

General

1) What is the impact of non-adoption of the UCC reforms in NI?

- The UCC is one of the key mechanisms that underpins Northern Ireland's (NI) access to the EU market. Its application in NI helps provide assurance that goods entering the EU market via NI are subject to the same arrangements as elsewhere in the EU. This is a key part of the legal and operational framework that enables NI businesses to benefit from their unique dual market access, with privileged access to both the UK internal market and the EU market.
- Therefore, as the EU customs framework evolves, NI's customs arrangements must remain responsive to those changes so that businesses can continue to benefit from dual market access. If the reforms did not apply in NI, businesses may not be able to access these benefits since aspects of the customs framework would operate differently in NI from those applying elsewhere in the EU.

2) Does the UCC take primacy over UK customs arrangements in NI? If the UCC provides differently, does that apply?

- NI remains within the UK's customs territory. The Windsor Framework was agreed to address the unique circumstances on the island of Ireland, including avoiding a hard border while protecting NI's place in the UK internal market.
- As part of those arrangements, the UCC applies under the Windsor Framework alongside bespoke UK-EU facilitations that simplify the UCC requirements for qualifying movements within the UK internal market.
- Customs arrangements in NI are therefore designed to give effect to the UCC while operating within the wider context of NI's position in the UK's customs territory and the arrangements agreed between the UK and EU under the Windsor Framework.
- The UCC Reform will apply on the same basis. Where appropriate, individual elements of the reform will be subject to discussion between the UK and the European Commission as the detailed arrangements are developed.

3) The Regulation provides for Member States to maintain or conclude customs cooperation agreements with third countries, subject to EU safeguards. Are those safeguards defined, and how is this to be done?

- The detailed operation of this provision, including any associated safeguards, is ultimately a matter for the EU to define and implement. However, in the context of NI, we do not see this provision as preventing the UK from concluding trade agreements that apply in NI. NI remains part of the UK's customs territory, and the Windsor Framework already provides mechanisms to accommodate the interaction between EU customs requirements and the UK's independent trade policy.

Handling Fee

4) The UK Government Explanatory Memorandum states that more than 99% of distance sales are expected to be classified as “not at risk”. What does the 99% refer to: value, volume or number of consignments?

- This figure refers to 99% of the total number of items in parcels declared into NI annually.

5) What types of goods or consignments comprise the remaining 1%?

- These are goods sent to consumers that would not be eligible to move under the UK Carrier Scheme as agreed within the Windsor Framework. This would include goods subject to sanctions or trade defence measures, as examples.

6) Does the 99% include small parcels bought by consumers in Northern Ireland from businesses such as Shein, Temu and DHgate? If so, can it be taken that these parcels are unlikely to be affected?

- Yes. Consumers in NI can continue to purchase goods from any business outside the UK and EU without paying a handling fee so long as they are eligible to move ‘not at risk’ of entering the EU. The business the goods are sent from is not a determining factor on whether goods are ‘not at risk’. This means that the vast majority of these goods will remain unaffected.

7) Who will receive the revenue generated by the handling fee?

- Any revenue generated from the handling fee in Northern Ireland will be retained by the UK.

8) Approximately how much revenue is the handling fee expected to raise, and how much would Northern Ireland be charged to pay to the EU?

- We are unable to provide an estimate of revenue from the handling fee at this stage, but would reiterate that we expect more than 99% of distance sales moving to NI will not be subject to the fee. Ultimately, the amount of any revenue raised from residual movements will be dependent on commercial decisions of businesses moving these distance sales. Any revenue raised will not be remitted to the EU.

9) What is the current position on the proposed UK-EU Joint Committee declaration relating to the handling fee, and what is the likely timescale: one month, six months or two years?

- The Government has engaged with the EU to minimise impacts on consumers in NI arising from the EU's planned handling fee. The UK-EU Joint Declaration means that the EU handling fee will only apply to consumer parcels in the limited circumstances where they are considered ‘at risk’ of entering the EU, significantly limiting its impact in NI. The Council of the European Union approved the Joint Declaration on 5 October, [Decision - EU - 2026/2232 - EN - EUR-Lex](#). As such, from 1 November, only distance sales that are ‘at risk’ of entering the EU would be charged the EU handling fee.

