

# LONDON

Business Matters

## Inside

King's Awards for Enterprise

The value of apprenticeships

Benefitting from the Procurement Act

## Year of the Snake

Adaptability and growth

Pages 6-7

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## Letter from the editor

**Our front cover story features the Chinese New Year celebrations in London – reputed to be the largest outside Asia. There was certainly a vibrant and well-attended procession around Trafalgar Square and Chinatown in February as revellers saw in the Year of the Snake and witnessed athletic and dramatic lion dance performances.**

In the Chinese zodiac, the snake symbolises wisdom, intuition and transformation. As the sixth animal in the 12-year cycle, it represents elegance and thoughtfulness. Here's hoping ...

### Outstanding

We report on the appointment of Michael Mainelli as LCCI's new president on page 11. He is an outstanding business leader who we hope will be the subject of an *LBM* Working Lunch in the not-too-distant future. Sadly, we publish the obituary of another former Lord Mayor of London – Sir Brian Jenkins, also a man of great repute who served as LCCI president (p 64).

### Model

Sir Richard Branson is one of the most referenced answers in the question: If you were advising a young entrepreneur, which businessperson would you suggest as a model in our regular Two minute interview feature. I am delighted therefore that

his Elevator of Dreams – a dedicated space where aspiring founders can present their business ideas to a global audience of potential investors via a video doorbell – is covered on page 42.

### Winning business

Things can go wrong in business of course, one of the thorniest being struck by professional negligence. An invaluable, short guide to the subject and the steps to take when affected appears on page 48. Another guide, this time on the happier subject of winning business, is this issue's Big Read (p 52) and takes readers through the new Procurement Act which, among other things, is intended to benefit suppliers of all sizes, especially small businesses, start-ups and social enterprises.

### Putting on a show

Japan features a couple of times in this issue of *LBM*. On page 21 we preview the upcoming World Expo in Osaka and ambitions of the UK in making the most of this five-yearly trade extravaganza. They will have a lot to live up to after the brilliant show Dubai put on last time round but if any country can put on a show, Japan can. Kyoto was the host of the ground-breaking COP3 in 1997 and is the title of a fascinating play currently running at the wonderful Soho Place Theatre. Read the review on page 39.

**Peter Bishop**

**editor@londonbusinessmatters.co.uk**

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Official Publication of  
London Chamber of Commerce

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media enquiries**

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*London Business Matters* is published on  
behalf of London Chamber of Commerce  
and Industry by



**Crosby Associates Media Limited**

634 Birchwood Boulevard

Birchwood, WA3 7QU

Tel: 0330 124 3780

[www.crosbyassociates.co.uk](http://www.crosbyassociates.co.uk)

ISSN 1469-5162(Print)

ISSN 2051-9524(Online)

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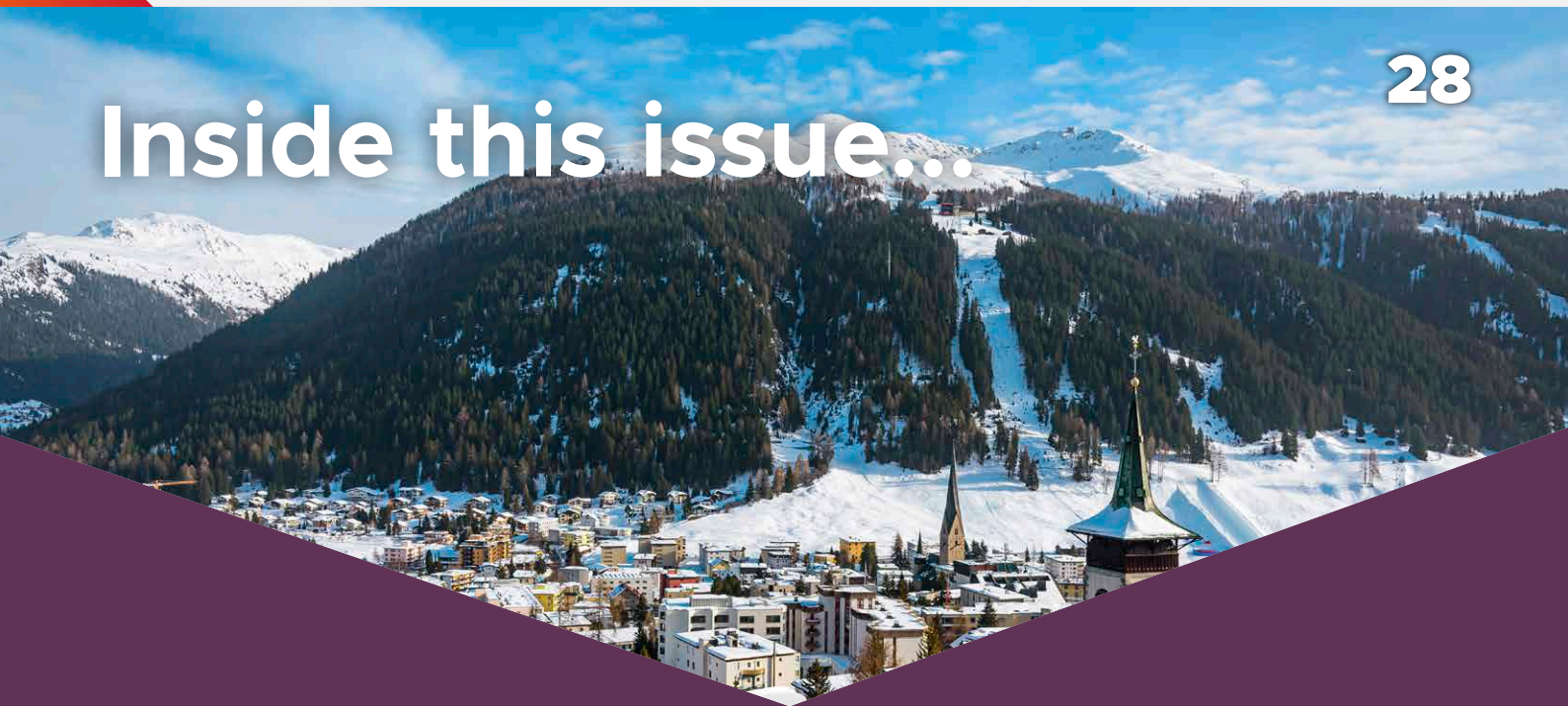
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# Inside this issue...



## Regulars

### 06 Cover story

The Year of the Snake  
Wisdom, intuition, and  
transformation

### 12 LCCI in the news

Leadership and vision

### 13 The Knowledge

What do you know about  
London?

### 18 100 years ago in London

Return to the gold standard

### 54 Events

Asian business at Chatora

Coming up – what to get in  
your diary for networking and  
business development

### 55 LCCI Member News

Offers

Noticeboard

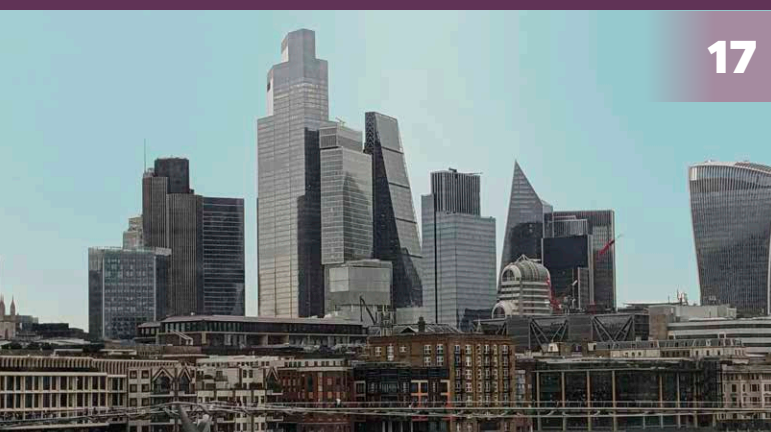
### 58 Two minute interviews

Charlotte Harrington, Belu Water

Kiany Fard, KEYFX

### 62 New Members

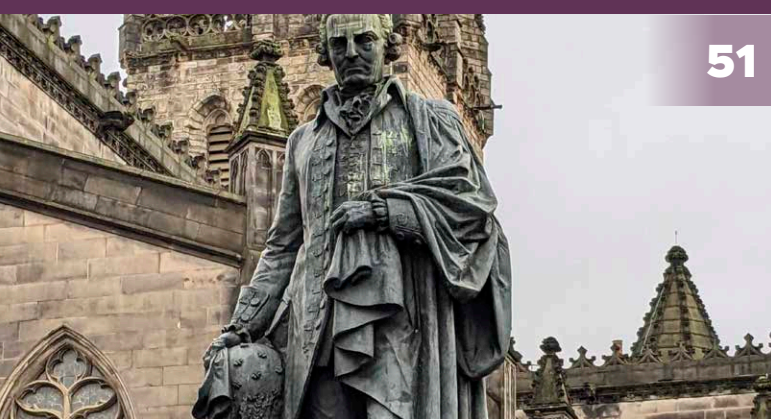
Who has joined LCCI in the last  
two months?



17



16



51



32

# Features

## 06 Top stories

The King's Awards for Enterprise  
Driving apprenticeships  
Main man Mainelli

## 13 London Life

Highlighting homelessness  
in the City

## 14 Connected, Liveable, London

The Stansted story  
Back to Blackfriars  
Street art at the museum  
Airport expansion in the capital

## 20 International

Investing in the Philippines  
Expo 2025 – Osaka  
Accessing preferential duty rates  
EU reset to drive growth  
Peter Bishop's Antwerp diary  
Investment opportunities for 2025

## 30 Book reviews

Gary Beckwith's City Cruises  
memoir  
Plus new works on  
entrepreneurship, investment  
and the free market

## 32 A Smarter City

Driving UK innovation and  
collaboration  
Document management in  
business processes  
Is British innovation starving  
itself?

Young talent and digital  
transformation success  
Shadow AI: the silent disruptor  
Legal protection for digital assets

## 39 Sustainability

Kyoto in Soho  
Recycling reforms  
The waste hierarchy

## 42 Skills and Entrepreneurship

Turning ideas into reality  
Mobility and car rental trends  
Mediation can help the  
bottom line  
Understanding professional  
negligence  
Immigration salary thresholds

## 50 Diversity and Inclusion

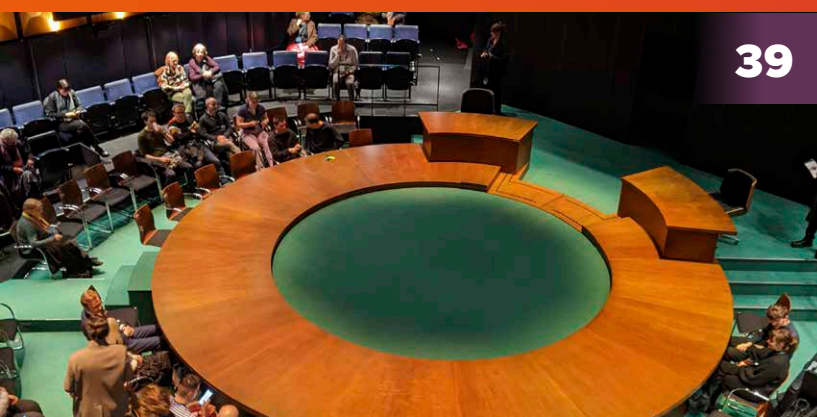
Action for women in the  
workplace  
Burns Night in Edinburgh

## 52 The Big Read

The Procurement Act – how  
small business can benefit

## 64 Obituary

Sir Brian Jenkins



39



08



# Year of the Snake

Chinese New Year celebrations in London are reputed to be the largest outside Asia. There was

certainly a vibrant and well-attended procession around Trafalgar Square and Chinatown in February as revellers saw in the Year of the Snake and witnessed athletic and dramatic lion dance performances.

## Wisdom

In the Chinese zodiac, the snake symbolises wisdom, intuition and

transformation. As the sixth animal in the 12-year cycle, it represents elegance and thoughtfulness.

Those born in the Year of the Snake – 1953, 1965, 1977, 1989, 2001, 2013 and 2025 – are said to be resourceful, insightful and graceful problem-solvers, embodying the power of adaptability and growth.

## Dotting the eyes

Hong Kong Economic and Trade Office, London greeted the Year of the Snake by hosting an evening reception at The Orangery, Kensington Palace. Here Gilford Law (top right image, left), director-general of the office and Wang Qi, minister of the embassy of the People's Republic of China, officiate the eye-dotting ceremony for the lion dance.



## SPONSORED COLUMN

# HMRC's offshore tax crackdown: More people coming clean – should you?

By Graham Caddock - Tax Investigations Director



The number of individuals admitting to HMRC that they've underpaid tax on offshore assets has surged by 22% in the past year. Our latest research reveals that disclosures made through HMRC's Worldwide Disclosure Facility (WDF) increased from 4,630 in 2023 to 5,643 in 2024.

This increase suggests more taxpayers recognise that undeclared offshore income is no longer worth the risk. As HMRC intensifies its scrutiny, those who act proactively stand to benefit the most.

## Why such an increase?

There are several reasons for more people coming forward to put their tax affairs right. In addition to an increase in public awareness, HMRC are making good use of the information it receives from overseas tax authorities using the agreement known as the Common Reporting Standard (CRS). The CRS is adopted by over 120 countries that now automatically share information about the assets and financial accounts held in its territory by individuals living in another country. HMRC now receives annual data from tax havens such as the Cayman Islands, Bermuda, and the British Virgin Islands, as well as European countries like Spain, France, and Greece.

HMRC cross-references this data with submitted tax returns using its powerful Connect database. As a result, an increasing number of "nudge letters" are being sent to those suspected of under-reporting foreign income, encouraging them to correct discrepancies before a formal investigation begins.

**The rising risk for cryptocurrency investors**  
By 2027, HMRC will also start

receiving cryptocurrency account data from multiple countries. Many taxpayers mistakenly believe that cryptocurrency income is tax-free, but this isn't the case. Those who fail to declare crypto-related gains could face serious financial penalties.

## The consequences of non-disclosure

If HMRC contacts an individual before they make a voluntary disclosure, penalties can be at least 150% of the unpaid tax, plus interest. In extreme cases, the tax penalty could rise to 300% or even criminal prosecution for deliberate tax evasion.

However, the risk of draconian tax penalties can be mitigated substantially by making a voluntary disclosure to HMRC using its online WDF portal. If HMRC accepts that a taxpayer had a reasonable excuse or took reasonable care, no penalty may apply. The WDF provides a structured way to correct past mistakes while limiting further HMRC action.

## How can we help

HMRC's message is clear: voluntary disclosure is always the best course of action. With tax enforcement tightening and penalties increasing, acting sooner rather than later is the safest and most cost-effective approach.

If you have undeclared offshore income or cryptocurrency gains, now is the time to act. Seeking professional advice can help ensure that your disclosure is handled correctly whilst minimising financial and legal risks. For a confidential conversation, please contact our Tax Investigations Director, Graham Caddock ([grahamcaddock@lubbockfine.co.uk](mailto:grahamcaddock@lubbockfine.co.uk)).

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# Rewarding enterprise

The King's Awards for Enterprise celebrate and encourage outstanding achievements in UK business

There are four categories – Innovation, International Trade, Sustainable Development and Promoting Opportunity (through social mobility). The awards are free to enter and firms can enter more than one category.

## Morale

Successful recipients have spoken highly of the benefits to their organisations of receiving an Award – such as increased sales, increased morale and staff retention, access to international markets and higher profile with potential investors.

Karim Fatehi OBE, LCCI's chief executive has a successful business, United Corporation, which has received two awards. He is now a judge for the awards, as is Lesley Batchelor CBE, a member of the LCCI international committee and director of Boot Camps. She commented: "The key aspect of this award is that it is exactly that



Lesley Batchelor CBE

– an award, not a competition. This means that as long as you can evidence achievements that meet the outlined criteria, you will receive the award.

## Active interest

"Every year, we see the most innovative businesses applauded but we also recognise those that form the backbone of the UK economy. Serving on this panel is a tremendous honour, and January is a particularly busy time for us as we review submissions for Number 10 before they are passed on to the King. King Charles, like his mother before him, takes an active interest in those who receive the awards.

"It is important that businesses engaged in international trade are aware of this prestigious accolade and leverage it to enhance their success in overseas markets, thereby contributing to the growth of our

economy. The application process is straightforward but does require some time to complete, and we are always available to help if needed."

## Applications

The 2025 recipients will be publicly announced on 6 May 2025 in The London Gazette.

The 2026 round of awards will open for applications on 6 May 2025 and close at midday on 12 September. Shortlisting and further assessment by professional assessors, expert industry representatives and senior civil servants takes place from September. One of the four judging panels (pictured below) met at LCCI in advance of the 2025 awards.

[www.gov.uk/kings-awards-for-enterprise](http://www.gov.uk/kings-awards-for-enterprise)





# Using technology to build a resilient, efficient and competitive business

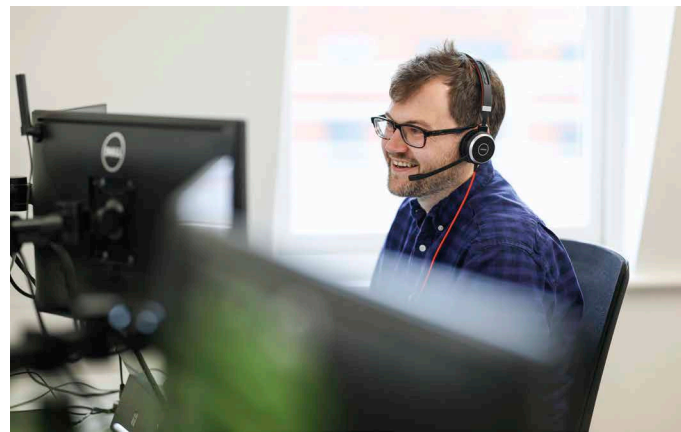
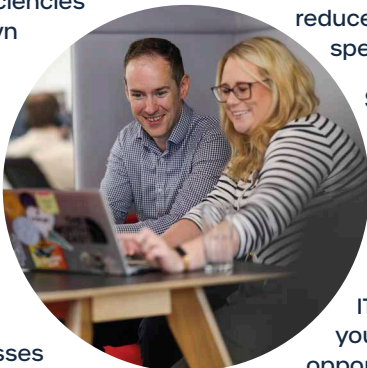
Challenging times often force us to think differently, and while rising costs impacting every organisation create pressure, they are often necessary – investing in cyber security for example – but can also present opportunities such as using innovative technology to operate effectively and remain competitive.

When change is necessary, it can be the perfect moment to innovate, streamline, and build a more resilient business. Necessity is the mother of invention, and change inevitable, so why not harness both and use technology as the key to not just surviving but thriving. The right investments now could make your business more efficient, resilient, adaptable, and competitive in the long run—turning cost pressures into catalysts for growth.

## There's no silver bullet, but there is smarter spending

There's no magic wand to suddenly make IT cheaper – technology is essential to running a business, and you can't simply switch things off or ask employees to share laptops. Cybersecurity measures can be costly, but the price of a cyber incident is far greater. IT is a fundamental part of modern business, and cutting costs recklessly can lead to greater inefficiencies and risks down the line.

However, that doesn't mean you can't be smarter about where your money goes. Many businesses are spending more than they need to, whether through outdated systems, underused software, or inefficiencies in processes. The key is to identify where savings can be made without compromising business performance.



For example, it's easy to assume that replacing out of date hardware is the best option, but it could be that it's the software in use that is actually costing you more? Legacy systems can be expensive to maintain, drain time and resources, and slow down productivity.

Similarly, many businesses continue paying for software and services they no longer need. Are you getting the most from your software licences? Are you paying for tools that duplicate functions? Could better user awareness and training help consolidate systems and reduce unnecessary spending?

## So where to start?

By taking a step back and evaluating your current IT landscape, you may find opportunities to optimise and reduce costs without sacrificing efficiency or security.

• **Process automation** – Can technology help reduce manual work? Automating repetitive tasks can free up valuable staff time, increase

efficiency, and reduce errors.

• **Data-driven decision making** – Using your business data effectively can help with forecasting, planning, and cost control. Smarter decision-making leads to better resource allocation and reduced waste.

• **Enhancing user experience** – Investing in intuitive, user-friendly technology can improve client and employee engagement and retention, ultimately boosting revenue.

## Quick wins for immediate impact

While long-term strategic planning is essential, there are immediate steps businesses can take to bring IT costs under control.

### 1. Licensing reviews –

Conduct an audit of your software licences. Are you paying for unused or underutilised licences? Ensuring you're only paying for what you need can lead to significant savings.

### 2. Cloud optimisation –

Cloud services are scalable, but many businesses end up over-provisioned and paying for storage or computing power they don't

use. Reviewing your cloud strategy and right-sizing resources can help reduce unnecessary costs.

### 3. Application

**rationalisation** – Many organisations use multiple applications that perform the same function, leading to unnecessary spending. Assessing your software landscape and streamlining applications can cut costs while improving efficiency.

## A smarter approach to cost optimisation

We help businesses take a strategic approach to technology investment—finding the right balance between cost savings and operational efficiency. By reviewing existing IT infrastructure, identifying inefficiencies, and planning for the future, businesses can optimise costs without sacrificing performance.

There's no escaping rising costs, but with the right technology strategy, businesses can remain competitive, efficient, and financially resilient. We're here to help you understand how to achieve this and make the most of your technology investments while keeping costs under control.



John Airey  
Head of Advisory at Waterstons

# Driving apprenticeships

LCCI has welcomed the government's announcement on shorter and more flexible apprenticeships as a step in the right direction to make them fit for the future. Chief executive Karim Fatehi OBE commented: "Slashing bureaucracy and giving employers and apprentices greater flexibility on English and Maths requirements could enable up to 10,000 more apprentices to qualify each year in key industries such as construction, healthcare and social care.

## Reform

While this progress is welcome, there is still more to be done. The Apprenticeship Levy, though a valuable initiative, remains too restrictive, preventing businesses from making full use of their funds.

## Stronger economy

"To unlock the full potential of



apprenticeships, we are calling on government to reform the Levy by extending the deadline for employers to spend funds, allowing investment in pre-employment training, and

simplifying the complex rules on usage. Greater flexibility will enable businesses of all sizes to invest in the skilled workforce they need to thrive, resulting in a stronger economy for all."



## Challenging times

During National Apprenticeship Week in February, LCCI hosted a roundtable – chaired by Anthony Impey, chair of the Department of Education's Apprentice Ambassador Network. This formed part of Impey's challenge to meet and talk to 100 leaders of small businesses

from across the country about the importance of skills and their experience of apprenticeships during the week-long celebration.

### Key questions

Business leaders had three key questions to address: how important

were skills to their company success; what was the best thing about employing an apprentice; and what would encourage more small businesses to employ an apprentice?

[www.nationalapprenticeshipweek.co.uk](http://www.nationalapprenticeshipweek.co.uk)

[www.gov.uk/apply-apprenticeship](http://www.gov.uk/apply-apprenticeship)

# Main man Mainelli

**Former Lord Mayor Michael Mainelli has been appointed as the new president of LCCI and will play a key role in representing London's business needs, as well as driving initiatives to enhance the capital's economic competitiveness.**

## Transformation

With a career spanning finance, technology and leadership, Professor Mainelli is highly respected and renowned in the business community. He served as Lord Mayor of London from 2023-24, championing initiatives from digital transformation to climate action within business, and he continues to serve as an international ambassador for the Square Mile. He is chair of Z/Yen, a leading commercial think-tank he founded in 1994, known for its work in promoting innovation and green finance.

## Leadership

Mainelli has a deep understanding of London's business community, having worked with companies across a range of sectors to promote growth

and innovation. His experience of financial markets, coupled with his leadership experience, will prove instrumental in LCCI's mission to support businesses across the capital during challenging economic times.

**“His experience of financial markets, coupled with his leadership experience, will prove instrumental in LCCI's mission to support businesses across the capital during challenging economic times.**

## Vision

Commenting on his appointment, Mainelli described the capital as “a hub of innovation and entrepreneurship.” LCCI chief executive Karim Fatehi OBE spoke of Mainelli's “combination of leadership experience and business acumen that will be invaluable to the Chamber as we continue to advocate for London's diverse business interests and needs.

“His vision for a connected, sustainable and prosperous London perfectly aligns with our own mission to advance the capital's economic competitiveness on a global stage.”

# Rugby Union – A Collapsing Scrum?



**The men's Six Nations tournament is one of the great sporting events on these isles starting in February every year. As a Welshman, it has been a painful watch, but rugby union remains one of the best sports to watch, regardless of how badly your team is doing. Regrettably, rugby union has not been performing off the pitch and the future of the sport is still in the balance.**

Like football, rugby union clubs have been riddled by financial struggles. In the 2022/23 season, no English Premiership club turned a profit. A report by Leonard Curtis on the state of English rugby showed that seven out of the ten clubs that made up the league were balance sheet insolvent in that season.

There are some key factors which have led to these demoralising results. Leonard Curtis' report identified that the average wage to revenue ratio was over 80%, an increase on previous seasons. The game has also been struggling to grow with game attendances over recent years being stagnant and broadcasting revenue on the decline since the 2018/19 season. The RFU also reported revenue had fallen by £46.2 million between the last two seasons. This has all meant that clubs are increasingly reliant on their backers to support them financially, otherwise they would collapse.

