British Glass policy position

British Glass

The UK glass sector contributes in excess of £2bn to the economy each year and provides more than 120,000 jobs across the supply chain. As the representative body, British Glass and our members are committed to working collaboratively with all relevant stakeholders to promote sustainable practices and drive innovation within our industry.

Flat Glass

Container Glass

Wool and Fibre Glass

Size of the market **£2.2 billion total**	Size of workforce (direct and indirect) **120,000 employed**
Tonnes manufactured **3 million tonnes**	Number of UK manufacturing sites **19**

UK industrial strategy

The UK glass industry manufactures a diverse range of products necessary for life in modern Britain. Many are contributing to the decarbonisation of other sectors e.g. glass wool insulation and triple glazing.

Current position:

- Higher manufacturing costs make UK glass products increasingly uncompetitive whilst unfair trade practices and supportive manufacturing strategies in other countries reduce the cost of imports.
- Trade tariffs on glass products have been removed and there has been a divergence in regulations since brexit which has impacted trade.
- The UK trade remedy system is reactive, disproportionately costly to industry and very slow.
- Reduction in UK production leads to lost jobs, lost GDP and lost self-sufficiency.
- The UK is the worst performing country in western Europe in terms of heat loss from buildings.[1]

Policy Recommendations:

- Work across Whitehall, with NGOs and industry to create a long-term industrial strategy that is supportive of UK manufacturing and gives certainty for investors.
- Review the UK trade remedies system, moving to a proactive approach to identifying and rectifying trade distortions.
- Align the scope and timelines of the UK Carbon Border Adjustment Mechanism with the EU scheme to ensure interoperability and no barrier to trade with the EU.
- Introduce greater incentives to drive long term energy efficiency renovations with a 'fabric first' approach such as glass wool insulation and high efficiency glazing.

Key strategic pillars

Power decarbonisation	UK Circularity	Futureproof skills
Glass manufacturers are committed to transitioning to net zero. The viability of UK glass manufacture and the sector's ability to achieve net zero is reliant on a secure supply of competitively priced low carbon energy. Major changes can only be made via high capital investments at furnace rebuilds every 10-15 years.[2]	Glass is a 'permanent material': 100% recyclable, infinite times and without loss of quality. Using recycled glass instead of raw materials reduces energy consumption and UK carbon emissions. The British public love glass packaging and already recycle around 74% [3] (with an outstanding 92% [4] kerbside capture rate in Wales), with most recycled into new glass products. the UK glass sector demands even more recycled glass for use in new glass products.	The glass sector has a diverse range of well-paid, skilled and unskilled employment opportunities, located in historically industrial regions. However, with an aging workforce, a large proportion of these employees will retire over the next decade. This means the need to attract new talent into the industry is vital.
Current position • Switching to new technologies carries risks for first movers. • Energy prices in the UK do not make it a strategic place to invest in decarbonisation of processes.	**Current position** • Currently there are no policies to promote flat glass recycling in the UK. • Current recycling policy reforms are destabilising and reducing the quality and quantity of glass collected for recycling in the UK. • Current waste policies have incentivised a 30% increase in the export of valuable glass in 2022, and 31% of glass recycled was exported in 2022 for remelt.[5]	**Current position** • The sector struggles to attract high quality STEM candidates. • Rapid digitalisation over the next decade will require upskilling. • New processes required for transitioning to net zero will require retraining.
Policy Recommendations • Maintain and continually review existing exemptions and compensation for electricity costs and ensure the sector is exempt from future levies on gas. • Create and implement a clear strategy for upgrading the electricity grid to allow industry to electrify at pace. • Develop and introduce a government electrification business model to address the higher cost of using electricity versus natural gas. • Develop national infrastructure for supply of hydrogen and transport of CO_2.	**Policy Recommendations** • Keep glass packaging out of deposit return schemes across all nations of the UK to maximise glass collected for recycling and interoperability. • Ban the export of unprocessed waste glass to create a circular economy and reduce UK CO_2 emissions. • Collect all glass packaging separately at the kerbside to improve quality, ensuring local authorities have sufficient funding to do so. • Remove glass from the lower rate of landfill tax to incentivise recycling. • Increase flat glass recycling through policy reform.	**Policy Recommendations** • Follow the recommendations outlined in the Manufacturing Commission report on upskilling industry, manufacturing productivity and growth in England such as reforming the Apprenticeship Levy.

[1] https://www.ggf.org.uk/window-of-opportunity/
[2] https://www.britglass.org.uk/knowledge-base/resources-and-publications/glass-sector-net-zero-strategy-2050
[3] https://www.gov.uk/government/statistics/uk-waste-data/uk-statistics-on-waste#:~:text=Figures%20for%202021%20show%20that,%25)%20was%20generated%20in%20England
[4] https://wrapcymru.org.uk/sites/default/files/2023-07/WRAP-wales-msw-summary-report-english-2023.pdf
[5] https://npwd.environment-agency.gov.uk/Public/PublicSummaryData.aspx

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