

MAKING YOUR VOICE HEARD

LOBBYING PRIORITIES FOR 2010/11. GETTING ACROSS THE CONCERNS OF THE INDUSTRY

The BPIF's Government and Industry Committee has approved its lobbying priorities for the year commencing 1 April 2010.

These are:

- Reform of insolvency practices
- Promoting the power of print
- Action on environmental issues
- Improving postal services
- Tackling waste in public services and improving public procurement
- Easing the burden of pension costs
- Delivering the right skills for the industry's needs.



Insolvency practices

To date, the BPIF has submitted written evidence to the BERR Select Committee enquiry into the Insolvency Service. It has met with insolvency practitioners' trade body R3 to discuss the concept of establishing a register of purchasers. It has also engaged with associate members on the need for a firm line by suppliers in extension of credit facilities to prepacks, generating support from several of them.



"IN 2010/11 THE BPIF INTENDS TO CONTINUE PUTTING PRESSURE ON GOVERNMENT, LOCAL GOVERNMENT AND PUBLIC SECTOR BODIES"

In 2010/11, the BPIF intends to acquaint both Government and Opposition with the adverse consequences of current legislation.

It will continue to encourage suppliers to refuse credit facilities to prepacks until the new owners have at least demonstrated some willingness to pay off past debts, and work with Begbies Traynor to provide free advice to BPIF members on insolvency questions. Furthermore, it will ask members to vote to amend the BPIF's own membership criteria to impose a moratorium on the admission into membership to apply in respect of any company formed as a result of a prepack administration for a period of two years from the date it commences trading. The only exception would be where the directors offer a legally-binding guarantee to repay outstanding debts owed by the previous company within a period of twelve months.



Promoting the power of print

The BPIF supports Two Sides' PrintPower campaign for promoting the effectiveness and sustainability of print, launched this spring.

In 2010/11 it intends to adopt The Power of Print as the theme for the All Party Parliamentary Group annual reception at the House of Commons on 6 July 2010. The BPIF will also press RDAs, or their successors, to support the printing sector and for them to be genuinely business-led.

In support of this, it will survey members to seek their experiences with RDAs and discover how they have benefited. It will lobby for increased Government support to be given to SMEs and for greater competition in the lending sector in order to increase the supply of accessible funding and challenge any Government proposals to apply VAT to books or magazines as a tax on literacy.



Environment

The BPIF has employed a full-time Environmental Advisor. It has developed a carbon footprint calculator specifically designed for use in the print and packaging

sector. In conjunction with Envirowise and Vision in Print, the BPIF has developed and tested an environmental diagnostic that allows for improved environmental management and resource efficiency while concurrently identifying major potential cost savings.

In 2010/11 the BPIF intends to campaign for reductions in the price of energy and improvements in the security of energy supply, including grants for the installation of low-carbon technologies and self-generation of power. It will also continue to actively support the Two Sides campaign, the aim of which is to correct the misleading and

inaccurate stories that abound concerning Paper and Print's environmental sustainability.



Postal services

Efficient, economical postal services are essential to the service offering of a large proportion of printers.

There is still insufficient competition in the postal services market to ensure that printers are getting the best possible service and price.

To date, through our work with the postal services regulator Postwatch, the BPIF has contributed to the ongoing discussions relating to all aspects of the postal industry, particularly the activities of Royal Mail. It responded to the Government consultation on 'zonal pricing' that led Royal Mail to drop plans for price sensitive postcode deliveries, and lobbied against proposals published by Government Regulator Postcomm to give Royal Mail flexibility to increase prices in 2010.

In 2010/11 the BPIF intends to seek improvements to the quality, efficiency, reliability and pricing of postal services, and for universal coverage of postal services to be maintained. It will continue to support the Direct Marketing Association's efforts in opposing 'opt-in' clauses for direct marketing material.



Public services and public procurement

So far, the BPIF has met with the Office of Government Commerce to express dissatisfaction with current Government

tender procedures, and prompted u-turns from a number of public sector bodies on their charging for application to tender. These included local governments and universities, and documented to members through BPIF Online the often unnecessary and unlawful charges for procurement websites claiming to have specific contacts and insight into the Government or local government procurement channels.

In 2010/11 the BPIF intends to continue putting pressure on Government, local government and public sector bodies to uphold fair, cost free and transparent procurement procedures. It will press for standard tender criteria or pre-qualification requirements in tenders so that printers large and small can understand, process and apply for with as little bureaucracy as possible, and to seek to ensure this is utilised widely by public sector print buyers.

The BPIF is also seeking to influence the development and content of the new OGC Business Solutions Framework contract for printing services. It will seek to establish a trading platform that will enable more SME

printers to compete for public tenders. It will lobby for action to reduce waste and improve efficiency in the public sector. It will also press for increased support for SMEs and reduced tax burdens on wealth creators, challenging excessive increases in business rates and instances where public sector organisations seek to compete with the private sector by offering commercial printing services.



Pensions

The BPIF is concerned at the growing problem of pension scheme deficits and escalating PPF levies, which impacts greatly on sectors such as print with a

large number of 'legacy' final salary pension schemes. To date it has set up a pensions working group and met with senior policy officials from the CBI's pensions unit and from the PPF to register our concerns.

In 2010/11 it intends to voice concerns about the increasing burden on industry resulting from the rising costs of public sector pension provision. It will support the Trade Association Forum, CBI in their efforts to lobby Government on behalf of business to address the issue of escalating levies, and will conduct a survey among members to gauge the extent of damage to companies with final salary pensions.



Skills

The BPIF is the industry's largest training provider and the only national specialist print training provider. It worked with trade associations in several

other sectors to establish proskills, the sector skills council for process manufacturing. To date it has worked closely with proskills since the latter's inception, with its CEO Terry Watts attending BPIF National Council meetings. Together with proskills and Unite, the BPIF convened an industry skills summit Transforming the print industry on 3 March this year, addressed by Skills Minister Kevin Brennan MP. (For a review of this, see page 12 of this issue of inprint.)

In 2010/11 the BPIF will input members' views on skills issues and funding priorities to proskills, ensure that proskills engages with BPIF member companies on formulating policy, and seek greater accountability from proskills through regular reporting on their activities, successes and how funds have been deployed.

→ For more information contact **Andrew Brown, Corporate Affairs Director** on **020 7915 8378** or email **andrew.brown@bpif.org.uk**