

Open letter to members of the Showmen's Guild

From: Ann Pope
Senior Responsible Officer

Case ref: 50243

22 August 2017

Dear Guild member

PROPOSED CHANGES TO THE RULES OF THE SHOWMEN'S GUILD OF GREAT BRITAIN

I am writing to you about our investigation into the rules of the Showmen's Guild of Great Britain (the Guild).

You may be aware of the CMA's investigation which looked at whether some of the Guild's rules were a problem under competition law – we made a public statement in December 2016,¹ which was reported in the World's Fair newspaper.

Our main concerns have always been over a small number of the Guild's rules and how these affect competition, in particular rules that protect Guild members from increased competition within existing Guild fairs and from rival fairs.

We are aware that some Guild members were concerned that the CMA's investigation could harm the Guild itself. I can assure you that the CMA has no intention – and never has – of undermining the role of the Guild. We recognise the many benefits that the Guild brings to its members, and, in turn, how members can pass on these benefits to fairgoers. We know that, amongst other things, the Guild contributes to

- keeping fairs safe
- ensuring that fairs are well-organised
- maintaining standards of consumer protection.

¹ <https://www.gov.uk/government/news/funfair-body-alleged-to-have-broken-competition-law>

We have been struck by how the leaders of the Guild have represented the Guild's members throughout the investigation and by how much they want to do the right thing in terms of members, fairgoers and compliance with competition law.

Therefore, we are very pleased that the Guild's leaders have offered to make changes to the rules which we feel would address our concerns. The changes do not involve removing any rules, although some of them will be altered. We think the changes will benefit Guild members, other showmen and the fairgoing public. Importantly, the changes will maintain the role of the Guild.

We understand, that before offering to make these changes, the Guild's leaders have already spoken to members to make sure they generally support them.

As members of the Guild, we would like to hear what you have to say before we decide whether to accept them. That's why we are consulting on these changes. Unless we receive any new information that makes us think the changes won't satisfy our concerns, then we hope to be able to accept the changes by late Autumn.

By accepting them, the CMA would close its investigation into the rules of the Guild. This means there would be no legal decision that the Guild has broken competition law nor any fine to be paid. The Guild would then need to confirm the changes to its rules by no later than 31 January 2018. If the Guild does not confirm that the rules have been changed, the CMA can re-open its investigation.

Our consultation is now live and runs from 22 August 2017 to 3 October 2017. A copy of the consultation document, which explains in more detail what all the changes are, can be found [here](#). A short 1-page summary and video can be found [here](#).

We very much want to hear from members of the Guild as to what you think about these rule changes. If you have particular concerns, we want you to tell us.

You can contact us by

- speaking to the CMA's Contacts team on 020 3738 6000 (9.30am to 6pm, Monday to Friday)
- emailing us at ProjectCrystal-External@cma.gsi.gov.uk
- writing to us: George Brenton, Competition and Markets Authority, Victoria House, Southampton Row, London, WC1B 4AD.

Yours faithfully

Ann Pope
Senior Responsible Officer