

Event co-hosted by UKFT and Tranoi with the support of the Department for Business and Trade. Paris Fashion Week. March 2023.



ukft[®]

Q1 Report

MARCH 2023

www.ukft.org

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Introduction



UKFT had a positive start of the year with many new members joining during the first quarter of 2023. We are also delighted that the UKFT Rise community now brings together over 350 early-stage fashion and textile businesses.

We continued to focus on delivering support tailored to our members' needs. We considerably increased our webinar and resource offering around key issues within the sector, including on the fast-changing EPR and export regulation landscape.

This quarter's highlights include the government's Energy Bill Relief Scheme, which provides increased support to the fashion and textile manufacturing sector following intense lobbying by UKFT. We were also delighted to introduce the UKFT Online Production Sewing Machinist Programme, which brings a new way of learning technical skills online.

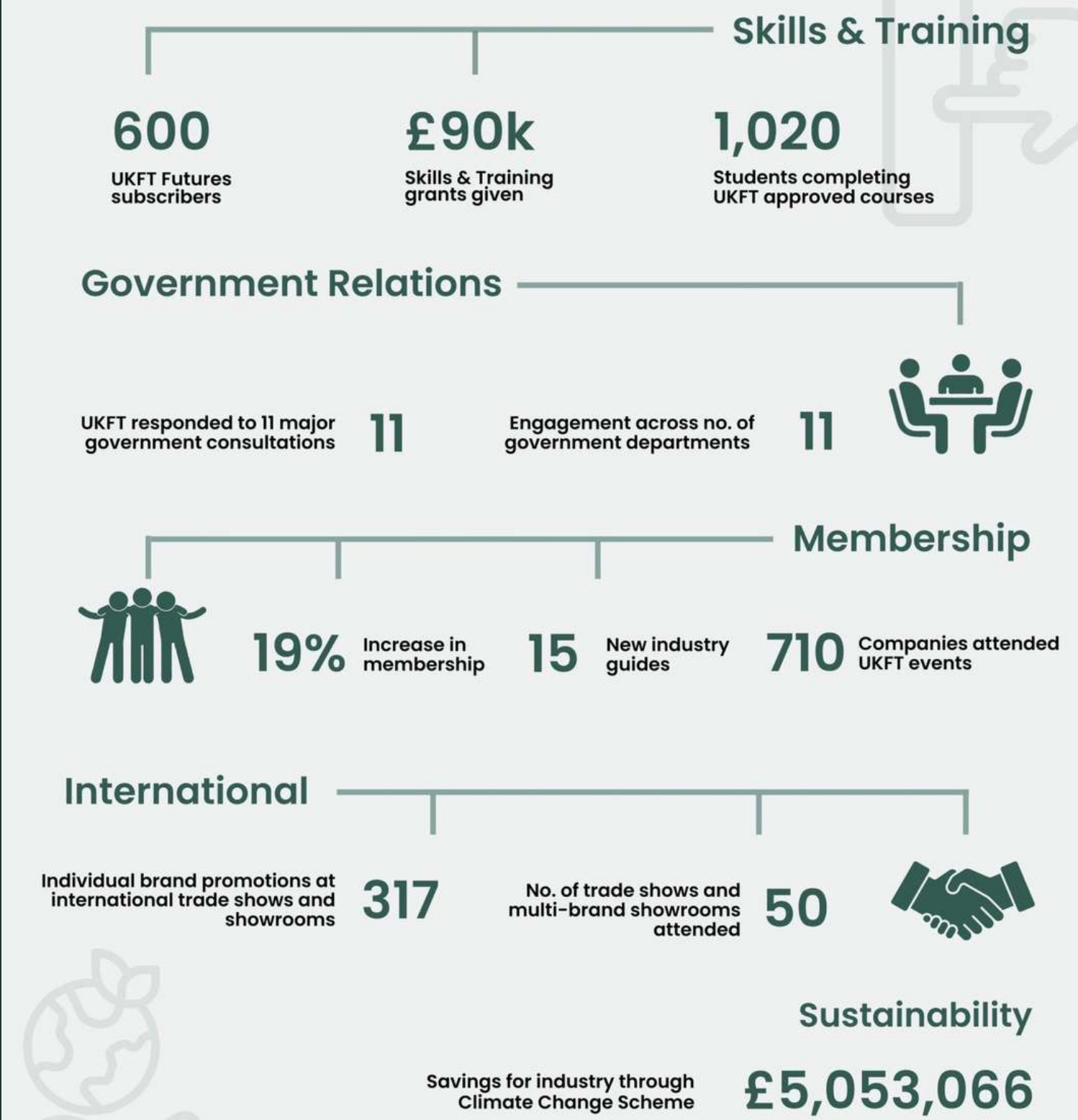
Adam Mansell, UKFT's CEO



ANNUAL PROGRESS



2022



Membership



UKFT Member Artisan Seams Atelier



At UKFT, membership is the foundation of our organisation. We continue to deliver the support our members need to develop their businesses: specialist, timely business knowledge; leadership around the key issues facing the industry and convening opportunities for growth.

