



## Five questions answered on the first appointed supermarket ombudsman

Christine Tacon named.

BY HEIDI VELLA | PUBLISHED 21 JANUARY 2013 15:56



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The first ever Groceries Code Adjudicator has been named. Photograph: Getty Images

The first ever Groceries Code Adjudicator (supermarket ombudsman) has been named today as Christine Tacon. We answer five questions on this newly created post.

### What authority will the new supermarket ombudsman hold?

As the first ever Groceries Code Adjudicator Ms Tacon will have the power to investigate anonymous tip-offs from suppliers, name and shame or even fine supermarkets that breach the groceries supply code of practice.

In general, she will police the groceries supply code of practice, which was put in place in 2010 to ensure the top ten supermarkets do not abuse their relationships with suppliers.

### What are Ms Tacon's credentials for the job?

Ms Tacon has a long history working in the food industry. She previously worked at the Co-operative's farming unit for 11 years, as well as holding positions at Mars, Vodafone and Anchor.

She currently holds a number of non-executive positions in the agriculture sector and is chair of the BBC's rural affairs advisory committee.

About her new post she has said:

"I am honoured to have been given the chance to make a permanent and enduring difference to the groceries sector.

"Coming from a commercial background, I am sure that if we can increase trust between retailers and their direct suppliers, it will lead to greater efficiency and can only have a beneficial impact on the rest of the supply chain."

### Why has the government decided to hire a supermarket ombudsman now?

The idea for a supermarket ombudsman was first suggested in 2008 by the Competition Commission as a way to solve disputes between supermarkets and suppliers.

At the time, a two year review of the supermarkets by the Competition Commission resulted in the criticism of the exclusivity arrangements often signed between supermarket chains and their suppliers.

### When will Ms Tacon take up her post and how much will she be paid?

Before the role can become official parliament needs to pass the Groceries Code Adjudicator Bill later in the year. Until then she will act as "Adjudicator-Designate".

Ms Tacon will be paid £69,000 per year for her job working over three days a week.

### What have government officials said about the creation of this new post?

Consumer and Competition Minister, Jo Swinson, said:

"I congratulate Christine Tacon on her appointment as Groceries Code Adjudicator. This is an incredibly important position in the retail groceries sector making sure that large supermarkets treat their suppliers fairly and lawfully.

"Ms Tacon has a wide range of experience in the food, retail and farming industry and her appointment is a real milestone. Her knowledge of the sector will be of huge benefit, and I'm sure will be crucial in making the Groceries Code Adjudicator a positive and powerful contributor to the groceries industry."

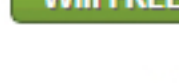
Adrian Bailey MP, Chair of the Committee said:

"This is a welcome change of policy from the Government, which was called for by the Select Committee and Opposition team in the debate on the Bill. It is also perfectly consistent with the approach taken by the Government in securing as much pre-legislative scrutiny as possible.

"The Select Committee spent many hours taking evidence on this issue and will examine the suitability of the proposed candidate against this evidence and the recommendations it made."

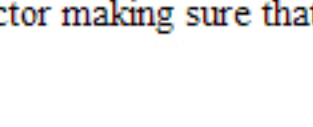
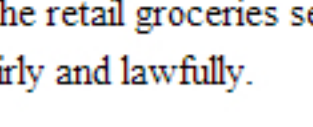
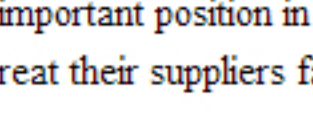
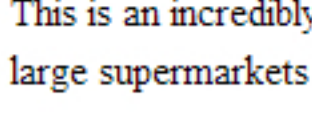
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