# Stevens Scotland closure threatens Brechin jobs despite recent £8.3m dividend



The Brechin community is facing significant economic turmoil following the announcement of the closure of Stevens Scotland Ltd, a family-owned blinds manufacturer established in 1968. The company, renowned as one of the UK's leading names in window blinds, will cease operations by the end of December 2024, resulting in the loss of over 50 jobs—a particularly harsh blow as it comes just days before Christmas.

According to the company's directors, the decision was precipitated by a downturn in UK sales driven by reduced consumer spending amid the ongoing cost-of-living crisis, which has left many households tightening their budgets. This shift in consumer behaviour has domino effects on businesses reliant on discretionary spending, such as home furnishings. Despite reports indicating that Stevens Scotland remained profitable at the end of 2023—posting a turnover of £8.1 million and pre-tax profits of £1.2 million—executives concluded that the company needed to close after an internal operational review.

Stevens Scotland’s Denburn Way factory has been a fixture of the Brechin business landscape since its move to purpose-built premises about 25 years ago. The site, which encompasses 70,379 sq ft of space on a 2.46-acre plot, includes modern facilities such as a steel portal frame warehouse and offices, along with a staff canteen added in 2006. With expansion land adjacent to the unit, the property is now on the market, marketed by commercial property agents Colliers, presenting a potential opportunity for a new buyer to contribute to the local economy.

Remarkably, just prior to the closure announcement, the firm declared an £8.3 million dividend. This decision raised eyebrows, as the dividend was approved despite the looming closure. Company accounts revealed the dividend was agreed upon before the operational review that led to shutting down operations, suggesting an unsettling juxtaposition between the company’s financial health and its workforce's future.

The ripple effects of this shutdown extend beyond Stevens Scotland. The community of Brechin is already grappling with economic anxiety, especially with a second major blow on the horizon: the impending closure of Matrix International, an engineering factory also in Brechin. Scheduled to stop operations by the end of 2025, this closure will only compound the job losses and economic challenges faced by the region.

In response to the job losses resulting from Stevens’ closure, Angus Council has activated the Partnership Action for Continuing Employment (PACE) scheme, which is designed to assist redundant employees in finding new work. The programme, overseen by Skills Development Scotland, offers support in various forms, including CV writing, interview preparation, and financial advice—a vital lifeline in these challenging times.

Stevens Scotland was acquired by the Dutch conglomerate Hunter Douglas in 2015, a move that initially strengthened the firm's position in the UK window covering market. Under this new ownership, the company saw significant growth, with a reported increase in turnover and profits following the takeover. However, the ultimate closure now raises questions about the long-term sustainability of such foreign acquisitions in the context of local employment.

As Stevens Scotland prepares for dissolution, the surrounding community and its residents are bracing for the economic repercussions, hoping that future investments may alleviate the growing unemployment and restore vibrancy to Brechin’s economic landscape.

## Reference Map:

* Paragraph 1 – [[1]](https://www.thecourier.co.uk/fp/news/5256848/stevens-scotland-brechin-factory-sale/), [[2]](https://www.thecourier.co.uk/fp/news/angus-mearns/5095231/brechin-blind-maker-closure-date-set/), [[4]](https://www.thenational.scot/news/24625985.scottish-blind-factory-close-jobs-lost-days-christmas/)
* Paragraph 2 – [[1]](https://www.thecourier.co.uk/fp/news/5256848/stevens-scotland-brechin-factory-sale/), [[3]](https://www.thecourier.co.uk/fp/business-environment/business/5155012/stevens-dividend-payment-closing-angus-firm/)
* Paragraph 3 – [[1]](https://www.thecourier.co.uk/fp/news/5256848/stevens-scotland-brechin-factory-sale/), [[2]](https://www.thecourier.co.uk/fp/news/angus-mearns/5095231/brechin-blind-maker-closure-date-set/), [[6]](https://www.thecourier.co.uk/fp/business-environment/business/298742/brechin-firm-thrives-dutch-ownership/)
* Paragraph 4 – [[1]](https://www.thecourier.co.uk/fp/news/5256848/stevens-scotland-brechin-factory-sale/), [[5]](https://www.heraldscotland.com/business_hq/13890808.family-owned-manufacturer-sold-dutch-giant/)
* Paragraph 5 – [[1]](https://www.thecourier.co.uk/fp/news/5256848/stevens-scotland-brechin-factory-sale/), [[7]](https://www.thecourier.co.uk/fp/news/angus-mearns/5096231/brechin-jobs-blow-scottish-government-scheme/)