We are delighted to welcome Faye Edwards as our new Fashion Manager. Faye joins us from Harrods where she was a menswear buyer.

Businesses that have joined UKFT as members during the first quarter of 2023 include: WSP Textiles, Dufa, Michaels Bridal Fabrics, National Weaving, CJ Antich, Beatrice Bayliss, Dey Studios, Loung-erie, Nudea, Artisan Seams Atelier and Pattern Cutting Studio.

Promotion

UKFT continues to promote members to its broad network through its website, newsletter and social media channels. The latest UKFT Member Spotlights include:

- [Meet UKFT Member Northumbria Healthcare Manufacturing and Innovation Hub](#)
- [UKFT Member TBCo Becomes a B Certified Corporation](#)
- [National Weaving, Making Labels in the UK for Over 35 Years](#)
- [Seahawk Apparel and Sseams Made In Scotland Factory Collection](#)

Events

- **Webinars:** AW24/25 Colour Trend Forecasting with Peclers Paris, Extended Producer Responsibility with Valpak, Cleansing Fashion Supply Chains of PFAS 'Forever Chemicals' with Eurofins.
- **In-Person Events:** UKFT Rise Networking Event and Panel Discussion, Textile Forum and a series of International Trade Show Briefings.

TikTok x UKFT Partnership

We were proud to launch our [partnership with TikTok](#) in February 2023, offering UKFT Rise subscribers:

- Access to an in-house TikTok Shop seminar programme.
- The opportunity for winning brands to work with a dedicated account manager, receive £400 to create adverts, collaborate with an affiliated content creator with subsidised rates, use TikTok studios and more.

