

The Rt Hon Baroness Smith of Malvern  
Minister for Skills  
Department for Education  
Sanctuary Buildings  
Great Smith Street  
London SW1P 3BT

January 7, 2026

Dear Secretary of State,

We, the undersigned, represent a coalition of leading professional and membership bodies across key sectors of the UK economy. Together, we set the standards, accredit professionals, and support employers and members in building the workforce capabilities that underpin the UK's economic and social prosperity.

Our combined membership **exceeds one million individually named members** and reaches beyond them into the companies that we also include in our memberships. We **represent a wide cross sector** of our economy and society.

We believe that professional bodies can do more to support Government priorities, by:

- **Boosting productivity:** Embedding professional standards and accredited skills across the workforce ensures individuals and organisations are equipped to perform at their best.
- **Reforming public services:** Professionalising the public sector workforce—particularly in leadership, project delivery, and health and safety—will improve outcomes and value for money.
- **Driving industrial growth and future skills:** From green technology to advanced manufacturing, professional bodies are already delivering workforce solutions for priority sectors. We ensure a pipeline of capable, accredited professionals aligned with the UK's industrial strategy.

We believe there is a clear opportunity to deepen collaboration between professional bodies and Government:

### **Our proposals:**

- **Strategic engagement:** Establish a structured mechanism for regular dialogue - such as a cross-sector working group - to align our work with Government policy priorities and delivery. This would enable better-informed decision-making and reduce policy and delivery risks through direct access to frontline professional insight.

- **Skills collaboration:** Partner on skills programmes that strengthen the UK workforce, support innovation, and enhance international competitiveness.
- **Formal recognition:** Embed professional accreditation in public sector workforce reform and industrial strategies to improve delivery and secure long-term skills investment.

At a time when the Government is focused on delivering economic growth, reforming public services, and improving productivity, we offer a ready-made part of the solution: leveraging the expertise and reach of professional bodies to drive workforce excellence, equip people with cross-cutting and specialist skills, and support sector-specific transformation.

Professional bodies are uniquely positioned at the interface of employers, education and training providers, and individual professionals. Every day, we connect these systems - helping businesses navigate complex labour market needs, advising on skills policy, and ensuring that training and qualifications meet evolving workplace demands. This means we not only set standards but ensure those standards are grounded in what's needed in practice.

Our members - highly trained and skilled professionals - work at the heart of the UK economy, as well as in global markets. They are delivering complex infrastructure projects, innovating in R&D, supporting safe and healthy workplaces, shaping green growth, and transforming public services. Many do so in volatile economic and political conditions, giving them a real-time understanding of the pressures facing UK business and society.

At their best, professional bodies are a strategic partner to Government: shaping and upholding professional standards, improving productivity through accredited skills, and building trust in sectors critical to growth and public confidence.

## Next steps

We would welcome a meeting with you and senior officials to explore how we can formalise a more strategic working relationship between Government and professional bodies. Integrating our coalition into the regular rhythm of policy development and decision making will ensure that the UK workforce remains globally competitive and that growth is underpinned by high standards of professionalism.

We look forward to your response and to working together to build a stronger, more productive UK economy.

Yours sincerely,

## LEAD SIGNATORIES

Adam Boddison, Chief Executive, Association for Project Management (APM)  
Alastair McCapra, Chief Executive, Chartered Institute of Public Relations (CIPR)  
Ann Francke, Chief Executive, Chartered Management Institute (CMI)  
Chris Daly, Chief Executive, Chartered Institute of Marketing (CIM)  
John Mark Williams, Chief Executive, Institute of Leadership (IoL)  
Jonathan Geldert, Director General, Institute of Directors (IoD)  
Linda Ford, Chief Executive, The Chartered Governance Institute UK & Ireland (CGIUKI)  
Nicky De Beer, Chief Executive, Association of Anaesthetists (Great Britain & Ireland)  
Peter Cheese, Chief Executive, Chartered Institute of Personnel and Development (CIPD)  
Sarah Beale, Chief Executive, Association of Accounting Technicians (AAT)  
Vanessa Harwood-Whitcher, Chief Executive, Institute of Occupational Safety and Health (IOSH)

