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Manufacturing Biz

ISSUE 05 JULY 2025

POLICY LAUNCHED TO POWER A SECURE AND SUSTAINABLE UK ECONOMY

NEW TRADE DATA SHOWS OPPORTUNITIES TO TURN THE TIDE

Call for the UK to act to stem £11bn loss to health research

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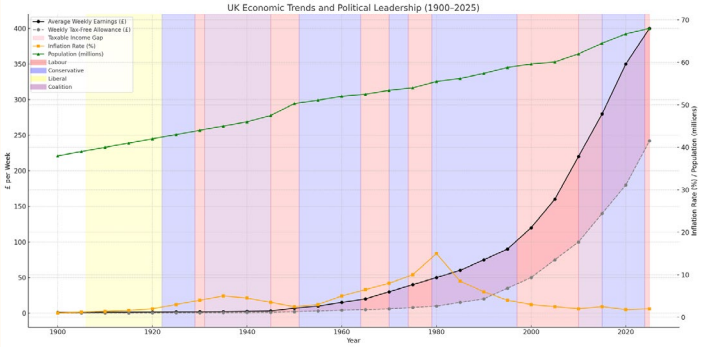
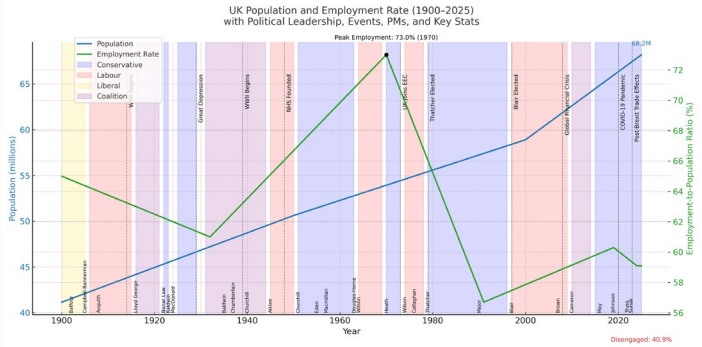
Welcome

Inspire to Aspire





Today there is a genuine concern that our benefits claimant's volume is increasing considerably, and we believe that there is a range of reasons why this situation exists.

There is always a need for taxation to deliver a range of public services and today there are many services delivered by government. The population that works pays taxes to cover the cost of the services delivered.

With over 9 million people now claiming benefits this leaves a smaller population earning and paying taxes and this against a declining population due to falling birth rates and higher levels of immigration numbers the overall population continues to rise.

Therefore, those that are working and paying personal taxes are taking responsibility for the social value they create. Sadly, however there is today a greater demand for tax income by government to support society and the graph above demonstrates this,

- The relevant government political party applying the rate of taxable income is shown
- The continued rise in population
- The level of inflation
- The growth in taxation because of the tax-free levels not following average wage levels.

The second graph details the same period of time as the first with further details related to specific events, the height of employment back in the 1970's at around the time that the taxation gap widens.

This is yet a further example of the lack of inspiration preventing aspiration.

If the government increases the tax-free limit more in keeping with reality, then there would be a much greater level of encouragement for people to work and a vast reduction in benefit payment issues.

I remember interviewing people recommended by DWP for a particular role and they would often say that they wanted a job to avoid queuing at the Benefits office every Thursday which they do not do today.

By creating an environment with a more realisable return on the effort invested, there would likely be an increased tax income and reduction in benefit claimants, and we will inspire to aspire.

ADRIAN HAWKINS OBE

Chairman - biz4Biz
Chariman - Herfordshire Futures Board
Chairman - Stevenage Development Board
Chairman - Hertfordshire Skills & Employment Board

Inside

Government's New Industrial Strategy

The government published its 'Modern Industrial Strategy' paper on Monday 23 June with a joint foreword from the Prime Minister Keir Starmer, Chancellor Rachel Reeves, and the Business Secretary, Jonathan Reynolds: "…it represents nothing less than a whole-government effort, with ambitious plans for eight high growth sectors. These sectors have been identified as those best placed to create the wealth, jobs, and higher wages our country needs in every community It underlines the Government's priority mission "to deliver strong, secure, and sustainable economic growth to boost living standards for working people in every part of the UK."

The sectors the government are focusing on are "the highly productive, innovative, exporting sectors whose frontier industries create strategically important technologies and services deployed across the economy."

The eight sectors (IS-8) with key highlights and stated aims by 2035, are:

> "The Government's priority mission, to deliver strong, secure, and sustainable economic growth to boost living standards for working people in every part of the UK."

1. Advanced Manufacturing: which gets £4.3 billion in funding, including up to £2.8 billion in R&D programmes over the next 5 years. Aim: achieve a near doubling of business investment to £39 billion per year.

2. Creative Industries: focussing on clusters, including investment of a £150 million Creative Places Growth Fund, new financial support for screen, music, and video games, and a new Creative Content Exchange. Aim: significantly increase business investment to £31 billion.

3. Life Sciences: to make the UK one of the world's top three Life Sciences economies, including 'up to' £600 million for a Health Data Research Service to create an AI-ready health data platform. Aim: by 2030 to be the leading life sciences

economy in Europe by 2030 and by 2035, the third 'most important' life sciences economy globally.

4. Clean Energy: producing the 'next generation of technologies' to delivering the government's 'Clean Energy Superpower Mission'. Aim: double investment to over £30billion.

5. Defence: building the UK's defence industrial base and exploit benefits through innovation, exports, and scale-ups. Aim: to be "Europe's leading Defence exporter and close the gap for venture capital investment into Defence with the US by half and reduce the time to contract across all segments of Defence procurements."

6. Digital Technologies: including £670 million to drive the development and adoption of quantum computers in the UK, £500 million delivered through the 'Sovereign AI Unit', and a new programme of 'AI Growth Zones'. Aim: to be 'the leading European hub' to create, invest in, and scale fast growing digital and technology businesses, with £3 of private R&D investment in the sector for every £1 of public R&D funding.

7. Professional and Business Services: including increasing tech adoption and expanding the "Made Smarter" scheme as part of a £150 million package of support for the sector. Aim: to double business investment to £65 billion.

8. Financial Services: growing the UK's financial services hub, including 'rebalancing to regulate for growth, cutting red tape for FinTech firms and opening more private capital. Aim: to be the location of choice for financial services firms to invest, grow, and sell their services, with the sector 'increasing its contribution' of exports to UK GVA.

Local Growth Plans will dovetail with the Industrial Strategy Sector Plans – highlighting the connections between local and national initiatives to support the Governments IS-8.
Government will back Combined Mayoral Authorities to implement their plans by giving them more powers over strategic planning, business support, skills, and transport, underpinned by Integrated Settlements, where applicable, and other devolved funding.

"It represents nothing less than a whole-government effort, with ambitious plans for eight high growth sectors… to deliver strong, secure, and sustainable economic growth to boost living standards for working people in every part of the UK."

US drops out of growth market top three for the first time

For the first time, the United States has dropped out of the top three growth markets for UK manufacturers - overtaken by Asia/Oceania and the Middle East - as export optimism fades in the face of tariffs and rising uncertainty.
This is according to Make UK and BDO's Manufacturing Outlook 2025 Q2 report, which also finds that 6 in 10 companies expect their export volumes to the US to be hit.

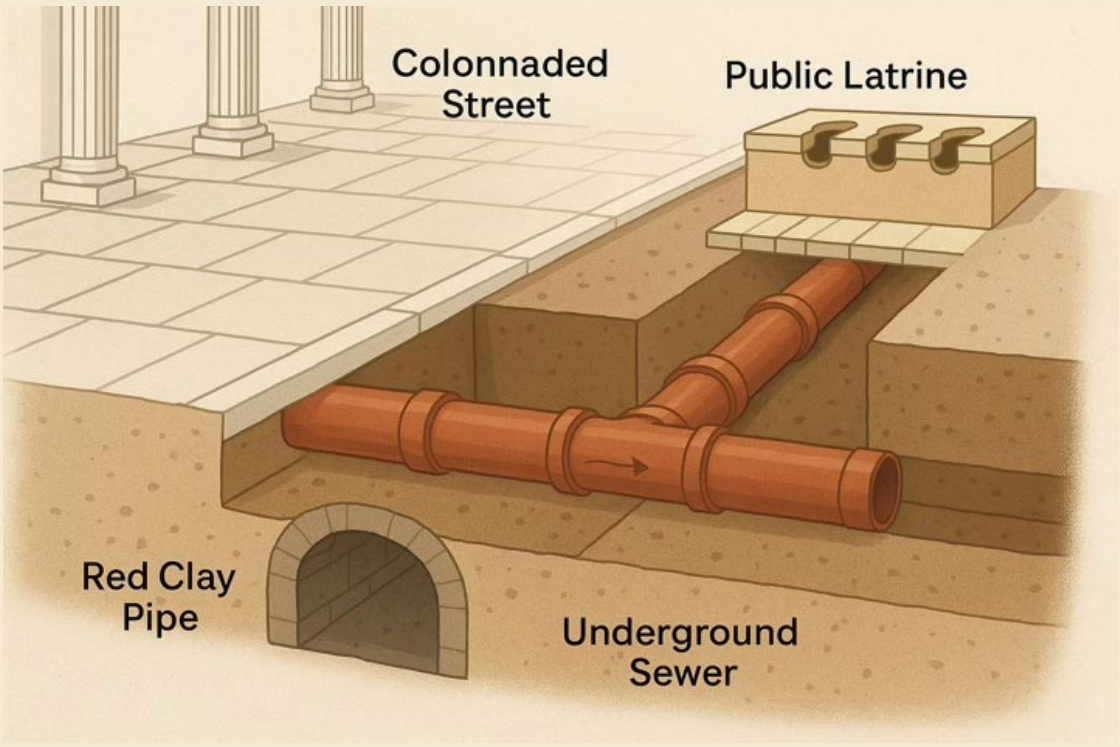
Furthermore, nearly a third of companies are rethinking their supply chains, with over a quarter exploring new markets - while just 4% plan to invest in US manufacturing.
In other news, output volumes have grown following a contraction last quarter, while - US-exports aside - overall export orders have recovered, though domestic orders are negative.
Employment levels remain stable, with

"Manufacturers are facing a gathering storm of huge uncertainty in one of their major markets, a skills crisis and eye watering energy costs."

"Growing output levels are proof of manufacturers' resilience and last month's trade deals should remove barriers as UK companies seek new trading partners and opportunities for growth. As always, they need urgent clarity and targeted investment from the government if this recovery is to continue into next quarter."

investment trending sharply downwards and manufacturing growth forecasts have been cut sharply for 2026, after already being negative for 2025.
"While at first glance the headline numbers may not look too bad, manufacturers are facing a gathering storm of huge uncertainty in one of their major markets, a skills crisis and eye watering energy costs which are providing a harsh reality for many.
"In response, it's absolutely essential that the forthcoming industrial strategy takes bold measures to bring down the cost of energy and takes equally bold action to ensure companies can access the people they need to take advantage of a more competitive landscape. If these two issues are not addressed, then we will face the serious prospect of the UK accelerating into de-industrialisation." Said Seamus Nevin, Chief Economist, Make UK"This quarter's results are a testament to the increasingly challenging landscape our British manufacturers are operating in. The forecasted decline in growth is concerning and the delayed industrial strategy won't help to assuage uncertainty in the sector.
"That said, there remains pockets of positivity. Growing output levels are proof of manufacturer's resilience and last month's trade deals should remove barriers as UK companies seek new trading partners and opportunities for growth. As always, they need urgent clarity and targeted investment from the government if this recovery is to continue into next quarter." Said Richard Austin Head of Manufacturing, BDO.

What's in the Pipeline?



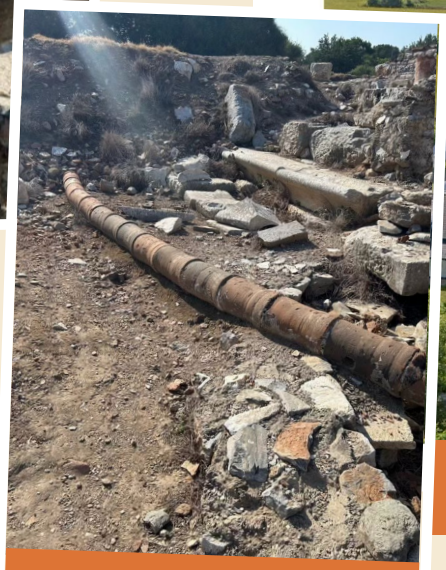
Ephesus flourished as part of the Roman Empire. It became the capital of the Roman province of Asia and a major centre of commerce, with a population of over 250,000. The famous Library of Celsus, Great Theatre, and public baths were built during this period. It was an early centre of Christianity; the Apostle Paul preached there, and the Gospel of John may have been written nearby. According to tradition, the Virgin Mary lived near Ephesus after Jesus's death. Positioned along major trade routes, Ephesus was a melting pot of Greek, Roman, and Eastern cultures. It had sophisticated infrastructure: aqueducts, paved streets, public toilets, and a complex sewer system.
The red clay water and sewerage pipes in Ephesus were primarily laid during the Roman period, particularly from the 1st century BC to the 2nd century CE. Roman engineering in Ephesus was highly advanced, and the city had a well-organized infrastructure system that included:

- **Clay (terracotta) pipes** for water supply and drainage.
- **Underground sewers** running beneath streets.
- **Public latrines** connected to running water and drainage systems.

These systems were developed during the height of Roman urban development:

- Reign of Augustus (27 BC – 14 CE) to Hadrian (117–138 CE).This was when the city saw major public works projects, including:
- Aqueducts for fresh water.
- Fountains, baths, and latrines connected by clay pipes.

Pipes were made from fired clay (terracotta). Fitted together in sections with bell-and-spigot joints, sealed with



This is the pipe as found on the site today.

‹ Editions | The Daily Telegraph News | 40 of 140

Share

Isn't there a hose pipe ban on?

A house is battered by a 100ft jet of water and a road is flooded after a pipe burst in Sneedhams Green, Matson, Gloucester. A spokesman for Severn Trent said engineers were on site yesterday to carry out repairs and bottled water was given to residents who were without supplies.

What happens when a pipe leaks, breaks or bursts just like the news coverage above?

mortar or lead and placed underground, often beneath colonnaded streets, and connected to slope-graded sewers.
These innovations made Ephesus one of the most sanitarily advanced cities of its time, rivalling even Rome itself.
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These innovations made Ephesus one of the most sanitarily advanced cities of its time, rivalling even Rome itself.
A sophisticated invention all those years ago which has now been repeated trillions of times across our planet but today carrying not just water or sewerage but gases, like hydrogen and methane and liquids like oil and electricity.

> "Today we are fortunate to live in a technologically sophisticated time and this is the time for Intelligent Pipelines. I-Pipes are pipes that can be used both to repair and replace existing pipes."

Just imagine what a network we now have running across our planet underneath our feet and close to our homes, industrial spaces and shops.

Today we are fortunate to live in a technologically sophisticated time and this is the time for INTELLIGENT Pipelines.

What is an INTELLIGENT Pipeline?
I-Pipes are pipes that can be used both to repair and replace existing pipes. They are intelligent for all the reasons detailed on our website

But in short

1. They tell you where they are so you can always find them.
2. They tell you if they are expanding or contracting.
3. They tell you if they have broken.

This provides

1. Knowledge of where they are.
2. Knowledge in advance of any issues arising.
3. Knowledge of leaks that can be very quickly resolved.
4. Knowledge of any safety issues arising.
5. Knowledge of ground movement pre-empting sink holes etc.

After 12 years in development working with industry, the product is now ready to deliver to the world.

