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News story

## Update on CMA COVID-19 Taskforce

The CMA has published a second update from its COVID-19 Taskforce, which monitors and responds to competition and consumer problems arising from the pandemic.

Published 21 May 2020

From:

Competition and Markets Authority (<https://www.gov.uk/government/organisations/competition-and-markets-authority>)



As part of the Taskforce's work, it is asking the public for information about businesses behaving unfairly, for example regarding cancellations and refunds or retailers charging unjustifiably high prices.

Some of the highlights in this update include:

- From 10 March to 17 May, the CMA has been contacted more than 60,000 times about coronavirus-related issues. Between 11 – 17 May on average 1,200 people a day contacted the CMA.
- Since mid-April, the majority of complaints received by the CMA have been about unfair practices in relation to cancellations and refunds. Holidays and airlines account for almost 27,000 complaints, three-quarters of the total number of complaints about cancellations and refunds.
- The CMA has launched a programme of work to investigate whether companies are breaking the law. Three sectors were initially prioritised: holiday accommodation, weddings and events and nurseries. The CMA has opened cases in respect of certain companies in these sectors and further details will be announced in due course. As a result of the rise in the number of complaints, package holidays have now been included in the scope of the investigation.
- Since early April, the number of complaints about price rises has fallen, but the coronavirus pandemic, and the necessary restrictions on businesses and people continue to present significant risks that prices are raised above justifiable levels for a number of essential products.

- The CMA has written to 264 firms, accounting for over 3,100 complaints, about price rises for essential products.

The overall number of submissions relate to just over 16,000 individual private sector businesses in the UK, or less than 3 in 1000. The vast majority of businesses are behaving in a reasonable way, but the CMA will not hesitate to take enforcement action if there is evidence that businesses have breached competition or consumer protection law.

Read more in the CMA coronavirus taskforce update: 21 May 2020  
(<https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/cma-coronavirus-taskforce-update-21-may-2020>).

For more information on the CMA's work on COVID-19 visit the CMA Coronavirus (COVID-19) response page (<https://www.gov.uk/government/collections/cma-covid-19-response>). Further updates on the Taskforce's work will be published in due course.

For media queries, contact the CMA press office on 020 3738 6460 or [press@cma.gov.uk](mailto:press@cma.gov.uk)

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## Related content

- CMA coronavirus taskforce update: 21 May 2020 (<https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/cma-coronavirus-taskforce-update-21-may-2020>)
- Health and Social Care Secretary's statement on coronavirus (COVID-19): 21 May 2020 (<https://www.gov.uk/government/speeches/health-and-social-care-secretarys-statement-on-coronavirus-covid-19-21-may-2020>)
- Coronavirus (COVID-19): an update on the Grenfell Tower site (<https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/coronavirus-covid-19-an-update-on-the-grenfell-tower-site>)
- Oliver Dowden's statement on coronavirus (COVID-19): 20 May 2020 (<https://www.gov.uk/government/speeches/oliver-dowdens-statement-on-coronavirus-covid-19-20-may-2020>)
- Coronavirus (COVID-19): CMA statement on consumer protection law in relation to cancellations and refunds complaints (<https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/cma-to-investigate-concerns-about-cancellation-policies-during-the-coronavirus-covid-19-pandemic>)

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