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ukft<sup>®</sup>

## **What we've been doing on your behalf**

UKFT Q1 2025

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# A letter from Adam Mansell, CEO

It's been a busy start to the year for us at UKFT and the creative, innovative industry we're proud to represent. I'm delighted to see our membership growing stronger, with new businesses and organisations joining us from every part of the fashion and textile supply chain here in the UK. We are proud to unite manufacturers, brands and retailers of fashion and textiles sold all around the world, the innovators creating fabrics for industries from agriculture to space, and those preparing the next wave of industry professionals. Together, our collective voice is making an even bigger impact.

In Q1 2025, we advocated for investment in the UK fashion and textile industry through the UK Government's Spending Review and echoed these industry needs in the House of Lords Creative Industries debate. We raised concerns about the Employment Rights Bill in a joint letter to Ministers, responded to the UK Defence Strategy to highlight sourcing opportunities, and contributed to the Education Committee's Call for Evidence on Further Education and Skills. Additionally, we published articles on key industry issues, including procurement reform, the impact of the PEM Convention accession, and the importance of paid internship schemes.

As part of our membership services, we provide industry-wide support covering business essentials, sustainability, international trade, skills, compliance and manufacturing. Our members benefit from networking, industry insights, exclusive events, opportunities to showcase their businesses and influence key debates.

This quarter, we hosted webinars on climate change agreements and currency risks, and shared industry trend information. We also published member news, business updates, compliance guidance and insights on key developments for our sector such as CPTPP and EU General Product Safety Regulation (GPSR) obligations. We also launched a new membership category for textile reuse and recycling businesses this quarter, strengthening our commitment to circularity and sustainability in the fashion and textile industry.

We promoted our sector at a range of international events including Pitti Uomo, Paris Men's Fashion Week, Chicago Collective, Milano Unica, Première Vision, VIATT, JITAC and Paris Women's Fashion Week through our **Discover British Brands and Textiles campaigns**.

We are enhancing skills and training in the fashion and textile sector through a range of initiatives. Our Production Sewing Machinist (PSM) Programme provides flexible online training covering industrial sewing techniques, efficiency, and employability skills. We support rehabilitation and employment through the HM Prison PSM Project, training prison instructors and connecting employers with skilled ex-offenders. Our careers events and job fairs promote industry opportunities at events through the UK, while the Licence to Sew programme, in partnership with West Lancashire Borough Council and The Sewing Rooms, addresses local manufacturing skills gaps. Additionally, our bursary programmes, including MADE IT, New Talent and Young Textile Technician bursaries, provide financial support and hands-on training to help new talent enter and thrive in the industry.

In Sustainability and Innovation, our ACT UK project is making significant progress towards establishing a full-scale Advanced Textile Sorting and Pre-processing (ATSP) facility. The project has successfully launched reports on post-consumer textile collection trials, the business case for ATSP facilities, and a circular textiles ecosystem vision. These reports highlight the economic benefits and strategies for scaling textile recycling, positioning the UK as a leader in automated sorting and circular fashion.

Through the Circular Fashion Innovation Network (CFIN), we have been piloting AI-driven solutions with a major retailer and technology provider to enhance efficiency, reduce fabric waste and optimise order allocation. In collaboration with a leading university and technology centre, we researched automation and robotics in UK textile manufacturing, resulting in the Advancing Automation and Robotics for Sustainable Manufacturing report. Our Circular Manufacturing report explores circular initiatives, including an onshore denim finishing pilot. We also hosted workshops with industry stakeholders, leading to the Responsible Supply Chains report, which offers recommendations to boost domestic production and strengthen social and ethical compliance in UK fashion and textiles.

There is lots more to come later in the year as part of our mission to build a stronger UK fashion and textile industry. Thank you for being part of our journey!



A handwritten signature in black ink that reads "Alex Marshall". The signature is written in a cursive, slightly stylized font.

# Voice of the Industry



UKFT team at VIATT Vietnam

# Voice of the Industry

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

We demonstrate the strategic and economic value of our vibrant industry to government and policymakers, ensuring the key issues are on the agenda. We champion our diverse and valuable industry through campaigns and key activities.