Leicester Tigers narrowly avoided Administration in

2023 after an investment of £13 million but unfortunately these financial trends made victims of clubs Worcester, Wasps and London Irish who each went into Administration and were suspended from competing. London Irish has only just been bought out of Administration and seeks to return in 2026.

For any company where liabilities exceed its assets deeming it balance sheet insolvent, it can be a key indicator of whether a company can meet its future debts. Another test is whether a company is cash flow insolvent where it cannot pay debts when due which, unhelpfully, does not make good reading for rugby union clubs. Seeking financial advice at the earliest sign of financial difficulty is vital and allows more options to deal with the situation.

This year, the British Lions tour in Australia is adding more to this year's Six Nations with players proving themselves to make the prestigious Lions squad for the Summer. Away from the field, clubs will still need to prove themselves financially. The future of rugby union certainly has some try(ing) times ahead.

**Gareth Rees is a Senior Manager in the Menzies Business Recovery team.**

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BRIGHTER THINKING



# Leadership and vision

by Vittoria Zerbini



**CityAM** reported the appointment – announced in January – of former Lord Mayor of London, Michael Mainelli, as LCCI president. Chair of think tank Z/Yen, Mainelli has held senior roles at BDO Binder Hamlyn and Deutsche Morgan Grenfell. He remains an Alderman for Broad Street Ward in the City of London. LCCI chief executive Karim Fatehi OBE praised Mainelli's leadership and vision for a competitive, sustainable capital.

## Cautious optimism

Following the launch of LCCI's Capital 500 quarterly economic survey, *The Standard* and *Director of Finance* shared how the survey showed London businesses to remain cautiously optimistic for 2025 despite challenges, with half expecting turnover growth and nearly 48 per cent predicting increased profitability. However, confidence in the overall UK economy has sharply declined, with concerns over recent



Budget decisions and the effect of inflation. Smaller firms are more optimistic about profitability, while larger businesses are more cautious. Inflation, rising energy and fuel costs, and a stagnant labour market remain key concerns. Quoted, Fatehi said that stability and supportive policies were crucial for long-term growth, urging the government to address rising costs and labour shortages.

*The Standard* reported on how business and union leaders welcomed the approval for a third runway at Heathrow with LCCI's Karim Fatehi highlighting the importance of Heathrow for London's global competitiveness and economic growth.

”

## Expansion

*The Standard* reported on how business and union leaders welcomed the approval for a third runway at Heathrow, with LCCI's Karim Fatehi highlighting the importance of Heathrow for London's global competitiveness and economic growth. The expansion is seen as essential for trade, though concerns about environmental sustainability and workforce resilience persist. The government is therefore being encouraged to support both infrastructure development and the aviation sector's decarbonisation efforts.

**Vittoria Zerbini is media and policy assistant at LCCI**

# The Knowledge

LBM's test of what readers know about London

- 1 Which great artist painted *London, Houses of Parliament. The Sun Shining through the Fog* in 1904?
- 2 Who is the current City Minister in the House of Commons?
- 3 Which south west London rugby club, founded in 1879, started life in Hampstead?
- 4 Sloane Square is named after Sir Hans Sloane (1660-1753). What was his profession?
- 5 Which nine-mile river feeds into the Thames at Wandsworth?
- 6 Who is the author of *London: the biography* published in 2000?
- 7 Who was the last female Lord Mayor of London?
- 8 Which Hollywood star's residency in a Mayfair town house is soon to be honoured with an English Heritage blue plaque?
- 9 Which literary boy wonder wrote the novel *London Fields*?
- 10 Which Prime Minister advised visitors to London that the best way to view the city was from the top of a bus?



Find the answers on page 65

# City sleeps out to highlight homelessness

**The Lady Mayoress, Florence King is hosting a charity sleep-out in March with proceeds going to Homewards and The Pret Foundation**

Taking place at Guildhall Yard, the charity fundraising event asks participants from the City and beyond to ditch their warm beds for the night to help raise awareness of the issue of homelessness.

## Reality

Launched by former Lady Mayoress, Amanda Keaveny in 2022, the Lady Mayoress's Sleep Out hopes to offer a glimpse into the reality of sleeping rough. It will directly support two organisations connected to homelessness, with 50 per cent of net proceeds going to The Lord Mayor's Appeal's charity partner Homewards and 50 per cent donated to The Pret Foundation.

It is estimated that over 300,000 people in the UK – nearly half of whom are children – are sofa surfing, sleeping on the streets,

staying in hostels, living in their cars or other forms of temporary accommodation.

## Lasting solutions

Mayoress Florence King commented:

"Homelessness is a growing issue in the City and beyond and a cause very close to mine and The Lord Mayor's heart. We

believe it's vital to not only raise awareness of what it's like for a growing number of Londoners sleeping rough, but to support organisations like Homewards and The Pret Foundation who are working tirelessly to find lasting solutions to the growing number of people without a permanent home in the UK."

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



# Uncorking a century-old Irish gem

**In the heart of the Royal Exchange, a premium spirits retailer has made an extraordinary find that is sure to set the hearts of whiskey enthusiasts racing. A rare bottle of Roe & Coe, estimated to be over a century old, now graces Tomoka's collection, an absolute treasure trove of Irish whiskey heritage**

**Jass Patel, chief executive of Tomoka, explains: "This bottle is a true piece of Irish whiskey history, and tells the story of the struggle the Irish whiskey industry has had over the last century."**

## Legacy

The bottle dates back to when the George Roe & Co Distillery in Dublin was still in operation, making the latest possible production year for this vintage 1926, which marked the closing chapter in the legacy of the distillery. This whiskey, therefore, is a living relic from the heyday of whiskey production.

Roe & Coe, as a brand, pays homage to the once-mighty George Roe & Co Distillery in Dublin, a name synonymous with the golden era of Irish whiskey during the 19th century. This distillery, sprawling across 17 acres at Thomas Street in Dublin, was Ireland's top whiskey exporter, standing shoulder to shoulder with Guinness as a heavyweight in the city's brewing and distilling district.

## Tumultuous

Surprisingly for some, during the 19th century, it was Irish whiskey, not Scotch, that held sway in the market.

**Two-thirds of all whiskey sold in London hailed from Ireland, making up a significant 60 percent of global whiskey sales.**

Two-thirds of all whiskey sold in London hailed from Ireland, making up a significant 60 percent of global whiskey sales. However, this Irish whiskey reign faced a tumultuous period in the country's history, marked by revolution, independence and civil war. Adding to the challenges, one of Irish whiskey's major importers, the US, implemented Prohibition in 1920, setting the stage for a prolonged period of decline. By the 1960s, the once-thriving industry had dwindled to just three operational distilleries in the country.

## Iconic

The story of George Roe, his family and their renowned whiskeys has faded over time since the distillery's closure in 1926. Today, all that remains is the iconic distillery windmill tower

and an enduring pear tree, still in bloom, serving as a silent tribute to the distillery's illustrious past.

## Revival

Yet, much like a phoenix rising from the ashes, Irish whiskey is experiencing a revival. The Thomas Street area in Dublin, with its rich whiskey history, is coming back to life. It is becoming a bustling hub of brewing and distilling once again, drawing both enthusiasts and artisans. In the midst of this resurgence, Roe & Coe stands as a symbol, preserving the memory of

George Roe, a true pioneer who helped shape the golden age of Irish whiskey.

Tomoka's acquisition of this rare Roe and Coe bottle is an invitation to step back in time, to savour the essence of a bygone era, and to witness the reawakening of Irish whiskey right before our eyes. If you're curious

to see this piece of Irish history for yourself and pay tribute to the enduring legacy of George Roe & Co, you can visit Tomoka's flagship store in the heart of Royal Exchange, London.

[www.tfandr.com](http://www.tfandr.com)



Jass Patel



SPONSORED COLUMN

# The Rising Cost of Employment: Will businesses turn to AI and outsourcing?

The forthcoming increase to national insurance (NI) to 15% and the lowering of the threshold from £9,100 to £5,000, means that businesses are facing a significant increase in their payroll costs. With increased workers' rights under the Employment Rights Bill (ERB) also set to be rolled out over the next 12-24 months, businesses are assessing their workforce strategies and, AI adoption and outsourcing are emerging as key considerations.

Businesses that may have been considering AI automation are now giving serious consideration to its' value not only from a cost saving perspective but also an employment risk perspective. We are already seeing how basic administrative and routine tasks can be AI generated; customer service AI-powered chatbots and virtual assistants are fast replacing human agents for handling routine enquiries and AI tools are used to streamline hiring processes, automating CV screening, interview scheduling and even employee onboarding. Professional services industries are also not immune from the allure of AI with financial reporting, invoice processing and payroll management being automated reducing the need for manual intervention.

Businesses are also contemplating outsourcing tasks, not only as a cost saving measure but also to reduce their exposure to employment claims associated with upcoming changes under the ERB. The proposals include introducing day one unfair dismissal rights, extending the eligibility period for making a claim from 3 months to 6 months, restricting the circumstances in which an employer can vary employment terms and many other changes.

Outsourcing allows businesses to access lower labour costs and avoid the pressures of employment compliance, which is expected to

have a greater impact on SMEs. Offshoring functions such as IT support, accounting and back-office operations gives businesses the opportunity to scale operations up or down more flexibly without the complexities and inherent risks associated with the hiring and firing of staff.

While job cuts in many sectors are likely, labour-intensive industries such as retail and hospitality are expected to be impacted the most. Those working part-time or on the lowest hourly pay, who were previously not eligible for employer NI, will now be brought into the fold from April and businesses will inevitably be looking to reduce headcount.

As businesses contemplate various strategies to manage increased costs and risk, a balance must be struck with maintaining quality service and a skilled workforce in what remains an increasingly competitive market.



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Visit: <https://quastels.com/>

*This information in this article is for general guidance only and should not be construed as specific legal advice.*

# QUASTELS

LEGAL ADVISERS



# Shining in the gloom

**Resisting**, a shot taken by the French photographer Aurelien Chen, was chosen by visitors at an exhibition at Christie's King Street in London, marking the closing of the **Culture Identified** photography event.

## Memory

Chen says of his photo, "In the middle of destruction, life goes on until the very last moment. Even after demolition, the memory of the place will remain with all the stories that happened within it. In this photograph, a barber shop stands in the middle of a demolished ground. Clients do not care about the surroundings, the barber is still here, they can still have their haircut; they will keep going as long as the shop still stands."

## Perspectives

The annual exhibition, sponsored by Raymond Legal, marked the fifth year of Global SinoPhoto Awards (GSPA) since its foundation in 2020. This highlighted 62 selected images from 32 photographers worldwide who have entered their photographs for an award from 2020 - 2024, to share their different global perspectives and understanding of Chinese culture. The aim of the awards is to connect people through an appreciation of

Chinese culture and promote photographers internationally.

## Ancestral connection

Over the first four years, GSPA has collected thousands of images from hundreds of photographers from more than 40 countries. The exhibition featured past entries that tell a story, whether it's a personal experience, an ancestral connection, or a fascination with Chinese culture.

## Human experience

GSPA, founded by Yintong Betser and Lynne Bryant, was inspired by the historical exhibition *Family of Man* curated by Edward Steichen at the Museum of Modern Art in New York in 1955. It celebrated the universal human experience through powerful photographs from around the world, promoting global unity, empathy, and the shared values that connect all people.

**In addition to principal sponsor Raymond Legal, Blick Rothenberg, and the Hong**

**Kong Economic and Trade Office also returned this year, continuing their support of the Global SinoPhoto Awards. The gallery space was provided by Christie's King Street in London.**

**Submissions for the 2026 awards will open in June**

[www.sinophoto-awards.com](http://www.sinophoto-awards.com)



How LBM covered last year's GlobalSino Photo Awards



# The Stansted story

**London Stansted Airport has a great story to tell and LCCI chief executive Karim Fatehi OBE heard it first hand when he visited earlier this year**

Meeting managing director Gareth Powell, Fatehi learned about Stansted's impressive Sustainable Development Plan which looks at sustainable growth for the airport over the next 20 years. It outlines developments and ambitions for the local economy, environment, surface access needs and community impacts. Critically for London, it addresses how Stansted can help to meet demand for aviation capacity by

making best use of its current runway and increasing its passenger limit to meet the connectivity needs for London's diverse economy.

### Boost

There is also a £1.1 billion investment for the airport to expand the existing terminal by a third, securing new air routes for key business and holiday destinations. This is expected to bring

5,000 additional jobs and a significant boost to the local economy.

The visit included a tour of the airport's college. Stansted's exceptional work in education and apprenticeships was also highlighted. The airport's work in education not only strengthens the talent pipeline in the aviation industry but also contributes significantly to the region's economic growth.

## Lording it

**Andy Lord, Transport for London (TfL) commissioner was guest speaker at a recent patron lunch at the splendid Ned Hotel in the City.**

### Transport services

Introduced by LCCI chief executive Karim Fatehi OBE, Lord briefed guests on his responsibilities at TfL for ensuring the delivery of safe and reliable transport services to keep London moving, growing and making life in the capital better for residents, visitors and businesses. He is responsible for

fulfilling the priorities and objectives set out in the Mayor's transport strategy and TfL business plan.

### Leadership

Street joined TfL in November 2019 as managing director of London Underground. He started his career with British Airways as a sponsored undergraduate in 1989 after gaining an honours degree in mechanical engineering from Manchester University. In his career, he has taken on roles across engineering, operations and customer service,

culminating as director of operations and member of the executive leadership team for seven years.







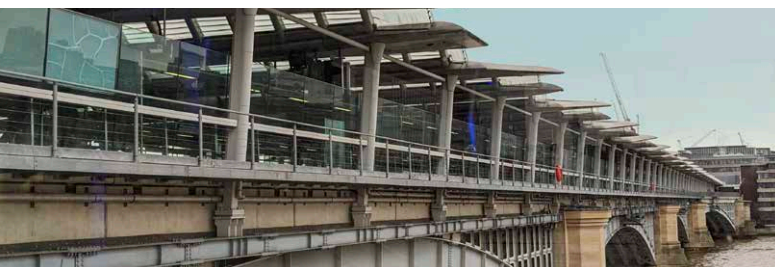
# Back to Blackfriars

**Just in time for the London Olympics, the renovation of Blackfriars station was completed in 2012, three years after the £500 million Thameslink-related project began.**

## Modernisation

Thirteen years later, it has become an established part of the City landscape and has

certainly achieved the original aim of modernisation and an increase in capacity. It now has the distinction of being the only station in London that spans the River Thames and boasts the largest solar roof of any bridge in Europe. Note too that Blackfriars station has an entrance on both sides of the river, so bear that in mind if it is used as a meeting place!



# Street art at the museum

**Last September LBM reported on Banksy's busy summer in the city. The famed street artist had produced a series of animal-themed images around the capital. It started with a goat in Kew, two elephants in Chelsea and three monkeys in Brick Lane.**

The seventh in the series – translucent swimming piranhas in a police sentry box – which popped up near St Paul's Cathedral last August – is set to become an exhibit in the new London Museum, due to open next year.

## Future generations



Chris Hayward, policy chair at the City of London Corporation commented: "When the piece appeared in the City and being acutely aware of Banksy's popularity, we relocated it swiftly to protect it and ensure that it could be viewed safely and retained for future generations to enjoy.

"The piece, alongside the museum's wider collection, will tell the story of London's unique and diverse history. The new London Museum is just one of the many attractions that visitors can explore and experience in the Square Mile, and I know this artwork will delight all who see it."

## SPONSORED COLUMN

# Sensible Cyber Security- Prevention is Better than Cure

Small and medium-sized enterprises (SMEs) face unique challenges in maintaining cybersecurity resilience due to limited resources and budgets. That said, many Large Enterprises also face these challenges, often buying an assortment of unconnected security solutions which may or may not be working effectively. It can be a daunting and complex journey to establish an advanced program. Often, however, businesses are failing to patch systems and manage risk across technologies. These issues can often be (relatively) easily addressed, in an affordable and ongoing manner. good practices in these areas are invaluable in making your business more secure.

The old adage, 'prevention is better than cure', holds true for cyber security in many ways. The cost (in resource, time and money) of a basic risk assessment and activities to 'close the open doors' is achievable. The comparative costs in detecting intrusions and indeed incident response are far greater.

Good cyber hygiene includes regular updates to software, operating systems, and applications. Automated patch management tools can help ensure that updates are applied consistently, reducing the risk of exploitation from known vulnerabilities. The traditional 'penetration test' (where a consultant probes for vulnerabilities and weaknesses in applications and networks) is still useful but does only present a snapshot in time. Thankfully there are now highly cost effective 'continuous threat exposure management'

(CTEM) approaches to ensure this can be done on going, all year round.

For SMEs with limited in-house cybersecurity expertise, partnering with external professionals can provide affordable advice and oversight. These experts can help identify vulnerabilities and implement cost-effective security measures tailored to the company's specific needs, working as a true extension of existing teams and providing key skills which are out of reach for many businesses.

At OSec, we are fully focused on cost effective approaches which prove that in cyber security, prevention is indeed so much better than cure. As an independent, creative and established firm we are always ready to listen and advise in the right way. We are a trusted advisor to many huge brands, and plenty of smaller ones too. Get in touch and open the discussion, which may just save the day.



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# Britain returns to the gold standard

**On 28 April 1925, Chancellor of the Exchequer Winston Churchill presented his first budget in the new government under Conservative Prime Minister Stanley Baldwin. As Chancellor until 1929, Churchill championed free trade, cuts to local taxation, a reduction in the pension age and support for Britain's coal mining industry**

## Disastrous

However, Churchill's decision for Britain to rejoin the gold standard in 1925 was one of the most contentious – and disastrous – ever taken by a British Chancellor.

The gold standard is a monetary system where the value of a country's currency is directly linked to gold. Paper money is converted into a fixed amount of gold. Under the gold standard, a country sets a price for gold, which is then bought and sold at that price.

Britain had enjoyed tremendous economic stability between the late 1890s and 1914. The gold standard helped to boost trade and foreign investment. World War I saw drastic economic changes, including the use of capital controls, soaring national debt and turbulent exchange rates. The pound's value fell and inflation surged. During the war and its aftermath, gold payments were suspended and exports limited.

## Shackles

The early 1920s saw increasing support for the gold standard because

people wanted financial stability. Initially, Churchill was doubtful.

However, he announced a return to the gold standard in his budget speech. "We are often told that the gold standard will shackle us to the United States ... I will tell you what it will shackle us to. It will shackle us to reality. For good or for ill, it will shackle us to reality. That is the only basis upon which we shall be standing, and I believe it to be the only basis which offers any permanent security for our affairs."

## Catastrophe

The pound's gold convertibility was duly restored. However, it was fixed at its pre-war rate, not a rate that reflected the paper pound's inflated post-war rate. This, not the return to the gold standard itself, proved fatal. The pound was pegged against the American dollar at £1 to US\$4.86 instead of the free market rate of £1 to US\$4.40. While this might not seem a big difference, it was the catalyst for a series of events that led to economic catastrophe.

Leading economist John Maynard Keynes warned that restoring the gold standard at its pre-war parity would severely damage Britain's exports, especially coal, and lead to global depression. The return to gold at 1914 levels is now widely believed to have caused deflation and

unemployment. Sure enough, the over-valued pound reduced demand for British coal exports. The mining industry imposed a national lock-out from 31 July unless the miners agreed to a large pay cut. Baldwin and Churchill set up a royal commission on the mining industry's future.

## Strike

Its findings came too late to avert a General Strike in May 1926. Called by the Trade Union Congress, its aim was to force the government's hand in stopping wage cuts and poor conditions for 1.2 million locked-out miners. Millions of workers from other industries joined in the sympathy strike, especially those in transport and heavy industry. It ended on 12 May without an agreement. Most miners eventually returned to work but many remained jobless for years.

## Wall Street Crash

The inflated pound affected not only Britain but the entire world. At the wrong exchange rate, Britain would have lost gold to America. To avoid this, America's Federal Reserve Bank depressed their own interest rates to weaken the dollar. This led to currency and credit expansion – and the artificially low interest rates and economic boom that culminated in the Wall Street Crash in 1929 and the Great Depression of the 1930s.

Britain left the gold standard forever in 1931.

**100 years ago in London is written and researched by Alexa Michael**





# Airport expansion welcomed

**LCCI chief executive Karim Fatehi OBE praised the Chancellor's plans for kickstarting economic growth and said that they matched the ambitions of businesses across London and the UK. He commented: "Measures that help London's firms attract more customers, invest in their future and continue to spread prosperity across the entire UK are essential to revitalise our economy."**

## Connectivity

Fatehi particularly welcomed the Chancellor's decision "to support expansion and the building of infrastructure across the entire UK, including in innovation hubs such as the Oxford Cambridge Growth Corridor which London businesses work with closely." He added the Chamber's support for airport expansion at Heathrow. "Trade through airports is essential for London and the wider UK's business community. Heathrow's role as a hub airport is crucial and unique

and a third runway is much needed. Our Green Skies report shows that four in five London business leaders agree that air connectivity is vital to London's global competitiveness, international trade and economic growth."

## Environmental concerns

Chancellor Reeves also confirmed that the Airports National Policy Statement would be reviewed to guide the development process. This

support is part of a broader initiative that includes airport expansions at Gatwick, Luton and Doncaster Sheffield, as well as additional investments in infrastructure and clean energy. Reeves emphasised the importance of addressing regulatory barriers to stimulate economic growth across the country and urged proposals to progress by summer, with private-sector funding covering surface transport costs. She also announced £63 million to address environmental concerns in financing sustainable aviation fuels.



## Spotlight on immigration compliance in 2025

By Francesca Sciberras at Laura Devine Immigration

SPONSORED COLUMN



application, with a significant increase in the refusal rate of sponsor licences. For compliance visits undertaken once a sponsor has been granted a licence, the ramifications can be severe and include sponsor licence revocation and issuance of civil penalties.

### Planned changes to compliance enforcement

In 2024, the Home Office tripled civil penalties for employers who fail to conduct right to work checks, increased the frequency of compliance visits for licenced sponsors and announced changes to compliance enforcement. It is more essential than ever to ensure that your business complies with UK immigration requirements.

New changes to the compliance enforcement regime are on the horizon, according to a Home Office press release in late November 2024. The Government plans to double the time a sponsor must wait to apply for a new sponsor licence following the revocation of its licence. The Home Office also announced its intention to increase existing sanctions against sponsors who have only committed minor breaches.

### Civil penalties

Since 13 February 2024, employers who breach illegal working rules are subject to increased fines, starting at a maximum of £45,000 for an initial breach and £60,000 for subsequent breaches. From the start of the Labour government on 5 July 2024 to 31 January 2025, 1,090 civil penalty notices have been issued.

### Is your business compliant?

The Home Office requires sponsors to adhere to complex duties, and the consequences for non-compliance can be dire for businesses and sponsored employees.

### Sponsor licence compliance visits

Compliance visits by the Home Office, designed to monitor and enforce sponsor duties, are on the rise. These can take place during the pre or post licence stage of the sponsorship system and can be conducted in person or via video call. Sponsors must be prepared to discuss and provide evidence of their current HR systems, right to work policies and financial forecasts, amongst other things. We have noticed a sharp increase in compliance visits before a decision is made on a sponsor licence

Laura Devine Immigration offers a range of sponsor compliance services which can assist your business with ongoing immigration compliance and ensure that your sponsor licence and HR systems are in order.

*Francesca Sciberras is a Partner at Laura Devine Immigration, a transatlantic boutique immigration firm with offices in London and New York.*

[www.lauradevine.com](http://www.lauradevine.com)

**LAURA DEVINE**  
IMMIGRATION

# Investment opportunities in the Philippines



by Miguel S. Santos, Ruben J. Pascual and Donna Angulo

**The Philippines is becoming one of Southeast Asia's most dynamic investment hubs. With a predicted GDP growth rate of 6.2 per cent and ongoing infrastructure development including new airports, highways, and railways, the country is positioned for continued economic expansion. Beyond its natural beauty, the Philippines offers a diverse array of opportunities for businesses seeking long-term growth and profitability.**

## Vibrant

The Philippines is an archipelago of over 7,600 islands, known for its vibrant culture, stunning natural landscapes, and warm hospitality. English is widely spoken, making it one of the largest English-speaking nations in the world, and the country shares a strong historical connection with Western culture due to centuries of colonial influence. With a population exceeding 110 million, the Philippines has a young and dynamic workforce, with a median age of 25. The country has also seen a surge in digital adoption, ranking among the top globally for social media usage and e-commerce growth. International visitors and

investors are often drawn to its thriving tourism sector, which includes world-renowned destinations such as Boracay and Cebu.

## Sustainability

With rich natural resources, a growing consumer market, and a robust workforce, the Philippines is a prime destination for investment. The country's agricultural potential, combined with its efforts toward sustainability, creates opportunities in eco-tourism and renewable energy. Its strategic location serves as a gateway to key Southeast Asian markets, enhancing the country's attractiveness for international trade.

## Challenging

The Philippines has consistently been one of the top destinations for business and investment in Southeast Asia. With its demographic sweet spot and growing consumer market, the country offers various opportunities for companies and entrepreneurs, local and foreign, looking for partnerships and business. However, navigating the business landscape can be challenging due to the complexity of regulatory processes and government

regulations. This is where the role of the Philippine Chamber of Commerce and Industry (PCCI) comes into play.

