



TEXTILE SERVICES ASSOCIATION

# Commercial Laundry: Delivering Resilience for the NHS, Hospitality and Industry



By delivering hygienically clean textiles and sustainable solutions, the commercial laundry sector plays a critical role in keeping vital sectors of the UK economy running.



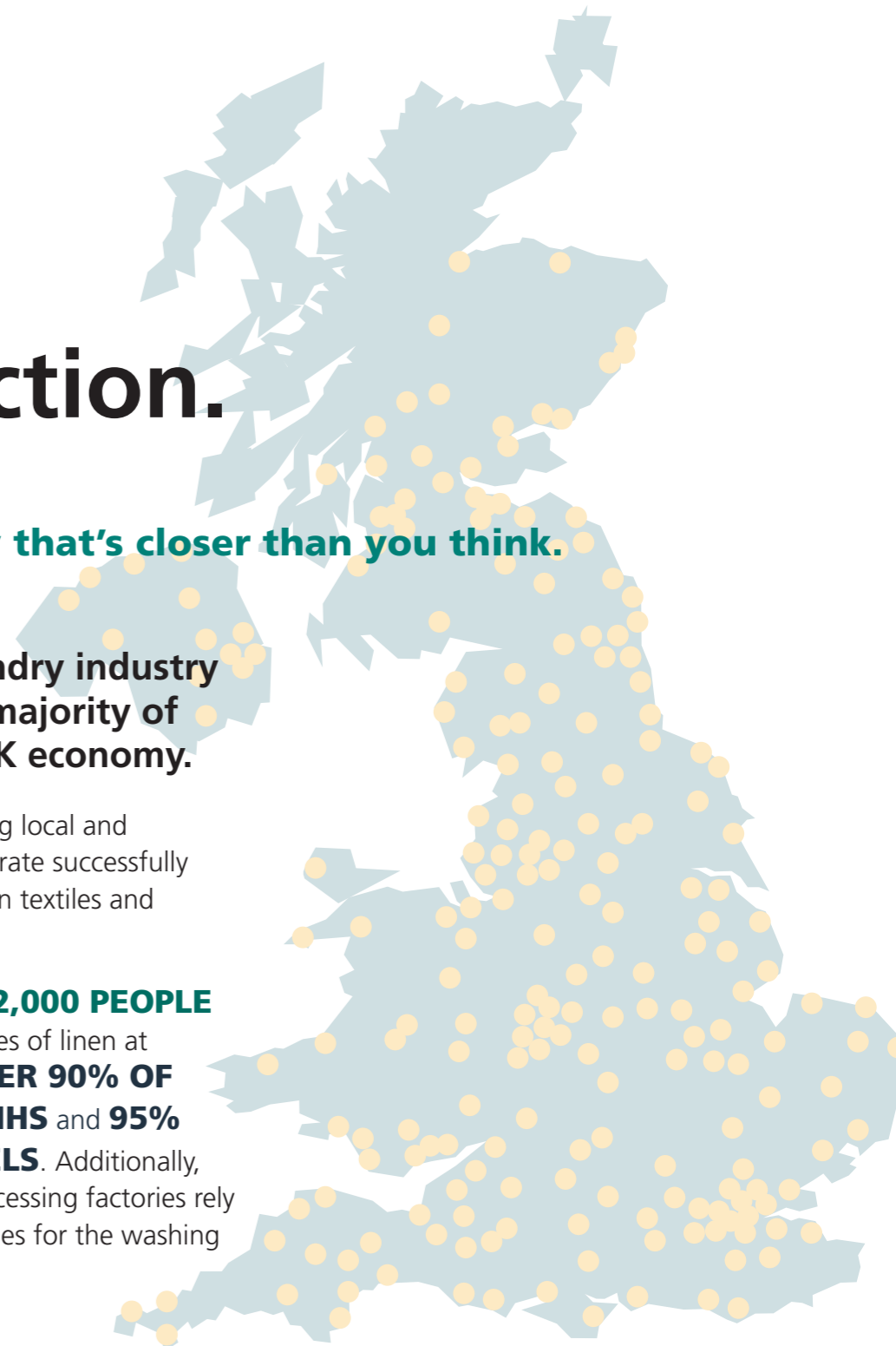
# An introduction.