In Q1 2025, we...

- Sent our submission to HM Treasury as part of the UK Government's Spending Review, urging the government to invest in the UK fashion and textile industry to unlock growth, support local jobs and future-proof the sector.
- These industry asks were echoed in House of Lords Creative Industries debate.
- Highlighted concerns about the Employment Rights Bill in a CBI letter to Ministers at DBT (the Department for Business & Trade), alongside other trade associations.
- Submitted a response to the Government Defence Strategy outlining the significant opportunity available from sourcing from the UK.
- Submitted a response to UK Parliament Education Committee Call for Evidence on Further Education and Skills.
- Published articles highlighting industry needs, economic impact and policy benefits, covering topics such as procurement reform for domestic manufacturing, the significance of UK's accession to the PEM Convention, and the importance of paid internship schemes in fashion and textiles.





UKFT member: Seasalt

# Membership

# Membership

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

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

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

New Members: In Q1, we have welcomed a range of new members including **Passenger Clothing, Beorma Leather, Fashion Toolbox, Au concours, Pulsar, Clyde Recycling, Livia, Marvic Textiles, Rockahula Kids and Lindsay Girvan Future Vintage.**

## WHAT OUR MEMBERS SAY...

*“Thanks to everyone at UKFT for all of that, lots going on and some great initiatives*

- Chris Gaffney, MD, Johnstons of Elgin

*“We are proud to join UKFT and be part of this reputable network. Collaborating with industry leaders strengthens our commitment to driving sustainability and innovation in the textile industry, accelerating meaningful change in recycling, reuse, and responsible production*

- Paul Roberts, Director at Roberts Recycling

*“Dubs joined UKFT to connect with like-minded industry leaders, gain access to valuable resources, and support our mission of driving innovation and sustainability in the kids' footwear sector. As we grow, UKFT provides the perfect platform to network, learn, and advocate for positive change within the industry*

- Dubs Footwear

*“We became members of UKFT to stay informed about industry developments and to access expert guidance*

- Blade & Rose

# Membership

## WEBINARS

We hosted two informative webinars focused on critical industry topics. The first, titled 'Climate Change Agreements: Key Insights for the Textile Sector,' was held in partnership with Envantage, offering valuable insights into climate-related agreements and their impact on the textile industry. The second webinar, 'Managing Currency Risk in Volatile Markets,' was organised in collaboration with Smart Business Currency, providing strategies for navigating currency fluctuations in unpredictable markets. Both events were designed to equip participants with essential knowledge for tackling current challenges in the sector.



UKFT member: Roberts Recycling



## TREND INFORMATION FROM PECLERS PARIS

The Peclers Paris AW26/7 Colour Trends continue to be well received by members. The physical trend book has travelled from Yorkshire to Scotland, the Hebrides and Ireland, reaching 17 textile members. It will then continue its journey southward, visiting an additional nine textile members in the UK. Meanwhile, the SS26 book is still circulating among fashion members and will have visited a total of 18 members during Q1.

## SHARING NEWS AND UPDATES FROM MEMBERS

In Q1 2025, we published a wide range of member spotlights and news from diverse businesses from throughout the supply chain, spanning designer collections at London Fashion Week through to textile companies expanding capabilities, new footwear companies, members receiving Royal Warrants, recycling and reuse firms and much more.

## BUSINESS UPDATES

To help keep businesses informed about key industry developments, we published updates including the UK government's decision to uphold the Commercial Agents Regulations, upcoming changes to wage rates, and a survey on intellectual property protection for designs. Other highlights include a new fashion workspace in Notting Hill, employer meetings with the Low Pay Commission, and insights on currency market impacts for fashion and textile businesses in 2025.

# Membership

## COMPLIANCE AND REGULATION UPDATES

We published key guidance and reports on compliance and regulatory issues, including new Member Guides to the Comprehensive and Progressive Agreement for Trans-Pacific Partnership (CPTPP) and EU General Product Safety Regulation (GPSR) obligations, as well as insights from the recent OECD Forum on due diligence in fashion and textiles. Updates also covered global trade and regulatory developments such as the US tariffs on Chinese products and Spain's Packaging Extended Producer Responsibility (EPR) scheme.

