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What we've been doing on your behalf

UKFT Q3 2026

www.ukft.org

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Executive summary

The third quarter of 2026 has seen continued growth across all membership sectors, with new members increasingly seeking impartial guidance on regulatory and compliance challenges, evolving legislation and changing market requirements. This growth reinforces the value of membership in helping businesses navigate a complex operating environment, providing clarity and practical support to inform decisions and plan with confidence.

Key new members include Montirex, Oner Active, Orla Kiely, Finisterre, Busby & Fox, Adanola, Scruffs Workwear, Fashion Works London, Gordon Nicolson Kiltmakers, Arda Biomaterials, Greenful Group, New Commodity, Clothes Aid and East London Textiles.

Within textiles, our regular industry roundtable held in July was well attended and we undertook visits to a wide range of companies including Arville, National Weaving, Soctt & Fyfe, Halley Stevensons, MacNaughton Group, Harley of Scotland, J&D Wilkie, Drove Weavers, Creation Mill, FTS Dyers and Burberry. We produced dedicated booklets highlighting our Innovation and Recycling & Reuse members, and hosted a UKFT village at the Resource & Waste Management Expo (RWM) show in September in Birmingham.

UKFT’s President Her Royal Highness The Process Royal visited the National Weaving Company in Pembrokeshire in July to recognise the important contribution that British textile manufacturing continues to make to the UK economy and celebrates the innovation, craftsmanship and skilled workforce behind a leading British woven label manufacturer.

Our campaign to change the rules on UK public procurement to create a level playing field for UK manufacturers in technical textiles and garments is gathering traction, and we are working closely with key members, DBIST, Make UK and CBI to create the policy conditions needed for UK procurement to be possible. We have also raised the issue at the WTO.

Our policy areas also include the renegotiation of the UK-EU trade agreement, a new agreement between the UK and Canada, a UK textiles EPR scheme and various other consultations.

International trade and export support remain a core area of activity. The fashion events (Pitti Uomo, Paris Men’s and PreCollections) exceeded expectations. A key highlight was UKFT’s presence at CINTe Techtextil in Shanghai and we also attended Intertextile Shanghai Apparel Fabrics, where we had stands and produced booklets to showcase the UK industry.



UKFT memeber: Scruffs Workwear

Executive summary



UKFT member: Epoch Biodesign



UKFT memeber: Derek Rose

Our regulation and compliance team continued to work with members to ensure they are prepared and informed about evolving global requirements through targeted engagement, practical guidance and webinars covering supply chain governance, product regulation and trade. Key activity included securing clarification from the European Commission, contributing to policy development on digital product passports (DPPs), PFAS, textile waste, traceability and potential UK alignment with the EUDR, and expanding resources on major trade agreements and tariff changes.

Regular member roundtables and forums strengthened industry intelligence and advocacy, while requests from major retailers for support with regulatory and compliance job descriptions demonstrate the growing value and relevance of this work.

Skills and workforce development remain a strategic priority. We are working on a project to review the current failing vocational skills system across the UK, specifically concentrating on textiles manufacture and associated sewn products.

Finally, students completed paid placements through UKFT at a wide range of employers including Bristol Weaving Mill, Calderdale Carpets, Church’s Footwear, Lyle & Scott, Primark, Richard Quinn and Urban Outfitters.

For Innovation and Sustainability, the focus has been on expanding UKFT's sustainability offer through the launch of new member services; developing practical resources; supporting businesses with increasing sustainability and regulatory requirements; increasing innovation membership scouting, preparing and submitting key innovation and sustainability research projects; and sharing sustainability and innovation knowledge globally.

Our activity has continued to demonstrate growing demand for both member support and consultancy, while new initiatives such as the UKFT Nature Working Group has strengthened UKFT’s role in providing strategic leadership on emerging sustainability topics.

Partnerships have continued to grow across the global industry and academia, alongside increased activity and engagement in innovation and collaborative research. UKFT is increasingly recognised as a key partner for research and knowledge exchange, with a growing interest in its expertise and involvement as a sustainability and innovation stakeholder both in the UK and internationally.