## Voice of business

Touted as the largest business organization in the country with 35,000 memberships nationwide, the PCCI serves as the leading voice of business, representing various industries and sectors, advocating for policy reforms that promote a conducive business environment where companies, big or small, thrive and contribute to the country's economic growth.

Consul Enunina V. Mangio, owner of a chain of over 50 casual dining restaurants in the Philippines, is president of the chamber movement. Since she assumed office in 2024, she has led numerous business missions overseas, inviting foreign entities and individuals to invest and do business.

## Platform

Through its Philippines-UK Business Council, the PCCI plays an essential role in fostering economic ties between the Philippines and the UK. The council provides a platform for UK businesses, including members of the LCCI, to explore opportunities in the Philippine market. Through initiatives such as trade missions and investment forums, the PCCI encourages collaboration, helping British companies establish sustainable business partnerships.

**Miguel S. Santos is a specialist in international affairs, Ruben J. Pascual is secretary general, and Donna Angulo is communications manager at PCCI**

[www.philippinechamber.com](http://www.philippinechamber.com)

Manila, the Philippine's bustling capital city



## Top performing sectors

Some sectors in the Philippines stand out for their profitability and capacity to contribute to sustainable development:

- **Agriculture:** leveraging the country's fertile lands, agriculture continues to be a significant industry. Recent shifts toward organic farming and sustainable practices aim to reduce environmental impact.
- **Renewable energy:** with an abundance of sun, wind, and geothermal resources, the Philippines is making strides in clean energy.
- **Tourism:** a key sector with initiatives that focus on ecotourism and sustainable travel ensure the preservation of natural sites while supporting local communities.
- **IT and business process outsourcing:** the country is a leading global destination, renowned for its skilled, English-speaking workforce, and cost-effective solutions. The sector's

growth is bolstered by the presence of economic zones, where companies benefit from tax incentives and robust infrastructure. These exclusive zones enhance operational efficiency and serve as strategic hubs for innovation and collaboration.

- **Creative industries:** art, fashion, design, and digital content creation are emerging as avenues for economic growth.

[www.philippines.business](http://www.philippines.business)



**World Expos – the global trade fairs that outdo all others – have a long history and can be traced back, in their current form, to the Great Exhibition in Hyde Park in 1851. This year, after an impressive Shanghai (2010), a food-orientated Milan (2015) and a spectacular Dubai (2021), the event moves to Osaka, a third honour for the Japanese city which previously hosted World Expo in 1970 and 1990.**



Hiroshi Suzuki

### Potential

The UK's presence on Yumeshima Island, Osaka at which 150 countries will participate, and at which 28 million visitors are expected, focuses on the government's *Plan for Change* and is epitomised by the country's mascot PIX, made up of red, white and blue building blocks. PIX represents how every idea has the potential to grow into something great.

### Innovation

Gareth Thomas, UK minister for exports explains: "The UK has been a pioneer of innovation for generations by utilising the power of ideas to change the world. Our presence at the Osaka Expo will demonstrate

the innovation and opportunities for exporting and growth there are in the UK and how we are open for business."

Thomas added that Japan was a crucial market for the UK economy, and central to its growth aims. Currently, currently it is the UK's sixth largest investor with £86.2 billion invested in the UK in 2022. "Our bilateral trade in goods and services was worth £27.2 billion in the four quarters to the end of Q2 2024 – which could be boosted further now that the UK has joined the regional CPTPP trade bloc."

### Iconic

The UK Pavilion will be supported by iconic global brands including biopharmaceutical company AstraZeneca, luxury sports car manufacturer Aston Martin and hospitality company IHG Hotels & Resorts.

### Scotland at Expo

Scotland, which launched its programme for the Expo at their London HQ in February with Japanese Ambassador Hiroshi Suzuki, will be much in evidence and will take over

the UK Pavilion for three spotlight days during the event. The focus will be on creative technologies, health technologies and energy transition to net zero – offshore wind and tech innovation. This aligns with the Expo's overarching theme of *Designing Future Society for Our Lives*. Scotland's spotlights will include a mixture of panel sessions, demonstrations, product showcases, pitching sessions and keynote speakers.

This will be Scotland's second significant World Expo presence, following participation in Dubai. Scottish companies at the event forecasted sales of around £89 million over three years, as a result of commercial outcomes agreed there.

**Expo 2025 opens on 13 April and runs for six months until 13 October**

[www.expo2025.or.jp/en](http://www.expo2025.or.jp/en)

**EXPO 2025  
OSAKA, KANSAI**

# Accessing preferential duty rates with CPTPP

| by Edward Jones

**The Comprehensive and Progressive Agreement for Trans-Pacific Partnership (CPTPP) is a free trade agreement that was established to enhance economic integration amongst its member countries. It is designed to reduce trade barriers, promote economic growth and create jobs across the participating nations. The treaty established a free trade area between the states.**

UK acceded to CPTPP last December, bringing the number of its members to 12. These are Australia, Brunei, Canada, Chile, Japan, Malaysia, Mexico, New Zealand, Peru, Singapore, Vietnam and the UK – a total population of 600 million and an area which makes up 14 per cent of global gross domestic product.

For the UK, being part of CPTPP will build on the current trade deals established with Australia, Canada, Chile, Japan, Mexico, New Zealand, Peru, Singapore and Vietnam

## Impact on UK exporters

One of the most tangible benefits to UK exporters is the tariff-free trade for goods exported from the UK to CPTPP parties that comply with the preferential



rules of origin established in the agreement.

In the long term, the UK government is forecasting a £2.6 billion boost in exports of UK goods to CPTPP countries. These figures could increase even further with the likes of China and Taiwan set to join.

## Preferential origin

Preferential origin refers to the status given to traded goods depending on the country in which they originate. This status is determined by the preferential rules of origin established in free trade agreements between two or more countries. Preferential origin rules establish the criteria products must meet to qualify as 'originating' and therefore access to zero or reduced duty rates.

Each trade agreement has its own set of preferential rules – and they can differ from one agreement to another – but they navigate around three main categories: wholly produced; last substantial transformation; and non-originating.

To access preferential duty rates, exporters are required to confirm the origin of their goods in their trade documentation (i.e. commercial invoice)

and if needed, present evidence to their importing counterparts and/or importing customs authorities that the goods shipped qualify as originating. Documentation, such as a Certificate of Origin or an EUR 1 might be required to claim preferential tariff benefits.

## Key features of CPTPP

**Market access:** the agreement aims to decrease red tape for services and reduce tariffs on originating goods traded between member countries.

**Investment protections:** CPTPP includes provisions that protect investments made by businesses in member countries against unfair treatment or expropriation.

**Regulatory cooperation:** the agreement encourages regulatory coherence among members to facilitate smoother trade processes and reduce unnecessary regulatory burdens.

**Labour and environmental standards:** CPTPP establishes commitments related to labour rights and environmental protections to ensure that trade does not come at the expense of these important areas.

**SMEs:** recognising the challenges faced by SMEs in accessing international markets, CPTPP includes specific provisions aimed at assisting these businesses in exporting their goods and services.

**Edward Jones is an LCCI certificates of origin account executive**

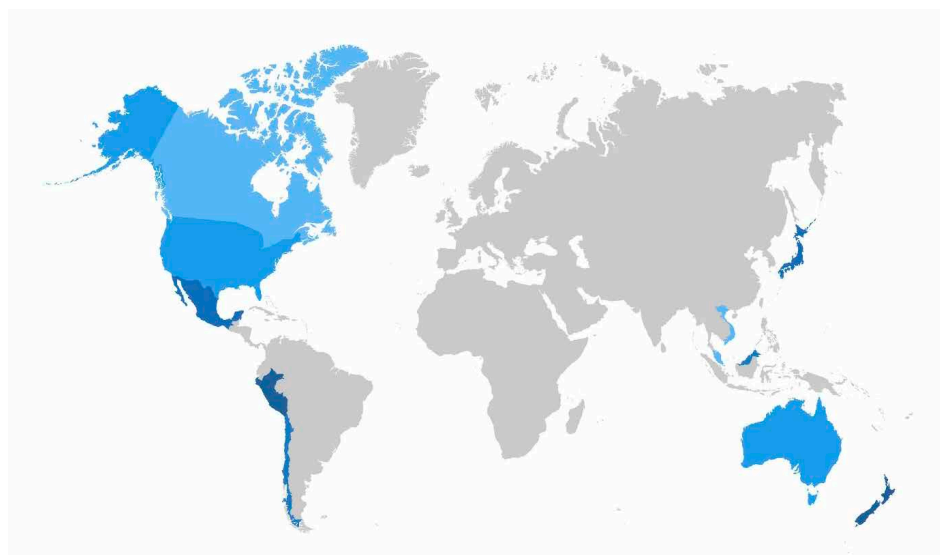
**Further guidance is available through specialised exporting guides from the UK government for each CPTPP member country: [www.great.gov.uk/markets](http://www.great.gov.uk/markets)**

**To apply for LCCI export documentation, visit:**

**[www.londonchamber.co.uk/international-trade/trade-documentation/all-trade-documents](http://www.londonchamber.co.uk/international-trade/trade-documentation/all-trade-documents)**

**LCCI runs regular training courses on preferential rules of origin**

**[www.londonchamber.co.uk/international-trade/trade-advice-and-support/international-trade-training-courses](http://www.londonchamber.co.uk/international-trade/trade-advice-and-support/international-trade-training-courses)**



# EU reset must drive growth

**The British Chambers of Commerce (BCC) is calling on the government to use its planned EU reset to achieve concrete change and help drive UK economic growth.**

## Struggle

Research by the BCC's Insight Unit has shown that SME exporters have faced an uphill struggle to sell goods and services in Europe as paperwork and costs have ballooned:

- Two fifths of exporters disagree the Brexit deal is helping them grow sales
- Only 14 per cent of exporters think the deal is helping them to grow
- More than a third want a reduction in VAT requirements to export to the EU
- A quarter want the UK to align with rules and regulations with the EU in key goods sectors.

## Barriers

Trade with the EU is covered by the Trade and Co-operation Agreement which was agreed on Christmas Eve in 2020, almost 11 months after the UK left.

It allows tariff-free trade with the EU but requires British and EU firms to produce documentation and paperwork for all shipments. Services access is also limited by rules on business mobility.

Companies say the biggest barriers

to exporting to the EU are customs procedures and documentation, export documentation, regulations and standards and tariffs.

## Awareness

Awareness of upcoming changes in trade rules and regulations being made by either the UK or the EU are also alarmingly low, with more than three quarters of firms knowing no details of much of the legislation.

This includes knowledge of the Carbon Border Adjustment Mechanism, Border Target Operating Model, Safety and Security Declaration Requirements and new rules on business-to-business movements of parcels to Northern Ireland.

## Top proposals

A BCC report sets out 26 recommendations to improve UK-EU trade. Among its top proposals for discussions in 2025 are to:

- Negotiate a deal with the EU which either eliminates or reduces the complexity of exporting food for SMEs.
- Produce a balanced Youth Mobility scheme between the UK and EU, covering school visits and exchanges, and a time-limited ability to work for young people.
- Rejoin the Pan-Euro-Mediterranean convention to align rules on raw

material and components that can be used in exports without incurring tariffs.

- Establish a supplementary deal, like Norway's, that exempts smaller firms from the requirement to have a fiscal representative for VAT in the EU.
- Make a deal to allow UK firms to travel and work for longer in Europe and vice versa, and provide mutual recognition of professional qualifications.
- Link the Emissions Trading Schemes of the UK and EU to avoid charges on carbon embedded in exports in both directions.

[www.britishchambers.org.uk/wp-content/uploads/2024/12/The-Trade-and-Cooperation-Agreement-Four-Years-On.pdf](http://www.britishchambers.org.uk/wp-content/uploads/2024/12/The-Trade-and-Cooperation-Agreement-Four-Years-On.pdf)



## Travelling the world

By many estimates, global revenue in the travel and tourism market is back to – and even exceeding in real terms – pre-Covid levels. Destinations, the 'go-to' show for the sector was back at Olympia this year marking its



30th anniversary and was as informative and entertaining as ever – including a South African welcome, dozens of national food outlets, and over two hundred stands.

## Extensive

Travel by train was a key focus

as 200 years of modern rail travel was celebrated. Its green credentials were highlighted alongside efforts to bring down costs to help compete with low-cost airlines. Overall, as sector specialist Simon Calder has commented, travel is now more affordable than ever – and more extensive too.

[www.destinationsshow.com](http://www.destinationsshow.com)

# Italy's time in the sun for UK investors

**As you contemplate the grey skies of London, consider that you could be living the sweet life in Italy.**

Renowned for its world-class cuisine, breathtaking landscapes, and rich cultural heritage, Italy is increasingly becoming a prime destination for UK businesses. The UK is already the third-largest investor in Italy, and year-on-year growth in foreign direct investment underscores the strengthening relationship between the two nations.



**Now is the perfect time to explore opportunities in Italy.** Bilateral relations between the UK and Italy are better than ever, reinforced by the Memorandum of Understanding signed in 2023 to foster trade and investment. Home to one of Europe's most stable governments, Italy boasts the world's 8th largest economy, leadership in manufacturing and design, and a strategic location for distribution across Europe and MENA. High quality labour and competitive operating costs further enhance its appeal.

**Italy has also emerged as a magnet for High-Net-Worth Individuals (HNWIs).** Even with the recent increase in its flat tax on worldwide income to €200,000, Italy continues to attract wealthy individuals seeking a more favourable tax regime than the UK's evolving non-dom policies. With its high quality of life and financial advantages, many are making the move south.

## Where are the business opportunities in 2025?

Italy has successfully positioned itself as a leader in the luxury goods, life sciences, aerospace, and automotive sectors, and is expanding its leadership in renewable energy and advanced technology. Here



are three high-growth sectors we see for UK investors in 2025:

### 1. Real Estate: A Market Poised for Growth

With a strong labour market and stable inflation, Italy's real estate sector is set for momentum in 2025. High yields continue to attract foreign investors, who already account for 70% of Italy's commercial property investments. The focus is on quality - Italy's prime locations are filled with historic assets ripe for redevelopment. Key opportunities exist in student accommodation, senior living, luxury hotels and co-working spaces. Additionally, Italy is committed to decarbonising its building stock by 2050 - yet 85% of buildings were built before 2000, 75% of which have lower than required energy ratings. This offers potential for green renovations and retrofits.



### 2. Life Sciences: A Hub for Innovation

Italy's life sciences sector, valued at €60 billion, presents immense opportunities for UK businesses in pharma, biotech, and medtech. International companies are attracted to Italy's high quality Contract Development and Manufacturing Organisations (CDMOs), which account for 23% of the EU's total and make Italy a top location for clinical trials and advanced manufacturing. UK companies that incorporate in Italy also gain eligibility for EU research and innovation funding, alongside access to a skilled workforce and a large consumer base. Italy's decentralised innovation clusters mean that opportunities are spread across the country.

### 3. Energy Transition: A Leader in Renewables

Backed by strong government incentives and a €23 billion industry, Italy is a leading destination for UK businesses in renewables and cleantech. With ambitious targets to install 120 GW of new renewable capacity by 2030, investment opportunities exist in wind,

hydrogen, solar and grid modernisation. Recent landmark deals - such as Italy's partnerships with Albania and the UAE - highlight its commitment to energy independence and sustainability. We are working with several UK green energy companies that are attracted to Italy's pro-investment policies, skilled workforce and leadership in the renewables sector.

*"Our conclusion was and remains that Italy meets all the criteria for political stability; economic growth, cost-benefit and overall quality of life. We view Italy as the most dynamic nation in Europe with a clearly bright future."*

**Dr Wilson, Vanguard**

## Explore the Italian Market with our assistance

The Italian Trade Agency's London office provides free Italian sector and location consulting services to UK-based businesses and investors that want to enter the Italian market. Our services include: real estate searches, bespoke market research, market entry assistance, information on grants and incentives, and local introductions.

## Speak with our Investment Director:

**Aster Thackery**

 a.thackery.ext@ice.it

 +44 (0)7784424572

<https://www.ice.it/en/invest/invest-italy>

<https://www.linkedin.com/in/fdilondonita/>



**ITA**   
**ITALIAN TRADE AGENCY**



# ITALY IS A LAND OF EXTRAORDINARY BEAUTY, TASTE, AND TALENT

It is also the 8<sup>th</sup> largest economy in the world



With a GDP of over €1.8 trillion and a population of nearly 60 million, Italy is the 8<sup>th</sup> largest economy in the world and top destination for foreign business and investment.

## Italy is the best place for 2025 European business growth

- ✓ Welcoming business environment
- ✓ Skilled labour force - especially in engineering and tech
- ✓ Competitive operating costs
- ✓ Strategically placed to export across Europe and MENA
- ✓ Government incentives for foreign businesses and investors
- ✓ Proven excellence in quality design and manufacturing
- ✓ UK's 9th largest trading partner
- ✓ Hundreds of direct flights daily from the UK
- ✓ Europe's best climate, food and quality of life

## Italy is.. *industrious*

5<sup>th</sup> largest manufacturer in the world, 8<sup>th</sup> largest exporter in the world

## Italy is.. *innovative*

1<sup>st</sup> in the EU by pharma CDMO manufacturing value, 6<sup>th</sup> worldwide for number of installations of industrial robots annually

## Italy is.. *green*

Home to the world's largest renewable energy operator, and generates more than 10% of Europe's renewable energy

## Italy is.. *ingenious*

25 of the world's top 500 universities, 173 incubators and accelerators, 33 technology parks and 40 crowdfunding platforms

## Italy is.. *beautiful*

1<sup>st</sup> in the world of number of UNESCO World Heritage Sites and a world leading tourist destinations, attracting 60 million visitors annually





# Rubens and chips

Peter Bishop's Antwerp diary



Arriving at the city's Central Station after, in my case, a smooth Eurostar-initiated journey, the traveller encounters a monumental example of railway architecture with neo-classical facades and a huge glass dome. This is evidence of the economic confidence engendered by a port – Europe's second largest – which developed as a major international trading centre in the 16th century and has remained a thriving working centre ever since.

## Migrants

**The station is adjacent to the diamond centre, still massively important as the centre of the world's business in the product that is 'for ever', despite India now being the home of its cutting and polishing operations. Port-side, along the river Scheldt towards the North Sea, there are miles of quays and a huge volume of containers and petrochemical traffic.**

It was on the banks of the river that the Red Star shipping line was based, a company that first specialised in oil exports before becoming a hugely active transporter of migrants to North America. It is now a fascinating museum telling the stories of those arriving in, and fleeing, Europe in a period that included two world wars.



## Towering

**A little further down the Scheldt, towards the towering cathedral and the historic centre, lies Museum Aan de Stroom – MAS – a collection of ethnographic treasures which explore Antwerp's trading past, cuisine and ordeals after the German invasion in 1940. Trade-wise its power was so strong in the 16th century that Antwerp became the main office of the Hanseatic League, attracting traders, artisans, diplomats and artists from all over the world.**

The fruits of many of the artists' work can be seen in the newly re-opened Koninklijk Museum voor Schone Kunsten, the city's major art museum with classic works by the city's favourite son Peter



Paul Rubens, famous for his muscular and curvaceous subjects. Modern masters feature too, including Magritte, Modigliani and Dali, and for the first time I encountered work by local artist Rik Wouters.

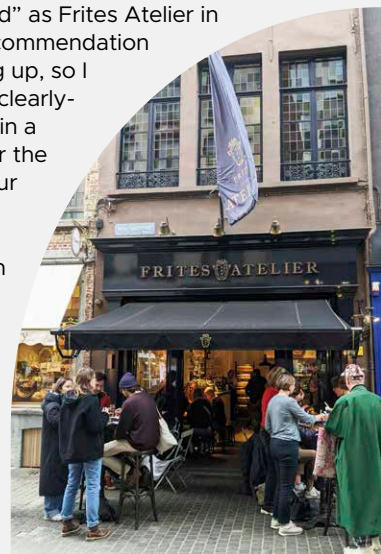
## Dedicated

**These were just three of many centres of culture in Antwerp and in my short visit were chosen as ones that suited my general interests. Others on offer include those dedicated to music, printing and publishing, tapestries and furniture, as well as Rubenshuis, the house and studio of the 17th century artist. A celebrated zoo, established in 1843 is home to over 4,000 animals. A skyscraper, known as the 'Farmers'**



**Tower, is claimed to be Europe's first high rise building.**

Journalist Agnès Poirier wrote in *The Times* recently that Belgians were "king when it comes to French fries." She revealed her favourite chips place "in the whole world" as Frites Atelier in Antwerp. A recommendation worth following up, so I headed to the clearly-popular venue in a side street near the Cathedral of Our Lady. She was right. Double cooked chips in Béarnaise and truffle sauce. Delicious!



# Overseas business opportunities

A selection of business co-operation offers made by companies wishing to work with UK firms taken from the Enterprise Europe Network Partnership Opportunities, Database. To find out more about these and similar opportunities contact Innovate UK Business Growth at: <https://iuk-business-connect.org.uk/business-growth-contact/> or call on 0300 123 3066

## Belgium

Fire safety equipment/alarm system maintenance company is looking to buy an SME in the security sector with recurring business through maintenance. The Belgian buyer company is following a strategy of growth by acquisition to increase its presence in the market and/or seek new opportunities.

REF: BRBE20250213014

## Japan

This company's product removes scale and prevents it from occurring in pipe systems or on the fins of cooling towers. The device is eco-friendly: no use of fluorinated chemicals; efficient: pre-existing scale can be removed within a few months, and from there, the product will prevent scale from occurring permanently; and saves costs: reduction of electricity consumption up to 42% in observed cases.

REF: BOJP20250213006

## Lithuania

A company specialising in aluminum windows, doors and facades is seeking distribution partners in the construction and building sectors. The company offers distribution opportunities in various regions and aims to establish long-term partnership agreements.

REF: BOLT20250212001

## Romania

A company

producing mycelium composite insulation panels with excellent thermal, acoustic and fire-retardant properties is looking for distributors under a commercial agreement

REF: BORO20250211014

## Czechia

The company with a long tradition in aluminium processing is looking for new customers. The company specialises in the production of a wide range of aluminum products, including structural elements, technical components and design solutions for various industries. Thanks to modern technologies and experience in precision aluminum machining, it can offer flexible and customised solutions.

REF: BOCZ20250210024

## Bulgaria

Producer of dot grid notebooks with evenly spaced dots, offering structure and creative freedom. The layout guides designs while allowing flexibility for tasks, calendars, notes and goal tracking. The product is ideal for professionals, students and artists. The company seeks a distributor under a commercial agreement.

REF: BOBG20250211003

## Denmark

A company dedicated to sensory and developmental children's products is seeking manufacturers with expertise in eco-friendly materials and ethical production processes

that can assist with the production of sensory play products for children. The company aims to establish supplier agreements to expand its range of sustainable products while maintaining high-quality standards.

REF: BRDK20250210032

## Poland

A biotech company has developed a high-purity, bioactive microcrystalline chitosan ingredient suitable for use in dermo-cosmetics, pharmaceuticals and medical applications. The company is looking for manufacturers and research institutions interested in using this innovative biopolymer in their final formulations for skincare, wound healing and controlled drug delivery systems.

REF: BOPL20250212012

## Spain

SME offers a text and language-independent voice biometrics technology for robust speaker verification and identification. This innovative SDK enhances security in authentication, enables forensic applications, and customises services from natural speech. Distributed as an SDK with a C++ API, this solution allows easy integration into existing systems.

REF: TOES20250212014

## France

SME offers automated solutions to dispense and untangle complex parts

which have a high capacity to tangle. These automated processes enable users to feed continuously industrial assembly lines that requires springs or clips to be supplied unit by unit for a wide range of applications, including electrical equipment, automotive components or medical devices.

REF: TOFR20250212004

## Germany

The innovation presented from this university improves the early diagnosis of lupus nephritis (kidney inflammation). It improves patient care because the diagnosis can be made through a non-invasive procedure in the patient. The university is offering a licence agreement.

REF: BOSK20241202004

## Italy

An EdTech startup created an AI-powered language learning platform enabling real-time and natural conversations in five languages. It offers adaptive content, pronunciation coaching and personalised learning paths using advanced speech recognition and machine learning. With 15,000+ users, the SME is expanding into hybrid learning with human tutors and collaborating with schools.

REF: RDRIT20250213007



# Investment priorities for 2025

Coinciding with the recent World Economic Forum in Davos, Capgemini released its latest report *Navigating uncertainty with confidence – investment priorities for 2025*.

The report explores the impact of global shifts in policies, technological advances, protectionism, and the green transition on organisations' business outlook and strategies.

## Trade wars

The data reveals that despite a still volatile global environment, six in ten UK businesses are optimistic about their growth potential for 2025, with 63 per cent planning to increase investment this year. However, seven in ten UK executives are concerned about trade tariffs and the impact of trade wars on their organisation. Other highlights include:

- **Talent scarcity and skills top investment priorities of UK businesses:** The majority of business leaders agree that the lack of technical skills is severely hindering their organisation's ability to be competitive. This is the biggest investment priority for UK business leaders, with organisations planning to increase investment in talent by 13 per cent next year.
- **Organisations are de-risking supply chains amidst fears of trade wars and economic uncertainty:** Almost eight in ten UK business are de-risking their supply chains by investing in emerging countries to reduce reliance on China, while 63 per cent are focusing on 'friendshoring' by moving sourcing and production to countries which are considered 'allies'.
- **UK businesses are ramping up**

**sustainability investment, with batteries, solar and nuclear energy topping their green agendas:** Two thirds of UK business are planning to increase investment in this area. Climate technologies, sustainable R&D, biodiversity and water are the top investment priorities for UK organisations. To achieve improvements in these areas, UK businesses are investing in batteries and solar, followed by nuclear energy, hydrogen and wind energy.

