



The Rt. Hon. Andy Burnham MP
10 Downing Street
London SW1A 2AA

5 August 2026

Dear Prime Minister,

We write to wish you success in leading our country and particularly in your ambition of rebuilding a strong, modern industrial base in every region.

Driving sustainable economic growth across the UK will be one of your government's most pressing challenges. As organisations at the heart of industry and science, we welcome the commitment from the Secretary of State for Business, Innovation, Science and Trade to place science at the centre of this mission.

We look forward to working with the new ministerial team and civil service colleagues at the expanded DBIST to deliver a successful future for chemistry and the chemical industry in this country. We urge you now, as a priority, to set out a clear vision for chemicals in the UK, together with a plan to deliver it with the sector.

The chemical sciences are a cornerstone of national prosperity, security and resilience, contributing over £60 billion of economic activity annually and underpinning many of the UK's most important industries. The sector directly employs around 140,000 people. Its supply chains contribute £220 billion a year in GVA and support 2.6 million jobs. Our industry is concentrated in regions across the UK where industrial growth and regeneration are most needed.

Chemicals will also be the foundation of future growth: they are critical to at least five of the eight growth sectors identified in the government's Industrial Strategy: Advanced Manufacturing, Clean Energy, Defence, Digital Technologies and Life Sciences.

However, the sector faces significant challenges. Since 2021, UK chemical output has declined sharply and 26 different sites have closed, resulting in at least 8,000 job losses, weakened industrial resilience and growing dependence on imports. High energy costs and an increasingly complex regulatory environment are making it harder for UK producers to compete internationally.



This trend can be reversed. Other economies, including the EU, are taking decisive steps to support their chemical industries through targeted investment, regulatory reform, and measures to improve competitiveness. The UK must do the same if it is to retain and attract investment in chemical business.

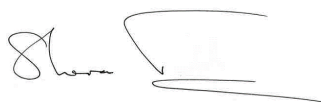
As your government takes forward the Modern Industrial Strategy, we urge you to recognise chemicals as a truly foundational sector and to work with us in prioritising action in six areas:

- **Deliver internationally competitive industrial energy prices**
- **Ensure a pathway to net zero that encourages investment and supports industrial growth**
- **Reform UK REACH and reduce unnecessary regulatory duplication**
- **Expand apprenticeships, strengthen technical education and support re-training**
- **Support investment in new, innovative technologies and products**
- **Ensure a joined-up and long-term approach across Government and the sector**

With the right policy framework, the chemicals sector can play a part in delivering the good growth in every postcode as well as the resilience and regional regeneration the UK needs.

We would welcome the opportunity to meet with you to discuss how your government can support the sector to achieve these goals.

Yours sincerely,



Sharon Todd OBE
CEO – SCI



Steve Elliott
CEO – Chemical Industries Association



Dr Helen Pain MBE
CEO - Royal Society of Chemistry



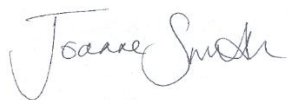
Yvonne Baker OBE
CEO - Institution of Chemical Engineers



David Talbot
Chief Executive Officer – CATCH UK



Ian Cranshaw
Operations Manager – Chemicals Northwest



Joanne Smith
Chief Executive – NEPIC



Dr Alan Wiles
Executive Director – ScottChem

cc:

The Rt. Hon. Jonathan Reynolds MP - Secretary of State for Business, Innovation, Science & Trade

Blair McDougall MP - Minister for Industry, DBIST

The Rt. Hon. John Healey MP - Chancellor of the Exchequer

The Rt. Hon. James Murray MP - Financial Secretary to the Treasury

The Rt. Hon. Miatta Fahnbulleh MP - Secretary of State for Energy Security & Net Zero

The Rt. Hon. Dame Angela Eagle DBE - Secretary of State for Environment, Food & Rural Affairs

Varun Chandra - Prime Minister's Chief Business Adviser

The Rt. Hon. James Purnell – Prime Minister's Chief of Staff