



Finding the right support for your business

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

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

In addition to these programmes, 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, or for help 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 Combined Authority's dedicated business support service, the West of England Growth Hub, provides SMEs with tailored one-to-one information 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 for:

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

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

Our business support programmes and vast network of partners offer tailored sector-specific support



THE GOOD EMPLOYMENT CHARTER

WHAT DO I GET?

The Good Employment Charter

The Good Employment Charter is an initiative to improve and set the employment standards in the West of England by encouraging organisations of any size, and within any sector, to become supporters or members of the Charter.

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

- 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.

Looking after your team isn't just the right thing to do, it makes business sense. Raising the standards of employment by adopting more inclusive, fair and sustainable working practices 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.

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

- Secure Work
- Flexible Work
- Real Living Wage
- Engagement & Voice
- Recruitment
- Developing People
- Health & Wellbeing.

ELIGIBILITY CRITERIA

Open to all businesses in the West of England.

MORE INFO

FINANCIAL & BUSINESS SUPPORT

WHAT DO I GET?

Business Growth and Adaptions Grant

The Business Growth and Adaptions Grant is designed to help SMEs purchase and implement new products and equipment, and in doing so, increase production to drive business growth and expansion. The funding can also be used to adapt to changes in legislation.

When available, details of the latest application window will be shown on the Business Growth and Adaptions Grant web page. You can register your interest to be informed when we are open for applications” or similar.

Applications must help the business to do at least one of the following:

- Increase or improve production
- Start production, including bringing production “in-house”
- Adapt to changes in legislation from the last 3 years

All projects should support your business to maintain or increase your turnover.

There are two funding pots available: £6,000 - £10,000 and £10,001 - £30,000*. Please note your business will need to be able to provide a minimum of 20% match funding.

*Eligibility differs between the two funds. Please see full details on our website.

ELIGIBILITY CRITERIA

Less than 250 employees.
Based in Bath and North East Somerset, Bristol or South Gloucestershire.
Able to match fund 20% of project costs.

MORE INFO

FINANCIAL & BUSINESS SUPPORT

WHAT DO I GET?

ELIGIBILITY CRITERIA

MORE INFO

Create Growth

The Create Growth Programme will provide a bespoke business support programme delivered by Watershed comprising business support tailored to the specific needs of high-growth potential creative businesses in the West of England. Support will include:

- £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, but is not exclusive to:

- 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 3 years (including either prior to or during the pandemic)
- Employ a minimum of 2 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 2 years.

Open to all businesses in the West of England.

FINANCIAL & BUSINESS SUPPORT

WHAT DO I GET?	ELIGIBILITY CRITERIA	MORE INFO
<h2>Intellectual Property</h2>		
<p>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. It's important to understand there have been changes to UK IP law following the UK's exit from the EU. The West of England Growth Hub can provide 1-1 guidance on managing your IP in partnership with the Intellectual Property Office.</p>	<p>Available to entrepreneurs, startup businesses and established SMEs.</p>	
<h2>Export and trade</h2>		
<p>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.</p> <p>Our offer includes:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Advice on the Government's Internationalisation Fund, which offers match-funded grants for businesses to grow their presence overseas • Sign up to the Export Academy to begin and grow your export journey. 	<p>All businesses.</p>	

FINANCIAL & BUSINESS SUPPORT

WHAT DO I GET?

ELIGIBILITY CRITERIA

MORE INFO

Universal Business Support

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.

The Universal Business Support programme can help you:

- Understand regulations, requirements and best practice when setting up a new business
- Access free expert advice and guidance to get started with a new business
- Access training to develop your business
- Access a range of 1-1 support, workshops and resources to help with everything from digital marketing to accountancy.

Delivered by the West of England Combined Authority in partnership with Bristol City Council, North Somerset Council, South Gloucestershire Council and Bath & North East Somerset Council.

Available to residents, entrepreneurs, start-up businesses and established SMEs.

Migrant Business Support

This programme provides free business information, guidance and training for non-EU migrant or refugees. It gives one-to-one business advice to help you become self-employed, start a business or learn new skills. You'll get the professional skills and expertise you need to grow your business, access to business training, and we'll connect you with a professional business mentor.

Led by ACH and with partners from Bristol's School for Policy Studies (University of Bristol) and the West of England Combined Authority. This project is supported by the Asylum, Migration and Integration Funding (AMIF) Programme 2014-2020.

To find out more information **request a call-back today.**

PINPOINT MAPPING

Supporting business recovery and growth

Pinpoint Mapping use a range of technology, including drones and 3D laser scanners, to produce precision land surveys and measured building surveys. Since 2017 they've worked with architects, developers, planning consultants and homeowners across the country.