Source: [Noah Wire Services](https://www.noahwire.com)

## Bibliography

1. <https://www.thecourier.co.uk/fp/news/5256848/stevens-scotland-brechin-factory-sale/> - Please view link - unable to able to access data
2. <https://www.thecourier.co.uk/fp/news/angus-mearns/5095231/brechin-blind-maker-closure-date-set/> - Stevens Scotland Ltd, a blinds manufacturer in Brechin, announced the closure of its factory at the end of December 2024, resulting in over 50 job losses. The decision was attributed to a decline in UK sales, influenced by reduced consumer spending amid the cost-of-living crisis. The company, established in 1968, had been a significant employer in the area for more than 50 years. The closure was confirmed following an internal operational review, with the firm ceasing trading on December 31, 2024.
3. <https://www.thecourier.co.uk/fp/business-environment/business/5155012/stevens-dividend-payment-closing-angus-firm/> - Before deciding to close Stevens Scotland Ltd, the directors approved a substantial £8.3 million dividend payment. The company's financial accounts revealed that, despite the closure, Stevens remained profitable in 2023, with a turnover of £8.1 million and pre-tax profits of £1.2 million. The dividend was agreed upon prior to the closure decision, and the company intended to settle its remaining assets and liabilities in an orderly fashion before dissolution.
4. <https://www.thenational.scot/news/24625985.scottish-blind-factory-close-jobs-lost-days-christmas/> - Stevens Scotland Ltd, a blinds manufacturer in Brechin, announced the closure of its factory at the end of December 2024, leading to over 50 job losses. The decision was attributed to a decline in UK sales, influenced by reduced consumer spending amid the cost-of-living crisis. The company, established in 1968, had been a significant employer in the area for more than 50 years. The closure was confirmed following an internal operational review, with the firm ceasing trading on December 31, 2024.
5. <https://www.heraldscotland.com/business_hq/13890808.family-owned-manufacturer-sold-dutch-giant/> - In 2015, Stevens Scotland Ltd, a family-owned window blind manufacturer employing over 100 people in Brechin, was acquired by Dutch company Hunter Douglas in a multi-million-pound deal. The acquisition aimed to strengthen Hunter Douglas's position in the UK window covering and sun protection market. Despite the change in ownership, the company's management remained unchanged, and employment was not affected. Stevens Scotland continued to operate as a subsidiary of Hunter Douglas, maintaining its status as a leading manufacturer of quality window blinds in the UK.
6. <https://www.thecourier.co.uk/fp/business-environment/business/298742/brechin-firm-thrives-dutch-ownership/> - Following its acquisition by Dutch company Hunter Douglas in 2015, Stevens Scotland Ltd reported a pre-tax profit rise of more than 60% in the year of the takeover. The firm's turnover increased by almost 17% to £8.6 million, with profit before tax rising by over £300,000 to £803,681. Despite the challenging operating environment, Stevens Scotland continued to thrive under Dutch ownership, maintaining its position as a leading manufacturer of quality window blinds in the UK.
7. <https://www.thecourier.co.uk/fp/news/angus-mearns/5096231/brechin-jobs-blow-scottish-government-scheme/> - In response to the impending closure of Stevens Scotland Ltd's Brechin factory and the potential loss of over 50 jobs, Angus Council initiated talks with the company. Due to the scale of potential redundancies, the Partnership Action for Continuing Employment (PACE) scheme was triggered. This Scottish Government initiative, led by Skills Development Scotland, provides free advice and support to help minimise the impact of redundancy, including assistance with CVs, application forms, interview preparation, and financial advice.