UKFT member: John Smedley

Membership



Membership

Membership Sectors: Fashion, Retail, Textiles, Manufacturing, Reuse & Recycling, Innovation and Education Partnership

We provide businesses from across the industry with knowledge and support that covers business essentials, sustainability, international business, skills, compliance, manufacturing and more.

As part of UKFT’s broad and valuable network, members can make new connections, stay up to date with the latest industry insights, join exclusive events, and access benefits and services from our partners.

UKFT membership offers opportunities to showcase your business, get involved in UKFT campaigns and activity, shape debates and influence key issues for the industry.



UKFT memeber: Lochcarron of Scotland

IN Q3 2026, WE...

- Delivered a wide range of member webinars on topics including compliance and regulation, sustainability, skills and marketing.
- Visited more than 20 members across offices, studios, factories and retail stores to strengthen engagement and understand business priorities.
- Published 25 member spotlights and maintained a regular programme of member opportunities and updates.
- Continued to convene regular member roundtables for different business communities and sectors.
- Launched an expanded suite of practical sustainability services for members.
- Launched the Circular Design Playbook at the Textile Recycling Expo.
- Published a new India market report and UKFT’s first in-depth sourcing report on Ethiopia, alongside regular regulatory and trade guidance.
- Published new booklets featuring UKFT’s Recycling & Reuse and Innovation members.
- Promoted trade missions, funding programmes and accelerator schemes, and delivered webinars on international growth and skills collaboration.
- Released a new episode of the UKFT Podcast covering the innovation landscape in the UK and how we’re supporting the sector.

