



HFMA UPDATE

by Martin Last,
Director General

The Windsor Framework – more than just movement of goods

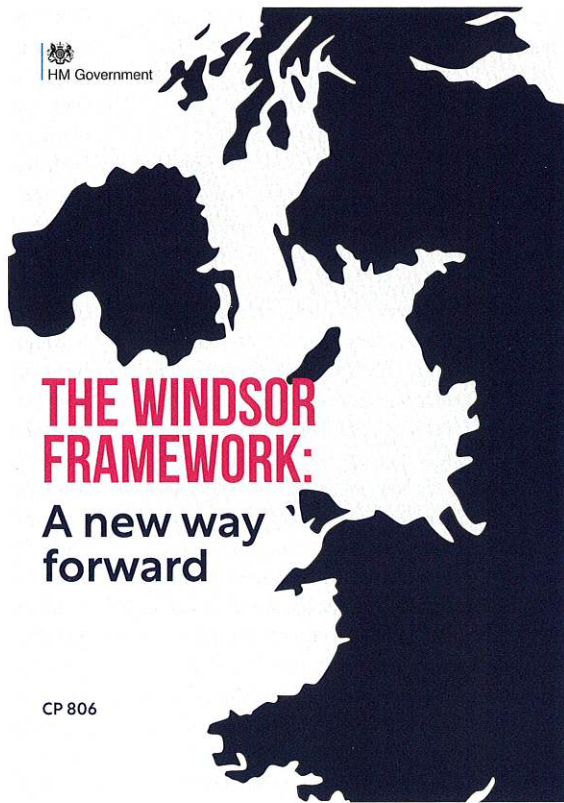
The new Windsor Framework took effect on October 1, 2023 and replaces the Northern Ireland Protocol, which, for two years had been the source of political, economic, and social difficulties in the way it affected goods entering Northern Ireland. The protocol created disrupting links between Great Britain and Northern Ireland that affected governance and trade between the two countries. In short, it did not work.

The Windsor Framework fundamentally provides a new set of arrangements to restore the smooth flow of trade between the UK internal market, will safeguard Northern Ireland's place in the GB Union, and address the democratic deficit that had been created by the Northern Ireland Protocol. It sets out the Government's ongoing commitment to working with and supporting business through this transition and the HFMA is in full consultation on these measures and its implementation through its participation on many relevant Government groups, mainly initiated by DEFRA.

Some changes have been introduced during 2023 already, but the key elements that affect food and food supplements are those that applied from October 1. This created a new internal market system with a 'Green Lane' for goods entering Northern Ireland and applies to internal trade, allowing goods being sold in Northern Ireland to be freed of unnecessary paperwork, checks, and duties, using only ordinary commercial information rather than customs processes or complex



HM Government



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certification requirements. Goods that do not have eligibility will be able to move the goods into Northern Ireland via a 'Red Lane', where stricter requirements will apply.

Through the Windsor Framework, a new system for specifically handling the way to move prepacked retail goods into Northern Ireland now also applies from October 1, 2023. Called the Northern Ireland Retail Movement Scheme (NIRMS), it applies to all retail food and drink entering Northern Ireland. Operators can apply a single General Certificate supported by a packing list for eligible consignments. There will be no requirement for an official vet or plant health inspector to approve documentation. Instead, the goods move under a trader declaration under the authority of the UK competent authority.

Operators need to register for it through the NIRMS scheme registration portal. It is a simple

online procedure to indicate the type of business, the departure and arrival establishments in Northern Ireland and GB, a UK FBO registration number, and contact information. Traders only need to register once and agree to the conditions.

DEFRA are providing training modules on the new requirements and there is financial assistance in the form of retrospective grants for those registered with the Transitional Labelling Financial Scheme, which provides flat rate grants for costs related to additional relabelling as a result. It applies to evidence of those costs from February 27, 2023 to February 28, 2024.

The scheme will open in January 2024 and close late March 2024. There is additional assistance in the form of templates for certificates for various product categories, and the extension of the Movement Assistance Scheme, which reimburses the costs of certification for businesses that cannot use the Green Lane process.

The Windsor Framework and

related schemes are part of the Government's 2025 Border Strategy, which focuses on aligning and advancing protocols for importing goods from countries both inside and outside the EU. This whole strategy will progressively introduce a range of measures with the aim to improve the UK Border controls with safety and security controls in line with new GB controls by integrating technology for goods passing through our borders.

The Border Strategy focuses on the Border Target Operating Model (BTOM), the latest version of which was published on August 29, 2023. This provides for a phased approach, balancing the need for effective management of biosecurity, public health, food safety and security risks. The model will look to work with operators to build the systems and infrastructure needed to create a single UK Trade Window.

There are many changes to how our UK supply chain will work in the future and in a relatively short timescale, which is going to create challenges for industry to prepare and adapt. The HFMA will continue to monitor and engage the relevant authorities to help guide members through these processes and share this through our regular member communications and Technical and Regulatory Working Group.

For more information, visit www.hfma.co.uk or contact me directly at martin@hfma.co.uk

Major milestones:

- January 31, 2024, to introduce health certification on medium and high-risk products, and the removal of pre-notification requirements for low-risk products.
- April 30, 2024, introduce documentary and risk based identify with physical checks on medium and high-risk products. Existing inspections will move from destination to Border Control Posts. This date will also start the process to simplify imports from non-EU countries.
- October 31, 2024, with requirements for Safety and Security declarations for imports into GB from EU or from other territories and application of the UK Single Trade Window will apply.

HFMA membership is vital to ensure that your company keeps abreast of the fast-changing regulatory environment. The HFMA is the UK's best source of information and most effective defender of our industry's interests. To help the HFMA defend your business at this most critical time, contact hfma@hfma.co.uk or call 020 8481 7100.

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