

West of England  
**BUSINESS SUPPORT GUIDE**

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## #TogetherWestofEngland



Tim Bowles

Mayor of the West of England

“ As one of the most successful regions in the UK, the West of England is key to leading the national recovery through these difficult times. Rather than just getting back on our feet, if we work together we can emerge stronger than before. This Business Support Pack aims to give you the information you need to get started.



“ Equipping the region's businesses with the means to emerge stronger than ever before from the pandemic is at the heart of our plan for economic recovery. We want businesses and their employees to not only be able to meet the needs of tomorrow but be able to seize the opportunities that the new economic landscape will present. ”



Steve West

Chair of the West of England Local Enterprise Partnership

# THE WEST OF ENGLAND RECOVERY TASKFORCE

Led by the West of England Combined Authority and the Local Enterprise Partnership, the West of England Recovery Taskforce has been set up to drive the West of England's economic recovery following the impact of the Covid-19 pandemic. The Taskforce is made up of senior figures from industry, education and local government.

**Business members of the Recovery Taskforce include:**



**David Brown**

Chief Executive Officer,  
Bristol Port



**Nigel Costley**

Regional Secretary,  
TUC South West



**Andy Forbes**

Principal,  
City of Bristol College



**Dave Lees**

Chief Executive Officer,  
Bristol Airport



**Poku Osei**

Chief Executive Officer,  
Babbsa



**Dick Penny**

Chair, WofE Cultural  
Strategy Group



**Joanne Rumley**

Partner,  
Foot Anstey



**Phil Smith**

Managing Director,  
Business West



**Ian White**

Vice Chancellor &  
President, University  
of Bath



**Rick Sturge**

South West Chair,  
Business in the  
Community



**Paul Craig**

President of the  
Defence Services,  
Rolls Royce



**Sammy Payne**

Co-founder,  
Open Bionics



**Katharine Finn**

Senior Partner,  
PWC



**Kathryn Davis**

Head of Tourism,  
Destination Bristol &  
Visit Bath



**Peter Alvis**

Managing Director,  
Lye Cross Farm



**David Coombes**

South West Chair,  
Chartered Institute of  
Logistics & Transport



**Natasha Swinscoe**

Chief Executive Officer,  
WofE Academic Health  
Science Network



**Margot Day**

Global Director for  
Risk & Commercial  
Law, Buro Happold



**Neil Douglas**

Managing Director,  
Viper Innovations



**Richard Bonner**

UK Operations  
Director and City  
Executive, Arcadis



**Jon Reynolds**

Chief Executive Officer,  
GDS

We'll create

**1,800+**

new jobs, provide

**22,000+**

training and skills placements  
each year, alongside

**750**

construction jobs a year  
across our investments.

## THE WEST OF ENGLAND'S RECOVERY PLAN

Our recovery plan, led by the Recovery Taskforce, includes measures to help businesses adapt to the new economic landscape and improve resilience, as well as support for residents to develop new skills, training and employment opportunities.

Our Recovery Plan has five key ambitions:

1

**Rebuilding business, helping new and existing businesses to survive and thrive; to safeguard existing and create new jobs**

2

**Getting residents back into jobs that pay above the living wage and offer employment security through training and work to match skills to opportunities**

3

**Strengthen inclusion, preventing further widening of inequalities and building an inclusive economy where everyone has the opportunity to achieve their potential**

4

**A green recovery, using changes in behaviour brought about by the pandemic to accelerate transition to net zero carbon**

5

**Renewing places, creating greener, healthier, more vibrant places to live and work.**



# THE WEST OF ENGLAND GROWTH HUB

The West of England Combined Authority's dedicated business support service, the West of England Growth Hub, provides SMEs with tailored one-to-one advice and access to finance, support programmes and expert guidance.

We offer the same level of free, impartial support to businesses from all sectors.

**The Growth Hub offers support under the following pillars:**

- Financial & Business Support
- Leadership & Management
- Workforce Development
- Technology & Innovation

**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 peer support

The Growth Hub supports businesses throughout Bath & North East Somerset, Bristol, North Somerset and South Gloucestershire.

**Invest Bristol & Bath is the West of England 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.**



# SUPPORT PROGRAMMES

Use the quick-reference guide on the following pages to find out what support is available for your business.

In addition to the programmes listed, the 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, please contact the West of England Growth Hub.

To be eligible for the following support, you will be a small - medium sized business based in the West of England (Bath & North East Somerset, Bristol, North Somerset and South Gloucestershire).

## FINDING THE RIGHT SUPPORT FOR YOUR BUSINESS

We're providing increased support to our region's 45,000+ businesses to help you respond and adapt as the world changes rapidly and provide you with the resilience to navigate uncertainty and get set for future success.