### Compliance Support:

UKFT continues to grow its compliance support for members, which includes:

- **Global Labelling Compliance** (incl. translations and GINETEX licensing): Advising members how to meet the labelling requirements of the countries they sell or distribute into. This could be care labelling, safety and warning labelling, environmental labelling (such as EPR), state law labelling (filled/stuffed articles) and certification labelling.
- **Global EPR obligations**: Supporting members with global packaging and textile EPR requirements including data reporting, making payments and labelling where required.
- **Product Testing** (chemical, performance and safety): Advising members on chemical and safety testing for their distribution markets. Suggesting performance testing to reduce customer complaints and returns based on their product offering and customer. Discussing chemical certifications where applicable to reduce the need for extensive chemical testing.
- **Performance and safety standards**: Recommending adherence to relevant performance and safety standards to support members in reducing customer complaints and returns and potential product recalls.
- **Import and Export Rules & Regulations**: Assisting members with import and export rules to reduce trade costs where applicable and prevent customs delays. Supporting members with extra paperwork required for some countries, such as certificates of conformity that may require passed testing reports from accredited testing houses.
- **Proposed Regulation/Legislation Involvement**: providing expertise and comment on behalf of the sector to Euratex, the Department for Business and Trade (DBT) and the Department for Environment Food and Rural Affairs (DEFRA)

# Membership

## INDUSTRY OPPORTUNITIES

We published a wide range of opportunities for UK fashion and textile firms, including export trade missions to Japan and India, a textile event in Vietnam, and a potential new tradeshow in Saudi Arabia. Other highlights include funding and pitching opportunities for start-ups, UN submissions on best practices, events connecting UK businesses with global markets and a textile pattern collaboration. We also flagged funding opportunities including bursaries for fashion and textile craft training, cash prizes for early-stage innovators and an R&D grant scheme for micro and SME businesses.

## REUSE AND RECYCLING MEMBERSHIP

UKFT has launched a new membership category for textile collectors, sorters, graders, mechanical recyclers, upcyclers and recycling innovators, dedicated to supporting circularity, growth and innovation within the UK fashion and textile industry. This new category aims to support businesses in the textile reuse and recycling sector by providing tailored resources, strategic guidance and advocacy to promote circular fashion solutions.

UKFT's work with **ACT UK** (Automatic-sorting for Circularity in Textiles) and **CFIN** (Circular Fashion Innovation Network) has laid a strong foundation in advancing circularity within the UK fashion and textile industries. Through these projects, UKFT has built an extensive network of stakeholders committed to rethinking waste and fostering innovation in material reuse. UKFT has also recently launched a new partnership with the **Textiles Recycling Expo** to drive greater collaboration between industry players, policymakers and sustainability advocates.

## EVENTS: TEXTILE FORUM

Textile Forum is UKFT's boutique fashion fabric sourcing show, located at One Marylebone in London. Showcasing short and forward order fabric collections with low MOQs, the exhibition also features trimmings, label and button suppliers and knit, print, pleating and embroidery specialists. The two-day event, held in central London on 12-13 March, attracts a wide range of visitors comprising independent designers, retailers, final year students, start-ups, high-street brands, costume designers, tailors, bridalwear and lingerie businesses. The next edition is 14-15 October 2025.



Textile Forum, March 2025



# International Business

# International Business

UK fashion and textiles have a global reputation for quality, creativity and innovation. Through our international trade campaigns, we showcase and promote the UK fashion and textile industry at events around the world.

Our tailored international business support helps UK companies to navigate changing markets, understand complex global trading arrangements and comply with international regulations.

While engagement with the new government has been strong, progress has been slower than expected. UKFT is regularly consulted on key issues, including updates to the UK's Trade Agreement - particularly the EU renegotiation, as well as agreements with India, Canada and the Gulf Cooperation Council (GCC). However, budget constraints remain a significant challenge.

This means that despite the government acknowledging the importance of grants to support businesses with trade shows and market information, funding remains unavailable.

