

## End of Transition period article

Timber supply chains are regulated to ensure harvesting practices are legal, encourage sustainable harvesting practices and support global forest governance. Businesses trading in timber and timber products must take steps to ensure that they originate from legal sources.

Timber imported from countries that have implemented voluntary partnership agreements (VPAs) with the EU – currently only Indonesia – must be accompanied by a forest law enforcement, governance and trade (FLEGT) licence.

The Timber and Timber Products (Placing on the Market) Regulations 2013 and the Forest Law Enforcement, Governance and Trade Regulations 2012 (as amended) are the underpinning legislation.

The Office for Product Safety & Standards (OPSS) has been appointed by Defra to enforce the regulations in the UK, checking that appropriate records are maintained by traders and operators, ensuring that the due diligence systems of operators are fit for purpose, and verifying FLEGT licences.

The transition period will come to an end on 31 December 2020 and businesses trading timber between Great Britain and Northern Ireland are being urged by the UK Government to take action ahead of the end of the transition period.

The UK government have established our own UK timber regulation and UK FLEGT regulation which will have the same requirements as current EU systems. This will ensure we have a sustainable timber industry and continue to play a leading role in tackling illegal imports.

The changes will be relevant to a range of businesses who use timber, including importers and operators, exporters, those working in the construction industry, furniture manufacturers, paper and pulp manufactures, and the forestry industry.

The government has confirmed:

- Due diligence checks will take place on timber flowing from Great Britain (GB) to Northern Ireland (NI)
- No new due diligence checks will take place on timber flowing from NI to GB
- Due diligence checks will take place on timber flowing from the EU to GB
- No new due diligence checks will take place on timber flowing from the EU to NI

Business trading timber within the UK need to be aware who they bought the timber from and who they sold it to (if it was to another business), regardless of species, product or country of origin.

To comply with their obligation timber traders will be required to tell OPSS:

- Who they bought the timber from,
- Who they sold it to (regardless of species, product or country of origin), through evidence such as an invoice,
- Both traders and operators (importers) will be required to keep records for 5 years

Operators are required to exercise due diligence to ensure that timber and timber products have not been illegally harvested.

There will be no changes to the current process for businesses importing from outside of the EU and UK producers first placing timber on the internal market will still need to carry out due diligence checks as before.

There will be no change to the way timber due diligence requirements are enforced and there will be no additional border requirements. However, failure to comply with the timber regulations and enforcement ranges from warning letters, through to court cases, to an unlimited fine and up to 2 years in prison.

Importers of timber from third countries already have to carry out due diligence checks, except if they are importing from a country which has an operational Voluntary Partnership Agreement (VPA) in place and that import is covered by a [FLEGT license](#) .

Free guidance and tools are available on the [OPSS website](#)

Further guidance on the end of the transition period can be found [here](#)