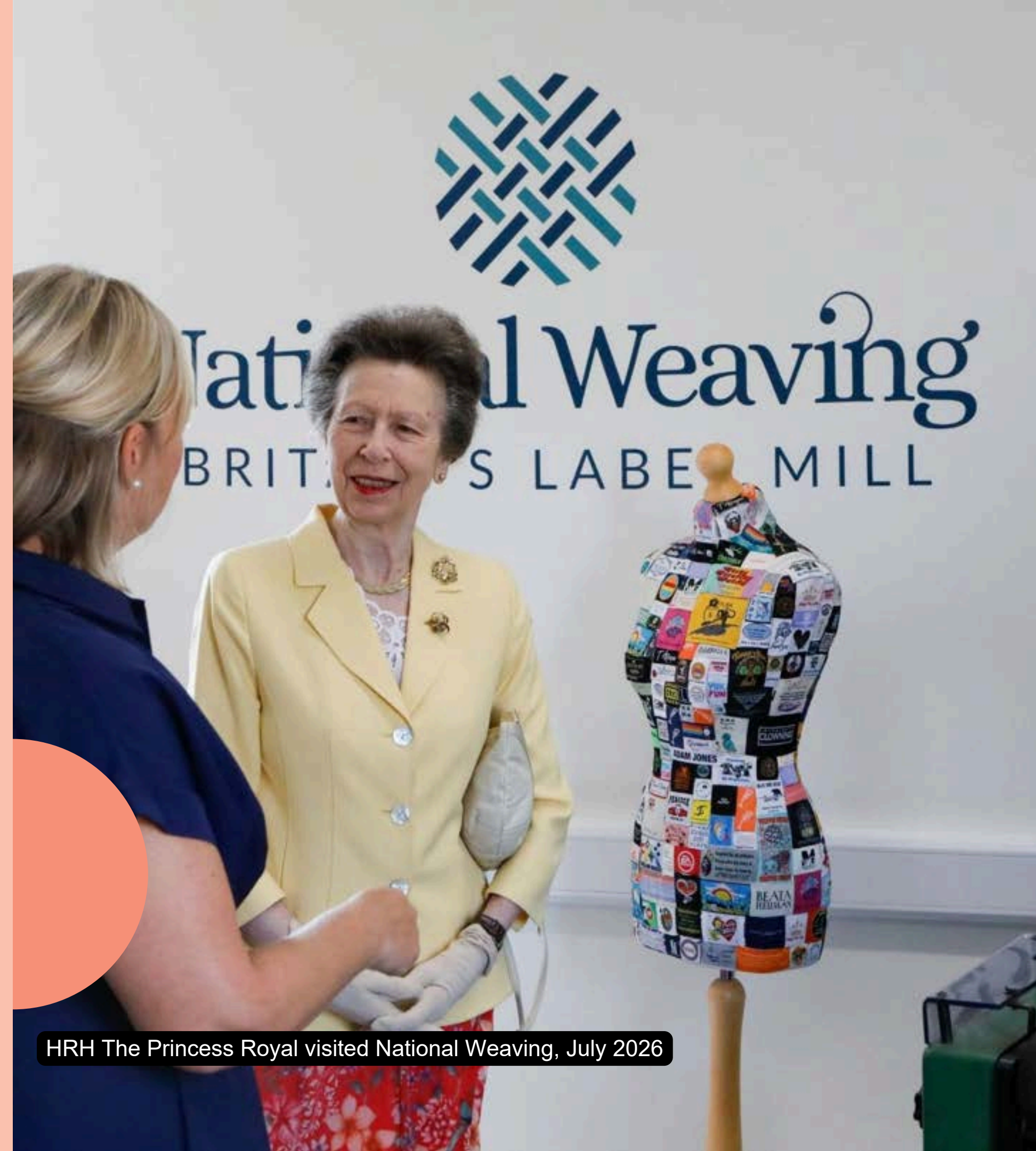


UKFT member: ACS Clothing



UKFT member: Loeffler Randall

Voice of the Industry



HRH The Princess Royal visited National Weaving, July 2026

Voice of the Industry

Creating the best environment for our industry

As the voice of UK fashion and textiles, UKFT is committed to creating the best environment for our industry. We represent the entire fashion and textile supply chain, promoting our industry in the UK and overseas.

We demonstrate the strategic and economic value of our vibrant industry to government and policymakers, ensuring the key issues are on the agenda. We champion our diverse and valuable industry through campaigns and targeted projects. UKFT’s campaign to change the rules on UK public procurement to create a level playing field for UK manufacturers in technical textiles and garments is gathering traction. We are working closely with key members, DBIST, Make UK and CBI on these issues to create the policy conditions needed for UK procurement to be possible. We have also raised the issue at the WTO. UKFT has launched a detailed survey of UK technical textile manufacturers to inform our policy asks.

The ask for UK government to use public procurement as a lever for economic growth has become even more important as recently published draft EU legislation shows that the EU are moving ahead with plans to implement minimum EU content for public procurement. A move which would severely harm our exports of technical textiles.

We are pushing HMG to renegotiate the UK-EU trade agreement (originally due in Autumn 2026 but delayed due to the change of PM and Ministers) and a new agreement

between the UK and Canada. We continue to work with DBIST on possible mitigation of some of the new EU rules listed above as well as which EU compliance requirements which may form a technical breach of the UK-EU trade agreement and/or the EU’s WTO commitments.

Despite several years of effort, it seems unlikely that the UK government will not introduce a UK textiles EPR scheme.

This is a huge disappointment and could prove very difficult for the reuse and recycling sector as well as for members who sell to Europe and other countries where textile EPR legislation already exists or is coming on stream.

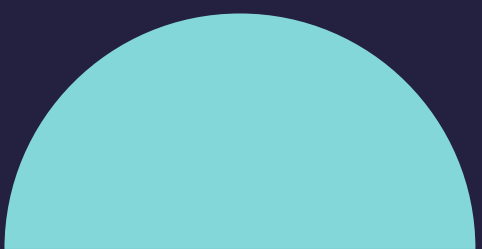
We continue to respond to government consultations and have recently submitted responses and evidence on potential new trade arrangements with Indonesia; a call for evidence on digital product records; a response to the Irish Governments’ consultation on textile EPR; a response to the UK Product Safety Consultation and a response to a survey on amending and updating Harmonised System codes.

We have raised important technical challenges with the government including the potential impact of the China Industrial and Supply Chain Security Regulation; raising international trade barriers with the DBT representative at the WTO; and raising challenges with trade with India and New Zealand.

International Business



Intertextile Shanghai Apparel Fabrics, August 2026



International Business

Activities supporting members in global markets

UKFT's tradeshow programme has mostly been delivered for 2026 with only Paris Women's Fashion Week left on the programme for early October. The shows have all performed in line with our expectations.

The fashion events (Pitti Uomo, Paris Men's and Pre-Collections) exceeded expectations. We saw a return of Middle Eastern buyers and a strong showing from the US.

