

West of England Growth Hub Business Support Guide





Finding the right support for your business

Our business support service, the West of England Growth Hub, supports small - medium sized (SMEs) businesses based in the West of England (Bath & North East Somerset, Bristol, North Somerset and South Gloucestershire).

This Business Support Guide provides an overview of the support programmes available for your business from the West of England Mayoral Combined Authority.

In addition to these programmes, Growth Hub can connect you to a wide range of online tools, training and services from our expert partners depending on your business needs.

For further information and guidance, or for assistance identifying what might benefit your business the most, please contact the **West of England Growth Hub**.

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THE WEST OF ENGLAND GROWTH HUB

The West of England Mayoral Combined Authority's dedicated business support service, the West of England Growth Hub, provides SMEs with tailored information, expert guidance and access to various support programmes.

Growth Hub offers support for businesses across all sectors in the following areas:

- Finance & Business
- Leadership & Management
- Workforce Development
- Technology & Innovation
- Green Business

Our team of expert Enterprise Advisors offer free one-to-one business support, and can help you:

- Access development programmes and funding
- Connect to support, advice and guidance from our expert partners
- Identify your business challenges and opportunities
- Benefit from support networks, events and guideance from peers



THE GOOD EMPLOYMENT CHARTER

WHAT DO I GET?

ELIGIBILITY CRITERIA

MORE INFO

The Good Employment Charter

The Good Employment Charter is an initiative launched to improve and set the employment standards in the West of England by encouraging organisations of any size, and within any sector, to join the Charter and takes steps towards bettering their employment practices.

Looking after your business is not only the right thing to do but also makes good business sense. Raising the standards of employment by adopting more inclusive, fair and sustainable working practices that benefits people and society and contributes to a thriving economy. This also leads organisations to higher staff retention rates, better productivity and a stronger workforce.

The Charter encourages organisations to meet seven characteristics of good employment in order to:

- Implement fair employment practices
- Help raise the standard of good employment across the West of England
- Increase staff retention
- Achieve better productivity, growth and access to top talent

Supporters and Members of the Charter pledge and commit to fulfilling the seven characteristics of good employment, demonstrating how they will make improvements in their organisations through new and improved practices including:

- Secure work
- Flexible work
- Real living wage
- Engagement & voice

- Recruitment
- Developing people
- Health & wellbeing

Open to all businesses in the West of England

GOOD EMPLOYMENT CHARTER

One of our founding members

Founded in 2016, Rising Arts Agency is a powerful, collaborative community of artists and creatives who have come together to create social change. The team comprises of driven, young individuals, with a diverse skill set.

Their primary objective is to 'empower underrepresented young people to fulfil their creative ambitions and make social change happen'. The foundation of this organisation lies in the community of individuals who work for Rising Arts Agency, playing a pivotal role in shaping all the incredible work they do.

'Undertaking the process of becoming a member was incredibly insightful to us. It gave us an opportunity to showcase all the work we are doing and we're incredibly proud of that.

The Charter team were really helpful throughout the entire process and open to feedback on how the process could be improved. It very much felt like we were a partnership working towards the same goal, of improving employment practices within the region.

We're really excited to be one of the businesses leading the positive change of better environmental practices in the region. Being a Member of the Charter will enable us to continue developing and improving our internal working practices with tailored guidance and tools from the experts at the West of England Mayoral Combined Authority.'



WHAT DO I GET?

ELIGIBILITY CRITERIA

MORE INFO

Safer Shops West

Are you concerned about shoplifting? Is it costing your business money? Do your staff feel vulnerable? Safer Shops West can help.

The Safer Shops West grant has been launched to provide independent businesses in the region, get access of up to £2,000 to use towards the purchase of security equipment such as CCTV and bodyworn cameras.

To qualify for the funding, you must be:

- 1. An independent retail shop significantly affected by shoplifting
- 2. Located in Bath and North East Somerset, South Gloucestershire or Bristol
- 3. Able to provide a 50% match funding contribution to your item(s) you are seeking funding for

Open to independent retailers
based within the West of
England (Bristol, Bath and
North East Somerset and South
Gloucestershire)

WHAT DO I GET?

ELIGIBILITY CRITERIA

MORE INFO

Create Growth

The Create Growth Programme, delivered by Watershed, provides creative businesses with support tailored to their specific needs.

