



Engaging with Government webinar executive summary

Overview

Chaired by British Furniture Confederation chairman Jonathan Hindle, a panel of heads of trade associations were joined by the chairman and vice chairman of the All-Party Parliamentary Furniture Industry Group (APPFIG) to discuss how to get industry specific government airtime on key UK policy and future trade discussions, engaging with the APPFIG and life after Brexit. The webinar took place on Wednesday 24 February 2021. It was part of a four-part series themed 'Innovation in Times of Crisis' from The Furniture Makers' Company, the City of London livery company and charity for the furnishing industry.

Chairman and panellists

- Jonathan Hindle, British Furniture Confederation chairman
- Jessica Alexander, executive director of the National Bed Federation
- Mark Eastwood, MP, vice chair of the APPFIG
- Nick Garratt, managing director of the British Furniture Manufacturers
- Jeremy Stein, managing director of the British Contract Furnishing Association
- Lee Wade, general manager at the Furniture Industry Research Association
- Mike Wood, MP, chairman of the APPFIG

Headline points from webinar

- Industry needs to engage with their local MPs to become more engaged to encourage them to try to belong to the APPFIG for furniture especially where there is a sector focus and employment.
- Our industry is dispersed around the UK so engagement with local MPs is paramount.
- Raising awareness of our issues at local levels can permeate national policy but only if there is a hierarchy of priorities.
- There are many challenges facing industry not only with COVID-19 but post-Brexit such as the increase of paperwork, VAT issues, confusion post-Brexit.
- Safeguard our industry by adopting a circular economy model and ramping up sustainability requirements, together with clarity about industry standards, will play a key role in futureproofing our sector going forwards.
- BCFA said the impact of COVID for 50% had been severe, 20% a moderate impact.
- BFM echoed the need for Buy British because 10,000 jobs at risk.
- NBF stressed the need for Extended Producer Responsibility schemes to be proactive about sustainability.
- Lee said there was a real need for safety and standards on chemicals.
- BCFA said Government in denial about the long-term impact of trade exports.
- There is a need to lobby David Frost about the industrial strategy and regional priorities.
- Components always going to be an issue about free movement of these and MP said to ensure that there is MP engagement on this issue.
- Look at innovative ways to incentivise spending and put forward to the chancellor.
- Look at tax relief on sustainability and include in a more digital environment.
- MP said that policy focus on sector specific issues will be quite limited so look at ways in which broader policies could help our industry such as extension of stamp duty exemptions.
- Mark/Mike, when questioned about IP issues said it was not their area of expertise, so to write to them with the issue.
- Jess – there is a landfill target of 2025. There is an ambition of an alternative strategy to waste with the circular economy model. Currently 20/25% new mattresses are “old” mattresses – target is 75%.
- Regeneration of high street is a major issue for all.

Watch the webinar

 The Furniture Makers' Company
the furnishing industry's charity

'Engaging with government' webinar

24 February 2021, 11:00am – 12:00pm

Mike Wood MP and Mark Eastwood MP, chair and vice chair of the All-Party Parliamentary Group for Furniture and Furnishings discuss the burning issues with the British Furniture Confederation board.

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Mike Wood MP
Chair of
APPG


Mark Eastwood MP
Vice Chair of
APPG


Jonathan Hindle
Chairman at
British Furniture Confederation


Jeremy Stein
Managing Director at
BCFA


Jessica Alexander
Executive Director at
NBF


Nick Garratt
Managing Director at
BFM

Thank you for joining -
the webinar will begin shortly

Panellist biographies



Jonathan M. Hindle FCSD

Jonathan originally trained as a designer and practiced at leading architectural and design and build companies before moving into sales and marketing in fit out, property development and office furniture design and manufacture. He founded KI's international subsidiary in the UK in 1994, subsequently developing its operations across the EMEA and South East Asia regions. Jonathan founded the Design Guild Mark in 2007. Jonathan is a Past Master of The Furniture Makers Company. Jonathan is a Fellow of the Chartered Society of Designers and is also the chairman of the British Furniture Confederation (BFC).



Jessica Alexander, executive director, National Bed Federation

Jessica's started her career as a journalist on the furniture trade journal Cabinet Maker. She set up her own PR & Communications business in 1987, when she began working as PR consultant for the National Bed Federation (NBF). In 1995 she set up The Sleep Council which ran as an independent entity until 2004 when it was reabsorbed back into NBF. In 2006 Jessica was appointed to run the NBF, becoming executive director two years later. In 2010, she launched the annual Bed Show and the NBF's independently audited Code of Practice in 2013. Today, she is

spearheading the NBF's agenda for members to adopt a circular business model and leading the NBF's partnership with Zero Waste Scotland (ZWS), developing an Extended Producer Responsibility (EPR) scheme for mattresses.



Nick Garratt, managing director, British Furniture Manufacturers

A qualified chemist and chartered engineer with a Masters in Business Administration, Nick Garratt's early career was spent in large engineering businesses primarily in the automotive industry. After six years as director in a component supply division of Bunzl plc, he moved into the furniture making side of the sector, joining Parker Knoll as operation's director in 2002. In 2005 he was appointed as operations director at Ercol and then later promoted to managing director, growing the business to a £20m turnover. After 13 years at Ercol, Nick took over as managing director of

trade association the British Furniture Manufacturers in 2018.



Jeremy Stein, managing director of the British Contract Furnishing Association

Jeremy Stein has been the managing director of the BCFA for five and a half years, and he previously held senior positions within the membership and publishing sectors. Jeremy was one of the key instigators that led to the formation of FIESTA (www.fiestalearning.co.uk) and he acts as Secretary to the FIESTA Executive. Amongst other sector roles Jeremy is the chair of the BSI Office Furniture Standards Committee and he is a member on the Furniture Makers Southern Committee.



Mike Wood MP, chair of the All-Party Parliamentary Furniture Industry Group

Mike was born and raised in the West Midlands and has campaigned on a variety of issues from a young age. He studied Economics and Law at Aberystwyth University and is a qualified barrister. He has stood for the Welsh assembly a number of times and was elected to Dudley Council in 2014, the following year he was elected was elected to Parliament in 2015, representing the Dudley South constituency. Mike currently serves as the Private Parliamentary Secretary (PPS) to the Home Secretary, Priti Patel

having formerly been the PPS to the then Secretary of State for International Trade, Liam Fox. Europe's largest secure trading estate is based in Mike's constituency, a facility that includes a number of furniture manufacturers. Mike has been chair of the All-Party Parliamentary Furniture Industry Group since 2019, previously having served as Vice Chair



Mark Eastwood MP, vice chair of the All-Party Parliamentary Furniture Industry Group

Mark Eastwood is the Member of Parliament for Dewsbury, an area with the 3rd largest furniture manufacturing base in the United Kingdom. Prior to his election, Mark worked in the furniture and bedding industry for over 15 years. His professional life has seen him work the likes of Gresham, Senator International and Teal Healthcare, among others. He currently serves as the Vice-Chairman of the All-Party Parliamentary Group for Furniture and Furnishings. He previously sat on the Select Committee on

the Future Relationship with the European Union.