**A hidden industry that's closer than you think.**

**The commercial laundry industry underpins the vast majority of sectors across the UK economy.**

It plays a critical role in helping local and nationwide businesses to operate successfully by delivering hygienically clean textiles and sustainable solutions.

The industry **EMPLOYS 22,000 PEOPLE** and processes 75 million pieces of linen at peak per week including **OVER 90% OF PRODUCTS FOR THE NHS** and **95% OF TEXTILE FOR HOTELS**. Additionally, food and pharmaceutical processing factories rely heavily on commercial laundries for the washing of workwear.



**REFERENCE SOURCES:**

- The Economic Value of the Textile Services Sector to the UK Economy 2025 Edition
- UK COVID-19 Inquiry – Witness Statement of David Steven on behalf of Textile Services Association Ltd, November 2024 - <https://covid19.public-inquiry.uk/wp-content/uploads/2025/05/31154212/INQ000513191.pdf>
- The Case for Reusable Isolation Gowns 2023 Issue
- TSA Sustainability Report 2025 Issue
- The Independent - News Article: <https://www.independent.co.uk/climate-change/ppe-gowns-nhs-government-latest-b2116210.html>

**WITHOUT A PROFESSIONAL LAUNDRY SERVICE**



**90% OF HOTELS**  
WOULD BE FORCED TO CLOSE  
WITHIN **THREE DAYS**



**90% OF HOSPITALS**  
WOULD BE FORCED TO CLOSE  
AFTER **ONE DAY**



**PHARMA & FOOD**  
**PROCESSING FACTORIES**  
WOULD CLOSE  
FOLLOWING **ONE DAY**

# Driving sustainability across essential services.

A circular economy for a sustainable future.

Commercial laundries play a vital role in the circular economy, with significant progress in reducing water and energy use, improving operational efficiency, cutting waste and supporting textile recycling across the industry.

The industry is committed to sustainability and energy efficiency across all areas of operation.



The **Infinite Textiles** scheme is an industry-wide certification for responsible textile care, sustainability and recycling.



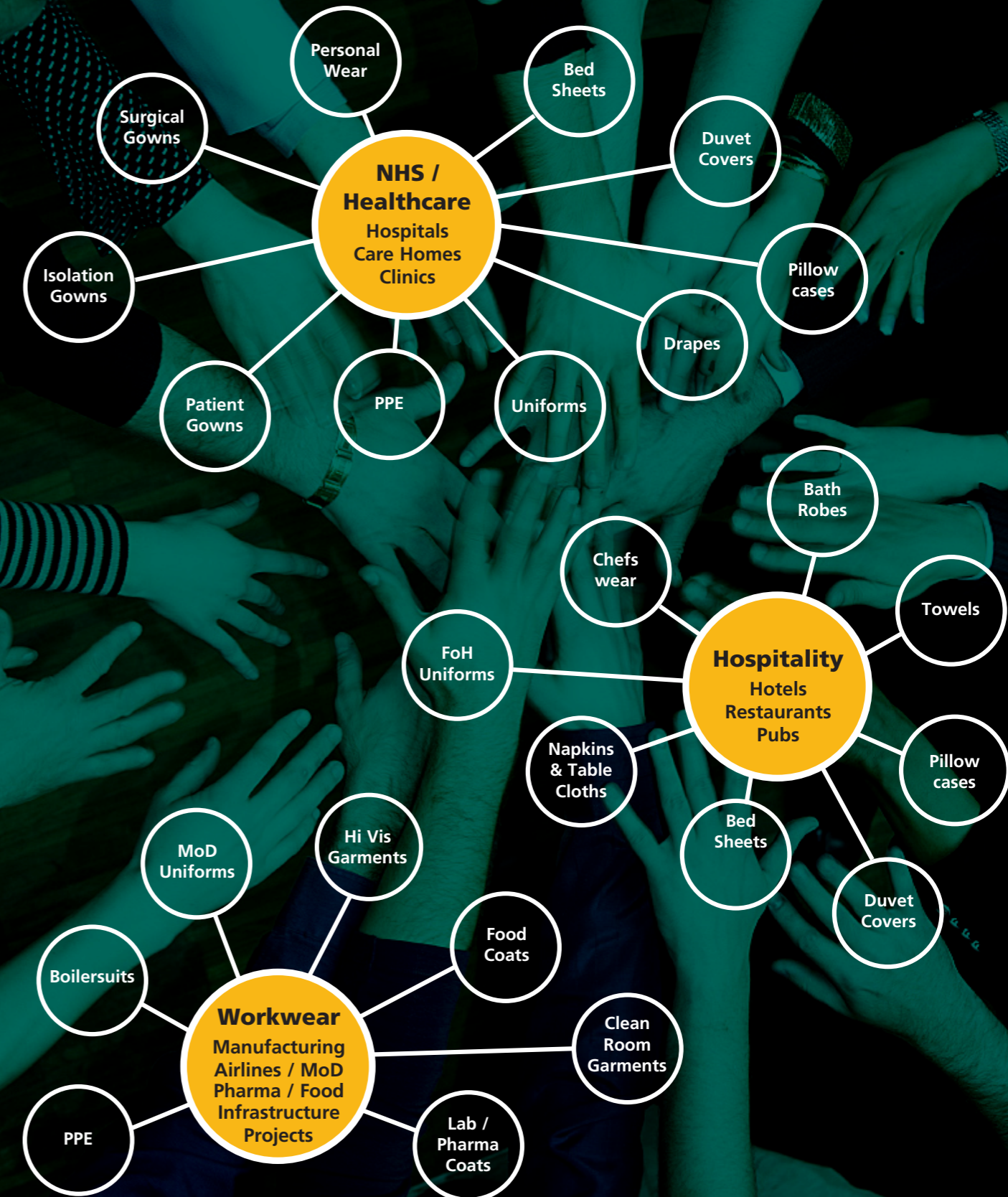
**GLARE** is the laundry industry's carbon emissions platform, helping textile businesses measure, track and improve their carbon footprint.