Support will include:

- · A £2,500 grant to spend on professional sector specific expertise (mentoring, coaching and or consultancy)
- · A dedicated peer support programme, including a minimum of six facilitated peer group sessions
- Free access to workshops and training

We are looking for companies who are exploring new growth opportunities, this could include:

- Reaching new customers
- Developing or taking to market a new product or service
- Expanding your business to new markets, including internationally

Businesses should be able to demonstrate they meet two or more of the criteria below:

- Have a turnover growth of 10% year-on-year over approximately three years (including either prior to or during the pandemic)
- Employ a minimum of two people over the last two years (full-time, part-time or freelance)
- · Have created a revenue generating product, launched a new platform or service or reached a market of scale
- Have generated sales revenue in the last two years

Open to creative businesses based within the West of England

WHAT DO I GET?

ELIGIBILITY CRITERIA

MORE INFO

Intellectual Property Support

Intellectual Property (IP) assets can be integral to the growth and sustainability of a business. When properly managed, the value of your IP can outweigh physical assets, accounting for over 70% of your business' value. The West of England Growth Hub can provide one-to-one guidance on managing your IP in partnership with the Intellectual Property Office.

As part of our IP support, the West of England Mayoral Combined Authority offers the IPforGrowth programme, that provides eligible businesses with up to £2,400 to complete an IP audit and a further grant of up to £5,600 to implement any recommended actions from the audit.

Available to entrepreneurs, startup businesses and established SMEs in the West of England

Export and trade

Growth Hub offers support for SMEs looking to trade with other countries. We can provide the information and tailored guidance your business needs to trade successfully with the EU and other markets.

Our offer includes:

- Subscription to the Export Academy to begin and grow your export journey
- Export Support Service, for queries and questions about exporting to new markets, paperwork and country-specific rules

Open to all businesses in the West of England

THE NATIONAL CENTRE FOR INTEGRATIVE MEDICINE (NCIM) CIC

The National Centre for Integrative Medicine (NCIM) CIC is a community interest company with a vision to support the transformation of healthcare to a broad model including conventional, lifestyle and holistic approaches.

They wanted to understand better the extent of their IP assets and ways to protect their academic programmes in an increasingly competitive environment and this led them to seek an IP Audit. The audit prompted a review of all their contracts of employment and with suppliers to ensure that copyright was retained by NCIM. They have also now asserted their copyright on all training materials and on their website.

They used follow-on grant funding to file Trademark applications in the UK and Europe to protect the NCIM brand. They are also sharing their IP knowledge with partners, so the benefits will be shared more widely.



Protecting our Intellectual Property had been on our 'To Do' list for some time, and the availability of the IP for Growth grant spurred us to do the necessary research and apply. We have used the Audit to create an IP Management Plan which we are now working through. As an organisation we have gained a lot more knowledge of IP and are pleased to be able to share this with some of our charitable partners.

Local Authority Business Start-up and Development Service The Local Authority Start-up and Development Service provides training and expert advice for those who are (or are hoping to become) business owners, whether you're self-employed or leading an established small business. We can support businesses in any sector, from retail to removals. You'll get the guidance on understanding the regulations, requirements and best practice when setting up a new business. You'll also have access to free expert advice along with a range of dedicated one-to-one support, training workshops and resources. Migrant Business Support The team at Growth Hub offer a range of support for non-EU migrants and refugees who are seeking business advice. The Enterprise Advisors can provide you with one-to-one business advice to help you become self-employed, start a business or learn new skills.

LEADERSHIP & MANAGEMENT

WHAT DO I GET?

ELIGIBILITY CRITERIA

MORE INFO

Help to Grow: Management

This course supports senior managers to boost their business performance, resilience, and long-term growth.

The 12-week programme is designed to be taken alongside full-time work through a combination of online sessions and face-to-face learning.

The in-depth high quality curriculum will support you to build your capabilities in leadership, innovation, digital adoption, employee engagement, marketing, responsible business and financial management.

- Access 12-weeks of learning designed to fit alongside work commitments
- Develop a bespoke business growth plan to help your business reach its full potential
- Get one-to-one support from a business mentor
- Learn from peers and network with businesses just like yours

SMEs in the West of England

LEADERSHIP & MANAGEMENT

WHAT DO I GET? ELIGIBILITY CRITERIA

MORE INFO

Business Advisory Boards

Delivered by our partner Be the Business, enjoy non-executive director style support from a group of experienced business people, made up of leaders and senior managers from leading firms. You will:

SMEs in the West of England

- · Be paired with a board of business leaders to work with over the course of one year
- · Attend a virtual induction event, giving you the opportunity to meet other participants
- Attend online meetings every three months to talk through challenges and gain input
- · Identify actions to help move your business forward and report back to your board for accountability and guidance

Be the Business Mentoring

Delivered by our partner Be the Business, this programme connects you with business leaders from large multinational companies. You'll access different skills and experiences, learn from different sectors and get fresh perspectives.

