio UK.
7. The Murdoch Family trust (MFT) is the largest shareholder of Fox and News Corp, holding approximately 39% of shares in each.
8. Fox announced on 14 December 2017 it had agreed the sale to Disney of certain assets including its interests in Sky. It also announced it was continuing its proposed acquisition of the shares in Sky it does not own. Should both acquisitions be completed successfully Disney would assume full ownership of Sky, including Sky News. The sale to Disney will itself be subject to regulatory scrutiny and it is unlikely to be completed until after the CMA inquiry has concluded. It is therefore uncertain whether, when or how that transaction will be completed. As such, the CMA's analysis of the Fox/Sky transaction cannot take it into account in its assessment of the transaction but implications of the Disney transaction in relation to remedies is considered in the notice of possible remedies.

Media queries should be sent to: press@cma.gsi.gov.uk or journalists can call 020 3738 6191 or 07774 134814.