Over 140 UK laundry and textile sites have now joined the **Climate Change Agreement** scheme, reducing energy costs and improve sustainability.



# Who we service.





# Key areas where we can support you further.

## NHS/Healthcare

- Work with Government to help the NHS achieve net zero through greater use of reusable textiles
- Supporting national resilience through infection prevention, R&D, and stronger hygiene and infection control across the NHS and social care

## Hospitality

- A simple way to support hospitality resilience and reduce inflationary pressures is to include commercial laundry within wider sector support measures

## Wider economic and environmental impact

- We improve unemployment levels with entry-level jobs nationwide
- Supporting Government's net zero ambitions by helping key sectors reduce Scope 3 emissions and improve sustainability

## Where we need support to make further progress

- Classify the industry as essential to ensure continued support for the critical sectors we serve
- Include the commercial laundry industry in national resilience planning to support pandemic preparedness
- Inclusion in Government strategy and policy where appropriate

Further information is provided on each of these topics overleaf.

# NHS/Healthcare.

Work with Government to help the NHS achieve net zero through greater use of reusable textiles.

## Reusable textiles for a sustainable and resilient NHS

The commercial laundry sector can support the Government and the NHS in accelerating progress towards net zero while strengthening healthcare resilience through the wider adoption of reusable gowns and textiles.

Reusable gowns provide a secure, long-term solution to future pandemic preparedness, with the UK sector able to process up to 50 million gowns per week. Unlike single-use alternatives, reusable gowns can be safely reused more than 70 times and stored efficiently for future outbreaks, helping to avoid the supply chain shortages experienced during COVID-19.

The environmental and financial benefits are significant. Cabinet Office analysis found that single-use gowns produce 1,164% more carbon emissions than reusable alternatives. Transitioning to reusable gowns could also REMOVE AN EST. 42,000 TONNES of clinical waste annually and DELIVER SAVINGS OF £1.2 BILLION PER YEAR ACROSS THE NHS.

This is an existing, proven solution currently used across approximately 20% of the NHS estate, supported by UK supply chains, British manufacturing and fully compliant reusable products meeting all national and international healthcare standards.

### DELIVERED BY:

- **Recognition of commercial laundry as an essential service** within national resilience and emergency planning frameworks.
- **Formal inclusion within the National Emergency Plan for Fuel** to ensure continuity of support for healthcare, social care and other essential sectors during periods of disruption.
- **Inclusion within the Government's pandemic preparedness planning**, reflecting the sector's critical role in infection prevention, reusable PPE provision and healthcare resilience, as outlined in our Covid Inquiry witness statement.
- **Involvement in wider national contingency and resilience planning**, including emergency response frameworks for national crises and conflict scenarios.
- **Engagement with the Department of Health and Social Care** to ensure the sector's expertise, operational capability and contribution to NHS sustainability and resilience are reflected within future policy and strategy development.

