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# Q2 Report

JUNE 2023

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[www.ukft.org](http://www.ukft.org)

UKFT President HRH The Princess Royal at the Textile Institute World Conference

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GET SKILLED  
WITH UKFT

Come explore and  
get a feel of the  
different skills in the  
Fashion and Textile  
industry.



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The UK fashion and textile industry is continuing to explore new ways of working post Covid and Brexit, and overcome significant barriers and rising costs, which is transforming how people live, work and consume. However, we have also seen first-hand the resilience and adaptability of companies and people in our sector, particularly SMEs which make up more than 80% of our industry.

We are delighted that membership continues to grow and we are continually rolling out new services to help members stay ahead of key issues facing our sector. We believe that innovation, a highly skilled workforce and a relentless focus on sustainability will be critical to ensuring our industry can continue to thrive for many years to come.

This quarter has seen the launch of four new industry-wide projects focused around textile recycling infrastructure and circular fashion, which we believe will create a step change in our sector's move towards a more sustainable and responsible future.

We've also unveiled a series of interventions and projects designed to attract new people into our sector, and ensure that the people already working in our industry have the skills they need to meet the requirements of tomorrow. So, despite the considerable challenges the industry faces it is also a time of great optimism with significant opportunities for sustainable growth. Thank you for joining us on this journey.

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**Adam Mansell, UKFT's CEO**

# Membership





UKFT member: Antich Fine English Tailors



UKFT member Donna Wilson

# UKFT is the largest network for fashion and textiles in the UK

**Members of UKFT receive business support, networking opportunities, market insights, exclusive discounts and more**

**We provide members with one-to-one support in a wide range of areas. Some examples from this quarter include:**

- Introducing a UK manufacture to a range of press contacts to help them tell the story of a new product range
- Working with a large textile company to help them challenge a customs ruling which was impacting their trade
- Helping a large high street retailer understand their requirements with regards to the French EPR regulation
- Helping another large fashion brand understand how to meet the UK's packaging regulations

- Working closely with a very large online retailer to ensure their care labelling was correct
- Working with a UK tailoring school to review the content of their qualifications
- Helping a childrenswear business understand how to access a European tradeshow
- Establishing a relationship with the IP team in the British Embassy in China to help members with IP issues and trademark squatting
- Helping provide a VIP guest at the Coronation with a UK made dress

UKFT member: Lochcarron of Scotland



UKFT member Ira and Isla



# Membership

## Webinars and seminars

As part of our knowledge sharing and education programme, we held a number of seminars and webinars for members during Q2 2023. Topics included:

- Promoting financial wellness in your workplace with FTCT
- On the Rise: Selling on Marketplaces (RISE)
- Seller, buyer, agent, and distributor contracts for the fashion sector
- Tradeshows 101
- Fashion in the Metaverse

## Education Partners

We recently welcomed new members Northumbria University and Bath Spa University into membership.

We have been out and about getting to know members and their needs better over the last period including visits to Westminster Kingsway College, Morley College, Manchester Metropolitan University and Nottingham Trent University.

We will hold two separate UKFT Education Partner Network Meetings in July. The first will be a HE focussed event hosted at De Montford University where we will explore the subject 'The Future Graduate | What the industry needs.' The second is for FE and private providers at UKFT HQ to explore the theme of 'Unlocking the potential of our education system | Delivering skilled people into fashion and textile employment'.

ukft<sup>®</sup> **RISE**

**UKFT Rise is a supportive community for UK fashion and textile start-ups offering inspiration, helpful tips and templates, events and networking.**

**The community is growing steadily, with daily activity on the dedicated WhatsApp group. Current topics discussed include sourcing fabrics, international shipping recommendations and manufacturers with low MOQs.**

**The partnership with TikTok Shop is developing further, with applicants to the programme currently being shortlisted. TikTok hosted an online and in person seminar, introducing our audience to the benefits of selling on TikTok Shop.**

**The next networking event is scheduled for 4th September at Hyatt Place in East London.**





UKFT member: Guildford Europe

UKFT member: Responsible



# Textiles

## Sustainability in UK Textiles

The second edition of the Sustainability in UK Textiles conference will be held on 28 September 2023. The conference title is 'Sustainability in Action: Solutions, lessons and definitions'.

## Textile Forum

The next edition of luxury fashion fabric show Textile Forum will be held in London on 18-19 October 2023. The event is being rebranded with a clear focus on its USP of low minimum orders, luxury fashion fabrics in a relaxed setting.