UKFT Rise Networking Event

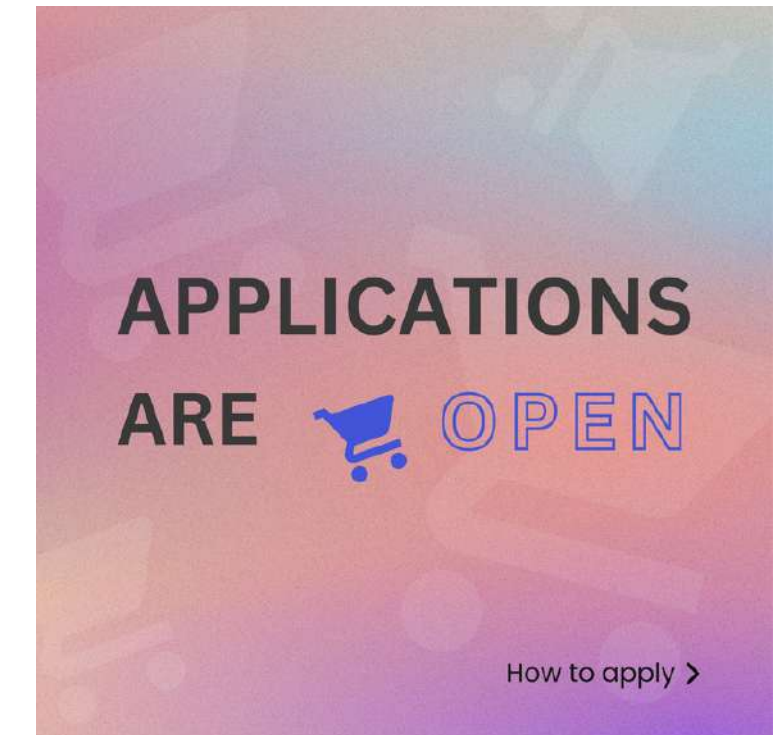
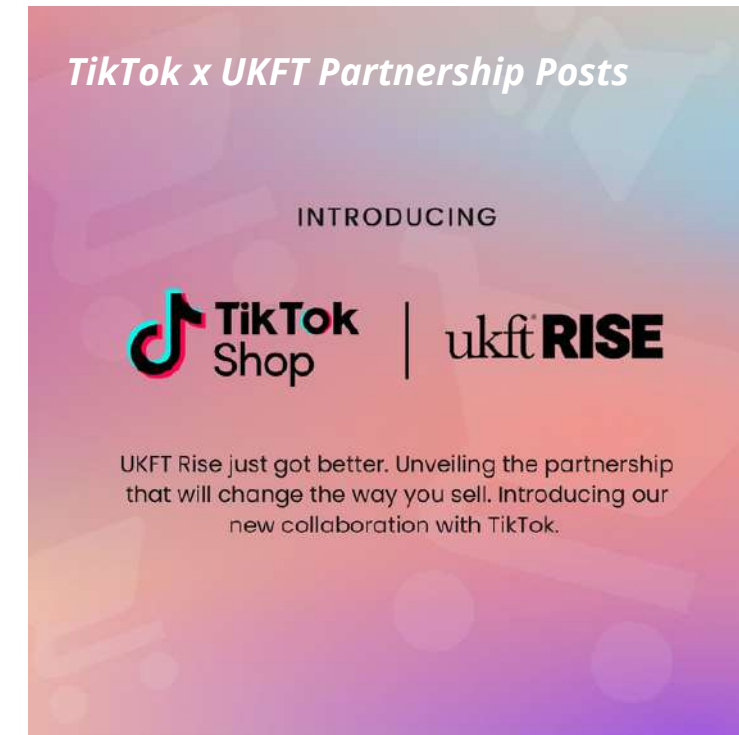
The first [UKFT Rise networking event](#) of the year was hosted by our partner Hyatt Place London City East and welcomed new and returning subscribers. Paul Alger MBE, Director of International Business at UKFT, delivered an update on International exports followed by a Q&A session.

'Website 101' Webinar

In February 2023 was held the 'Website 101' webinar, giving UKFT Rise subscribers insight into online branding and the logistics of shooting products. Liam Byrne, Marketing Manager at UKFT hosted the event and was joined by UKFT Member Paul Clapham, founder of the brand [Uskees](#).

UKFT Rise WhatsApp Group

The UKFT Rise WhatsApp chat is running successfully and now has 122 members. The chat has become a space for subscribers to share questions, problem solve and make connections across the country. It has become a valuable tool for the Rise team to understand what issues the Rise audience is facing and use this information as we plan future talks and resources.





Employment Support

Employment Support

UKFT membership includes free support from UKFT's employment advisor, Anne Carvell. Anne has extensive experience of employment advice specifically in the fashion and textiles sector and currently sits as a lay judge on employment tribunals.

