



# 10 years of the CMA

Promoting competitive markets and  
tackling unfair behaviour



The CMA was launched a decade ago to promote competition and tackle unfair practices.

Ten years on, I am very proud of the positive impact that has been delivered for the UK. I am also clear-sighted about the pressing challenges facing the people and businesses of this country, as well as our wider economy.

Over the last decade, the CMA has adapted and evolved to help meet these challenges. We have grown in scale and geography, set up new functions, invested in our capabilities and skills, and focused consistently on being an inclusive employer and great place to work.

2024 also marks a pivotal year for competition and consumer enforcement with the introduction of the Digital Markets, Competition and Consumer Bill. The CMA stands ready to use these anticipated new powers to drive more dynamic digital markets and take even more robust action to protect consumers.

As the CMA enters its second decade, we are better equipped and more determined than ever to stand up for the interests of people and businesses in the UK, as well as to help drive the growth and productivity we all wish to see across our economy.

**Sarah Cardell**  
Chief Executive



The CMA's purpose is to help people, businesses and the UK economy by protecting competition and tackling unfair behaviour.

That purpose is all the more important now, during one of the most disruptive periods in economic history as three major forces combine: growing macroeconomic and geopolitical volatility; a continuous technology revolution; and accelerating climate change.

In that context, we set a new long-term strategy for the CMA in 2023, designed to ensure we are set up to deliver the best outcomes for people, businesses and the UK economy over the years to come.

This includes consistently focusing our actions where competition and consumer protection is most needed: ensuring people have great choice and a fair deal in areas of essential spend; making sure all markets stay open to challengers and innovators; and helping emerging technologies and sectors fulfil their promise of driving rapid, productive, sustainable growth.

Fair, open, effective competition is a tremendously powerful lever to drive innovation, choice, productivity and growth. Indeed, it's a prerequisite. That is why it's the foundation of everything we do and of the impact we deliver for the UK - today and in the future.

**Marcus Bokkerink**  
Chair



# Key numbers

Between 2020 and 2023, the CMA has returned over **£26** in savings to consumers for every £1 spent by UK taxpayers



To date, the CMA has returned at least **£15.6 billion** in consumer savings

Over **1400** cases, projects and investigations launched in the last decade



**DISQUALIFIED**

The CMA has disqualified **28** directors for taking part in illegal activity since 2014



In the last 10 years, the CMA has received over **200,000** pieces of information and enquiries from members of the public



## CMA office locations

As the UK's competition and consumer agency, we represent everyone, which is why we have offices in all 4 nations of the United Kingdom.

- Edinburgh
- Darlington
- Cardiff
- Belfast
- Manchester
- London



## Our tools

CMA teams work across a number of different functions to deliver our important work, these include:



# Major highlights

## 2014 to 2015

- Launch of the CMA
- Secured 9 convictions for £20m pyramid promotional scheme

**OPEN**

## 2015 to 2016

- Fined pharmaceutical companies £45m as part of investigation into the supply of the drug paroxetine – the first ever UK pay-for-delay case
- Secured the first disqualification of a company director for participation in illegal anti-competitive conduct in relation to online sales of posters and frames, including collusion through an algorithm



## 2017 to 2018

- Four major online gambling firms agreed to overhaul how they offer bonus promotions
- Concluded market study into digital comparison tools setting clear ground rules for how sites should behave

## 2016 to 2017

- Concluded investigation into the retail banking market, paving the way for the UK's Open Banking revolution
- Investigation into excessive pricing of phenytoin finds NHS expenditure on the drug had increased from around £2m a year (2012) to around £50m (2013)



New Data, Technology and Analytics Unit launched

## 2018 to 2019

- Announced reforms to tackle the 'loyalty penalty', following a super-complaint from Citizens Advice
- Secured court order requiring viagogo to make changes to business practices in the secondary ticketing market
- Concluded merger inquiry into Fox's proposed acquisition of Sky recommending to the Secretary of State for DCMS that the merger was not in the public interest and recommending divestment of Sky News

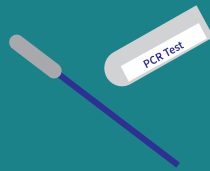
## 2019 to 2020

- Blocked the Sainsbury's/Asda merger after finding it would lead to increased prices in stores, online and at many petrol stations across the UK
- Illumina abandoned anticipated \$1.2bn takeover of PacBio after CMA merger investigation highlighted serious concerns
- Consumer investigation launched into leasehold market, which would lead to thousands of leaseholders being freed from costly contract terms