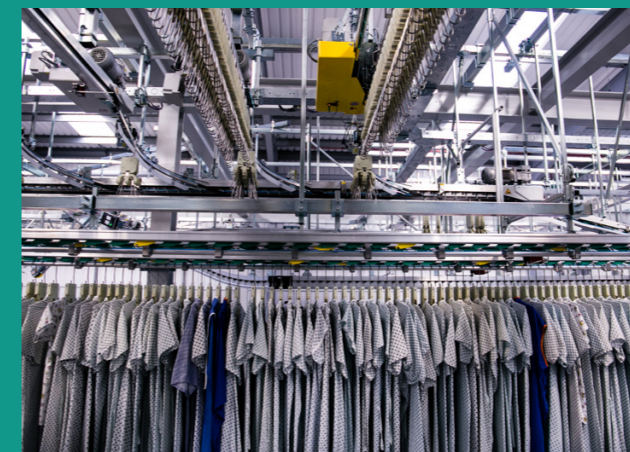
Supporting national resilience through infection prevention, R&D, and stronger hygiene and infection control across the NHS and social care.

## Strengthening national resilience

The commercial laundry sector plays a vital role in supporting infection prevention, hygiene and resilience across healthcare, food processing and pharmaceutical industries.

During the COVID-19 pandemic, the sector demonstrated its ability to respond rapidly to increased demand while maintaining essential hygiene standards. The crisis also highlighted how **REUSABLE GOWN SERVICES COULD HAVE REDUCED WASTE AND SAVED THE GOVERNMENT MILLIONS OF POUNDS**, reinforcing the need to ensure the sector is well positioned to support future emergencies.

Through continued investment in R&D and collaboration with academic and research bodies, the industry is helping develop evidence-based solutions to support pandemic readiness, food security and health security across the UK.



### DELIVERED BY:

- **Recognition of commercial laundry as a critical partner in infection prevention and control**, supporting patient safety and operational resilience.
- **More collaboration with UKHSA, the Department of Health & Social Care and NHS stakeholders** to strengthen hygiene standards, infection prevention measures and healthcare resilience across the UK.
- **Recognition of the infection prevention benefits of professionally processed healthcare textiles over home washing and unmanaged laundering practices**, particularly within NHS uniforms and care home settings.
- **Increased engagement with the sector on R&D and innovation**, supporting the development of infection solutions, standards and best practice guidance.
- **Inclusion within healthcare emergency planning**, recognising the industry's role in maintaining hygienic and operational healthcare environments during routine operations and periods of national emergency.

# Hospitality.

**A simple way to support hospitality resilience and reduce inflationary pressures is to include commercial laundry within wider sector support measures.**

## Supporting the hospitality sector and the wider UK economy

Commercial laundry is an essential part of the UK hospitality supply chain, providing approximately **95% of hotel linen services nationwide**. The sector plays a critical role in supporting hospitality businesses, tourism, employment and economic activity across the UK.

**HOSPITALITY CONTRIBUTES MORE THAN £130 BILLION TO THE UK ECONOMY AND SUPPORTS APPROXIMATELY 3 MILLION JOBS.** Commercial laundries are fundamental to maintaining operational standards across hotels and accommodation providers, processing significant volumes of linen daily to support hygiene, customer experience and business continuity. While closely linked to the hospitality sector, commercial laundry was not included within targeted pandemic support measures.

**Recognising the laundry sector as part of the wider hospitality ecosystem and ensuring access to proportionate support in future periods of disruption would help protect both industries, strengthen supply chain resilience and reduce inflationary pressures on hospitality businesses.**

### DELIVERED BY:

- **Recognition of commercial laundry as a critical part of the hospitality supply chain**, supporting hotels, accommodation providers and the wider visitor economy.
- **Inclusion of the commercial laundry sector within future Government hospitality support packages**, ensuring proportionate support during periods of economic disruption or sector shutdowns.
- **Recognition of the dependency between hospitality and commercial laundries**, with 90% of hotels reliant on professional laundry services to remain operational.
- **Targeted support to help safeguard resilience, capacity and investment across sectors**, helping to prevent future supply shortages and reduce inflationary pressures on hospitality businesses.
- **Engagement with Government departments to ensure laundry is appropriately represented within hospitality, business and economic policy development**, recognising its contribution to employment, tourism and the UK economy.