Find out more here
www.i-transmission.com

Call for the UK to act to stem £11bn loss to health research

The UK could lose out on £11 billion in pharmaceuticals research and development (R&D) investment by 2033, and see fewer new medicine launches in the NHS, unless very high and unpredictable medicines sales clawbacks are addressed, according to WPI Economics. In the UK, a medicines pricing control mechanism, known as the Voluntary Scheme or VPAG, now requires companies to pay the Department of Health and Social Care (DHSC) up to a quarter to a third (23.5%-35.6%) of their UK revenue from sales of branded medicines to the NHS. In a new report, 'Opportunity Unlocked: How UK medicine spend policy can free the life sciences sector to drive growth,' WPI Economics looked at a subset of R&D activity in the UK and modelled the impact of prolonged high medicines payment rates. The report showed that if very high new medicine payment rates of above 20 per cent of companies' UK revenue continue, the UK could lose out on £11bn of R&D investment by 2033. However, if new medicine payment rates are returned to pre-2023 levels of below 10 per cent, such losses can still be avoided. Lower rates under 10 per cent would also increase GDP by £61bn over the next 30 years, delivering increased tax revenue of around £20bn, according to WPI Economics' calculations. The authors suggest that both these losses and gains could be even larger once the full range of life science investments in the UK is considered. Richard Torbett, Chief Executive, the ABPI, said: "The UK will not realise its ambition and potential to be a global leader in health research if it continues to value the products of that research so poorly. This work sends a clear warning about the risk of doing nothing. However, it also shows the size of the prize if this government can address the policy

"The UK will not realise its ambition to be a global leader in health research if it continues to value the products of that research so poorly."

failures of the past and work with industry to make the UK the home of life science innovation." Matthew Oakley, Founder and Director, WPI Economics, said: "The burden of such high repayment rates on company revenues has clearly become an obstacle to growth in life sciences. The system risks generating poorer outcomes for patients and making health inequalities worse. Addressing this issue is critical in supporting the government's number one mission to deliver economic growth." In recent years, rocketing payment rates have resulted in industry payments to the government going from around £590 million in 2021 to £3.5 billion in 2025. This has been compared to an additional tax by some pharmaceutical companies, although it is applied to sales rather than profits. While no other country has an identical scheme to the UK, the 2025 payment rate has left the UK significantly out of line with comparable countries, with France's average payment rate at 5.7 per cent, Italy at 6.8 per cent, Germany at 7 per cent, Spain at 7.5 per cent. In parallel, there is a growing evidence base of widely reported cases of investments in R&D and manufacturing going to other countries. At the same time, competition for global investment has escalated, and pharmaceutical companies are stepping up their investments in the US – Johnson &Johnson has announced $55bn worth of investment, Roche $50bn, Gilead $32bn, Lilly $27bn, and Novartis $23bn. The very high UK repayment rates and challenging pricing rules are already impacting new medicines launches. NICE's baseline threshold has remained static since the early 2000s, and the discount rate applied to health benefits realised over time is punitive, creating an increasingly difficult proposition for companies seeking to prioritise launching their medicines in the UK. In the last five years (2019-2024), around a fifth of the NICE work programme has been terminated – a 100 per cent increase since the preceding five-year period - meaning that NHS patients are not able to access those medicines for their condition. Access to new, more effective medicines directly benefits patients and indicates competitiveness for investment, including partnerships with the NHS and future clinical trial placements, which provide revenue directly to the NHS. For example, R&D investment offers a range of benefits, including large economic spillovers. Investment is also linked to growth in employment. The pharmaceutical sector is a key source of high-skill and high-pay employment, 60 per cent of which is outside London and the South East and West of the country. To understand the potential upsides to fixing these rates, the ABPI surveyed its members on how their plans for new medicines launches, new R&D, and headcount figures have changed since the announcement of the rates, and how they would change in a range of potential future scenarios. One in five companies (19 per cent) anticipate a reduction in R&D investment as a direct result of the 2025 VPAG payment rate. In 2022, 30 per cent of respondents stated that the UK was in the top three countries globally to launch medicines; in 2025, only 13 per cent stated that this was the case. The survey sample of 33 companies found that 15 new active substances and 38 new indications have not been launched in the NHS in the UK since the start of 2023, the same year that the payment rate soared to 26.5 per cent (the highest in UK history). Furthermore, 27 medicines, including new indications, were made available only on the private market, further risking the creation of a two-tier health system. Steve Hopkinson, Vice President & General Manager, AbbVie

UK, said: “In the last decade, it is clear the UK has become less competitive and less attractive for life sciences investment due to high medicines rebate rates, low access and uptake of innovative medicines, and declining activity in clinical trials. AbbVie UK has welcomed the government’s willingness to engage in this issue and believes it now has the opportunity to readdress this balance, making the UK more attractive and a top five destination for the life sciences sector, benefiting patients, the NHS and the wider UK economy.” Russell Abberley, Vice President & General Manager, Amgen UK&I, said: “The findings of this report highlight that we have reached a critical juncture. Government must therefore act decisively on VPAG, taking immediate and positive steps to prevent looming disinvestment and deliver on its ambition to grow the life sciences sector. Failure to do so will further exacerbate the UK’s position as an international outlier with profound and long-lasting consequences for patients, our nation’s health and the UK economy. Now is the time to change course and take a confident step back in the right direction.” Jackie Davis, UK General Manager, Astellas, said: “Unpredictable and excessive medicines payment rates are putting UK innovation at risk. If the UK wants to remain a leader in life sciences, we must properly value and invest in innovative medicines – because ultimately, it’s about delivering the very best treatments to patients.” Vani Manja, Country General Manager and Head of Human Pharma, Boehringer Ingelheim UK and Ireland, said: “The UK cannot afford to treat innovative medicines just as a cost to the NHS. A long-term, joined-up strategy is needed – one that sees access to innovative medicines as a vital part of reversing poor health outcomes, boosting workforce productivity, and restoring the UK’s standing as a global leader in life sciences. A stable and internationally competitive commercial environment is essential to achieving this.” Kylie Bromley, Vice President and Managing Director of Biogen UK and Ireland, said: “The size and unpredictability of the rebates have had a major impact on our work in the UK and our investment here. The positive parts of the UK’s life sciences ecosystem are over-shadowed by the fact that we are a noticeable international outlier for the wrong reasons. “If the UK can get this right, as well as addressing the well-documented challenges with getting new medicines approved for use on the NHS, we can strengthen our position as a world-leading hub for the life sciences, potentially delivering billions in increased tax revenue and R&D investment over the coming years.” Peter Wickersham, Vice President and General Manager, Gilead Sciences UK & Ireland, said: “The UK has the potential to be a global leader in life sciences; however, the excessive and unpredictable VPAG rates, coupled with the challenging operating environment are undermining that ambition. We are at a crucial moment for the government to set a more positive trajectory. We must now all work together to create a fairer model that fosters, rather than stifles, access to innovative medicines for patients who need them." Roz Bekker, Managing Director UK & Ireland, Johnson & Johnson Innovative Medicine, said: “At Johnson & Johnson, we believe everyone should have access to the best health and care. We have long shared our concerns that the UK's challenging commercial access environment and unstable VPAG payment rates are denying patients the latest treatments, while also impacting the country’s longstanding reputation as a leader in life sciences. An urgent update is needed to the current VPAG scheme to bring rates more in line with international comparators to deliver for the economy and for UK patients. “Johnson & Johnson remains committed to working constructively with all relevant stakeholders to identify a suitable path forward, however immediate government intervention is now absolutely vital to unlock our country's potential, and ensure our patients are not left behind.”

> “Unpredictable and excessive medicines payment rates are putting UK innovation at risk.”

Manufacturers and friends of sector have been recognised in 2025 birthday honours

Manufacturers and friends of the sector have been recognised for their achievements and contributions by King Charles III in the 2025 birthday honours

King Charles III's Birthday Honours List has been announced and includes several members, champions and close partners of the UK manufacturing community. We salute all those who have been recognised for their contributions to business, manufacturing, innovation, and public service. Including:

Damehood:
Chi Onwurah, MP for Newcastle upon Tyne Central and West. Chair, Science, Innovation and Technology Committee. Recognised for political and public service.

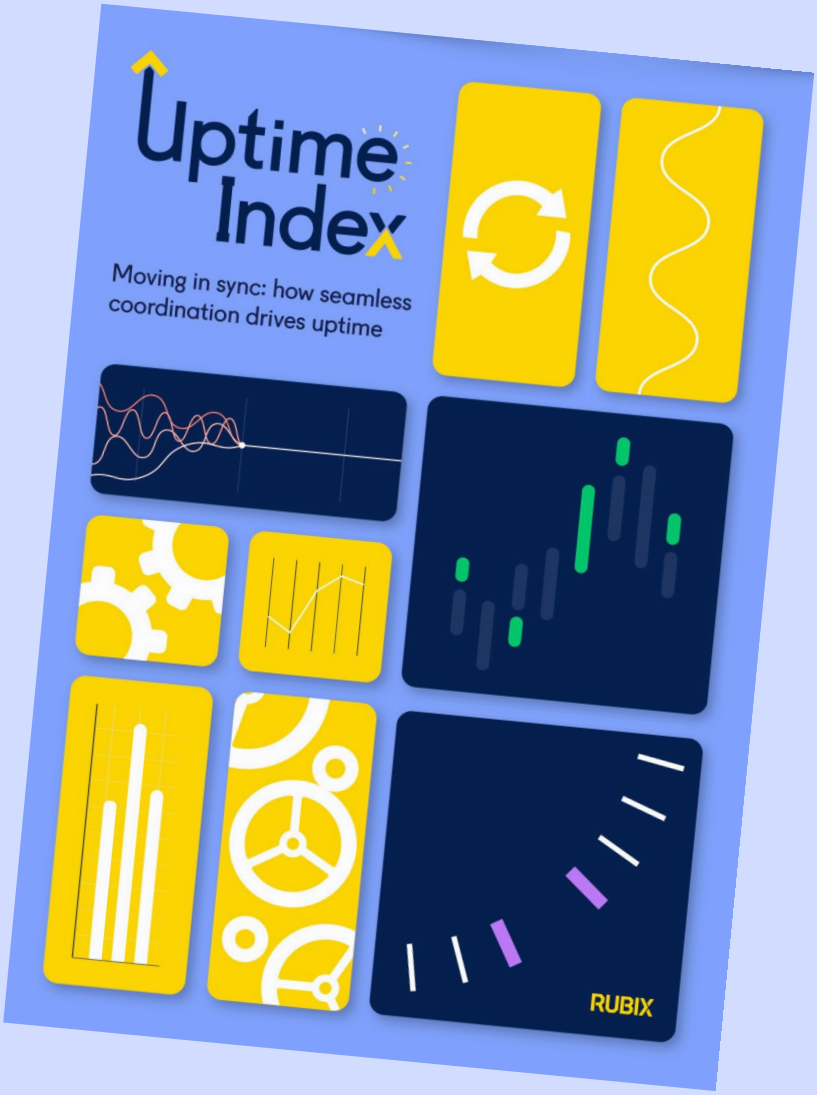
Commander of the Order of the British Empire (CBE):
Damon de Laszlo, Chair, Harwin - for services to the manufacturing industry and to scientific and charitable causes.
Paul Livingston, CEO, Lockheed Martin UK - for services to the defence industry.
Shevaun Haviland, Director General, British Chambers of Commerce - for services to business.

Stephen Scrimshaw, former Executive Director UK&I, Siemens Energy Ltd - for services to British manufacturing, to transport and the green transition to net zero.

> "We salute all those who have been recognised for their contributions to business, manufacturing, innovation, and public service."

Officer of the Order of the British Empire (OBE):
Craig Beaumont, Executive Director, Federation of Small Businesses - for services to small businesses.
Neil Carberry, CEO, Recruitment and Employment Confederation - for services to the economy and to business.

Rubix launches new industry health indicator for the European manufacturing sector



Rubix, Europe's leading distributor of industrial products and services, has announced the launch of the Uptime Index – a new indicator assessing the health of European manufacturing. The Uptime Index was developed in response to ongoing conversations with customers across Europe, who expressed a growing need for greater visibility into the factors affecting factory uptime and long-term performance. Understanding these pressures is essential to improving resilience, boosting productivity and staying competitive in a fast-changing industrial landscape.Commenting on the launch, David Cullern, Group VP Key Accounts at Rubix, said: "Within any manufacturing business – the factory is the heart and uptime is its oxygen – so the Uptime Index is the industry's health check."The success of the European manufacturing industry is a priority we share with both customers and suppliers, and the Uptime Index provides a collective focus on what matters most, keeping European industry running reliably and resiliently."As of June 2025, the overall

Uptime Index score stands at 74 out of 100, indicating a relatively high level of confidence among Rubix customers. Across Europe, the most positively rated area was a strong understanding of maintenance requirements, suggesting businesses are well-equipped to manage downtime and keep sites running at peak efficiency. In contrast, the findings showed that confidence in predictive maintenance was slightly lower among participants despite its growing importance in boosting resilience and avoiding unplanned outages.Local findings from the UK and Ireland, based on responses from 395 manufacturing businesses, closely reflected the wider European picture. A strong understanding of maintenance needs emerged as a key strength across the region. However, confidence in accessing skilled staff was notably lower, underscoring a particularly acute skills challenge in the UK and Ireland.These results are not a cause for concern but a clear call to action – and a demonstration of the importance of regularly measuring performance. They also reinforce the vital role trusted partners, such as Rubix, can play in helping manufacturers address capability gaps and drive meaningful progress.Cullern continued: “It’s encouraging to see real momentum in some areas, but there’s more to do to ensure progress is shared across the board. By identifying where support is most needed, we can help strengthen resilience and drive positive change across the industry.“Results from our research show that the majority of European manufacturers agree on the need to improve systems integration between functions like procurement, inventory and maintenance. True resilience comes from joined-up thinking across the value chain – and that’s where the right partnerships and technical expertise can make all the difference.”The Uptime Index marks the beginning of a continuing initiative to monitor and understand shifts in performance, confidence and capability across European manufacturing.

> “True resilience comes from joined-up thinking across the value chain – and that’s where the right partnerships and technical expertise can make all the difference.”

Whitepaper: Moving In Sync: How Seamless Coordination Drives UptimeTo support the Uptime Index, Rubix will publish a series of whitepapers. Informed by further insight, including in-depth customer interviews, these provide deeper analysis of industry needs and opportunities concerning uptime and manufacturing performance.The first whitepaper in this series, ‘Moving in sync: How seamless coordination drives Uptime’, highlights how greater alignment of decisions taken by central teams and actions carried out at the site level can improve a business’s health. It offers a perspective on why this alignment is often hard to find and what it takes to put it right.To view the full findings, visit: https://rubix.com/uptimeindex/.

Jobs boost as UK Defence Secretary officially opens new artillery factory in Sheffield

The Defence Secretary has officially opened a landmark £25 million BAE Systems artillery factory that is the first to restore critical gun barrel manufacturing capability in the UK.

The new 94,000 sq. ft facility, which will become operational by the end of the year, will house a state-of-the-art factory specialising in artillery expertise that will make Sheffield the home of UK howitzer production. The facility will also create 200 new high skilled jobs and support more than 60 businesses across the UK supply chain.

John Healey, Secretary of State for Defence said: "This new factory is a big boost for South Yorkshire and a significant step forward in strengthening our British defence industrial base. This is a vote of confidence in our world-leading defence sector and good, skilled British jobs, underpinned by this government's Plan for Change.

"I welcome BAE Systems' long-term commitment to this new site, which demonstrates how defence can be an engine for growth, bringing investment and opportunities to communities across the UK, including right here in South Yorkshire."

Once operational later this year the site will initially deliver the Company's M777 lightweight towed howitzer manufacturing capability, with capacity to expand production lines. The site will then evolve to develop and produce a range of world-class combat systems, leading the charge for the UK Government's ambitions to revitalise and sustain vital UK artillery capacity.

"This new factory is a big boost for South Yorkshire and a significant step forward in strengthening our British defence industrial base. This is a vote of confidence in our world-leading defence sector and good, skilled British jobs, underpinned by this government's Plan for Change."

The Company welcomed guests from across Sheffield who enjoyed a tour of the site. As work to prepare the facility for production continues, visitors also had the chance to meet with apprentices who will be among the first to work on the new production lines.

John Borton, Managing Director, BAE Systems Weapons Systems UK said "Our significant investment adds to Sheffield's rich manufacturing history and reputation as an industrial powerhouse and will develop a highly skilled workforce in the local area, while also forming an important part of the UK's critical defence infrastructure.
"It's fantastic to be able to welcome the Defence Secretary, as well as local partners and suppliers from across the city to get a first look at our progress and hear about the commitments we're making in Sheffield, as part of delivering sovereign artillery capabilities."

