

UPDATED: Industry response to the survival of hallmarking

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The industry has welcomed the Government's decision not to scrap hallmarking after nearly 6,000 people registered their support.

The first results from the Red Tape Challenge, a key action from the Government's Plan for Growth that focuses on reducing unnecessary red tape to help support businesses, were announced at the end of July.

The Government decided to keep hallmarking after overwhelming support from the industry.

Minister for business and enterprise Mark Prisk commented: "The aim [of the Red Tape Challenge was] to get rid of the [rules] we don't need and making the ones we do simpler to put into practice. At the same time though, we are preserving good regulation, such as the hallmarking regime, for which there was strong support."



Jewellery experts said they were unsurprised that hallmarking was widely supported. Dr Robert Organ, assay master and managing director of The Goldsmiths' Company Assay Office, said: "There is widespread recognition by the trade of the value of hallmarks. It not only protects the consumer and the trade but is also a wonderful marketing tool."

Jewellery insiders welcomed the decision. John Henn, National Association of Goldsmiths board member, CIBJO representative and managing director of Wolverhampton jeweller T A Henn & Son, said: "There are enough abuses of trust in the commercial world and to lose hallmarking would have been a fatal blow to one of the few remaining quality marks in existence."

While approval of the announcement was unanimous, the consultation has encouraged discussion about potential changes.

Harriet Kelsall, managing director of the eponymous jeweller, thought the system could be quicker. "While I feel strongly that the service shouldn't be scrapped, I feel many aspects of the actual methods used by the Assay Office represent too much paperwork and red tape for businesses."

However, Michael Allchin, chief executive of The Birmingham Assay Office, said that the Assay Offices and British Hallmarking Council made the process as quick as possible and standards were the priority.

"The Assay Offices have to legally stand behind their hallmark," said Allchin. "Any attempt

to water down the regulations or their control would mean that the Assay Offices wouldn't be in a position to guarantee their hallmark."