

**ECONOMY, ENERGY AND FAIR WORK COMMITTEE****COVID-19 – impact on Scotland’s businesses, workers and economy****SUBMISSION FROM****Competition and Markets Authority**

In our [statement of 5 March](#), we urged retailers to behave responsibly and said that the CMA would consider any evidence that companies may have broken competition or consumer protection law.

Following on from this, the CMA has [created a taskforce](#) to tackle, within its remit, negative economic and consumer impacts of the COVID-19 pandemic. The taskforce is looking at how we can use our powers in consumer protection and competition law to stop firms exploiting the situation. In particular, the taskforce will:

- Scrutinise market developments to identify harmful sales and pricing practices as they emerge.
- Warn firms suspected of exploiting these exceptional circumstances – and people’s vulnerability – through unjustifiable prices or misleading claims. The CMA has already [written an open letter](#) to pharmaceutical and food and drink businesses.
- Take enforcement action if there is evidence that firms may have breached competition or consumer protection law and they fail to respond to warnings.

As well as monitoring and responding to excessive pricing and other harmful practices, the taskforce is working to ensure that competition law does not stand in the way of businesses trying to do the right thing to protect consumers.

On 25 March, we [issued new guidance](#) for businesses, setting out in detail the CMA’s approach to business co-operation at the current time. This builds on our [statement of 19 March](#) in which we explain that we have no intention of taking enforcement action against cooperation between businesses or rationing of products to the extent that this is necessary to protect consumers – for example, by ensuring security of supplies. At the same time, the CMA will not tolerate unscrupulous businesses exploiting the crisis as a ‘cover’ for non-essential collusion.

We recently wrote to all MSPs and MPs asking them to encourage constituents to [contact us](#) to report any unfair business practices.

We have also been reaching out to business organisations, trade associations and consumer groups in Scotland. We have asked for their support in sharing our key messages with business and consumers, as well as asking them to share any information that might inform the work of our taskforce.

You can find all the information relating to our work relating COVID-19 at this [collection page](#); as well as on our [Twitter](#), [Facebook](#) and [LinkedIn](#) pages.