

UK and US start trade negotiations

International Secretary of State Liz Truss and US Trade Representative Robert Lighthizer to launch the first round of Free Trade Agreement negotiations today



The UK and US governments will today (Tuesday 5 May) start negotiating a UK-US Free Trade Agreement.

The International Trade Secretary Liz Truss and the US Trade Representative Robert Lighthizer are launching negotiations via video conference call.

This first round of negotiations will last for approximately 2 weeks and will involve around 100 negotiators on each side.

On the UK side, talks will be led by Oliver Griffiths, with all UK trade negotiations being overseen by Crawford Falconer, DIT's Chief Trade Negotiation Adviser, formerly New Zealand's Chief Negotiator and Ambassador to the WTO.

Talks will cover all areas set out in the UK's negotiation objectives, including goods and services trade, digital trade, investment and supporting SMEs.

Further rounds will take place approximately every 6 weeks and will be carried out remotely until it is safe to travel.

This common-sense approach to negotiations will ensure that talks can progress during the COVID-19 pandemic, while public health and social distancing measures can continue to be respected.

International Trade Secretary Liz Truss said:

"The US is our largest trading partner and increasing transatlantic trade can help our economies bounce back from the economic challenge posed by Coronavirus.

We want to strike an ambitious deal that opens up new opportunities for our businesses, brings in more investment and creates better jobs for people across the whole of the country.

The Prime Minister has been clear that we champion free trade and this deal will make it even easier to do business with our friends across the pond.

As we sit down at the negotiating table today be assured that we will we will drive a hard bargain to secure a deal that benefits individuals and businesses in every region and nation of the UK.”

Both negotiating teams have already laid the groundwork for an ambitious agreement through the UK-US Trade and Investment Working Group, which has met six times in the lead up to the talks. They have discussed the full suite of topics typically included in FTAs – allowing talks to quickly get underway.

Government analysis shows a UK-US FTA will benefit every region and nation of the UK, with the greatest benefits in Scotland, the North East and the Midlands. It will also include a dedicated chapter to help the UK’s 5.9 million small businesses.

The UK’s negotiating objectives make clear that any future agreement must protect our NHS and we will continue uphold our high standards on food safety and animal welfare.

The government is committed to a transparent approach to trade negotiations and we will publish a summary of the first round once it has concluded.