



Welcome from the Groceries Code Adjudicator



As the GCA, I am here to support suppliers who experience issues related to the Groceries Supply Code of Practice (Code) with their designated retailers. I have the power and authority as the independent regulator to effect change. But I must know what is happening; I cannot act if suppliers do not tell me.

A major focus for me in these early days has been to develop ways to increase suppliers' trust that they can raise issues with me and the retailers' Code Compliance Officers (CCOs) in total confidence that their information will be treated confidentially. I want transparency to help dispel the fear of retaliation.

Soon after I was appointed, I raised this issue with the CCOs and they have all told me that their practice has been to maintain confidentiality in discussions with suppliers. However, in such an important area where concerns still persist, it is one thing to say something and another to have it in writing. I am very pleased to say that all the CCOs have formally confirmed to me that they will treat any discussions with suppliers in the strictest of confidence. The CCOs are not part of, and sit outside, the retailers' buying teams.

The CCOs have also confirmed that it will be up to the supplier to determine whether they can disclose any details about the subject matter of their Code-related discussion within their designated retailer. This commitment is now on the [GCA website](#) alongside the most up-to-date contact details for the individual CCOs. Details are also available in my [Code Confident pack](#).

'Tell the GCA' - The new anonymous reporting platform

I have a legal obligation to protect the anonymity of suppliers who bring me information if that is what they wish. Yet, in repeated annual surveys, a significant number still say they would not do so for fear of retaliation. I want to overcome any remaining concern in this area and therefore I am establishing a confidential platform, hosted by an independent third-party, for suppliers to report behaviour by a designated retailer that they believe to be in breach of the Code.

When the platform is operational, suppliers will be able to provide information anonymously and can also choose to continue to correspond with me via a secure post box that protects their identity.

I am working towards having 'Tell the GCA' up and running early in February. Look out for further information on the [GCA website](#).

GCA survey

One of the most important ways for suppliers to tell me what they are experiencing is to complete the GCA survey. I launched the latest annual [survey](#) on 11th January and it is open until 21st February.

Please do take the time to respond before it closes because your responses will help me identify the issues the groceries sector is facing as well as guiding my work over the coming months.

Be as frank as possible and remember your answers can help your business. The GCA survey has made a big contribution to securing progress in previous years and I am hoping to hear from as many suppliers as possible so I can really explore issues widely and deeply.

This year the survey has two innovations. First, I would like to hear from suppliers about examples of where they think the designated retailers are doing a good job. These will help me highlight success and share good practice. Second, after the main survey has closed, I am asking YouGov, who conduct the survey, to carry out some detailed interviews with suppliers on particular issues arising from the findings. If any supplier is interested in taking part in these interviews, please provide contact details at the end of the survey. As with survey responses, any information gathered from these follow-up interviews will be treated with complete confidence.



Mark White

Meet the CCO

Recently appointed CCO Alex Russo, Chief Compliance Officer of B&M Retail, has 25 years of senior leadership in retail across the UK, Europe, Asia and America. He reports good initial team engagement, both internally and with the GCA, and recognises the importance of maintaining a positive balance in providing support and engagement while maintaining his independence in the CCO role. His aims over the next 12 months are to promote the CCO role within B&M, maintain the retailer's zero complaints record and further develop his engagement. He says: "There's lots more to come from B&M."



Contact details for Alex:

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Save the Date – Meet Mark White

On 4th February at 3pm Mark White is holding his first GCA webinar. Join him to hear about his plans for the coming months, how he is working with the regulated retailers and the areas that he is making his priority. There will also be an opportunity to ask questions. Book your place at the webinar by clicking on or scanning this QR Code.



If you would like to get in touch with the GCA and his team to tell him about your experiences, please email Enquiries@GroceriesCode.gov.uk or call 020 7215 6537.