



News from the Adjudicator

Edition 5

Welcome from the Groceries Code Adjudicator



This has been another busy three months for me and my team. We continue to work on my top issues at the same time as progressing my investigation and a number of arbitrations as well as the rest of my business-as-usual activities.

The heavy workload means I have had to cut back on speaking engagements but to help meet the requests I regularly receive I have produced a short film explaining key issues. You can take a look at the video [here](#); it is also available for use at conferences or other relevant events. I am also pleased to announce an increase in my team with the addition of a compliance manager.

In recent weeks I have hosted two important meetings at the GCA offices. These were announced at the GCA conference. The first was a workshop on packaging and design for groceries suppliers to the large retailers.

Over the past year I have heard concerns from a number of sources that some of the charges for photography, packaging and design appeared unreasonable. This meeting was a chance for me to hear about them in detail.

The positive news was that the position on packaging for suppliers has improved over the past two years. The choice of retailer-approved packaging supply companies has increased, suppliers have been given more flexibility and they now perceive costs to be reasonable.

However, suppliers did report concerns with artwork and design services. Often they had no choice but to use the retailer's designated supplier. Issues included inefficient processes, high costs compared with what they pay for similar work with other artwork and design houses and frequent design changes. I have now raised these concerns with the Code Compliance Officers and will report on next steps in a future newsletter.

My second meeting was with trade associations in the groceries sector. Top issues were how to work better together to build understanding of what the GCA can do for direct suppliers and what additional support trade associations and similar membership bodies can provide to ensure more suppliers are trained in the Code.

There was a good turnout and we made progress in spreading the message that training is vital for suppliers to understand their rights and have more confidence in their negotiations with retailers' buyers. I showed attendees my short [video](#) on training (available on the [GCA website](#)). Feedback where it has been used has been very positive. The trade associations agreed to do more to promote the need for training in the Code.

My investigation into Tesco plc is now in the final stages. I had originally anticipated that it would take up to 9 months but it has taken slightly longer. My plan is to publish the report in the New Year.

As my next newsletter will be published in 2016, let me wish you all a successful and enjoyable Christmas and New Year.

Christine Tacon

Christine Tacon

Making progress on the Top 5

Close followers of the Adjudicator's work will have spotted that the GCA is currently focusing on four issues. After closing consumer complaints by issuing the best practice statement, the Adjudicator decided to concentrate on making progress on the existing four before adding another.

Expect a strategic review in early 2016 that will take account of information received during the past six months, including the results of a mini YouGov survey to be carried out in December. This way the GCA will ensure it continues to focus on the most pressing issues for suppliers

On the four remaining issues - as well as the previously mentioned developments on packaging and design - the GCA's focus recently has been on forecasting. And we are making progress.

The large retailers have now provided information on how they handle forecasting and compensation for forecasting errors, as set out in the Code, and the Adjudicator has decided to promote a best practice approach to the issue. Discussions are underway with the Code Compliance Officers and we expect to have more to say on forecasting next year.

Meet the CCO

Duncan Vaughan – Code Compliance Office for Iceland – answers News from the Adjudicator's questions this edition. Read [here](#) about his team's role in a fast-moving business and his pride in Iceland's newly announced relationship with suppliers

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2016 Annual Conference

An early notice of the 2016 GCA Conference; please put this date in your diaries. We will be holding the conference at Church House in Westminster on Monday 27th June 2016. Details of the conference programme and timings as well as how to register will be available nearer the time.