Following a downturn in new business enquiries, as a result of the uncertainty following Russia's invasion of Ukraine, the company sought support to grow.

Neil Maloney said: "In terms of generating new business we had become rather stuck in our ways, relying on traditional methods, however we knew we needed to push our boundaries to achieve more. Tech for Growth has opened our eyes as to what's available to grow the business. We're now using tech to develop CRM, establish an email marketing campaign and create a digital marketing strategy to boost our social media presence."



PINPOINT MAPPING

Supporting business recovery and growth

There have been huge technological advances in the industry over recent years, with the use of drones revolutionising working practices - where large areas of land once took a month to survey this can now take a day. Pinpoint mapping are now looking to secure funding via the Growth Hub to ensure they stay at the cutting edge of the industry.



Neil said

“It’s been great to have a fresh pair of eyes look at the business, suggest new ideas and ways to improve. It’s had a huge impact with turnover tripling over the past six months.”

LEADERSHIP & MANAGEMENT

WHAT DO I GET?	ELIGIBILITY CRITERIA	MORE INFO
Help to Grow: Management		
<p>This course supports senior managers to boost their business's performance, resilience, and long-term growth.</p> <p>The 12-week programme is designed to be taken alongside full-time work through a combination of online sessions and face-to-face learning.</p> <p>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.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none">• 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 1:1 support from a business mentor• Learn from peers and network with businesses just like yours.	Small to medium sized businesses.	

LEADERSHIP & MANAGEMENT

WHAT DO I GET?	ELIGIBILITY CRITERIA	MORE INFO
Advisory Boards		
<p>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'll:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • 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. 	Small to medium sized businesses.	
Be the Business Mentoring		
<p>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.</p> <p>This fully-funded programme is designed to focus on your needs, and can help with:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • 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. 	Small to medium sized businesses.	

PRIOR

Mentor support

Bristol's ever-growing presence within the creative industry continues to thrive and is accelerating daily.

One business in the beating heart of it is Prior. Founded in 2019, Prior is a non-for-profit award winning independent shop, gallery, and workshop space.

Founder Beck Prior says, "We want to ensure everything we do creates a positive impact for our local and wider community, and of course, the planet. 100% of the profits that we make is fed back into community workshop provision, local creative projects to improve social issues, charity donations and more".

During the early stages of the Covid-19 pandemic Prior found as a new business the pandemic started to affect the way in which the business functioned, with no eligibility for grants, or the self-employment grant, the business was plunged into a state of uncertainty.



Beck said

“ I hadn't even been open a year and the country was advising people to stay at home. I knew it would hugely affect retail and I needed financial advice but also emotional support. I desperately needed to voice my concerns and worries with someone impartial who could help me. ”

PRIOR

Mentor support

That's when Beck sought help from the Growth Hub. Over the last three years the Growth Hub have supported Prior through its evolution with access to programmes such as, The Good Employment Charter, Tech for Growth, and signposted towards different grant opportunities.

Founder Beck Prior says, "Growth hub have supported me over the last 3 years through all stages of my business growth. My advisor Sian has become a friend who cheerleads me at every milestone, encouraging and supporting me as the business grows".

Building upon the support provided by Sian and the Growth Hub, Prior has been able to reach new heights and implement new practises within the business.

Asking if Prior would recommend the Growth Hub to other start-ups and businesses, "If you haven't reached out to Growth Hub I would do so immediately. They are a great bunch of people, all dedicated in doing their best for local independent businesses. If you're in need of serious business advice, or just a cheerleader the Growth Hub team tick all the boxes".



Beck said

“ Growth Hub has enabled me to learn about writing funding applications and how to manage my business better. The business mentoring, I have received has guided me through maximising revenue, confidence with pivotal changes, and even pricing of our services. ”

WORKFORCE DEVELOPMENT

WHAT DO I GET?

Workforce for the Future

Workforce for the Future is a fully funded workforce planning, training, and talent acquisition service for all sectors. You'll get support to invest in your workforce and make sure you have the right people with the right skills.

Our extensive and expert team of partners will analyse your needs and work with you to implement workforce development plans to upskill or retrain your employees, and bring in new talent to drive your business forwards. Our services include:

- Succession planning
- Recruitment and selection
- Retention planning
- Talent management
- Learning and development.

We can support you with workforce development planning, training and skills, apprenticeships and work placements, education and skills pathways and talent retention. Our fully-rounded offer covers all areas of workforce development, including digital upskilling and accessing the latest low carbon opportunities for sustainability. We also provide bespoke support for the Hospitality, Construction and Adult Social Care sectors.