Queries answered during Q1 2023 include:

- Closing a night shift and requiring employees on permanent nights to move to days
- Employee in position of trust sleeping on night shift
- Supervisor conniving with employees on clocking offences
- Falsifying time sheets for overtime payments
- Refusing to participate in redundancy consultation meetings
- How to consult with employees off sick
- Amending contracts of employment without consent from the employee
- Withdrawal of parking facilities
- Reduction in status following reorganisation
- Timing of redundancy and notice payments
- Appeals against verbal warnings for trivial offences
- Participation of relative in redundancy consultation meeting

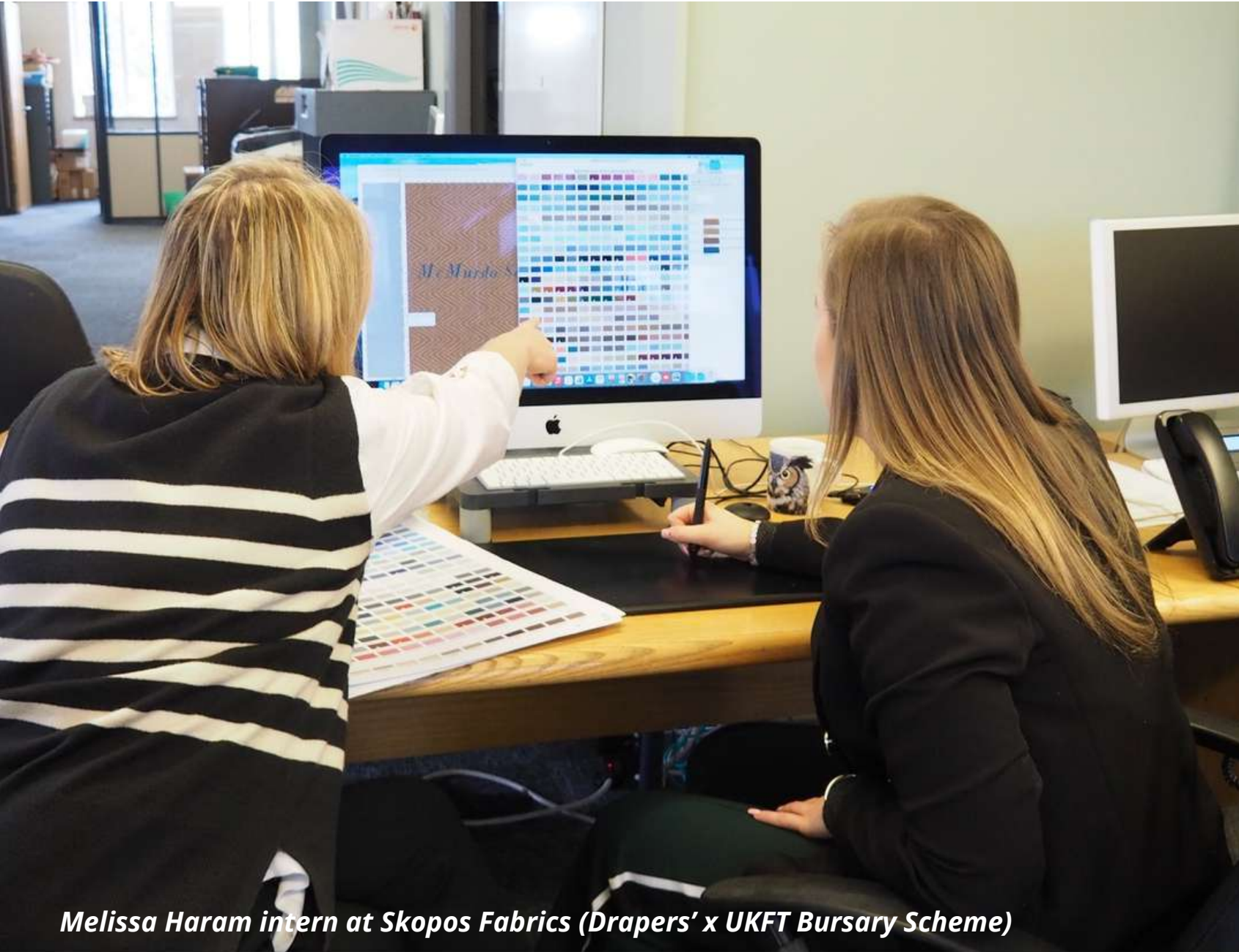


Tranoï at Paris Fashion Week, March 2023



Government Relations

Government Relations



Melissa Haram intern at Skopos Fabrics (Drapers' x UKFT Bursary Scheme)

UKFT is strengthening relationships with key government departments to ensure our industry's priorities are high on the political agenda. Highlights during Q1 2023 include:

Department for Business & Trade

Following intense lobbying by UKFT, supported by detailed data provided by members, we were delighted to announce that the fashion and textile manufacturing sector would receive increased support through the government's **Energy Bill Relief Scheme**. While the original scheme has been extended albeit at a lower level of support, UKFT argued strongly that the energy intensive nature of textile and fashion manufacturing meant that the sector needed greater support during the ongoing energy crises. For one textile business alone, this new support has been worth £100k.

Trade Programme: We have continued to exert significant pressure to change the new trade show programme and replace it with a fit for purpose scheme through a variety of channels including via Export Partners UK and direct to DIT, CITIB and CreativeUK.

UKFT has submitted responses to consultations on the South Korea and Japanese FTA's. We have also given more detailed briefings to government on the India, Mexico, Canadian and GCC trade negotiations.

Department for Work and Pensions

We continue to engage with local and regional DWP offices and staff about ongoing skills shortages.

Department for Environment Food & Rural Affairs

