



Department for
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& Technology

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Dame Chi Onwurah MP
Chair, Science, Innovation and Technology
Committee
House of Commons
London
SW1A 00A

4th September 2025

Dear Dame Chi

Launch of consultation on improving the UK designs system

I am writing to inform you, as Chair of the Science, Innovation and Technology Committee, about an important consultation on improving the UK designs system, which will be launched by the Intellectual Property Office (IPO) today.

The design sector is vital to our economy, contributing £97.4 billion in GVA annually and supporting over 80,000 businesses across the UK. The vast majority (92%) of these are microbusinesses with fewer than 9 employees.

Strong intellectual property (IP) protection is essential for these innovative enterprises to thrive and continue driving economic growth.

However, feedback from stakeholders indicates that the complexity of our current IP system for designs creates significant barriers, particularly for small businesses.

Although there is evidence that many designers are aware of intellectual property, they often struggle to find the best ways to effectively protect their creative assets. We are also aware that some applicants are abusing the system by seeking to register designs for well-known products or products that don't belong to them.

The IPO's consultation seeks stakeholders' views on a package of proposals aimed at:

- Improving the validity of registered designs through measures such as novelty checks and bad faith provisions
- Simplifying our complex designs IP regime to make it more accessible to all businesses
- Addressing post-Brexit issues relating to unregistered designs
- Ensuring our IP framework adequately protects virtual and animated designs
- Exploring appropriate approaches to computer-generated designs in an era of AI
- Enhancing enforcement options, including potentially expanding the Intellectual Property Enterprise Court's small claims track to include registered designs cases

These proposals aim to create an IP system for designs that better supports UK creativity and innovation while maintaining the speed and flexibility that designers value.

Yours sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read 'Feryal Clark', is centered within a light gray rectangular box.

Feryal Clark MP
Parliamentary Under-Secretary of State for AI and Digital Government
Department for Science, Innovation & Technology