

cancer and Alzheimer's directly at risk or to drive important jobs and business investment away from the UK.

We are also committed to increasing public confidence in science. Britain has remained at the forefront in crucial fields like fertilisation treatment and stem cell research and we want to ensure people feel confident in future medical advances.

Promoting manufacturing

Manufacturing is crucial to our country's future prosperity – it creates a sixth of our output, employs 3.5 million people and produces more than 60 per cent of our exports. The manufacturing sector is also vital to innovation and accounts for most of the scientific developments in the UK.

Our vision for the manufacturing sector is one where we fully exploit advances in science and technology and embrace the opening up of world markets. The manufacturing sector has been through a tough time and global competition is intensifying. But recent developments show the industry has turned a corner. Britain remains one of the world's most popular destinations for inward investment. Recent reports continue to point to growth in manufacturing with new business expanding and export orders picking up, recent ONS figures also show the sector is performing well.

Our Manufacturing Strategy launched in 2002, the first in over 30 years, focuses on the seven areas that are crucial to the long-term health of British manufacturing:

- Economic stability – allowing businesses to plan for the long term.
- Investment – utilising modern, efficient processes and equipment to drive up performance.
- Science and innovation – helping manufacturers exploit the UK's strong science base to create innovative, high-value products.
- Best practice – raising productivity and competitiveness by continuous improvement.
- Skills and education – developing a skilled and innovative manufacturing workforce.
- Modern infrastructure – providing effective transport and communications networks.
- The right market framework – providing the business environment the manufacturing needs to compete globally.

Since publishing the strategy we have:

- launched the Manufacturing Advisory Service, which has been hugely successful in offering practical advice to manufacturers
- strengthened the provision of skills and training to meet the needs of employers and their employees through various schemes including Apprenticeships and Sector Skills Councils
- improved Labour's Research and Development Tax Credit, first introduced in 2000, which has supplied £700 million of government support for business R&D
- invested heavily in national research, to ensure our science base remains world-class
- set up Innovation and Growth teams in key manufacturing sectors, to address strategic challenges and opportunities.