

UK Internal Market Bill becomes law



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The UK Internal Market Act – which has today (Thursday 17 December) received Royal Assent – will protect businesses, jobs and livelihoods by ensuring there are no harmful new barriers to trade between all parts of the UK.

This means that from 1 January businesses can continue to trade seamlessly across all 4 parts of the UK, as they have done for centuries, and ensures the UK's world-leading standards for consumers and workers are maintained, including for food and the environment.

The law will enable the government to boost the UK's economic recovery, increase investment across the whole country, create new jobs and emerge stronger from the pandemic.

Business Secretary Alok Sharma said:

Businesses and government have been crystal clear that we must protect the integrity of our internal market which has allowed us to trade freely between all 4 parts of the UK for centuries, as we seize new opportunities outside the confines of EU law.

Today's law will ensure businesses can continue trading unhindered from 1 January, while upholding the UK's world-leading standards in food, the environment and workers' rights, protecting jobs and helping us build back better from the pandemic.

The end of the transition period will see powers on a wide range of issues flow from the EU to the devolved administrations in Holyrood, Cardiff Bay and Stormont for the first time. This will provide power over more issues than they have ever had before, including over air quality, energy

efficiency of buildings and elements of employment law, without removing any of their current powers.

Minister for the Constitution and Devolution, Chloe Smith MP added:

By passing this act we have secured our vital UK internal Market, underpinning the strong economic foundations that it will provide to businesses and jobs across all 4 corners of the UK; from Belfast to Bolsover and from Barry to Banff.

As the Minister for Constitution, I remain committed to working closely alongside Cardiff Bay, Holyrood and Stormont in implementing this vital act. This legislation will work alongside new ways of engaging that we are developing with the devolved administrations, enhancing transparency and clarity for citizens across the UK.

As a New Year beckons, we can now move forward as a successful and strong United Kingdom with a thriving internal market, seizing the opportunities and meeting the challenges ahead of us together.

The UK Internal Market Act establishes 2 principles (the Market Access Principles) that apply to goods and services, ensuring our shared internal market continues to operate effectively:

the principle of mutual recognition (MR) ensures regulations from one part of the UK are recognised across each of the others

the principle of non-discrimination (ND) supports companies trading in the UK, regardless of where in the UK they are based, by preventing unreasonably discriminatory regulation

The Office for the Internal Market (OIM) will monitor the running of the UK Internal Market. It will provide independent, technical advice to all four administrations and their legislatures and sit within the Competition and Markets Authority (CMA).

The OIM will begin operation later in 2021 following the

necessary appointments process that the Business Secretary will be able to begin from the New Year.

Notes to editors

While the appointments process takes place for the Office for the Internal Market, the government will continue to monitor and protect the UK's internal market in cooperation with the devolved administrations.

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