SMEs in the West of England

This fully-funded programme is designed to focus on your needs and can help with:

- Providing an objective sounding board for challenges and new ideas alike
- Getting your senior management team working together more effectively
- Improving your company's forward-looking forecasting and modelling
- Making changes to your business model to suit changing consumer spending habits
- Improving the performance of your business overall

WHAT DO I GET?

ELIGIBILITY CRITERIA

MORE INFO

Workforce development

Through the expertise knowledge of Growth Hub, you can discover ways to support your business to grow and ensure your business has the right skills and experience for the future.

We can support with:

- Workforce planning
- Apprenticeships
- Recruitment, retention, and accessibility resources
- Talent resources
- Sustainability resources
- Digital marketing
- Intellectual Property
- Artificial Intelligence

SMEs in the West of England

WHAT DO I GET?

ELIGIBILITY CRITERIA

MORE INFO

Thrive at Work West of England

Thrive at Work West of England provides interactive tools and training resources needed to help you embed good mental health practice in your business and support your employees, including:

- Our free e-Learning, developed by Mind, 'Managing Mental Health at Work' is designed to equip businesses with the confidence and skills to have supportive conversations with their staff about mental health and well-being, particularly in these challenging times
- · Advice and guidance to implement Mental Health at Work Commitments and Mental Health at Work Standards and Wellness Action Plans
- Toolkits and research reports
- Suicide awareness training
- Psychological first aid

Open to all businesses and voluntary, community and social enterprises (VCSEs) based in the West of England

Jobs Connect

Jobs Connect is a free-to-use career and recruitment tool for the West of England. Businesses can use the platform to manage their recruitment process and list their vacancies. Individuals can log in, complete their digital CV, search and apply for jobs and complete games to identify their skills.

Open to all businesses based in the West of England

WHAT DO I GET? ELIGIBILITY CRITERIA

MORE INFO

Skills Connect

Skills Connect is a brand new one-stop-shop website, bringing together hundreds of support services within the West of England, making it simple for residents to find skills, training and career support. The website caters to individuals at every stage of their career, providing tailored training options, local event listings, and essential research insights into the regional job market.

As well as the resources available online, Skills Connect offers a team of friendly advisors who support those in need of personalised guidance or those facing barriers to accessing the available services. These advisors are based in hubs run through the Combined Authority's local authority partners - Bristol, Bath and North East Somerset, and South Gloucestershire.

Residents and employees in the West of England

SKILLS BOOTCAMPS

Recruit staff with the right training and skills from the outset

• Get access to a pipeline of skilled adults by working with existing Skills Bootcamps providers

Skills Bootcamps

Skills Bootcamps can be delivered in a variety of ways, either through a training providers, or by joining a consortia/group of employers with similar training needs.

Skills Bootcamps are funded through the Department of Education's National Skills Fund and forms part of the Governments Lifetime Skills Guarantee, helping everyone gain Skills for Life.

Skills Bootcamps can help your business:

Develop a loyal and talented workforce with the skills you need

Quickly futureproof your business in a rapidly changing labour market

Improve your productivity; learners are motivated to learn new skills, provide new ideas and a fresh perspective

SKILLS BOOTCAMP

Supporting business recovery and growth

During the Covid pandemic, Ellie held a demanding position within the NHS, braving the high pressures of the healthcare environment.

However, with the joyful news of her pregnancy, Ellie decided it was time to embark on a career transition after her maternity leave. Ellie wanted to create a better balance between her professional pursuits and the needs of her growing family.

After some research, Ellie decided to complete a Skills Bootcamp in HGV driving. The Skills Bootcamp course was flexible and Ellie was able to fit it easily around family life.

In Ellie's new role, her salary is the same as her and her partner's combined take-home pay had been when the pair had both been working full-time in previous roles.

Ellie says, "Skills Bootcamp has given our family a better way of life".

Her partner is now a full-time stay at home parent whilst she works full time, and another bonus has been that her children feel that "she is a super cool Mum now that she's driving lorries."



WHAT DO I GET?

