

Update on Star Pubs & Bars' compliance with PCA investigation recommendations

The Pubs Code allows a brewing pub company to protect its route to market when a tenant chooses to go free of tie by including a stocking requirement in its Market Rent Only (MRO) tenancies. This means a tenant who takes the MRO option may still be required to stock some of the pub company's products. But the stocking requirement must be reasonable, and the tenant must be able to buy those products from any supplier.

In June 2019, the PCA launched an investigation into the use of the stocking requirement by Star Pubs & Bars (Star), which is part of the Heineken group. The PCA found that Star had failed to comply with the Pubs Code by using unreasonable stocking terms in certain proposed MRO tenancies. The findings were published in October 2020 and can be read in full [here](#).

In addition to a financial penalty, the PCA made eight recommendations to Star outlined on page 31 to 33 of the report. These were designed to ensure Star's proposed stocking requirements comply with the Pubs Code and address harm to tenants from any non-compliant stocking terms proposed since the Code came into force in 2016.

Star's Action Plan for complying with the PCA's recommendations was updated in August 2022 and can be read [here](#). Most actions are now reported as closed. The Action Plan shows the steps Star has taken to ensure it can demonstrate evidence-based compliance with the Code. Such compliance is to be supported by effective operational systems and independent assurance within Star, such as through introducing monthly 'Compliance Cabinets' in Star's management system.

In summary, recommendation 3 required Star to review its MRO offers that were subject to negotiation or arbitration to identify any non-compliant stocking requirements and make new compliant offers to tenants. 76 tenants were affected and 32 have now concluded their MRO tenancy or are in the process of doing so. Other tenants have chosen to stay tied.

Recommendation 8 required a similar review of MRO tenancies already in the market, and for Star to offer to amend any non-compliant stocking requirements at no cost to the tenant. 17 tenants were affected and 14 have now concluded changes to their MRO tenancy or are in the process of doing so.

In all affected MRO cases, Star reduced the amount of Heineken UK product the pub must stock. The keg stocking requirement was either equivalent to or a reduction for the tenant on the previous requirement based on a percentage of taps that must stock Heineken UK products. In most cases, the cask and packaged brand stocking requirements were removed. It was also clarified in tenant agreements that stocking obligations fall away if Star sells the pub

Further information about Star's compliance with recommendations 3 and 8, and

examples of the improved terms, can be read [here](#).

The PCA continues to monitor Star's compliance with recommendations 3 and 8 while agreements are concluded. Star has informed the PCA that where the tenant has not responded to contact, it is taking steps to treat the matter as closed. In the small number of cases where this applies, the PCA is monitoring Star's handling to ensure it is fair and open with tenants.

Star tenants who have any questions about the investigation recommendations can contact Star's Code Compliance Officer, Lynne Winter at pubscode@starpubs.co.uk or the PCA team at office@pubscodeadjudicator.gov.uk.

End

Minister for the Armed Forces **statement on the UN Peacekeeping** **Mission in Mali**

West Africa is an important region for the United Kingdom and our allies across Europe. And the UK is strongly committed to supporting the UN to deliver its peacekeeping commitments around the world. That is why since 2018 we had been supporting the French-led counter-terrorism mission in Mali with CH-47 Chinook helicopters under Operation BARKHANE and more recently, since 2020, through the deployment of a Long Range Reconnaissance Group as part of the UN's MINUSMA peacekeeping mission.

The House will be aware, however, that in February, President Macron announced the drawdown of French troops in Mali and was joined in that announcement by all other European nations, as well as Canada, that were contributing to the French-led Operations BARKHANE and TAKUBA. In March, Sweden announced that it would be leaving the UN's MINUSMA mission.

Today, Mr Speaker, I can announce that the UK contingent will also now be leaving the MINUSMA mission earlier than planned.

Mr Speaker, we should be clear that responsibility for all of this sits in Bamako. Two coups in three years have undermined international efforts to advance peace. On my most recent visit last November, I met with the Malian Defence Minister and implored him to see the huge value of the French-led international effort in his country.

