

CUSTOMS COMPLIANCE LEAD

Location: Pimlico, with blended working	Profession: Trading Optimisation
Reports to: Head of Trade Planning	
People Management: Yes - Customs Compliance Analyst, Customs Compliance Admin, Customs & Excise Manager, Excise Analyst	
Job description (critical purpose) As the Customs Compliance Lead within the Trading Optimisation Profession, you will serve as the Partnership's authoritative expert and principal point of contact for HMRC across both John Lewis and Waitrose. You will lead strategic and operational trade compliance, driving end-to-end import and export controls, Authorised Economic Operator (AEO) governance, complex Excise duty regimes (specifically across Waitrose Beers, Wines, Spirits, and food/non-food imports), and the oversight of the Partnership's multi-hundred-million-pound duty deferment accounts. Combining sharp commercial acumen with deep regulatory insight, you will act as a trusted advisor to Heads of Merchandising, Buying, Supply Chain, and Finance. You will ensure commercial importing and sourcing strategies are legally compliant, duty-efficient, and optimised to protect margins and cash flow while safeguarding stock availability and speed-to-shelf. You will lead the evolution of the combined Customs & Excise function—designing future-fit processes, embedding scalable technologies, and aligning operational controls with industry best practices. As a people leader, you will empower, upskill, and stretch your team, creating an agile, high-performing compliance capability that supports the business through regulatory change and complex trading environments. Through your Profession, you will have the opportunity to develop and stretch personally and professionally to achieve your potential.	
Primary Outcomes & Accountabilities Act in accordance with the Partnership's purpose and democratic principles, constructively participating in co-ownership, and demonstrating to customers and each other that it is a better way of doing business. Share your knowledge, experiences, ideas and opinion to improve the Partnership, speaking honestly and frequently. Invest in your personal and professional development to achieve your potential, by doing more, doing better, or doing different. Continuously engage with and actively contribute to your Profession. Take responsibility for actively engaging with change. Key Accountabilities: - Responsible for all Customs activities including CFSP customs entries, classification, valuation, evidencing controls and governance processes to meet the standards and requirements expected of an Authorised Economic Operator. Maintain up-to-date documentation of activities touching the international supply chain across John Lewis and Waitrose. - Ensuring relevant product codes are linked to a commodity code. For JL this includes import, intrastat, International Wholesale and International Online. For Waitrose this includes non-food import and intrastat. Meet appropriate availability targets - Ensuring all CFSP entries are submitted and month-end is closed off in	Measures of success Compliance with all legal requirements Processes support legal accountabilities and timely stock flow Provides insight and recommendations to leadership teams regularly that optimise and drive business performance to make both short-term and long-term benefits. Broader team is upskilled in the areas of customs compliance Engages with relevant stakeholders to understand and tailor insight to their requirements. Shares knowledge readily. Is known as an expert and an evangelist in subject matter. Leadership skills and Partnership Values are consistently demonstrated to a high standard. Creates and maintains high performing,

accordance with HMRC timelines.

Managing and reporting on Assists calculations including collating the annual statement of intent from every JL and Waitrose buyer, calculating monthly RFID, GIL label duty & VAT liabilities

- Setting up new systems and processes which make our operations fit for the future
- Ensuring all Customs activities for Waitrose, including the correct treatment of BWS and food and non-food imports.
- Ensuring all Excise movements are correctly recorded and declared to HMRC for Waitrose.
- Overseeing and controlling the Waitrose Customs & Excise deferment accounts and releasing the payments to HMRC
- Obtaining and maintaining all the necessary authorisations for John Lewis & Waitrose (AEO, Excise Warehouse, CFSP, PVA...)
- Act as a main point of contact for HMRC for any Customs and Excise-related queries.
- Advise on strategic business decisions to improve margin and cash flow for the Partnership (implementation of new FTAs, mass excise duty payments).

Key Activities:

Provides expert advice and support to stakeholders involved in international movement of goods including Buying & Merchandising, Waitrose, International Wholesale and Online on import related topics, returns, classification, costs and best practice. Advises Partnership Services/Financial Processing on issues relating to import finance.

Ensures Partnership Services/Financial Processing objectives for the invoice passing and supplier payment process is streamlined and aligned with overseas supplier contract agreements

Leads and delivers customs compliance best practice that meets all legislative requirements and demonstrates due diligence for **John Lewis & Waitrose**. Ensures that the maximum opportunity is derived from duty management techniques and Customs regimes.

Builds and maintains positive working relationships with HMRC. Lead discussions with HMRC Policy and government departments and ensure regulatory changes are adopted and the impacts made known across the business. Submit intrastat returns for John Lewis Partnership on time and pass relevant data to the Taxation team. Analyse and audit key data elements in accordance with procedures agreed with HMRC (Ricardo standing data weekly, MSS monthly). Evaluate and investigate any discrepancies internally and with third parties. Manage the audit of classifications, valuations and preferences monthly. Lead HMRC's Intrastat audit. Prepare all voluntary declarations to HMRC as a result of weekly/monthly control checks. Monitor refunds and repayments.

