

24th July, 2026

The Rt Hon Andy Burnham
Prime Minister
10 Downing Street
London
SW1A 2AA

Dear Prime Minister,

Re: Supporting the UK's Home, Gift and Independent Retail Sector

I am writing on behalf of the Home & Gift Association to highlight the significant contribution made by the UK's home, gift and stationery industry and to call for targeted Government support to help unlock further growth, investment and job creation.

The businesses that make up our sector are present in every constituency in the United Kingdom. They design, manufacture, source, distribute and sell products that drive consumer spending, support local high streets and employ people across retail, logistics, manufacturing, design, marketing and e-commerce.

The economic importance of our sector is substantial. Independent research commissioned by the British Allied Trades Federation found that the UK's gift economy contributes approximately **£58.2 billion in Gross Value Added (GVA)** and supports around **844,500 full-time equivalent jobs**. Collectively, industries represented by the British Allied Trades Federation contribute over £70 billion in GVA and support more than one million jobs across the UK economy.

These figures demonstrate that the home, gift and stationery sector is not a niche industry but a major contributor to economic activity, supporting businesses of all sizes, from independent retailers and family-run wholesalers to British manufacturers and internationally recognised brands.

Despite this, businesses throughout our supply chain face considerable challenges. Rising employment costs, increased National Insurance contributions, business rates pressures, energy costs and growing competition from overseas online marketplaces are placing significant strain on independent retailers and suppliers. Many businesses are ambitious and growth-focused but are finding it increasingly difficult to invest, recruit and expand.

At a time when the Government is seeking to drive economic growth, revitalise town centres and support British industry, we believe our sector can play a pivotal role.

To achieve this, we respectfully ask your Government to consider the following measures:

1. Business Rates Reform

Introduce meaningful reform to business rates that reflects the realities of modern retail and provides greater support to independent high street businesses competing against large online operators.

2. A Fair Trading Environment

Review the competitive advantages currently enjoyed by international online marketplaces and ensure imported products meet the same safety, environmental and taxation requirements as those supplied by UK businesses.

3. SME Growth and Investment Support

Provide targeted tax incentives, investment allowances and access to finance for independent retailers, wholesalers and manufacturers seeking to expand, modernise and create jobs.

4. Back British Manufacturing and Design

Increase support for British manufacturing, product innovation and design-led businesses through procurement policies, export programmes and grants that encourage production and sourcing within the UK.

5. Recognise Trade Shows as Economic Growth Engines

Trade exhibitions are often the primary route through which suppliers secure new customers, launch products and generate export opportunities. Recognition of trade events as strategic business infrastructure would help unlock growth across thousands of SMEs. Support could include export assistance for exhibitors, international buyer programmes and enhanced funding for trade promotion.

The Home & Gift Association also believes that the Government has an opportunity to champion our industry, in a way that encourages consumers, businesses and public bodies to support British brands, independent retailers and UK-made products.

Our industry has demonstrated remarkable resilience and adaptability. Businesses have embraced digital transformation, sustainable innovation and new routes to market. However, with the right support, we believe the sector could deliver even greater economic impact, supporting the Government's ambitions for growth, productivity, regeneration and employment.

As the voice of the home, gift and stationery industry, we would welcome the opportunity to work with Government to develop a dedicated growth strategy for our sector and to provide further insight into the challenges and opportunities facing the businesses we represent.

Independent retailers and suppliers are the lifeblood of our high streets and communities. They create jobs, foster entrepreneurship, support local economies and contribute billions to the national economy. Ensuring their continued success is not simply a retail issue; it is a matter of economic growth, community resilience and Britain's future prosperity.

Thank you for your consideration, and I look forward to the opportunity to discuss these matters further.

Yours sincerely,

Gemma Sault
Managing Director
Home & Gift Association