The EU performed well with brands reporting a number of new areas of activity including Romania and Albania. Only Asia remained sluggish with even some of the smaller and more bullish countries affected by the aftermath of the US IEEPA tariffs.

Textile events were also very well attended this season. Intertextile Shanghai and Cinte Technical Textiles Shanghai saw good numbers and contacts and reports on those shows will be prepared shortly. This was our first ever technical textile show in China. Earlier in the summer Milano Unica performed very well.



Paris Fashion Week, July 2026

International Business

MEMBER SUPPORT

Trading remains challenging for most companies as the ongoing situation in the Middle East and Ukraine lead companies to defer decisions on investment in the hope of greater clarity later in the year.

We have had good discussions with the Indian High Commission in London on potential sourcing support for larger companies looking to source out of India. This is an interesting topic at the moment for many larger members especially if they are concerned about China’s new “Countering Improper Extra-Territorial Regulations” which could make it impossible for Chinese companies to certify to UK, EU or US customers and/or authorities their goods meet Modern Slavery declaration requirements.

GENERAL EXPORT TRENDS

Business is challenging, especially during the heat of the summer, but some members report that business has begun to improve towards the end of the summer with some identifying new export markets especially for summer weight garments and fabrics. The same applies to some also closer to home.

Saks Global (Saks 5th Avenue, Neiman Marcus and Bergdorf Goodman) has now emerged from Chapter 11 and has rebranded as the Exemplar Luxury Group. (ELG).

Some companies are beginning to look at offers they have received to sell to Russia again as there is no sign of an end to the conflict and refusing business does not come easily, especially as the Italians are cleaning up in the absence of UK brands.

Asia remains sluggish while the US, especially for garments and accessories, still seems to have high disposable income although there are signs that inflation is biting as a result of the US President’s tariffs.



UKFT at Cinte Techtextil China in Shanghai, September 2026

Regulation & Compliance

UKFT team speaking at British Footwear Association's Sustainability Summit

om Policy
Practice:
plementing
SG in Footwear



ANDREW HUDSON
Head of Softlines
Eurofins Sustainability Services



AVA KENNY-COLWELL
Regulation & Compliance Manager
UKFT



NICOLA PICHEL-JUAN
Sustainability Manager
SATRA



DEBORAH
Director
Leather



ROSIE
Senior
Manager



JOE
Sustainability
Manager
ERA Group



Regulation & Compliance

Supporting members to comply with international regulations

The Regulation and Compliance team continue to have very close engagement with members and policy makers regarding the huge range of global regulation that the sector faces.

REGULATORY COMPLIANCE

- Engaged with EU Commission DG Environment to urgently clarify disclosure obligations relating to the destruction of unsold goods, where application dates were unclear for members.
- Delivered a Supply Chain Governance Legislation webinar and accompanying guides covering the EU FLR (Forced Labour Regulation), EU CSRD (Corporate Sustainability Reporting Directive), EU CSDDD (Corporate Sustainability Due Diligence Directive), China Industrial and Supply Chain Security Regulation, US UFLPA (Uyghur- Forced Labor Prevention Act) and US Section 301.
- Delivered a Children's Apparel and Product webinar and accompanying guides covering children's apparel and sleepwear and the toy regulations.
- Delivered a Global Regulatory Overview webinar, covering key legislative developments since March 2026.
- Developed guides on the US Executive Order relating to Foreign Importers of Record (FIOR) and the French UFF (Ultra Fast Fashion) Bill.

PRODUCT STANDARDS & TESTING

- Attended UK Government PFAS Forums, providing industry insight and representing UKFT member views.

EPR OBLIGATIONS

- Delivered a panel discussion on EPR compliance for marketplaces at the European Commission offices



Regulation & Compliance

POLICY DEVELOPMENT

- Held a Member Briefing with DEFRA ahead of the Basel Convention OEWG meeting to discuss emerging proposals relating to used textiles and textile waste.
- Joined the Global Fashion Agenda Global Textiles Policy Forum (GTPF) Working Groups on Traceability and Used Textiles & Textile Waste, providing UK industry expertise alongside AAFA, Euratex and WRAP.
- Held a meeting with DBIST to highlight concerns and potential implications for UK businesses of aligning UK requirements with the EUDR (EU Deforestation Regulation).
- Responded to the EU study on DPPs for textile and apparel with Euratex, calling for practical, proportionate and technology-neutral obligations.
- Provided input and finalised the Euratex uPFAS Restriction position paper.

