



HM Revenue
& Customs

Customs Standard for Intermediaries launched to raise service quality across sector

A new Customs Intermediaries Standard has been launched to set clear expectations of good practice across the sector.

A certification scheme is in development for intermediaries to prove they adhere to the Standard and to enable traders to make more informed decisions. The certification scheme is due to be introduced in 12 to 18 months.

Published as a Publicly Available Specification (PAS) on the British Standards Institution (BSI) website on 2 June, the Standard sets out a shared baseline of good practice covering areas such as due diligence, systems and processes, customer service, transparency, complaints handling and continued professional development.

It is sponsored by HMRC and developed collaboratively with industry representatives and the BSI, marking the first time best practice for customs intermediaries has been formally brought together in a single, sector wide framework.

Customs Intermediaries play a critical role in the UK's border and trade system, supporting businesses to meet customs requirements and move goods efficiently. A call for evidence in 2022 and subsequent public consultation in 2023 found that the quality of service across the sector was mixed, prompting the Government's commitment to develop a standard to improve consistency across the sector.

Rather than introducing new regulations, the Standard focuses on how services are delivered and what customers should reasonably expect. It does not create new legal obligations or change intermediaries' existing responsibilities under customs law.

Alex Pienaar, HMRC Director of Customs Policy and Strategy, said:

“Excellent standards across the customs intermediary sector are essential to maintaining a smooth and efficient border system, which benefits our traders and supports economic growth.

“Traders will be able to make informed choices about who they work with thanks to this new Standard, which has been developed in full partnership between industry and HMRC. It sets out a clear, shared view of good practice, helping customs intermediaries to deliver their vital role in the border system, whilst maintaining agreed standards under a clear framework.

“I'd like to thank the many businesses and representative bodies across the industry who have worked closely with us to help shape it.”

Anna Doherty, Industry Chair of HMRC's Joint Consultative Committee and Customs Practice Director at Chartered Institute of Exports and International Trade, said:

“In an increasingly complex customs environment, the Standard sets out a practical and credible benchmark for consistent quality in customs declaration services, which will help facilitate smoother cross-border trade and support efforts to grow the UK economy.

"By setting clear expectations for due diligence, training, systems and transparency, the standard supports the consistent, high-quality submission of customs declarations and reinforces the critical role intermediaries play in enabling compliant and efficient international trade.”:

Emma Coker, from Menzies LLP and member of the Customs Intermediary Standard Development Steering Group, added:

“The Customs Intermediary Standard is the first step towards setting best practice for the sector, using trusted trader legislation as a baseline and incorporating customs specific clauses to enhance the compliance framework of the business.

“It is designed to facilitate strong partnerships, define clear roles and responsibilities of parties involved in the submission of customs declarations and promote transparency.

“The aim of the customs Standard is to give recognition to customs intermediaries who lead the way in providing a best-in-class service.”

What this means for you

Customs intermediaries

Customs Intermediaries are encouraged to

- use the Standard as a benchmark to review systems, processes and customer service
- be open with customers about due diligence - asking for detailed and accurate information is a sign of good practice and supports compliant, high-quality service
- use the Standard to demonstrate professionalism and consistency, helping build customer confidence in the level of service they provide

Traders

- the Standard clarifies what good service looks like, helping traders choose and work confidently with a customs intermediary
- traders should expect intermediaries to ask detailed questions about their goods and business — this is intermediaries demonstrating due diligence, ensuring their clients provide accurate information to adhere to customs law
- traders are encouraged to provide accurate information to help avoid errors, support smoother movement of goods across the border and to be compliant

The Standard for Customs Intermediaries does not replace existing authorisations such as Authorised Economic Operator (AEO) status, which remains focused on compliance. Instead, it complements existing regimes by placing greater emphasis on transparency, customer service and continuous professional development.

Further information on the standard is available via the [BSI website](#) and [GOV.UK](#), with joint HMRC and industry webinars planned for later in the year to support awareness and understanding across the sector.

Thank you.