Provide ad-hoc clearance instructions to 3rd party agents and ensure standard clearance instructions held by them are current and fit for purpose.

Ensure all processes touching the supply chain are sufficiently documented to meet AEO criteria and are kept under review, at least annually.

Identify areas for improvement in existing ways of working and recommend and lead enhancements, including ways to minimise duty costs.

Advise the business on all regulatory or legislative changes ensuring the impact is clearly defined, all personnel are aware of the change and process documentation updated as necessary.

Establish which rules of origin are relevant and ensure suppliers are clear of their responsibility. Maintain appropriate controls and up-to-date evidential documentation.

Control use of Deferment and VAT.

Design and implement new processes and systems that streamline our customs compliance operation.

cross-functional teams.

Positive stakeholder and line manager feedback / 360

Skills	
Decision Making	Identifies the issue/opportunity, then gathers the relevant information and alternative viewpoints to form options and evaluates to drive an informed outcome.
Analysis of Data	Evaluates and analyses different types of complex data objectively and sees patterns and meaning to establish the key relevant facts. Uses this thinking to make credible recommendations to inform critical decision making.
Stakeholder Management	Identifies who is impacted by or involved in your goals/objectives and therefore who is key to achieving the desired successful outcomes. Understands the motivations and priorities of these stakeholders and takes these into account in order to build and manage sustainable relationships. Can anticipate potential challenges stakeholders may bring and puts plans in place to achieve collaboration.
Commerciality	Demonstrates an innate passion for and understanding of Retail. This includes knowledge of our competitors and the wider social, political and economic factors which impact our business. Understands the Partnership business model and our integrated objectives and uses this understanding to make well informed decisions that support key business objectives.
Works Well Under Pressure	Understands own emotional reaction to pressure and knows how to identify and use own coping outlets. Works to understand what is within control and what is not and practices acceptance of this. Prioritises and plans effectively and is realistic about what can be achieved to ensure that the most important and urgent activities are communicated and achieved.

Qualifications & Experience
ESSENTIAL Substantial, hands-on experience managing complex end-to-end import, export, and excise compliance within high-volume retail or FMCG environments. Detailed technical knowledge of UK Customs tariffs, CFSP, AEO governance, duty deferment systems, Free Trade Agreements, Rules of Origin, and Excise regulations (specifically BWS and food/non-food imports). Excise Systems & Movements: Practical, operational expertise using EMCS (Excise Movement and Control System) to manage goods under duty suspension, duty-paid movements, and release for consumption. Extensive, hands-on experience managing UK Excise Duty regulations and operational compliance within retail, FMCG, or logistics, with specific emphasis on Beers, Wines, and Spirits (BWS). : Strong financial and analytical capability with a proven track record of leveraging trade data (MSS, customs entries, audit reports) to drive duty savings, optimise cash flow (e.g., managing high-value deferment accounts), and inform commercial/sourcing strategies. High-Value Financial & Deferment Governance: Proven track record of managing and reporting on large-scale Duty Deferment Accounts (managing liabilities up to ~£230m/year) and executing accurate monthly/annual declarations and payments to HMRC. Outstanding communication and negotiation skills, with a track record of acting as the principal contact for HMRC and external regulatory bodies. Proven ability to translate complex legislative updates into actionable business advice for senior decision-makers (Heads of Merchandising, Buying, and Finance). Direct experience obtaining, maintaining, and auditing HMRC Excise authorisations (e.g., Excise Warehouse, Registered Consignee/Consignor status) Ability to evaluate cross-functional supply chain risks and design balanced operational processes that safeguard compliance

without compromising stock availability, speed-to-shelf, or customer delivery targets.

DESIRABLE

Professional qualification in Customs Compliance or International Trade (e.g., UK Customs Academy Level 4/5, Institute of Export & International Trade, or equivalent).

Understanding of Sanitary and Phytosanitary (SPS) controls, IPAFFS, Defra guidelines, and Border Control Post (BCP) processes for imported foodstuffs alongside excise products.

Experience leading or developing high-performing technical teams (e.g., Analysts and Managers) through process redesign and systems transformations.

Practical experience managing Customs Declaration Service (CDS) and EMCS (Excise Movement and Control System).
Experience implementing or optimising dedicated Excise management software(DMS) and ERP/WMS integrations for EMCS and duty calculation automation.

Version	Created/updated by	Date
1.0	Christina Slater/Izzy Stoker	20/01/2021
2.0	Juan Louro	09/07/2026

APPENDIX DOCUMENT: **INTERNAL USE REQUIREMENTS ONLY** for People teams

Partnership Level: 5
Manager's Partnership level: 4
Job Family Group:
Job Family:
Pay range/Compensation Grade Profile:

Vetting required? (Yes or No)

- Yes