ELIGIBILITY CRITERIA

MORE INFO

Careers Hub

The Careers Hub supports employers to connect with diverse future talent and deliver meaningful outreach activity in schools and colleges.

Supporting all secondary schools and colleges in the region, we can connect employers with education to better align their careers provision to the skills needs of employers and the labour market, whilst also giving employers an opportunity to promote pathways into their business or sector.

There are many ways to engage including the Enterprise Adviser programme which builds strategic relationships between employers and schools. Other opportunities include developing opportunities for students to gain experiences of the workplace, learn about apprenticeship opportunities, and work with teachers to co-design curriculum.

Your organisation can also sign up to represent key sectors in the region through our Cornerstone Employer Network. Our Cornerstone employers have experience in engaging with schools and colleges and provide strategic support to our <u>Careers Hub</u>.

Organisations based within the West of England

TECHNOLOGY & INNOVATION

WHAT DO I GET?

ELIGIBILITY CRITERIA

MORE INFO

Made Smarter

Made Smarter is a wide-ranging digital technology and transformation service for making, producing and manufacturing businesses.

Designed to help local manufacturing SMEs understand and overcome operational challenges using industrial digital technologies, Made Smarter will help boost innovation, productivity and create high-value and highly paid jobs of the future.

If eligible, you can access:

- One-to-one digital acceleration sessions that will give you a tailored plan and outline the benefits that industrial digital technologies can bring to your business
- · Access to financial support through match funded grants that you can use to purchase and integrate new industrial technology
- Skills support including leadership training and access to student internships to ready your workforce for a digital future

Made Smarter West of England is delivered in partnership with the National Composites Centre and the University of the West of England.

Manufacturing industry

With 2-249 employees

A minimum turnover of £75k a year

Based in Bath and North East Somerset, Bristol or South Gloucestershire

Able to match fund certain support services

Bath Aqua Glass

Made Smarter West of England has been an essential part of our company development, which would not have happened so quickly on our own.

TECHNOLOGY & INNOVATION

WHAT DO I GET?

ELIGIBILITY CRITERIA

MORE INFO

Business Innovation Fund

Research, development and innovation (R,D&I) can help your business adapt for the future, build resilience, get ahead of the competition, reach new customers, and create jobs. The Business Innovation Fund supports R,D&I by making grants and wider support available to small and medium sized enterprises (SMEs) that are progressing innovative projects. Application rounds are open at various points during the year.

You'll get:

- A grant to help progress your project activity that will lead to the creation of a new product, process or service
- Wider support to develop your R,D&I ambitions

The Business Innovation Fund is supported with £1.89m of funding from the West of England Mayoral Combined Authority's West of England Investment Fund. When available, details of the latest application window will be shown on the Business Innovation fund website.

You are able to match fund the cost of your project

Less than 250 employees

Businesses and projects is West of England based

BUSINESS INNOVATION FUND

Supporting business recovery and growth

Gritty Talent had identified that small production businesses lacked the knowledge and reporting mechanisms to meet the equality, diversity and inclusion (ED&I) requirements consistently. They therefore wanted to explore how Artificial Intelligence (AI) could be used to improve the process. The idea of the Inclusion Accelerator was to disrupt how the UK's TV and film companies act on their ED&I and talent challenges through data science-led R&D and contribute to a much-needed transformation of representation in the media. Gritty Talent was awarded a £30,000 grant from the Business Innovation Fund to support their research.

Melanie Rodrigues, CEO and Founder, says; "One of the problems we found was the inconsistency with which government bodies and national organisations collect data around protected characteristics, making it difficult to establish benchmarks. We are now using the evidence we have gained to consolidate and standardise good practice in ED&I within the film and TV sectors.

We feel that this R&D project has been a resounding success. We have achieved proof of concept, increased the automation of our workflow and gained valuable market insights, improving our staff's expertise. We plan to share this learning to promote understanding and help drive up commitment to ED&I with our clients.

We also have a product that is suitable for trademarking and have laid the groundwork for a second product."



GREEN BUSINESS

WHAT DO I GET?

ELIGIBILITY CRITERIA

MORE INFO

Carbon Surveys

The Carbon Surveys offer free, impartial support for SMEs to find ways to reduce their greenhouse gas emissions and energy costs.

