



Monthly Business
Clinic, Alistair
Cooke, ASM
Chartered
Accountants,
Dungannon

A BRIEF BREXIT CHECKLIST FOR BUSINESS

As everyone will be aware, as things currently stand the UK is still set to leave the EU on 31 October 2019 – with or without a deal, according to Boris Johnston.

As this deadline is fast approaching, and given the lack of any certainty over customs arrangements post Brexit, we would recommend that all businesses consider what steps they should consider taking in order to minimise any disruption after this date, although we do not guarantee that putting these measures in place will provide any advantage.

1. Obtain an EORI number.

You'll need an Economic Operator Registration and Identification (EORI) number starting with GB to move goods into or out of the EU (including the UK).

If you do not get one, you may have increased costs and delays. For example, if HM Revenue and Customs (HMRC) cannot clear your goods you may have to pay storage fees. Apply for one at www.hmrc.gov.uk/eori

2. Decide who will make your import declarations.

You can hire a person or business to deal with customs for you, such as freight forwarders, customs agents / brokers or fast parcel operators.

You could make the import declarations yourself but most declarations are

submitted electronically through Customs Handling of Import and Export Freight (CHIEF) system. If you're going to do this yourself, rather than appoint an agent, you'll need to apply for access to CHIEF and buy third party software that can submit declarations through CHIEF.

3. Apply to make importing easier.

In a no-deal Brexit, businesses will need to apply the same procedures to EU trade that apply to trading with the rest of the world. You can make it easier to import goods from the EU by registering to use transitional simplified procedures.

You may also be able to use the Common Transit Convention (CTC) to simplify how your goods pass through customs and when you pay customs duties.

4. Set up a duty deferment account.

If you import goods regularly, you can apply for a duty deferment account to delay paying most customs charges. For example customs duty, excise duty and import VAT.

A duty deferment account lets you make one payment a month through Direct Debit instead of paying for individual consignments. You can apply for a duty deferment account if you're an importer or an agent who represents importers.

5. Check the rate of duty you will need to pay.

If the UK leaves the EU with no deal, you may need to pay different rates of customs duty (tariffs) on imports into the UK. These rates would only be applied if the UK were to leave the EU with no deal and would be in place for up to 12 months.

The UK Trade Tariff tool www.gov.uk/trade-tariff will be updated with the new rates of customs duty (tariffs) if the UK were to leave the EU with no deal.

6. Check if you need a licence or certificate for the type of goods you are importing.

You may need to get a licence or certificate to import some types of goods. You might also need to pay an inspection fee for some goods before they're allowed into the UK.

Even if you don't import goods directly yourself you will need to understand your supply chain - understand where and how your business buys and sells products and services and where and how your suppliers obtain their goods and services. This will enable you to understand the impact of any new trade model and prepare to change current practices where required.

These steps are only general guidance and may not apply depending on the outcome of any deal. Always seek professional advice.