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[UK Bribery Act will see light of day this summer](#)

Guidance published by the UK government on its delayed Bribery Act has been welcomed by businesses and other organizations as an interpretation and clarification of the legislation, allowing companies to prepare for its full implementation in July.

In particular the 45-page document qualifies the requirements on hospitality and relations with foreign officials.

Another new point in the guidance is that prosecutors will need to prove an intention to gain advantage, rather than just the gaining of advantage.

The government had hoped to enforce the Act last October but delayed repeatedly as it feared that the UK business world was not in a position to comply with the requirements.

Justice Secretary Kenneth Clarke said the guidance showed that combating bribery 'is largely about common sense, not burdensome procedures'.

Most companies affected are regarding the guidance as a softening of the legislation.

The Confederation of British Industry, which has aggressively lobbied the government ever since the announcement of the new law, said it was happy with the result.

'We strongly support the principles behind the Bribery Act and welcome this much-improved final guidance,' it said. 'The government has listened to concerns that honest companies could have been unwittingly caught out by poorly drafted legislation and has clarified a number of important areas. These include the extent of liability through the supply chain, joint ventures, due diligence and corporate hospitality.'

Lawyers have also interpreted the guidance as an attempt to mollify business. Stephen Gentle, a partner at the London-based Kingsley Napley, said: 'The government is trying to provide a comfort blanket to businesses. It is saying, "A commonsense approach will see you through".'

Zia Ullah, head of compliance advisory at law firm Pannone, said: 'The sigh of relief in the corporate world will certainly be palpable.'

The CSR accreditation company GoodCorporation said it felt that, although the guidance contains 'major omissions and outdated exemptions', its lucidity is broadly to be welcomed.

It said: 'Much of the guidance is clear, straightforward and broadly in line with best practice. Many companies already operate within such rules.'

'However, there are a number of areas that are still unclear or even permit activities that many companies ruled out long ago. For business it is now all systems go in preparing for the Act. Companies that have done this already are unlikely to need to change much after this guidance.'

'Those who have been waiting and seeing no longer have an excuse to dilly-dally. Those who have not yet woken up to the Act will have to hope for the best.'