



Department for  
Business, Energy  
& Industrial Strategy

George Freeman MP  
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[www.gov.uk](http://www.gov.uk)

Our ref: MCB2022/21245

November 2022

Dear Richard,

Thank you for your email dated 1 August sent to HM Treasury, enclosing correspondence from your constituent, Mr Michael Poultney of Albion Stone plc, regarding geographical indications (GIs) and particularly GIs for non-agricultural products (NAGIs). Your correspondence has been passed to this Department and I am responding as this matter falls under my Ministerial portfolio. Please accept my apologise for the delay in responding. *(The recent turmoil and reshuffle)*

A GI is a sign used to indicate that a product has a specific geographical origin and possesses a certain reputation or qualities due to that place of origin. The UK has always supported effective protection mechanisms for NAGIs and we recognise that safeguarding these products is important for producers, consumers and local economies. To achieve this, the UK has found the most appropriate and effective way is through our trade marks system, via collective and certification marks. This offers robust protection to the holders of such marks. This works for our stakeholders and, to date, we have not received widespread calls or compelling evidence to challenge this approach. Further information on the UK certification and collective marks system, which may be of assistance to Mr Poultney, is available at: [www.gov.uk/government/publications/collective-and-certification-trade-marks](http://www.gov.uk/government/publications/collective-and-certification-trade-marks).

Furthermore, my officials are at Mr Poultney's disposal should he have any concerns regarding UK stone producers accessing or utilising the certification and collective mark system. They can be reached at:

[www.gov.uk/government/organisations/intellectual-property-office](http://www.gov.uk/government/organisations/intellectual-property-office)

In his previous emails, Mr Poultney references GI legislation progressing within the EU. This relates to a proposal published by the European Commission in April this year to introduce a unitary EU GI scheme for craft and industrial products (i.e. NAGIs). In the absence of evidence showing any deficiencies in the current system, the UK's policy position remains to utilise trade marks. However, we continue to monitor the progress of the EU's proposals and remain committed to ensuring UK businesses do not find themselves in a less advantageous position than their EU-based counterparts.

The Consumer Protection from Unfair Trading Regulations 2008 (CPRs) prohibits traders from engaging in unfair commercial practices against consumers (mainly marketing and selling). The regulations apply across all business sectors and set out a framework for how businesses must deal with consumers.


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Under the CPRs, information given by traders to consumers about goods and services must be clear and correct. The regulations prohibit commercial practices which through false information or misleading presentation, including by omitting important information, cause, or are likely to cause, the average consumer to make a different choice (for example to purchase goods or services that would not otherwise have been purchased). Enforcement of the Regulations is by local authority trading standards services.

If consumers or businesses believe there has been a breach of the legislation, they should report the matter in the first instance to the Citizens Advice consumer service on 0808 223 1133 or at [www.citizensadvice.org.uk](http://www.citizensadvice.org.uk). The service offers free advice to consumers on their rights and how best to take a complaint forward. The helpline can also refer complaints to the Trading Standards for appropriate enforcement action.

I hope you will find this reply helpful.

Yours ever,



**GEORGE FREEMAN MP**  
**Minister for Science, Research and Innovation**

Pickard

Let's pick this up in the future.

(P.S.: Apologies for the delay - I'm trying to work out when this letter went out originally.)