This Business Support Pack provides an overview of the support programmes available for your business. If you'd like further help identifying what might benefit your business the most, please contact the West of England Growth Hub.

Contact the Growth Hub at  
[wearegrowth@westofengland-ca.gov.uk](mailto:wearegrowth@westofengland-ca.gov.uk)

# FINANCIAL & BUSINESS SUPPORT

WHAT DO I GET?	ELIGIBILITY CRITERIA	MORE INFO
<b>Accountancy Support Programme</b>		
<p>This programme will help you better understand your financial position and assess how you could strengthen financial resilience, and understand how you could benefit from new financial management processes and best practice.</p> <p>Access free, 1-1 support from a chartered accountant, and tap into a network of expert financial support from the Institute of Chartered Accountants in England and Wales (ICAEW).</p> <p>Delivered by the West of England Combined Authority in partnership with ICAEW.</p>	<p>You will not be currently using a chartered accountant</p> <p>Have between 2 -100 employees.</p>	
<b>Effective Digital Entrepreneurship &amp; Business Support for non EU migrants</b>		
<p>This programme supports the launch, stabilisation and growth of non-EU migrants' businesses through personalised business support.</p> <p>This programme will support businesses through a network of volunteer mentors in the business sector, a digital platform for learning &amp; training resources and one-to-one coaching.</p> <p>Led by ACH and with partners from Bristol's School for Policy Studies and the West of England Combined Authority.</p> <p>This project has been part funded by the European Union Asylum, Migration and Integration Fund.</p>	<p>To find out more information please email - <b>dwayne.deer@ach.org.uk</b></p>	
<b>Rose Review Female Entrepreneurs Mentoring Programme</b>		
<p>With an increasingly challenging business environment, an experienced mentor that can provide impartial guidance can make the difference between success and failure.</p> <p>NatWest has partnered with not-for-profit Be the Business to launch a free mentoring service for female entrepreneurs.</p> <p>Backed by the government, this free 12-week mentoring programme, will give female SME leaders and entrepreneurs access to advice and guidance to build their businesses.</p>	<p>Already run an established business</p> <p>Identify as a woman</p>	

# FINANCIAL & BUSINESS SUPPORT

WHAT DO I GET?	ELIGIBILITY CRITERIA	MORE INFO
<b>Intellectual Property</b>		
<p>Intellectual property (IP) assets can be integral to the growth and sustainability of a business.</p> <p>When properly managed, the value of your IP can outweigh physical assets, accounting for over 70% of your business' value.</p> <p>It's important to understand there will be changes to UK IP law following the UK's exit from the EU.</p> <p>The West of England Growth Hub can provide 1-1 guidance on managing your IP in partnership with the Intellectual Property Office.</p>	Available to entrepreneurs, startup businesses and established SMEs	
<b>Universal Business Support</b>		
<p>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.</p> <p>The universal business support programme can help you:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>▪ Understand regulations, requirements and best practice when setting up a new business</li><li>▪ Access free expert advice and guidance to get started with a new business</li><li>▪ Access training to develop your business</li><li>▪ Access a range of 1-1 support, workshops and resources to help with everything from digital marketing to accountancy.</li></ul> <p>Delivered by the West of England Combined Authority in partnership with Bristol City Council, North Somerset Council, South Gloucestershire Council and Bath &amp; North East Somerset Council.</p>	Available to residents, entrepreneurs, start-up businesses and established SMEs	





## CASE STUDY

### Bailey Balloons - supporting business recovery and resilience

Bailey Balloons is a hot air balloon operator based in Bristol. With a reduction in bookings of 90% in 2020, they got in touch with the Growth Hub who were able to signpost them to grant funding and helped them to tap into local business networks for ongoing support.

Jo Bailey said:

“It’s been a really challenging year. The Growth Hub helped our business at a time when during lockdown I felt that no-one was listening to us.

“I just think they’ve been brilliant in so many ways and supporting so many unsupported companies like us. To other entrepreneurs I would say please do get in touch with the Growth Hub. They’ve been invaluable to us.”

