

UK cleaning, hygiene and waste sector nears £72bn as workforce and business numbers rise

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The UK cleaning, hygiene and waste industry has grown to almost £72 billion in value, reinforcing its position as one of the country's ten largest sectors, according to the [British Cleaning Council](#)'s 2026 annual research report.

The latest figures show the sector contributed nearly £72bn to the UK economy in 2023, up from a revised £67.7bn in 2022. The report was released on 18 February at the Manchester Cleaning Show.

Employment across the industry has also increased. The total number of people working in cleaning, hygiene and waste now stands at 1.51 million, representing around five per cent of the UK workforce, compared with 1.49 million the previous year.

Business numbers continue to edge upwards. The report identifies 78,915 businesses operating in 2025, up from 77,535 in 2024, highlighting steady growth across the sector.

Facilities management accounts for the largest share of industry turnover at close to 46 per cent. Waste and resource management contributes 26 per cent, cleaning activities 18 per cent and landscape services just under 10 per cent.

The sector remains highly competitive and dominated by smaller operators. Around 83 per cent of businesses are micro enterprises employing fewer than 10 people, while more than 99 per cent are privately owned firms.

Among the sector's strengths, the report highlights the UK Cleaning Career Development Zone, which brings together information on training and development opportunities in one accessible online platform. It also points to growing uptake of the Level 2 Cleaning Hygiene Operative apprenticeship.

However, challenges persist. Recruitment difficulties, an ageing workforce and what the BCC describes as a lack of government recognition are cited as ongoing concerns.

The research provides detailed analysis of workforce characteristics, pay and working hours, alongside insights into sub-sectors and occupations including pest control officers and caretakers.

BCC Chair David Garcia said: "Our annual research report is a detailed, insightful and a key industry document. We are pleased to be able to offer a digital copy free, on request.

"It shows that the cleaning, hygiene and waste industry remains one of the biggest and most essential industries in the UK.

"It paints a picture of an industry which is steadily growing, with strengths and challenges.

"I commend the report to my industry colleagues and I urge you to contact us for a copy, if it will be of use."

To order your free digital copy of the BCC's 2026 research report, email compsec@britishcleaningcouncil.org. Attendees at the Cleaning Show can order a copy at the BCC stand.

All figures contained in the report are the latest available at the time of publication.