## The Weaving Conference

The second edition of the Weaving Conference will be held on 16 November 2023. The conference title is 'Weaving The Supply Chain – from Fibre to Fabric'.

## Trend support in partnership with Peclers Paris:

UKFT members can access trend information as part of membership. Textile members have now had access to the physical trend book and online platform and the SS25 trend information is now available.

Peclers Paris also offers UKFT members exclusive access to trend presentations for colour inspiration.



UKFT partnership with PECLERS PARIS

# Government relations



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of the environmental impact of a product is determined at the design stage.

*European Commission 2022*

Manufacture of textiles and apparel generates substantial material and process waste. Urgent attention is required to reduce environmental impact and a creative reimagining is essential in the design, production and use lifecycle of a product.

**Creativity**

**UK solutions:**

UK is celebrated for its creativity design-led thinking, with a rich heritage that enables buyers to hit their targets through textile

# Voice of the industry

## Engagement:

### Treasury Connect

UKFT attended the Treasury Connect: Creative Industries Conference with the Chancellor and the Secretaries of State for DCMS, Education and Digital Science & Technology. The event included sessions on exports, skills, investment and innovation, giving UKFT the opportunity to raise key issues common across the creative industries, including:

- How innovations can support sustainability
- The knock-on impact to the industry of the decline in creative education and making skills in primary and secondary education
- The urgent need for trade and export support for SMEs
- Rising concerns over a potential gap in vocational training due to the defunding of qualifications coupled with the delay to the new T-level in Craft and Design

### Department for Trade and Business

The Department for International Trade has merged with the Department for Business Energy and Industrial Strategy to become the Department for Business and Trade (DTB). UKFT held meetings with the Minister for Exports and the Minister for Enterprise at DBT

## Policy:

A snapshot of areas that UKFT has been responding to over the last quarter:

### People

Immigration: Shortage Occupation List – We have submitted our response to the Migration Advisory Committee (MAC) that is undertaking the review of the Shortage Occupation List for government. In preparation, we sent out a survey to industry on job role shortages, spoke to employers and recruiters and to other industries that had been successful in adding roles to the list in the past.

Skills consultations - UKFT has responded to several calls for evidence from Ofqual regarding level 1 and 2 qualifications, supporting progression to T-levels and post 16 training.

## Trade

Free Trade Agreements – We continue to engage on the development of FTAs including on India, US, Mexico, South Korea and the Gulf Co-operation Council.

House of Commons International Trade Commission – UKFT submitted evidence to the Commission on the inadequacies of government support for British exporters.

## Innovation

R&D Tax Credits – UKFT submitted a response to HMRC's consultation on merging the existing research and development expenditure credit (RDEC) and the small and medium enterprise (SME) R&D relief to create one simplified scheme.

# Voice of the industry

## Funding Updates

### **UKRI Circular fashion programme - Network**

In partnership with BFC, UKFT is working on a two year project to support overarching progress on sustainability for the sector. The Network will look to bring together stakeholders, research, policymakers and industry around six objectives:

- Recycling Infrastructure\*
- Sustainable Manufacturing\*
- Circular Business models
- Novel Technologies
- Diverse & Future-proof workforce
- Green Growth

\*UKFT led objectives



# Skills & training



# Skills & training

## Apprenticeship Reviews (England)

UKFT is working with The Institute for Apprenticeships and Technical Education (IfATE) Route Reviews updates:

- Level 2 Textile Manufacturing Operative
- Level 5 Bespoke Cutting & Tailoring
- Level 2 Sewing Machinist Operative
- Level 3 Fashion Studio Assistant
- Level 4 Technical Dyer & Colourist

