

‘I apologise profusely’, CBI boss Danker says after stepping down amid conduct investigation

The director general of the Confederation of British Industry (CBI) Tony Danker has stepped aside from the role while the business lobby group investigates allegations relating to his workplace conduct.

The body said he had requested to leave the role while a number of allegations were examined.

Mr Danker responded to the claims in a statement saying he was “mortified” for any offence or hurt caused and that it was unintentional.

They came to light after a previous allegation that was made in January was investigated and “dealt with comprehensively, in line with CBI procedure”, the lobby group said in a statement.

It continued: “The CBI investigation determined that the issue did not require escalation to a disciplinary process”.

But it added: “On March 2, the CBI was made aware of new reports regarding Tony Danker’s workplace conduct.

“We have now taken steps to initiate an independent investigation into these new matters. Tony Danker asked to step aside from his role as director-general of the CBI while the independent investigation into these matters takes place.”

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It is understood that these additional allegations stemmed from at least one complaint made via The Guardian.

The newspaper approached the CBI last week over claims from a female employee that Mr Danker made “unwanted contact with her and considered this unwanted conduct to be sexual harassment”.

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"The CBI takes all matters of workplace conduct extremely seriously," the lobby group's statement continued, "but it is important to stress that until this investigation is complete, any new allegations remain unproven and it would be inappropriate to comment further at this stage."

Mr Danker was appointed to lead Britain's biggest employers' group in 2020.

The former Treasury adviser had spent the previous three years trying to tackle Britain's poor productivity record at Be the Business.

Mr Danker said of the allegation made via the newspaper: "It was completely unintentional and I apologise profusely.

"The CBI is the employers' organisation and I am very proud to be its leader. We always strive for the highest standards.

"I therefore support the decision we've taken to review any new allegations independently. And I have decided to step aside while the review takes place and will cooperate fully with it."