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# UKFT - the Collective Voice of UK Fashion and Textiles

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## What is UKFT?

The UK Fashion and Textile Association (UKFT) is a trade body representing the UK fashion sector. You can access the UKFT website at [www.ukft.org](http://www.ukft.org)

UKFT is the collective voice of UK fashion and textiles and represents the entire supply chain of textiles from spinning, weaving and knitting, right through to catwalk presentation and fabric aftercare.

KFT members include major suppliers and high street retailers such as Marks & Spencer. Luxury fashion brands like Aquascutum, Ben Sherman, Bonsoir, John Smedley and Simon Carter are also members.<sup>1</sup> The chief sponsor of the London Fashion Week, the British Fashion Council, is an affiliate UKFT member.

## About the UKFT

According to the UKFT website:

*“UKFT is the most inclusive British network for fashion and textile companies, bringing together 2,500 designers, manufacturers, agents and retailers to promote their businesses and our industry in the UK and throughout the world. UKFT is in a unique position, representing businesses from spinning, weaving and knitting, right through to catwalk and garment care.”<sup>2</sup>*

## Key Areas of UKFT Support

The UKFT primarily focuses on offering skills and training, providing business advice and promoting fashion and textile manufacture in the UK. The UKFT also plays an active role in assisting UK businesses to expand internationally. The body is also involved in lobbying for the fashion industry.

## Skills and Training

UKFT's Sector Skills Body is an association that focuses on addressing fundamental skill gaps and developing industry-led solutions in skills and training.

Amongst others, The UKFT

- provides information, advice and guidance to employers, employees and training providers
- offers apprenticeships so that budding talent can earn while they learn
- offers advice on funding available for training
- reviews and endorses qualifications to help students enter the fashion industry
- works with universities and colleges to ensure that graduates are equipped with the appropriate skills
- develops new vocational and academic routes into the industry that meet the needs of business

## **Business Advice**

Amongst others, The UKFT

provides accurate and up to date information on labelling requirements across the globe

- offers guidance on raising funds and investment
- provides one-to-one guidance with business plans and strategies, market trends, marketing and PR, logistics, IP protection, labelling, standards, range planning and pricing, and employment
- helps with ISO, CEN, or BSI standards compliance
- provides guidance on health and safety regulations and how to stay with the law
- supports early-stage fashion entrepreneurs with information and networking events through UKFT Rise
- promotes the Scottish fashion and textile industry through UKFT Scotland
- provide a platform for companies to share best practice and possibly forge relationships with new business partners

## **Manufacturing**

The UKFT believes that UK manufacturing is enjoying a great renaissance. The latest government statistics show that in 2018 manufacturing employment in the UK rose for the first time in decades.<sup>3</sup>

In 2013, The UKFT relaunched their Fashion and Textile Awards, and for the very first time, there was a category commending those that support British manufacturing. Peter Lucas, chairman of the UKFT at the time, said:

*“We are an industry not just of designers but also suppliers, manufacturers and some of the best and most innovative textile businesses in the world. Without them, our industry could not exist, and they should be recognised for thriving even in difficult economic times.”<sup>4</sup>*

In the realm of manufacturing, the UKFT

- has created a comprehensive toolkit to help brands with developing and nurturing relationships with manufacturers
- offers the 'Made It' programme to bring together graduate design talent and the skills of UK manufacturing
- provides a free sourcing platform that connects UK fashion and textile manufacturers with designers, brand, and retailers through Letsmakeithere.org

## **International Support**

The UKFT has a business support program to help UK companies target overseas markets. Part of this programme helps businesses develop export strategies and also find new routes into the global market. Through the Department of International Trade's Tradeshow Access Programme (TAP), the UKFT provides grants to more than 700 companies every year.

## **Lobbying**

The UKFT is committed to supporting a best-of-breed regulatory infrastructure for the UK fashion and textile industry. The body's lobbying initiatives include representing the entire chain and promoting the fashion and textile industry to government and key policymakers.

## **References**

<sup>1</sup> Business Wire 17 July 2009 - Company Profile for UK Fashion and Textile Association (UKFT):  
<https://www.businesswire.com/news/home/20090717005008/en/Company-Profile-UK-Fashion-Textile-Association-UKFT>

<sup>2</sup> UKFT website – About: <https://www.ukft.org/about/>

<sup>3</sup> UKFT website – Manufacturing: <https://www.ukft.org/manufacturing/>

<sup>4</sup> Make it British - UKFT launches award for businesses manufacturing in the UK:  
<https://makeitbritish.co.uk/uk-manufacturing-2/ukft-launches-award-for-businesses-manufacturing-in-the-uk/>

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