UKFT's submissions on the reviews of UK Trade Policy have been accepted and referenced. We are also engaging with a number of MPs including members of the All Party Parliamentary Group (APPG) on Business and Trade, through Export Partners UK

From the list of issues we have raised with Government, there has been progress. The British Embassy in Tokyo now has a fashion resource and we are in discussion with government on a retail trade mission to Japan that will coincide with the UK's participation at Tokyo Fashion Week and Osaka World Expo 2025 in September 2025.



UKFT team at VIATT Vietnam

## Q1 2025 INTERNATIONAL TRADESHOW UPDATE

Our Discover British Brands and Textiles campaign has continued to showcase, celebrate and promote the best in UK fashion and textile brands around the world, and the results have been stronger than expected in the first quarter of the year.

Key highlights:

- Exhibitors across Europe and the US reported strong business, with positive engagement from international buyers. Notably, there are early signs of renewed optimism from Japan, which bodes well for future growth in the region.
- While the Chinese market remains sluggish, as anticipated, we are observing signs that South Korea's market is cooling, which was also expected.

# International Business

## Q1 2025 TRADESHOW ACTIVITY

We attended and supported UK businesses at several key events:

- **Pitti Uomo** (January): The season kicked off with a visit by HM Consul General, showcasing 45 UK brands in Florence.
- **Paris Men's Fashion Week, Paris Lingerie, and Women's Pre-Collections** (January): With 110 UK brands on display, Paris saw incredible engagement across multiple fashion sectors.
- **Chicago Collective** (February): This event, attended by HM Deputy Consul Commercial, featured 45 UK brands and marked another successful engagement with North American buyers.
- **Milano Unica** (February): Our Italian presence was strong, with 23 UK companies showcasing their latest collections.
- **Première Vision** (February): 27 UK companies were present at this pivotal textile-focused event in Paris, continuing to solidify our position in the global textile industry.
- **VIATT Vietnam** (February): This was a landmark event for UKFT, marking our first visit to Vietnam with 22 UK companies and a visit from the Embassy, further strengthening our ties to the growing Southeast Asian market.
- **Paris Women's Fashion Week** (March): We wrapped up Q1 with 80 UK companies participating in one of the most prestigious fashion weeks in the world.
- **JITAC Textiles Tokyo** (March): After a 10-year absence, UK returned to JITAC, supporting 20 mills and agents and welcoming an Embassy visit in Tokyo.
- Looking ahead, we continue to see a positive trajectory for our brands, especially in Europe and the US, with growing optimism from Japan. While we keep a watchful eye on the challenges in China and South Korea, we remain committed to driving global visibility and supporting our UK companies in all international markets.



# International Business

## GENERAL EXPORT ISSUES

Our predictions about the outcome of the US elections and their impact on the industry have, unfortunately, proven accurate. Governments and businesses worldwide are struggling to adapt to President Trump's unpredictable policy shifts. While China had anticipated and prepared for these changes, Canada and Mexico appear to be caught off guard.

UK businesses are already experiencing shifts in how US retailers operate, beyond just the effects of foreign policy. For example, Neiman Marcus has extended its payment terms from 30 days to over 90.

We are awaiting updates on the US administration's decision regarding the De Minimis exception, which has already been suspended for China. Many UK fashion brands rely on this rule to ship B2B goods to the US duty- and tax-free when the total daily shipment value is below \$800. We continue to expect that the exception will be modified or come to an end.

The EU's new General Product Safety Regulation (GPSR) which came into effect on 13 December 2024 continues to be a major preoccupation for most UK companies which trade with the EU. This is a hot topic of conversation at the major tradeshows and from members.

UKFT had to correct Government advice to UK companies on this topic as they had fundamentally misunderstood the GSPR regulation. Greenway Logistics and UKFT are working on a potential GPSR solution for members.

## PRODUCT ENVIRONMENTAL FOOTPRINT (PEF)

UKFT continues to work with Euratex and others on the Product Environmental Footprint (PEF) labelling issue. Our latest conversations with Euratex have confirmed that PEF labelling is likely to be phased in, probably from 2027 onwards but that it will be optional. There is a chance it may become mandatory from 2030 onwards but before this can happen the feeling is that the Commission would have to revisit its models which are currently disproportionately biased around natural and recyclable fibres.