However, soon afterwards, the Malian Government began working with the Russian mercenary group Wagner and actively sought to interfere with the work of both the French-led and UN missions. The Wagner group is linked to mass human rights abuses. The Malian government's partnership with Wagner group is

counterproductive to lasting stability and security in their region.

Mr Speaker, this Government cannot deploy our nation's military to provide security when the host country's Government is not willing to work with us to deliver lasting stability and security.

However, our commitment to West Africa and the important work of the UN is undiminished. We've been working closely with our allies to consider options for rebalancing our deployment alongside France, the EU and other like-minded allies. On Monday and Tuesday next week, Mr Speaker, I will join colleagues from across Europe and West Africa in Accra to co-ordinate our renewed response to instability in the Sahel.

This will be the first major gathering in support of the Accra Initiative – a West African-led solution focussed initially on preventing further contagion of the insurgency into Cote d'Ivoire, Ghana, Togo, Benin and Niger and tackling the growing levels of violence in Burkina Faso as well as Mali – making this a very timely conference indeed.

And of course, Mr Speaker, it is not just the UK military that will remain committed in West Africa – the UK will continue its commitment to Mali and the Sahel through our humanitarian, stabilisation and development assistance, working in close coordination with partners.

Nor, Mr Speaker, is this a reduction in our commitment to the United Nations. The UK remains an important contributor of troops through Operation TOSCA in Cyprus, and staff officers across several missions, and provide training to around 10,000 military, police and civilian peacekeepers from a range of countries annually. We remain the fifth largest financial contributor and will continue to drive reform in New York. Indeed we are working with New York on developing a pilot – to be delivered through the British Peace Support Team based in Nairobi – to develop the capacity of UN troop contributing nations across Africa.

Mr Speaker, we will of course co-ordinate with allies as we drawdown from Gao and have been sharing our plans with them over recent months. The Army will be issuing orders imminently to reconfigure the next deployment to drawdown our presence. We are leaving the MINUSMA mission earlier than planned and are, of course, saddened by the way the Government in Bamako has made it so difficult for well-meaning nations to remain there.

The work of our troops has been outstanding, and they should be proud of what they've achieved there. But through the Chilcott Report and our wider experience in Iraq and Afghanistan, we – like so many allies – are clear that the military instrument should not be deployed on counterinsurgency or countering violent extremism missions unless there is a clear and compelling commitment towards political progress.

We will work quickly with allies in the region and across Europe to support the Accra Initiative to deliver security, stability and prosperity in West Africa. Our commitment to that region is undiminished.

EU-US-UK Joint Statement on global food security and Russia sanctions: 14 November 2022

The world faces acute food and nutrition challenges. Conflict, climate change and the lasting impacts of COVID-19 are having devastating effects on local and global food systems and the people who rely on them. Russia's unprovoked aggression against Ukraine has significantly worsened these challenges and vulnerabilities.

The European Union, the United States of America and the United Kingdom, alongside other G7 members and our international partners, are at the forefront of global efforts to address food insecurity that is affecting millions of vulnerable people in developing countries, whilst also driving up living costs in our own countries.

We have always been clear that the target of our sanctions is Russia's war machine and not the food or fertiliser sectors. To that end, we have provided clarity to industry and partners. This includes the [UK's publication of a General Licence](#), the [US General Licence 6B](#); as well as [updated and detailed EU guidance](#). These provisions make clear that banks, insurers, shippers, and other actors can continue to bring Russian food and fertiliser to the world.

We call on our global partners, and on the actors, industries and services involved in agricultural trade, to take note of these provisions; to act in accordance with them; to bring Ukrainian and Russian food and fertiliser to meet acute demand; and to continue to advance the accessibility of food to all.

We reiterate our call on all countries to demonstrate their support for the Black Sea Grain Initiative. We call on the parties to the Initiative to extend its term and scale up its operations to meet the evident demand. And we reiterate our support for other efforts by the United Nations to facilitate access to food and fertiliser in global markets.

Overall, we are united in our commitment and resolve to address food insecurity. We are working to meet humanitarian needs, keep food and fertilisers moving, provide emergency funding, improve resilience, and to accelerate the transition to sustainable food systems to withstand future challenges. We are taking action alongside partners to mobilise the international community, including through the UN-led Global Crisis Response Group (GCRG) on Food, Energy and Finance, the G7 Global Alliance for Food Security (GAFS), the Roadmap – Call to Action and the EU-led Solidarity Lanes.

