

Adapting to Change: The Key Trends Defining the UK Pump Industry

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The UK pump industry is operating at a pivotal moment. Long recognised as a critical enabler of sectors ranging from water and energy to manufacturing and building services, the industry is now being reshaped by powerful forces including sustainability, regulation, skills shortages, and digital transformation. While these trends present challenges, they also create opportunities for innovation and growth.

As the industry's trade body, the British Pump Manufacturers Association (BPMA) works closely with its members to help navigate this evolving landscape and to ensure the UK pump sector remains competitive, resilient, and future-ready.

Energy Efficiency and Sustainability as Strategic Priorities

Energy efficiency continues to sit firmly at the top of the industry agenda. Pumping systems account for a significant share of global electricity consumption, meaning even modest efficiency gains can have a substantial impact on operating costs and carbon emissions.

Manufacturers are responding through innovation — improving hydraulic performance, integrating intelligent controls, and focusing on system-level optimisation rather than standalone components. At the same time, decarbonisation measures such as the Carbon Border Adjustment Mechanism (CBAM) are advancing rapidly, reinforcing the need for demonstrable environmental performance and transparency throughout the supply chain.

Sustainability is no longer simply a matter of regulatory compliance. For many customers, it has become a

key purchasing criterion, making energy-efficient, low-carbon solutions a source of competitive advantage for UK manufacturers.

Managing Regulatory Complexity

Alongside sustainability, regulation remains a defining issue. The European Union is progressing the Ecodesign for Sustainable Products Regulation (ESPR), a wide-ranging framework that will influence how products are designed, documented, and placed on the market. Its scope extends beyond energy efficiency to include durability, reparability, data transparency, and lifecycle considerations.

In the UK, the Government is considering legal alignment with aspects of ESPR through an extension of CE recognition. While alignment can reduce barriers to trade, it also introduces complexity for manufacturers operating across multiple markets.

The BPMA continues to play an active advocacy role in this area, engaging with UK policymakers and working at a European level through Europump. Our focus is on ensuring that regulation is proportionate, practical, and supportive of innovation, while providing manufacturers with the clarity and certainty they need to invest for the long term.

Addressing Skills and Talent Challenges

The pump industry, like much of UK engineering, faces an ongoing shortage of skilled personnel. An ageing workforce, combined with intense competition for engineering talent, means attracting and retaining new entrants is a growing concern.

Throughout 2026 and beyond, the BPMA will place increased emphasis on careers, skills and training through its Recruitment Committee and the continued development of its comprehensive training programme. These initiatives are designed to upskill the existing workforce while promoting the pump industry as a modern, technology-driven sector offering long-term career opportunities.

Sustained collaboration between industry, education providers and government will be essential to building a robust talent pipeline capable of supporting future growth.

Digitisation and the Rise of Data-Driven Manufacturing

Digitisation is accelerating across the pump sector. Under ESPR, manufacturers will see increasing requirements for digital product information, leading to electronic nameplates and Digital Product Passports. These tools will improve traceability, compliance, and access to product data across the entire lifecycle.

Beyond regulatory drivers, digital technologies, including artificial intelligence, are being adopted to improve design, manufacturing, predictive maintenance, and business decision-making. When implemented effectively, these technologies can enhance efficiency, quality, and competitiveness in both domestic and global markets.

A Sector Looking Forward

The trends shaping the UK pump industry are significant, but they point towards a sector that is adaptable, innovative, and increasingly strategic in its role. With the right support, skills and regulatory frameworks,

the industry is well positioned to contribute to the UK's industrial resilience and net zero ambitions.

The BPMA remains committed to supporting its members through leadership, advocacy, and practical guidance – ensuring the UK pump industry is not just responding to change, but helping to shape it.