



March 2022

Dear trader/customer

Full customs controls were introduced between the EU (except the island of Ireland) and Great Britain on 1 January 2022. We'd like to thank you for doing so much to prepare for the new rules at the border.

This letter provides information about upcoming changes to the UK's customs systems, and what you need to do to prepare for the change.

## Moving to a single UK customs platform

Our IT systems need to be fit for the future to help to create an environment where businesses can thrive, prosper and take advantage of free trade agreements, supporting our ambitious plans for global trade.

Over the past few years, we have been working with businesses on the Customs Declaration Service, a replacement for Customs Handling of Import and Export Freight (CHIEF) which is now nearly 30 years old. The Customs Declaration Service is a secure platform with flexibility to grow in line with the government's ambitious trade plans to have the world's most efficient customs system by 2025.

Last year, we announced the UK will move all customs declarations from CHIEF onto the Customs Declaration Service. We're now ready for declarants to start moving to the new system, and we wanted to give you more details to help you prepare, whether you make your own declarations or have someone who does this for you.

The CHIEF system will close in two phases:

**Phase one:** After 30 September 2022 the ability to make import declarations will end

**Phase two:** After 31 March 2023 the ability to make export declarations will end

The Customs Declaration Service will serve as the UK's single customs platform, with all businesses needing to declare all imported and exported goods through the Customs Declaration Service after 31 March 2023.

## Preparing to move to the Customs Declaration Service

Adapting to a system change can take time and you'll need to prepare. We're encouraging businesses to work with their software developer to start making the move to the Customs Declaration Service now and take advantage of the help that we can offer.

For more information on how to start using the Customs Declaration Service, go to **GOV.UK** and search for 'Customs Declaration Service'.

## Making import declarations using the Customs Declaration Service

You can ask someone to complete declarations for you. Go to **GOV.UK** and search:

- 'get someone to deal with customs for you'
- 'software developers providing customs declaration software' to find an enabled software provider

## If you use software from a software developer

Your software developer should be working closely with us to prepare for the Customs Declaration Service. This includes updating their applications and letting you know when your business is ready to start using the Customs Declaration Service.

## If you use in-house developed software

Completing an import or export declaration can be complicated. You'll need compatible software to do it. If you already have the correct software, authorisations and skills in place, you can prepare yourself for the move. Go to **GOV.UK** and search 'Customs Declaration Service'.

## If your software is not ready or you do not have the right software

If your supplier does not have software ready to use, or if you plan to submit declarations yourself, go to **GOV.UK** and search 'software developers providing customs declaration software' to contact someone who does.

If you have any questions about the Customs Declaration Service, please contact your Account Manager or Customer Compliance Manager. If you do not have either of these, please use the contact details in the help and support section below to speak to us.

## Help and support

We know the introduction of new systems and rules can be challenging. We'll do everything we can to support you to get things right.

If you still do not feel confident in meeting your customs obligations, please:

- go to **GOV.UK** and search 'import, export and customs for businesses' for guidance on importing and exporting and our trader checklist
- watch our videos and recorded webinars on topics like imports, exports, rules of origin, and import or export declarations – search **@hmrcgovuk** on YouTube

If you still have a question, or you need help with one of our IT systems, please call our Customs and International Trade helpline on 0300 322 9434. The helpline is available from 8am to 10pm Monday to Friday, and 8am to 4pm at weekends.

You can also call this number and choose option one, to access our 24/7 critical care service. Use this service if you need urgent help, for example, if your goods are stuck at the border.

For other ways to contact us about importing, exporting and customs reliefs search for 'imports and exports: general enquiries' on **GOV.UK**.

If you export to the EU, you can contact the export support service team on **GOV.UK** by searching for 'export support service' or call them on 0300 303 8955.

You might also be aware of upcoming changes around safety and security requirements when importing goods from the EU into Great Britain and import requirements for goods subject to sanitary and phytosanitary controls, including meat, dairy, fruit, and vegetables.

We'll write again with more details about what these will entail and how we can support you to prepare. If you have questions about this please check **GOV.UK** guidance or contact us using our helplines above.

Yours sincerely



**Katherine Green and Sophie Dean**

Directors General, Borders and Trade, HMRC