

# Taxpayers Left Hanging On The Telephone By Inept HMRC Service

**Customer service levels at HM Revenue & Customs are at an all-time low, the Public Accounts Committee has said – just as a record number of tax returns were filed on time.**

The fallout means that installers with any queries on their tax matters can barely get through to anyone to discuss them without long waits – and risk any penalties increasing if mistakes cannot be resolved.

The Public Accounts Committee (PAC) says service levels at the tax authority have continued a five-year decline, with written evidence to the PAC's inquiry about HMRC's performance demonstrating taxpayers' exasperation.

Since the PAC's last report in

January 2023, HMRC's performance has continued to deteriorate. In 2022-23, 62.7% of callers waited more than 10 minutes to speak to an adviser, up from 46.3% in 2021-22. HMRC told the PAC's inquiry that it did not have the resources to meet rising demand for its phone and post services at expected standards. Instead it is directing callers to use digital services which it insists are good quality.

## Oh no it isn't

The PAC received a lot of evidence to the contrary from taxpayers and their agents. HMRC has been told that it must



not require customers to go online to resolve issue until a service is of a suitable standard.

HMRC is failing to collect £2 billion in tax revenue a year because of its failures to interact with 'customers' – and those who are guilty of evading tax are getting away with it. There were only 240 criminal prosecutions in 2022-23 – down by nearly a third since 2019-20. [f](#)

## Worcestershire Brings The Sauce

**The Residence Collection and The Worcestershire Door Company have added a bit of stylish sauce to a £7 million Cotswold housing development.**

The contract was for 70 windows and 10 French doors all in a grained Painswick colour.

The Worcestershire Door Company did the installation and Lister Windows was responsible for the fabrication. The developer was Lockley Homes. The windows were from the R7 collection with flush profiles both externally and internally.

All the windows were made using the mechanical jointing method, offering the windows a

timber look both externally and internally. They also boast A++ energy ratings and achieving a U-value of 1.2W/m<sup>2</sup>k with double glazing as standard.

R7 can achieve up to 0.79W/m<sup>2</sup>k with triple glazing.

The Residence Collection is available in 24 different colours with multiple colourways.

Ashley Smith, a director of The Worcestershire Door Company says: "We have been working with Lockley Homes for over 10 years. The company doesn't compromise on quality, which is why we chose the Residence 7 windows on this project."

Jo Trotman, the marketing manager at Residence, adds: "This



project highlights the versatility of the R7 windows for use in luxury housing developments just like these by Lockley Homes." [f](#)

# Watchdog To Tackle Rip-Off Fuel Prices

**The Competition & Markets Authority is to get new powers to help stop consumers and businesses that rely on their cars and vans from being ripped-off at the fuel pumps.**

UK motorists can expect some protection under tough new powers that will shine a light on any attempt from retailers to unfairly hike up petrol and diesel prices. Under an amendment to the Digital Markets, Competition & Consumers Bill, the Competition & Markets Authority (CMA) will become the body responsible for closely monitoring road fuel prices and reporting any sign of malpractice to the government.

The move aims to help improve competition by making sure customers across the country are given a fair choice of prices when they buy fuel.

Fuel retailers, including supermarkets, will be forced to come

clean on how much they are charging customers on their forecourts versus their profits.

Those that fail to comply could face a fixed fine from the watchdog of up to 1% of their worldwide turnover or

an ongoing fine of up to 5% of daily turnover. Energy Security Secretary, Claire Coutinho, has cautioned retailers that she will not hesitate to hold them to account, if there is any evidence of unfairly hiking up prices and holding back savings from UK motorists.

The warning follows a report from the CMA earlier this year that revealed some supermarkets had failed to pass on savings in



oil prices – charging drivers 6p more per litre for fuel, which amounted to £900 million in extra costs in 2022 alone.

Coutinho says: “At a time when many were struggling with increased living costs, we saw shocking behaviour from some fuel retailers who failed to pass on savings at the pump. Now we are cracking down on any petrol station bosses found to be unfairly hiking up their prices.” [i](#)

## Good Reviews Are Good For Business

**With the RMI market very challenging, a manufacturer of composite doors is urging installers to consider how they and their suppliers are reviewed by homeowners.**

RMI – or home repair, maintenance and improvement is in a decline despite it being the most buoyant of construction sectors.

Endurance Doors has highlighted how installers working with manufacturing partners that have positive online reviews can get a lift in a landscape where most buying journeys, including for fenestration products, start online with prospects researching the feedback and experiences of previous customers.

Endurance manufactures solid, secure and stylish composite doors which have some great reviews. The company says it can demonstrate how those reviews convert into leads – and then into actual orders.

Scott Foster, sales & marketing director at Endurance says: “In today’s internet-enabled, hyper-connected world, consumers have a greater voice than ever before. Whether they’re looking to compliment or complain about a product or service they have received, they can now do so easily to an audience that can potentially amount to millions.

“As a result, online reviews have become the ultimate form of



word-of-mouth marketing. The buying process for all manner of products now begins online with purchasers looking at the experiences of other customers before making their own final decision.

“Endurance Doors has over 2,300 independent consumer reviews on Trustpilot, of which more than 87% award us the maximum five out of five stars.” [i](#)