- Understand your current energy use we help you to learn more about your bills and find where the energy hotspots could be in your business
- Discover ways to reduce your emissions and energy bills we'll visit you at your premises, discuss how you work and suggest ways to reduce your environmental impact
- · Work out how to make your staff more comfortable warmer in winter and cooler in summer, building resilience to the impacts of climate change
- · Identify the quick wins you don't always need to invest to save, a lot can be done for little or no upfront cost
- Access funding to realise savings understanding your investment options can help you to secure loans or grants to carry out improvement works

During your survey, we will assess the fabric, heating and lighting systems in your building, as well as discuss your business operations and equipment with you. A few weeks after we visit, we will send you a Carbon Report which will summarise our findings and recommendations.

Less than 250 employees

Business or registered charity

Commercial premisis in Bath and North East Somerset, Bristol or South Gloucestershire

GREEN BUSINESS

WHAT DO I GET?

ELIGIBILITY CRITERIA

MORE INFO

Green Business Support

The West of England Mayoral Combined Authority are committed to supporting businesses within the region to improve their sustainability. As part of this, we have introduced our Green Business Support. The pillar is made up of eight steps which support on the journey to creating a green business and in turn, contributing to a greener economy.

The steps are:

- 1. Build your plan
- 2. Attend events
- 3. Measure and report
- 4. Get structured support
- 5. Take action
- 6. Connect with organisations
- 7. Search for funding support
- 8. Keep up to date

Open to all West of England businesses

Less than 250 employees

A legal entity, such as a private limited company

Based in the West of England

GREEN BUSINESS

WHAT DO I GET? ELIGIBILITY CRITERIA

MORE INFO

Green Business Grants

A Green Business Grant is designed to help SMEs purchase and install new products and equipment that reduce your greenhouse gas emissions, cut your utility costs and improve your energy efficiency. A total of £2million will be made available up to March 2025. You can apply for a grant of between £500 and £15,000 towards eligible capital costs of purchase and installation.

The amount of match funding required will vary between 40% and 70% depending on your project's typical payback rate

Previous applicants have used a grant for:

- LED lighting and better lighting controls
- Solar photovoltaic panels
- Roof, wall, pipe and technical component insulation
- Solar film to reduce the need for air conditioning in the summer
- More efficient heating and better controls

Less than 250 employees

A legal entity, such as a private limited company

Based in the West of England

LOW CARBON BUSINESS SUPPORT: JAM INN'S ICE DELIVERY

Based in Fishponds, Bristol, Jam Inns Ice Delivery is an ice producer and supplier for businesses and events. Having previously run a business in the hospitality sector, owner James Maloney recognised a demand for an ice delivery service in the South-West. They are now the region's largest supplier.

The team recognised that they were producing a lot of carbon and their processes ended up costing the business a lot of money. They therefore decided to undertake a carbon survey, from the West of England Mayoral Combined Authority. The survey highlighted the main difficulty was that the warehouse regularly overheated, leading to the constant use of an extract fan to cool it down and draw in fresh air. On occasion, this had also resulted in James running the ice machines overnight when it was cooler, including sleeping in the warehouse while the roller shutter was up to let the heat out!

The overheating was originally believed to be caused by inefficient ice machines which emitted heat into the warehouse. But with the sun hitting the south-facing metal roller shutter most of the day and with no insulation installed, this was acting like a giant radiator, lifting the internal temperature to over 30 degrees on sunny days. The warm internal temperatures were likely to be challenging the walk-in freezers too, reducing their efficiency and increasing energy use. Jam Inns were awarded a Green Business Grant of nearly £15,000 from the Mayoral Combined Authority to install an insulated roller shutter, replace fluorescent lighting with LEDs and install a 23kWp Solar PV array on the roof. As well as the financial and carbon savings, the impact on the business has been life-changing. The warehouse no longer overheats and remains comfortable all year round due to the insulated shutter and replacement ice machine. Now instead of working overnight, James makes use of free solar energy, has shifted production to the daytime and spends his evenings at home!



HOW TO GET SUPPORT

Contact the West of England Growth Hub for help navigating the range of local, regional and national support available for your business.

Tel: **0117 456 6955**

Email: wearegrowth@westofengland-ca.gov.uk

Website: www.westofengland-ca.gov.uk/growth-hub





Invest Bristol & Bath is the West of England Mayoral Combined Authority's inward investment service. It offers sector expertise, relocation support, research, property advice, skills and talent support and networking opportunities to growing companies established in the region as well as those looking to relocate.

In addition to the range of business support from the West of England Mayoral Combined Authority, our team of Enterprise Advisors can also help you navigate the Government's national and regional support programmes, funding and business advice.



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