

Dear Customer

We are writing to inform you that HMRC will be closing its Customs Handling of Import and Export Freight (CHIEF) system on **31 March 2023**. It will be replaced by the **Customs Declaration Service (CDS)**. CDS will serve as the UK's single customs platform for all declarations and all goods will need to be declared through CDS from this date.

Ahead of the closure, HMRC will withdraw services in two stages:

- 30 September 2022: the ability to make import declarations on CHIEF will end.
- 31 March 2023: the ability to make export declarations on CHIEF and the National Export System (NES) will end.

Further information on the exact arrangements for withdrawing CHIEF services will be provided in due course.

Why are we doing this?

We want our border IT systems to be fit for the future and support our ambitious plans for global trade. This will help to create an environment where businesses can thrive and prosper and take advantage of free trade agreements. CHIEF has served the UK well, but it is nearly 30 years old, and it doesn't match the functionality now offered by CDS.

CDS has been developed over a number of years in consultation with the border industry. It is a secure platform that has the flexibility to grow in line with the Government's ambitious trade plans.

Moving to one system is more efficient than running two platforms, as we are currently doing. Operating one, single system will clarify processes for traders and save money for the taxpayer.

Founded on world-leading technology, CDS is already performing well. It is currently used for both Northern Ireland declarations and Rest of World movements and has already processed well over one million declarations since it went live in 2018. It is fully compliant with our obligations under the Northern Ireland Protocol and operates the full UK Trade Tariff, which CHIEF cannot do. It is critical to the long-term flow of trade, offering flexibility to accommodate future improvements to imports and exports.

What happens next?

We will continue working with our delivery partners to align their systems with CDS and will write to you again with more detail on our plans to migrate traders from CHIEF to CDS. We will also provide more detail on the withdrawal of CHIEF services, starting with import declarations on 30 September 2022, allowing you and your business time to plan for the changes. In the meantime, there are four key actions you need to take to prepare for using CDS. You must:

- Get an [Economic Operator Registration and Identification \(EORI\) number](#)
- Get a [Unique Taxpayer Reference number](#)
- Register your [Government Gateway account details](#), and once notified by your [software developer](#), register for CDS and authorise your software provider
- Understand the changes to the Import and Export Tariff, available on [GOV.UK](#)

You should also consider:

- Any training or information your business needs to provide to your staff, for example on the new data elements necessitated by Union Customs Code legislation
- Any changes to finance processes, for example setting up a [new Direct Debit](#) for a [Duty Deferment account](#), or how to pay into your [cash account](#)
- Whether your business details (email and business address) match our records, or if they need updating
- Whether your business would benefit from using the optional [Trader Dress Rehearsal \(TDR\) service](#) to trial declaration processing in a production-like environment

What support is available?

We continue to listen to the border industry and act on your valuable feedback. We are committed to making your transition to CDS as seamless as possible and are exploring where we can best support you, including looking at opportunities to streamline the declaration process.

We will continue to work with trade partners and wider industry bodies to ensure we are providing all the support we can to help them throughout the migration process. This includes creating new webinars, toolkits and general guidance.

Comprehensive guidance and resources are available on [GOV.UK](#) to help businesses and agents prepare for making declarations on [CDS](#). We will continue to keep you updated and provide information, signposting and resources to help you make the transition smoothly.

Thank you for your continued co-operation.

Kind regards,
HMRC