

Statistics - The Furniture Industry

April 2019

GROWTH



£17.5 billion and rising, the UK furniture, bed and furnishings manufacturing is a substantial growth industry for the UK.

£17.5 billion
total consumer expenditure on
furniture in 2017 supported:

338,000
JOBS in **52,000**
COMPANIES

MANUFACTURING



Manufacturing turnover for the sector rose to £11.8 billion emanating from:

8,489 companies
— employing —
120,000 people

TOP 3
Furniture manufacturing is one of the top three divisions driving manufacturing growth in the UK.

IMPORTS



Global furniture imports reached £6 billion in 2017

Export performance rose between 2016 & 2017 by:

12%
to **£1.14 billion**



TRADE

#1 = Trade with the European Community
Source of Export Income

(with primary recipients being: Ireland, Belgium, The Netherlands, Italy and Spain)

£ **EU exports totalled £0.69 billion in 2017** & **↑** **exports to Ireland reached £0.24 billion**

Whilst exports to the EU are significant, the persistent £2.04 billion with EU trade gap remains.

Key Policy Issues - The Furniture Industry

Skills and Education



79% of employers are concerned that their ability to recruit adequately skilled staff will not improve over the next three years.

To address concerns over access to skilled staff, the Government should ensure that there is sufficient funding for training opportunities for young people in the UK. The Government should work with the industry to make the Apprenticeship Levy viable for the sector and reverse the recent decision to cut funding for training for non-levy paying manufacturers.

Trade and Exports



33% of respondents listed 'export support' as one of the best ways the Government could help their business grow.

The BFC has welcomed successful exporting programmes, such as the Exporting is GREAT campaign. However, the BFC also believes that the Tradeshow Access Programme (TAP) should be enhanced to help grow the furniture industry. This would be achieved by removing restrictive administration and substantially increasing funding to at least the 2014 level of £11million.

Standards and Regulations



95% of respondents believe the level of product safety in the UK is adequate.

The BFC is committed to maintaining high levels of fire safety in the home, but wish to engage in a meaningful consultation on current regulations. This is to ensure that environmental concerns are met, as well as updating the regulations to reflect modern materials and manufacturing techniques. Additionally, the Government should provide clarity on the scope of the Machinery Directive.

Environment & Circular Economy



87% of furniture businesses are interested in engaging with the Government in the development of circular economy.

The Government should continue discussions with industry on Extended Producer Responsibility schemes with a view to implementing a circular economy for all furniture industry products in the future. To achieve this, the Government must support the furniture industry with research and development of more environmentally friendly materials.

This information is drawn from a 2018 BFC survey amongst its Association's members. Sixty-five companies across the sector responded to our survey of 45 questions.



Jonathan Hindle
BFC Chairman

Our Board consists of members from these Associations:



The Furniture Makers' Company
the furnishing industry's charity

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