## 2020 to 2021

- Established COVID-19 taskforce, receiving around 150,000 contacts about coronavirus-related issues, and returning over £200m in refunds for cancelled holidays
- Secured legally binding commitments from Instagram, Facebook and eBay to tackle the buying and selling of fake reviews
- Launched the Digital Regulation Cooperation Forum, bringing together the CMA, ICO and OFCOM
- Market study into digital advertising concluded, which recommended a new pro-competition regulatory regime to govern the behaviour of major platforms funded by digital advertising
- Issued the 'state of UK competition report' – a first-of-its-kind analysis examining how well competition is working across the UK economy
- Following the UK's exit from the EU, the CMA took on additional responsibilities for merger, cartel, and competition enforcement cases that were previously reserved to the European Commission



## 2021 to 2022

- Published final report on the children's social care market, sharing findings and recommendations with UK governments
- Set out measures to ensure a national network of electric vehicle (EV) charge points is in place by 2030, following market study into EV charging
- Imposed fines of nearly £400m on pharmaceutical firms for excessive pricing / anti-competitive arrangements in thyroid, hydrocortisone and anti-nausea medicines
- Revised merger assessment guidelines adopted

Office for the Internal Market launched

Digital Markets Unit launched in 'shadow' form



## 2022 to 2023

- Launched investigations into housing, groceries and fuel to help contain cost-of-living pressures for people across the UK
- Published Green Agreements Guidance, as part of a strategy to help businesses achieve green goals without breaking the law
- Imposed fines of over £2m on firms for fixing the prices fans pay for Rangers FC merchandise
- Meta ordered to sell Giphy following merger investigation, which found it would limit choice for UK social media users and reduce innovation in UK display advertising



Subsidy Advice Unit launched

Microeconomics Unit launched



## 2023 to 2024

- Microsoft/Activision merger cleared following Microsoft restructuring its transaction to exclude the acquisition of cloud gaming rights
- Fined construction firms nearly £60m for illegally colluding to rig bids for contracts involving both public and private sector projects
- Secured commitments from ASOS, Boohoo and George at Asda to be clearer about their green claims, following 'greenwashing' investigation

## 2024 and beyond

- New Digital Markets, Competition and Consumers (DMCC) Bill, set to give the CMA new powers to promote competitive markets and tackle unfair practices



# Our ambitions

## People



### **Ambition: People can be confident they are getting great choices and fair deals**

When competition is weak, the cost is borne by everyone in the form of higher prices, lower quality, reduced choice, and poor incentives for companies to treat customers fairly. Our work helps ensure people are protected and can be confident when they engage with markets. It means people don't feel powerless in the face of large corporations or those who seek to exploit them. That confidence, underpinned by effective markets and strong consumer protection, drives growth across our economy.

From understanding options at an IVF clinic when starting a family, to more transparency and choice in the fuel and food we buy every day. From helping bring down the barriers to getting more homes built, to protecting customers from being misled or pressurised when shopping online. The CMA supports people when and where they need it most.

## Businesses



### **Ambition: Competitive, fair-dealing businesses can innovate and thrive**

Competitive rivalry unlocks the drive for innovation and efficiency, pushing businesses to constantly improve - to develop cutting edge products, optimise customer service, and be more creative and productive.

Without competition, complacency and stagnation can creep in. This doesn't just lead to worse outcomes for customers. Incentives for investors and fair-dealing businesses who play by the rules can also weaken, as the unscrupulous behaviour of a few goes unpunished.

The CMA acts decisively to protect open, competitive market conditions, so that challengers and businesses who play by the rules can innovate and thrive on a level playing field. We enforce competition law, penalising breaches and providing guidance to businesses to help them stay within the rules.

Our work opens up markets to the positive power of disruption and innovation, helping to drive better outcomes for consumers as well as growth across the wider economy.

## UK economy



### **Ambition: The whole UK economy can grow productively and sustainably**

The CMA's continual efforts to promote competitive markets and tackle unfair behaviour mean that efficient and innovative firms are rewarded. Investors can have confidence in a strong, independent competition regime creating a level-playing field for businesses. Consumers can engage in markets without fear of exploitation.

Through all of these outcomes, we foster and protect the conditions for productivity, growth and resilience across the whole UK economy.

We target our efforts at new and emerging markets, where the potential for innovation and growth is the highest. We are also committed to helping accelerate the UK's transition to a net zero economy, through tackling greenwashing and supporting businesses who want to grow and compete sustainably.



**CMA**   
Competition & Markets Authority

