

FSB press release

13 million small businesses join forces to make voice heard at G7 conference & view from Cornwall

- Federation of Small Businesses (FSB) coordinates first joint intervention of its kind from groups across EU, Canada, US and Japan
- 'SME7' collective issues shared recommendations, stressing that "recovery will hinge on success of the 99%"
- Call to action comes as finance ministers meet seven days before G7 commences in Cornwall
- Cornish businesses will be keen to see some benefit after the disruption

Small business bodies representing firms from across G7 nations and the European Union are calling on conference leaders to put smaller enterprises "at the heart of economic recovery plans" as finance ministers meet in London ahead of the conference getting underway in Cornwall in seven days' time.

In a joint statement, issued today after a meeting of the groups convened by FSB last month, the SME7 collective also urges leaders to "support small businesses on their journeys to reduce carbon emissions", "address the digital divide" and "champion a small business-friendly international trading framework", asks aligning with the G7 policy priority areas [outlined](#) by the Government.

Small and mid-sized firms make-up 99% of businesses across the G7. The groups, which together represent 13 million businesses internationally, argue that smaller firms and sole traders "must be top of mind" as conference talks progress.

In addition to the joint statement, FSB has put forward seven specific recommendations covering the G7 priority areas. The UK's largest business group is urging policymakers to:

- Introduce a World Trade Organisation (WTO) committee dedicated to the trading needs of micro, small and medium-sized enterprises, as outlined in its '[Trading Forward](#)' study.
- Ensure any future free trade agreements include dedicated small business chapters, so that smaller firms can make the most of preferential terms, comparable to that [included](#) in the EU-UK deal.
- Unlock the potential of small firms that sell goods and services online by removing barriers to access and digitising customs paperwork, as set out in '[Destination Digital](#)'.
- Follow the [five principles](#) it has set out to ensure smaller firms can successfully make the transition to a net zero economy.
- Introduce digital vouchers to ensure small firms can access the right tech and training.
- Deliver full fibre broadband connectivity for every small business premises.
- Radically reform business taxation to make it fairer for small businesses at the heart of community high streets, as proposed in '[Streets Ahead](#)'.

FSB National Chairman Mike Cherry said: *"The overwhelming majority of firms across the G7 are smaller businesses and sole traders. As finance ministers gather today, and as we look ahead to the full conference launch seven days from now, it's vital that all those attending have the needs of small firms front and centre as they agree measures to get the global economy back on track.*

"Our recovery will hinge on the 99%, so its voice must not be lost – that's why we've coordinated this one-of-a-kind intervention.

"From improving digital connectivity, to aiding the transition to net zero, to formulating trade policies that work for all, it's so important that global leaders work together to facilitate a small business, sole trader, entrepreneur-led recovery, one that secures sustainable prosperity in every local community across the UK and beyond."

For Cornish businesses and their staff however, the physical presence of the meeting is causing disruption which is not helpful at a time when businesses are just trying to get back on their feet and capitalise on a busy summer.

Ann Vandermeulen, Cornwall FSB Development Manager summarised the local view:

"Due to timescale and nature of the event there has been little scope for a significant number of local businesses to get involved in directly supplying into G7. Whilst highlighting any opportunities and sharing information so that there will be a financial benefit to a few, we have also made sure that we look after Cornish businesses that are rebuilding their businesses and going about making their day to day livelihoods. At such a crucial time in their recovery, supporting that day job is paramount.

We have also been included in the work being done to showcase Cornwall as a high tech, sustainable place of commerce as well as being a very beautiful place to holiday. If we are to be a serious contender in funding rounds and catching the eye of Government, that kind of profile raising is also an absolutely necessary investment in the levelling up agenda for Cornwall. Therefore, everyone has their part to play while the eyes of the world are here but to be brutally honest it is really difficult for many of our members to get excited about that part of G7 when struggling to pay bills, find staff or get through the extra traffic.

We are however, optimistic about what G7 brings. Hopefully the disruption will be short lived, we will survive and we can push for the promised "legacy". Our policy messages about what small businesses need will get to the table, improvements will be made and Cornwall will finally be recognised by our own Government and across the world as a trailblazer in many exciting sectors while they admire and envy our gorgeous location."

Ends

Notes to Editors

- 1) For a full copy of the SME7 joint statement, contact Matt Dickinson.
- 2) Signatories to the joint intervention are FSB, Canadian Federation of Independent Business (CFIB), SMEunited, Chambres de Métiers et de l'Artisanat (CMA), Confédération des Petites et Moyennes Entreprises (CPME), Zentralverband des Deutschen Handwerks (ZDH), Confederazione Nazionale dell'Artigianato e della Piccola e Media Impresa (CNA Nazionale), Confederazione Generale Italiana delle Imprese, delle Attività Professionali e del Lavoro Autonomo (Confcommercio), Confartigianato Imprese, British Chamber of Commerce in Japan (BCCJ) and BritishAmerican Business (BAB).