# Skills & Training



UKFT member: Oubas Knitwear Studio

# Skills & Training

UKFT is the Sector Skills Body (SSB) for fashion and textiles. Our activity is focused around addressing critical skills gaps and creating industry-led solutions to ensure that the UK fashion and textile industry remains competitive on a global stage. We help fashion and textile businesses to attract, train and retain the best people, as well as promote careers and opportunities to the next generation of talented workers through UKFT Futures and our careers campaigns.

We are increasingly focused on developing new vocational and academic routes into industry that meet the needs of business, such as the online production sewing machinist course, the work with HM Prison Service or the new BSc in Textile Technology at the University of Leeds. Through our schemes like MADE IT and the New Talent programme, we also bring together education and industry to ensure graduates have relevant experience and knowledge to enter the workplace.

## SECTOR SKILLS BODY

In February 2025, it was announced by the Department for Education that Apprenticeship programmes in England would see two major changes – the introduction of shorter flexible apprenticeships and a relaxation of Functional Skills requirements for over 19-year-olds. UKFT has raised concerns about both announcements with the relevant bodies.

## REVISION OF SCOTTISH VOCATIONAL QUALIFICATIONS

Development work continues with the SVQ in Textile Care Services. UKFT is also reviewing the SVQ in Leather, Sewn Products or Textiles Manufacturing and the SVQ in Leather and Textile Technology

## NATIONAL APPRENTICESHIP WEEKS IN ENGLAND AND SCOTLAND

UKFT supported these annual events by promoting the technical and supporting Apprenticeship programmes offered by UKFT's education partners and showcasing some of the success stories from companies. We also highlighted non-apprenticeship entry level training.



The Textile Centre of Excellence apprenticeships



Sir Lindsay Hoyle MP and UKFT's John West, Pincroft

# Skills & Training



Henna Ibrahim, from Winchester School of Art, interning at Sirplus, as part of the MADE IT programme

## PRODUCTION SEWING MACHINIST PROGRAMME (PSM)

PSM is an online programme developed by UKFT, which covers everything from industrial sewing techniques and best-practices, essential knowledge on quality, costs, efficiency, materials and machines, health and safety, working relationships and employability skills. Designed to be flexible, the programme allows learners to fit the training around busy schedules as all courses are pre-recorded.

We are developing new course content, covering:

- **Course 1.** The Role of a Production Sewing Machinist:
- **Course 2.** Industrial Sewing Machines:
- **Course 3.** Industrial Sewing
- **Course 4.** The Sewing Machinist Apprenticeship

## HM PRISON & PROBATION SERVICE: PSM PROJECT

As a member of UKFT, His Majesty's Prison and Probations Service (HMPPS) has been working closely with UKFT to develop specialist Production Sewing Machinist Training for both Production Instructors running on-site prison workshops and prisoners working within textile workshops.

There are currently 73 textile workshops across 50 UK prisons. The programme designed by UKFT and HMPPS will help to standardise sewing machinist training across these workshops. It will support internal production processes while reflecting current practice within the fashion and textile manufacturing sector.

The third PSM Instructor training course took place in January 2025. Instructors from four different prisons participated and are currently completing the online course as part of their training.

An Employer event took place on 13 February at HMP Lindholme. Employers were invited to tour the prison textiles workshops and explore potential recruitment of trained ex-offenders.

# Skills & Training

## PROMOTING CAREERS AND JOBS IN OUR INDUSTRY

As part of our commitment to promote the wealth of careers, employers and training opportunities available in the UK fashion and textile industry, UKFT works with local industry, training providers, schools and recruitment organisations to deliver an annual series of career events and job fairs across the UK.

Our first Careers Fair of 2025 took place in February in Leeds at the **National Career Guidance** event, which is aimed at teaching professionals and career advisors.

In March, we attended the **National Apprenticeship & Education** event in Salford. We were joined by four of our Education Partners at this event who offered hands-on activities.