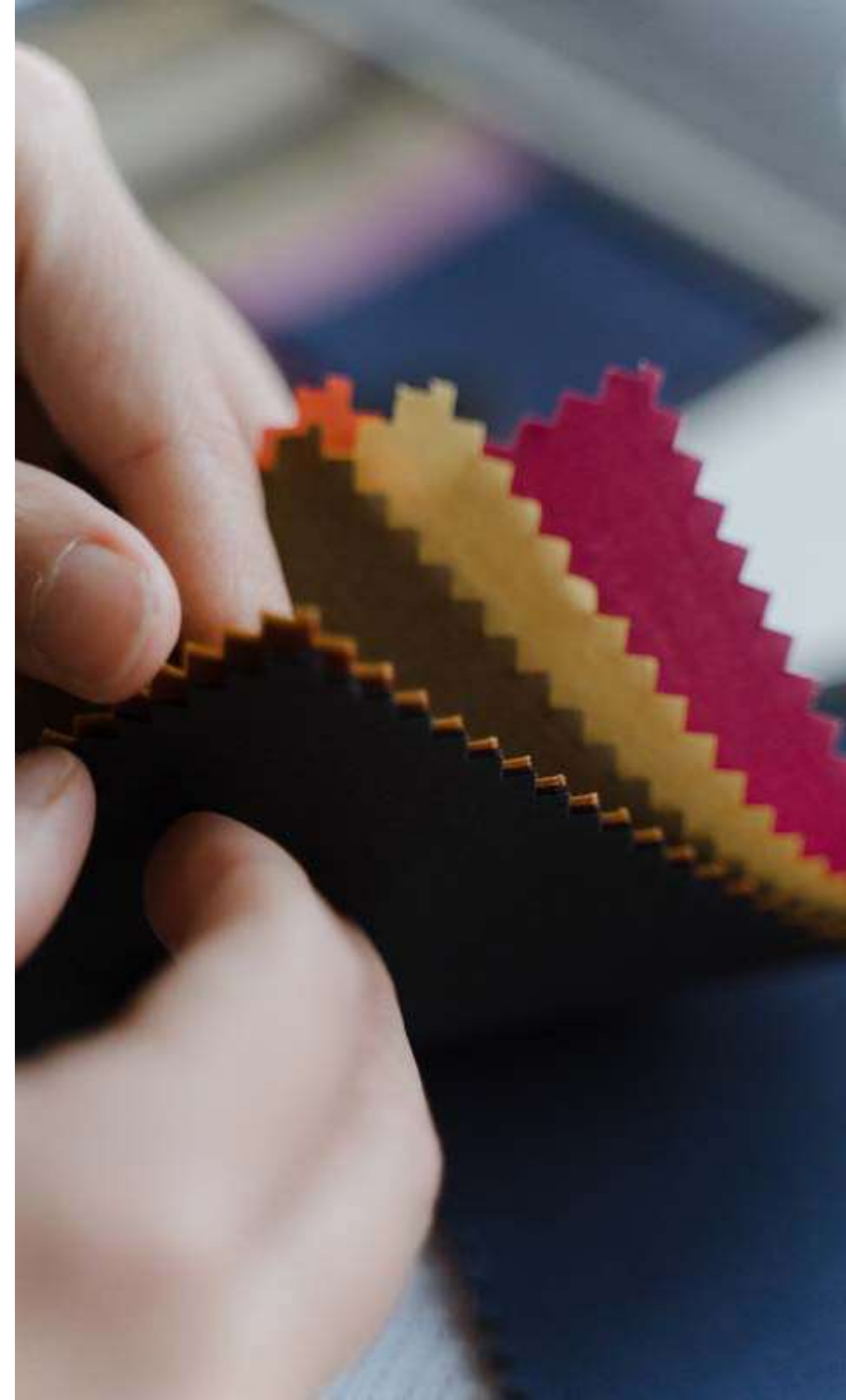
## Devolved Nations

### Scotland

The review of the SVQ in Kilt Making at SCQF Level 6 and the SVQ in Leather and Textile Technology at SCQF Level 7 have been completed.

## SEG Awards - Award in Fashion and Textiles (Sewing and Textiles) at SCQF Level 4

The aim is to introduce this qualification in Scotland so that it is available across the UK. The qualification addresses the need for introductory pre-apprenticeship / workplace entrance for all ages. UKFT is working closely with ACS Clothing to introduce three new units for Textile Care Services. Laundering Items, Drying Items and Inspecting Returned Items.



# Skills & training

## UKFT Academy: Production Sewing Machinist Programme (PSM)

UKFT has developed a new Production Sewing Machinist Programme, which is a series of 7 modules, including 48 lessons and over 100 activities that combine online and practical learning.

The first learners have now completed the programme.

## Textile Innovation And Sustainability BSc

The University of Leeds is launching a Textile Innovation and Sustainability BSc, which will start in 2024. UKFT helped prepare the business case for the launch of the new course.

The course will help students to discover and drive sustainable and innovative textile solutions and will also offer an advanced understanding of the role that technology plays in the development of textile materials, processes and products of the future.