We aim to use the announcement of the delay of the textiles EPR scheme for the sector as an opportunity to encourage an industry-led approach to the scheme, to ensure it is fit for purpose.

Scotland

UKFT Scotland's Industry Leadership Group (ILG) met in January 2023. The agenda focused on activities and advances regarding sustainability and addressing current skills issues which are curtailing growth. Further meetings with Ministers are expected.



Creative Industries Council

A refreshed Creative Industries Council has been appointed, chaired by Sir Peter Bazalgette. UKFT joined the Creative Industries Council Skills Apprenticeships, Technical Education and Skills subgroup (CIC ATES) in January. This group is responsible for liaison with DCMS and DfE in making Policy Recommendations for training interventions for the Creative Industries.

Creative Industries Trade Board (CITIB)

CITIB has published their strategy and is currently forming working groups to take action forward.

CreativeUK

Continuing strong engagement with them, they have proactively been highlighting and raising our issues. Of note was that they put forward our question on the future of creative education in schools to Shadow Culture Secretary Lucy Powell MP during Friday's Q&A session. See next page.

Shortage Occupation List (SOL) and the Migration Advisory Committee (MAC)

The shortage of workers and skills is still the biggest barrier to the industry, with manufacturers reporting full order books but unable to fulfil them with their current workforce. The delayed review of the Shortage Occupation List has now been announced and we are preparing a submission.

R&D Tax Credits

HMRC are proposing to merge the existing research and development expenditure credit (RDEC) and the small and medium enterprise (SME) R&D relief to create one simplified scheme. We have reached out to a number of our trusted members for their feedback based on their experience of these schemes.

Government Relations

As the government begins to settle, our political engagement has increased. With an eye to the future, we are increasing our engagement with the shadow government. We have submitted evidence to Labour's National Policy Forum on Trade Policy, Green and Digital Future and Better Jobs and Better Work.

