

# **New CBI boss ‘profoundly sorry’ to women let down by business group**

The new boss of the CBI says she is “profoundly sorry” to women who have been let down by the business lobby group.

Rain Newton-Smith took over as director general on Wednesday after scores of high-profile companies announced they were suspending or ending their membership of the 58-year-old organisation following allegations of sexual misconduct and rape by some members of staff.

Addressing women who felt their claims of sexual harassment were not taken seriously by the organisation, she said she wanted to express “how profoundly sorry I am for how our organisation let you down”.

“You will have heard about the crisis that has shocked and saddened us all at the CBI,” Ms Newton-Smith tweeted.

“I want to recognise the courage of the women who came forward and say how profoundly sorry I am for how our organisation let you down.

“I hope to reward your bravery by finding a better path forward.”

Ms Newton-Smith was the CBI’s chief economist for almost nine years before joining Barclays as managing director for strategy and police, sustainability and ESG.

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She was in that job for just a month before being chosen to help the CBI overcome its recent scandals.

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## misconduct scandal

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The organisation's fall from grace began in early March when The Guardian published accusations of misconduct against then director general Tony Danker.

A month later, it reported claims from more than a dozen women who worked for the organisation saying they had been sexually harassed by colleagues, with one saying she had been raped.

An inquiry by external lawyers has been under way, but the government has also wound down its engagement and many businesses have suspended or terminated their membership.

The allegations surrounding Mr Danker were separate from those including the rape claim, but he said he had been made into the "fall guy" and his reputation had been "totally trashed".

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Last Friday, The Guardian published a second allegation of rape and a new allegation of stalking against CBI staff.

The resulting flood of businesses leaving the organisation prompted it to suspend all policy and membership activities.

Ms Newton-Smith said on Wednesday: “We know there is so much to do to win back the trust of our members, our colleagues and wider society.

“But I believe in the work of the CBI and our people, and I am determined to rebuild and reimagine our organisation to regain that trust.”