<https://courses.leeds.ac.uk/j761/textile-innovation-and-sustainability-bsc>

## Greater Manchester Skills Boot Camp

Students who attended the first Production Sewing Machinist Skills Bootcamp at Pendleton Sixth Form College have now secured jobs in the industry, after the course finished in April 2023. 14 students completed the UKFT Production Sewing Machinist Programme and gained the skills and knowledge needed to start a career in the industry.

Alice West attended the bootcamp course with no technical skills but a willingness to learn and an interest in the sector. She now has a job lined up in the alterations department of Slater Menswear in Manchester using her new skills. Alice said the programme content (covering industrial machines, sewing techniques and materials, as well as an understanding of workplace requirements) gave her the skills and knowledge to start her new role with confidence.

The programme was supported by Greater Manchester Combined Authorities, which works with manufacturers of fashion, interior design, health, automotive and other textiles sectors across the region. Many of these manufacturers are experiencing increasing demand for their products but find recruiting skilled workers a challenge.



# Skills & training

## Career Events

UKFT will be promoting careers and opportunities at a series of events for job seekers, aged 16-25yrs, including school leavers, college leavers, university graduates and young adults looking for their next career step.

The event schedule is listed below:

1. National Career and Guidance Show, London 18 March
2. The Glasgow Careers Fair on 8 September.
3. The Leeds Careers Fair on 13 September.
4. The Cardiff Careers Fair on 15 September.
5. The Leicester Careers Fair on 20 September.
6. The Preston Careers Fair on 6 October
7. The Belfast Careers Fair on 11 October.
8. The Manchester Careers Fair on 27 October.
9. The London Careers Fair on 3 November
10. Skills London on 24 & 25 November

## Working with schools

Work with schools will continue throughout 2023 via a series of UKFT Industry Insight Webinars, designed to deliver in schools and involving an industry panel of young professionals.

The sessions will be delivered in partnership with 'Discover Creative Careers' who work with a database of over 20,000 schools. The sessions are aimed at students aged 11-18, and will bring together industry professionals to talk about their job roles, industry, career pathways and top tips, in order to inspire and inform young people about careers in the industry.

The sessions will be recorded, and an edited and fully captioned versions will be available to view on the UKFT website, UKFT Futures and the Discover Creative Careers website.

The first event took place on 23 May and involved:

- Celia Thornley Skills and Training Manager at UKFT (Chair)
- Annabel Wright- Sampling Coordinator at MAES London, a luxury womenswear manufacturer
- Katie Andrews - Tailor and workshop supervisor at Samuel Brothers Military Tailors
- Lottie Watkinson – Outdoor wear specialist and Business Development Manager at Social & Labor Convergence Program,
- Rebecca Sampson - Garment and Fabric Development Manager at English Fine Cottons, a state-of-the-art cotton spinning facility in Dukinfield

Further sessions are planned for July and October 2023 and January 2024.

# Skills & training



## 'Where I work' Insight Film

UKFT has organised and coordinated the making of a 'Where I work' insight film in partnership with the team Discover Creative Careers. The filming took place at 'Costumes of Character' Manchester in April.

The film captures product developers, cutters and makers talking about their job roles and the environment they work in, with focus on a young man who works as pattern cutter and sample machinist.

The final film will be hosted on UKFT Futures and used across a suite of classroom resources, with shorter versions used on social media.

# Skills & training

## MADE-IT

### Current Delivery

The Made It 22/23 programme is currently being delivered to the following universities:

- University of Bolton
- University of Westminster
- Manchester Metropolitan University
- Northumbria University
- Buckinghamshire New Uni

### Future Delivery

We have secured funding from Clothworkers and CapitB, to deliver MADE IT for another three years from September 2023. The programme will remain much the same as in previous years however this time we will be able to offer funded manufacturing-based internships to two students from each university annually, rather than just one

Over three years MADE IT will deliver 30 production internships; 1,000 students reached by the Masterclass; 8,400 hours for students in the production environment; 30 fashion and textile businesses engaged; 15 universities supported and 75 tutors reached.

## Drapers x UKFT internship Bursary Programme

For the academic year 22/23 UKFT are supporting students from:

- University of Bolton - 4 Places
- Northumbria University - 4 Places
- Heriot Watt University - 2 Places



# Skills & training

## UKFT Futures

UKFT has launched UKFT Futures, a brand-new platform promoting careers in the UK fashion and textile industry. Developed with the generous support of the Textile Livery Group, the platform allows users to explore opportunities and find their path within the industry.

