

Time is running out for businesses to prepare

- Government to urge business leaders to step up preparations for an Australia-style exit
- 'Time is running out' campaign will encourage businesses to 'act now' for guaranteed changes at the end of the year
- EU Exit Operations (XO) Cabinet committee moves to daily rhythm

Business leaders will be urged not to get caught out by new rules at the end of the transition period by the Prime Minister and Chancellor of the Duchy of Lancaster (CDL) Michael Gove this week.

In a call with business leaders the Prime Minister and Michael Gove will discuss preparations and ask businesses to step up their efforts to get ready for the changes and opportunities in just over 8 weeks.

The call to action comes as the government launches the latest phase of its public information campaign emphasising the increased urgency to prepare for the end of the UK transition period with the strapline "Time is running out".

HMRC are today also writing to 200,000 traders who trade with the EU to set out the new customs and tax rules coming into place and how to deal with them.

This follows a clear direction from the Prime Minister that the whole UK must prepare to leave the EU on Australia-style terms based on simple principles of global free trade, after the European Council conclusions last week left us without a basis to continue trade negotiations if there was no fundamental change in the EU's negotiating position.

The Chancellor of the Duchy of Lancaster Michael Gove said:

At the end of this year we are leaving the EU Single Market and Customs Union and this means there are both new challenges and new opportunities for businesses. Make no mistake, there are changes coming in just 75 days and time is running out for businesses to act.

It is on all of us to put in the work now so that we can embrace the new opportunities available to an independent trading nation with control of its own borders, territorial waters and laws.

The government is also redoubling its own efforts to get ready for the end of the year with Michael Gove ordering the XO Cabinet Committee to convene five times per week as of today. He will chair the 150th meeting of the operations committee in COBR next week.

The government has already published the Border Operating Model which gives traders the clarity they need to prepare for new rules, announced £705m of investment in jobs, infrastructure and technology at the border, and provided £84m in grants to grow the customs intermediary sector.

Recognising the impact of coronavirus on businesses' ability to prepare the UK has also taken the decision to introduce new border controls in three stages up until 1 July 2021. However, the focus of the X0 committee is now firmly on making sure businesses are ready for the changes and opportunities ahead.

Business Secretary Alok Sharma said:

With just 75 days until the end of the transition period, businesses must act now to ensure they are ready for the UK's new start as an independent trading nation once more. There will be no extension to the transition period, so there is no time to waste.

There will be a guaranteed set of changes for which businesses need to prepare for, so I urge all businesses across the country to check gov.uk/transition to see what action they need to take.

Businesses have a crucial role to play in ensuring a smooth transition, and the Government will be there to support them through this change every step of the way.

The UK is leaving the EU's Single Market and Customs Union at the end of the year and there are some definite actions businesses need to take now. These actions are required whether we end up with Australian or Canadian-style trading arrangements.

- If you sell goods to the EU you must prepare for new customs procedures. Visit GOV.UK to check duties and customs procedures for exporting your goods worldwide from 1 January 2021.
- If you travel to the EU for work purposes you will need to check if you need a visa or work permit and apply if necessary.
- If you employ overseas nationals you will need to prepare your business for the implementation of the new immigration system. From 1 January 2021, if you want to hire anyone from outside the UK, including from the EU, you must be a Home Office licenced sponsor.
- If you are a UK business or organisation that receives personal data from contacts in the EEA, you may need to take extra steps to ensure that the data can continue to flow legally at the end of the transition period.
- If you provide services in the EU, you must ensure that your qualifications are now recognised by EU regulations to be able to practice or service clients in the EU.

Businesses can get a personalised summary of the actions they need to take by using the simple tool on gov.uk/transition.