## 'LICENCE TO SEW' PROJECT

The Sewing Rooms in Skelmersdale, in partnership with UKFT and the West Lancashire Borough Council, has established the 'Licence to Sew' programme to address a skills gap in the local manufacturing sector. The 10-week programme offers training for individuals aged 17+ to become skilled sewing machinists, with potential employment opportunities. The course includes tutor-led sessions, online modules based on UKFT's PSM course and hands-on practice. The initiative aims to upskill residents, support local businesses, and drive economic growth in West Lancashire.

The third 'The Licence to Sew' Course took place in January 2025. 31 PSM learners have now registered and certificated through this programme. Supported by UKFT, The Sewing Rooms has submitted a Skills Bootcamp proposal to the Lancashire local authority to fund further PSM Courses.



Capital City College runs UAL Level 2 and Level 3 diploma courses in fashion and textiles.

# Skills & Training

## UKFT BURSARIES

UKFT now has an annual £250,000 bursary programme to support new people into the industry or those taking their first steps in careers. The programme includes:

**MADE IT:** The programme is designed to enrich the production and sourcing knowledge of graduates and to illustrate the wealth of technical and creative roles throughout the supply chain. The scheme offers undergraduates a production and sourcing masterclass and 10 funded placements annually within a production environment thanks to the generous support of the Worshipful Company of Clothworkers and CapitB.

The 2024/25 programme has started, and the Masterclasses have been successfully delivered to the following:

- Manchester Metropolitan University
- Istituto Marangoni
- Bath Spa University

This year we launched an online masterclass open to all the second year students studying BA Fashion/Textiles so that we can offer this learning to all our HE Education members.

**UKFT New Talent Bursary:** This is designed to break down the financial barriers that can limit fair access to industry placements. The bursary supports a number of students annually to take up placement opportunities they may otherwise struggle to afford. The 2024/25 programme is kindly supported by The Worshipful Company of Weavers.

**UKFT Young Textile Technician Fund:** Designed to allow businesses across the UK to train their young textile technicians. The fund will cover 50% of the costs of in-depth training for young textile technicians, thanks to the generous support of The Worshipful Company of Weavers, The Worshipful Company of Clothworkers and The Worshipful Company of Drapers.

In Q1 2025, we supported eight young technicians at [Knockando Woolmill](#), [Knitster](#), [Alex Begg](#) and [Oubas Knitwear](#).

“*Receiving training from Stoll through the UKFT funding and applying the training through a hands-on role has been an invaluable experience. The introduction to machine handling and programming has enabled me to better understand fully-fashioned knitwear in practice and operate our Stoll machinery for production*”

-Laura Brown, a studio assistant/ technician at Oubas Knitwear

“*It was an incredible experience for our business and our team to have Shima come from their head office to London to train us. We have come on leaps and bounds since the training. Rob gave us the knowledge we needed to take Knitster to the next level.*”

-Emma McClelland, director at Knitster, said



# Innovation & Sustainability



# Innovation & Sustainability

UKFT is at the forefront of large-scale innovation projects to tackle some of our industry's biggest challenges. We help to attract research investment and unite the industry in pre-competitive collaboration.

We provide practical help and guidance to help members meet their sustainability goals and share best practice. Through our close connections with the UK and European governments, we help companies prepare for changes in future sustainability legislation.

## SUSTAINABILITY 101

UKFT's Sustainability 101 series been created to support and guide the sustainable development of the fashion and textiles industry in the UK. The guides and webinars delve into the core principles of sustainability and what it means for our industry. It explores the fundamental concepts and practices required to shape a more sustainable industry via simple guides and thought-provoking but practical webinars.

This quarter, we launched the fourth issue of the **Sustainability 101 series** offering guidance about chemical compliance for UK fashion and textile businesses, including key regulations, applicable standards and certifications, testing guidelines and a risk assessment.

The series now comprises:

- Issue 1: Standards and Certifications
- Issue 2: Green Claims
- Issue 3: Human Rights and Environmental Due Diligence
- Issue 4: Chemical Compliance

Coming soon:

- Issue 5: EU Legislation
- Issue 6: Energy and Carbon



# Innovation & Sustainability

## CIRCULAR FASHION INNOVATION NETWORK (CFIN)

The Circular Fashion Innovation Network (CFIN) is an industry-led programme led by UKFT and the British Fashion Council (BFC) in partnership with UK Research and Innovation (UKRI) to accelerate the UK towards a Circular Fashion Ecosystem. UKFT leads on the Sustainable manufacturing and Textile recycling infrastructure pillars.

