

Press release: Opticians merger could lead to worse deal for some customers

The Competition and Markets Authority (CMA) has been carrying out an [initial investigation](#) (phase 1) into the merger of the companies, which are both retail optician chains with stores located throughout the UK.

As part of its initial investigation, the CMA has looked at more than 200 local areas where Vision Express and Tesco Opticians both have stores. The CMA has identified 3 local areas where Vision Express would not face sufficient competition after the merger, which could lead to price increases or a worsening in the quality or choice of the products and services on offer in-store. These areas are Barrow-in-Furness in Cumbria; Helston in Cornwall; and Ryde on the Isle of Wight.

Adam Land, CMA Senior Director and decision maker in this case, said:

Opticians provide a vital service for millions of people in the UK and it is therefore important that any competition concerns are addressed. In this case, we have looked carefully where Vision Express and Tesco Opticians compete at present and identified 3 areas of the country where we believe this merger could result in a worse deal for eye care customers.

Vision Express now has the opportunity to offer undertakings to address the competition concerns identified by the CMA. If Vision Express does not offer undertakings, or if the undertakings offered do not sufficiently address the concerns that the CMA has identified, the merger will be referred for an in-depth phase 2 investigation.

All information relating to the merger is available on the [case page](#).

Notes for 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. The Reference Test: under the Enterprise Act 2002 (the Act) the CMA has a duty to make a reference to phase 2 if the CMA believes that it is or may be the case that a relevant merger situation has been created, or arrangements are in progress or in contemplation which, if carried into effect, will result in the creation of a relevant merger situation; and the creation of that situation has resulted, or may be expected to result, in a substantial lessening of competition within any market or markets in the United Kingdom for goods or services.
3. Under the Act a relevant merger situation is created if 2 or more enterprises have ceased to be distinct enterprises; and the value of the

turnover in the United Kingdom of the enterprise being taken over exceeds £70 million ('the turnover test') or as a result of the transaction, in relation to the supply of goods or services of any description, a 25% share of supply in the United Kingdom (or a substantial part thereof) is created or enhanced ('the share of supply test').

4. The CMA's duty to refer the merger for a phase 2 investigation under the Act is not exercised whilst the CMA is considering whether to accept undertakings (if offered) in lieu of a reference. Vision Express has until 5 October 2017 to offer undertakings to the CMA that might be accepted by the CMA. If no undertakings are offered and accepted, then the CMA will refer the merger.
5. All the CMA's functions in phase 2 merger inquiries are performed by inquiry groups chosen from the CMA's panel members. The appointed inquiry group are the decision-makers on phase 2 inquiries. The CMA's panel members come from a variety of backgrounds, including economics, law, accountancy and/or business. The membership of an inquiry group usually reflects a mix of expertise and experience (including industry experience).
6. The full text of this decision will be placed on the merger [case page](#) as soon as is reasonably practicable.
7. Enquiries should be directed to the Press Team, on 020 3738 6191.
8. For information on the CMA see our [homepage](#), or follow us on Twitter [@CMAgovuk](#), [Flickr](#) and [LinkedIn](#). Sign up to our [email alerts](#) to receive updates on merger cases.

[News story: Science Minister announces non-executive Board members of UK Research and Innovation](#)

The 12 non-executive members of UK Research and Innovation (UKRI) Board have today (28 September 2017) been announced by Science Minister, Jo Johnson.

Over the coming months the Board will work with the UKRI Chair, Chief Executive and the executive team to ensure the successful formation and launch of UKRI, as well as the strategic direction of the organisation. This will include advising the Secretary of State on the allocation of research and innovation budgets, including the Industrial Strategy Challenge Fund.

Science Minister, Jo Johnson said:

UKRI has a pivotal role in our future as a knowledge economy. This is an exceptionally strong board that will ensure the UK's world

leading research system stays at the frontier of science and innovation for decades to come.

Sir John Kingman, interim UKRI Chair said:

UKRI's Board brings together an extraordinary array of brilliant scientific and business leaders. Together with the emerging executive team led by Mark Walport, we will be superbly equipped to ensure the new organisation delivers on the great opportunities it has.

A key task for the Board will be to ensure the strengths of the Research Councils, Innovate UK and Research England are preserved and built upon, and maximise the value and benefits from the government's investment of over £6 billion per annum in research and innovation.

The Members of the Board:

[News story: ACT for Youth](#)

Designed to teach 11-16 year olds how to act in the unlikely event they are caught in a gun or knife attack, the ACT for YOUTH campaign reinvents the successful 'Run, Hide, Tell' public information films for a new generation.