BAE Systems' Weapons Systems UK business is the country's only design house for artillery where it also develops, manufactures and supports artillery systems and naval guns. This includes the M777 lightweight artillery, the only combat-proven lightweight howitzer in the world.
Earlier this year, the UK Ministry of Defence awarded BAE Systems a contract to deliver 150 British designed artillery barrels to Ukraine, working with Sheffield Forgemasters to deliver on the government's commitment to supporting the conflict.
The Company also been providing in-country maintenance and repair for 105mm Light Guns since last year and is working with local partners to extend support across additional artillery capabilities, which helps to ensure that critical equipment can be returned to the frontline more quickly.
The Sheffield site is the latest infrastructure investment that BAE Systems is making across its UK facilities. The Company is nearing completion of a £300 million transformation of its shipbuilding facilities in Glasgow and a £200 million expansion of its munitions facilities to meet increased demand. It is also investing £220m in a new advanced technology factory in Rochester.

> "Our significant investment adds to Sheffield's rich manufacturing history and reputation as an industrial powerhouse and will develop a highly skilled workforce in the local area, while also forming an important part of the UK's critical defence infrastructure."

Pragmatic Semiconductor set to revolutionise NFC connectivity with sustainable flexible chips

Pragmatic Semiconductor Ltd., a pioneer in flexible semiconductor technology, has announced the launch of its latest radio frequency identification (RFID) near-field communication (NFC) product line, Pragmatic NFC Connect.

NFC Connect redefines the parameters of NFC connectivity, unlocking seamless, item-level intelligence for mass-market products – traditionally constrained by cost, supply chain and sustainability challenges.

Powered by Pragmatic's unique FlexIC (flexible integrated circuit) technology, NFC Connect delivers industry-standard NFC endpoint capability in an ultra-thin, flexible form factor with a uniquely low carbon footprint.

> "Pragmatic's FlexIC technology sustainably bridges our physical and digital worlds to enable low carbon, low-cost edge and item-level intelligence at scale."

Inlay manufacturers, label convertors and service bureaus can now empower brands to effortlessly integrate NFC functionality into products or packaging – even on curved surfaces – delivering smarter, more connected experiences and deeper levels of consumer engagement at scale.

"Pragmatic's FlexIC technology sustainably bridges our physical and digital worlds to enable low carbon, low-cost edge and item-level intelligence at scale, where it

"With an industry-leading low carbon footprint and passively powered, it offers NFC-enabled iOS and Android smartphone compatibility, enabling use within existing reader infrastructure."

simply wasn't possible previously," said David Moore, Chief Executive Officer, Pragmatic Semiconductor.

"Our NFC Connect product line empowers sustainable customer innovation, enabling brands to unlock richer consumer experiences and drive deeper connections, from customer loyalty programs, product authentication and provenance, to facilitating improved reuse and recycling for a more circular economy. We see tremendous market demand in fast-moving consumer goods – such as food and beverage, apparel, pharmaceuticals and cosmetics – with applications rapidly extending to smart health and wellness devices, toys and games, and food freshness detection."

James Davey, SVP Sales, Business Development and Product Management, Pragmatic Semiconductor added: "NFC Connect conforms with ISO15693 and NFC Forum Type 5 industry standards, and is easily integrated into existing workflows, providing inlay, assembly and converter ecosystem partners with a unique opportunity to expand their product portfolios while addressing new market opportunities.

"With an industry-leading low carbon footprint and passively powered, it offers NFC-enabled iOS and Android smartphone compatibility, enabling use within existing reader infrastructure. It can be assembled onto single-sided NFC RFID antennas, giving our customers the ability to develop thinner, more cost-effective and more sustainable NFC solutions."

Francisco Melo, President, Solutions Group at Avery Dennison – a global leader in materials science and digital identification solutions, and a strategic investor in Pragmatic – adds: "Innovation is the lifeblood of our industry. It is also key to realising item-level intelligence at scale and extending unique item-level ID to new segments, such as FMCG. It's exciting to see the launch of Pragmatic NFC Connect and to be part of this journey, I look forward to our continued strategic partnership enabling clients to pursue exciting new market opportunities."

Hector Gomez, VP of NFC Business Development at Tageos – a global leader in RFID products, and a key ecosystem partner – commented: "We celebrate the launch of Pragmatic NFC Connect and are delighted to explore how we can integrate the technology into our future portfolio. It is also further confirmation of our joint ambition and leadership in meeting the latest customer and market needs and in expanding and shaping the range and flexibility of new products and applications for RFID and NFC innovations."

Frank Lehmann, Vice President of Corporate Venturing and Open Innovation at Amcor – a strategic investor in Pragmatic Semiconductor – adds: "We are excited to see Pragmatic launch this innovative product, which can unlock multiple opportunities for connected packaging options and more sustainable business models for a variety of brands. We look forward to exploring the potential applications and leveraging Pragmatic's exciting technology."

Qiao Luyun, Secretary of the Party Committee and Chairman at Jinjia Group commented: "We welcome the launch of Pragmatic NFC Connect, and the new levels of innovation it brings to the digital packaging sector. This supports our shared vision for a more sustainable future, delivering item-level intelligence through smart packaging, contributing to the circular economy and driving digital transformation to bring an interconnected world closer to reality."

NFC Connect is manufactured at Pragmatic Park, Co. Durham – the company's flagship production facility and home of the UK's first 300mm semiconductor fabrication line – which provides capacity to produce billions of chips per year using its innovative fabrication process.

This sustainably delivers rapid cycle times and cost efficiencies, consuming less energy and water, and fewer harmful chemicals, than standard semiconductor manufacturing, while significantly driving down the environmental impact of production.

Initial volume samples of the first member of the NFC Connect product line, PR1301, are available as frame-mounted 300 mm wafers, singulated dies, and sample inlays.

Planning permissions for new home building projects plummets to new low

Figures starkly illustrate the urgent need for government to tackle ongoing barriers to delivery and address housing market issues.

The number of new home building sites given planning approval in England during Q1 2025 was the lowest since reporting began some 20 years ago, representing less investment in new sites than during the Global Financial Crisis and the COVID-19 lockdowns.

The figures are included in the latest Housing Pipeline report from the Home Builders Federation, based on data from Glenigan. Approval was given for just 2,064 sites in Q1, a 16% drop on the previous quarter. The rolling annual number of projects approved in the year to Q1 2025 was 9,342, itself a new record low and is the twelfth quarter in a row that the annual rolling number has been the lowest since the report began recording

In total approval for just 45,521 new homes was given in Q1 – the lowest number of quarterly approvals since 2012, a 37% drop on the previous quarter and 21% drop on Q1 2024. The report starkly illustrates the urgent need for Government to address problems in the housing market and the ongoing barriers to housing supply if they are to get anywhere near the much vaunted 1.5 million homes target.

The rolling annual number of units approved in the year to Q1 2025 was just 233,695, a 5% drop on the previous 12-month period and the lowest 12-monthly outturn recorded since 2014. The figure is just 63% of the 370,000 number the Government has cited an ambition to achieve through cumulative local authority housing targets across the country.

Estimates suggest that we are currently delivering around 200,000 new homes a year, meaning that as we approach the anniversary of the election we are already 100,000 behind the run rate needed to hit the 1.5m target. With housing construction levels flatlining at best and planning permissions for new sites and new homes continuing to fall, the likelihood of imminent increases seems remote.

As the industry has been warning ministers for some time now, whilst the planning system changes announced swiftly following the election were very welcome, housing supply is determined by several key factors. Without further policy interventions in those other areas to address the huge constraints that remain, the industry is unable to deliver on Government's - or indeed its own – wishes to build more homes.

> "The latest planning figures are disastrous for an industry and a Government looking to increase housing supply over the coming years. Unless urgent interventions are made, there seems little chance of us building the homes we know are desperately needed."

Neil Jefferson, Chief Executive at the Home Builders Federation, said: "The latest planning figures are disastrous for an industry and a Government looking to increase housing supply over the coming years. With current supply flatlining and permissions for homes to be built over the next few years plummeting, unless urgent interventions are made, there seems little chance of us building the homes we know are desperately needed.

> "Planning permissions and house building levels will not increase unless ministers work with industry and tackle the issues preventing companies from pressing the accelerator and investing in the sites, skills and supply chains needed to build the homes the country needs."

"Whilst the government's ambition and the swift action on planning were very welcome, increasing housing delivery requires much more than good intentions and planning reform.

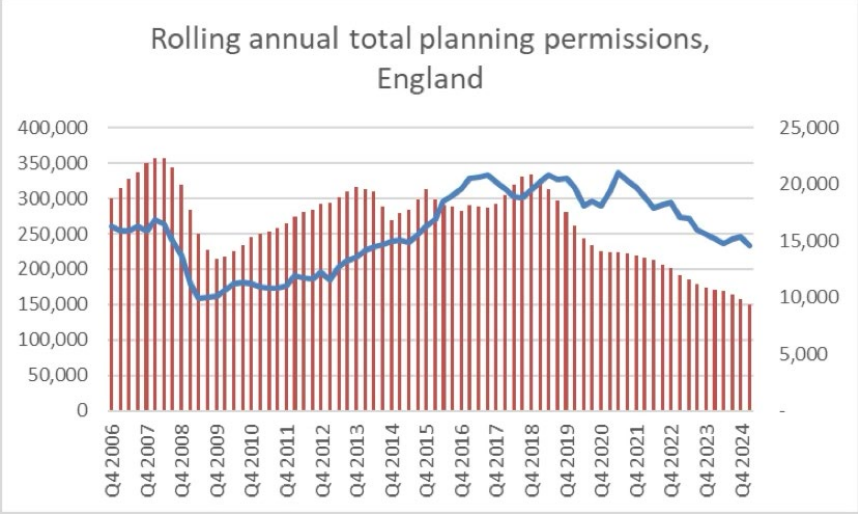
"Ministers have to address the fact that potential home owners are unable to buy due to the lack of affordable mortgage lending and the absence for the first time in decades of any Government support scheme (for first time buyers). Similarly, it needs to ensure Housing Associations are financially able to purchase the affordable homes house builders deliver. Without a functioning market for private or affordable homes it is impossible for industry to deliver them.

"Planning permissions and house building levels will not increase unless ministers work with industry and tackle the issues preventing companies from pressing the accelerator and investing in the sites, skills and supply chains needed build the homes the country needs."

Allan Wilen, Economics Director at Glenigan, said: "The drop in detailed planning approvals has been widespread, but especially marked for larger projects of 125 homes or more. Whilst Glenigan has seen an increase in planning applications in recent months, the current decline appears to reflect earlier declines in planning applications during 2023 and the first half of last year. This underlines the long lead time to secure residential planning consent and the need to streamline the planning system."

Industry has been clear with government that without action on a number of fronts, the welcome ambition of the 1.5m homes target will soon become an impossible dream. Specifically, ministers have been encouraged to:

1. Bring forward effective support for first-time buyers. With uncertainty in the market and affordability stretched to breaking point, the effective demand for housing is extremely small and, for first-time buyers, often limited to those with wealthy families capable of providing financial assistance. Previous governments for the past 25 years have assisted first-time buyers with equity loans or shared equity mortgage support and for more than 60 years governments have supported home ownership in other ways. A recent report by Public First found that introducing a new equity loan scheme for first-time buyers would support the construction of an additional 100,000 new homes over the next five years;
2. Address the long-term problems in the Section 106 Affordable Housing market which see tens of thousands of new homes designated for Social and Affordable Rents going unacquired by Housing Associations. Improving flexibility in Section 106 agreements to clear the backlog and get builders investing again is long overdue;
3. Resolve the ongoing delays and uncertainty caused by the failure of the Building Safety Regulator to meet its service requirements. Since last spring, prospective high rise developments have required approval from the new Regulator run by the Health and Safety Executive which has been unable to deal with its workload. Investment in new apartment blocks has collapsed because of the uncertainty;
4. Speed up the planning process. While the planning framework changes delivered by the government in its first months have helped to create a more progressive planning system, the day-to-day operation of planning services at a local level continues to frustrate. Recent HBF research has found a shortfall of more than 2,000 planners in local authority departments and average times to agree a Section 106 agreement is regularly exceeded one year. Meanwhile, stretch councils are failing to spend infrastructure and community payments made by developers with the running total of unspent Section 106 and Community Infrastructure Levy reaching £8bn in 2024;
5. Recognise the impact that a suite of new taxes, levies and policy costs is having on the viability and deliverability of new housing. Since 2020, builders have seen costs of government interventions balloon with a new industry-specific Residential Property Developers Tax, Biodiversity Net Gain, Nutrient Neutrality charges and multiple regulatory changes, including a forthcoming Future Homes Standard. Government recently confirmed the introduction next year of a new levy on house building, which will add thousands to the cost of building each new home, and last week launched a consultation on a new Build Out Tax, empowering councils to impose additional costs on builders if construction rates decline due to market slowdowns.



Britain's battery future at a crossroads: Policy commission launched to power a secure and sustainable economy

Lord Hutton has launched a Policy Commission on Gigafactories to support the UK's ambitions for economic growth and sustainable industries.

This Commission brings together senior cross-party political figures and industry leaders with deep expertise in government, policy, manufacturing, energy and national security. Its members include three former Cabinet Ministers, and two respected industry experts – combining political experience with frontline sector knowledge.

The Commission will consult with stakeholders from across industry, government, academia, and investors, and will publish its findings and recommendations early in 2026.

The Commission will produce recommendations on how the UK can scale up its battery manufacturing capacity – a critical requirement to achieving net zero, generating economic growth and securing high-quality green jobs.

The Commissioners are:

Rt Hon Lord John Hutton (Chair), former Secretary of State for Defence

Rt Hon Greg Clark, former Secretary of State for Business, Energy and Industrial Strategy and Chair of the Society of Chemical Industry, and currently Chair

of the University of Warwick's Innovation District
Dr Isobel Sheldon OBE, founder of Oak Polytech
Rt Hon Baroness Lindsay Northover, Member of the Lords Science and Technology Committee
Rt Hon Sir Oliver Letwin, former Minister for Government Policy and Chancellor of the Duchy of Lancaster, currently Senior Advisor to the Faraday Institution
Dr Ian Constance, CEO at Advanced Propulsion Centre UK.

The Commission comes at a pivotal moment for the UK as the Government negotiates new trade deals and is expected to launch its Industrial Strategy in the coming weeks. From energy independence to electric vehicle production, national supply chain resilience to our trading relationship with China and the USA, the need for increased battery manufacturing cuts across many major policy priorities facing Britain today.
The Faraday Institution, the UK's independent institute for electrochemical energy storage research, skills development, market analysis, and early-stage commercialisation, will serve as secretariat to the commission.
Lord Hutton of Furness, Chair of the Commission, said: "Batteries are no longer just a tech issue or an energy issue – they are a national strategic imperative. The UK cannot afford to remain dependent on foreign supply chains for such a vital component of our economic and energy future. This Commission will ask the difficult questions and provide bold but realistic and politically deliverable recommendations to put Britain on the front foot."

Professor Martin Freer, CEO of the Faraday Institution, added: "Britain has world-class battery science and growing industrial ambition. We are pleased to support this Commission, which is about turning that potential into national strategy – one that boosts jobs, strengthens our energy and tech sectors, and protects the UK's strategic autonomy."
Why Batteries Now? A National Priority on Every Front

Net Zero and Clean Transport According to the UK Battery Strategy, by 2040, nearly 200GWh of capacity will be needed in the UK to satisfy demand for batteries for private cars, commercial vehicles, HGVs, buses, and grid storage. UK battery production is critical to the UK's commitment to phasing out sales of new petrol and diesel vehicles by 2035. Without a domestic battery industry, this transition risks outsourcing jobs, technology, and economic value to global competitors.

Energy Security and Grid Resilience Battery demand is not limited to vehicles – by 2030 grid-scale energy storage will account for 10 GWh of UK battery demand. Next-generation technologies like sodium-ion batteries offer safe, affordable solutions for static energy storage, helping the UK reduce its reliance on international supply chains and support the grid's switch to renewable generation. Attracting investment in domestic battery production is therefore key to enhancing national energy independence.

Jobs and Economic Growth A thriving UK gigafactory sector could create tens of thousands of high-quality jobs across the UK, including in the Midlands and North East. It would anchor supply chains, upskill workers, and boost regional economies.

Defence and National Infrastructure From electric military vehicles to autonomous systems, battery tech is becoming core to the UK's national resilience and defence capability. Control over supply chains is now a national security issue, not just a commercial concern. The UK Critical Minerals Strategy explicitly links secure battery materials to national resilience. Reducing dependence on cobalt from the Democratic Republic of Congo and lithium processed in China is not only an economic imperative, but vital to ensuring a sovereign capability and military, industry and infrastructure readiness.