TRADE REGULATIONS

- Updated member resources on the UK-India CETA to support businesses following its application on 15 July 2026.
- Updated member resources on the Developing Countries Trading Scheme to support businesses with graduation and exit amendments made throughout 2026.
- Formalised new International Trade member guides covering UK-India CETA, IEEPA Tariffs, UK-South Korea (EU Cumulation), CPTPP, the end of EU De Minimis, the end of US De Minimis, ATA and Digital Carnets.



UKFT member: Ginger Autumn



UKFT member: House of Cheviot

Skills & Training



Skills & Training

Addressing critical skills gaps and developing industry-led solutions



UKFT SKILLS RESEARCH PROJECT 2026

This project aims to review the current failing vocational skills system across the UK. It specifically focuses on textile manufacturing and associated sewn products.

We have produced an in-depth interim report which highlighted the very low take up of apprenticeships compared to the number of entry level short courses. The next phase of the project is industry consultation on how vocational training can be improved.

UKFT, supported by regional specialists, undertook over 60 in person interviews supported by a wider online consultation. The response rate was much higher than anticipated and the responses were very in-depth.

MADE - IT

UKFT MADE IT programme is a training and paid internship initiative to connect second-year fashion and textile students with hands-on manufacturing experience.

10 students for the 2026 cohort completed placements at companies including Church’s Footwear, Lyle & Scott, Opera Prelude, Primark, The Modiste and Urban Outfitters.

We received almost four times’ more applicants than places this year, showing the pressing need for structured, paid internships to help graduates into full employment.

WEAVERS X UKFT BURSARIES

Each year, The Worshipful Company of Weavers and UKFT offers five bursaries to students. These bursaries provide £1,800 to fund a 12-week internship during the summer, offering hands-on experience and insight into the textile industry. The internship can support part of a longer industry placement or placement year, or be split across multiple placements with different businesses or organisations.

The 2026 cohort have now completed placements with Bristol Weaving Mill, Calderdale Carpets, Sudbury Silk Mills (x2) and The Theatre Royal Wakefield.

Innovation & Sustainability





Innovation & Sustainability

Helping to accelerate circularity and inform best practice



UKFT member: Weffan

IN Q3 2026, WE...

- Formalised and launched new member support services. First to launch, the Sustainability Clinics and the Sustainability Communications, Green Claims Review. Both services have seen strong uptake, providing members with practical, tailored advice on sustainability strategy, regulatory compliance and sustainability communications.
- Additional services launched were the Sustainability Strategy & ESG Roadmap service, Ethical trade, responsible sourcing & human rights due diligence support and Standards, Certifications, Audits & Sustainability Tools. All three of these were developed based on the regular enquiries from members on these topics making it the natural next step to standardise.
- Delivered tailored sustainability clinics to a range of members, covering topics including sustainability strategy, certifications, traceability, responsible sourcing and green claims and much more.
- Completed Sustainability Communications & Green Claims Reviews for various members, helping businesses strengthen the accuracy, substantiation and credibility of sustainability communications.
- Continued delivery of tailored consultancy projects, including a new service -Sustainability Strategy & ESG Roadmap development, ESG maturity assessments and strategic sustainability support for businesses.
- Provided tailored support to members on ethical trade and corrective action planning, and facilitated knowledge sharing between members by connecting businesses facing similar non-conformances to encourage collaborative learning and best practice. Also supported one member with their factory portal for their suppliers and another with best digital tools around traceability and due diligence.
- Delivered webinars on water compliance, reporting and stewardship approaches and another on building water stewardship across fashion & textiles supply chains.
- Became a signatory to the Social and Labour Convergence Programme
- Established the UKFT Nature Working Group
- Engaged with BSI on the development of ISO standards relating to modern slavery and due diligence, alongside broader discussions on sustainability standards and their relevance to the sector.
- Presented “Innovation as a Catalyst for Circular Textiles: Insights from the UK.” At TIFE2026 in Taiwan alongside key organisations including World Textile Sourcing, Reconomy and CITEVE.

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