Question to Lucy Powell MP, Shadow Culture Secretary

In January 2023 the Lords Communications and Digital Select Committee published its report on the future of the UK Creative Industries in which it criticised the Government's failure to recognise the true value of creative education in schools. A lack of emphasis on teaching and honing 'making' skills within the National Curriculum is having a stifling effect on knowledge and talent in the Fashion & Textile industry, where there is a severe creative skills shortage. We asked the Shadow Secretary of State how Labour plans to increase uptake of creative subjects and promote the value of creativity in schools. Key points from her response:

- Textiles is a personal passion for her and her daughter, who loves textiles at school and is hoping to pursue it at GCSE.
- Powell recognises that there is a bias towards core subjects to the detriment of creative subjects. She cited that a major reason for this is the way schools assess pupils on core subjects but not on outside subjects which are therefore deemed less important. Additionally, the time required for core subjects squeezes creative subjects out of the timetable.
- Highlighted that some State schools can't afford to run creative subjects.
- Promoting the value of creativity in schools is a conversation she and her team at DCMS have actively been having with the Shadow education team.
- She commented that Bridget Philipson (Shadow Education Secretary), Keir Starmer, and Rachel Reeves (Shadow Chancellor) are all passionate and personally committed to greater inclusion of creative skills in the curriculum.
- The need for creative skills is something that has been highlighted to her from businesses of all types, recognising the important link between technical and creative skills
- Recognises this is a fundamental issue of the UK economy. She could give no specifics as such regarding Labour's plan but instead gave reassurance that championing creative education will be a personal commitment from a Labour government.



Sustainability, R&D & Innovation



Sustainability, R&D and Innovation

Driving positive change

UKFT is continuing to develop new resources and activities for the industry to help companies to meet both their voluntary and mandatory requirements/standards/regulations, ensuring they continue to progress towards government targets.

See below a few of UKFT's sustainability highlights:

- [UKFT Presents UK Responsible Textiles Campaign at Première Vision Paris](#)
UKFT showcased the innovation, heritage and sustainability of the UK textiles industry with support from the Department of Business and Trade (DBT) and The Worshipful Company of Clothworkers.

- [UK Research & Innovation's \(UKRI\) Circular Fashion Programme](#)
UKFT has been working closely with InnovateUK (IUK) and the British Fashion Council (BFC) to understand the major challenges facing our industry and lead a call to action for the enablement of a 'Circular Fashion Ecosystem' in the UK.

- [Green Transition Ecosystems](#)
UKFT have supported Education Partners Huddersfield University and the University of Leeds in their bids in to the AHRC Green Transition funding call.



UKFT Member Frugi's Recycle Me range certified by the Circular Textiles Foundation.



International Business

International Business

Flying the flag around the world

UKFT's Autumn/Winter [Global Brands campaign](#) supported by the Department for Business & Trade, ended in March. It included promotions supported by staff on the ground, social media and advertising.

Since January, UKFT has attended and worked with over 350 British businesses at the following shows and events reflecting the breadth and creativity of our industry:

- [Pitti Uomo Florence](#)
- [Paris Men's Fashion Week](#) including Who's Next Paris, Salon de la Lingerie, Man Paris and 20 multi-brand showrooms
- [Première Vision Paris](#)
- [Chicago Collective Menswear](#)
- [Paris Women's Fashion Week](#) including Première Classe, Tranoi Femme, Woman Paris and 25 multibrand showrooms.

“*It was great to be back in Paris this season with such a diverse group, from heritage and designer menswear and pre-collections to mainstream collections and to see the positive discussions being had by many UK brands with key international buyers.*”

Paul Alger MBE,
Director of International Business at UKFT

UKFT Member Kestin at Paris Fashion Week



Skills & Training



UKFT's Production Sewing Machinist Programme

Introducing the new way of learning practical skills online

The UKFT online Production Sewing Machinist Programme launched in February 2023.

Bringing a new way of learning practical skills online, the programme is a series of seven short modules to equip learners with technical expertise to become skilled production sewing machinists.

- Course 1: The role of a production machinist
- Course 2: Industrial machines
- Course 3: Industrial sewing
- Course 4: The sewing machinist apprenticeship standard
- Course 5: Quality and quantity
- Course 6: Fabric and materials
- Course 7: Employability and workplace procedures

UKFT Members and Education Partners can access an exclusive discount on the course.