Kids will be taught to RUN if they are able to, HIDE if they are not, and TELL police of the threat only when it is safe to do so. They will also be advised to warn others about an on-going threat, and crucially told NOT to stop and use their mobiles phones until they are safely away from danger.

The three-phase communications and education plan will launch publicly today, Thursday 28 September 2017, and will be supported across policing and government, with the hope that Run, Hide, Tell will eventually make up part of the PSHE, (Personal Social Health Economic), curriculum of formal education at schools and colleges

All previous Counter Terrorism (CT) messaging has been aimed at adults, but following extensive research with children and young people, security experts from the National Counter Terrorism Security Office (NaCTSO) have created age appropriate safety advice to engage and empower a younger audience.

They have also teamed up with key partners such as the NSPCC, Childline and Educate Against Hate, to help and support parents who are understandably anxious about discussing such a topic with their children.

We appreciate that talking to young people about terrorism can be scary, for parents and children alike,” said the National Lead for Protective Security, Deputy Assistant Commissioner Lucy D’Orsi.

But the atrocities in London and Manchester have sadly resulted in some of the youngest victims of terror this country has ever seen, and if we are able to teach children to act in a way which could potentially save their lives then it is our responsibility to do so.

We are particularly concerned when we see people – young and old – using their mobiles to film scenes when they should be moving away from the danger. The recent incident in Parsons Green is a good example of this.

Our research showed that many young people think filming would be a good thing to provide evidence for police. We must get them to understand that the priority must be their safety.

John Cameron, head of NSPCC Helplines, said:

Since April, Childline has already received more than 300 contacts from young people anxious about terrorism, so we know it’s a child welfare issue that is impacting on their emotional wellbeing.

Adults can help a child by listening to their worries, reassuring them these events are rare, and teaching them to Run, Hide, and Tell.

Although these conversations might be difficult, the spate of devastating events means that they cannot be brushed under the carpet and we all have a duty to help every child stay safe.

Through a collaboration with News UK, Counter Terrorism Police have enlisted the support of celebrities and commissioned the creation of a ‘Run, Hide, Tell emoji’ for phase one, with the hope that this ground-breaking communications campaign will reach out across social media platforms, television, radio and news outlets to give young people that life-saving information.

The first of two new Run, Hide, Tell videos features TV personalities Bear Grylls and Ant Middleton, Leicester City footballer Jamie Vardy, England rugby star James Haskell and double Olympic gold medalist Jade Jones, who will tell young people that when caught up in a terror attack: “Real champions run.”

This will be followed in October by a second, longer, video, designed to explain the ‘Run, Hide, Tell’ messaging, and also teach children how to spot and report suspicious behavior or suspicious items.

Later phases of the campaign will then launch this messaging across youth groups such as the Scouts, Guides and Cadets, before finally being made part of the PSHE curriculum of formal education at schools and colleges.

Speech: “It is clear that the threat facing civilian aviation has not diminished.”

Thank you Mr President and may I thank Secretary-General Liu and Ambassador Aboulatta for their briefings, which were both informative and I thought contained some important recommendations for us all to take note of. So thank you for those.

A year ago, this Council met to pass the first ever resolution on the terrorist threat facing civil aviation. Through that unanimous adoption, we showed our joint resolve to protect our citizens from a shared and escalating threat. And we started a global discussion on how together we would improve aviation security standards.

So we welcome the good work that followed over the past twelve months. It speaks volumes of the momentum created by resolution 2309 that the Global Aviation Security Plan was completed two years ahead of the original schedule. And we look forward to the plan being endorsed later this year by the International Civil Aviation Organisation Council. We believe that this council should then add its endorsement and call to action.

And yet, one year on from 2309, it is clear that the threat facing civilian aviation has not diminished. Instead, it has evolved. You will recall the plot to smuggle bombs inside laptops which led the UK and US to ban larger electronics from cabins of aircraft for several months this year. Or the failed attack at Sydney’s international airport just two months ago – a sophisticated effort that would have claimed hundreds of innocent lives.

These are but two examples of the terrorists’ unrelenting desire to bring death and destruction to our skies. These plots should remind us all we cannot relent in our efforts to keep our citizens safe.

Instead, we need to maintain the resolve we found a year ago. This means each and every ICAO Member State turning their commitment to the Global Aviation Security Plan into real action. Lip-service is simply no deterrent. Those who believe that their airports and carriers are somehow immune from terrorist targeting are not just wrong, they’re also irresponsible, shirking both their obligations and the common responsibility we have to protect the global industry and our peoples who use it. Aviation is part of the lifeblood of our economies.