**Gen AI is the top tech investment priority for eight in ten UK businesses, followed by cloud, data analytics and cybersecurity.**

[www.capgemini.com](http://www.capgemini.com)

Capgemini 

# Cleankill sparkles in Gatwick Diamond Business Awards



**Cleankill Pest Control has been shortlisted in four categories of the prestigious Gatwick Diamond Business Awards confirming that the company is one of the best in the region.**

The categories Cleankill has been named a finalist in are:

- **Business of the Year Over £1m**
- **The Award for Customer Delight**
- **Employee of the Year (Josh Bates)**
- **Business Person of the Year (Paul Bates)**

Paul Bates, Managing Director of Cleankill Pest Control, said: "We are absolutely thrilled to reach the finals of four categories. We have made the finals in previous years but not in four categories, so we are hopeful that we can win at least one award. We won't know until the exciting moment when the winner is announced and is asked to go on stage whether we've won."

"We believe in what we do and operating with honesty and transparency while delivering the best possible service. It's great to have this ratified by independent peers from different industries."

Cleankill will find out on 20th of March at a ceremony at the Grand Hotel in Brighton whether it has won any of the awards which will be presented by celebrity host and magician Ben Hanlin.

The Gatwick Diamond is home to a vast range of businesses spanning all sectors of the economy, from household names to niche companies, and from multinationals to sole traders. All award finalists will have shown innovation and inspiration in their work and demonstrated a real commitment to this world-class economic area.

As a long-standing Gatwick Diamond member, Cleankill is making sure the evening gets off to a flying start by sponsoring a pre-dinner reception.

Sally Brown, Director and General Manager of Gatwick Diamond Business said: "We would like to thank all the people who took time out of their busy schedules to prepare and submit awards entries this year and congratulate those who have been selected as finalists in each category. The entries get stronger year on year so that in

itself is a huge achievement and worthy of celebration."

## Why enter awards?

Entering awards is a key element of Cleankill's marketing strategy. These include local regional and national awards. Each award entry is an opportunity to look at what we have achieved in the last year and get recognition for our efforts as a team and also individually. If we don't win, we look at the feedback and how we can improve for next time.

The Gatwick Diamond judging process is very thorough with the sponsors interviewing all possible finalists face-to-face before making their decisions.

When we reach the finals of awards, we take the opportunity to invite members of staff and sometimes suppliers to the ceremonies as a way of teambuilding. If we win, we make sure we publicise our success at every opportunity including on the special page on our website. After all, if we don't proudly blow our own trumpet who will?

**Cleankill is also fully accredited to the Safecontractor, Constructionline and Achilles Health and Safety schemes and aims to be recognised as a market leader for innovation and new pest control techniques. For further information go to [www.cleankill.co.uk](http://www.cleankill.co.uk) or call 0800 056 5477.**





**0800 056 5477**

[CLEANKILL.CO.UK](http://CLEANKILL.CO.UK)

CONTACT CLEANKILL FOR

## FAST & EFFECTIVE PEST CONTROL



**BP**  
**PCA**  
British  
Pest Control  
Association  
MEMBER

**Winner  
COMPANY  
OF THE  
YEAR**

**BUILT ON REPUTATION:**

**FIRST-CLASS SERVICE  
VALUE FOR MONEY  
TRANSPARENT PRICING  
NO HIDDEN COSTS  
EXPERT ADVICE**






**INVESTORS IN PEOPLE**  
We invest in people Gold



@cleankilluk

# Tales of the riverbank

**Gary Beckwith and his team grew City Cruises from one small pleasure craft to become London's largest sightseeing operator and a prominent player in the UK's tour boat industry.**

## Passion

Born and raised in East London, Beckwith left school at 15 without any qualifications, having struggled without the right support for his dyslexia. He took his first job on the Thames working alongside his father which sparked a lifelong passion for working on the water and a determination to build a business on the UK's most famous river. He eventually created an operation which comprised 40 vessels, carried over four million passengers



annually, and had a turnover of more than £25 million.

## Whirlwind

His team included his impressive wife Rita, well known to, and respected by, LCCI as a former tireless and effective chair of its Docklands Business Club and a long-standing member of the Chamber Council. The Beckwiths, with their children Matthew and Lucy, were a business whirlwind bringing energy and excitement to all they encountered.

## Royalty

*How to make a million in business* is a fascinating read, packed with insights, anecdotes and humour – from Gary Beckwith's first day as an odd job boy at Thames Pleasure Craft, through his time training as a croupier in Leeds, and his brush with casinos in Iran, to his dealings with royalty. HM Queen Elizabeth II 'named' *Millennium of London*, an on-board event in which anything that could go wrong, did – though it was a success in the end.

There is poignancy and drama too, as the sad story of the *Marchioness* tragedy that unfolded on the Thames between Cannon Street railway and Southwark bridges in 1989 is recounted in a chapter titled *The worst day of our lives*.

## Tips and insights

As well as being a memoir, it is a business book and although readers



may not be guaranteed to make a million on completion of it, they will certainly pick up many valuable tips and insights. These include how to stay calm in explosive situations, budgeting when money is tight, adapting to changing circumstances, and leaving a legacy. Well worth a read.

***How to make a million in business: memoirs on the River Thames* by Gary Beckwith, published by Wrate's Publishing**

[www.wrateseditingservices.co.uk](http://www.wrateseditingservices.co.uk)

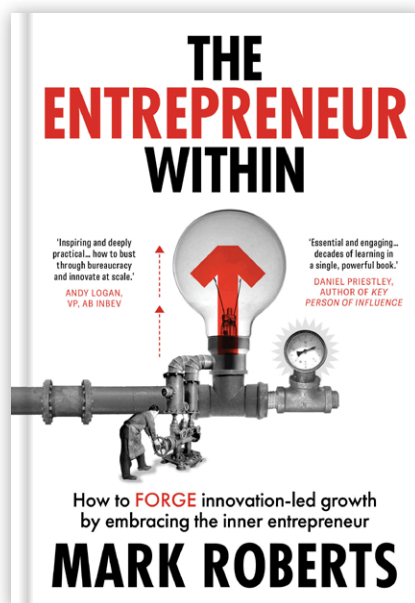
# Regaining the creative spark

**The Entrepreneur Within is described as “an innovators’ playbook to help gain traction, scale quickly and keep an entrepreneurial mindset alive within any organisation.”**

Large companies often lose the creative spark that brought them success and get weighed down by the complex systems built up within them. Start-up companies often get bloated with too many disparate ideas and get blocked by a lack of basic systems and infrastructure.

## Innovation

The proprietary FORGE® Methodology which the book highlights is designed to show how businesses of all stages and sizes can develop creative and viable innovation that makes a difference.



## Toolkit

Author Mark Roberts has produced a well-presented and designed book peppered with some thought-proving and instructive quotes – for example: If you want to go fast, go alone; if you want to go far, go together (African proverb) and “Innovation comes from saying ‘no’ to a thousand things.” (Steve Jobs). Roberts is offering the reader a toolkit, “a reference book, one designed to be scribbled in ...” There has never, he believes, been a better time to innovate. “Now it’s over to you.”

***The Entrepreneur Within: how to forge innovation-led growth by embracing the inner entrepreneur* by Mark Roberts is published by Unicorn**

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

# Being part of the investment landscape

**The Perceptive Investor** is billed as “a guide to success on your investing to journey.”

Success leaves clues. This book attempts to demonstrate that by learning from the world’s most successful value investors and notable business figures, it is possible to better understand the depth and breadth of the full investment landscape and confidently participate in it.

## Selection process

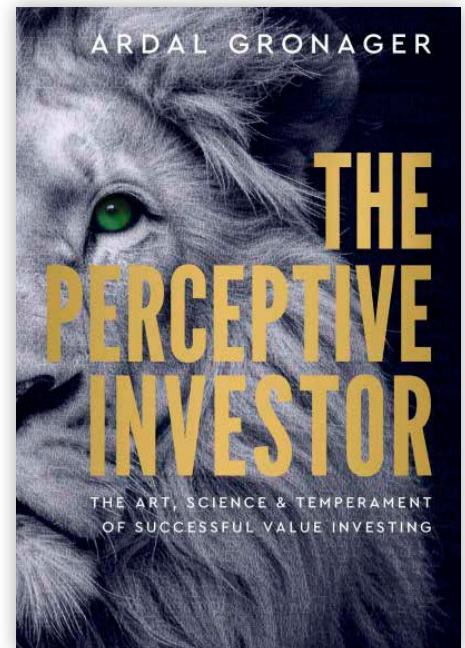
Part One explores the financial concepts needed to become a successful value investor while Part Two outlines the individual securities selection process employed by author Ardal Gronager.

## Value

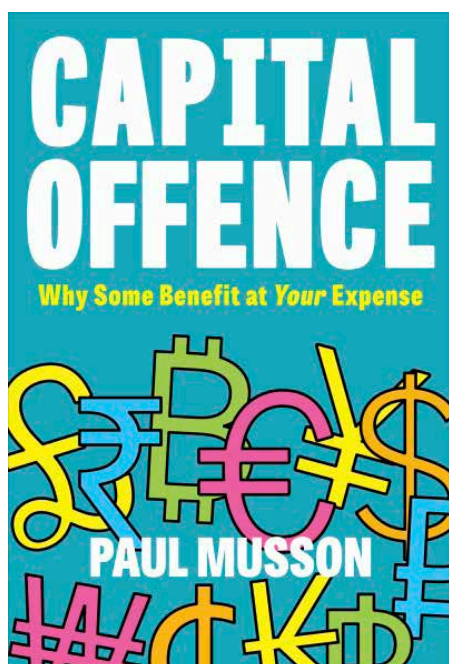
Half-Danish, born in the UK and educated across Europe, Asia and Australia, Gronager is a serial entrepreneur, starting his first business at seven years old. His investing career began in earnest in 2009, as the markets were still reeling from the global financial crisis. Over the following 12 years, he turned the \$150,000 he’d made from his various business ventures into over \$8 million by investing in public markets, while forging his own value investing philosophy.

**The Perceptive Investor: the art, science & temperament of successful value investing by Ardal Gronager is published by Unicorn**

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



# Getting the free market back on track



**Capital Offence** is both a critique of how well-meaning policymakers have distorted the free-market system and created unsustainable economic practices for future generations, and a roadmap for reform.

## Divided

Author Paul Musson shows how the world is becoming increasingly divided on many fronts. One of the root causes of this, he maintains, is that well-intended policymakers have drunk the something-from-nothing Kool-Aid and are convinced that there is such a thing as a free lunch. There isn't. They believe that debt-fuelled spending is what leads to economic prosperity. It doesn't.

## Reform

The result, he argues, is growing wealth

disparity where some people are able to extract more from our economic system than they create, while others are left to foot the bill.

Musson uses everyday language and analogies to help readers understand a complex subject. The next generation, he states, is now poised to be worse off than its predecessors, not because they are less productive, but because older generations are benefiting at their expense. Musson provides steps for reform, and while, he asserts, the painful choices ahead are inevitable, facing them now will prevent even greater consequences later.

**Capital Offence: why some benefit at your expense by Paul Musson is published by Unicorn**

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



# Driving UK innovation and collaboration

**Innovate UK's Knowledge Transfer Partnerships (KTP) programme is marking 50 years of fostering innovation and collaboration between UK businesses, universities and graduates**

Since its launch in 1975, the KTP programme has supported over 14,000 transformative projects across the UK and generated billions for the economy. Approximately 11,000 of these projects have been with SMEs. From 2010 to 2020 alone, Innovate UK invested £200 million in 2,000 projects, adding £2.3 billion to the UK economy.

## Real world challenges

The KTP Programme enables partnerships between three participants: UK businesses seeking to bring new ideas to life; academic institutions equipped to solve complex challenges; and graduates who drive these innovative projects forward. The programme brings businesses and academics together to solve real world challenges.

This unique collaborative model has added billions to the UK economy, boosting productivity, turnover and economic resilience for participating businesses and creating a ripple effect across industries.

Iconic KTP projects include:

- **Baxters Food Group** which improved its food waste and wastewater

management system

- **Yeo Valley** which made significant improvements in the efficiency of their yoghurt manufacturing process and increased environmental sustainability
- **Siemens** collaborated with KTP to better understand the degradation of different battery technologies. This resulted in the KTP team producing the first software prototypes for managing charging processes within electrical vehicle depots
- **The Finishing Line**, a supply chain specialist offering eCommerce fulfilment, warehouse management, contract packing solutions and returns management, which used KTP to maximise overall efficiency of its fulfilment and distribution centres
- **James Leckey Design**, which manufactures mobility and postural aids, used KTP to integrate the latest sensory technologies into existing Leckey products to improve

the clinical outcomes for children using the products.

## Collaboration

Lord Vallance, Science, Research and Innovation Minister, commented: "Knowledge Transfer Partnerships have long supported collaboration between our renowned

universities, UK innovators and thriving businesses – from helping household brands to produce their goods more efficiently through to unleashing new discoveries that improve lives.

"They also demonstrate the benefit of public investment, with ambitious, Innovate UK-backed projects across the country having added billions of pounds to our economy in the previous decade alone."

<https://iuk-ktp.org.uk>



Lord Vallance



Innovate  
UK

Knowledge  
Transfer  
Partnerships



# Document management in business processes

| by Emilie Martin

Many people are unaware that a document management system (DMS) can serve as a central repository for a wide range of business platforms, which enhances efficiency. In addition to managing traditional documents, a DMS can integrate with key business tools, such as MS Outlook, CRM systems, invoicing software and workforce management platforms. A DMS also connects to specialised systems like ERP, accounting and HR software. By centralising data from these different sources, a DMS provides businesses with a unified view of their operations, eliminates data silos and improves collaboration across the organisation.



## Digital age

Managing business documents efficiently is not just an option – it's a necessity. Companies generate massive amounts of data every day, from contracts and invoices to reports and emails. Without a clear system for organising, storing and retrieving documents, businesses face inefficiencies, compliance issues and even security risks. A DMS can transform the way businesses operate. Here's why effective document management is central to streamlined processes, collaboration, compliance and overall productivity.

## Efficiency

A key benefit of document management is improved efficiency. Businesses often lose hours to disorganised files and outdated systems, with employees wasting up to 30 per cent of their time searching for information. A robust DMS eliminates this issue by providing a central hub where all documents are stored, categorised and easily searchable. Automated features like

file indexing, version control and audit trails mean that employees no longer have to worry about outdated files or lost information.

## Collaboration

Collaboration is critical in today's business environment. A solid DMS makes it easier for teams to collaborate by providing secure, real-time access to documents, regardless of location. Centralised storage and editing capabilities enable multiple users to work on files simultaneously, without overlapping changes. Streamlined workflows minimise errors and foster a culture of collaboration.

## Compliance

For many businesses, compliance with industry regulations is not just important – it's mandatory. Whether it's GDPR or financial industry standards, a failure to comply can lead to penalties or reputational damage. A DMS helps businesses to meet regulatory requirements by storing documents securely with the necessary retention policies built-in. Features like encryption, access control, redaction and detailed audit trails ensure sensitive information is protected and only accessible to authorised personnel. During audits, businesses can show logs detailing document management best practices.

## Driving transformation

Document management plays a pivotal role in digital transformation. By shifting from paper-based processes to digital solutions, businesses cut costs associated with printing, storage and manual labour. More importantly, going digital enhances operational efficiency and supports sustainability.

With the introduction of artificial intelligence and machine learning, DMS platforms are becoming more

intelligent. Systems can automate tasks such as document classification, tagging and data extraction, which reduces administration burdens, and ensures that businesses remain agile and prepared for future challenges.

## Mitigating risks

Every business faces the risk of data loss, whether from a natural disaster, a cyberattack or system failure. A strong document management system mitigates risks by offering automated backups and disaster recovery options that minimise downtime and operational disruption.

## Cost efficiency

While investing in a DMS may seem like an upfront expense, the long-term benefits outweigh the costs. Additionally, as businesses grow, their storage needs increase. DMS platforms are scalable, which enables companies to expand without the need for expensive hardware upgrades.

## Crucial pillar

Document management is no longer just an administrative task – it's a strategic asset that drives business success. By improving efficiency, enhancing collaboration, ensuring compliance and supporting digital transformation, DMS are central to modern business processes. Companies that invest in digital document management not only streamline their operations but also position themselves for growth in a rapidly evolving digital landscape. As businesses continue to adapt, document management will remain a crucial pillar of operational excellence.

**Emilie Martin is a workflow specialist at Document Logistix**

[www.document-logistix.com](http://www.document-logistix.com)



# Is British innovation starving itself?

I would've asked you to not take this the wrong way, but please do writes *Altaf Jasnaik*

**You see, despite world-class universities, cutting-edge R&D and billions in funding, the UK is losing ground as a global innovation leader. We rank fourth in the 2023 Global Innovation Index, yet we struggle to turn research into commercial success.**

**A fragmented ecosystem, inefficient funding and a broken scale-up pipeline are holding us back. So while this may sound like a rant – it's more like a call to action.**

**Whether you're a founder, investor, policymaker or someone who cares about the future of UK innovation, it's time to have an honest conversation and drive real change.**



## The Bottleneck: innovation without impact

Despite billions in public funding and countless initiatives, our innovation ecosystem remains a black box of inefficiency and missed opportunities. The problem isn't a lack of good ideas or research; it's a failure to execute efficiently. Funding is uncoordinated, often outsourced to third parties, spread thinly across overlapping initiatives with minimal accountability and limited long-term impact.

Startups face their biggest challenge when securing growth funding. A few, with taxpayer-private- or self-funding, reach product-market fit but struggle to survive and scale. The ecosystem prioritises early-stage investments, leaving founders to seek go-to-market and scale funding from risk-averse private investors. Though largely unaudited, it's evident that many promising startups end up buckling or being absorbed by foreign economies that, to our detriment, inherit these businesses through later stage investment.

Beyond funding, structural issues undermine the UK's innovation output.

High-profile de-listings make the UK less attractive, with 88 companies leaving the London Stock Exchange (LSE) in 2024 alone. A rigid immigration system treats innovators the same as general migrants, creating bureaucratic hurdles that slow the entry and retention of high-value talent. Key sectors, like the NHS, lag in integrating innovations that taxpayers fund to develop in the first place. Meanwhile, a wealth exodus saw 10,800 millionaires leave the UK in 2024, further reducing venture capital and domestic startup investment.

At the heart of these issues is a lack of cohesive strategy. The UK excels in research and startup creation but falters when converting that success into patents, market leadership and economic returns.

## The Solution: a smarter, systematic approach

To reclaim its position, the UK must shift from fragmented efforts to a structured, data-driven strategy that supports scaling businesses, addresses funding gaps and retains top talent. Consolidating scattered initiatives under a unified national innovation strategy can help link R&D with commercialisation, while empowering the Regulatory Innovation Office to streamline policies for emerging sectors and cut bureaucratic friction for startups.

Bridging the scale-up gap requires tailored funding programmes to help UK startups scale domestically and reduce reliance on foreign investors. A UK Growth Fund, modelled on Singapore's Temasek framework, could co-invest in promising ventures.

Regulatory reforms and tax incentives can make public listing more attractive, revitalizing the LSE. Revising the Innovator Visa program to provide a clearer, faster residency path for high-impact entrepreneurs, along with promoting university-to-unicorn programs, would incentivise careers in UK-based innovation.

Institutionalising startup support is crucial. Teaching founders how to scale by embedding commercialisation training into startup programmes and expanding successful models like the Digital Health Partnership Award beyond healthcare will drive sustainable growth. Targeted innovation programmes like #scaleXacademy can equip founders with the tools to attract investment and scale efficiently.

## The Impact: smarter innovation, greater returns

By addressing these systemic challenges, the UK can build a resilient innovation economy where startups scale into global powerhouses, R&D investments yield stronger commercial returns, and high-growth tech firms stay listed in the UK. Strengthening our innovation pipeline ensures that taxpayer-funded breakthroughs don't end up benefiting foreign economies.

The UK has the ingredients for innovation success – world-class research, entrepreneurial talent and deep capital markets. Without a structured execution strategy, these advantages will continue to erode.

Now is the time to be innovative with our innovation.

**Altaf Jasnaik is chief executive of MANAGEMENT LIMITED**

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management

# Young talent: the hidden key to digital transformation success

| by Naz Keceli

**In today's competitive digital landscape, SMEs face a dual challenge: delivering innovative solutions while addressing the ongoing tech skills shortage. At my company, welcoming our first post A-level apprentice into the team not only transformed our approach to talent development but also sparked new thinking among our clients about the role of young talent in digital transformation.**



## Breaking the mould

As a digital transformation consultancy with a team of ten, including seasoned developers and emerging talent, we consciously chose to look beyond conventional recruitment paths. When we took on our first apprentice, we integrated them directly into a significant project with one of our European renewable energy clients. This decision resonated particularly well, given Germany's established 'working student' culture, which values hands-on learning and professional growth from an early stage.

## From student to digital consultant

Our human-centred recruitment approach, based on face-to-face interviews rather than automated screening, allowed us to uncover potential that conventional methods might overlook. Within months, we saw our apprentice progress from asking foundational questions to confidently proposing solutions in client meetings. This rapid development validated our belief that practical experience, combined with structured learning, accelerates professional growth far more effectively than traditional education routes alone. The mentoring process we introduced to aid our apprentice's development has brought new energy to our team, fostering a culture of continuous learning that benefits both our developers and clients.

## International impact

Integrating young talent into international projects has challenged the conventional approach to apprenticeships. The positive response from our German client highlighted an appetite for nurturing young talent that extends well beyond the UK, especially in markets where working students are already valued as an integral part of the business ecosystem.

## Creating a ripple effect

The impact on our client relationships has been profound. Recently, a client requested that we include an apprenticeship position in our project proposal, with the intention of transitioning the apprentice to their team upon project completion. This innovative approach tackles multiple challenges at once:

- Creates a sustainable flow of knowledge transfer
- Ensures continuity in system maintenance
- Develops talent tailored to specific business needs
- Addresses the tech skills shortage proactively
- Ensures that the client can support the project long term without being locked to the vendor.

## The business case for apprenticeships

For London-based businesses considering similar initiatives, our experience highlights several clear advantages:

- Immediate contributions: Apprentices can contribute directly to projects from day one.
- Fresh perspectives: Young talent brings new insights into digital transformation challenges.
- Cost-effective talent development: Apprenticeships offer a financially sustainable model for skill-building.

- Enhanced client engagement: Clients appreciate the long-term sustainability and skills alignment.
- Long-term skill sustainability: Apprenticeships create a talent pipeline tailored to evolving needs.
- Building future success
- In both greenfield and brownfield development projects, our apprentice has proven uniquely valuable, thanks to their:
  - Unbiased approach to innovation: With a fresh outlook, our apprentice drives creative solutions. Recently, he was given full ownership to develop a simple mobile app connecting people at networking events—an impressive feat he achieved in under a year.
- Natural affinity with emerging technologies: Young talent is often eager to explore and adopt the latest tech.
- Ability to bridge generational perspectives: They can connect insights across different age groups.
- Eagerness to embrace dynamic work methods: Apprentices quickly adapt to flexible and iterative approaches common in SMEs.

## Looking forward

Our first apprenticeship experience has been so successful that we're expanding the programme. Moreover, we're now guiding clients to integrate apprenticeships into their digital transformation strategies. This approach not only addresses the skills gap but also offers a sustainable model for building digital capabilities.

For companies considering digital transformation, we encourage thinking beyond traditional models. By incorporating apprenticeships into project planning, businesses can create lasting value that extends beyond immediate technical solutions. As our experience demonstrates, when young talent is given the right opportunity and support, they can become true catalysts for innovation and growth.

**Naz Keceli is chief executive of Khiliad Ltd**

[www.khiliad.com](http://www.khiliad.com)

# Shadow AI: the silent disruptor in business

by JayTee Taiwo

**BBC's recent investigative report on Shadow AI sent shockwaves through the corporate world. The findings? Companies are increasingly losing control over AI-driven decisions as employees deploy unapproved AI tools, creating security, compliance and ethical risks. While enterprises embrace AI to drive efficiency, the emergence of Shadow AI – unregulated and often unnoticed – poses a significant challenge. Without governance, these hidden AI tools threaten data integrity, regulatory compliance and corporate security.**

## Rising threat

Shadow AI refers to artificial intelligence systems that employees or departments use without formal IT approval. The BBC's findings highlighted a multinational corporation that suffered a major security breach when employees leveraged AI-powered automation tools without oversight. Sensitive financial data was inadvertently exposed to third-party AI platforms, leading to a massive compliance failure.

Shadow AI is not inherently malicious. Employees adopt AI to improve productivity, automate tasks and enhance decision-making. However, without governance, it can result in unforeseen vulnerabilities. The BBC report pointed out that nearly 60

per cent of AI-powered decisions in enterprises now occur without direct oversight from IT departments – a staggering statistic that highlights the scale of the issue.

## Cybersecurity loophole

Another alarming consequence of Shadow AI is its impact on cybersecurity. In the BBC's report, a healthcare provider suffered a data breach after AI-powered chatbots were used by staff without approval. These chatbots stored sensitive patient information on unsecured servers, making them an easy target for cybercriminals.