Through CFIN, we have:

- Established a pilot with major retailer and a leading technology provider to show the wide range of benefits of working with AI, in driving faster turnaround times, reduce delays, make cost savings through minimised fabric waste and optimise order allocation.
- Conducted extensive research into the role of automation and robotics in the UK textile and apparel manufacturing sector in partnership with Manchester Metropolitan University's Robotics Living Lab (RoLL) and the Manufacturing Technology Centre (MTC, resulting in the **Advancing Automation and Robotics for Sustainable Manufacturing**).

- Held a series of collaborative workshops with brands and retailers, textile and garment manufacturers, ethical and social compliance experts to develop a series of recommendations and interventions with the ultimate aim of boosting domestic manufacturing, outlined in our Responsible supply-chains in the UK' report.
- Examined circular initiatives and practices in the sector, presenting actionable steps in our **Circular Manufacturing** report that manufacturers can take to integrate circularity into their products and processes. One of our exciting pilot projects explored onshore denim finishing, showing how innovation can revitalise traditional processes.
- Published a new report on **Responsible UK Fashion and Textile Supply Chains**, following workshops with brands and retailers, textile and garment manufacturers, and social and ethical compliance experts. The report is a key step in supporting the UK fashion and textile ecosystem's reshoring efforts. It identifies practical solutions and opportunities to drive positive change for manufacturers, brands and retailers alike.



# Innovation & Sustainability

## NETWORK+

UKFT sits on the steering committee of Network Plus, a collaborative project consisting of three main elements:

- **IMPACT+**, led by the University of Northumbria, focuses on improving data collection for the fashion industry, ensuring that data is accessible and can be critically analysed ([more here](#)).
- **Back to Baselines**, led by the University of Leeds, aims to use this data to establish research-backed baselines, providing a clear picture of the industry's current state and enabling measurable progress ([more here](#)).
- **Future Fibres Network**, led by the University of Exeter, integrates insights from the environmental science community into the industry, assessing the real impact of microplastics and other environmental factors ([more here](#)).

During the first quarter of 2025, we have:

- Worked with the University of Leeds and ReLondon on a project called 'Unlocking the potential of post-consumer textiles to drive textile reuse and recycling in the UK: assessing post-consumer sorting, grading and feedstock requirements among textile reuse and recycling stakeholders' through the Future Fibres Network. By assessing these factors, the project aims to develop a more efficient and effective system for recycling textiles after they have been used by consumers. This work could significantly reduce the volume of textiles that end up in landfills and increase the rate of domestic recycling or reuse, addressing the issue of textile waste.
- Worked on a project on 'Non-clothing textile material flows in the UK' with University of Leeds through Back to Baselines. This work is crucial because non-clothing textile materials often do not receive the same level of attention as clothing waste, yet they make up a significant portion of textile waste. By focusing on these materials, the project can help improve data visibility and optimise their recycling processes, reducing overall textile waste.
- Been part of various panel discussions in Network+ events to disseminate our research.