The screenshot shows the UKFT Academy website interface. At the top left is the 'ukft academy' logo. To the right are navigation links: 'About Us', 'UKFT Courses' (with a dropdown arrow), and 'Contact'. In the top right corner, there is a 'Log in / Register' button. The main content area features a background image of a woman working at a sewing machine in a factory. Overlaid on this image is the title 'The Production Sewing Machinist Programme' in large white text. Below the title is a descriptive paragraph: 'The Production Sewing Machinist Programme is a series of seven courses, which include forty eight lessons and over one hundred activities that combine online and practical learning.' At the bottom of this text block is a 'Start Programme' button. The background image also shows a yellow sign with the number '25' hanging from the ceiling.



Greater Manchester Skills Boot Camp

The first Fashion and Textiles Skills Boot Camp started in January with Salford City College. A cohort of 16 are undertaking the 12-week programme, which includes the delivery of UKFT's new Production Sewing Machinist Programme plus functional skills. The learners' travel costs are being generously supported by CapitB.

Apprenticeships

UKFT continues to review key apprenticeships for the sector in England, including Level 2 Textile Manufacturing Operative, Level 5 Bespoke Tailoring and Level 3 Fashion Studio Assistant.

National Apprenticeship Week (6th-12th February): UKFT supported this initiative by celebrating the work of apprentices and employers across all four nations on our website and social media channels using the hashtag #NAW23.

UKFT Approved

Through the UKFT Approved Programme, UKFT reviews and approves fashion and textile training courses that have been designed with industry practice in mind. UKFT Approved courses will be added to UKFT Futures.

UKFT Futures

The new platform that will promote careers in the fashion and textiles industry is due to launch in the second quarter of 2023. The platform will also help industry extend the reach of job and training opportunities.

Career Events 2022/23

In March we attended the National Career Guidance Show in London for career professionals. Via the UKFT stand, we provided advice, information and guidance to support their role in steering young people into education and careers. Further events are planned in the Autumn.

Skills & Training

Funds and Bursaries

UKFT continues to support students and young people across the UK through several schemes, generously supported by our partners. These include:



Young Textile Technician Will Pullen at C&J Antich & Son

MADE-IT

MADE-IT aims to enrich the UK production and sourcing knowledge of design graduates at university. The scheme is supported by The Clothworkers' Company and CapitB Trust.

We have partnered with the following institutions to deliver the 2022/23 [MADE-It programme](#) with Masterclasses currently underway: the University of Bolton, the University of Westminster, Manchester Metropolitan University, Northumbria University and Buckinghamshire New University.

Drapers x UKFT internship Bursary Programme

Supported by The Drapers' Company, the Drapers's x UKFT bursary programme helps fashion and textile students across the UK to access good quality internships.

For the academic year 22/23 we will be supporting students from the University of Bolton (4 Places), Northumbria University (4 Places) and Heriot Watt University (2 Places).

The three-year funding* period for the [Drapers x UKFT bursary programme](#) is to be renewed at the end of this academic year.

Young Textile Technician Fund

The fund allows businesses across the UK to train their young textile technicians, predominantly in weaving positions. It is supported by The Worshipful Company of Weavers, The Worshipful Company of Clothworkers and The Worshipful Company of Drapers. Since December, we have received applications for funding from a variety of companies, these are now being assessed.

[ITMA Young Textile Technician Travel Bursary Fund](#): This fund supports 10 young textile technicians wishing to attend the textile show ITMA 2023 in Milan. With the grants allocated, the itinerary for the ITMA visit (13th -14th June) has now been agreed. As well as the 10 technicians and the UKFT team members of the Weavers Company are also due to attend. The itinerary will include visiting an extensive range of machinery suppliers.

Knowledge Leadership Opportunity

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