

BCC Director General Shevaun Haviland: No more tax on business

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If the Government is serious about growth, then it cannot tax business any further, Director General of the [BCC](#), Shevaun Haviland, warned.

At the BCC's Global Annual Conference 2025, she unveiled new research showing the impact of the increase in National Insurance Contributions on firms.

The survey of more than 570 businesses – mostly SMEs – by the BCC Insights Unit, found that:

- One third of firms (32%) said they have either made staff redundant or are planning to as a direct result of the NICs increase
- Breaking the data out, 13% say they have already made staff redundant and 19% say they are actively considering redundancies

In her keynote address, Shevaun urged the Government to use the BCC's Blueprint for Growth to create a long-term platform to expand the economy.

ON TRADE AND INVESTMENT

Shevaun welcomed the new Trade Strategy, saying:

“It sets out a clear, evidence-based approach to raising the UK's export game.

“It rightly targets our strengths in services, and vital high-growth goods sectors, while identifying key markets in the Indo-Pacific, Americas and Europe.

“A focus on sectoral and digital trade deals is also welcome, alongside a commitment to a functioning rules-based global trading system. This must mark the start of our ambition to promote our country around the world.

“Brand Britain is an incredibly powerful tool, and our politicians, diplomats and business leaders must all speak as one on selling our great country and driving inward investment.

“Let’s use our new Industrial and Trade Strategies as our Manifesto for Brand Britain all over the world.”

ON REDUCING COSTS

Emphasising the importance of easing the cost burden to help business, Shevaun said:

“The size and scale of the rise in National Insurance Contributions took businesses by surprise.

“We were unprepared for the huge burden placed upon us, and it led many of us to rethink our growth plans. As a result, our business confidence measures have fallen to their lowest levels since 2022.

“For the government to achieve its Growth Mission, people need to stay in work and businesses need to invest. As always, businesses soak it up and move forward, but they feel like they are wading through treacle.”

ON SKILLS

Addressing the need to close the UK’s yawning skills gap, she said:

“In 1997, Tony Blair said ‘education, education, education’. The rallying cry for 2025 must be ‘skills, skills, skills’.

“Two thirds of businesses tell us they are facing skills shortages, and this is stopping their growth.

“They tell us too many young people turn up at their doors without many of the core skills they need for the world of work.

“We need to bring the workplace into education and our young people into our workplaces before they drop out of the classroom. It is vital we link up the worlds of education and business like never before.”

ON SUPPORTING SMEs

Urging the Government to buy British, she said:

“Government must use the power of its purse. It must buy British. We need government to keep its promise to boost British businesses through its infrastructure strategy, and to apply these rules to all areas of government procurement.

“Get this right and we can inject billions into the economy. Taxpayers’ money going back to taxpayers’ pockets.”

See Shevaun's full speech [here](#).