This is not an isolated incident. Unauthorised AI systems often bypass enterprise security protocols, exposing organisations to cyber threats. Phishing attacks, deepfake scams, and AI-driven fraud are growing concerns for businesses operating without robust AI governance frameworks.

## Regaining control

However, Shadow AI can be tamed. Here's how:

### Establish an AI governance framework

Organisations must develop clear AI policies that define acceptable AI usage. Employees should know which AI tools are approved, what data can be processed, and who oversees AI integration.

### Deploy AI detection and monitoring tools

AI security platforms can identify unauthorised AI applications in real time. IT teams should implement monitoring solutions to detect and regulate AI deployments across the organisation.

### Provide secure AI alternatives

Instead of banning AI outright, companies should offer vetted AI tools. A secure, enterprise-grade AI assistant reduces the temptation to use unregulated AI models.

### Educate employees on AI risks

Many employees engage in Shadow AI unknowingly. Conducting AI literacy programmes will help them understand the risks of unauthorised AI and the importance of compliance.

### Form an AI oversight committee

A dedicated AI governance team should assess risks, approve AI tools and ensure compliance with regulatory standards.

### Call to action

Shadow AI is an urgent challenge that demands immediate action. AI is a powerful asset, but without proper governance, it can become a liability. Businesses must manage proactively AI risks before they escalate into crises.

**JayTee Taiwo is chief executive of Alluvium**

[www.alluvium.net](http://www.alluvium.net)



## Case study

**A global consulting firm recently faced an embarrassing fallout when AI-generated financial reports were riddled with inaccuracies. Employees had relied on an unvetted AI model that fabricated data to fit predetermined patterns – a phenomenon known as AI hallucination. The false projections led to severe reputational damage and the loss of key clients.**

This illustrates why AI governance is crucial. AI models can generate misleading insights if not properly trained and monitored. Shadow AI exacerbates this risk by allowing unchecked systems to shape business decisions, often with catastrophic results.



# Firms face increasing cyber security risks

The British Chambers of Commerce (BCC) warns that businesses face increased cyber security risks without stronger engagement with government. Among the recommendations in a new report, the BCC is calling for ministers to:

- Carry out a cyber security awareness programme for businesses, particularly smaller firms
- Update the National Cyber Strategy
- Reform cyber security insurance to provide firms with better protection
- Address the shortage of UK cyber security professionals and support more training in all workplaces
- Engage directly with businesses to strengthen confidence in the UK's digital infrastructure.



Alex Veitch

## Unnecessary burden

The report draws on expertise from businesses of all sizes and sectors, academia and think-tanks. It advises that the Cyber Security and Resilience Bill, due to be published this year, must be developed in full consultation with businesses. This is to avoid creating 'an unnecessary burden for businesses' and to ensure that firms are 'actively incentivised to report cyber breaches or attacks'. This will then support the government's growth agenda by strengthening cyber resilience.

## Exposed

Changes to working environments have created more IT challenges for businesses. BCC research has revealed more than half of firms believed working from home left their computer systems more exposed.

The report highlights an urgent need to tackle the current shortage of cyber security professionals, and the digital safety skills gap facing over half a million businesses.

## Co-ordinated

Alex Veitch, BCC director of policy commented: "Cyber threats against businesses are growing, and without coordinated action many SMEs will remain at risk. Our report outlines some immediate actions for ministers to engage directly with firms.

"There's a lack of specialist digital security knowledge in many smaller companies. Government needs to take the lead and engage proactively with business to raise awareness.

"Cyber resilience isn't just about protection; it's about trust, innovation and supporting the long-term growth of businesses."

[www.britishchambers.org.uk](http://www.britishchambers.org.uk)

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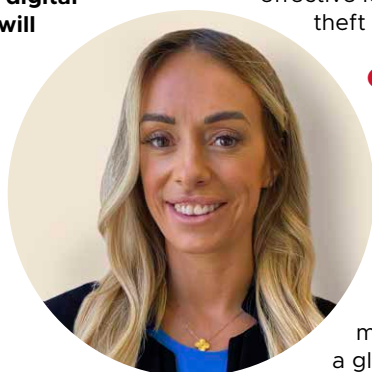
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# Legal protection for ownership of digital assets

by Joanna Bailey

**The rise of digital assets across a wide range of sectors has led to The Property (Digital Assets etc.) Bill to be introduced in Parliament which means that cryptocurrency, non-fungible tokens such as digital art, and carbon credits will be classed as personal property under law. The Bill means that it will ensure Britain maintains its pole position in the emerging global crypto race by being one of the first countries to recognise these assets in law.**



## Complex

The new law will give legal protection to owners and companies of such assets. By defining ownership, this will assist against fraud and scams, helping deal with complex cases where digital holdings are disputed or form part of settlements, for example, in divorce cases.

English law currently recognises two categories of personal property,

- things in possession – tangible items such as jewellery or a car
- things in action – intangible items such as debt and intellectual property.

## Personal property

The Bill introduces a third category, assets that are “digital or electronic in nature,” such as cryptocurrencies and non-fungible tokens. These will be considered personal property under the Bill and give legal protection to individuals and businesses targeted in frauds and scams involving cryptocurrency and other digital assets.

Owners of digital assets gain enforceable rights against theft, fraud and unauthorised interference. Digital assets can also be included in bankruptcy and insolvency proceedings and treated as part of an individual's estate. The UK aims to be a leader in digital asset regulation, reinforcing international frameworks like the EU's

Markets in Crypto-Assets Regulation and aims to enhance the attractiveness of the UK for global investment and a hub for fintech innovation. At the same time, it wants to provide stronger, more effective legal recourse for the theft of crypto assets.

## Global leader

Justice Minister Heidi Alexander has said that it was “essential that the law keeps pace with evolving technologies and this legislation will mean that the sector can maintain its position as a global leader in crypto assets and bring clarity to complex property cases...”

Regulation of crypto assets varies considerably worldwide, as Britain aims to provide a safe jurisdiction for dealings in them. There must be a legal regime that protects ownership in a sector that is subject to scams and fraud. The Bill provides room for the common law to evolve in defining what qualifies as a digital asset. This approach accommodates new technologies as they arise without over-specific legislation. By allowing digital assets to be treated on par with traditional forms of property, it could feasibly reduce litigation risks and provide clearer guidance for courts in disputes involving such assets.

## Clearer basis

As technology evolves, the law will have to keep pace in this rapidly progressing sector to maintain the protections that The Property (Digital Assets etc.) Bill introduces. However, the legal sector will now be better equipped to respond to new technologies and courts will have a clearer basis to handle disputes involving digital assets, such as issues of theft, fraud or ownership claims. Legal remedies, including injunctions to freeze stolen assets, will be more enforceable.

The legal position of digital assets, particularly cryptocurrency, across

the world is far from consistent. Some jurisdictions enthusiastically embrace digital assets such as cryptocurrency, whilst others have banned it. Countries with differing approaches to digital asset regulation may face challenges in reconciling their laws with the UK's framework.

## Landmark

The recognition of digital assets as possessions could lead to “regulatory arbitrage,” where businesses gravitate toward jurisdictions with more favourable rules. This could also lead to global disagreements regarding how digital assets are treated, which could complicate cross-border transactions and litigation.

The Bill is a landmark in modernising property law for the digital age. In England and Wales, it will boost legal clarity, commercial confidence, and innovation. Globally, it is likely to inspire similar reforms, driving legal and regulatory convergence. However, challenges around enforcement, over-regulation and international co-ordination remain key hurdles to address.

The Bill, when enacted, could have a significant impact on the UK's reputation as a global leader in digital assets and financial technology.

**Joanna Bailey is a partner and head of the banking and financial fraud department at Giambrone and Partners**





# Kyoto in Soho

**In December 1997, representatives from 160 nations gathered in Kyoto, Japan, for COP3, the third 'conference of the parties' to sign what was described as "a historic agreement in an unprecedented moment of international consensus making." The Kyoto Protocol aimed to address global warming by cutting greenhouse gas emissions in 38 industrialised countries by 5.2 per cent between 2008 and 2012, compared to the levels registered in 1990.**

For the first time ever, legally binding targets and commitments were set and key economic players such as Japan, the US and the EU pledged to cut their emissions by 7, 8 and 9 per cent respectively.

## Climate change

Today, at the impressive Soho Place theatre – two years old and the first new-built West End theatre in 50 years – *Kyoto*, a new political thriller, transferred from Stratford-

upon-Avon, is bringing the story of the dramatic conference that led to what is hopefully now significant progress in the response to climate change to a wider public.

The stage and the tone are set as delegate passes are issued to audience members as they make their way to their seats in a brilliantly designed space representing the conference venue. A young Angela Merkel, then an environment minister in the German government, a seasoned John Prescott, a spokesman for the EU, and US vice-president Al Gore play their parts. The main drama though lies in the combative but ultimately effective (for a period at least) relationship between conference chair Raúl Estrada-Oyuela and American lawyer and oil lobbyist Don Pearlman.

## Threat

It makes for a fascinating two and a half hours of entertainment and information, depressing in the lack of attention to the big picture of the environmental threat, but strangely hopeful too.

**Kyoto runs at Soho Place until 3 May**

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





# Getting ready for the recycling reforms

| by Mark Hall

**The new Simpler Recycling rules affect any business with ten or more full-time employees and arrangements to comply with them must be in place by 31 March 2025. Businesses that fit under this category must arrange separate collections of food waste, paper and cardboard (can be combined), and other dry recycling (glass, plastic and metals, which can be combined).**

It means businesses can no longer throw any of these materials away with general waste. The rules apply to businesses regardless of how many employees are on-site at once. For example, if you have two locations with five full-time employees at each, you must still comply with the Simpler Recycling regulations, as you'll have ten employees in total.

## Separate collections

Businesses must arrange separate collections of all food waste, paper and cardboard, and dry recycling (glass, plastic and metals) they produce by licensed waste carriers. All businesses, schools, hospitals and other 'non-household municipal premises in England' should have separate bins to store these three waste streams.

Using commercial waste collection services and licensed waste carriers should ensure compliance with the new plans. You can use separate bins

for each recycling stream or use dry mixed recycling bins to combine plastic and metals for ease (such as food packaging). Paper and card must be collected separately from other dry recyclables.

## What can businesses do to transition and keep costs low?

### Get organised

It's important to implement any changes your business needs in plenty of time. This way you'll be able to spot and fix any teething issues as they arise, and before the rules are enforced.

A great place to start is to conduct a waste audit to understand how much waste your business produces, what types of waste you generate, and what bins and collections you need.

Following on from this, you can then look to create a waste management plan that will help ensure your business manages its commercial waste safely, appropriately and efficiently.

### Train and educate staff

All staff must understand the new laws and what changes are being made in the business to follow these. Educate staff about the waste you generate and its impact on the environment, so they understand the reasons behind the changes.

Set clear guidance to follow and provide instructions or labelling that helps staff segregate and dispose of waste correctly.

### Prevent waste at the source

Reducing waste is cheaper and better for the environment than removing it. Look for ways your business could reduce its waste at the source. Rethink packaging, switch from single-use products to reusable options, or evaluate your inventory management.

### Partner with a broker

A waste broker can help you understand your waste needs, arrange any collection and disposal services, and work with their suppliers to find you the best price. Using a waste broker should ensure you meet all the requirements of Simpler Recycling and removes a lot of the administration and time spent arranging waste collection.

### Utilise free bins

Business Waste can help companies with their transition to the new rules by providing millions of free bins to customers. There are no delivery fees or hire charges, you only pay for the collection costs. Any business using the services can access a wide range of free bins to separate their waste

**Mark Hall is a waste management expert at Business Waste**

[www.businesswaste.co.uk](http://www.businesswaste.co.uk)



**business  
waste.co.uk**



# The waste hierarchy

**Andrew Wright** explores the waste hierarchy – a structured approach to waste management

**The primary, or most desired, solution for dealing with waste is simply preventing waste in the first place. By focusing on product design, efficient manufacturing processes and consumer behaviour changes, we can avoid waste generation at its source. By promoting responsible consumption and sustainable practices, we can minimise waste and make a significant impact on environmental sustainability.**



## Prevention

Waste reduction or prevention is often just about the source and not producing something that will go to waste in the first place. However, companies that revive redundant resources for reuse, for example, an ITAD/STARR service provider reviving a computer, will also help to prevent waste as new equipment does not need to be bought – which will help to prevent waste from being produced in the first place.

This happens because a new machine is not entered into the cycle. Eventually (given a long enough run) all technology dies and so, if a new piece enters the technology life cycle, it will form some sort of eventual future waste. Another example is choosing to buy clothes that will last or buy second hand from a re-seller or a charity shop therefore avoiding buying 'fast fashion' for quick use and disposal.

## Revived

By re-selling revived high-end technology and other products at depreciated prices we all can:

- stop older kit from either going to landfill or being recycled
- stop a new product from starting its life cycle which could eventually go to waste provide products to people at more affordable prices than if bought new. For example, with technology assets this will contribute towards improving digital equality.

## Reuse and repurpose

Next in the waste hierarchy is the emphasis on reusing and repurposing.

Reviving redundant products/ technologies for re-use is a powerful way to prevent waste. Not only does it prevent a new thing entering the market, it also stops the thing itself being disposed of. It guarantees that the thing will avoid the less desired methods of waste processing in the waste hierarchy.

Repurposing is a specific kind of reuse where a product changes its function, for example, using a tyre as a fishing boat fender.

## Recycling

The next step in the waste hierarchy is recycling. This one everyone knows about due to its usefulness in reducing the negative impact of household waste. Recycling involves the collection, processing and transformation of waste materials into new products

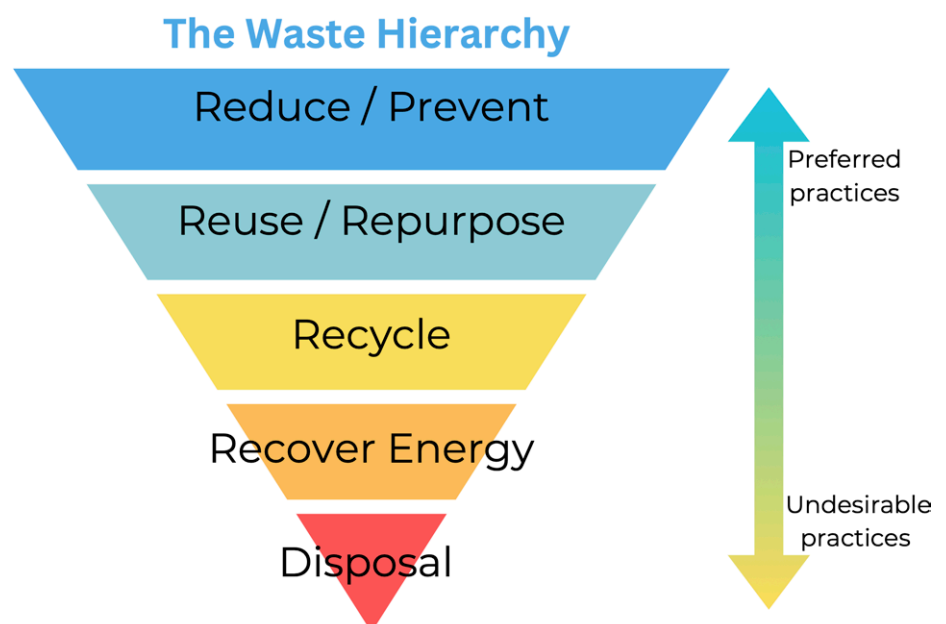
or materials. It conserves resources, reduces energy consumption and minimises the strain on raw materials and our planet's reserves of resources. Good recycling ensures that valuable resources are recovered and used, supporting a sustainable approach to waste management. Recycling still uses resources that produce waste and this is why reducing and reusing are so important. Recycling is still far better than resorting to landfill or dumping.

## Recovering

The bottom three steps of the waste hierarchy, namely recovering energy, treating waste and disposing (dumping) of waste, should be approached with caution due to their negative impacts. While these steps may have their place in specific circumstances, they should never replace or overshadow the importance of reducing, reusing and recycling.

**Andrew Wright is account manager at the ICEX Group.**

[www.icex.co.uk](http://www.icex.co.uk)





# Virgin territory

**Founder Friday**, described as the most entrepreneurial day of the year, took place in January at Virgin Hotels London in Shoreditch. It featured the launch by Sir Richard Branson and Simon Squibb of their Elevator of Dreams – a dedicated space where aspiring founders can present their business ideas to a global audience of potential investors via a video doorbell. Using their social

media platforms, which boasts a combined following of more than 50 million, Branson and Squibb shared feedback and expert advice on their favourite pitches.

## Dream

This proved to be a good time of year for budding founders to turn their ideas into reality following new research by Virgin StartUp (Virgin's home of entrepreneurship). It found a third of Brits dream of starting their own business in 2025, with a quarter of 18–24-year-olds planning on taking the plunge this year.

## Potential investors

Pitches were uploaded to the HelpBnk platform where potential investors

This proved to be a good time of year for budding founders to turn their ideas into reality following new research by Virgin StartUp

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can view and support their journey. In addition to this, the top pitches were invited to join the Virgin StartUp Community, gaining access to 1:1 mentoring with founders of some of the UK's fastest growing business, online courses and workshops.

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



Virgin **UP**  
**START**

# Securing investment with food and drink startups

Leading venture capital firms and the well-known brands they back shared the secrets of how to secure investment with over 40 food and drink businesses from across London at a recent event

Venture capital (VC) firms Beringea, BoxFund, Jensen Funding and Future Planet Capital told local food and drink businesses what they look for when allocating investments at an event hosted by Walthamstow MP Stella Creasy and the British Private Equity and Venture Capital Association (BVCA). The event focused on the theme of growing small companies and explored the ways in which VC investment supports businesses.

In 2023, VC-backed businesses generated £20 billion of GDP for the UK economy. Recent BVCA research shows that London continues to lead the UK's venture capital landscape, being home to approximately 80 per cent of VC firms in the UK. VC-backed firms employed 315,000 people across the UK's nations and regions with two thirds of that population (209,000 people) being employed in London alone.

**VC-backed firms employed 315,000 people across the UK's nations and regions with two thirds of that population (209,000 people) being employed in London alone.**

## Scale-up

Speaking at the event, deputy mayor for business Howard Dawber highlighted that London has grown more unicorn



Howard Dawber and Stella Creasy @Nicola Tree

startups in the last five years than the whole of France and Germany put together. "London is home to a wide array of leading industries. The event demonstrated just how important the food and beverages sector are in supporting our local economy. It was great to see founders make connections with the investment community – something we need to encourage to increase the number of businesses which successfully scale-up." ~

Stella Creasy, MP for Walthamstow said: "Supporting the fantastic food and drink producers in Walthamstow to grow is a key priority for me as the local MP."

## Ownership model

Well-known VC-backed businesses Lucky Saint, the UK's leading non-

alcoholic beer; DASH water, the UK's top selling seltzer and sports nutrition brand; Tribe, shared their experience about how venture capital funding helped them to scale their operations.

VC-backed firms all attributed the industry's active ownership model to their success. Private capital invests in companies for the long-term, meaning investors provide hands-on, proactive and advisory support to businesses in their portfolio to help navigate the market and achieve financial success. Companies in attendance learned about the venture capital market and how businesses access expertise through investors.

[www.bvca.co.uk](http://www.bvca.co.uk)

# Compressed hours: a turning point for UK workplaces?

| by David Banaghan



*David Banaghan is co-founder and interim chief executive of Occupop, recruitment software specialists*

[www.occupop.com](http://www.occupop.com)

**As businesses navigate evolving workplace dynamics, compressed working hours are emerging as a compelling alternative to traditional work patterns. Whilst Labour has ruled out mandating a four-day week, the party's support for flexible arrangements, including compressed hours, signals a significant shift in British workplace culture.**

## Employee perspective

A study from Indeed UK (2023) showed that 65 per cent of British workers would accept a pay cut for a shorter working week and increased flexibility, highlighting a growing appetite for alternative working patterns. For employees, compressed hours present a tempting proposition beyond the obvious attraction of extended weekends.

When it comes to making job changes, people are no longer just prioritising salary – work-life balance has become a crucial factor in candidate decision-making.

The financial implications are significant. According to research, UK parents spend an average of £7,000 annually on child care, per child. Compressed hours could help reduce these costs, offering substantial savings for working families.

## Business benefits

For businesses, the advantages extend beyond employee satisfaction. The CIPD's business case surrounding flexible working highlights that flexible working can contribute to increased productivity and reduced absenteeism.

Data from LinkedIn (2023) reveals that job posts offering flexible working arrangements, as well as culture and wellbeing, receive nearly three times more views and more than twice as many applications.

In today's competitive job market, flexible working is becoming a powerful differentiator.

## Challenges

The transition to compressed hours isn't without its complexities. A recent LinkedIn poll by People Management revealed that 23 per cent of organisations anticipate significant issues in implementing compressed hours. Key considerations centre around maintaining service consistency, managing client expectations and adapting operational processes.

## Implementation

When advising companies on their recruitment strategies, we emphasise the importance of clearly communicating compressed hours policies during the hiring process.

Some considerations for businesses include:

### Workplace readiness

- Ensuring adequate rest areas for longer shifts
- Implementing robust health and safety protocols
- Upgrading technology for remote collaboration.

### Performance monitoring

- Establishing clear productivity metrics
- Regular well-being check-ins
- Quarterly review processes.

## Sustainable future

As UK businesses navigate this transition, the success of compressed hours will largely depend on thoughtful implementation and continuous adaptation. With proper planning and open dialogue between employers and employees, compressed hours could represent not just a temporary trend but a sustainable future for UK workplaces.

# Driving into the future

## I Denise House on the key mobility and car rental trends which are shaping 2025



Denise House FIMI is vice president –  
Global Supply Chain of Selfdrive Mobility

[www.selfdrive.uk](http://www.selfdrive.uk)

**The global mobility industry is on the cusp of transformative change. As technology accelerates, consumer behaviour evolves, and sustainability becomes a cornerstone of modern business, the car rental sector is emerging as a key player in redefining the future of transportation. What was once a simple convenience for travellers is now an ecosystem of innovation, offering smart, flexible and environmentally responsible solutions. Here are five pivotal trends shaping the car rental industry's future.**

### **The rise of subscription-based car rentals**

The next generation of consumers, particularly Gen Z, values flexibility above all else. They are less inclined to own vehicles or commit to long-term rentals, paving the way for subscription-based car rental models to dominate the market. Under these subscription services, customers can pay a fixed monthly fee for access to a range of vehicles tailored to their needs. What makes these models even more attractive is their bundled approach – insurance, maintenance and roadside assistance are included in the package, making it a hassle-free alternative to car ownership. By 2025, seamless integrations between car rentals, airlines, hotels and travel agencies will deliver personalised, sustainable travel experiences with enhanced convenience and affordability.

### **Smart mobility powered by AI and IoT**

The integration of Artificial Intelligence (AI) and the Internet of Things is revolutionising the car rental industry, enabling smarter and more efficient operations. AI-powered systems will analyse demand patterns in real time, allowing rental companies to optimise fleet management and reduce operational costs. Predictive analytics will ensure that the right vehicles are available at the right locations, improving convenience for customers

while maximising usage rates for businesses.

**Carbon offset programs, eco-friendly charging infrastructure, and the integration of green hydrogen-powered vehicles will gain traction as companies strive to meet both regulatory requirements and customer expectations.**

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### **Sustainability as a core priority**

Sustainability is no longer a buzzword – it is now a business imperative. This year, car rental providers will have to go beyond offering electric vehicles and embed sustainability into their core strategies. Carbon offset programmes, eco-friendly charging infrastructure and the integration of green hydrogen-powered vehicles will gain traction as companies strive to meet both regulatory requirements and customer expectations.

The car rental industry is accelerating towards a future defined by flexibility, technology and sustainability. Subscription-based models, AI-powered smart mobility and micro-rentals are reshaping customer expectations, while sustainability initiatives and strategic partnerships with the tourism sector are driving long-term growth. These trends signal a shift from traditional car rentals to a dynamic, customer-centric mobility ecosystem that is poised to meet the demands of a changing world. Companies which embrace innovation today will not only stay relevant but will lead the charge into the future of mobility.

# Talking about mental health

Talking about mental health can feel uncomfortable but it's one of the most powerful ways to break down stigma, build understanding and create a more supportive workplace. Around *Time to Talk Day* (6 February) the charity Mind were asking everyone to 'get comfortable' talking about mental health. It's an opportunity for teams, colleagues and leaders to come together for the nation's biggest mental health conversation and create positive change at work.

## Why conversations matter

Over the last decade, Time to Talk Day has encouraged millions of conversations across the UK, helping to normalise discussions about mental health. Yet challenges remain, stigma still exists and not everyone finds it easy to open up.

When we talk about mental health at work, we help tackle misconceptions and build more supportive, understanding workplaces. It creates a culture where colleagues feel heard, supported and encouraged to seek help without fear of judgement.

## Starting the conversation

There's no one-size-fits-all approach to starting these conversations, and it's okay to feel a little awkward. What matters most is showing up and being there for your colleagues.

If you're not sure where to begin, here are a few simple tips to help:

- **Ask open-ended questions:** Instead of "Are you okay?", try "How have things been for you lately?" or "What's been on your mind?".