Trade and Global Positioning The USA and China's dominance in battery production have shifted the global playing field. Additionally, Europe is projected to have 1,350 GWh of battery capacity by 2030. And the UK needs to take decisive action, to establish a competitive gigafactory capacity and participating in international collaborations, to position itself as a key partner in European battery markets. The UK must urgently define its own strategy – both to attract investment and to maintain leverage in trading relationships.

"Britain has world-class battery science and growing industrial ambition. This Commission is about turning that potential into national strategy – one that boosts jobs, strengthens our energy and tech sectors, and protects the UK's strategic autonomy."

As UK food and drink exports continue to flatline, new data shows opportunities to turn the tide

The Food and Drink Federation's (FDF) latest Trade Snapshot reveals the continued struggle to recover lost exports since the COVID pandemic. While export volumes were relatively steady in Q1 compared to 2024, looking at the longer-term trend, significant growth is needed to return to pre-pandemic levels. UK global food export volumes are down nearly a fifth (20.4%) and non-alcoholic drinks are down 9.2% compared to 2020. However, the report shows that there are opportunities to raise the level of UK's exports, highlighting the positive impact of recent trade negotiations for food and drink manufacturers. The value of food and drink exports to non-EU countries were up 10.5% in Q1, as food producers take advantage of improved access to growing global markets. For example, since the Comprehensive and Progressive Agreement for Trans-Pacific Partnership (CPTPP) came into force in December 2024, UK exports of soft drinks to Malaysia have more than doubled (103%), while exports of sweets have grown by 48%. Export volumes of food and non-alcoholic drinks to the EU – the UK's biggest and most important trade partner – were down by 3.7% and 1.7%, respectively compared Q1 2024. The recently announced negotiations on a UK/EU Sanitary and

> "The negotiations on a Sanitary and Phytosanitary (SPS) agreement with the EU is a positive step towards reversing a concerning decline in exports from the UK. But it's far from a silver bullet."

> “There are plenty of opportunities for UK food and drink beyond the EU, meaning government should keep its foot on the gas when it comes to improving the UK’s trade relationships across other global markets.”

Phytosanitary (SPS) agreement with the EU is expected to have a positive impact, and could boost UK-EU exports by almost a quarter (22.5%) However, this won’t affect exports until 2027 at the earliest.The report also highlights the potential value of recent negotiations with the US and India for UK trade. Exports to India have surged over the past decade, up 156%. With the new Free Trade Agreement expected to boost exports even further, soft drinks, biscuits and chocolate present particular opportunities for UK manufacturers. Meanwhile, imports from India, such as rice, spices, tea, and pulses, grew a fifth (20%) in Q1 2025. US imports were up by nearly a tenth (8.9%), with particular growth in soybeans, corn, and almonds. While there are encouraging signs of an improved global trade outlook ahead, FDF warns that there’s more work to be done. It’s vital that government continues to build closer trade relationships with trade partners, near and far, and prioritises British competitiveness in ongoing negotiations.Balwinder Dhoot, Director of Industry Growth and Sustainability, FDF said: “As the UK’s biggest and most important trade partner, the negotiations on a Sanitary and Phytosanitary (SPS) agreement with the EU is a positive step towards reversing a concerning decline in exports from the UK. But it’s far from a silver bullet. It’s vital that through these negotiations the UK secures the ability to influence EU regulatory decisions that will impact British businesses.

“This new data demonstrates that there are also plenty of opportunities for UK food and drink beyond the EU, meaning government should keep its foot on the gas when it comes to improving the UK’s trade relationships across other global markets. Removing trade barriers and helping more businesses expand into new markets abroad presents a crucial growth opportunity, while diversifying our import markets is vital to protecting the UK’s food security.”

The report highlights several opportunities for government to maintain momentum by removing barriers to trade across the globe. For example, the United Arab Emirates (UAE), entered the UK’s top ten export markets for the first time last quarter while UK imports from Turkey were up 8.4% in Q1 2025. Pushing tariff reductions over the line faster, will help promote further growth within these emerging markets.

Additionally, while recent improvements to the overall trading relationship with the US were welcome, UK food and drink exports to the US increased by almost a quarter (23%) at the start of 2025 – a significant rise as businesses brace for the impact of increased tariffs. The removal of 10% export tariffs that continue to apply to our sector, and a reduction on import tariffs for products that are not produced in the UK, should remain priorities for ongoing negotiations.

Manufacturing Biz spotlight on the motor industry

New car market returns to growth as discounting lifts EV registrations

The UK's new car market returned to growth in May, as registrations rose 1.6% to 150,070 units, according to the latest data published today by the Society of Motor Manufacturers and Traders (SMMT).It was the best May performance since 2021, but still -18.3% lower than in pre-pandemic 2019 and only the second month of growth this year, reflecting brittle consumer confidence and economic turbulence.

Fleets and businesses drove the growth, up 3.7% and 14.4% respectively and responsible for 62.6% of registrations, while interest from private buyers fell for the second consecutive month, down -2.3%. There were double digit declines in deliveries of both petrol and diesel cars – down -12.5% and -15.5% – while demand for the latest electrified models increased dramatically to take a combined 47.3% market share.

Uptake of hybrid electric vehicles (HEVs) grew by 6.8% to 20,351 units, while plug-in hybrid electric vehicles (PHEVs) were up more than half (50.8%) to 17,898. Registrations of battery electric vehicles (BEVs), meanwhile, rose by 25.8%, accounting for 21.8% of the market as manufacturers continued to support sales with attractive incentives.Despite this, BEV registrations year-to-date have only reached 20.9% market share – still seven percentage points off the 28% mandated by regulation. Moreover, significant discounting is still ongoing despite new model introductions and increasingly affordable offerings. While recent adjustments to the ZEV Mandate were welcome, the current market situation is unsustainable for a sector already facing multiple cost pressures.Manufacturers are investing billions to deliver zero emission mobility for all, and consumers are responding but not in the volumes needed – so industry calls on government to match this commitment with fiscal incentives. Halving VAT on new EV purchases would put 267,000 additional new EVs – rather than fossil fuel vehicles – on the road in the next three years and drive down CO2 emissions by six million tonnes a year. Removing EVs from the VED Expensive Car Supplement, meanwhile, and equalising VAT paid on public charging to that levied

"A return to growth for new car registrations in May is welcome but manufacturer discounting on new products continues to underpin the market, notably for electric vehicles. This cannot be sustained indefinitely."

at home would send a signal that now is the time to switch.Mike Hawes, SMMT Chief executive said: "A return to growth for new car registrations in May is welcome but manufacturer discounting on new products continues to underpin the market, notably for electric vehicles. This cannot be sustained indefinitely as it undermines the ability of companies to invest in new product development – investments which are integral to the decarbonisation of all road transport. Next week's Spending Review is the opportunity for government to double down on its commitments to Net Zero by driving demand through fiscal measures that boost the market and shore up our competitiveness."
Latest data shows the breadth of vehicle powertrain choice now available, with sustained investment by manufacturers into product development, meaning car buyers can choose from more than 135 BEVs – up from 106 last year – while there are also just over 100 PHEVs and nearly 50 HEVs.2 The average BEV is capable of driving almost 300 miles on a single charge and, for those keen to cut their emissions but not quite ready to go fully electric, the average PHEV electric-only range is just under 50 miles. Some PHEVs offer as much as 88 miles of zero emission motoring, while HEVs can also travel in electric mode with zero emissions at low speeds.

	MAY 2025	2024	% CHANGE	MKT SHARE '25	MKT SHARE '24
BEV	32,738	26,031	25.8%	21.8%	17.6%
PHEV	17,898	11,866	50.8%	11.9%	8.0%
HEV	20,351	19,053	6.8%	13.6%	12.9%
PETROL	71,291	81,508	-12.5%	47.5%	55.2%
DIESEL	7,792	9,220	-15.5%	5.2%	6.2%
TOTAL	**150,070**	**147,678**	**1.6%**		

	MAY 2025	2024	% CHANGE	MKT SHARE '25	MKT SHARE '24
PRIVATE	56,131	57,453	-2.3%	37.4%	38.9%
FLEET	90,102	86,871	3.7%	60.0%	58.8%
BUSINESS	3,837	3,354	14.4%	2.6%	2.3%
	150,070	**147,678**	**1.6%**		

	MAY	
1	FORD PUMA	3,695
2	KIA SPORTAGE	3,256
3	NISSAN QASHQAI	3,088
4	NISSAN JUKE	2,876
5	VAUXHALL CORSA	2,693
6	MG ZS	2,624
7	VOLKSWAGEN POLO	2,295
8	HYUNDAI KONA	2,189
9	PEUGEOT 2008	2,096
10	MINI COOPER	2,079

Manufacturing Biz spotlight on the motor industry

Van market shrinks for the sixth month running

The UK's new light commercial vehicle (LCV) market fell by -11.8% in May with 22,796 vans, 4x4s and pick-ups joining the road, according to the latest figures published today by the Society of Motor Manufacturers and Traders (SMMT). The contraction marks the lowest May performance since 2022 and rounds off the sixth consecutive month of decline, as weak business confidence holds back fleet investment.1

Demand shrank for new vans of all sizes, with the largest models down -14.0% to 14,652 units, while deliveries of medium sized vans fell by -9.2% to 4,065 units and the smallest vans by -7.8% to 673. Only the new 4×4 segment saw growth, up 36.9% to 716 units. The pickup segment, meanwhile, declined by -12.7% to 2,690 registrations as April's introduction of fiscal measures to treat double-cabs as cars for benefit in kind and capital allowance purposes began to bite.

The tax change is heaping additional costs on businesses in key sectors – such as farming, construction, utilities and sole trading – which depend on these operationally critical vehicles. Discouraging operators from placing new orders will keep more polluting vehicles on the road for longer and, counterproductively, reduce tax revenues given lower volumes. SMMT continues to urge government to postpone the change for at least one year to give industry and customers more time to prepare, especially given new lower and zero emitting vehicles entering the market. Manufacturers are making massive investments to decarbonise the market and demand for battery electric vans (BEVs) continues to grow, up 50.0% to 1,731 units in May – the seventh successive month of rising demand.2 Businesses can now choose from almost 40 BEV models that meet a wide range of use cases but, despite this, zero emission vans represented just 7.6% of the overall market in May and 8.2% in the year to date – half the 16% share mandated for 2025.

> "The negotiations on a Sanitary and Phytosanitary (SPS) agreement with the EU is a positive step towards reversing a concerning decline in exports from the UK. But it's far from a silver bullet."

The Plug-in Van Grant continues to offer essential support for buyers, but rapid investment in LCV-suitable charging infrastructure – at public,

	MAY	
1	FORD TRANSIT CUSTOM	3,365
2	FORD TRANSIT	2,449
3	PEUGEOT PARTNER	1,216
4	TOYOTA HILUX	1,096
5	MERCEDES-BENZ SPRINTER	1,064
6	FORD RANGER	1,003
7	CITROËN BERLINGO	688
8	VOLKSWAGEN CRAFTER	664
9	VAUXHALL VIVARO	653
10	RENAULT TRAFIC	646

> "Six months of declining new van demand reflects a tough economic environment and weak business confidence - and that won't be helped by punitive taxes such as on double-cabs that will only restrict wider growth."

	MAY-25	MAY-24	% CHANGE
A PICKUPS	2,690	3,081	-12.7%
B 4X4S	716	523	36.9%
C VANS <=2.0T	673	730	-7.8%
D VANS > 2.0-2.5T	4,065	4,477	-9.2%
E VANS >2.5-3.5T	14,652	17,042	-14.0%
ALL VANS TO 3.5T	**22,796**	**25,853**	**-11.8%**
RIGIDS > 3.5 -4.25 T (BEV ONLY)	76	77	-1.3%
RIGIDS > 3.5 – 6.0T (OTHER)	732	620	18.1%
ALL RIGIDS	**808**	**697**	**15.9%**

depot and shared hub locations across the UK – is key to unlocking further decarbonisation. Preferential treatment for depot grid connections is also necessary, given the waiting time of up to 15 years – beyond the 2035 end of ICE sale date. Consistent and efficient implementation of local planning policy, meanwhile, will help streamline the fleet transition and give businesses greater confidence to plan for change.MIKE HAWES, SMMT CHIEF EXECUTIVE

Six months of declining new van demand reflects a tough economic environment and weak business confidence – and that won't be helped by punitive taxes such as on double-cabs that will only restrict wider growth.

Fleet renewal with the latest, cleanest models must be encouraged so it's positive that zero emission van uptake is rising, but with market share at just half the mandated level, it's clear we need action to drive that uptake faster. Accelerating LCV-centric and affordable chargepoint rollout is the bold next step that van operators and manufacturers need now.

	MAY-25	MAY-24	% CHANGE	% YTD 25 TOTAL	% YTD 24 TOTAL
BEV < 3.5T	1,655	1,077	53.7%	7.2%	4.2%
BEV RIGIDS > 3.5 -4.25 T	76	77	-1.3%	0.3%	0.3%
DIESEL < 3.5T	19,980	23,950	-16.6%	87.4%	92.4%
OTHERS < 3.5T	1,161	826	40.6%	5.1%	3.2%
TOTAL	**22,872**	**25,930**	**-11.8%**		

	YTD-25	YTD-24	% CHANGE	% YTD 25 TOTAL	% YTD 24 TOTAL
BEV < 3.5T	9,756	6,877	41.9%	7.6%	4.7%
BEV RIGIDS > 3.5 -4.25 T	753	444	69.6%	0.6%	0.3%
DIESEL < 3.5T	111,321	133,798	-16.8%	86.5%	92.3%
OTHERS < 3.5T	6,798	3,879	75.3%	5.3%	2.7%
TOTAL	**128,628**	**144,998**	**-11.3%**		

Thousands of clean energy jobs to be created through new hydrogen funding

Thousands of clean energy jobs will be created in Britain's industrial heartlands as the government confirms over £500 million for hydrogen infrastructure, as part of the Plan for Change to invest in Britain's future as a clean energy superpower.
The government has confirmed that the spending review allocated landmark new funding to create the UK's first regional hydrogen transport and storage network, connecting hydrogen producers with vital end users, including power stations and industry for the first time. This major infrastructure boost will help deliver clean energy while creating thousands of skilled jobs in industrial regions such as Merseyside, Teesside and the Humber, as well as in the supply chain. This will ensure communities across the country feel the benefits of Britain's renewal while reducing reliance on volatile international fossil fuel markets.The announcement also follows confirmation in the Spending Review that the government is creating thousands of clean energy jobs across the country, with 10,000 jobs to be created at Sizewell C in Suffolk, a new fusion reactor to be built on the site of an old power station in Nottinghamshire, up to 3,000 jobs created through the small modular reactor programme, and funding to kickstart the Acorn project in Scotland and the Viking project in the Humber.
This investment builds on the 4,000 jobs already set to be created in CCUS projects in the North West and Teesside.This will support manufacturing sectors likely to require hydrogen like iron, steel, glass, chemicals and ceramics – and forms part of government's long-term plan to invest in and secure the country's industrial

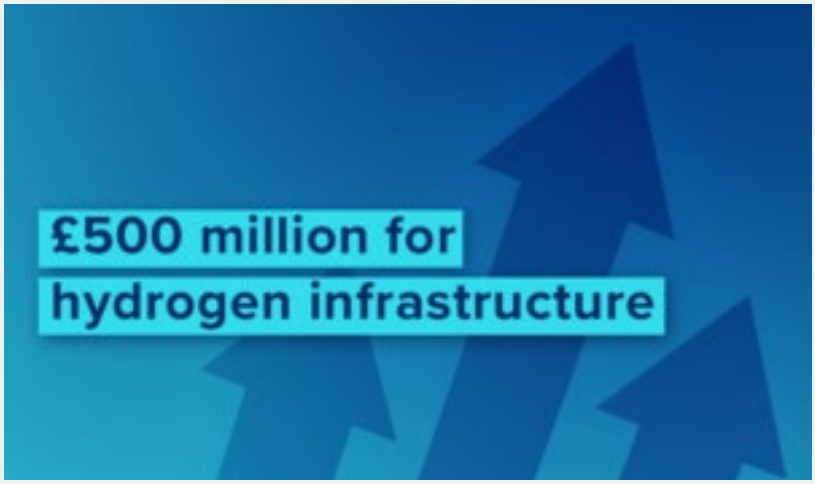
> "By investing in transport and storage infrastructure, the government is rightly joining the dots, connecting already supported hydrogen production with end users across power and industry."