# The wider economic impact.

## The industry improves unemployment levels with entry-level jobs nationwide

### Supporting employment, skills and economic growth across the UK

The commercial laundry sector provides **STABLE, ACCESSIBLE EMPLOYMENT** opportunities across the UK, supporting skills development, apprenticeships and long-term career progression.

The industry is committed to **SUPPORTING EMPLOYMENT OPPORTUNITIES FOR UNDERREPRESENTED AND DISADVANTAGED GROUPS**, including:

- People who are unemployed or economically inactive
- Young people and school or college leavers
- Care leavers
- People with disabilities or long-term health conditions
- Older workers
- People returning to work
- Ex-offenders
- Refugees

Working closely with Government employability programmes and Jobcentres, the sector is helping tackle labour shortages, strengthen local workforces and support regional economic growth across the UK

#### DELIVERED BY:

- Recognition of the sector's contribution to UK employment, skills and economic growth.
- Continued collaboration with the Department for Work and Pensions on careers, skills and workforce participation.
- Support for apprenticeships, training and workforce development to strengthen long-term resilience.
- Recognition of the sector's role in providing accessible employment and career opportunities.
- Engagement on future employment, industrial and skills policy to support economic growth and resilience.



# Net zero ambitions.

## Supporting Government's net zero ambitions by helping key sectors reduce Scope 3 emissions and improve sustainability.

### Driving sustainability improvements across key UK sectors

The commercial laundry sector plays a vital role in supporting the Government's net zero ambitions and helping industries reduce Scope 3 emissions across healthcare, hospitality, manufacturing and food production.

Through industry initiatives, laundries are:

- Improving resource efficiency
- Reducing waste
- Reducing emissions
- Increasing textile reuse
- Increasing textile recycling

As part of wider supply chains, these reductions directly support businesses and organisations in meeting their own sustainability and net zero targets.

**Built on a circular model of reuse, repair and recycling, the sector delivers significant environmental benefits while supporting more sustainable supply chains across the UK.**

#### DELIVERED BY:

- Recognition of the commercial laundry sector's role in reducing Scope 3 emissions across essential UK industries.
- Greater collaboration with Government, the NHS and hospitality sectors on joined-up sustainability and net zero strategies.
- Recognition of the benefits of reusable and circular textile systems in reducing waste, carbon emissions and resource use.
- Support for industry-led sustainability initiatives, including carbon measurement and textile recycling programmes.
- Engagement with the sector on future sustainability, circular economy and net zero policy development.



# Conclusion

## Key Questions

1. How can the commercial laundry sector be better integrated into Government policy, resilience planning and support frameworks?

2. How can commercial laundry ensure it's recognised as an essential service supporting sectors including the NHS, hospitality, food processing and pharmaceutical industries?

3. How can the sector best support Government priorities across pandemic preparedness, net zero, infection prevention, energy efficiency and economic resilience?

## Government and Stakeholder Engagement

Identify the appropriate ministers, departments and stakeholders for ongoing engagement, including the Department of Health and Social Care, Department for Energy Security and Net Zero, Department for Business and Trade, Department for Work and Pensions, UKHSA and relevant Parliamentary groups.

## Next Steps: Working together to deliver more

Agree practical next steps for continued collaboration, including Ministerial meetings, site visits, industry roundtables and potential Parliamentary engagement to raise awareness of the sector's essential role, resilience capability and contribution to the UK economy.

## Get in Contact

We welcome the opportunity to discuss this further in more detail.

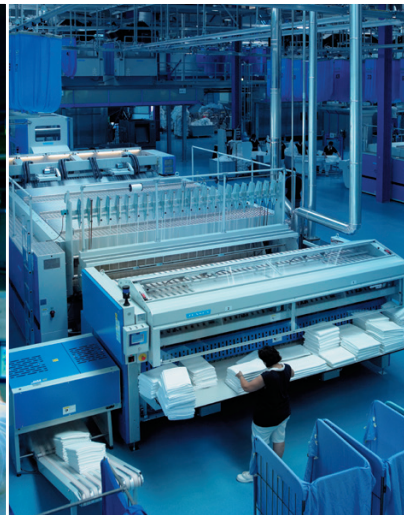
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# Working alongside leading organisations and institutions



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