We recognise that implementing ICAO's agreed standards – and doing so on the basis of recommended practices, validated by robust verification – is a challenge for some, no matter how good their intentions. So let us support each other through technical co-operation and capacity development as spelled out in 2309. The UK has recently tripled its budget for such assistance and has an active programme working alongside dozens of fellow Member States. I call on other Council members to do the same.

And it's not just ICAO members who can do more. I see three ways for the United Nations, together with ICAO, to work better to ensure that aviation security remains at the top of the agenda, getting the attention it requires.

Firstly, threats to aviation security should be routinely included in UN reporting related to terrorism. We encourage the Al-Qaeda and Daesh Monitoring Team to make sure that they ask states about threats to aviation security and that these are properly assessed in the team's regular reporting.

Second, we welcome the close cooperation that has developed between CTED and ICAO. These two agencies already work together closely and are developing a cooperation agreement. We encourage continued collaboration on CTED country assessments, but also on sharing information, research, and analysis about the emerging trends in terrorist threats to civil aviation, and also cutting-edge ways that they can be mitigated.

And third, we encourage the new UN Office of Counter Terrorism to work closely with ICAO and make capacity-building in aviation security a priority. We encourage them together to identify and deliver appropriate capacity-building projects in line with the actions and tasks set out in the Global Aviation Security Plan.

In conclusion, Mr President, the first anniversary of 2309 is a moment in part to reflect on what has been achieved over the last year. But it needs to be far more than that. It should also be a moment when we ask how we sustain the momentum created by 2309, by putting into practice what we have committed to on paper.

Thank you.

[Press release: Giant funnel bins to tackle North West motorway litter](#)

Highways England is providing the bins as part of a North West initiative to tackle littering after over 40,000 sacks of rubbish had to be collected from motorways in the region last year – an average of 108 sacks for every mile of motorway.

The window-height bins are being installed at around a dozen service areas in the North West over the next few months, and the first bins have been installed at Lymm Services by the M6 in Cheshire this week.

Two different sizes of bins are being installed – ranging from 1.8 to 2.2 metres high – next to Give Way lines at the exit to service area car parks. The bins allow both car and lorry drivers to reach the half-a-metre-wide funnels from their vehicles' windows.

Paul Elliott, Service Delivery Team Leader at Highways England, said:

We're committed to tackling littering on our network and are installing the funnel bins at service areas in the North West. The bins offer another opportunity for road users to dispose of their rubbish responsibly within service areas.

Our teams of workers do a fantastic job removing litter from motorways every year but we'd much rather they were able to spend more of their time carrying out maintenance work.

The new giant funnel bins will make it much easier for drivers to get rid of their litter as they won't need to leave their vehicles, and I'd urge drivers to either use the bins on the network or to take their litter home with them.

It costs taxpayers an estimated £40 for each sack of litter collected from motorways – roughly the same cost as fixing a pothole.

Litter poses a risk to other drivers if it lands on windscreens, causes a threat to wildlife and leads to flooding if drains become blocked so litter picking is regularly carried out across the network.

Rubbish has to be collected close to fast-moving traffic – putting workers at risk – and lane closures are often needed, causing needless disruption to drivers.

Paul Cooper, 46 from Bolton, has been collecting litter from motorways in the North West for 19 years as part of his job as a maintenance worker for Balfour Beatty Mott MacDonald. Paul's other duties include filling potholes, repairing safety barriers and clearing drains. He said:

I think most drivers who sling litter out their windows don't really think about what they're doing, and that someone like me has to come along and clear up after them. It tends to be worst on slip roads or where there's standing traffic, as that's when drivers seem to decide to have a clear out of their cars.

There's always an element of risk when you're working on the network as you're near traffic so my message to drivers is please stop dropping litter and use the bins or take it home with you

instead.

The bins are being installed as part of a North West litter initiative, which also involves trialling new signs with the message 'Workers lives are put at risk picking your litter' and carrying out extra litter picking patrols to help tackle the issue.

CCTV footage has also been released which shows a lorry driver discarding an oil container at the side of the M62 near Rochdale after pulling over to the hard shoulder to add oil to his vehicle's engine. The footage is available to watch at <https://youtu.be/5kw0Y-kBuAI>.

General enquiries

Members of the public should contact the Highways England customer contact centre on 0300 123 5000.

Media enquiries

Journalists should contact the Highways England press office on 0844 693 1448 and use the menu to speak to the most appropriate press officer.