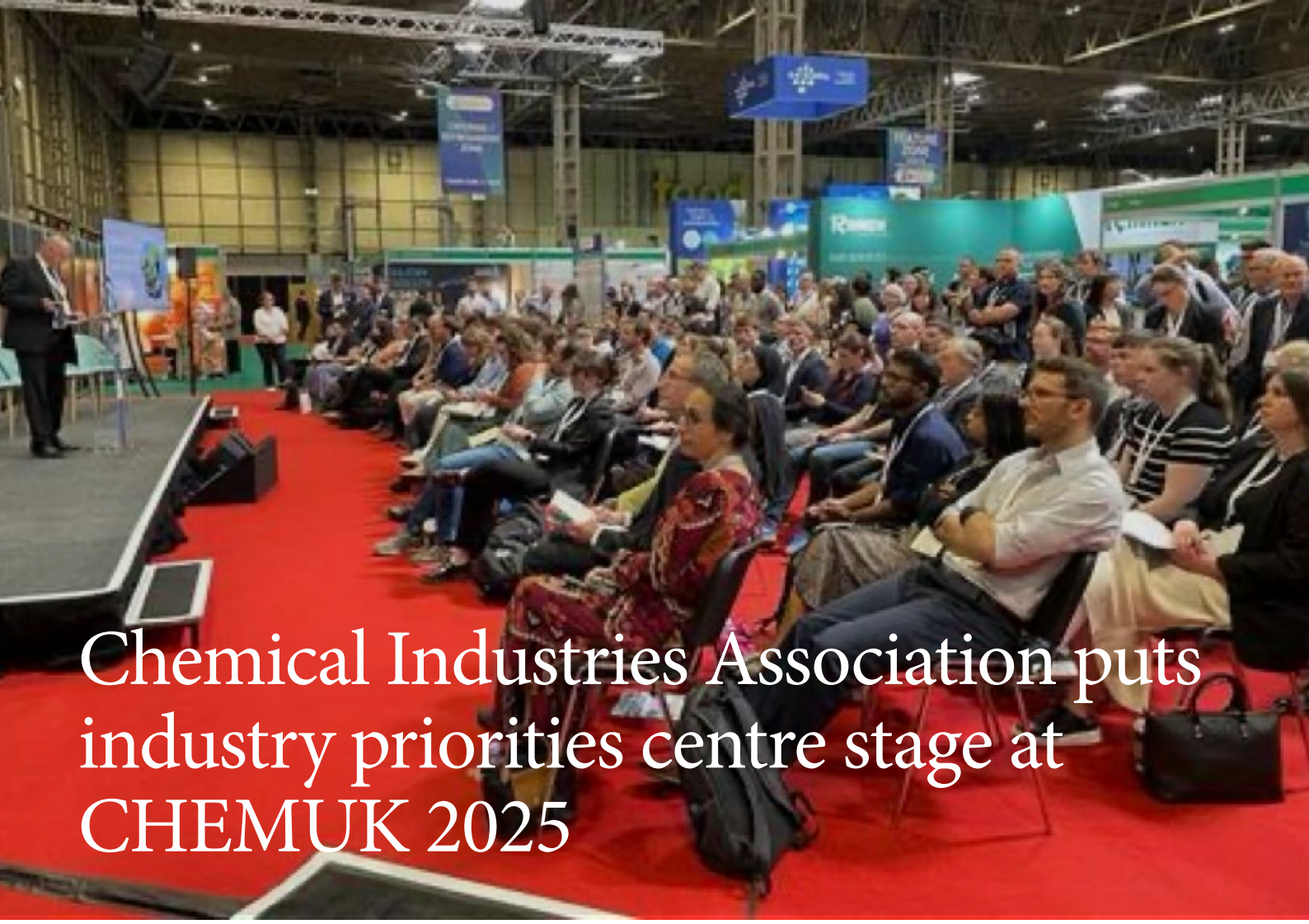
future, with more detail expected in the upcoming Infrastructure Strategy.Energy Secretary Ed Miliband said: "We are investing over half a billion pounds in our industrial heartlands to deliver jobs and energy security for Britain. By building hydrogen networks, we are securing homegrown energy that will power British industry for generations to come."This will

bring in the investment needed across the country to deliver our Plan for Change by unlocking clean energy and growth in our local economies." The funding will unlock hydrogen's unique role in Britain's energy system, where it can decarbonise industrial sectors including refineries and heavy transport, while providing long-term energy storage that can be deployed during peak demand periods. The funding also enables progress on supporting low carbon hydrogen production through continued Hydrogen Allocation Rounds (HAR), building on the success of the First Hydrogen Allocation Round which saw 11 projects being allocated over £2 billion in government funding. Hydrogen UK's head of policy and analysis, Brett Ryan, said: "We welcome today's announcement on hydrogen transport and storage infrastructure. Hydrogen networks are essential for a secure and resilient hydrogen sector, whilst ensuring sufficient energy storage capacity will be critical to energy security and affordability during the energy transition. We look forward to working with the government as we continue to deliver hydrogen's role in reaching net zero and ensuring our energy security."Dr Emma Guthrie, CEO of the Hydrogen Energy Association, said: "This announcement is a key piece of the puzzle and represents very welcome government support to galvanise the UK's regional hydrogen hubs. By investing in transport and storage infrastructure, the government is rightly joining the dots, connecting already supported hydrogen production with end users across power and industry.

This strategic thinking builds on the strength of our established industrial regions and supported clusters, unlocking clean energy potential while creating skilled jobs in places such as Merseyside, Teesside and the Humber. It's a vital step forward on the UK's journey to becoming a clean energy superpower.Hydrogen has already attracted £400 million of private sector investment in towns and cities such as Milford Haven in Wales and High Marnham in Nottinghamshire, and government support will help create thousands of jobs in the sector, including roles for apprentices, graduates and technically trained professionals, such as engineers, welders, skilled construction workers, pipefitters and operations specialists.

"We are investing over half a billion pounds in our industrial heartlands to deliver jobs and energy security for Britain. By building hydrogen networks, we are securing homegrown energy that will power British industry for generations to come."





Chemical Industries Association puts industry priorities centre stage at CHEMUK 2025

The Chemical Industries Association was proud to take centre stage at this year's CHEMUKEXPO, representing the voice of the UK chemical and pharmaceutical sector on some of the most pressing challenges and opportunities facing our industry today.

Simon Marsh, CIA Communications Director, addresses a packed audience on the future of the UK chemical industry. From the future of UK REACH to the role of trade associations, the CIA led crucial conversations that will shape the next decade for our sector. With the UK chemical industry contributing £60 billion in exports, supporting over 140,000 highly skilled jobs, and accounting for 20% of all UK business R&D, the stakes could not be higher.

In a keynote address, Simon Marsh, CIA Communications Director, issued a key call to action: "The next decade is critical for the UK chemical industry."

Citing the CIA's report, Simon highlighted the urgent need to address issues including uncompetitive energy costs, regulatory uncertainty and a widening skills gap. He stressed that the future of the UK chemical sector is closely linked to the resilience and prosperity of the broader UK industrial base:
"This is not just about chemicals — it's about securing the UK's industrial future. We have ten years to get it right."
Policy Director Nishma Patel, a familiar and respected voice at the event, made her fifth appearance on the 'UK REACH: How to Survive in 25' panel. She reinforced

"The next decade is critical for the UK chemical industry. This is not just about chemicals - it's about securing the UK's industrial future. We have ten years to get it right."

the industry's vital contribution to society and acknowledged recent progress, including developments at the European Summit, while urging continued action to provide clarity and stability for businesses.

Nishma also joined a key discussion on the growing importance of trade associations, emphasising the power of collective voices

in shaping effective policy and supporting members through a period of significant transition.

Thank you to the entire CHEMUKEXPO team for delivering another outstanding event. It provided a valuable platform to connect with our members, showcase the work of the Association and Chemicals Northwest, and underline the crucial role of our sector in powering a sustainable and competitive UK economy.

"This is not just about chemicals - it's about securing the UK's industrial future. We have ten years to get it right."

Predictive Maintenance stops downtime costs crippling manufacturing

Unplanned downtime is now a cost that major manufacturers cannot afford. In the Automotive sector, the cost of an idle production line at a big plant is now $695 million a year, 1.5 times higher than five years ago. In a Heavy Industry plant, it is $59 million, 1.6 times higher than in 2019. So unplanned downtime now costs the world's 500 biggest companies 11% of their revenues. That totals $1.4 trillion equivalent to the annual GDP of a major industrial nation like Spain.These are the key findings of this report, a review of the true costs of downtime to manufacturers and industrial organisations over the past five years.At the bottom end, the costs of a lost hour are now $36,000 in Fast Moving Consumer Goods. At the top end, they are $2.3 million in the Automotive sector – or more than $600 a second.Faced with these kinds of costs, companies have been forced to try to cut downtime ruthlessly. Most have succeeded. Since 2019, almost every sector has cut the number of downtime hours suffered. Heavy Industry has slashed it to nearly a third of 2019 levels.Only these efforts have stopped the overall costs of downtime from spiralling out of control.Firms have brought in powerful new technology to minimise production hours lost. The Internet of Things has allowed them to collect data on the condition of their machines.Predictive Maintenance (PdM) has allowed them to avoid machine failures on the one hand and the costs of over-maintenance on the other. Frequent scheduled maintenance keeps machines healthy, but it also has considerable costs in unnecessarily closed lines and the need to keep up stocks of expensive spares. PdM has moved from a promising technology to an essential part of business.This report asks three critical questions about the past five years in manufacturing and industry:• What is the true cost of downtime for large manufacturing and industrial businesses?• What savings could firms make by adopting technology enabling PdM?• How many firms have PdM teams in place, and how many are ready to do so?We answer those questions using the results of surveys over five years. We hear from manufacturing and industrial organisations worldwide about the true impact of downtime.Executive summary

• Unplanned downtime costs are generally much higher today than five years ago. In Automotive, every hour of downtime costs twice what it did in 2019. In Heavy Industry, it costs four times as much.

• The costs are highest of all in the Automotive

> "Unplanned downtime now costs the world's 500 biggest companies 11% of their revenues - that totals $1.4 trillion, equivalent to the annual GDP of a major industrial nation like Spain."

sector. An hour's downtime in a large Automotive plant now costs $2.3 million an hour – or more than $600 a second.

- In Oil and Gas, the cost of an hour's downtime fell dramatically in 2023, in line with a fall in oil prices. But 2022 saw record costs.
- In FMCG (Fast Moving Consumer Goods), the cost of an hour's downtime has remained relatively stable since 2019.
- Rising energy prices were the critical factor in the increasing cost of an hour's downtime over the past five years.
- Total losses to downtime are also rising but at a slower rate than per-hour costs. We estimate that the cost for an average large plant in the sectors we surveyed is now $253 million a year.
- We estimate that the world's 500 biggest companies lose almost $1.4 trillion annually through unplanned downtime, equivalent to 11% of their revenues.
- The only factor that has prevented total losses from spiralling out of control has been a reduction in the number of hours lost to unplanned downtime. Plants now suffer an average of 25 downtime incidents a month per facility, down from 42 in 2019.
- An average large plant still loses 27 hours a month to unplanned downtime, down from 39 in 2019, but still more than a full day's production.
- A critical factor in this reduction has been Predictive Maintenance (PdM) going mainstream. Almost half of firms surveyed now have PdM teams, twice the proportion seen in 2019.
- Condition Monitoring and PdM applications have now become indispensable mainstream technologies. Nine out of ten respondents are doing some form of condition monitoring and almost half have dedicated PdM teams.

Siemens estimates that full adoption of condition monitoring and PdM practices at Fortune Global 500 industrial organisations could:

- Save them 2.1 million hours of downtime annually
- Save them $388 billion through a 5% increase in productivity
- Save them $233 billion through a 40% reduction in maintenance costs

The true cost of an hour's downtime
In all of the sectors we surveyed, every hour of unplanned downtime costs more than ever before.

For each hour Automotive production lines fall silent or furnaces are on standby, money drains away frighteningly fast. To take the most extreme example, Automotive manufacturers now lose $2.3 million for each unproductive hour. Is downtime getting more expensive?

In most sectors, yes. Our five-year comparison suggests that:

- In the Automotive industry, the cost per hour of downtime is 2x what it was in 2019
- In Heavy Industry, it is 4x higher
- In Automotive, unplanned downtime now costs $2.3 million an hour.
- In FMCG, costs have stayed stable.
- In Oil & Gas, they were down sharply in 2023 as the oil price fell.
- At the top end, huge sums are now lost to downtime, reflecting the hidden costs that hurt producers:
- Loss of revenue (the loss of goods that should have been produced for sale in that period)
- Cost of wages (paying staff who can't work)
- The cost of salaries for those rectifying the problem
- Cost of emergency replacement parts
- Penalties incurred, such as payments of contractual compensation.

Cutting downtime has, therefore, long ceased to be a nice-to-have. In today's manufacturing and industrial landscape, it is essential.

Why is an hour's downtime cost rising so much faster than inflation in key sectors?

In the Automotive and Heavy Industry sectors, the spike in the cost of downtime over the past five years has hugely outpaced inflation. For instance, US price inflation has totalled 19% over the five years we studied (2019-23). By contrast, our figures suggest the cost of an hour's downtime has risen by 113% in the Automotive sector. In Heavy Industry, that rises to 319%.

The first factor in the rising cost of downtime is the energy crisis, which began in the summer of 2021. Global energy prices rose sharply as economies came out of Covid lockdown. Reduced output from some energy producers led to further increases, as did the invasion of Ukraine in early 2022, which brought global uncertainty about energy supply and further price rises. Costs spiked in 2022, with oil prices almost three times higher than 2019.

Automotive downtime has become increasingly expensive as the manufacturing processes and supply chains have become ever more complex and interdependent. Downtime in one part of the process can have knock-on effects across the assembly plant and even down the supply chain. This helps explain how, according to our figures, large Automotive manufacturers now lose $2.3 million for every hour of downtime.

In Fast Moving Consumer Goods (FMCG), the cost of downtime fell during and after Covid lockdowns. It remains at a level below that of 2019. This may reflect changes in the penalty clauses manufacturers face for missing their production targets. In 2019, global demand was stagnant, leaving retailers in a strong position with manufacturers.

Retailers were able to name their terms, including penalty clauses. But the Covid boom in demand for FMCG – especially for electronics – turned the tables.

With retailers desperate to get products into delivery vans, they could not impose penalties on manufacturers for missed production targets. This may have allowed manufacturers to reduce the cost per hour of their downtime.

In Oil and Gas, the cost of an hour's downtime over the last five years follows a simple pattern. The higher the oil price at any given time, the higher the losses that stem from losing an hour's production. In 2023, the cost of an hour's lost production was broadly similar to that in 2019; unsurprisingly, the cost of oil was similar in both periods, at $60 - $80 a barrel. As the price spiked to nearly $120 a barrel in early 2022, so did the sector's downtime cost. Oil and Gas remains highly exposed to periods of very significant downtime costs when the oil price is high.

When we combine all the figures across sectors, they suggest that the cost of an hour's downtime has doubled over five years, driven mainly by the enormous costs now incurred by Heavy Industry.

Note: within each year's sample, the proportion of firms in each sector has been broadly similar, but has not remained

> "Predictive Maintenance has moved from a promising technology to an essential part of business."

exactly the same. This fluctuation means the combined results shown above are not directly comparable year-on-year and should be seen as indicative only

What about the cost for small and medium-sized manufacturers?

Our survey data comes mainly from large manufacturers and major heavy-industrial producers. However unplanned downtime poses significant challenges for SME manufacturers too. These include:

1. Cost. Downtime costs can be significant for SMEs, reaching $150,000 an hour at the top end. For smaller organizations, these can be unsustainable losses.
2. Loss of business. The health of many SMEs depends heavily on them supplying larger manufacturers. A metric many work to is OTIF – delivery On Time, In Full. Their customers monitor what proportion of orders are delivered on time and in full. Downtime is a severe challenge – if SMEs can't supply in time and in full, they are in danger of losing their status as a supplier. In some cases, this threatens their very existence.
3. Having to hold stock. If supplying an essential part is crucial to the SME hitting supplier KPIs, they may have to hold buffer stock to guard against being unable to supply in the event of downtime. This brings storage and management costs.