## CO-SIGNATORIES

Alex Llewellyn & Kate Geary, co-Chief Executives, Chartered Institute for Archaeologists (ClfA)  
Andrew Pester, Chief Executive, British Parking Association (BPA)  
Andy Hough, Chief Executive, Institution of Sales Professionals  
Ben Peachey, Chief Executive, Chartered Institute of Ergonomics and Human Factors (CIEHF)  
Cait Allen, Chief Executive, British Chiropractic Association (BCA)  
Chris Combemale, Chief Executive, Data and Marketing Association (DMA)  
Chris Goldsworthy, Chief Executive, Institute of Marine Engineering, Science and Technology (IMarEST)  
Craig Leadley, Chief Executive, Institute of Food Science and Technology (IFST)  
Darren Caplan, Chief Executive, Railway Industry Association (RIA)  
Dave Edwards, Chief Executive, Royal Aeronautical Society (RAeS)  
Dawn Howard, Chief Executive, National Office of Animal Health (NOAH)  
Emma Thompson, Chief Executive, Society of Operations Engineers (SOE)  
Emma Wilcox, Chief Executive, Society for the Environment (SocEnv)  
Emma Jhita, Chief Executive, Institute of Conservation (ICON)  
Gavin Smart, Chief Executive, Chartered Institute of Housing (CIH)  
Geoff Webb, Chief Executive, Grounds Management Association (GMA)  
Graham Blair, Chief Executive, British Society for Immunology (BSI)  
Jane Frost OBE, Chief Executive, Market Research Society (MRS)  
Jen Sproul, Chief Executive, Institute of Internal Communication (IOIC)  
Jo Causon, Chief Executive, Institute of Customer Service (ICS)  
John Cowman, Chief Executive, Chartered Society of Physiotherapy (CSP)  
John Worne, Chief Executive, Chartered Institute of Linguists (CIOL)  
Jon Levett, Chief Executive, UK Council for Psychotherapy (UKCP)  
Kate Sargent, Chief Executive, Society for Endocrinology (SfE)  
Libby Meyrick, Chief Executive, Institution of Engineering Designers (IED)  
Linda Hausmanis, Chief Executive, Institute of Workplace and Facilities Management (IWFM)

**Liz Stockley, Chief Executive, British Dietetic Association (BDA)**  
**Lizzie Lockett, Chief Executive, Royal College of Veterinary Surgeons (RCVS)**  
**Lorna Stimpson, Chief Executive, Local Authority Building Control (LABC)**  
**Mark Hill, Lead Director, Royal Town Planning Institute (RTPI)**  
**Matthew Hill, Chief Executive, Chartered Insurance Institute (CII)**  
**Nadira Hussain, Chief Executive, Society for Information Technology Management (Socitm)**  
**Nina Goad, Deputy Chief Executive, British Association of Dermatologists (BAD)**  
**Robert Gofton, Chief Executive, Nuclear Institute (NI)**  
**Robert Richardson, Chief Executive, Institute of Hospitality (IH)**  
**Sara Robertson, Chief Executive, Institute of Translation and Interpreting (ITI)**  
**Sarah Poulter, Chief Executive, Chartered Institution of Wastes Management (CIWM)**  
**Sharron Gunn, Chief Executive, British Computer Society (BCS)**

#### SUPPORTERS

**Bob Perry, Chief Executive, Door and Hardware Federation (DHF)**  
**Cath Hill, Chief Executive, Gemmological Association of Great Britain (Gem-A)**  
**Colin Bell, Chief Executive, Council of British International Schools (COBIS)**  
**Helen Hewitt, Chief Executive, British Woodworking Federation (BWF)**  
**Jim Boyd, Chief Executive, Equity Release Council**  
**John Cunningham, Chief Executive, Foodservice Equipment Association (FEA)**  
**John Newcomb, Chief Executive, Builders Merchants Federation (BMF)**  
**John Parker, Chief Executive, Arboricultural Association**  
**Lesley Robson, Chief Executive, British Marine Federation (BMF)**  
**Margaret Fitzsimons, Chief Executive, Electrical Distributors' Association (EDA)**  
**Maria Iredale, Chief Executive, Geoscience Energy Society of Great Britain (GESGB)**  
**Neil Ogilvie, Chief Executive, Painting and Decorating Association (PDA)**  
**Pam Murrell, Chief Executive, Cast Metals Federation**  
**Paul Gaze, Chief Executive, Hire Association Europe and Event Hire Association (HAE)**  
**Rob Lightfoot, Chief Executive, National Association for Able Children in Education (NACE)**  
**Rod Addy, Chief Executive, Provision Trade Federation (PTF)**  
**Rosina Robson, Chief Executive, British Pest Control Association (BPCA)**