

Press release: New Industrial Strategy to boost NI earning power and innovation

Business Secretary Greg Clark has today published the [UK government's modern Industrial Strategy](#), with a plan to boost productivity and the earning power of people and businesses throughout Northern Ireland and the whole of the UK.

The White Paper outlines a plan to drive growth across the whole of the UK, build on the strengths of places, boost skills, improve productivity, boost people's earning power and upgrade infrastructure.

The Strategy includes flagship Sector Deal agreements with a number of Northern Ireland's most important sectors – automotive, construction, Life Sciences and Artificial Intelligence (AI).

Northern Ireland has a world-leading reputation in a number of key sectors including construction and automotive, as well as future industries such as Artificial Intelligence (AI) and life sciences and the government has confirmed these sectors will be the first to benefit from these new strategic and long-term partnerships with government, backed by private sector co-investment. Work will continue with other sectors on transformative sector deals.

With a clear ambition of boosting productivity and economic growth, the Industrial Strategy contains a number of policy measures to benefit Northern Ireland:

- A new Strength in Places Fund to support innovation excellence that can demonstrate a strong impact on local growth, with Northern Ireland's innovators and communities perfectly-placed to benefit
- Increasing national research and development spending to 2.4 per cent of GDP by 2027, boosting Northern Ireland's research and innovation base, and offering new opportunities for innovative companies to bid for funding through the Government's flagship science and research fund, the Industrial Strategy Challenge Fund
- A commitment to work with partners in the devolved nations to consider how Local Industrial Strategies could deliver for places in Northern Ireland in future.
- Continuing to support advanced data and digital infrastructure across the United Kingdom, including the testing and deployment of 5G technologies
- Government will open negotiations for a Belfast City Deal as part of its commitment to a comprehensive and ambitious set of city deals across Northern Ireland

Secretary of State for Northern Ireland James Brokenshire said:

“Championing the unique strengths of Northern Ireland, the new Industrial Strategy launched today clearly demonstrates the UK Government’s commitment to boost earning power, drive growth and offer opportunities across the country. It is a further example of the UK Government building an economy that is fit for the future.

“Building on the extra £660 million set out for Northern Ireland in the Chancellor’s budget, businesses, innovators, people and places throughout Northern Ireland will benefit from the Industrial Strategy’s removal of barriers to innovation and growth, as well as from its preparation for the opportunities and grand challenges of the coming decades.

“Thanks to New Sector Deals and investment in R&D, we will support the industries of the future – such as life sciences, Artificial Intelligence (AI) and cyber security – where Northern Ireland is at the cutting-edge and has the potential to lead the world.

“Over the coming weeks, as we look to restore the Executive, I will continue to explore how to maximise the positive impact this Strategy will have in Northern Ireland, to build a better, more productive and more prosperous UK economy.”

Business Secretary Greg Clark said:

“Our new, ambitious Industrial Strategy will build on the UK’s strengths, boost productivity and earning power and will ensure we are one of the most competitive places in the world to start and grow a business.

“We recognise no two economies within the UK are the same – for Northern Ireland, strengths include construction, life sciences and emerging sectors like AI. But we also recognise that our Industrial Strategy is not something that is done to business, it is done with, and indeed, by business.

“This strategy is about firms from across the UK coming together and working with Government to build a better, more productive and more prosperous UK economy – fit for the future.”

The Strategy outlines how the Government is allocating the second wave of the Industrial Strategy Challenge Fund, matching innovation excellence held by businesses and universities across the UK.

A number of the Challenge areas set to receive significant Government funding will offer significant opportunities for Northern Ireland’s businesses and universities including:

- transforming construction – Part of the proposed fund is for a UK Active Building Centre, this will build significantly on this area of expertise Northern Ireland’s companies in this sector
- healthcare – with an emerging cluster of connected health, assisted living and data analytic hubs, including The Connected Health Innovation Centre (CHIC) and companies such as Intelesens, Leckey Design, Data Analytics Labs, Brainwave Bank and Analytics Engine, Northern Ireland is well poised to become a leading location in the UK in this area

- services 4.0 – Belfast is ranked as the UK's number one destination for fintech and cybersecurity, and is home to first rate examples of industry and academia collaboration in the Capital Markets Collaborative Network (CMCN). Investment through the Services 4.0 challenge will help build on NI's position as a global centre of R&D excellence in Capital Markets technology
- energy revolution – Northern Ireland currently has significant research capability and expertise within its universities and colleges. Ulster University's Centre for Sustainable Technologies (CST) and The Centre for Advanced Sustainable Energy (CASE) at Queen's University are prime examples of industry-led sustainable energy research centres that could benefit.