

March 2016 Quarterly CCO meetings

Record of the Groceries Code Adjudicator (GCA) Quarterly Meetings with Code Compliance Officers (CCO)	
Location	Purpose of meeting
GCA, Victoria House, Southampton Row, London	Quarterly progress meetings
Attendees	
<p style="text-align: center;">GCA</p> <p style="text-align: center;">Christine Tacon (CT)</p> <p>Angela Latta (AL) – <i>All except J Sainsbury, Tesco, Waitrose and Asda</i></p> <p>Helen Gordon – Lee (HGL) – <i>All except Lidl, Marks & Spencer and Iceland</i></p> <p>Matthew Sabourin (MS) – <i>All except Aldi, Lidl, Iceland, WM Morrison and Co-Operative Group</i></p> <p style="text-align: center;">Jenny Hendricks (JH) – <i>Aldi only</i></p>	<p><u>7 March 2016</u></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Aldi Stores Limited – Jonathan Ward <p><u>8 March 2016</u></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Lidl UK GmbH – Tim Belser • Iceland Foods Limited – Duncan Vaughan <p><u>14 March 2016</u></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Wm Morrison Supermarkets plc – Steven Butts • Co-Operative Group Limited – Phil Wilsmer <p><u>21 March 2016</u></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • J Sainsbury plc – Susannah Parden and Daffyd Pugh • Tesco plc – Emer Kelly • Waitrose Limited – David Roberts <p><u>22 March 2016</u></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Asda Stores Limited – Alex Simpson • Marks and Spencer plc – Max Gillibrand and Robert Steadman
Key Points Raised	
<p>GCA update</p> <p><u>New GCA staff</u></p> <p>Angela Latta is due to leave the GCA on 24 March, and will be replaced by Matt Sabourin, a DEFRA secondee who will start working with the GCA on 21 March as the new Head of Policy & Operations.</p> <p>James Courtenay recently left the GCA, and Steve Davies, a DECC secondee, has accepted the position of Policy and Project Manager.</p> <p><u>2016 GCA survey</u></p> <p>This year's survey has been updated following feedback from the in-depth interviews which took place in December/January. Changes have been made to the questions covering direct suppliers' experience of training (and the types of training they would like to see), and also reasons people gave for not telling the GCA of issues arising.</p>	

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Update at later CCO meetings: A further change this year is that information on potential breaches is being collected, broken down by retailer. A print out of the questionnaire and access to a soft copy (not live) was sent to CCOs to see the question set. The survey closes 29 April and retailers were encouraged to send reminders to their suppliers complete the survey closer to the end date.

BIS review of the GCA

The BIS review of the GCA will cover the period from when the GCA was established up to 31 March 2016. BIS and DEFRA are working together to establish the approach to be taken by the review. The review will cover how the GCA meets its statutory functions. BIS has indicated that it will also publish a 'Call for Evidence' to address other questions, including whether the GCA remit should be extended. BIS is continuing to work on both the Review and the Call for Evidence.

EFRA Committee: 3rd Report - Farmgate Prices

The GCA gave evidence to EFRA Committee on 2 December 2015, for its Inquiry on Farmgate Prices. The Committee's report has called for an urgent review of the GCA remit. The GCA noted that this issue would likely be covered in the BIS Call for Evidence on the role of the GCA.

GCA guidance: statutory guidance and compliance monitoring

An internal compliance monitoring exercise has been completed. This will be shared with the CCOs along with a piece on post investigation monitoring (including how the GCA will review that recommendations are being followed).

GCA core guidance documents are being reviewed. The statutory guidance on investigations and enforcement will be updated to take into account coming into force of the GCA's power to impose financial penalties. The arbitration guidance will also be reviewed: charging rates for cost recoverable activity will be separated from the arbitration guidance and published separately. The rates will be revised to a full cost recovery model.

The Top 5 issues will be reviewed, taking into account the latest GCA evidence base and the 2016 survey results. These will be officially communicated at the conference, and discussed with CCOs in advance.

GCA conference and other events

This year's conference will be held on 27 June at Church House, Westminster. Presentations will finish at 13:30. It is intended that the afternoon will have supplier-focused sessions.

Key Discussion items

Forecasting statement

The GCA will issue a document clarifying the three different types of interpretive publications it uses: guidance, best practice statements and voluntary agreements. The best practice statement on forecasting will be published at the same time.

Feedback on artwork and design: rate cards

The GCA is awaiting two rate cards. These will all be reviewed and direct feedback given to CCOs.

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GCA Levy 2016-17

Work on the levy methodology is ongoing but should be finalised soon. The GCA intends to have a base cost to be shared among all retailers with a variable top up element. The GCA will increase the budget to ensure it has money available to fund future investigations. Invoices can only be issued once the accounts are finalised, which is likely to be in June.

Consultation on better positioning and increased share of shelf space

This will be drafted after Easter. The question sets for retailers and suppliers may be different. Responses to the consultation will be treated sensitively. There will be a published GCA response to the consultation in due course.

CCO progress report:

The CCOs provided hard copies of their quarterly compliance progress reports, which covered the following areas in accordance with the agenda.

- Consumer complaints
- Delays in payments
- Forecasting/Service levels
- Requests for lump sums
- Packaging & Design charges;

The reports were reviewed and discussed.

AOB:

Annual compliance reports

CCOs were asked when their reports were likely to be received.

Keeping GCA updated on any point of contact changes

All CCOs were reminded that this is a statutory requirement and includes phone number and email changes, not just any change of CCO.