General stats and information help to illustrate why a career in this diverse and valuable industry is such a great option.

Content can be found within the three key sections of the site:

- Get inspired allows users to discover stories and profiles from across the industry
- Get informed is where users can explore the industry, sub-sectors and job roles within it
- Get involved helps users to find their path into industry using specialist guides and resources

Users of the platform will be new entrants, people wishing to progress their career or find a new direction, those wishing to turn a hobby into a career, parents, career advisors and educators. Everyone is encouraged to [sign up](#) to become part of the UKFT Futures community.

The community will receive regular newsletters and social media activity that highlight opportunities within the sector alongside wider information, advice and guidance about getting into and getting on in fashion and textiles.

UKFT Futures will be promoted across the UK at a series of physical regional careers fairs this autumn.



## Young Textile Technician Training Fund

UKFT's YTTTF fund covers 50% of the cost of in-depth training costs for young textile technicians under the age of 30. This quarter, UKFT has supported the following and created case studies to promote the benefits of the fund:

- Milliken: two technicians training on a Tsudakoma loom
- Johnstons of Elgin: an apprentice tuner attending a DORNIER FT Rapier course in Lindau
- KnitRegen: a wearable technologist and material scientist undertook a machine handling and Fully Fashion training/programming course at STOLL in Leicester

There are new applications into the fund received from:

- Bristol Weavers
- Bower Roebuck

## ITMA Young Textile Technician Travel Bursary Fund

A group of young trainees were taken by UKFT on a scheduled tour of ITMA in Milan to learn more about new innovations in technology and get a global perspective on their sector. Interestingly there are six female technicians and two male technicians.



UKFT at Paris Fashion Week

# International business

# International business

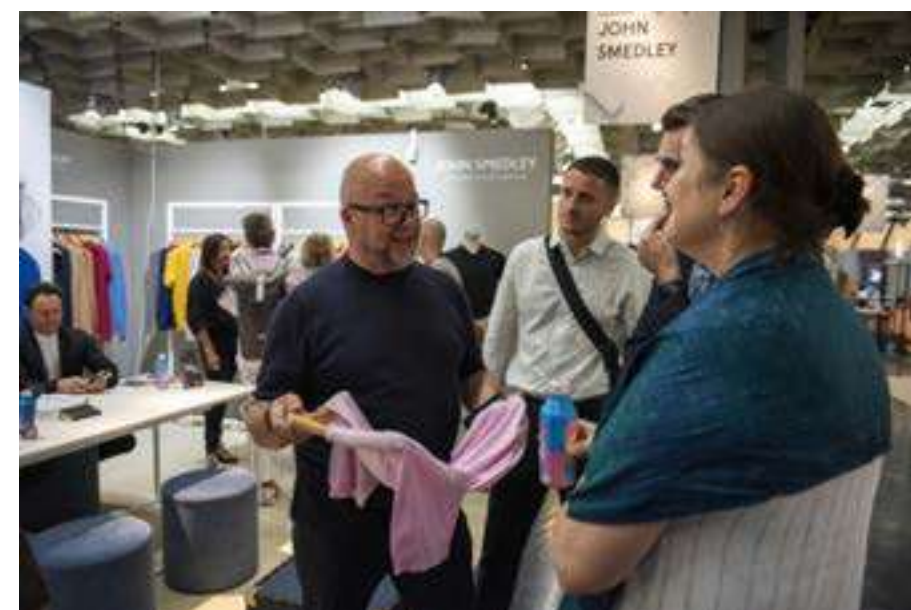
## Department for Business and Trade

Following the formation of DBT, UKFT met with the new Export Minister, Lord Offord.

Although there are still no grants for companies at trade shows (for any sector), UKFT has been successful in securing funding from DBT to continue with our core support activities to companies showing at the major fashion and textile shows in 2023 and 2024.

The events confirmed are:

- Pitti Uomo Florence
- Paris Men's Fashion Week
- Première Vision Paris
- Milano Unica
- Chicago Collective Menswear
- Paris Women's Fashion Week



UKFT's Global Brands campaign



# Innovation, R&D & sustainability

# Innovation, R&D & sustainability



## **UKFT launches textile recycling infrastructure and circular fashion projects**

UKFT is working with a wide range of industry partners from throughout the UK supply chain on a series of government-funded projects focused on textile recycling infrastructure, circular fashion and sustainable manufacturing.

