

Press release: Pubs Code Adjudicator data – six months on

From 21 July to 21 January, the Enquiry Line set up by the Pubs Code Adjudicator (PCA) to provide information about the Pubs Code has received 435 enquiries. 91% of the enquiries were from tied pub tenants or their representatives.

The top issues raised by callers were:

In the same period the PCA also received 121 referrals for arbitration, 42 more since November 21st. The top issues that have been referred are:

- whether a full response had been given by a pub-owning business to a request for an MRO Proposal
- duties of the pub-owning business in relation to Rent Assessment Proposals

Mr Newby said:

Calls are continuing to be received by the PCA at a high rate and referrals for arbitration are still rising. This is a very significant level of engagement from tied pub tenants.

I am receiving a great deal of information and I am building a good picture of what is happening in the industry and the issues to prioritise but to strengthen that picture more information is helpful.

If I am to take action on Code-related issues it needs to be evidence-based and I would encourage tenants to come forward with that evidence where they believe they have experienced inappropriate practices. I would urge them to contact the Enquiry Line confident that their identities will be protected.

He added:

The figures I have released today also demonstrate the scale of the task for the PCA. I am working with my team to deal efficiently and effectively with the referrals. In recent weeks I have increased my office resources to support this work and I expect some of the early cases to be completed shortly.

I am committed to resolving all arbitrations without undue delay. However, some are complex cases and as the legislation is new, many are the first of a kind.

They cannot be completed overnight and each party must be given an opportunity to make their case. Individual cases and the requirements of the parties will be different in each case. There can be no one size that fits all in terms of the length of time a case will take.

Mr Newby said he had also held a wide range of meetings with tenants, their representatives and stakeholder organisations:

A major part of my role is to raise awareness of the new rights and protections tied pub tenants have under the Pubs Code and to encourage compliance from the industry.

I have held a wide range of meetings to spread the message and the vast majority of responses I have received have been positive and encouraging. I am always willing to meet interested parties who wish to engage constructively and support the PCA's mission to create a fair and lawful environment for tied pub tenants.

Notes to editors: The Pubs Code came into force on 21st July 2016. Its two key principles are that there should be fair and lawful dealing by pub-owning businesses in relation to their tied tenants and that tied tenants should be no worse off than if they were free of tie.

The Pubs Code Adjudicator is responsible for promoting and enforcing the Code. The PCA Enquiry Line is open Monday to Thursday, 9:30am to 5pm and Friday, 9:30am to 4pm on 0800 528 8080. Fact sheets explaining the Pubs Code are available on the [PCA website](#)

For further information contact Sheree Dodd office@pca.gsi.gov.uk

[The number of people forced to sleep rough on our streets is spiralling – John Healey](#)

John Healey MP, Labour's Shadow Secretary of State for Housing, commenting on the latest rough sleeping statistics released today, said:

"It is a national scandal that in England in the 21st century the number of people forced to sleep rough on our streets is spiralling upwards – and this is only the tip of the iceberg.

"These figures are a terrible reminder of the consequences of Conservative Ministers' seven years of failure on housing.

"The number of people sleeping rough fell under Labour but has more than doubled since 2010, and has risen every year under the Conservatives.

"This is a direct result of decisions made by Conservative Ministers: a steep drop in investment for affordable homes, crude cuts to housing benefit, reduced funding for homelessness services, and a refusal to help private renters.

"Ministers' long-promised housing white paper will fall at the first hurdle if it does not set out how they will end the national shame of rough sleeping, as Labour has committed to do."

This is a significant and welcome U-turn from the Prime Minister – Keir Starmer

Keir

Starmer MP, Labour's Shadow Secretary of State for Exiting the European Union, commenting on

the Government's announcement that they will publish a White Paper, said:

"This is a significant and welcome U-turn from the Prime Minister.

"Labour has repeatedly called for the Government to publish a plan for Brexit before Article 50 is triggered and we made clear Labour would table amendments on this to the Article 50 Bill.

"This U-turn comes just 24 hours after David Davis seemed to rule out a White Paper, and failed to answer repeated questions from MPs on all sides of the House.

"The Prime Minister now needs to confirm that this White Paper will be published in time to inform the Article 50 process, and that it will clear up the inconsistencies, gaps and risks outlined in her speech."

Carl Sargeant thanks Armed Forces Expert Group

At the 13th meeting of the group, Carl Sargeant said the multi-agency group provided valuable insight into the needs of the Armed Forces community and ways in which service delivery might be improved.

Carl Sargeant said:

“We are committed to providing high quality services to the Armed Forces community in Wales. The Expert Group brings together people with detailed knowledge of issues which affect this community in a number of areas such as health, education and housing.

“Our meetings generate positive discussion between all members and I am keen to continue this, identifying issues of interest to the Armed Forces Community that we can address collaboratively.”

Press release: South East lawyers asked to help raise competition law awareness

Around 260 law firms headquartered in the South East of England will be encouraged to share the Competition and Markets Authority's (CMA) easy-to-use competition law information with their small and medium-sized enterprise (SME) clients.

The information is intended to help SMEs recognise anti-competitive practices, comply with competition law and report suspicions of illegal anti-competitive activity.

The approach is part of the CMA's ongoing drive to boost awareness of, and compliance with, competition law, following the launch of its [competing fairly in business: advice for small businesses](#) materials and the South East of England is the latest region chosen as a target for the awareness-raising drive.

The consequences of breaking competition law can be very serious. Recently, a

managing director of an online poster supplier was [disqualified](#) for 5 years after the company was found to have been part of an online price-fixing cartel.

Furthermore, businesses can be fined up to 10% of their annual turnover and people involved in cartels can face up to 5 years in prison.

But [research](#) shows that businesses' understanding of competition law in the area is low:

- only 59% of businesses surveyed in the South East of England knew that price-fixing can lead to imprisonment
- only 33% of businesses surveyed in the South East of England knew that it is unlawful to set the price at which others can re-sell their product
- only 7% of businesses surveyed in the South East of England had run training sessions on competition law

The CMA has also commissioned [further research](#) which revealed that most small businesses have a shared ethical sense that certain anti-competitive practices, such as price-fixing, are unfair or wrong and want to do the right thing.

Ann Pope, CMA Senior Director of Antitrust Enforcement, said:

The victims of anti-competitive activity can often be other businesses, so knowing what illegal behaviour looks like and how to report it can help small and medium-sized businesses protect themselves.

The potential consequences of breaking the law are very serious. That is why it is important that all businesses know what to look out for and report suspected breaches to the CMA.

Legal advisers to SMEs are ideally placed to help raise awareness of competition law among their clients.

Nikki Burns, Chair of FSB Thames Valley said:

It's good to see the CMA raising awareness among small businesses of the rights they possess under competition law. Anti-competitive practices harm many small businesses across the Thames Valley and the South East.

We must create an environment where all small firms recognise and report anti-competitive behaviour and are not afraid to speak out. Helping small businesses identify all the forms that anti-competitive practices can take is a good starting point.

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. For CMA updates, follow us on Twitter [@CMAgovuk](#), [Flickr](#), [LinkedIn](#) and [Facebook](#).
2. Media enquiries should be directed to Simon Belgard (simon.belgard@cma.gsi.gov.uk, 020 3738 6472).