There is, therefore, a unique opportunity for SME manufacturers. As the cost of the technology needed to implement Industry 4.0 digitalisation and Predictive Maintenance comes down, those on the cutting edge are using these technologies to eliminate these problems. In doing so, they gain considerable competitive advantage by saving costs and becoming A-graded suppliers to major manufacturers.

Total downtime losses held steady with Predictive Maintenance and Industry 4.0

At some point in the past two years (2022 or 2023), almost every key sector we surveyed faced per-hour downtime costs at least three times higher than in 2019.

The exception is FMCG, which is explored later.

Does that mean overall costs of downtime have spiralled out of control too? The answer is no. The explanation lies in companies' successful efforts to minimise downtime.

- In all sectors, bar Oil & Gas, total costs per plant are at least 50% higher today than in 2019
- Oil & Gas costs per plant in 2023 are half what they were in 2019. But in 2022, they were three times as high due to much higher oil prices
- Global Fortune 500 businesses, the largest 500 companies in the world by revenue, still lose $1.4 trillion annually to unplanned downtime – equivalent to 11% of annual revenues or the GDP of Spain, but these losses have fallen by 6% since 2022.

Total unplanned downtime costs have not spun out of control because manufacturers have reduced unplanned downtime. And, after a year of significant losses in Oil & Gas, a lower oil price has reduced the costs of unproductive time in that sector.

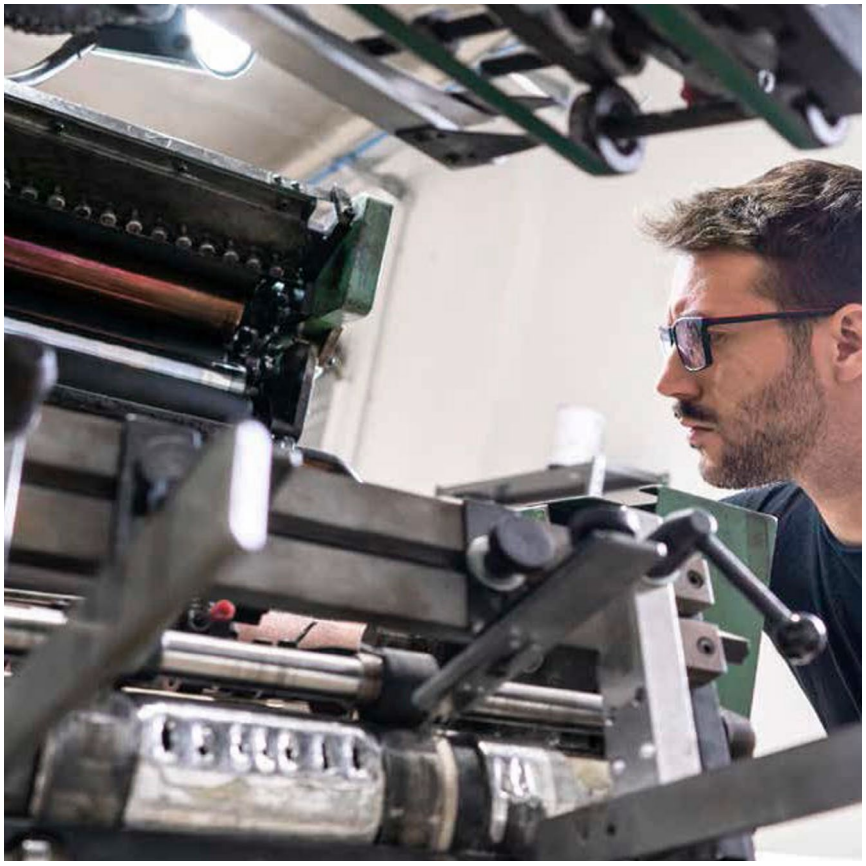
However, the sums lost are still vast. In Automotive, the annual cost of downtime in a large plant is approaching $750m a year – or more than $2m a day.

The overall costs of downtime are heaviest of all at large Automotive plants. This helps explain why this sector has been successful in holding the cost of downtime relatively steady, at around 50% higher than 2019 costs. Downtime is so costly that auto manufacturers have invested significant time and money in cutting it. They pre-manufacture components to exacting standards and have led the push towards digitisation, Industry 4.0 and Predictive Maintenance. Why? Because they can't afford not to

As the supply chain gets stressed, manufacturers have problems with getting the supplies they need to produce their products. This has knock-on effects: if they miss their contractual obligations to buyers they are financially penalised. They have to add these costs to the penalties they impose on their suppliers for delivery failure. And so on, down the supply chain.

The net effect is that those at the bottom of the supply chain face the stiffest penalties for non-delivery, and this flow-down effect has hit Heavy Industry.

The most significant rise in overall downtime costs has been in the FMCG sector, where costs have doubled per plant since 2019 to just over $10 million annually. This may reflect the relatively low cost of an hour's downtime compared to other sectors. As such Industry 4.0 technology delivers a less compelling ROI. However, it still has



> "Predictive Maintenance (PdM) is now a routine part of business as usual at major manufacturers. Almost half now have a PdM team – double the proportion that had one five years ago."

important effects on the bottom line, improving the efficiency of engineers, reducing the need for planned maintenance, and making sudden failures much less likely. Plants face fewer downtime incidents and hours lost.

The cost of every hour of downtime has spiked in key industries. But in every sector, total costs per plant have not risen as fast. How?

- The answer is that – with the help of Predictive Maintenance (PdM) – major manufacturers have slashed the unplanned downtime they have suffered over the last five years.
- They suffer 25 downtime incidents a month per facility on average, down from 42 in 2019
- They lose 27 hours per plant per month, down from 39 in 2019
- On average, each pant now loses 326 hours a year, down nearly a third on 2019
- Since 2019, only the FMCG sector has seen downtime hours increase
- In Automotive and Heavy Industry, hours lost to unplanned downtime have halved over the past five years
- But the average plant is taking longer to get running again

Why might the number of incidents and total time lost have fallen?

Compared with five years ago, the number of unplanned downtime incidents is dramatically down. The average plant now has 25 unplanned monthly downtime incidents, 41% fewer than five years ago.
As PdM and Industry 4.0 technologies have gone mainstream, manufacturers have been able to predict mechanical failures and maintain machinery at the right time. These technologies have helped them push down the hours lost.
The exception here is in FMCG, where the average number of hours lost is similar today to 2019. This may reflect the fact that this sector needs to catch up on Industry 4.0 technology. With the cost per hour of downtime in FMCG less extreme than in Heavy Industry, PdM has been less of a business priority, and the sector has yet to achieve the reductions in downtime seen elsewhere.

Why might downtime incidents be taking longer to recover from?

Five years ago, it took an average of 49 minutes to get production back up and running following downtime. Now, it takes 81 minutes. This reflects several factors:

- Many businesses lost skilled maintenance labour during the so-called post-Covid 'great resignation', creating a skills and knowledge gap, which led to longer recovery times.
- Global supply-chain issues mean that emergency replacements are more challenging to source and take longer to arrive when components fail, leading to more extended periods of downtime.
- • Industry 4.0 going mainstream means that data capture and failure-prediction techniques have solved many of the minor problems that once caused downtime. The things that cause downtime now are the more challenging problems that are harder to detect and take longer to fix.

Predictive Maintenance goes mainstream
Predictive Maintenance (PdM) is now a routine part of business as usual at major manufacturers. Almost half now have a PdM team – double the proportion that had one five years ago.

Our detailed breakdown of what data firms capture shows that nine out of 10 manufacturers we surveyed collect at least some data that gives them a view of machine health. PdM is no longer just something frontrunners are trying out. It is a well-established and well-proven technology. Digitization strategies are now maturing. This explains why the proportion of manufacturers saying PdM is a 'strategic priority' fell between 2019 and 2023: it is no longer a development priority but business as usual.
To control the costs of downtime, PdM has become a must-have. It prevents sudden and unexpected equipment failures that lead to lengthy downtime while avoiding the opposite danger of over-maintenance. Costs are cut further by allowing manufacturers to reduce the spares they need to hold 'just in case'. It also allows them

> "By bringing in Predictive Maintenance, clients have shown an 85% improvement in downtime forecasting accuracy and a 50% reduction in unplanned machine downtime."

to calculate the likely Remaining Useful Life of machines, allowing industry to make full use of an asset lifespan without pushing machines so far that catastrophic and hugely costly failures become likely.

The pressure on supply chains in recent years has meant that unplanned downtime is a bigger and bigger headache. With the costs of PdM falling simultaneously, the technology has entered the mainstream, becoming a must-have for manufacturers.

Do manufacturers have the data for Predictive Maintenance?

Good data is the foundation for condition monitoring and Predictive Maintenance (PdM). Nine in 10 major manufacturers (87%) now gather data that makes PdM possible, and half collect at least one of the key data points that boost PdM performance: current, vibration, and temperature.

However, almost three-quarters are still using factory historians, only a slight fall from 2019. Historians are seen increasingly as legacy technology because they do not provide the rich data that powers the most effective PdM. So, while PdM is increasingly widespread, not every business will feel the full power of the technology because they are not collecting the full range of data needed.

Powerful PdM needs data from a range of sources:

- Maintenance records
- Operational systems
- Manufacturing Execution Systems
- Service Data
- Human insights

Businesses use PdM technology to analyse all these data points. They then identify those with the most predictive power and focus on these. AI analysis finds those that offer nothing but irrelevant noise instead of a meaningful signal that allows accurate prediction of machine conditions. To help them do that, generative AI has been introduced to products like Senseye Predictive Maintenance. This helps customers bring out all the existing knowledge from their machines and systems. And it allows firms to make robust decisions about efficiency and maintenance via a user-friendly conversational interface.

Improving productivity with Predictive Maintenance

Senseye Predictive Maintenance automates the analysis of machine health, enabling Predictive Maintenance (PdM). It can be introduced cost-effectively and at scale across large manufacturing and industrial organisations.

It uses artificial intelligence to analyse data about all aspects of machine health, such as current drawn down by machines, temperature and vibration. That allows Senseye Predictive Maintenance to warn you early about a deterioration in performance and reliability. With that information, engineers can direct their attention where needed to prevent failure.

PdM means firms can service machines before they break down, not after, eliminating the need for exhaustive, costly preventative maintenance schedules.

By bringing in PdM, clients have shown the following:

- An 85% improvement in downtime forecasting accuracy
- A 50% reduction in unplanned machine downtime
- A 55% increase in maintenance staff productivity
- A 40% reduction in maintenance costs

These gains mean large manufacturers have recouped the cost of their investment within three months.

British industry to benefit from billions in government spending under new plans to protect national security

Government will back British industries such as energy, steel and cyber - giving them more of the £400bn spent on government procurement each year and protecting our national security.A consultation which has launched will consider new rules to give the government greater power to back our national security through government buying and ensure the country retains a strong, homegrown industrial base.The plans will allow Ministers to designate certain UK industries as nationally important to protecting UK national security – as part of our Plan for Change to secure Britain's future.Current rules require public sector buyers to consider bids from overseas suppliers that can undercut UK firms. Under the new designation, public sector buyers will be able to avoid normal buying rules to support national security, and award contracts to our industries. Chancellor of the Duchy of Lancaster, Pat McFadden said: "Strong industry is essential to our national security. The new rules being considered will give us the power to protect our national industries, ensuring more money goes to them as we buy goods and services in government."Our

> "The new rules being considered will give us the power to protect our national industries, ensuring more money goes to them as we buy goods and services in government."

> "By strengthening our procurement to back British industry, we'll not only bolster national security but drive growth by filling up companies' order books across the UK. Supported by up to £2.5 billion, our upcoming Steel Strategy will set out how we'll boost growth and investment in the sector even further."

reforms will boost growth and ensure British industry is supported to deliver national security and our Plan for Change. The move aims to harness the £400 billion spent by central Government each year on everyday products and services to boost British business - as the government rebuilds the country in a decade of national renewal and delivers the Plan for Change. The changes come following the publication of the government's Industrial Strategy which set out a ten year plan to boost investment, skills and jobs and reduce the energy costs for business and industry.New guidance will also require Government departments to consider UK-made steel in all future public projects, including those that form part of the £725bn of UK infrastructure spending over the next 10 years.Industry Minister Sarah Jones said: "This is the latest win for our Steel Strategy, supporting jobs across the UK and building on the launch of our modern Industrial Strategy which will cut energy costs for steel firms."By strengthening our procurement to back British industry, we'll not only bolster national security but drive growth by filling up companies' order books across the UK. Supported by up to £2.5 billion, our upcoming Steel Strategy will set out how we'll boost growth and investment in the sector even further.Cracking down on late payment and supporting SMEs."The new rules will also ensure public sector buyers exclude companies that cannot evidence a good record of paying businesses in their supply chains promptly and on time. Prompt payment is vital to a small business' success, as they work to tight margins. By ensuring government supply chains are paying them quickly and on time we can remove uncertainty and fuel growth.Alongside prompt payments, new rules will be introduced that would require all large contracting bodies to set three year targets for SME spending. The government previously announced that Government departments would have targets, and this expands that requirement to the wider public sector. Further prioritising and boosting spending with SMEs

Electricity bills to be slashed for over 7,000 businesses in major industry shake-up

More than 7,000 British businesses are set to see their electricity bills slashed by up to 25% from 2027, after the Government unveiled its new Industrial Strategy.The modern Industrial Strategy sets out a ten-year plan to boost investment, create good skilled jobs and make Britain the best place to do business by tackling two of the biggest barriers facing UK industry - high electricity prices and long waits for grid connections.British manufacturers currently pay some of the highest electricity prices in the developed world while businesses looking to expand or modernise have faced delays when it comes to connecting to the grid.For too long these challenges have held back growth and made it harder for British firms to compete. Today's announcement marks a decisive shift — with government stepping in to support industry and unlock the UK's economic potential.From 2027, the new British Industrial Competitiveness Scheme will reduce electricity costs by up to £40 per megawatt hour for over 7,000 electricity-intensive businesses in manufacturing sectors like automotive, aerospace and chemicals.These firms, which support over 300,000 skilled jobs, will be exempt from paying levies such as the Renewables Obligation, Feed-in Tariffs and the Capacity Market — helping level the playing field and make them more internationally competitive. Eligibility and further details on the exemptions will be determined following consultation, which will be launched shortly.The government is also increasing support for the most energy-intensive firms — like steel, chemicals, and glass — by covering more of the electricity network charges they normally have to pay through the British Industry Supercharger. These businesses currently get a 60% discount on those charges, but from 2026, that will increase to 90%. This means their electricity bills will go down, helping them stay competitive, protect jobs, and invest in the future.This will help around 500 eligible businesses in sectors such as steel, ceramics and glass reduce their costs and protect jobs in industries that are the backbone of our economy and will be delivered at no additional cost to the taxpayer.These reforms complement the government's long-term mission for clean power, which is the only way to bring down bills for good by ending the UK's dependency on volatile fossil fuel markets.To ensure businesses can grow and hire without delay, the government will also

> "This Industrial Strategy marks a turning point for Britain's economy and a clear break from the short-termism and sticking plasters of the past."

