Department for Business & Trade

Kate Dearden MP
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Ben Massey
CEO
National Association of Jewellers

By email: Ben.Massey@naj.co.uk

18 February 2026

Dear Mr Massey,

Thank you for your email of 17 December 2025, submitted on behalf of the four UK Assay Offices and supported by the NAJ, regarding the operation of the Hallmarking Act 1973 in the context of online marketplaces and other digital selling models.

I fully recognise the important consumer protection role of hallmarking, ensuring precious metal items are independently tested and marked. You have highlighted that current legislation has not kept pace with modern trading models, making it harder to identify and prevent non-compliant items being sold online, with risks for both consumers and fair competition. The Government is planning to modernise hallmarking arrangements once a suitable legislative vehicle becomes available. This includes the abolition of the British Hallmarking Council whose statutory functions will be transferred to the Secretary of State for Business and Trade.

You have proposed a formal consultation on targeted amendments to the Hallmarking Act 1973, including clarifying definitions for digital commerce, extending liability to online marketplace operators, confirming that digital listings constitute an “offer to sell”, and enabling more effective digital enforcement. While I cannot pre-empt future decisions on the scope or timing of legislative changes, I do want to ensure your evidence and operational experience will inform our work. I will ask my officials to set up a meeting with you and the other signatories to understand in more detail the enforcement barriers you are encountering online, and the changes you believe would be most effective and proportionate.

Thank you again for raising these issues. I value the constructive approach you have set out, and I welcome continued engagement as we seek to ensure the UK hallmarking framework remains robust and credible as retail markets evolve.

With best wishes,

Kate Dearden.

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