

The Rt Hon Jonathan Reynolds MP  
Secretary of State for Business, Innovation, Science, and Trade  
Department for Business, Innovation, Science, and Trade  
Old Admiralty Building  
Admiralty Place  
London  
SW1A 2DY

Sent via email

24th July 2026

Dear Secretary of State,

**Congratulations on your appointment as Secretary of State for Business, Innovation, Science, and Trade**

On behalf of the British Furniture Confederation (BFC), I would like to warmly congratulate you on your appointment as Secretary of State for Business, Innovation, Science, and Trade.

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 Trade and Exports. As BFC Chairman, I have identified four priorities that I believe are fundamental to the success of UK manufacturing.

1. **Defend British business** by ensuring companies have the confidence to invest, innovate, and grow.
2. **Reduce unnecessary regulatory burdens** that place UK manufacturers at a competitive disadvantage.

3. **Create a competitive operating environment** through fair business rates and internationally competitive energy costs.
4. **Champion exports and manufacturing** by providing practical support that helps British businesses compete and succeed overseas.

Exports represent one of the greatest growth opportunities for the UK's FFF sector. According to the BFC's latest member survey, around 80% of exporting businesses sell into the EU and wider European markets. At the same time, almost half of manufacturers are actively exploring opportunities in faster-growing markets, including North America, the Middle East, and Asia-Pacific.

While many businesses have successfully adapted to post-Brexit trading arrangements, exporting remains unnecessarily complex and costly, particularly for SMEs. The BFC therefore welcomes the Government's commitment to economic growth and its efforts to strengthen the UK's trading relationships, reduce unnecessary barriers to trade, and expand opportunities for British exporters. Improving market access and supporting manufacturers to reach new customers overseas will help unlock investment, increase production, and create skilled jobs throughout the UK.

International trade fairs and exhibitions remain one of the most effective ways for UK manufacturers to secure export orders, build distribution networks, and showcase British design and manufacturing excellence. However, government support for participation has reduced significantly in recent years and is now considerably more limited than offered by many of our international competitors.

Countries including Germany, France, Italy, Spain, Turkey, and Australia invest substantially more in helping manufacturers exhibit at major international trade fairs, often through well-established partnerships between government and industry. The BFC would welcome consideration of a more ambitious UK programme that combines financial assistance with practical export support, enabling British businesses to compete on a level playing field internationally.

Alongside export support, the BFC believes the UK would benefit from a more competitive, pro-enterprise business environment that encourages investment, strengthens domestic manufacturing, and provides businesses with the confidence to expand.

The BFC would welcome the opportunity to work with your Department to:

1. develop an ambitious export support programme for UK manufacturers, combining grant funding with practical trade advice and market development support;
2. establish a dedicated Manufacturing Champion within Government to ensure the interests of UK manufacturing are represented across Whitehall;
3. create a single, easily accessible gateway to export advice, grants, finance, and tax incentives for manufacturers seeking to enter or expand in overseas markets; and
4. continue working with the industry and remove unnecessary barriers that inhibit UK manufacturers from competing successfully in international markets.

The FFF industry has a proud manufacturing heritage and significant untapped export potential. With the right partnership between Government and industry, we can help more British

manufacturers reach international markets, attract investment into domestic production, and create high-quality jobs 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 strengthen UK manufacturing, increase exports, improve competitiveness, and ensure British businesses are well placed to truly succeed in an increasingly competitive global marketplace.

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, export potential, and economic contribution of our industry. We would be delighted if you were able to join us and, if your diary permits, say a few words about the Government's ambitions for UK manufacturing, trade, and exports.

Yours faithfully,

A handwritten signature in dark ink, appearing to read 'Tony Attard', with a long, sweeping horizontal line extending to the right.

**Tony Attard OBE**  
Chairman  
British Furniture Confederation