



Policy Statement on SIC and Soc Reform

IMI Position

The Institute of the Motor Industry (IMI) believes that the United Kingdom's industrial, skills, and workforce policy frameworks must be underpinned by data that accurately reflects the full scope and structure of the automotive workforce.

Current Standard Industrial Classification (SIC) and Standard Occupational Classification (SOC) systems do not adequately capture the modern automotive sector. While automotive manufacturing is relatively well defined, large parts of the downstream workforce, including service, repair, diagnostics, logistics, and specialist technical roles, remain under-represented or insufficiently differentiated. As a result, significant sections of the automotive workforce lack visibility in national data, limiting the recognition of the motor industry's skills and professions within policy development, funding decisions, and workforce planning.

The IMI calls for comprehensive reform of SIC and SOC frameworks to ensure that they reflect real industry activity, recognise emerging skills, and provide policymakers with a robust and accurate evidence base to support net zero, future mobility, and economic growth objectives.

Background

The automotive sector extends far beyond manufacturing and research and development. Technicians, service and repair professionals, diagnostics specialists, logistics workers, customer-facing roles, and managers are essential to keeping vehicles operational, supporting consumers, and enabling the transition to electric, connected, hydrogen-powered, and digitally enabled vehicles.

However, existing classification systems largely reflect a legacy view of the sector, grouping key occupations too broadly and failing to differentiate emerging and specialist roles. This obscures skills demand in areas such as electrification, advanced diagnostics, software-enabled systems, and digital service models.

As a result, workforce shortages are often misidentified or underestimated, skills needs are not fully understood, and funding and policy interventions are less precisely targeted. If the automotive workforce is not properly counted or classified, it cannot be properly prioritised, planned for, or funded.

With revisions to SIC and SOC frameworks now underway, there is a critical opportunity to improve long-term visibility of the automotive workforce within national data systems and ensure that industrial and skills policy is grounded in an accurate representation of the sector.

IMI Position

The IMI calls for:

- Full recognition of the automotive workforce across all parts of the sector, not solely manufacturing and research and development.
- Greater occupational granularity within SOC, particularly for technician, diagnostic, and specialist technical roles, to reflect real skills demand and progression pathways.



- SIC structures that reflect actual industry activity, including downstream, service-led, and logistics functions that are essential to the vehicle lifecycle.
- Improved alignment between SIC and SOC classifications, ensuring that industry-level activity and occupational data are coherent and mutually reinforcing.
- Explicit recognition of emerging skills and roles, including those linked to electrification, digitalisation, automation, and connected vehicle technologies.

IMI Goals

- Improve national understanding of the size, composition, and skills profile of the automotive workforce through more accurate classification and data.
- Strengthen the evidence base used to inform skills policy, funding allocation, and workforce planning at national and devolved levels.
- Ensure the automotive workforce required to deliver net zero and future mobility is visible and recognised within official data frameworks.
- Position the Institute of the Motor Industry as the authoritative voice on automotive workforce data, classification, and policy evidence.

Opportunities

- The current SIC and SOC revision cycle provides a timely opportunity to modernise classifications to reflect the true structure of the automotive sector.
- Ongoing reforms to national skills policy and workforce planning increase the importance of accurate occupational and industrial data.
- Growing policy focus on net zero, transport decarbonisation, and digitalisation creates demand for more precise workforce intelligence.
- Engagement with the Office for National Statistics (ONS) and classification governance bodies enables constructive, evidence-based influence on system design.

IMI Actions

- Engage directly with ONS, classification review bodies, and policymakers to advocate for SIC and SOC reforms that accurately reflect automotive sector activity and occupations.
- Provide evidence, workforce data, and technical insight to support the case for improved occupational granularity and sector visibility.
- Submit consultation responses, policy briefings, and technical input during SIC and SOC revision processes.
- Work with employer groups, sector bodies, and partners to present a unified, evidence-led case for reform.
- Use improved classification data to strengthen future IMI policy positions on skills, funding, net zero delivery, and workforce development.
- Continue to advocate on this issue on behalf of our members to our audiences.