# LEADERSHIP & MANAGEMENT

WHAT DO I GET?	ELIGIBILITY CRITERIA	MORE INFO
<b>Business Advisory Boards</b>		
<p>This initiative brings small groups of senior leaders together online to add external ideas and perspective to the thinking of ambitious small businesses.</p> <p>Over the course of 12 months, you'll enjoy invaluable non-executive director style support from a group of experienced business people made up of leaders and senior managers from larger businesses with specialisms such as finance, marketing, operations or HR.</p> <p>Your advisory board will be there to do just that, advise. You know your business best. But they will provide:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ Support and advice on the issues you're facing</li> <li>▪ An external perspective, and objective input</li> <li>▪ A sounding board to talk through ideas and strategy</li> <li>▪ Reassurance you're heading in the right direction</li> </ul> <p>Delivered by the West of England Combined Authority in partnership with Be the Business.</p>	Small- to medium-sized businesses	
<b>Mentoring for Growth</b>		
<p>You will be matched to a mentors from leading companies such as Siemens, GSK, BAE Systems and the John Lewis Partnership. This programme, which is fully funded, is designed to focus on your needs. Their support could be just the thing to help with:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ An objective sounding board for challenges and new ideas alike</li> <li>▪ Getting your senior management team working together more effectively</li> <li>▪ Improving your company's forward-looking forecasting and modelling</li> <li>▪ Making changes to your business model to suit changing consumer spending habits</li> <li>▪ Improving the performance of your business overall</li> </ul> <p>Delivered by the West of England Combined Authority in partnership with Be the Business.</p>	A turnover of at least £500,000	



## CASE STUDY

### Amanda Challans - mentor support

Adventurer and public speaker Amanda Challans runs an international change management consultancy based in Bristol. Amanda got in touch with the Growth Hub for support to grow her business.

“When you’ve got a lot of pressure and responsibility on yourself it’s really nice to have that feeling that someone else is part of this journey with you, and they’ve been with me every step of the way.”

She also benefited from the vibrant network of local businesses that the Growth Hub connected her to.

“One of the biggest benefits for local businesses is the network the Growth Hub has – I’m aware that they’re speaking to so many other businesses in the area. There’s that feeling that we’re all supporting each other to grow.”



# WORKFORCE DEVELOPMENT

WHAT DO I GET?	ELIGIBILITY CRITERIA	MORE INFO
<b>Workforce for the Future</b>		
<p>Through this programme you'll receive support over three years from our expert partners to ensure your business can identify ongoing skills needs, unlock opportunities, drive change and invest in your current and future workforce.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>▪ Access to an experienced Skills Adviser who will help you develop your workforce</li><li>▪ A Workforce Development Plan and strategy to put into place</li><li>▪ Access a suite of online tools, resources and workshops</li><li>▪ Funding for skills training programmes</li><li>▪ Strategic planning and change management guidance</li><li>▪ Support with apprenticeships and student placements</li><li>▪ Confidence in safeguarding jobs, reimagining your existing workforce and recruiting sufficiently skilled employees from local pools of talent</li><li>▪ The latest approaches to open and inclusive recruitment so you can reduce your skills gaps and improve connectivity with the local skills system</li></ul> <p>Delivered by the West of England Combined Authority in partnership with Adviza, Bath College, Business West, City of Bristol College, South Gloucestershire &amp; Stroud College, University of the West of England, Weston College and Western Training Provider Network.</p> <p>The project has received funding from the European Social Fund (ESF).</p>	5 - 250 employees	

# WORKFORCE DEVELOPMENT

WHAT DO I GET?	ELIGIBILITY CRITERIA	MORE INFO
<b>Thrive at Work West of England</b>		
<p>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:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>▪ Our free e-Learning, developed by Mind, 'Managing Mental Health at Work' is designed to equip managers with the confidence and skills to have supportive conversations with their staff about mental health and wellbeing, particularly in these challenging times</li><li>▪ Advice and guidance to implement Mental Health at Work Commitments and Mental Health at Work Standards and Wellness Action Plans</li><li>▪ Toolkits and research reports</li><li>▪ Suicide awareness training</li><li>▪ Psychological first aid</li></ul> <p>Delivered by the West of England Combined Authority in partnership with Bath &amp; North East Somerset Council, Bristol City Council, Mind, North Somerset Council, Public Health England and South Gloucestershire Council.</p>	Open to all businesses	



# WORKFORCE DEVELOPMENT

WHAT DO I GET?	ELIGIBILITY CRITERIA	MORE INFO
<b>Kickstart Scheme</b>		
<p>£2bn of funding has been allocated to create thousands of 6-month work placements for unemployed people aged 18-25. Employers of all sizes can apply for funding which covers:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>100% of the <b>National Minimum Wage</b> (or the <b>National Living Wage</b> depending on the age of the participant) for 25 hours per week for a total of 6 months</li> <li>associated <b>employer National Insurance contributions</b></li> <li>employer minimum automatic enrolment contributions</li> </ul> <p>You can spread the start date of the job placements up until the end of December 2021.</p> <p>The placements help young people develop the skills and experience they need in the workplace after the placement has ended, whilst providing you with the extra resource you need to grow your business.</p> <p>Businesses able to create 30 or more job placements can apply for the funding <b>directly on the Government website</b>.</p> <p>Businesses interested in creating less than 30 fully-funded Kickstart placements need to apply through an intermediary.</p> <p>The West of England Combined Authority are working with our partners across the region to connect SMEs interested in creating Kickstart placements with the relevant local intermediary.</p>	Open to all businesses	

