

Navigating your business through the new customs process

Whether you are importing or exporting, there's nothing more frustrating or costly for businesses right now in our post-EU world than having their products stuck in customs limbo. It can tie up significant amounts of capital and create cash flow problems for companies already struggling to cope with the COVID control measures.

It's a problem that many Haringey businesses are now familiar with and it's one of the most common reasons businesses have for accessing the free BREXIT support Haringey Council are offering in partnership with the trade and regulatory experts at ResilienceHelp.com.

When a product is stuck, it is often detective work to find the reason. It can be the wrong certificate for a food product, the wrong customs code, not applying the rules of origin correctly, differences in enforcement by customs authorities in different countries and unexpected local rules. My advice is to make sure you understand the main requirements of the customs process for your product and go over them with your customs agent,' said Sietske de Groot.

Frictionless trade is a thing of the past. No one likes paperwork, but as businesses continue to try to trade with customers and suppliers inside the European Union, getting it right, and getting it done as cost effectively as possible has never been more essential. Whether you're a large or small business, decisions need to be made on how to approach the customs conundrum. One thing is certain, like death and taxes, it's here to stay for the foreseeable.

Some businesses opt to engage a full service customs broker who will manage the process for them. Others endeavour to handle it in-house which comes with its own set of training considerations. One day courses are offered through commercial export organisations and could be an option for businesses able to afford the time and the expense.

Larger businesses may wish to train someone to be a full-time in-house customs officer. It can take up to 9 months to complete a full customs course but businesses with up to 500 employees and no more than £100 million in turnover can apply for a UK government grant of up to £2,000 to fund the training. The scheme is due to close on 30 June 2021. <https://www.gov.uk/guidance/grants-to-help-small-and-medium-sized-businesses-new-to-importing-or-exporting> There are also funds available to hire a customs agent.

For further information on rules of origin, expert trade and regulatory advice is available through **Haringey Council's Brexit Advice Support Service**, delivered on behalf of the council by Resilience Help. As a business based in the borough, you are able to access up to four hours of expert trade and regulatory advisory support.

To gain access to the Haringey Brexit Business Advice service, contact Paula@resiliencehelp.com