deliver a new Connections Accelerator Service to streamline grid access for major investment projects — including prioritising those that create high-quality jobs and deliver significant economic benefits.We will work closely with the energy sector, local authorities, Welsh and Scottish Governments, trade unions, and industry to design this service, which we expect to begin operating at the end of 2025. New powers in the Planning and Infrastructure Bill, currently before parliament, could also allow the Government to reserve grid capacity for strategically important projects, cutting waiting times and unlocking growth in key sectors.The Industrial Strategy is a 10-year plan to promote business investment and growth and make it quicker, easier and cheaper to do business in the UK, giving businesses the confidence to invest and create 1.1 million good, well-paid jobs in thriving industries – delivering on this government's Plan for Change.Prime Minister Keir Starmer said: "This Industrial Strategy marks a turning point for Britain's economy and a clear break from the short-termism and sticking plasters of the past."In an era of global economic instability, it delivers the long term certainty and direction British businesses need to invest, innovate and create good jobs that put more money in people's pockets as part of the plan for change."This is how we power Britain's future - by backing the sectors where we lead, removing the barriers that hold us back, and setting out a clear path to build a stronger economy that works for working people. Our message is clear - Britain is back and open for business."Chancellor of the Exchequer Rachel Reeves said: "The UK has some of the most innovative businesses in the world and our Plan for Change has provided them with the stability they need to grow and for more to be created."Today's Industrial Strategy builds on that progress with a ten-year plan to slash barriers to investment. It'll see billions of pounds for investment and cutting-edge tech, ease energy costs, and upskill the nation. It will ensure the industries that make Britain great can thrive. It will boost our economy and create jobs that put more money in people's pockets."Business and Trade Secretary Jonathan Reynolds said: "We've said from day one Britain is back in business under this government, and the £100 billion of investment we've secured in the past year shows our Plan for Change is already delivering for working people."Our Modern Industrial Strategy will ensure the UK is the best country to invest and do business, delivering economic growth that puts more money in people's pockets and pays for our NHS, schools and military.Not only does this Strategy prioritise investment to attract billions for new business sites, cutting-edge research, and better transport links, it will also make our industrial electricity prices more competitive.:Tackling energy costs and fixing skills has been the single biggest ask of us from businesses and the greatest challenge they've faced – this government has listened, and now we're taking the bold action needed. Government and business working hand in hand to make working people better of is what this Government promised and what we will deliver."Energy Secretary Ed Miliband said: "For too long high electricity costs have held back British businesses, as a result of our reliance on gas sold on volatile international markets."As part of our modern industrial strategy we're unlocking the potential of British industry by slashing industrial electricity prices in key sectors.We're also doubling down on our clean power strengths with increased investment in growth industries from offshore wind to nuclear. This will deliver on our clean power mission and Plan for Change to bring down bills for households and businesses for good."The Supercharger and British Industrial Competitiveness Scheme will be funded through reforms to the energy system. The government is reducing costs within the system to free up funding without raising household bills or taxes and intends to also use additional funds from the strengthening of UK carbon pricing, including as a result of linking with the EU carbon market."We have set out an intention to link emissions trading systems, as part of our new agreement with the

European Union to support British businesses. Without an agreement to do this, British industry would have to pay the EU's carbon tax."We intend to link our carbon pricing system with the EU's, we will ensure that money stays in the UK—which allows us to support British companies and British jobs through these schemes.The Strategy's plan of action includes:Slash electricity costs by up to 25% from 2027 for electricity-intensive manufacturers in our growth sectors and foundational industries in their supply chain, bringing costs more closely in line with other major economies in Europe.Unlocking billions in finance for innovative business, especially for SMEs by increasing British Business Bank financial capacity to £25.6 billion, crowding in tens of billions of pounds more in private capital. The includes an additional £4bn for Industrial Strategy Sectors, crowding in billions more in private capital. By investing largely through venture funds, the BBB will back the UK's most high-growth potential companies.Upskilling the nation with an extra £1.2 billion each year for skills by 2028-29, and delivering more opportunities to learn and earn in our high-growth sectors including new short courses in relevant skills funded by the Growth and Skills Levy and skills packages targeted at defence digital and engineering.Reducing regulatory burdens by cutting the administrative costs of regulation for business by 25% and reduce the number of regulators. Supporting 5,500 more SMEs to adopt new technology through the Made Smarter programme while centralising government support in one place through the Business Growth Service.Boosting R&D spending to £22.6bn per year by 2029-30 to drive innovation across the IS-8, with more than £2bn for AI over the Spending Review, and £2.8bn for advanced manufacturing over the next ten years. This will leverage in billions more from private investors. Regulatory changes will further clear the path for fast-growing industries and innovative products such as biotechnology, AI, and autonomous vehicles.Attracting elite global talent to our key sectors, via visa and migration reforms and the new Global Talent Taskforce.Deepening economic and industrial collaboration with our partners, building on our Industrial Strategy Partnership with Japan and recent deals with the US, India, and the EU.Reducing planning timelines and cutting costs for developers, by hiring more planners, streamlining pre-application requirements

> "Tackling energy costs and fixing skills has been the single biggest ask of us from businesses and the greatest challenge they've faced."

and combining environmental obligations, removing burdens on businesses as well as accelerating house building. Revolutionising public procurement and reducing barriers for new entrants and SMEs to bolster domestic competitiveness.Supporting the UK's city regions and clusters by increasing the supply of investible sites through a new £600m Strategic Sites Accelerator, enhanced regional support from the Office for Investment, National Wealth Fund, and British Business Bank, and more.

The plan focuses on 8 sectors where the UK is already strong and there's potential for faster growth: Advanced Manufacturing, Clean Energy Industries, Creative Industries, Defence, Digital and Technologies, Financial Services, Life Sciences, and Professional and Business Services. Each growth sector has a bespoke 10-year plan that will attract investment, enable growth and create high-quality, well-paid jobs.

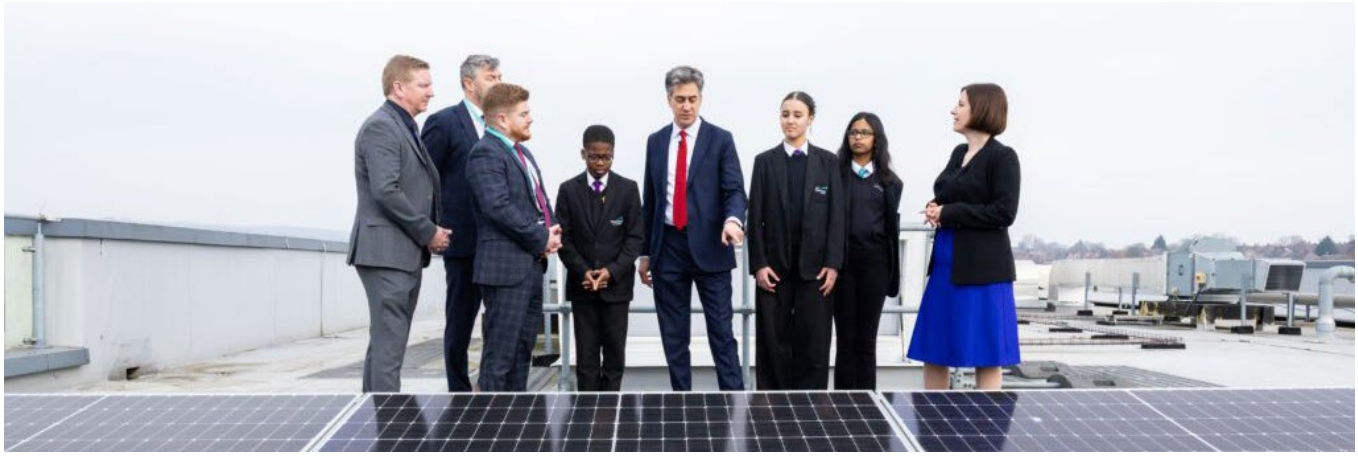
Five sector plans have been published:

Advanced Manufacturing - Backing our Advanced Manufacturing sector with up to £4.3 billion in funding, including up to £2.8 billion in R&D over the next five years, with the aim of anchoring supply chains in the UK - from increasing vehicle production to 1.35 million, to leading the next generation of technologies for zero emission flight.Clean Energy Industries - Doubling investment in Clean Energy Industries by 2035, with Great British Energy helping to build the clean power revolution in Britain with a further £700 million in clean energy supply chains, taking the total funding for the Great British Energy Supply Chain fund to £1 billion.

Creative Industries - Maximising the value of our Creative Industries through a £380 million boost for film and TV, video games, advertising and marketing, music and visual and performing arts will improve access to finance for scale-ups and increase R&D, skills and exports.

Digital and Technologies - Making the UK the European leader for creating and scaling Digital and Technology businesses, with more than £2 billion to drive the AI Action Plan, including a new Sovereign AI Programme, £187 million for training one million young people in tech skills and targeting R&D investment at frontier technologies such as cyber security in Northern Ireland, semiconductors in Wales and quantum technologies in Scotland. Professional and Business Services - Ensuring our Professional and Business Services becomes the world's most trusted adviser to global industry, revolutionising the sector across the world through adoption of UK-grown AI and working to secure mutual recognition of professional qualifications agreements overseas.

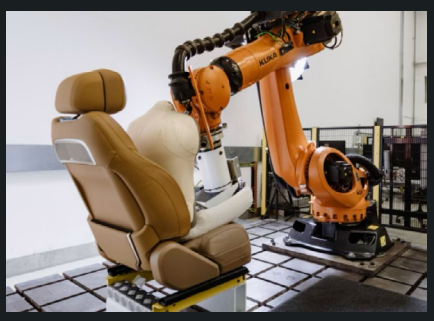
The Industrial Strategy is published here.



Robots simulate a decade of seat usage to give JLRs luxury vehicle clients the ultimate comfortable ride

JLR (Jaguar Land Rover) has revealed its rigorous seat testing regime, with four dedicated robots – KUKA Occubots – each simulating a decade of sitting, moving and twisting in a matter of days to ensure the company's luxury vehicle clients are sitting comfortably.In recognition of the importance of comfort and convenience, which are the foremost features when deciding to buy a vehicle according to a recent survey commissioned by JLR of over 2,000 luxury and premium SUV clients*, the robots test a range of different foams and coverings for quality, safety and comfort.
The robots can exert forces more than 800 Newtons (N) (approximately 82kg) on each seat design 25,000 times over a period of around five days, simulating movements akin to people of varying body shapes and weights entering a vehicle and sitting in one of its seats.But it isn't just the act of sitting JLR tests for, as the Occubots also review the resilience of the vehicles' heated seats. Across 20,000 cycles over 25 days, a robot reenacts actions such as sliding and twisting in the seat, applying huge forces ranging from 350N to 700N to ensure the heated seat is robust and will remain operational throughout a vehicle's lifespan.Integrated sensors in the robot track torque hundreds of times per second to ensure forces are maintained during different tests, while a camera communicates with the Occubots to take regular photos to operate 24/7, independently reviewing progress and investigating failures.The robots, which also test how quickly foam recovers it shape following pressure from different body types, form part of just one of JLR's virtual and physical testing environments dedicated to delivering the next generation of safe, reliable, luxury vehicles from the Range Rover, Defender, Discovery and Jaguar brands.Settling into your seat is one of the first experiences when entering one of our vehicles. Comfort is critical to luxury, so it's a make-or-break moment for our clients and they expect a consistently comfortable ride over the life of their vehicle.
Thomas Mueller, JLR executive director, product engineering said: "We've invested in robots to work alongside our expert engineers and rigorously test every aspect of our seat materials in super quick time. Automation like this is a vital part of our comprehensive vehicle quality component testing programme, which helps us review vehicle elements over a lifetime of usage and in the most extreme environments."JLR's investment into virtual testing forms part of the luxury vehicle manufacturer's wider £18bn Reimagine strategy, with Gaydon home to a wide range of testing facilities including vehicle simulators, cold weather climate chambers and a semi-anechoic chamber.
JLR's Gaydon head office also features 32 miles of tarmacked test track, off-roading courses, speed bumps and manhole covers, allowing engineers to put each JLR vehicle through a range of physical testing regimes that mimic real world conditions.

> "We've invested in robots to work alongside our expert engineers and rigorously test every aspect of our seat materials in super quick time."



Fusion energy powers UK's Industrial Strategy

The UK is investing £2.5 billion over 5 years to lead the global race for fusion energy, with the STEP programme at its core.STEP (Spherical Tokamak for Energy Production) is the UK's flagship fusion programme, aiming to deliver a prototype fusion power plant by 2040 at West Burton, Nottinghamshire.Built on the site of a former coal-fired power station, STEP is delivering a 'fossil to fusion' mission and will create thousands of jobs, as well as acting as an anchor for a new industrial ecosystem in the region as part of the East Midlands Combined Authority's Clean Energy Supercluster along the River Trent.Delivered by UK Industrial Fusion Solutions (UKIFS), STEP is a cornerstone of the UK's clean energy and industrial future. The Industrial Strategy features STEP as a case study for fusion energy development, alongside further workstreams in the sector, such as the UK Atomic Energy Authority's (UKAEA) Fusion Futures careers programme. The announcements serve to highlight the government's support for the sector and confidence in the STEP programme's progress to date.The Industrial Strategy also highlighted the UKAEA's Fusion Futures programme, which aims to support skills and training in the sector, to stimulate supply chain activity and foster international collaboration. The UKAEA are the STEP Programme's Fusion Partner and this work will support the shared aim to develop a strong UK fusion supply chain that can deliver commercial fusion power plants in the future.Other recent UK fusion milestones include a UKAEA–ENI fusion energy fuels partnership announced in March, working to build the world's largest tritium fuel cycle facility in the UK, and a £100 million investment boost via the Starmaker One fund from central government. Fusion is already delivering spillover benefits in AI, robotics and advanced materials - securing the UK's place at the forefront of clean technology. UKIFS CEO Paul Methven reflected on the Industrial Strategy announcement: "The UK is at the forefront of global fusion energy research, and STEP is the flagship initiative poised to transform that leadership into commercial reality. By building our prototype fusion power plant in the East Midlands, we're not only advancing clean energy but also creating high-quality jobs, driving innovation, and delivering economic growth both regionally and nationally."Maintaining our global edge in such a transformative technology demands ambition and today's Industrial Strategy publication, with STEP at its heart, shows that government is rising to that challenge. We're ready to turn this bold vision into action and ensure the UK leads the way in this exciting sector.Secretary of State for Energy Security and Net Zero (DESNZ) Ed Miliband visited UK's Fusion Research Campus in Oxfordshire earlier this year, where he said: "After scientists first theorised over 70 years ago that it could be possible, we are now within grasping distance of unlocking the power of the sun and providing families with secure, clean, unlimited energy."(By delivering) fusion in the East Midlands we will deliver the benefits of our Clean Energy Superpower Mission to communities up and down the country."The project offers exciting innovation opportunities and a chance to shape the future of clean energy. STEP is currently in dialogue with potential Construction and Engineering partners, with announcements expected this coming winter 2025/26."The Industrial Strategy is available here: Industrial Strategy: Clean Energy Industries Sector Plan

> "An ambitious and effective industrial strategy is not optional – it is essential to ensuring the UK remains competitive, secure, and economically productive in the coming years."

STEP Tokamak with burning plasma, side view. Image credit: UK Industrial Fusion Solutions Ltd.

Manufacturing output weakens in three months to June

Manufacturing output weakens in three months to JuneManufacturing output volumes fell in the quarter to June, at a similarly steep pace to the three months to May, according to the CBI's latest monthly Industrial Trends Survey (ITS). Looking ahead, however, firms anticipate that the pace of decline will slow over the three months to September. Total and export order books remained weak in June, with both balances broadly unchanged from last month and below their long-run averages.Manufacturers indicated that stock adequacy for finished goods fell slightly relative to May, with the balance dipping below the long-run average. Expectations for selling price inflation eased this month relative to May but remain above the long-run average. The survey, based on the responses of 335 manufacturers, found: Output volumes fell at a steep pace in the three months to June, broadly similar to May (weighted balance of -23%, from -25% in the quarter to May). Manufacturers expect output volumes to decline at a slower pace in the three months to June (-5%). Output decreased in 14 out of 17 sub-sectors in the three months to June, with the decline driven by the chemicals, metal products and mechanical engineering sub sectors. Total order books were reported as below "normal" in June (-33% from -30% in May). The level of order books remained significantly below the long-run average (-14%). Export order books were also below "normal" and broadly unchanged from last month (-26% from -29%). The balance stood below the long-run average (-18%). Expectations for average selling price inflation eased in June (+19% from +26% in May) but remained above the long-run average (+7%). Stocks of finished goods were reported as more than "adequate" in June (+6% from 10% in May), but the balance fell below the long-run average (+12%). Ben Jones, CBI Lead Economist, said: "The UK's manufacturing sector is under significant pressure, contending with high energy costs, rising labour costs, pervasive skills shortages, and a volatile global economic environment. With departmental budgets now set following the Spending Review, businesses are looking to the government to dismantle barriers to growth ahead of the Autumn Budget. "Welcome progress has been made with the recent infrastructure and industrial strategies setting a clear long-term economic vision for the UK. This is complemented by a US-UK trade deal expected to mitigate tariff uncertainty, especially for automotive and aerospace, and British Steel's agreement to provide 337,000 tonnes of rail track for Network Rail." "With long-term strategies presented, the government must now continue to back up its ambitions with short-term delivery. This includes rolling out welcome energy cost interventions as soon as possible; delivering on Growth and Skills Levy flexibility; and pushing technology adoption to boost productivity." "Businesses are ready to work in partnership to translate long-term ambitions into near-term investments, job creation and opportunities."

