



The Rt Hon Dame Angela Eagle DBE MP
Secretary of State for Environment, Food, and Rural Affairs
Department for Environment, Food, and Rural Affairs
Seacole Building
2 Marsham Street
London
SW1P 4DF

Sent via email

24th July 2026

Dear Secretary of State,

Congratulations on your appointment as Secretary of State for Environment, Food, and Rural Affairs

On behalf of the British Furniture Confederation (BFC), I would like to warmly congratulate you on your appointment as Secretary of State for Environment, Food, and Rural Affairs.

The BFC was established in 2006 and continues to act as the trusted, single voice of the UK's furniture and beds, furnishings, and flooring (FFF) sector. Together, our sector contributes £40 billion to the UK economy and supports more than 230,000 jobs across over 30,000 businesses.

The BFC brings together the sector's leading FFF trade associations - the British Furniture Association (BFA), Commercial Interiors UK (CIUK), Furniture Industry Research Association (FIRA), National Bed Federation (NBF), and the UK Sustainable Flooring Alliance (UKSFA) - and works closely with The Furniture Makers' Company (FMC). We also provide the Secretariat for the All-Party Parliamentary Furniture Industry Group (APPFIG), which was, until recently, chaired by Adam Thompson MP before his appointment to the Home Office.

The BFC remains committed to advocating for policies that strengthen the sector across four key pillars, one of which is the Environment and Circular Economy. As BFC Chairman, I believe there is a significant opportunity for Government and industry to work together to accelerate the transition towards a more circular economy in a way that strengthens UK manufacturing, improves resource efficiency, and supports sustainable economic growth.

Sustainability is becoming an increasingly significant focus for the UK FFF sector, with 93% of respondents to the latest BFC Survey considering sustainability practices to be important. Many companies are already implementing waste reduction strategies, with 68% using environmentally friendly packaging and 61% recycling post-production waste. However, barriers including high

implementation costs and limited customer willingness to pay a premium for more sustainable products continue to constrain wider adoption of circular economy practices.

If UK manufacturers are expected to invest in more sustainable production while competing against imports produced to lower environmental standards, it is essential that the policy framework supports a level playing field. The Government's proposed Carbon Border Adjustment Mechanism (CBAM) is an important step in helping to prevent carbon leakage and ensuring that UK manufacturers are not placed at a competitive disadvantage as environmental standards continue to evolve.

Despite significant progress by industry, the FFF sector continues to face uncertainty over the long-term policy framework for end-of-life products. There remains no clear timetable for any future approach to Extended Producer Responsibility (EPR) for bulky waste, creating uncertainty for manufacturers, recyclers, and investors alike. While parts of the FFF industry, including the mattress and flooring sectors, have explored industry-led stewardship models, Government engagement will be essential to ensure these initiatives align with wider objectives on economic growth, resource efficiency, and waste reduction.

The BFC also looks forward to the publication of the Government's Circular Economy Growth Plan. The Government has consistently reaffirmed its commitment to publishing the Plan, recognising its importance in providing strategic direction for businesses investing in circular economy initiatives. We would therefore welcome an update on the anticipated publication timetable and would be keen to contribute the expertise of our sector as implementation plans are developed. The FFF industry has so much to offer in helping the Government deliver practical, commercially viable circular economy solutions.

The BFC has a keen interest in being actively involved at the earliest stages of policy development concerning the FFF sector, including on EPR, future product stewardship arrangements, and the implementation of Digital Product Passports and other product information requirements arising from the EU Ecodesign for Sustainable Products Regulation (ESPR), particularly where these affect UK manufacturers exporting to European markets. Initiatives such as the NBF's Pledge for the Planet, its eco-design assessment tool, and the Furniture Industry Sustainability Programme (FISP) demonstrate the proactive steps our sector is already taking to support the Government's environmental ambitions. Likewise, UKSFA continues to play a unique role in supporting the textile flooring industry on sustainability and the circular economy.

We also believe there is an opportunity to broaden representation from across the FFF sector within the Government's Circular Economy Taskforce and associated stakeholder engagement. Our industry encompasses domestic, office, contract, hospitality, education, bedding, and flooring markets, each facing distinct opportunities and challenges in the transition to a circular economy. Broader representation would ensure that policy development benefits from the full breadth of our industry expertise.

Early engagement with the BFC would enable the Government to draw upon practical industry expertise during these formative stages of policy development, helping to ensure that proposals are evidence-based, proportionate, and capable of successful implementation across complex manufacturing and supply chains.

The BFC would welcome the opportunity to work with your Department in the following policy areas:

1. Publish the Circular Economy Growth Plan at the earliest opportunity and establish structured engagement with the FFF sector as the implementation progresses.
2. Ensure the FFF sector is appropriately represented within the Government's Circular Economy Taskforce and wider stakeholder engagement strictures.
3. Progress the UK's own CBAM in close consultation with the industry, ensuring UK manufacturers are protected from unfair competition from imports produced to lower environmental standards.
4. Develop a clear long-term framework for EPR and other end-of-life product policies, providing certainty for manufacturers, recyclers, and investors.
5. Support greater research, development, and innovation in sustainable materials, eco-design, and circular manufacturing, particularly SMEs.
6. Ensure environmental regulation is proportionate, consistently enforced, and supports both environmental objectives and the long-term competitiveness of UK manufacturing.

The FFF industry has a proud manufacturing heritage and is committed to playing its full part in delivering the Government's environmental ambitions. With the right partnership between Government and industry, we can accelerate the transition to a more circular economy, reduce waste, strengthen domestic manufacturing, and create sustainable economic growth across every region of the UK.

I wish you every success in your new role and would welcome the opportunity to meet with you and your officials to discuss how the Department and the BFC can work together to deliver practical, evidence-led environmental policy that supports both the transition to a circular economy and the long-term competitiveness of UK manufacturing.

I would also like to invite you to an event this autumn. On 25th November, the BFC and FMC will host a Furnishings Industry Showcase in the Cholmondeley Room and Terrace at the House of Lords between 12:15pm and 5:00pm. The event will bring together parliamentarians and leaders from across the FFF sector to demonstrate the breadth, innovation, and economic contribution of our industry. We very much hope you will be able to join.

Yours faithfully,



Tony Attard OBE
Chairman
British Furniture Confederation