

New Research: Boards brace for risk as confidence in UK markets wanes – Bellwether 2025

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LONDON, UNITED KINGDOM, June 22, 2025

/EINPresswire.com/ -- The Chartered

Governance Institute UK & Ireland today

publishes its latest Boardroom Bellwether report, revealing the mood in UK's boardrooms as one of caution and recalibration. The findings show a sharp decline in capital expenditure expectations, pessimism about the UK and global economies, and growing concerns over regulatory burden, cybersecurity, and diversity reporting readiness.

The latest survey reveals that 0% of respondents expect a significant increase in capital expenditure this year, with most boards prioritising efficiency over growth. Confidence in the London Stock Exchange has also deteriorated, with just 1 in 8 respondents believing it can reverse its decline over the next five years, despite recent reforms aimed at boosting listings. The findings are based on responses from a broad cross-section of governance professionals – including those in listed companies, private firms, and public and third-sector organisations – reflecting the diverse landscape of UK boardrooms.

Regulatory pressure continues to mount, with 77% of quoted companies stating that regulation is excessive – up from 44% last year. Cybersecurity has emerged as the top board-level risk, with 71% expecting threats to increase and two-thirds increasing their investment in cyber resilience.

The report also highlights a shift in diversity, equity, and inclusion (DEI) strategies. While 30% of boards are reviewing or reframing their DEI approach, 15% are increasing investment. However, disability and socio-economic background remain the least addressed areas of board diversity, and a third of organisations say they may struggle to meet new ethnicity and disability pay-gap reporting requirements.

AI adoption is accelerating, with 64% of quoted companies now having formal AI policies in place. Boards are increasingly using AI in board packs, predictive analytics, and cybersecurity –

though concerns remain about uneven implementation and ethical risks.

In light of the government's forthcoming Industrial Strategy, the report also asked which sectors boards believe should be prioritised. The top four were: digital infrastructure, clean energy, advanced manufacturing, and defence – aligning closely with the government's Invest 2035 framework.

Peter Swabey, Policy & Research Director at The Chartered Governance Institute UK & Ireland, said: "Governance professionals, always in tune with board sentiments, reveal a boardroom mood of caution and recalibration in this year's Boardroom Bellwether. While AI and cyber resilience are climbing the agenda, confidence in the UK's economic outlook and regulatory environment remains fragile. The government's Industrial Strategy will need to address these concerns if it is to unlock long-term investment."

The full report is attached.

Notes to Editors:

1 The Chartered Governance Institute UK & Ireland is the professional body for governance and the qualifying and membership body for governance professionals across all sectors. Its purpose under Royal Charter is to lead 'effective governance and efficient administration of commerce, industry and public affairs' working with regulators and policy makers to champion high standards of governance and providing qualifications, training and guidance. As a lifelong learning partner, the Institute helps governance professionals to achieve their professional goals, providing recognition, community and the voice of its membership.

One of nine divisions of the global Chartered Governance Institute, which was established 130 years ago, The Chartered Governance Institute UK & Ireland represents members working and studying in the UK and Ireland and in many other countries and regions including the Caribbean, parts of Africa and the Middle East. Website: www.cgi.org.uk

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