# Innovation & Sustainability

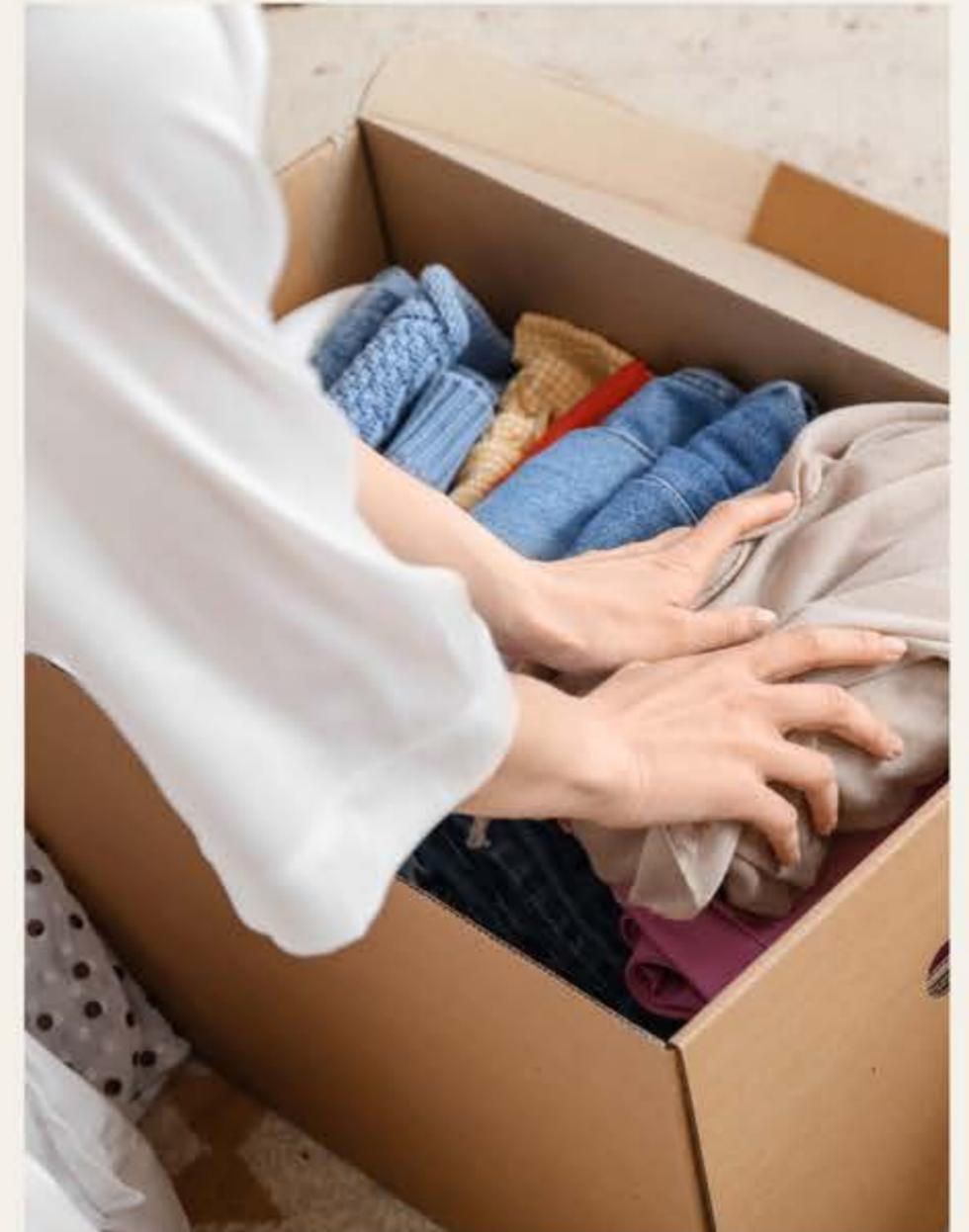
## ACT UK

Every year, the UK generates over 1 million tonnes of used textiles, with an estimated one-third being non-rewearable textiles (NRT) that are either landfilled, incinerated, or exported to lower-cost regions. The ACT UK project aims to bridge the gap between manual sorting and automated processing of NRTs, supporting the transition to textile circularity.

A two-year initiative funded by Innovate UK and led by UKFT, the project unites recyclers, collectors, manufacturers, academics and retailers to develop an Advanced Textile Sorting and Pre-processing (ATSP) facility. This facility will process NRTs into high-quality feedstock for fibre-to-fibre recycling, positioning the UK as a leader in automated textile sorting.

Now in its final quarter, with completion set for 31 March 2025, the project has met all its deliverables except securing an ATSP facility site. Using the project grant, Circle-8 Textile Ecosystems will be purchasing a £1million automated fibre line sorting unit able to differentiate and separate into multiple bespoke textile fractions. This will be a stepping stone towards the creation of the full plant ATSP.

Recent milestones include the launch of reports on post-consumer textile collection trials, the business case for ATSP facilities and a vision for a circular textiles ecosystem. These reports outline the economic benefits and enablers for scaling textile recycling in the UK, reinforcing its role in the global circular economy.



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