- **Listen without judgement:** Resist the urge to jump in with solutions. Sometimes, just listening is the best support you can offer, and you don't need to have all the answers.
  - **Be patient:** Not everyone is ready to share right away, and that's okay. The fact that you've shown you care may make it easier for them to open up in the future.
  - **Share your own experiences:** If it feels right, opening up about your own challenges can help others feel less alone and more comfortable to talk.
- How to get involved at work**  
*Time to Talk Day* isn't just about individual conversations — it's also a chance to build a workplace culture where mental health matters. Here are a few ways to get involved:
- **Host a team event:** Organise a

coffee morning, lunch and learn or wellbeing session to encourage open conversations.

- **Share resources:** Use posters, email templates or digital assets to spread the word across your workplace.
- **Lead by example:** Encourage leaders and managers to open up and set the tone for talking about mental health.
- **Use social media:** Share your workplace initiatives using the hashtag #TimeToTalk to inspire others to get involved.

## Make your conversations count

Whether you're checking in with a colleague, sharing your own experiences or organising an event, your efforts can help change lives and strengthen support for your team.

*Time to Talk Day 2025* was run by Mind and Rethink Mental Illness and is being delivered in partnership with Co-op for the fourth year running.

[www.mind.org.uk](http://www.mind.org.uk)



## For better mental health

Infoline: 0300 123 3393

(Call us from 9am to 6pm, Monday to Friday – except for bank holidays)

# How mediation can help your bottom line

| by Jonathan Wood, Rebecca Warder and Luke Hard

Since at least the 1990s, mediation – an out-of-court method of resolving disputes where a neutral third party (a mediator) helps those involved reach a solution – has been popular among businesses of all sizes for disputes of all flavours. The reasons for mediation’s popularity will be familiar to any business that has found itself resolving a dispute in the courts. Unlike court-based dispute resolution, which can be time-consuming, costly and the legal remedies available not always consonant with businesses’ commercial objectives, mediation allows for the speedy resolution of disputes. Mediation often leads to settlement on the day of the mediation, preserving commercial relationships (by avoiding heated court battles) and entails significant cost savings. It also puts the solution in the hands of the parties, rather than a judge, increasing the scope for commercial outcomes.

Over the last 30 years English judges have, to varying degrees, recognised and made use of mediation’s potential. Many readers will already be familiar with the court’s power to reduce the amount of legal costs a winning party can recover if they unreasonably refused to engage in mediation, as well as the mediation schemes operated by many County Courts and mediation for certain claims for sums of money. A number of recent developments, however, have signalled increased expectations among English judges that parties will more widely turn to mediation to resolve their disputes. Indeed, going forward, they are likely to not only expect parties to mediate, but even *order* them to do so.

## What’s changed?

The first signal to businesses came at the end of 2023. In a landmark ruling, the Court of Appeal found that the English courts *can*, as a matter of law, order parties to engage in non-court-based alternative dispute resolution (known as “ADR”, which includes mediation).

This departed from the widely held belief that, while courts could take steps to encourage parties to mediate (e.g. reducing the recoverable legal costs for winning parties), compelling parties to mediate was a line that could not be crossed.

On the back of this decision, in October last year the body responsible for maintaining court procedural rules updated court rules to expressly include this power, and made some other amendments to underscore the expectation that parties will meaningfully engage in mediation. Even where mediation is not ordered, the updated rules emphasise that it will be *encouraged*.

## What does this mean for businesses and particularly SMEs?

The power to order parties to engage in mediation has now decisively shifted away from being a theoretical one. Alongside the softer encouragement of mediation, it shows that judges seriously intend mediation to be the ‘business as usual’ option for commercial parties. While the new rules in theory apply equally to all businesses, they are

particularly relevant for SMEs, who may be involved in disputes which do not involve very large sums of money, or particularly legally complex or novel disputes.

Here the costs, time and effort involved in resolving the dispute in court may become *disproportionate* – a key consideration for judges under the rules.

## Is your business mediation-ready?

Disputes are inevitable for commercial parties, be it over an unpaid invoice, rent arrears or disagreement about the meaning of a contract’s terms. In this new mediation landscape, it is important to be aware of the cost-effective mediation options available.

Disputes are inevitable for commercial parties, be it over an unpaid invoice, rent arrears or disagreement about the meaning of a contract’s terms.

Jonathan Wood FCI Arb and Rebecca Warder are respectively chair and deputy chair of London Chamber of Arbitration and Mediation (LCAM) Advisory Board. Luke Hard leads the LCAM secretariat.

LCAM has a variety of mediation offerings available for disputes and maintains lists of expert independent mediators with specialist knowledge across a variety of industries, sectors and legal areas, who mediate disputes of all sizes at competitive prices.

[www.lcam.org.uk](http://www.lcam.org.uk).



# Understanding professional negligence – a guide for businesses

by Adam Haffenden and Hannah Groom

In today's fast-moving business world, professionals such as consultants, accountants, lawyers and engineers play a fundamental role in ensuring smooth operations. However, when these professionals fail to meet the expected standards of care, businesses can suffer huge reputational and financial damage.

Understanding professional negligence is crucial for businesses to mitigate risks, protect their interests and take appropriate action when things go wrong.

## What is professional negligence?

Professional negligence happens when a professional fails to perform their duties to a satisfactory standard, leading to financial loss or harm to their client. This failure can originate from errors in judgment, poor advice or a breach of duty.

Three key elements must be established to advance a claim for professional negligence:

- **Duty of care** – the professional must have had a duty of care toward the business
- **Breach of duty** – the professional must have failed to meet the expected standard of care
- **Resulting loss/causation** – the business must have suffered financial or reputational loss due to the breach, which is not too remote.

The initial limitation period for bringing such claims is six years from the negligent act or omission. If such negligence is discovered outside of this period, the limitation becomes three years from when the negligence was discovered.

There is a final limit which prevents a claim being brought after 15 years from the date of negligence occurring.

## Impact of professional negligence on businesses

Professional negligence can have severe consequences for businesses, including:

- **Financial loss:** incorrect advice or errors can lead to significant financial damage
- **Reputational harm:** a business's credibility may suffer if professional negligence affects customers or stakeholders
  - **Operational disruptions:** delays, regulatory penalties or legal issues can hamper business continuity.



## Examples of professional negligence

Professional negligence can arise in various industries. Some common situations include:

- **Legal professionals:** a lawyer missing a crucial deadline, leading to a case being struck out
- **Accountants:** erroneous tax advice resulting in penalties for a business
- **Consultants:** providing incorrect strategic advice that leads to financial loss
- **Architects and engineers:** poor design work causing construction delays or safety risks.

## How to prevent professional negligence

While businesses cannot eliminate all risks, practical steps can minimise the likelihood of professional negligence affecting them:

- **Due diligence before hiring professionals:** before engaging professionals, businesses should check credentials, experience and client reviews to ensure reliability
- **Clear contracts and expectations:** clearly outline the scope of work, responsibilities and expected standards in legally binding agreements to avoid

misunderstandings

- **Performance reviews:** assess the work of hired professionals periodically to identify potential issues early
- **Professional indemnity insurance:** ensure that professionals have adequate professional indemnity insurance to cover potential claims in case of negligence
- **Seek a second opinion:** for major business decisions, a second opinion can reduce the risk of relying on poor advice.

## What to do if your business suffers from professional negligence

If your business has been impacted by professional negligence, consider the following:

- **Gather evidence:** document all interactions, agreements and any losses suffered carefully
- **Communicate with the professional:** attempt to resolve the issue directly with the professional or their firm, where possible
- **Seek legal advice:** consult a solicitor specialising in professional negligence claims
- **Consider litigation or alternative dispute resolution:** depending on the severity, legal action may be necessary to recover damages.

Professional negligence poses a significant risk to businesses, potentially impacting their finances, reputation and client trust. Understanding what constitutes professional negligence and implementing proactive risk management can help mitigate such risks faced by businesses.

Taking appropriate steps will help ensure long-term success and resilience in an increasingly complex business landscape.

**Adam Haffenden is a partner and Hannah Groom a paralegal at TV Edwards LLP**

[www.tvedwards.com](http://www.tvedwards.com)





# The hidden impact of the UK's immigration salary thresholds

| by Mariam Touray

In a bid to curb net migration, the UK government introduced changes to its skilled worker visa salary thresholds in April 2024. These changes, among the most significant in recent immigration policy history, have increased the general salary threshold for skilled workers by 48 per cent – from £26,200 to £38,700. The reform aims to reduce reliance on migrant labour by ensuring businesses pay higher wages if they recruit from overseas, deterring them. However, beyond the headline figures, these changes are reshaping the UK job market in ways extending far beyond migration statistics.



## Challenge

For businesses that have historically relied on migrant workers, the salary increase presents a complex challenge. Many industries, particularly hospitality and construction, have long depended on skilled overseas talent to address labour shortages.

Previously, the Shortage Occupation List enabled employers to sponsor migrants for jobs deemed difficult to fill, with a 20 per cent reduction on the salary requirement. This mechanism has been replaced with the Immigration Salary List, which reduces the number of job roles eligible for the reduction. Subsequently, industries already facing workforce deficits are now less able to recruit internationally, putting additional pressure on an already strained domestic labour market.

## Who is being priced out?

Many essential but lower-paid professionals have been effectively priced out of the UK's skilled worker visa system. Examples include:

- **Lab technicians** – average salary: £25,000–£30,000
- **Teaching assistants** – average salary: £19,000–£25,000.

Employers are faced with difficult choices: increase wages beyond feasibility; recruit fewer workers; or risk operational shortfalls.

## Regional disparities

The new salary thresholds create regional inequalities, as wage structures vary across the UK. In London, where salaries tend to be higher, some businesses may find it easier to meet the new minimums. In Northern England, Scotland and Wales, where salaries are generally lower, the increased thresholds disproportionately impact employers.

For instance, a software engineer in London might require £45,000, well above the new threshold, while the same role in Manchester or Glasgow might average £36,000, making sponsorship under the new threshold less viable. This policy shift risks concentrating skilled migration in London while leaving businesses in other regions struggling to attract necessary talent.

## Economic and employment consequences

### ▪ Wage disparities and workplace tensions

In cases where businesses meet the salary threshold for migrant workers, an employment conundrum emerges, as some migrant employees may earn more than their UK resident counterparts in similar roles. This disparity could contribute to workplace tensions and fuel anti-immigration narratives, reinforcing claims that migrants are taking jobs at inflated wages while domestic workers are paid less.

### ▪ Increased costs for businesses

Many companies now face the prospect of paying significantly higher wages where roles cannot be filled

domestically. For small and medium-sized enterprises, these financial burdens may prove unsustainable, leading some businesses to cut back on hiring.

### ▪ Exceptions and transitional provisions

The government has implemented transitional measures to ease the shift:

- **Existing visa holders** can continue to meet previous salary thresholds
- **New entrants** (such as graduates) can qualify under lower salary requirements, albeit temporarily.

These exceptions provide only temporary relief to a small subset of people.

## Preparing for a changing landscape

UK businesses must take a proactive approach to workforce planning. Employers should:

- **Review hiring strategies** to determine how salary adjustments might affect recruitment
- **Stay informed** on evolving immigration policies to ensure compliance.

## Balancing act

The unintended economic and workforce consequences of the threshold increase cannot be ignored. With many industries unable to meet the new thresholds, labour shortages could intensify, regional disparities may grow and business costs could rise.

In this evolving landscape, businesses must adapt quickly and strategically to maintain operational stability and ensure a sustainable workforce. The challenge now is not only about securing skilled talent – it's about ensuring the UK job market remains dynamic, inclusive and competitive.

**Mariam Touray is an immigration paralegal at Barar & Associates**

[www.bararassociates.com](http://www.bararassociates.com)

# Accelerating action for women in the workplace

| by Maddy Dixon

**The call for gender equity in the workplace is more pressing than ever. Yet at the current rate, it'll take 133 years for full gender parity to be achieved. That's five generations where women and girls don't feel they're quite enough. Five generations where women are under-rewarded and over-blamed. Five generations where we can't truly claim that the sexes are equal.**



That's why this year's theme for International Women's Day – 8 March – is *Accelerate Action*. If we want a truly equal world, we need to do more. More in schools, homes, society, and of course, the workplace.

Businesses that prioritise their female employees' growth not only foster a more inclusive environment but also enhance their overall performance. This article explores actionable strategies that businesses can implement to accelerate progress for women in the workplace.

## Commitment from leadership

The journey toward gender equity starts at the top. Executives and board members must publicly commit to gender diversity, setting measurable goals and holding themselves accountable. This commitment should be reflected in company policies, resource allocation and a culture that celebrates diversity. Regularly reporting on progress can reinforce this commitment and foster transparency.

## Education and acknowledgement of bias

Bias – whether deliberate or unconscious – is holding women back in the workplace. Common biases women face at work include likeability bias (the expectation that women are kind and communal, so when they

assert themselves, we like them less), performance bias (assumptions about men's and women's abilities), and maternal bias (the assumption that because of motherhood women are less committed to their careers). Education plays a crucial role in dismantling biases that hinder women's growth. Training programmes focused on unconscious bias, inclusivity, and leadership can empower employees at all levels.

## Support networks

Formal and informal support networks, such as LCCI's Women in Business group, or mentorship programmes can provide women with the guidance and visibility they need to advance in their careers. Pairing emerging female leaders with experienced mentors can help navigate challenges, while sponsorship involves advocating for women in key projects and promotions. This support network can significantly improve women's career trajectories.

## Flexible work policies

Today's workforce wants flexibility, and businesses that offer adaptable work arrangements, such as remote working options, flexible hours and parental leave, are more likely to attract and retain female talent. By accommodating the diverse needs of employees, companies can create a more inclusive environment where women feel supported in balancing their professional and personal lives.

## Performance metrics and accountability

As with all aims in business, it's important to establish clear metrics to track progress. This could include analysing hiring, promotion and retention rates by gender. Regular

audits can help identify areas of improvement and allow companies to adapt their strategies as needed.

## Creating a safe and inclusive environment

A culture of safety and respect is fundamental for women to thrive in the workplace. Companies must actively work to eliminate harassment and discrimination, ensuring that all employees feel secure in their environment. Implementing clear policies, providing resources for reporting incidents, and fostering open dialogue about workplace culture can contribute to a more inclusive atmosphere.

## Encouraging work-life balance

Encouraging a healthy work-life balance is essential for all employees and employers. Businesses can promote this balance through flexible working offerings, increased paid holiday days, initiatives such as mental health days and wellness programmes, and resources for time management. By prioritising employee well-being, businesses can enhance productivity and job satisfaction, retaining their top talent.

Embracing diversity is not just good for women; it's good for business. Companies that invest in gender equity will not only improve their reputation and standing but also drive innovation, improve employee satisfaction and increase overall performance. By implementing these strategies, businesses can create an environment where women thrive, ultimately benefiting everyone in the organisation and beyond.

**Maddy Dixon is social media and content executive at LCCI**



International Women's Day



# Burns Night in Edinburgh



The anniversary of the birth of Scotland's national poet – Robert Burns – was celebrated in the customary way during January's financial services summit – *Celebrating success, partnering for growth* – in Edinburgh. Scotland's capital and London are the UK's two biggest financial centres and key players in the financial sector witnessed the traditional recital of Burn's *Address to a haggis* and, of course, sampled the fare. The many bankers in attendance might also have welcomed a

rendition of his *Lines written on a banknote*.

## Fear no labour

Scotland's First Minister John Swinney (a former banker) and City of London Lord Mayor Alastair King (who hails from Aberdeen) gave entertaining speeches. They made appropriate references to economic giants Adam Smith – his statue was a few minutes away from the event venue at Lloyds Banking Group's impressive building in The Mound – and John Hume. Naturally the best quote came from Rabbe Burns himself: "Dare to be honest and fear no labour."



# The Procurement Act – how small business can benefit

**Public procurement is one of the largest areas of government spending in the UK, with approximately £300 billion of taxpayers' money being used to purchase goods and services across sectors such as healthcare and infrastructure**

**As part of broader reforms aimed at lowering barriers to SMEs obtaining public sector contracts, the UK government has introduced the Procurement Act which was due to go live in February 2025. Rob Rees explains what the new Act means for SMEs and shares advice on how to increase your chances of success when bidding for government contracts.**

## **Procurement Act 2023 - changes that benefit SMEs**

The Procurement Act 2023 is being introduced to consolidate several existing regulations, such as the 'Public Contracts Regulations' and 'Concessions Regulations', into one set of rules. The aim of doing this is to benefit SMEs by increasing transparency, streamlining procurement processes and generally creating more opportunities to access government contracts, all of which should allow small businesses to compete more fairly with larger organisations.

## **Simplified bidding processes**

The current rules, based on EU directives, consisted of complex procedures that put SMEs off from participating in bidding processes. The new Act will assist in streamlining the tenders, making it easier for SMEs by introducing a simplified digital bidding platform where

suppliers can register their company's details, bid on contracts and track all opportunities in one place.

## **Increased transparency**

One of the current pain points is the lack of transparency. Businesses were often left without any explanation as to why certain bidders were chosen instead of others, which led to concerns about favouritism. The new framework aims to enhance transparency throughout the entire process, fostering greater trust and fairness in the system, with the intention of encouraging more SMEs to bid for public contracts.

## **Simplified access to contracts**

In the current framework, SMEs often struggle to access public contracts due to rigid thresholds and complicated eligibility criteria that go in favour of larger companies. The purpose of the Act will be to help reduce these barriers by simplifying documentation and application requirements to be more encouraging for SMEs.

## **Focus on sustainability and social values**

Currently, many tenders' success criteria are focused on price. However, the new Act shifts the criteria from the 'Most Economically Advantageous Tender' to the 'Most Advantageous Tender'. There will be a greater focus on sustainability and social values in the decision-

making process, such as reducing carbon footprints, supporting local communities and ensuring ethical business practices.

This change gives SMEs a better opportunity to secure government contracts by highlighting their contributions for 'good' beyond just cost alone, allowing them to compete with larger businesses who may have previously benefitted from economies of scale.

## **How can SMEs prepare for the new act?**

### **Stay up to date**

With the new Act, there will be new developments and regulations, as well as opportunities, and government procurement is no exception. Make sure that you, or someone in your business, is responsible

for staying informed of these changes. This can be achieved through participating in workshops with industry trade associations, reviewing government guidance and networking with other SMEs.

### **Build relationships**

If you haven't already, start building relationships with key stakeholders. These include contractors, contracting authorities (such as government agencies or councils) and other SMEs, all of which can help with business opportunities. Although the Act aims to make it easier for SMEs to access these contracts, fostering collaborations could prove invaluable.

### **Develop your company's public image**

If you are an SME owner, now is the time to focus on developing your



**Rob Rees**



business' public image to position your company as strongly as possible in the eyes of public sector buyers. Ensuring your business' financial credit score is in good health and all accounts are up to date with Companies House is a good starting point.

It's important to also consider what your goals are for the contracts you will tender for, and to start investing in areas that could be viewed as favourable to these buyers before the Act comes into full force. This could include certifications or frameworks such as:

- **ISO 14001 (Environmental Management):** Shows a commitment to environmental responsibility.
- **Cyber Essentials or Cyber Essentials Plus:** A UK government-backed certification that ensures basic cybersecurity measures are in place.
- **SSIP (Safety Schemes in Procurement):** A certification demonstrating compliance with health and safety standards required in many public sector projects.
- **Carbon Trust Standard:** Certification for demonstrating actions in measuring, managing and reducing carbon emissions.
- You can find more information about being a supplier to the public sector [here](#).

### Have the right insurance in place

Having the right insurance in place

for your business can help with a number of aspects of submitting a bid in a competitive tender:

- **Bid eligibility:** Insurance can help ensure that SMEs meet the necessary criteria to qualify for government contracts by fulfilling legal and contractual obligations.
- **Risk management:** Insurance can provide protection against financial losses from accidents, errors or disruptions that may occur during the contract term, helping to safeguard business operations.
- **Operational confidence:** With appropriate insurance in place, SMEs can operate with peace of mind, knowing they are financially protected if something unexpected were to happen.

### What types of insurance can support your business in the procurement process?

#### Public liability insurance

Many government contracts require SMEs to have adequate public liability insurance. This type of insurance can protect businesses in the event they are held liable for injury caused to a third party, or property damage, during the performance of a contract.

#### Professional indemnity insurance

Government contracts often involve significant sums of money, and mistakes can have serious financial consequences. Professional

indemnity insurance can mitigate this risk by protecting businesses from allegations of professional negligence. If the contracts you tender for will involve providing designs, advice or professional services, it's likely that the contracting authority will have a requirement for your business to hold a minimum level of professional indemnity insurance cover.

#### Product liability insurance

For SMEs supplying goods as part of a government contract, product liability insurance can be crucial. It can protect businesses from claims related to defects in the products supplied and more. This type of insurance is generally considered essential cover when bidding for contracts involving manufacturing or distribution.

#### Cyber insurance

Public sector contracts often involve handling sensitive data, which increases the risk of breaches, cyberattacks and data loss. Cyber insurance can offer financial protection against cyber-related incidents and demonstrates that SMEs have strong risk management in place, providing reassurance to contracting authorities.

**Rob Rees is divisional director of Markel Direct**

[www.markeluk.com](http://www.markeluk.com)



## Asian business at Chatora

LCCI's Asian Business Association (ABA) held their New Year networking lunch at the splendid – and geographically convenient – Chatora City.

A chapati's throw from the Chamber's Queen Street HQ, the newly-opened Indian restaurant hosted around 100 guests who were welcomed by ABA chair Tony Matharu and Alyssa Martin, senior alumni networks manager of programme partner University of Westminster.

Proprietor Jamshed Rahman has a lot to be proud of, as have his superb staff, resplendent in their bottle green Chatora aprons.

[www.chatoracity.co.uk](http://www.chatoracity.co.uk)

[www.westminster.ac.uk](http://www.westminster.ac.uk)





# LCCI Member News



## Storetec Services Limited

MDI Cloud, the innovative document and data management platform, has been named Workflow/BPM Product of the Year at the prestigious Document Manager Awards 2024.

This award recognises MDI Cloud's advanced workflow capabilities, which enable businesses to automate operations and achieve efficiency with unprecedented ease. The platform's revolutionary no-code, drag-and-drop workflow builder allows users to design, test, and deploy complex automation solutions within hours—no technical expertise required. Its AI workflow engine processes thousands of documents in minutes, with features such as AI redaction ensuring compliance and data security. This automation extends to document classification, data extraction, and cross-referencing, all within a single, scalable platform.

Damien Baker, CTO at Storetec, commented: "We're incredibly proud to have MDI Cloud recognised as Workflow/BPM Product of the Year. This award validates our commitment to providing a comprehensive platform that simplifies automation while delivering powerful capabilities."

<https://storetec.net>



## MMC

**MMC, a research and insights agency founded in Sunderland, has announced it is expanding into London.**

The firm provides organisations with the data and insights they need to drive informed decisions, engage with their customers, employees and stakeholders, and validate product and service ideas for the market.

The London base will allow founder Natasha McDonough and the team to build stronger relationships with clients, particularly in the Private Equity and SaaS sectors where the company has been making great strides, with VC organisations such as Perwyn and Silvertree already working with MMC.

The expansion formalises Alice Broomhall's involvement as a key figure for MMC in the capital. Alice has played a crucial role in driving the company's service delivery outside of the agency's North East home since 2021. The agency aims to drive an additional £100,000 in revenue from the London hub over the next 12 months.

<https://mmc.agency/>



## Walk the Walk

Walk the Walk is a pioneering cancer charity encouraging everyone to get fitter, healthier, and take control of their well-being. Best known for its iconic MoonWalks in London, Scotland, and Iceland, where participants walk overnight in decorated bras or vibrant bra T-shirts, the charity challenges perceptions and raises awareness through groundbreaking campaigns like Men Can Get Breast Cancer Too.

Under the patronage of His Royal Highness King Charles III, Walk the Walk has raised over £143 million, funding vital prevention research, supporting cancer patients, and inspiring communities to lead healthier lives. The charity also focuses on educating people about the importance of early detection and lifestyle changes in reducing cancer risk. Through creativity, determination, and a spirit of fun, Walk the Walk continues to make a transformative impact in the fight against cancer.

If you're interested in partnering with Walk the Walk for the iconic MoonWalk London or want to enter a team, contact Milly Larmer, Head of Partnerships, at [milly@walkthewalk.org](mailto:milly@walkthewalk.org). [www.walkthewalk.org](http://www.walkthewalk.org)



## Harod Associates

**Freedom of the City of London Award – Trenham Ian Weatherhead**

Ian Weatherhead, a highly experienced advisor in the defence and security field and Director of Strategy and Marketing at Harod Associates, was awarded The Freedom of the City of London on Monday 25 November 2024.

Ian started his career with the Metropolitan Police and subsequently held several overseas postings with Thomas Cook Bankers. Upon returning to the UK, Ian joined LCCI's International team and, in June 2002, was appointed to the British Government's Cabinet Committee for Security: "The London Resilience Group".

Following nearly 36 years at LCCI, Ian retired in 2012 before joining Harod, a global investigative solutions and intelligence company based in the City of London. Harod have been LCCI members for several years and Ian regularly attends Chamber events. Ian is also a member of the Business Crime committee and is an LCCI Ambassador.

For further information regarding Harod, please contact Ian at [ian.weatherhead@harodassociates.com](mailto:ian.weatherhead@harodassociates.com) or visit [www.harodassociates.com](http://www.harodassociates.com).