> "The UK's manufacturing sector is under significant pressure, contending with high energy costs, rising labour costs, pervasive skills shortages, and a volatile global economic environment."

Make UK calls for action on industrial electricity costs in new report or risk the industrial strategy being 'fatally flawed'

Make UK has called for Government to take action to address sky-high industrial energy costs in the upcoming industrial strategy, or risk the plan becoming "fatally flawed."With UK industrial energy costs four times higher than the US and 46% above global average, their new report -Tackling Electricity Prices for Manufacturers - calls on ministers to remove regressive policy levies from energy bills in order to slash costs and create a fixed electricity price to put British manufacturers on a level playing field with international competitors.

Such policy levies make low-carbon energy more expensive than fossil fuels and are one of the main causes of high electricity prices for UK industry. Removing them, they estimate, would cut costs for manufacturers by 15%.

To help alleviate the burden of high costs, Government should agree a fixed price for manufacturing (a Contract for Difference), i.e. if the GB wholesale price went above the fixed price, the Government would pay manufacturers and subsidise their energy costs. If it went below the fixed price, manufacturers would pay back the difference to Government.

Make UK recommend that the electricity price is set at £56/MWH which equates to a 10% reduction in retail prices paid by manufacturers. When the savings are added to those gained by removing the policy levies from bills, UK manufacturers would be on a par with European industrial energy bills.

Make UK has made it clear that an ambitious and effective industrial strategy is not optional. It is essential to ensuring the UK remains competitive, secure, and economically productive in the coming years.

For that strategy to make the impact manufacturers across Britain desperately need, it must address the energy crisis that leaves firms at a massive competitive disadvantage - Make UK is demanding that the Government must act now.

> "An ambitious and effective industrial strategy is not optional – it is essential to ensuring the UK remains competitive, secure, and economically productive in the coming years."

UK seeks views on further trade protections for steel

The UK has launched a six-week Call for Evidence, inviting views from across the steel supply chain to help shape new, future-ready trade measures.Steel producers, consumers, and unions will shape the UK's future trade approach for steel, as Ministers seek robust long-term protections for the industry.Safeguard measures are put in place temporarily to address sudden import surges and help industry adapt to new trading environments, however the challenges now facing the steel industry demand longer-term solutions.The current UK steel safeguard measure ends in June 2026 and cannot be extended. The views from industry will help shape new future-ready trade measures that will protect UK businesses and jobs right across the country. Business and Trade Secretary Jonathan Reynolds said: "We know this is a tough time for steel producers which is why this Government is using every tool available to ensure the long-term success of our vital steel industry, protect jobs and deliver on our Plan for Change."Thanks to our deal with the United States, all Section 232 tariffs on UK steel will be removed—while producers in other countries still face tariffs of up to 50%. But we're not stopping there."We will not sit by idly while cheap imports threaten to undercut UK industry, so we are inviting industry to shape the next phase of our trade defences so we can provide robust support and ensure a fair and competitive market."The six-week Call for Evidence comes in addition to further government action to support industry amid global challenges. This includes securing a trade deal with the US to remove tariffs on steel products and protect jobs. It also includes announcing the upcoming steel strategy, which will establish a long-term vision for the sector and help build resilient supply chains. These efforts follow the launch of both the Trade and Industrial Strategy, which set out broader plans to support key industries, including steel.This Call for Evidence is a key step in the Government's wider commitment to rebuilding the steel sector, alongside decisive interventions such as the £500 million grant securing the transformation of Port Talbot steelworks, the £2.5 billion investment pledged to rebuild the sector, the action taken to safeguard British Steel's blast furnaces at Scunthorpe, and the forthcoming Steel Strategy.UK Steel Director General Gareth Stace said: "It is welcome news that the Government is developing a new steel trade defence mechanism."With growing global steel overcapacity and rising trade diversion, Government must deliver a new trade defence system to provide industry certainty before steel safeguards expire in June 2026.UK Steel looks forward to working with Government to design an effective framework that will help to level the playing field on international trade and provide the market stability needed to draw investment in the UK steel sector."Community Assistant General Secretary Alasdair McDiarmid said: "Trade protections are a vital bastion for our steel industry in the face of global overcapacity, rising protectionism and unfair trade. They provide essential security, and safeguard thousands of jobs across the UK steel industry and its extensive supply chains."We welcome the UK Government's early engagement with the sector to shape our future steel protections and ensure that a cliff-edge scenario next year is prevented. This government has demonstrated its steadfast support for our steel industry, and we will continue to work with them to secure the long-term future of the sector."

"We know this is a tough time for steel producers which is why this Government is using every tool available to ensure the long-term success of our vital steel industry, protect jobs and deliver on our Plan for Change."

British manufacturing leader recognised for redefining home mobility with design-led innovation

Sam Stannah, CEO of Uplifts has been named one of The Manufacturer Top 100 for 2025. The prestigious list, released as part of Smart Manufacturing Week, celebrated the most inspiring individuals in UK manufacturing, those who are shaping the future of the sector through creativity, leadership and bold thinking.

As a sixth-generation leader of the Stannah family business, founded in 1867 by Joseph Stannah, Sam combines deep brand heritage with a modern vision for what British manufacturing can be. Over the past 18 months, he has led a transformation in the home mobility sector through the creation and growth of Uplifts, a design-focused brand offering stylish, functional homelifts that challenge the traditional perception of mobility aids.

Uplifts homelifts are engineered to seamlessly integrate into modern homes, featuring contemporary design

> "He embodies the future of British industry, honouring legacy while embracing disruption, and leading with empathy, insight and vision."

"Over the past 18 months, Sam has led a transformation in the home mobility sector through the creation and growth of Uplifts, a design-focused brand offering stylish, functional homelifts that challenge the traditional perception of mobility aids."

aesthetics that prioritise both form and function. Each homelift is designed with quiet operation, premium finishes, and space-efficient engineering that maximises accessibility without compromising on style. The homelifts are manufactured in a new sustainable factory based in Andover that was opened last year, underscoring the brand's commitment to responsible production and local craftsmanship.
Sam's innovative thinking was recognised earlier this year with an Innovation Award at the OT Show, and his work has captured national attention through recent media coverage profiling his leadership alongside his father, Jon Stannah.
"What sets Sam apart is his ability to innovate from within a well-established business," said Joe Bush, Editor, The Manufacturer. "He embodies the future of British industry, honouring legacy while embracing disruption, and leading with empathy, insight and vision."
Beyond product innovation, Sam's hands-on leadership, regularly engaging with factory teams, customers, and global suppliers, has ensured that Uplifts maintains the quality and craftsmanship associated with the Stannah name while moving the business into bold new territory.
This recognition cements Sam's place as a leading figure in UK manufacturing, and reflects the growing relevance of design-led, people-first innovation in addressing the challenges of an ageing population.

Exciting New Engineering Apprenticeships at Oaklands

Oaklands College are excited to share some great news - they're launching a brand-new suite of Engineering Apprenticeship programmes starting from this month (June 2025), and they'd love for you to be part of it.

These programmes are designed to support both new recruits and training existing staff, helping them build the skills needed to succeed in today's fast-moving engineering world.

HERE'S WHAT'S ON OFFER:

- **Level 2 Engineering Operative**
- **Level 3 Engineering Design Technician**
- **Level 3 Engineering Fitter**
- **Level 3 Machining Technician**
- **Level 3 Mechatronics Maintenance Technician**
- **Level 4 Engineering Manufacturing Technician**

Whether you're looking to develop your current team or bring in fresh talent, they're here to help you make the most of these opportunities. Their team will support you through the whole process – from choosing the right programme to recruiting the perfect apprentice.

Spaces are limited and will be allocated on a first-come, first-served basis, so do get in touch soon if you're interested.

If you already have someone in mind or would like support finding the right fit, just let them know – they're happy to help: **CLICK HERE to learn more and register your interest.**

OAKLANDS TRAINING & DEVELOPMENT

Oaklands shines in new National Achievement Rate Tables

Oaklands College has made stunning progress according to the latest Department for Education National Achievement Rate Tables (NARTs) for 2023–24.
This marks a significant achievement for the College, which has climbed an impressive 59 places nationally - moving from 107th to 48th in the overall standings. Even more notably, in the Under-19 Achievement category, Oaklands has risen from 77th to 17th, placing them firmly among the top providers in the country. Their performance in adult education continues to strengthen, offering more opportunities for those looking to retrain, upskill or take a new direction.

> "Recent milestones include the opening of the £7.5 million High Performance Centre for sport"

Apprenticeship provision also remains strong, reflecting the commitment to work-based learning and employer engagement.

These outcomes are part of a wider transformation at Oaklands, underpinned by substantial investment in both the student experience and the learning environments. Recent milestones include the opening of the £7.5 million High Performance Centre for sport, and a new state-of-the-art Construction Centre - both of which support the mission to deliver a well-rounded, future-facing education.

OAKLANDS COLLEGE

BizCrunch

Looking to Buy or Sell a business?
BizCrunch has the data, you need to make that purchase or sale.

In an era characterised by seismic shifts in the global economic landscape, a remarkable phenomenon is unfolding, one that heralds the largest generational wealth transfer in history. As the sun sets on the careers of the baby-boomer generation, a new dawn beckons for the young, ambitious and visionary. At the heart of this transition lies the vibrant domain of Small and Medium-sized Enterprises (SMEs), where opportunity knocks louder than ever before.

> "This burgeoning wave of entrepreneurs sees not just companies, but legacies ready for a new chapter"

A HISTORIC TRANSFER AWAITS

Picture this: over 75,000 companies in the UK alone, each a testament to the entrepreneurial spirit, boasting revenues north of £1,000,000. Their architects? A generation of business owners now on the cusp of retirement. But this isn't a narrative confined to the British Isles. From the fjords of the Nordics to the vibrant markets of the USA, and the bustling economic landscapes of Germany and Australia, this trend paints a global canvas. The baton is poised for passing, but the question looms – who will take the helm?

AN UNPREPARED LEGACY

A startling revelation by Wilmington Trust sheds light on a critical gap – almost 60% of these privately-owned bastions of industry lack a clear succession plan. The foundation of their life's work, their companies, remain without a formal valuation, an oversight that could lead to untold losses in potential and opportunity.

ENTREPRENEURSHIP THROUGH ACQUISITION: A NEW PARADIGM

Enter the bold and the brave, fuelled by the pioneering ethos of "Entrepreneurship Through Acquisition," a movement birthed in the hallowed halls of Harvard

Business School. This burgeoning wave of entrepreneurs sees not just companies, but legacies ready for a new chapter. They recognize the inherent value in established enterprises, where profitability, not just potential, shapes valuation. It's a shift from the ground-up approach, moving away from the venture capital frenzy to a more measured, value-driven investment in proven entities.

THE MISMATCHED MARKETPLACE

Yet, the journey is fraught with hurdles. According to insights from BizBuySell, a staggering 80% of businesses listed for sale find no buyer, a testament to the chasm between seller expectations and market realities. Often, inflated valuations, spurred by overzealous brokers, derail potential deals, leaving businesses in limbo.

BIZCRUNCH: THE BEACON FOR ASPIRING ACQUIRERS

In this landscape of untapped potential and navigational challenges, BizCrunch emerges as a lighthouse for the intrepid acquirer. With its vast repository of data on millions of companies, BizCrunch.

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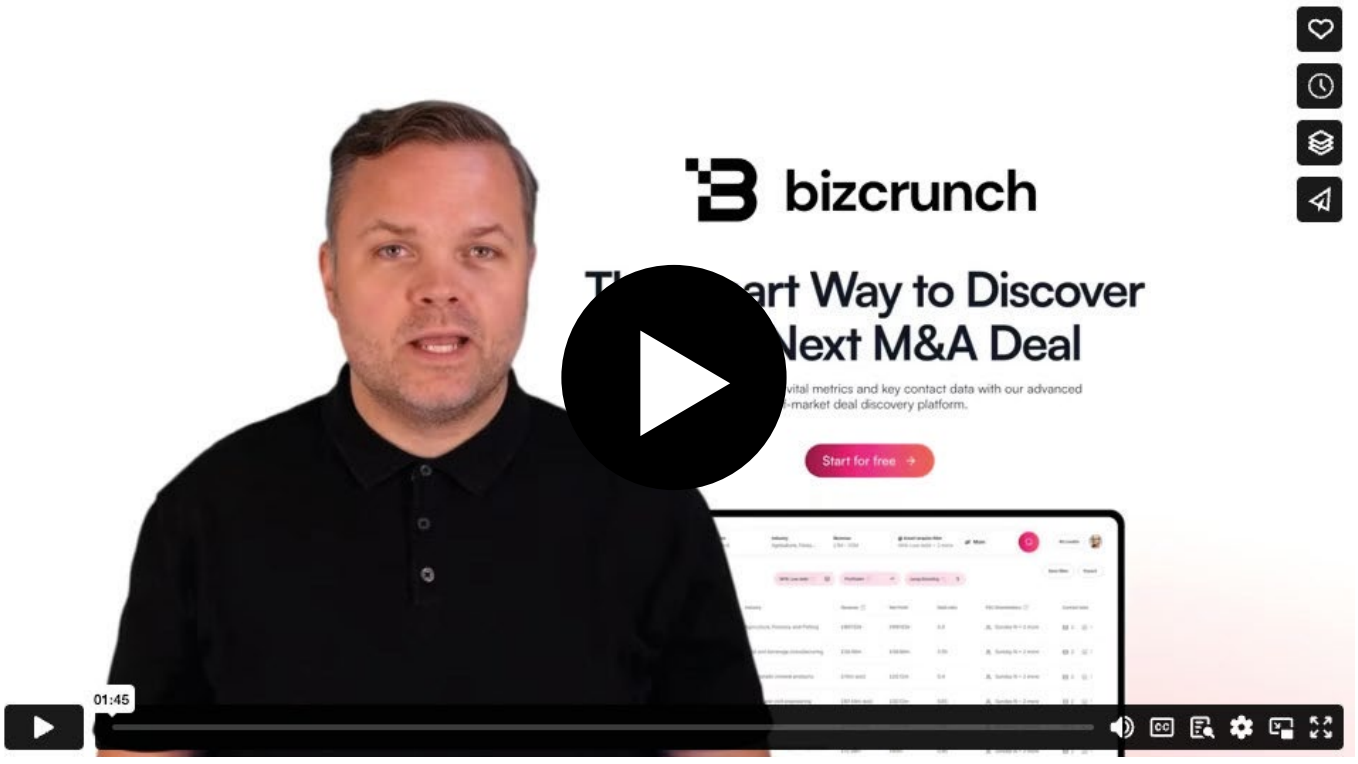

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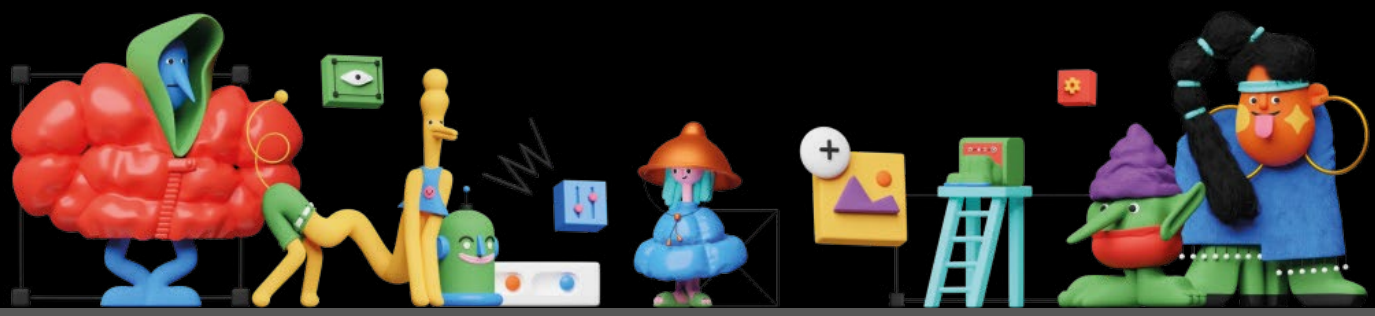

What we offer

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Capture the Essence of Your Brand with Stunning Imagery

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