The first is a £4 million project to develop and pilot a pioneering fully-integrated, automated sorting and pre-processing demonstrator for waste textiles (ATSP), which could eventually divert thousands of tonnes from landfill each year.

The Autosort for Circular Textiles Demonstrator (ACT UK) is a two-year project that will support the transition from uneconomic manual sorting of clothes and textiles that are not suitable for resale to highly-automated sorting and pre-processing, which can then be used as feedstock for existing and emerging recycling processes.

ACT UK brings together a consortium of recycling technologies, textile collectors/sorters, academia, manufacturers, industry associations, technologists and brands/retailers, supported with funding from Innovate UK.

It is part of a broader Circular Fashion Programme supported by Innovate UK, the Arts and Humanities Research Council (AHRC) and the Natural Environment Research Council (NERC), all part of UK Research and Innovation (UKRI).

With close involvement of Circle-8 Textile Ecosystems, the project partners are IBM, Marks & Spencer, Tesco, Pangaia, New Look, Reskinned, Salvation Army, Oxfam, Textile Recycling International, Shred Station, Worn Again Technologies, English Fine Cottons, Alex Begg, Camira, Manufacturing Technology Centre, University of Leeds, University of Huddersfield, Textile Recycling Association and WRAP. Other partners are expected to join the consortium.

The project was announced as part of the Creative Industries Council Sector Vision by the Secretary of State for Digital, Culture, Media and Sport, The Rt Hon Lucy Frazer MP, on 14 June.



# Innovation, R&D & sustainability

Today over 1 million tonnes of used textiles are generated annually in the UK. Estimates suggest that a third of these are non-rewearable textiles (NRT) which are currently being lost to landfill/incineration or are being exported, to be sorted in lower cost labour regions.

Manual sorting of used textiles has its limitations. It is not possible to sort garments by fibre composition 'by eye' and pre-processing (button, zip and trim removal) and sizing steps required by textile recyclers haven't been optimised and customised to meet their individual specifications. No scaled process currently exists which brings all of this into one industrial process or facility.

ACT UK will build on sorting approaches that are currently coming to market in countries such as the Netherlands, Spain and Sweden. The UK approach will innovate, combine and advance existing and new supporting technologies to overcome current barriers to materials circularity.

The project will bring together and advance key technology components including state of the art optical scanning, robotics, AI, pre-processing (buttons, zips, trim removal) and size reduction equipment – all under one roof. It will create a world-class blueprint that integrates the latest technologies and can be deployed across the UK.

Adam Mansell, CEO of UKFT, said: "What happens to our textiles when we no longer need them is a growing problem that we cannot ignore. With this ground-breaking project, we're aiming to create a model to sort and prepare NRT for recycling in a way that's never been done before, at scale. A national system of recycling plants could save 100,000s of tonnes of material from entering landfill. In turn, the system could generate huge volumes of material for use across the UK textile manufacturing sector."

If you are a brand, retailer, platform, recycler or any other producer of textiles and/or garments and want to find out how to participate in the project, please contact [info@ukft.org](mailto:info@ukft.org).



# Innovation, R&D & sustainability

## Related Projects

The future UK textile manufacturing industry needs data, infrastructure and supporting policies to drive circularity. Data will build business cases and inform regulations such as an Extended Producer Responsibility (EPR) scheme, which will then drive infrastructure and capital investment into the industry, creating commercially viable opportunities for the UK industry.

This project closely links to other projects that UKFT is involved in:

- The new Circular Fashion Innovation Network (part of the Institute for Positive Fashion), in partnership with the British Fashion Council (BFC) and is also part of the UKRI Circular Fashion Programme, which will support and guide the creation of a circular fashion ecosystem in the UK

- The Digital Supply Chain Hub for Textiles that will improve visibility of data flows in waste textiles, which will be critical to understanding flows of textiles through the ATSP

- The sandbox development of an industry-led Extended Producer Responsibility (EPR) scheme for textiles

In being involved in these projects UKFT is informing legislation, supporting commercial and business case planning and the viability of fibre recycling infrastructure in the UK. Through this work UKFT hopes to bring significant opportunity for transition to sustainable practices: creating opportunities to increase value and margins and achieving meaningful growth in the onshoring of manufacturing.

**Knowledge,  
Leadership,  
Opportunity**

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