## Aramex (UK) Limited

**Aramex UK Scoops International Logistics Business of The Year at Logistics UK Awards**

Aramex UK came away as winners late last year at the Logistics UK awards, securing International Logistics Business of the Year.

Its ability to demonstrate exceptional flexibility and responsiveness during a year marked by significant geopolitical challenges and supply chain disruption was what stood out to the judging panel on the night.

Boasting a presence in over 600 cities across more than 70 countries, and a workforce of over 16,000 professionals worldwide, Aramex UK was able to leverage its impressive network to ensure the movement of goods continued to remain flowing for its clients last year.

Haissam Badr, UK National Freight Manager at Aramex UK commented: "To have our efforts formally recognised by a third party with the prestige of Logistics UK is a huge honour. Credit must also go out to the team as without their hard work and dedication winning this award would not have been possible." [www.aramex.com](http://www.aramex.com)



## Primera Ventures Advisory

I'm thrilled to share that Primera Ventures Advisory has been recognised by Wealth & Finance International as a winner in their latest awards programme! This recognition highlights our commitment to helping mid-market business owners achieve exceptional outcomes through M&A as a Service (MAAAS), integrating pre-transactional exit planning, and value-building initiatives with transactional M&A. At Primera Ventures, we pride ourselves on guiding entrepreneurs and business leaders through the complexities of acquisitions and exits, positioning their companies for high-value opportunities and future success!



## Change Aligned Limited

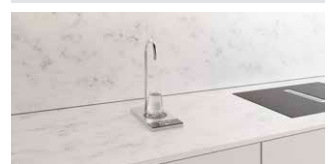
**Transforming Leadership and Teams with Emotional Intelligence**

Change Aligned is thrilled to announce the launch of our innovative Emotional Intelligence programmes for leaders and teams!

Using engaging methodologies like LEGO® SERIOUS PLAY® or the Emotional Culture Deck, scientifically proven EQ psychometric assessments, and tailored coaching, we empower organisations to foster trust, collaboration, and measurable growth.

Our latest offerings include workshops, leadership programmes, and team-building activities designed to help businesses tackle challenges, resolve conflict, and inspire high-performing teams. If you're looking to enhance team dynamics or develop future-proof leadership skills, our evidence-based, people-centric approach delivers real results.

Contact us today to learn how we can help your organisation thrive. <https://changealigned.com> [olga@changealigned.com](mailto:olga@changealigned.com) [insighthouse.co.uk](http://insighthouse.co.uk)



## Belu Water

For businesses with sustainability and social procurement in mind, Belu has just launched their NEW workplace water tap – The Belu Curve.

Sleek and stylish, compact, accessible and built with advanced digital technology, the Belu Curve delivers chilled, ambient, still, sparkling and hot filtered water at the touch of a button.

As well as reducing waste, lowering carbon footprint and boosting workplace wellbeing, choosing the Belu Curve means partnering with a purpose led social enterprise that invests in UK nature based projects, champions circular economy and gives 100% net profit to WaterAid.

The Curve's standout features include an intelligent energy-efficient system with an eco-mode that activates in idle or low-light conditions, ultraviolet LED purification for chemical-free sterilisation, and airless rapid cooling technology. With a high-capacity undercounter unit and user-friendly design.

A simple switch to Belu can help deliver global change, supporting Belu's mission to change the way the world sees water.

# Coming up...



## MARCH

- **Driving Gender Equity - Empowering women in Leadership and Management - Online**  
Monday 3 March, 1.00pm – 2.00pm

- **Property & Construction Networking and Briefing with guest speaker Keith Janes, Property Director, Landmark at LCCI**  
Wednesday 5 March, 12.00pm – 2.00pm  
Programme Partners: Essential Land LLP, Forth Ports and Menzies

**MENZIES**  
BRIGHTER THINKING



FORTH PORTS LIMITED

- **Maximise your Membership at LCCI**  
Thursday 6 March, 3.00pm – 5.00pm

- **Go Connect Networking at Lucky Voice Holborn**  
Tuesday 11 March, 5.00pm – 7.00pm

## Women in Business Networking Lunch celebrating International Women's Day

**Wednesday 12 March, 12.00pm – 2.30pm**  
LCCI

Celebrate International Women's Day with an inspiring networking lunch! Join us for a special International Women's Day celebration - a day of empowerment, connection, and growth. Whether you're an entrepreneur, professional, leader, or just beginning your career journey, this event offers a chance to expand your network, share experiences, and support one another. Free to attend for LCCI Members only.

- **Understanding and Reducing Import and Export Costs - Online**  
Thursday 13 March, 10.00am – 11.00am
- **Global Macroeconomics: Prospects for the UK and International Trade at LCCI**  
Thursday 13 March, 3.30pm – 6.30pm  
Programme Partners: DP World and HSBC
- **How to Deal with Rejection - Online**  
Monday 17 March, 1.00pm – 2.00pm
- **The Pathway to Sustainable Finance - Online**  
Monday 24 March, 1.00pm – 2.00pm
- **Due Diligence in International Trade - Online**  
Thursday 27 March, 10.00am – 11.00am

## APRIL

**LCCN Open Afternoon at LCCI**  
Wednesday 2 April, 3.00pm – 5.00pm

**Creating an inclusive future by embracing Equity, Diversity, and Inclusion (ED&I) - Online**  
Monday 7 April, 1.00pm – 2.00pm

**Sanctions, Quotas and Regulations – Online**  
Tuesday 8 April, 10.00am – 11.00am

## LCCI Quarterly Economic Survey

**Wednesday 9 April, 10.00am – 12.00pm**  
HaysMac, 10 Queen Street Place, London EC4R 1AG

LCCI will discuss the latest results for the Capital 500 – London's largest and most authoritative regular business survey. We will be joined by guest speakers Ian Daniels, Property Partner from HaysMac, Vicky Pryce, Chief Economic Advisor and Board Member for Cebr, and James Rentoul, Director at Savanta ComRes, to hear their thoughts on the Q1 2025 results. This complimentary event is open to all Members, Community Network and Non-members

Programme Partner: HaysMac

**HaysMac**<sup>+</sup>

**Go Connect! Networking at LCCI**  
Wednesday 23 April, 4.00pm – 6.00pm

**Back to the Future: Planning for tomorrow's workplace - Online**  
Monday 28 April, 1.00pm – 2.00pm

**The Windsor Agreement – Online**  
Tuesday 29 April, 10.00am – 11.00am

**The 5 Pillars of SME Success: Business Strategy Meets Marketing - Online**  
Tuesday 29 April, 1.00pm – 2.00pm





## Business Owners Club Spring Briefing and Networking Reception

**Tuesday 29 April, 4.00pm – 6.00pm**  
LCCI

Join us for an exceptional afternoon of networking, insights and inspiration at the Business Owners Club Spring Briefing. This event brings together up to 70 business owners for an unparalleled opportunity to connect and engage with like-minded leaders and hear from Henry Engelhardt, Founder and CEO Emeritus of Admiral Group plc. Open to LCCI Patron and Premier Plus members only at £12 inclusive of VAT per person.

## MAY

**How to Sell to the Modern Buyer - Online**  
Wednesday 7 May, 1.00pm – 2.00pm

**Unlocking Immigration Routes - Strategies for Businesses – Online**  
Thursday 8 May, 1.00pm – 2.00pm

**Leveraging Data for Smarter Business and Marketing Decisions – Online**  
Monday 12 May, 1.00pm – 2.00pm

**Maximise your Membership at LCCI**  
Thursday 15 May, 3.00pm – 5.00pm

**Go Connect! Networking at Fairgame**  
Tuesday 27 May, 5.00pm – 7.00pm

## Dates for your diary!

**Property & Construction Summer Reception at No 4  
Hamilton Place**  
Tuesday 17 June, 6.30pm - 8.45pm  
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**ESSENTIAL  
LAND**

**LCCI Annual Summer Party at College Garden,  
Westminster Abbey**  
Thursday 17 July, 6.30pm – 8.30pm

**LCCI Cricket Day: Surrey v Hampshire in the One  
Day Cup at the Kia Oval**  
Monday 18 August, 10.30am – 6.00pm

## AUGUST

### LCCI Cricket Day: Surrey v Hampshire in the One Day Cup at the Kia Oval

**Monday 18 August, 10.30am – 6.00pm**  
Kia Oval

Join the LCCI team and up to 80 members and guests for a day of cricket at one of the world's oldest and most historic stadiums, The Kia Oval. This fun, informal day offers a cost-effective way to entertain clients, reward colleagues and increase your business network whilst watching cricket – a fantastic day out! Open to LCCI members only. Tickets are £96 inclusive of VAT per person.



# Two minute interview

## Charlotte Harrington of Belu Water



### Who are you?

I'm Charlotte Harrington, co-chief executive of Belu Water. We demonstrate that there is a better way to do business and that through doing business, we can help solve some of the world's problems.

### What is your connection with the London Chamber of Commerce?

Belu is a partner of the Chamber, and this partnership allows us to connect with corporate businesses that really care about sustainability and social purpose.

### What was your first job in London?

I started my career in Bristol, then went to Welwyn Garden City and only made it to London when I joined Belu ten years ago as chief operating officer.

### Which one business achievement over the last 12 months are you most proud of, and why?

One of our proudest achievements this past year has been the launch of our new office and workplace water tap, the Belu Curve. This marks not only our first entry into providing a dedicated hydration solution tailored for the workplace but also our first-ever bespoke product launch. The Belu Curve was developed to meet the specific needs of office environments, aligning

with our commitment to sustainability and providing high-quality hydration options in every setting.

### If you were advising a young entrepreneur which business person would you suggest as a model?

Paul Polman, ex-chief executive at Unilever where he used his decade-long tenure to demonstrate that big business can be a force for good. He's a visionary and courageous leader, advocating for businesses to be net positive, thriving by giving more to the world than they take. He worked with the UN to develop the sustainable development goals and campaigns tirelessly on climate change, societal inequality and diminishing biodiversity. His words of wisdom and determination are inspirational to anyone who believes in purpose-driven business.

### Which piece of red tape causes most problems for your company and why?

Currently the biggest threat we're facing is the Extended Producer Responsibility Scheme (EPR) which is due to come in to effect this year. The current proposal would add 25 per cent to our cost of goods for glass and is a real concern. We're working with our suppliers to lobby government but

progress is slow. Most alarmingly, the full details of the scheme are yet to be published, yet charges are due to start being levied in April which gives us little time to plan or mitigate the impact.

### What is your favourite and least favourite thing about London?

London is an incredible, vibrant, diverse city that's full of cultural creativity. For me, this really comes to life in hospitality – there are so many incredible hotels and restaurants, founded and thriving thanks to passionate foodies. At Belu we get to hear and work with the hottest new openings, which is such a privilege.

### If you were Mayor of London for the day which one thing would you change?

Natalie Campbell, my co-

chief executive, actually ran in the mayoral campaign as an independent candidate so she'd be the best person to ask about this!

### Who would you consider an appropriate person to play you in a movie of your life?

Maybe Jessica Alba?! She's in her 40s, mum to three kids, an actress but also an entrepreneur who founded a purpose-led business, called The Honest Company – she might empathise with the compromises you have to make.

### What is your favourite quotation?

Margaret Mead: "Never doubt that a small group of thoughtful, committed citizens can change the world; indeed it is the only thing that ever has."

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





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# Two minute interview

## Kiany Fard of KEYFX

### Who are you?

I'm Kiany Fard, CEO of KEYFX, where we make international payments easier for small businesses and educate business owners on how to manage their money during international transactions.

### What is your connection with the London Chamber of Commerce?

I've been a member for a few years and have really enjoyed the networking sessions, which provide great opportunities to connect with other business leaders and entrepreneurs.

### What was your first job in London?

My first job in London was at Sainsbury's, working in the bakery section when I was 16.

### Which one business achievement over the last 12 months are you most proud of, and why?

I'm most proud of losing 12 kg in weight, a challenge I've faced for the past 20 years. It wasn't just a physical transformation but also required a lot of discipline and resilience, which has positively influenced my mindset in business as well.

### If you were advising a young entrepreneur,

### which business person would you suggest as a model?

Elon Musk. His relentless pursuit of innovation, ability to take risks, and desire to change entire industries is something every entrepreneur should aspire to. He also shows the importance of staying resilient in the face of challenges.

### How do you think the transport system in London can be improved?

Improving the reliability of the tube and bus services, especially during peak hours, would make a big difference. More night services could also help with mobility. London's airports need better direct transport links and more streamlined procedures, especially for international travellers and businesspeople.

### Which piece of red tape causes the most problems for your company and why?

Navigating tax regulations, particularly around international payments and currency exchange, is one of the biggest challenges. The frequent updates and changes in compliance requirements for financial

services make it difficult to stay on top of things while also running the business.

### What is your favourite and least favourite thing about London?

My favourite thing about London is its diversity – it's a city full of different cultures, ideas and opportunities. My least favourite is the high cost of living, which can create challenges for both individuals and businesses, especially smaller ones trying to scale.

### If you were Mayor of London for the day, what one thing would you change?

I would focus on making housing more affordable, especially for young professionals and entrepreneurs. This would

help nurture the city's start-up ecosystem, allowing more businesses to grow without the burden of skyrocketing rent.

### Who would you consider an appropriate person to play you in a movie of your life?

I think Oscar Isaac could do a great job. He's versatile, intense, and has the depth to portray someone with a blend of determination, business acumen and personal challenges.

### What is your favourite quotation?

"Success is not final; failure is not fatal: It is the courage to continue that counts." Winston Churchill. This quote speaks to the resilience required in entrepreneurship. There will always be setbacks but it's perseverance that leads to long term success.

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Department  
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# New Members



## Who has joined the London Chamber of Commerce and Industry in the last two months?

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T: 07779 125095  
 afschool@hotmail.com  
*Performing arts school*

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### Artensia Medical Services

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### Aves Housing

marketing@adamastech.in  
[www.aveshousing.org](http://www.aveshousing.org)  
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T: +90 538 796 44 85  
 bekir.ugur@ekmob.com  
<https://bespokehandling.com>  
*Automotive and motorsport logistics*

### Blue Lotus 360 Holdings Ltd

hello@bluelotus360.com  
[www.bluelotus360.com](http://www.bluelotus360.com)  
*Cloud software*

### BMS Group

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*Insurance*

### Bou Ltd

holla@bou.co  
[www.bou.co](http://www.bou.co)  
*European brand company*

### BrandFell Technologies Ltd

T: 07747 249340  
 ananthu@brandfell.com  
<https://brandfell.com>  
*Digital marketing agency*

### Bristol Global Mobility

T: 07949 951291  
 nclark@bristolglobal.com  
[www.bristolglobal.com](http://www.bristolglobal.com)  
*Relocations and global mobility*

### Caravana Group Ltd

<https://caravana.land/>  
*Apparel retail*

### Change Aligned Limited

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 olga@changealigned.com  
<https://changealigned.com>  
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 leyla@chards.co.uk  
[www.chards.co.uk](http://www.chards.co.uk)  
*Bullion dealer*

### Chartered Trading Standards

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[www.tradingstandards.uk](http://www.tradingstandards.uk)  
*Membership organisation*

### Church House Westminster

marina.papadopoulou@churchhouseconf.co.uk  
<https://churchhouseconf.co.uk/>  
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### City Lit

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### Close Brothers Savings

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 tamzin.bayne@closebrothers.com  
[www.closesavings.co.uk/business](http://www.closesavings.co.uk/business)  
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### COMO Hotels London

[www.comohotels.com](http://www.comohotels.com)  
*Hotels*

### ConnexSA C.I.C.

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 Roberto.carton@connexsa.org  
[www.connexsa.org](http://www.connexsa.org)  
*Sustainability platform*

### Count Ltd

*FinTech*

### Day One

<https://dayonework.com>  
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### Diffusion Elite Security

<https://diffusionelitesecurity.co.uk/>  
*Security services*

### Doballi

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<https://www.doballi.com/>  
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<https://elite100network.co.uk>

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# Commitment to excellence in Hillingdon



The Hillingdon Chamber of Commerce hosted the inaugural Hillingdon Business earlier this year. The event was a celebration of the exceptional businesses that make Hillingdon a thriving economic hub.

One of the largest London

Boroughs, Hillingdon has a diverse and vibrant business community. From innovative startups to well-established enterprises, it is home to many businesses that play a crucial role in its economic growth.

## Contributions

The awards recognised these businesses for their outstanding achievements, innovation, resilience and commitment to excellence. The event brought together business leaders, entrepreneurs, key stakeholders and community members for an evening of celebration and inspiration. With a broad range of award categories, businesses of all types and sizes were recognised for their contributions.

Winners of awards



included TAG Drinks (hospitality/leisure business of the year), Community Connexx (charity/social enterprise), Kinseed (technology) and Stuart Hart of Home Instead (business leader). Heart Relocation picked up the prestigious Hillingdon business of the year award.



[www.hillingdonchamber.co.uk](http://www.hillingdonchamber.co.uk)

## Obituary: Sir Brian Jenkins

Sir Brian Jenkins was President of the London Chamber of Commerce and Industry for two years in the mid-1990s during a successful period for the organisation. International trade activities were particularly strong with over 500 companies in one year participating in LCCI export missions and overseas trade fairs. The Chamber was also active in making the case for a fifth terminal at Heathrow airport which eventually came to fruition.

### At the helm

Sir Brian had previously served as Lord Mayor of London in 1992



and was at the helm, helping to co-ordinate rescue operations, in April 1992 when the Baltic Exchange terrorist bomb devastated the City. He declared, correctly, that "this great city" would be up and running as usual the following morning.

Professionally, Sir Brian was an accountant, a partner at Coopers & Lybrand (now PricewaterhouseCoopers) for 26 years and served as president of Institute of Chartered Accountants for England and Wales in 1985-86. He used all that experience,

along with his strong and engaging personality and desire to make a difference, to leave a positive mark on both the City and LCCI.

### Wisdom

Robin Booth was finance director and company secretary at LCCI throughout Sir Brian's association with the organisation and paid the following tribute: "At the Chamber, Sir Brian will be remembered warmly for his sound wisdom and the strengthening of relations with the Mansion House, thereby ensuring LCCI remained an important and respected voice in the City."

**Sir Brian Jenkins 1935 – 2024**



## Answers to The Knowledge

On page 13

- 1 Claude Monet. It can be seen at the Musée d'Orsay in Paris.
- 2 Emma Reynolds MP has been the Economic Secretary to the Treasury and City Minister since January this year when Tulip Siddiq MP resigned from the post. The City Minister is responsible for financial services policy, reform and regulation.
- 3 Rosslyn Park. It was formed to keep a team of north London cricketers together during the winter.
- 4 He was a physician and also a collector. Indeed his collection was left to the nation and formed the basis of that in the British Museum.
- 5 River Wandle. It passes through the boroughs of Croydon, Sutton, Merton and Wandsworth.  By Garry Knight - Flickr: River Wandle, CC BY-SA 2.0
- 6 Peter Ackroyd. He is also the biographer of Charles Dickens, William Blake and Thomas More.
- 7 Dame Fiona Woolf, elected in 2013. She was the second woman (among over 700 men) to have held office, after Dame Mary Donaldson in 1983. 
- 8 Audrey Hepburn. The star of Breakfast at Tiffany's lived at 65 South Audley Street in the 1950s.
- 9 Martin Amis. Published in 1989, it is set 10 years later at a time forecast by the author to be one of moral, social and environmental degradation.
- 10 William Gladstone (1809-98). The first double-decker 'omnibuses' were horse drawn, introduced in the 1820s; the first petrol driven buses arrived in 1908.

# Survival in the workplace

**CET – the Commercial Education Trust – started life in 1887 as the LCCI's Commercial Education Department. It aimed to address what was seen as the skills crisis: clerks were insufficiently educated for key jobs in the City of London.**

## Leadership

A Commercial Education Scheme was developed and subsequently (1967) incorporated as a charity. Eventually, it became exclusively grant-making as CET in 2002. Since then it has given more than £3.3 million in grants with the objective of “equipping youth with knowledge, attitudes, skills and behaviours to help them survive in the workplace.”



In our last issue, *LBM* reported on the David Coughtrie Leadership Awards – picked up by

Dr Theodora Thomadaki, employer engagement officer at the University of East London (UEL) and – young leader award – Samie John, project manager at East London Alliance.

## Vision

This year CET have launched their Small Grants Programme. Grants range from £500 to £10,000 with flexible funding to support projects that align with their vision of *Excellent commercial ability for all*. The programme applies whether it relates to a new project or the enhancement of an existing one, provided they can make a meaningful impact. Applications are open until 31 March 2025. Meanwhile CET is still accepting applications for our standard grants which relate to new opportunities to collaborate on innovative projects which further the concept of *Commercial ability*.

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



# Shaping the capital

**Professor Tony Travers gave an insightful overview of London's economic growth and regeneration plans for 2025 at a recent South East London Chamber of Commerce executive lunch at the DoubleTree Hilton Greenwich.**

The London School of Economics director – who has written memorably for

*LBM* – explored the key developments, challenges and opportunities shaping the capital under the Labour government.

Professor Travers with former South East London Chamber of Commerce president Helen McIntosh.



# London Business Matters Issue 198 March/April 2025

## Page-by-page

### FEATURES

Year of the Snake **6**  
 King's Awards for Enterprise **8**  
 National Apprenticeship Week **10**  
 Mainelli at LCCI **11**

### LONDON LIFE

Lady Mayoress' Sleep Out in the City **13**

### CONNECTED, LIVEABLE, LONDON

Whiskey find: Tomoka **14**  
 Global SinoPhoto Awards **15**  
 Business visit to London Stansted **16**  
 Andy Lord, TfL **16**  
 Blackfriars Station **17**  
 Banksy at London Museum **17**  
 Airport expansion in London **19**

### INTERNATIONAL

Investment opportunities in the Philippines **20**  
 Expo Osaka **21**  
 CPTPP **22**  
 EU reset **23**  
 Destinations at Olympia **23**  
 Antwerp diary **26**  
 Overseas business opportunities **27**  
 Investment priorities: Capgemini **28**

26

### BOOK REVIEWS

How to make a million:  
 Gary Beckwith **30**  
 The Entrepreneur Within **30**  
 The Perceptive Investor **31**  
 Capital Offence **31**

### A SMARTER CITY

Innovate UK's Transfer  
 Knowledge Partnership **32**  
 Document management: Document Logistix **33**  
 British innovation: Management Ltd **34**  
 Digital transformation success: Khiliad Ltd **35**  
 Shadow AI: Alluvium **36**  
 Legal protection for digital assets:  
 Giambrone and Partners **38**

### SUSTAINABILITY

Kyoto at Soho Place **39**  
 Recycling reforms: Business Waste **40**  
 The waste hierarchy: ICEX Group **41**

### SKILLS AND ENTREPRENEURSHIP

*Founder Friday*: Virgin StartUp **42**  
 Securing investment: BVCA **43**  
 Compressed hours: Occupop **44**  
 Car rental trends: Selfdrive Mobility **45**  
 Talking about mental health: Mind **46**  
 Mediation and the bottom line: LCAM **47**  
 Understanding professional  
 negligence: TV Edwards LLP **48**  
 Impact of immigration salary  
 thresholds: Barar & Associates **49**

### DIVERSITY AND INCLUSION

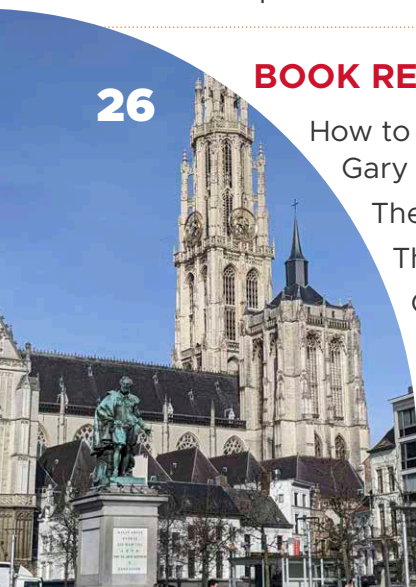
Women in the workplace:  
 International Women's Day **50**  
 Burns night in Edinburgh **51**

### THE BIG READ

The Procurement Act: Market Direct **52**

### OBITUARY

Sir Brian Jenkins **64**



## Transforming Lives with XLP: Join Us in Making a Difference

**About Us:** XLP (The eXcel Project) is a leading London youth charity, supporting over 4,000 disadvantaged young Londoners each year. Most of the young people we work with face daily challenges like family breakdown, unemployment, and educational, financial and relational poverty.

**Our Impact:** Growing up in areas prone to knife crime, anti-social behaviour, and a culture of fear, many young people need a guiding hand. XLP steps in to provide that support through:

- **Literacy and Numeracy Programmes**
- **Arts and Sports Projects**
- **Employment Programme including financial literacy workshops.**

Through our work, 100s have found jobs, 1000s have been saved from sinking into a life of crime, and millions has been saved by keeping young people out of prison.

**Success Stories:** For nearly 30 years, we've helped young

people who have slipped through the cracks. Take, for example, a young man who was stabbed on an estate 7 years ago. Thanks to XLP's dedicated youth practitioners, he is now a fully qualified engineer.