# TECHNOLOGY & INNOVATION

WHAT DO I GET?	ELIGIBILITY CRITERIA	MORE INFO
<b>Trading Better Online</b>		
<p>Businesses will be matched to a consultant and supported with up to 4 days of hands-on support to develop and enhance their web presence.</p> <p>The support is fully funded and tailored to each company's requirements, giving you access to the expertise you need to boost your business.</p> <p>The programme can help you:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ Develop an online presence, for example creating a new website or social media presence</li> <li>▪ Install new systems into your business to increase productivity and growth</li> <li>▪ Increase engagement with customers online, such as developing your digital marketing strategy or adopting a new customer relationship management system</li> </ul> <p>Delivered by the West of England Combined Authority in partnership with TechSPARK.</p>	Small- to medium-sized businesses	
<b>Business Innovation Fund</b>		
<p>The Business Innovation Fund awards grants to support eligible businesses to undertake research, development and innovation activities, including research and development, in order to bring new or enhanced products, processes and services to the market. You'll get:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ Funding and support to move from concept to commercialisation</li> <li>▪ Collaborate with our region's leading research institutions</li> <li>▪ Advice on IP, testing and development roadmaps</li> <li>▪ Bespoke research, development and innovation action plan</li> </ul> <p>The Business Innovation Fund is supported by the European Regional Development Fund (ERDF).</p>	<p>Able to match fund the cost of your project</p> <p>Less than 250 employees</p>	

# TECHNOLOGY & INNOVATION

WHAT DO I GET?	ELIGIBILITY CRITERIA	MORE INFO
<p><b>Green Business Grants</b></p> <p>Green Business Grants can be used for capital works and purchases to improve the energy efficiency of buildings and business operations. A grant could help you:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ avoid harmful emissions that contribute to climate change</li> <li>▪ reduce your energy bills and lower maintenance costs</li> <li>▪ make your buildings healthier for your employees</li> <li>▪ improve your green credentials with customers and contractors</li> <li>▪ access cutting edge low carbon technologies</li> <li>▪ actively support the local supply chain for energy efficiency goods and services.</li> </ul> <p>Green Business Grants of up to £15k are available to small &amp; medium sized enterprises in the West of England.</p> <p>These will pay for 40-80% of eligible costs depending on the business' size, location and project.</p> <p>Potential projects include LED lighting, air source heat pumps, solar thermal, wall and roof insulation, variable speed drives, air compressors, induction cooking and solar PV.</p> <p>The West of England Combined Authority will provide a free carbon survey and report to help businesses decide on the project they would like to fund.</p> <p>The grant is available between 25<sup>th</sup> January and 25<sup>th</sup> June 2021.</p> <p>Green Business Grants are funded through the European Regional Development Fund (ERDF) and the West of England Combined Authority's West of England Recovery Fund.</p>		
	<p>Less than 250 employees</p> <p>Turnover equal to or less than €50m OR a balance sheet of equal to or less than €43m</p> <p>VAT registered</p>	



## CASE STUDY

### Charlie Gardner, CGI Music - Trading Better Online

CGI Music is a music events and artist management business owned by Charlie Gardner.

Having never applied for grant funding before, the Growth Hub worked with Charlie to offer advice on the support available and give him access to the Trading Better Online programme.

Charlie said,

“I’m massively grateful for all the help and support that the Growth Hub has provided at this difficult time. It can be a bit of a lonely world running your own business so having a support system like that [the Growth Hub] is really invaluable.”



## CONTACT

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](mailto:wearegrowth@westofengland-ca.gov.uk)**

Website: **[www.wearegrowth.co.uk](http://www.wearegrowth.co.uk)**

## HOW TO GET SUPPORT

Having confidence in your business position and knowing your options can make decision-making a lot easier.

We're here to help you find the right grants, guidance and support to boost your business.

West of England  
**GROWTH  
HUB** ▶▶▶

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

**EU Transition**

**National financial support for Covid-19**

**Export Academy**

For further information and support on the employment and skills support available in the West of England, please visit the Employment and Skills Portal on the West of England Combined Authority website  
**[www.westofengland-ca.gov.uk/skills/employment-skills-portal](http://www.westofengland-ca.gov.uk/skills/employment-skills-portal)**



