



Groceries Code  
Adjudicator

# News from the Adjudicator

Edition 7

## Welcome from the Groceries Code Adjudicator



This newsletter comes at an important time for collecting feedback on supplier experiences that will help me in the year ahead.

As in the past two years the GCA has commissioned polling experts YouGov to carry out a comprehensive survey of the groceries sector, most importantly including how well the regulated retailers are complying with the Groceries Supply Code of Practice (the Code).

I see this as a valuable way to measure what progress I am making in changing the culture of the sector and to understand those areas where I should focus my attention. Last year over a thousand direct suppliers took part and this year I am hoping for an even greater response.

If you have already filled in the survey, thank you. But if it is still on your “to do list” please take the opportunity to complete it now or over the coming days. Clicking [here](#) will take you to the link.

I want your feedback on your experience of Code-related issues as well as responses that help me explore developments in training and suggestions of ways to make suppliers more confident about bringing me information.

All your answers are treated in strict confidence; they are collated and analysed by YouGov and respondents are not identified without their prior consent. If you are happy to be identified you can give permission as part of the survey.

This year’s survey follows closely after the Tesco investigation and will be an important source of information for me about current retailer practices and any changes suppliers have experienced over the past 12 months.

### Meetings with suppliers

Following my report on the Tesco investigation I am organising a number of seminars for suppliers. The aim is to explain my findings as well as to give an overview of my priorities and work programme.

The first of these took place in Aberystwyth, North Wales on 4 March; the next will be in [Edinburgh](#) on 14 April with a third planned for [Belfast](#) on 25 April. Click on the links for further information. The GCA Annual Conference in London on 27 June will also cover the investigation findings.



In this edition:

- The Top 5 – Report on Progress
- Meet the CCO – Phil Willsmer, Co-operative Group Limited
- New GCA publication
- Register for the Annual Conference

At each seminar there is an opportunity to ask me questions and to network over lunch. Following the seminar I am available for meetings with suppliers to discuss issues in confidence.

### **GCA office**

There will be a number of changes at the GCA office in the coming weeks. After three years as my Head of Policy and Operations Angela Latta is moving on; Matthew Sabourin is replacing her and joined the team on 21 March. We also have another new member of the team from mid-April: Steve Davies will be joining as Policy and Programme Manager. I am very grateful for all the support Angela has given me in establishing the GCA office and her expert advice in carrying out my work.

I wish you all a happy and successful holiday season.

*Christine Tacon*

Christine Tacon

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## **Progress on the Top 5**



### **Packaging and design**

As I reported in Edition 5 of News from the Adjudicator suppliers told me at the special workshop I held in September that the position on packaging had improved over the past two years. However, I have been pursuing the continuing concern that suppliers have with artwork and design costs, raising the issue with the CCOs and requesting details of their charges.

I now have information from all 10 retailers and will be reviewing this in the coming weeks before deciding what action to take.

### **Forecasting**

This week I have published a best practice statement on forecasting following a review of retailer practice and detailed discussions with the Code Compliance Officers.

I found in my review that retailers adopted a range of approaches and used the word “forecast” in a variety of ways but on the information provided, from March 2016 all retailers appear to be compliant with the Code. As a reminder, the Code deals with compensation for forecasting errors and I have seen evidence that retailers are striving for improvement in the accuracy of their forecasting.

However, I have asked the retailers to consider what they can do to improve the transparency of their communications about forecasting with suppliers to allow suppliers to meet orders and to calculate the full costs of supply.

I have suggested the retailers collaborate more closely with suppliers and regularly review their forecasting performance to ensure that the risks and costs of fluctuations in supply and demand are fairly shared. You can read the full details [here](#).

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## Meet the CCO

Phil Willsmer, Risk Operations Director for Co-operative Group Limited, answers News from the Adjudicator's questions this edition. Read [here](#) about his work to ensure all his buyers have "GSCOP in their DNA". His plea to suppliers is to remember his name and speak to him if the Group is not meeting its obligations under the Code.

### Contact details for Phil

Email: [GSCOP.compliance@co-operative.coop](mailto:GSCOP.compliance@co-operative.coop)

The **co-operative**

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## New GCA publication

The GCA has published a new policy which explains the three main types of publication used to communicate to retailers and others how the Adjudicator interprets particular aspects of the Code. These are: interpretative guidance; best practice statements; and retailer voluntary commitments. Each of these carries a different level of compliance risk, from a retailer perspective. You can find the new policy [here](#).

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## 2016 Annual Conference – Registration is now open



Results of the YouGov survey will be announced at the 2016 GCA Conference on Monday 27 June 2016 at Church House in Westminster. Registration is now [open](#) so please register and I look forward to seeing you there.

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