



Department for  
Business & Trade

**Nigel Huddleston MP**  
**Minister of State for International Trade**  
**Department for Business and Trade**

Old Admiralty Building  
Admiralty Place  
London  
SW1A 2DY  
United Kingdom

T +44 (0) 20 4551 0011  
E [huddleston.correspondence@trade.gov.uk](mailto:huddleston.correspondence@trade.gov.uk)  
W [gov.uk](http://gov.uk)

Darren Jones MP  
Chair, Business and Trade Committee  
House of Commons  
London  
SW1A 0AA

1 August 2023

Dear Darren,

I am writing to update you and your committee on the fourth round of negotiations for a free trade agreement (FTA) between the UK and the Gulf Cooperation Council (GCC). A Written Ministerial Statement will be laid in the House after recess.

The fourth round of negotiations for an FTA between the UK and the GCC took place between 17 and 28 July.

The round was hosted by UK in London and held in a hybrid fashion. A number of GCC negotiators travelled to London for in-person discussions with others attending virtually.

Draft treaty text was advanced across the majority of chapters. Technical discussions were held across 23 policy areas over 44 sessions. Good progress was made and both sides remain committed to securing an ambitious, comprehensive and modern agreement fit for the 21st century.

The GCC is equivalent to the UK's 7<sup>th</sup> largest export market and total trade is worth £61.3 billion according to latest figures. An FTA will be a substantial economic opportunity and a significant moment in the UK-GCC relationship. Government analysis shows that, in the long run, a deal with the GCC is expected to increase trade by at least 16%.

The fifth round of negotiations is expected to be hosted by the GCC later this year.

His Majesty's Government remains clear that any deal we sign will be in the best interests of the British people and the United Kingdom economy.

I will continue to update you and your committee as these negotiations progress – this includes the offer of a private briefing with the Chief Negotiator after each substantive negotiation round. My Department and I are committed to being transparent and keeping Parliament appropriately updated on our ambitious trade agenda.

Yours sincerely,

A handwritten signature in blue ink, appearing to read 'Nigel Huddleston', with a stylized flourish at the end.

**Nigel Huddleston MP**  
Minister of State for International Trade  
Department for Business and Trade