10) How the 'at risk' test works, with specific reference to the handling fee.

- Consumer goods that are 'at risk' and therefore subject to the handling fee are those that are not eligible to move under the UK Carrier Scheme, as set out in the Windsor Framework. HMRC has published guidance setting out the process for moving goods from a business outside the UK and EU to a private consumer in NI under the UK Carrier Scheme. <https://www.gov.uk/guidance/how-to-move-parcels-from-great-britain-to-northern-ireland-for-express-operators#moving-parcels-if-youre-authorised-under-the-uk-carrier-scheme>

Stakeholder feedback

11) Please provide comments on the consultation responses submitted to the Committee by the British Ports Association, the British International Freight Association and the Consumer Council. [Committee consultation responses](#)

- The Government recognises the point raised by stakeholders regarding the practical implementation of the reforms, particularly the importance of avoiding unnecessary burdens on trade. At the same time, the feedback also recognises that the reforms aim to modernise the EU customs framework through greater digitalisation and simpler processes and may therefore create opportunities for NI to benefit from more streamlined customs processes. It is agreed that the practical operation of the reforms will be critical to determining their overall effect NI.
- It is for this reason that the UK Government, and the European Commission will continue to work jointly as the detailed arrangements are developed, to ensure that existing Windsor Framework facilitations and approaches are maintained while enabling NI to benefit from the reforms.
- Stakeholder insight will play an important role in identifying practical issues and businesses will continue to be engaged as the detailed arrangements are developed. HMRC will continue to engage with industry through our usual structures, including the Joint Customs Consultative Committee and it's NI subgroup, to ensure trade have the opportunity to provide direct feedback.

12) Please provide a summary of any relevant input received from trade bodies through DfE and HMRC engagement.

- The UCC reform is a long-term programme of change that will be implemented over a number of years. Many of the detailed operational arrangements are still to be developed, and engagement with businesses and trade bodies will continue as implementation plans become clearer.
- In relation to the more immediate change, the approach to the handling fee, feedback from industry, including members of the Joint Customs Consultative Committee and its NI sub-group and the Consumer Council of Northern Ireland, has been broadly positive, particularly as the agreed position protects the vast majority of distance-sales entering NI from the fee.

- HMRC will continue to work closely with businesses and representative bodies as the reforms are operationalised, in the same way that they have engaged with stakeholders on the implementation of the handling fee.

13) What feedback has HMRC received from its ongoing consultation and engagement, particularly from those who responded to the Committee's Citizen Space survey? [Committee survey and supporting material](#)

- The Government will be happy to review and comment on the full feedback following the closure of the Citizen Space survey on 18 October.

From: +Windsor Framework Committee Public Email
<WindsorFramework.Committee@niassembly.gov.uk>

Sent: 01 October 2026 16:00

To: TEO Democratic Scrutiny Committee <[REDACTED]>

Subject: TEO DSC Notification

Good afternoon,

[Regulation \(EU\) 2026/2108 of the European Parliament and of the Council of 16 September 2026 establishing the Union Customs Code and the European Union Customs Authority, and repealing Regulation \(EU\) No 952/2013](#)

At its meeting on 1 October 2026, the DSC considered the above published replacement EU act and agreed to hold an inquiry.

The Department is therefore required to formally brief the Committee at its next meeting on Thursday 15 October 2026.

Officials are asked to provide further information in writing on any questions which were not fully addressed in today's evidence session by **11.00am on Monday 12 October 2026**. Officials will also be expected to present an update on those questions at the meeting on 15 October 2026.

Please provide details of the officials who will be attending to give oral evidence, using the attached template.

Kind regards,

[REDACTED]



[REDACTED]

Clerical Supervisor

Windsor Framework Democratic Scrutiny
Committee

[REDACTED]

[REDACTED]