**Partner with Us:** We are seeking partnerships with businesses across London to support our work. Get involved through:

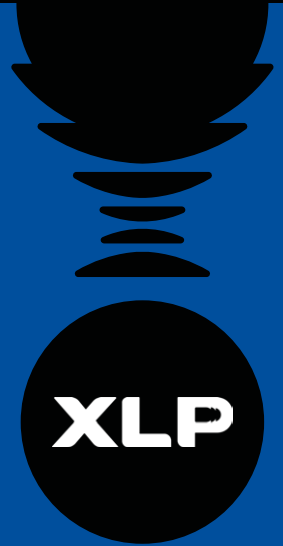
- **Fundraising**
- **Volunteering**
- **Work Experience and Apprenticeships**

By partnering with us, you can enrich your Social Responsibility and ESG values while making a tangible difference in young lives.

**Join Us:** We need the support of London businesses to continue transforming the lives of disadvantaged young Londoners. If you would like to partner with us, please contact Tim Sledge, Director of Fundraising, at [tim.sledge@xlp.org.uk](mailto:tim.sledge@xlp.org.uk) or **07860953182**.



## CREATING POSITIVE FUTURES FOR YOUNG LONDONERS



[www.xlp.org.uk](http://www.xlp.org.uk)



## Training for a better future

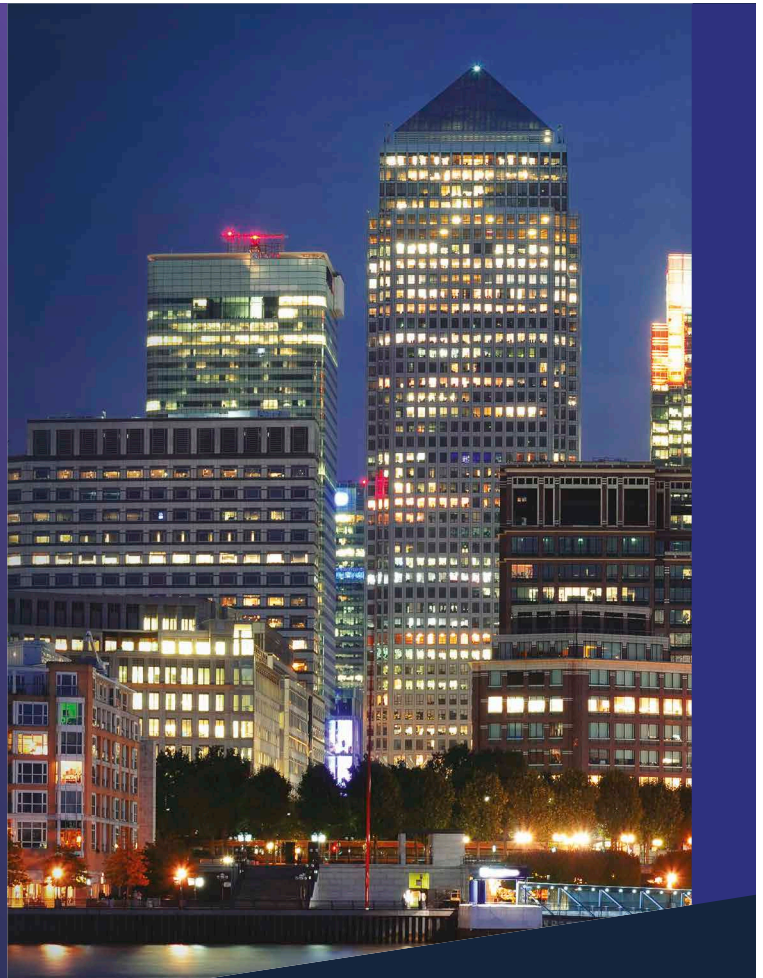
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Also important for staff retention is an organisation's ESG and sustainability strategy; further studies reveal that if an employer's strategy isn't good enough, people will look another job.

This is where the Cycle to Work Scheme can become an important part of your employee rewards package, adding variety and sustainability into the benefits mix. Cycling has become popular due to the climate, health and financial crises. The number of people choosing to commute to work by bike is increasing and employers need to support their choices.

The Cycle to Work Scheme is a sustainable and self-funding employee benefit using salary sacrifice to access tax savings. By working with the award-winning Green Commute Initiative (GCI), employees have access to savings of 28-47%\* on any type of bike, including ebikes and cargo bikes. There are no ownership fees to make a dent in the savings either. The scheme can be accessed in two ways:

- **Instant GCI** - a pay-as-you-go scheme which is perfect for smaller organisations who wish to use the scheme on an ad-hoc basis. Turnaround time is 24 to 48 hours.
- **Corporate GCI** - ideal for larger organisations with bespoke set-up requirements and perhaps work with a benefits provider. All the admin is managed via GCI's online portal and payment terms are available upon request.

GCI's scheme is HMRC and FCA compliant and the team will advise the most tax-efficient way to use the scheme to ensure maximum possible savings can be achieved. Employer savings of 15%\* can be used to cover any costs incurred in the administration of the scheme (\*savings from 6th April 2025).

As the scheme uses salary sacrifice, employees earning on or near NMW are unable to take part. To overcome this, GCI's product portfolio includes bike subscription packages through Brompton, Beryl and Forest. There is also Everyone Cycle, a net-salary deduction scheme. It's important to enable all employees to choose smarter, active ways to commute to work and GCI has a range of solutions to suit different needs.

GCI is a not-for-profit social enterprise and we've helped thousands of organisations take positive climate action whilst improving employee wellbeing.

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A KEY EMPLOYEE BENEFIT

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No fees or charges

Monthly payments

Cut commuting costs



[www.greencommuteinitiative.uk](http://www.greencommuteinitiative.uk)

GCI is HMRC compliant and FCA authorised and regulated for Consumer Hire. The amount you can save is dependent on your individual tax circumstances. Not all bike brands are available. Please ask for details.

# CAPITAL MATTERS

MARCH/APRIL 2025

A special advertising features and listings supplement produced by Crosby Associates Media Limited, the official publishers of London Business Matters



COVER STORY

Q&A on the benefits of apprenticeships in the energy sector

**INSIDE**

## Apprenticeships Feature

72,73

## EU Compliance

71-83



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Published by:

**CROSBYASSOCIATES**  
MEDIA

**Crosby Associates Media Limited**

634 Birchwood Boulevard

Birchwood, WA3 7QU

Tel: 0330 124 3780

[www.crosbyassociates.co.uk](http://www.crosbyassociates.co.uk)

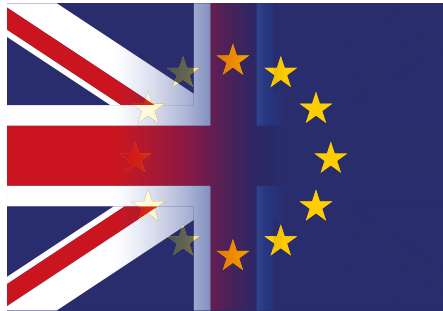
# Is selling in the EU still worth it? GPSR – Hot air or real consequences?

The EU has once again introduced a regulation that leaves UK businesses scrambling to adjust. Companies feel let down—not because product safety isn't important, but due to unclear guidance and practical challenges. While GPSR introduces significant changes, due to the lack of information and limited enforcement previously, many question whether it will have real consequences or remain another regulatory formality.

## A catch-all rule for unregulated products

GPSR was designed as an umbrella regulation for consumer products that are not already covered by sector-specific laws such as the Toys Directive or Low Voltage directive.

Most notably, non-EU businesses must not place products on the market unless there is an EU Responsible Person present who is responsible for that product. Furthermore, manufacturers must now carry out an internal risk analysis and draw up technical documentation. Many companies appoint "paper" EU RPs who do little beyond providing an



address. Regulators are now testing these services, and if they fail to meet obligations, businesses remain liable.

## A law is only as good as its enforcement

Authorities have begun issuing warning letters under GPSR for key compliance failures, including:

- Missing CE marking
- No user manual in the local EU language where the product is sold.
- Unclear traceability – no manufacturer or EU RP listed, or missing batch numbers.
- Missing warning labels – important safety information not included or not translated.
- Fake or incomplete documentation

– test reports, declarations, or risk assessments that are either missing or unverifiable.

## How to stay ahead and avoid pitfalls

- Verify supplier compliance – ensure your manufacturers or suppliers meet EU safety requirements, especially for critical components and materials.

Verify your EU Responsible Person – ensure they do actually review your technical file and provide compliance support, not just an address.

- Stay proactive, not reactive: prepare documentation before enforcement catches up

**With enforcement slowly ramping up, the question isn't if GPSR compliance will matter—but when.**



If you would like assistance with any of the matters mentioned in this article, please get in touch with Marko Novkovic.

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# Q&A on the benefits of apprenticeships in the energy sector with Graham Taylor, HR Business Partner, at Sembcorp Energy Limited

*Sembcorp Energy Limited located in Middlesbrough, North Yorkshire is a leading provider of sustainable solutions driving the energy transition to Net Zero. Sembcorp supply energy-intensive industrial customers with the development land, energy and utilities they need.*

## WHY DID SEMBCORP LOOK INTO SUPPORTING APPRENTICESHIPS?

At Sembcorp, we have always been eager to hire strong and ambitious people to join our team. By hiring apprentices, this led to us securing fresh new talent with a drive to learn and who are interested in our work within our business.

The UK workforce is always changing and evolving, but what we're experiencing now in the energy sector is a serious skills gap. And we're not the only ones. New data from the Skills Horizon Barometer by Skills for Life shows that nine in 10 SMEs (90%) are facing some kind of skills gap within their business, with the biggest at entry level (32%)\*. Even though we're a larger company, we're not immune to these challenges and that's why we began exploring alternative education routes and training opportunities for Sembcorp staff. The skills gap is very real and it's clear we need to train our workforce well if our business is to continue operating efficiently in a competitive marketplace.

We believe if we recruit apprentices and grow our own we will achieve a higher quality of work, leading to better retention of staff. At the start of 2024, we had 31 apprentices and even though it was a challenging year we still managed to offer many apprentices full time positions with the company.

## HOW HAS SEMBCORP BENEFITTED FROM ADOPTING THESE TRAINING AND EMPLOYMENT SCHEMES?

It's opened the door to new talent which is incredibly exciting. A lot of



GRAHAM TAYLOR, HR BUSINESS PARTNER, AT SEMBCORP ENERGY LIMITED

the apprentices we hire come to us with a real hunger and passion to learn new skills. They also bring with them new ideas and fresh ways of thinking that help support our existing workforce. Whilst these young people are ultimately there to learn from us, we also learn a lot from them, so it's a really reciprocal relationship.

Overall, we're big advocates for nurturing new talent and growing our own. When we hire apprentices from our local training centres and colleges, we have an opportunity to shape this new talent; to mould them and teach them our unique skills and values.

Mentoring is an extremely important part of our business model which is why we invest so heavily in training new and existing employees, including young apprentices. By dedicating time and resources into upskilling our staff, we're showing them that we value them; that we want them to succeed at Sembcorp and build a long-lasting career and future with us.

Whilst some employers may view this type of investment as an unnecessary cost, particularly during challenging times such as this, we see this as key to our business success. Investing in the training and development of our staff and supporting them in their pursuit of



recognised qualifications has given Sembcorp highly motivated, skilled and a competent workforce and provides a structured career path for both operational and technical staff. It also provides us with a stream of new talent coming through the business to aid our succession plans.

### HOW HAVE YOUR APPRENTICES BENEFITTED FROM WORKING WITH YOU DURING THEIR TRAINING PROGRAMME?

At Sembcorp, apprentices come to us to learn valuable skills which help set them up for their future. This includes learning to operate complex and expensive assets we have, which require highly skilled individuals to operate them in a safe manner. It's imperative that we have a competent and a highly qualified team with strong operational and technical abilities. In order to have this, we need to invest into our team, train them, provide them with the tools to succeed and gain these qualifications to operate these assets effectively.

We evaluate our programme on results, whether in terms of professional qualifications or continued progression. Not only do we sponsor our apprentices to complete their apprenticeship, but

we also sponsor them to complete a Higher National Certificate qualification in their chosen field, which are run at our local colleges. We see this as key to their development and it also brings a sense of loyalty that we are investing further in our people.

We also have ex-apprentices who we have sponsored to complete degrees in various fields, who themselves are now in senior managerial and senior engineering positions. By following a structured apprenticeship route, retiring staff have been replaced and despite a difficult business climate over the last few years, clear commitment remains to recruit more apprentices to further strengthen the team and aid in our succession plans.

### WHAT ADVICE WOULD YOU GIVE TO EMPLOYERS CONSIDERING USING A TRAINING AND EMPLOYMENT SCHEME FOR THE FIRST TIME TO HELP DEVELOP THEIR WORKFORCE?

I would definitely encourage other employers to explore the various different training and employment schemes available to them. There are so many opportunities on offer to suit all your business needs – from hiring apprentices, like we are, to T Levels

and exploring upskilling courses for your staff such as Skills Bootcamps and various others.

We've put a lot of time and investment into our training schemes to ensure we provide our employees with the right support they need to build a successful career with us.

If you're not sure where to start, I'd recommend visiting the Department for Education's Skills for Life website. This has all the information employers need in one place to help you make the training choices you need for your business.

Alternatively, you can reach out to local colleges and training providers in your area for support. It can be difficult working out what the right apprenticeship is for the job role you're hiring, for example. Training providers can help guide you through this process, offering you tips and insight into technical education options and they can support you in the future when you're looking to hire more apprentices or HTQ students.

*If you're interested in learning more about employing apprentices, hosting T Level and HTQ students, or upskilling your staff through courses like Skills Bootcamps, search Skills for Life or [click here](#).*



Build your career  
with a Sembcorp  
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# Understanding the General Product Safety Regulation (GPSR): A Guide for UK Businesses

As UK businesses continue selling products in the EU, ensuring compliance with evolving safety regulations is crucial. The General Product Safety Regulation (GPSR), effective from 13 December 2024, introduces new requirements. This article outlines the key aspects, impact on UK businesses, and steps to ensure compliance.

## What Is the General Product Safety Regulation?

The GPSR modernises EU product safety rules, replacing the General Product Safety Directive (GPSD). It introduces stricter obligations to enhance consumer protection, strengthen traceability, and improve market surveillance.

E-commerce and global trade prompted regulators to ensure online products meet the same safety standards as physical store items. The GPSR applies to most consumer products, including those sold online, second-hand, or reconditioned. It complements other EU safety laws, covering risks not addressed in sector-specific regulations.

## Application in Northern Ireland

Due to the Northern Ireland Protocol, businesses operating there must also comply with the GPSR, aligning with EU product safety laws.

## Key Changes Introduced by the GPSR

### Risk Assessments

Businesses must conduct and document comprehensive risk assessments, considering potential hazards, product usage, and cybersecurity vulnerabilities in smart devices.

### The Need for an EU-Based Representative

The GPSR mandates an EU-based economic operator to ensure compliance. This can be a manufacturer, importer, distributor, or

Authorised Representative (AR). Without one, UK businesses risk product removal from the market.

### Strengthened Traceability Requirements

Stronger traceability systems are now required. Products must carry clear identifiers (e.g., batch numbers), and manufacturers must keep detailed supply chain records. Essential safety information must be provided to consumers in an accessible format.

### Enhanced Market Surveillance and Penalties

EU authorities now have greater enforcement powers, including monitoring online marketplaces. Non-compliance may result in fines, recalls, and stricter penalties.

### Consequences of Non-Compliance

Failing to meet GPSR standards can lead to serious repercussions:

- Product removal from the EU market
- Financial penalties up to 4% of annual turnover
- Legal action and reputational damage, impacting business success

For UK companies relying on EU sales, compliance is essential.

### Do Requirements Differ Across EU Countries?

While GPSR is an EU-wide regulation, enforcement varies between member states. Some countries impose additional safety measures or stricter penalties. Understanding these differences is crucial for businesses selling in multiple EU nations.

### Finding an Authorised Representative in the EU

An EU-based economic operator is mandatory, leading many UK businesses to appoint an Authorised Representative (AR). The AR acts as the official liaison with EU regulatory authorities to ensure compliance.



### Responsibilities of an Authorised Representative

An AR plays a crucial role in regulatory compliance, including:

- Holding technical documentation
- Collaborating with market surveillance authorities
- Ensuring manufacturers meet legal obligations

### Cost Considerations

AR service costs depend on product volume and compliance complexity. Fees range from a few hundred to several thousand euros annually, depending on the level of service provided.

### Expert Support from 24hour-AR

Understanding the GPSR can be challenging, but businesses don't have to do it alone. 24hour-AR provides expert guidance and serves as an Authorised Representative for UK businesses selling in the EU.

For assistance with GPSR compliance, contact [info@24hour-ar.com](mailto:info@24hour-ar.com) or visit [www.24hour-ar.com](http://www.24hour-ar.com) for more details on services and pricing.

**24: HOUR**  
AUTHORISED REPRESENTATIVES





# 24: HOUR

AUTHORISED REPRESENTATIVES

## SELLING TO THE EU?

# NEW PRODUCT SAFETY RULES REQUIRE AN EU-BASED CONTACT!

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- Meet the new General Product Safety Regulation (GPSR) requirements effortlessly.
- Appoint **24hour-AR** as your **Authorised Representative** and avoid compliance risks.
- Avoid costly **finances, product recalls, and market access restrictions.**

### Why Choose 24hour-AR?

- Fast & hassle-free setup for UK businesses
- Full compliance with EU safety regulations
- Trusted by leading companies
- Dedicated support from compliance experts

## How It Works

- 1. Sign Up** Simple onboarding process to get started.
- 2. Verification** We review your product's technical documentation.
- 3. Label the product with our details and compliance secured** Your business is fully covered under GPSR requirements.

**Act Now Don't Let Regulation Slow Your Business Down!**

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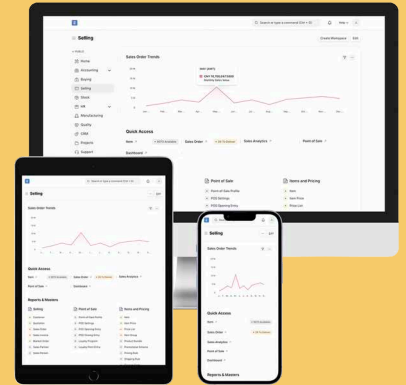
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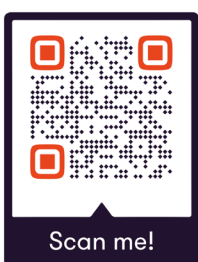
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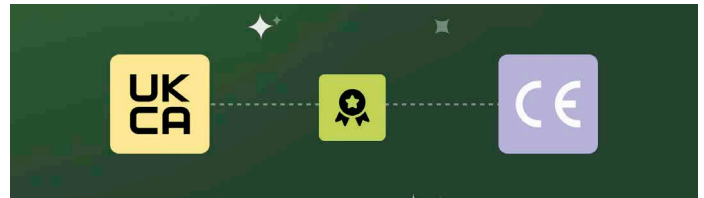
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# New GPSR Rules: What UK Manufacturers Need to Know



## Are You Ready for the Biggest Compliance Shift in Years?

The General Product Safety Regulation (GPSR) introduces stricter safety and compliance rules for businesses selling non-food consumer products in the EU.

Since coming into effect on December 13, 2024, it has changed the way UK manufacturers, retailers, and direct-to-consumer (D2C) brands operate when selling to the EU or Northern Ireland (NI). Even if your business doesn't trade directly with the EU, you could still be affected, as Northern Ireland follows EU regulations under the Windsor Framework.

### Who Needs to Pay Attention?

If you make or sell consumer goods, these changes will probably impact you. GPSR applies to:

- Manufacturers of electronics, homeware, and personal care products.
- Independent artisans and online sellers (Amazon, Etsy, etc.) of jewellery and handcrafted goods.

- Sports equipment makers – from bicycles to protective gear.
- Toys, cosmetics, and medical device producers – even those previously covered by sector-specific regulations.
- Book publishers – yes, even they must now follow labelling and traceability requirements.

Even if you only sell in Northern Ireland, you still need to comply, making GPSR a major regulation shift for UK businesses.

### The Challenges for UK Businesses

For small and medium-sized enterprises (SMEs), these changes bring extra costs and logistical challenges. Larger companies may already have compliance teams, but SMEs will need to find an EU-based Responsible Person and update packaging and labelling accordingly. This is a significant shift for independent manufacturers and online sellers.

### How to Stay Compliant

Ignoring GPSR isn't an option—businesses must act now to stay compliant. Seeking expert support can make the process easier. Euverify provides GPSR compliance services, from labelling reviews to acting as an EU-authorized representative, ensuring smooth access to the EU and NI markets.



### What's Changing?

Under GPSR, businesses must:

- Appoint an EU-Based Representative – UK manufacturers must name a responsible contact in the EU, with their details clearly shown on the product or packaging.
- Ensure Labelling & Traceability – Stricter guidelines require safety warnings, batch numbers, and manufacturer details for greater accountability.
- Conduct Risk Assessment & Documentation – Businesses must assess product safety, keep documentation current, and meet regulatory requirements before selling.

### Why This Matters

Regulations are tightening, but staying informed and proactive will keep UK businesses ahead. Is your business ready for the new GPSR rules?



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## GPSR Compliance Made Simple For UK Manufacturers



Appoint an EU-Based Authorised Representative



Ensure Labeling & Traceability Compliance



Risk Assessment & Technical Documentation



### Seamless Access to EU & NI Markets – Starting from £39/Month!

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# Complying with the new GPSR: Don't fear, you're probably already on track

With the introduction of the General Product Safety Regulation (GPSR), many manufacturers are questioning whether they need to make drastic changes to meet compliance requirements. However, the reality is far less daunting than it may seem. If you already have arrangements in place for product compliance such as risk assessments, traceability and product documentation, you're on the right track. If not, help is on hand.

## The Introduction of GPSR

On December 13, 2024, the General Product Safety Regulation (GPSR), replaced the GPS Directive and officially became law across the EU, bringing with it a fresh approach to product safety compliance. For many manufacturers, the initial reaction to regulatory changes is one of concern: "What do I need to change, and how do I ensure compliance without overhauling my operations?" The good news is that most manufacturers are already doing much of what's required.

## What does the GPSR mean for manufacturers?

The regulation applies to all products intended for consumers or likely to be used by consumers, including where products are sold B2B (such as to a distributor) and aims to ensure only safe products reach the EU market. – examples of GPSR products are furniture, books, clothing, home décor, etc.

The core focus is on strengthening compliance and traceability whilst aligning obligations for manufacturers, importers, and distributors with the CE marking system. For manufacturers, this means carrying out risk assessments to identify and mitigate any hazards and maintaining documentation to support product safety and traceability.

## Appointing an Authorised Representative

The GPSR does bring one significant new obligation for non-EU manufacturers: appointing an Authorised Representative (AR). Sarah Hall from Authorised Rep Compliance Ltd. (ARC) explains, "An AR plays a critical role as the intermediary between manufacturers and Market Surveillance Authorities. They're responsible for making sure correct technical documentation is available to the authorities if they need it." She adds, "Appointing an AR also meets the requirement for an EU responsible person's name and address on the products, which is vital for maintaining uninterrupted market access."

## Steps to simplify compliance

For those feeling overwhelmed, Sarah advises manufacturers to take stock of their current processes. "When you break it down, GPSR is about formalising practices most businesses already perform," she explains. "If you're committed to safety and quality, you've

likely been conducting informal risk assessments and maintaining accurate traceability documentation for years."

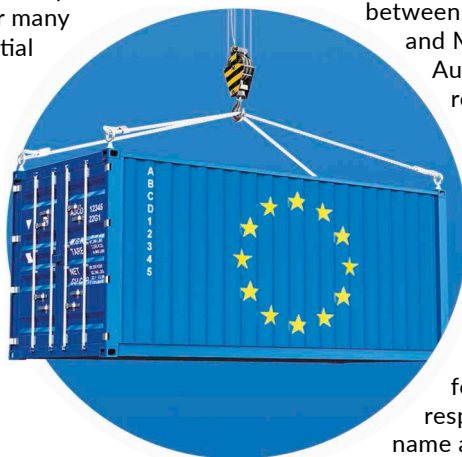
The next step is appointing an AR. "This requirement is new for many non-EU companies, but it's a straightforward process with the right support," says Sarah. Partnering with a reliable AR ensures you meet your obligations while limiting the administrative burden.

## Resources to help manufacturers and brand owners navigate GPSR

Manufacturers who want extra support could make use of ARC'S expert resources. "We guide manufacturers through the entire process, so they can focus on their business knowing that product compliance is in good hands," Sarah adds.

Sarah asks you to visit [AuthorisedRepCompliance.com](https://www.AuthorisedRepCompliance.com) where you will find comprehensive services to help appoint an AR and navigate compliance.

Also, for those seeking more practical tools take a look at the shop at, [ProductComplianceSupport.co.uk](https://www.ProductComplianceSupport.co.uk). There you can download and purchase a GPSR guide, checklists, a risk assessment template and consultation services tailored to GPSR compliance.





# Worried About GPSR Compliance?

## You're Probably Already on Track

Most manufacturers already meet many GPSR requirements. If you've got risk assessments, traceability, and documentation in place, you're already ahead. The final step? Appointing an Authorised Representative. Don't worry – we make it simple.

Let us be your trusted AR partner. Contact us at [info@arcompliance.com](mailto:info@arcompliance.com)



**CHECK OUT OUR GPSR GUIDES, CHECKLISTS  
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Go to [www.productcompliancesupport.co.uk/shop](http://www.productcompliancesupport.co.uk/shop)



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