[Foreign Secretary statement: Direct flights between Tel Aviv and Doha for the World Cup – 14 November](#)

News story

The Foreign Secretary has welcomed an agreement between Qatar and Israel to allow direct flights between Tel Aviv and Doha for the World Cup.



Foreign Secretary James Cleverly said:

The UK congratulates Israel and Qatar for reaching an important deal to open direct flights between Tel Aviv and Doha for the World Cup.

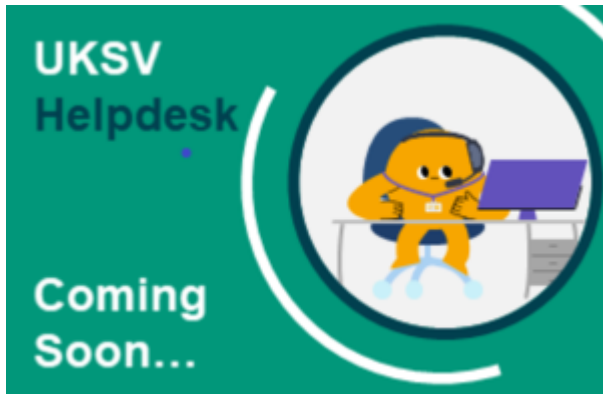
We welcome the commitment that this will benefit football fans in both Israel and the Occupied Palestinian Territories, and foster stronger people-to-people links across the Middle East.

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[New UKSV Helpdesk service: Contact details and launch dates](#)

News story

The current Enquiry Centre service for all vetting queries will be replaced by a new UKSV Helpdesk service by the end of 2022.



UKSV left MOD to become part of Cabinet Office in April 2020 and this move to our own in-house enquiries and complaints service is a key element in completing our transition away from legacy MOD services.

We can now share more information about the timeline for the changeover as well as the contact details for the new UKSV Helpdesk service. The new email contact details should be used from Monday December 12 2022 and not before. The current Enquiry Centre details on the gov.uk [Contact Us](#) page remain valid until that date and will be updated once the changeover has taken place.

Please note that there will be an email-only service for an interim period between the closure of the current Enquiry Centre phone lines and the launch of the full UKSV Helpdesk telephone service in early 2023.

UKSV Helpdesk contact details: email service from December 12

The contact address for the new UKSV Helpdesk is uksv-helpdesk@cabinetoffice.gov.uk and you should start to use this address for all email enquiries from Monday December 12. This includes those enquiries which are currently sent to the UKSV-TechSupport-Grp@mod.gov.uk mailbox.

Key dates to be aware of:

Friday, December 8, 16:00: The Enquiry Centre phone service closes.

- The lines will be deactivated following close of business at 4pm on December 8.
- The current email enquiry service will continue to operate from the MOD mailbox UKSV-ContactUs@mod.gov.uk and UKSV-TechSupport-Grp@mod.gov.uk until December 12, when this service will also close.
- Any enquiries which are received into the MOD mailboxes by December 12 will be actioned before the mailboxes finally close on December 29.

Monday, December 12: The new UKSV Helpdesk email service will launch.

From this date onwards, all new enquiries and any replies to ongoing enquiries should be sent to the new Helpdesk mailbox uksv-helpdesk@cabinetoffice.gov.uk

Thursday, December 29: The UKSV-ContactUs@mod.gov.uk and UKSV-TechSupport-Grp@mod.gov.uk MOD mailboxes will be deactivated.

There will be an automatic response giving advance notice of the mailbox closure, and anyone emailing these addresses from 12 December will be prompted to forward their enquiry to the new Helpdesk mailbox.

The email-only service is an interim measure during the period of transition and the new Helpdesk phone service will launch during the first quarter of 2023. The new UKSV Helpdesk will offer a modern, multi-channel digital service for customers, sponsors and applicants to communicate and engage with UKSV, making use of new systems and technology to create a positive customer experience.

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