



Small Business Taskforce Terms of Reference

Industry Taskforce

Purpose and Scope

1. The Small Business Regulatory Taskforce¹ is an industry group, commissioned by His Majesty's Government, with a mandate to develop recommendations aimed at reducing the administrative burden on small and medium sized enterprises (SMEs), including micro businesses, in line with the Government's 25% administrative burden reduction target and our Plan for Small and Medium-Sized Businesses.
2. The purpose of the Taskforce is to identify opportunities to remove or streamline regulatory and administrative costs faced by SMEs, whilst not undermining vital worker, consumer, environmental or public protections. It will also seek to improve clarity and usability of regulation and guidance and support innovation, productivity and growth across the SME economy. These objectives will seek to apply these objectives to both the existing stock of regulation and future regulatory requirements in the pipeline.
3. SMEs consistently recognise the importance of proportionate regulation in enabling safe, fair and competitive markets, but report that complexity, duplication and uncertainty can impose disproportionate burdens relative to firm size and capacity.
4. To address these challenges, the Taskforce will seek to understand SME perceptions of specific regulatory frameworks and will assess evidence of barriers within the regulatory landscape impacting SMEs. This will allow it to evaluate options that support business resilience, unlock growth, innovation and investment, and enable entrepreneurship.
5. The precise set of issues the taskforce will examine should be agreed when the group convenes its first meeting. However, the government expects the taskforce will hold a focus on:
 - a. modernising regulatory submissions
 - b. embedding SME-friendly approaches to regulatory guidance
 - c. exploring regulatory passporting initiatives;
 - d. reviewing the SME impact from regulatory enforcement across regulators and local authorities; and
 - e. examining what more Government can do to support SMEs to build capability, resource and technology that will help them in achieving tax and regulatory compliance.

¹ For the purposes of these Terms of Reference, "small business" is used as shorthand. The Taskforce will examine regulatory and administrative burdens across the full SME population.

6. The taskforce may also seek to identify where the principles of the Fingleton Review into the Nuclear Sector could be applied to regulation impacting SMEs, e.g. by uncovering unnecessary gold plating beyond statutory or risk-based requirements

Membership

7. The Taskforce shall be co-chaired by the Minister for Small Business and Tina McKenzie MBE of the FSB.
8. Membership will comprise a balanced mix of SME representatives (including micro-businesses, sector bodies, supply-chain representatives, and worker or trade union members, ensuring coverage across key parts of the SME economy.
9. The Taskforce will be supported by officials from the Department for Business and Trade (DBT), HM Treasury (HMT) and relevant regulators and arm's-length bodies, as appropriate.

Outputs

10. The Taskforce will engage directly with businesses to identify and co-design evidence-based recommendations to improve the operation, clarity and proportionality of existing regulation and guidance, as well as future regulatory requirements. This may include recommendations to tackle 'blue tape' – an indirect impact of regulation on business which can derive from rules and standards that are more prescriptive than the legislative requirements themselves e.g. standards for specific industries or technologies, as well as guidance offered by non-government sources.
11. Recommendations will focus on reducing administrative and compliance costs that are demonstrated to be unnecessary, duplicative or poorly designed, and that disproportionately affect SMEs.
12. The Taskforce will aim to publish findings and recommendations that support delivery of the Government's 25% administrative burden reduction target and wider Regulation Action Plan
13. The Taskforce will report to the Business Secretary and Treasury Ministers with findings and recommendations to be published by Autumn 2026. The Government will then set out its response to these recommendations in due course.
14. While the Taskforce will seek to identify recommendations to support businesses to achieve tax and regulatory compliance more efficiently, changes to tax policy and reforms to tax administration are not in scope of the Taskforce.

Meetings

15. At the commencement of the Taskforce, all members and supporting officials will convene formally. Thereafter, meetings will be held as deemed necessary by the Chair.
16. The Taskforce's work will be primarily delivered through thematic or sector-based sub-groups, led by industry or SME representatives where appropriate, which will report findings and recommendations back to the full Taskforce.

17. Evidence gathering activity, including surveys, calls for evidence or stakeholder engagement exercises, may be run in parallel to support the Taskforce's work. The group will also draw on existing evidence from DBT's *Unlocking Business: Reform Driven by You* questionnaire and Business Perception Survey.
18. Meetings will be conducted on a confidential basis to promote open and constructive discussion. External communication will be limited to agreed meeting notes or published outputs, and comments will not be attributed to individual members.

Supporting Structures

19. The Taskforce will be supported by a small secretariat staffed by DBT, as well as other relevant departments or bodies, as required.
20. The Senior Responsible Owner (SRO) will be David Lunn, Director of Regulation.

Decision-Making

21. The Taskforce will not hold direct decision-making authority.
22. The Taskforce's role is to provide insight, advice and recommendations to Ministers, which will inform policy development and regulatory reform activity.

Composition

- Blair McDougall MP (co-chair), Minister for Small Business and Economic Transformation
- Tina McKenzie (co-chair), Chair of Policy and Advocacy at Federation of Small Businesses (FSB)
- Michelle Ovens CBE, founder of Small Business Britain.
- Polly Dhaliwal, Chief Operating Officer at Enterprise Nation.
- Neil Davy, CEO of Family Business UK.
- Charlotte Keenan, Managing Director at Goldman Sachs.
- Dr Roni Savage, CEO and Founder of Jomas Associates, Business and Trade Non-Executive Director.
- Joshua Toovey, Head of Policy and Research at the Association of Independent Professionals and the Self-Employed (IPSE).
- Kate Shoesmith, Director of Policy and Insight at the British Chambers of Commerce
- Iain Wright, Chief Policy and communications officer Institute for Charter Accountants for England and Wales (ICAEW)
- Ed Woodall, CEO of Association of Convenience Stores (ACS)
- James Carroll, No10 Special Advisor
- Emma Jones CBE, Small Business Commissioner
- Katie Martin, Business Advisor to the Financial Secretary to the Treasury