Delivered by the West of England Combined Authority in partnership with 11 expert partners.

The project has received £4m of funding from the European Social Fund (ESF).



ELIGIBILITY CRITERIA

Less than 250 employees.

MORE INFO

WORKFORCE DEVELOPMENT

WHAT DO I GET?

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 wellbeing, 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.

ELIGIBILITY CRITERIA

Open to all businesses and voluntary, community and social enterprises (VCSEs).

MORE INFO

WORKFORCE DEVELOPMENT

WHAT DO I GET?

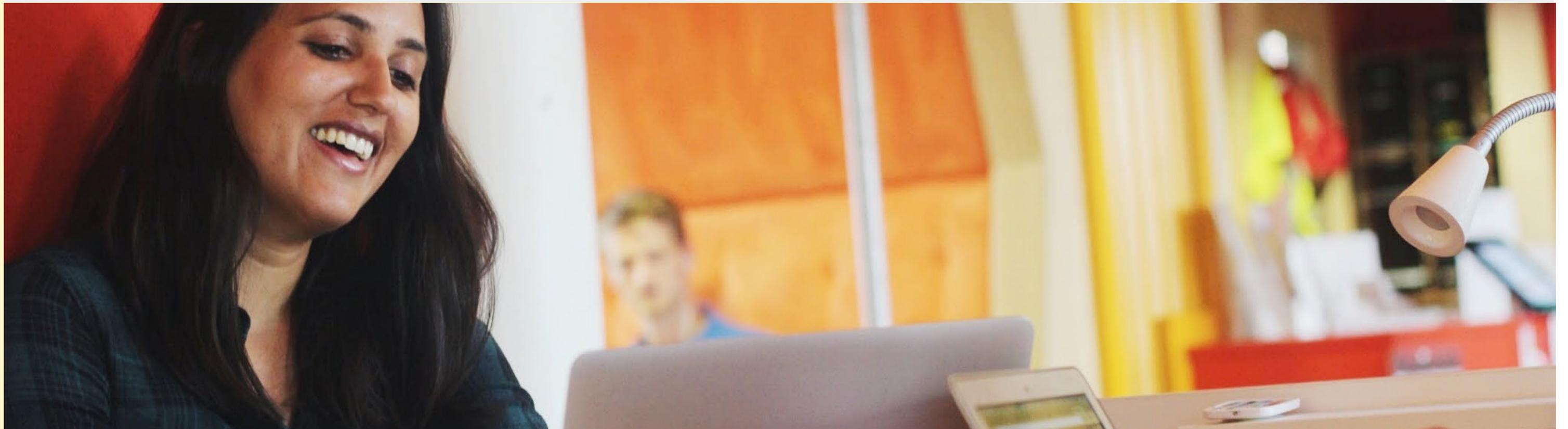
Jobs Connect

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.

ELIGIBILITY CRITERIA

Open to all businesses.

MORE INFO



SKILLS BOOTCAMPS

WHAT DO I GET?	ELIGIBILITY CRITERIA	MORE INFO
<p>Skills Bootcamps</p>		
<p>Skills Bootcamps can help your business:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • 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 • 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 <p>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.</p> <p>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.</p>	<p>Open to all businesses.</p>	

HAWKLAND ECOLOGICAL ARCHITECTURE & CONSTRUCTION

Sustainable building project design and delivery

Initially a two-man operation focussing on the South West, partners Chris Hawker and David Copeland have over the past six years expanded their client base nationwide. However, the slow-down in the industry during the pandemic resulted in a backlog of projects. They needed to deliver while securing a stream of new business and that meant expanding their team.

David explains: “The pandemic gave us time to think about what we were doing and why. We set up the business to grow and scale and help the construction industry provide better sustainable solutions, but we needed support to take the next step, that’s when we turned to the Growth Hub.”

David took advantage of free business mentoring: “It’s invaluable, my mentor Rick encourages me to voice my ideas, then challenges them, acting as a steering rudder to chart a sensible route, prioritising what we need to focus on.”



HAWKLAND ECOLOGICAL ARCHITECTURE & CONSTRUCTION

Sustainable building project design and delivery

Hawkland believe they have solid foundations on which to build growth. Through the Workforce for the Future programme, they are investing in their leadership skills, enrolling on a mental health and wellbeing course:

“We work in a physically demanding, tough, dirty and dangerous industry so the welfare of our staff is of paramount importance. We want to support our workers mental health and ensure they have a good work/life balance.

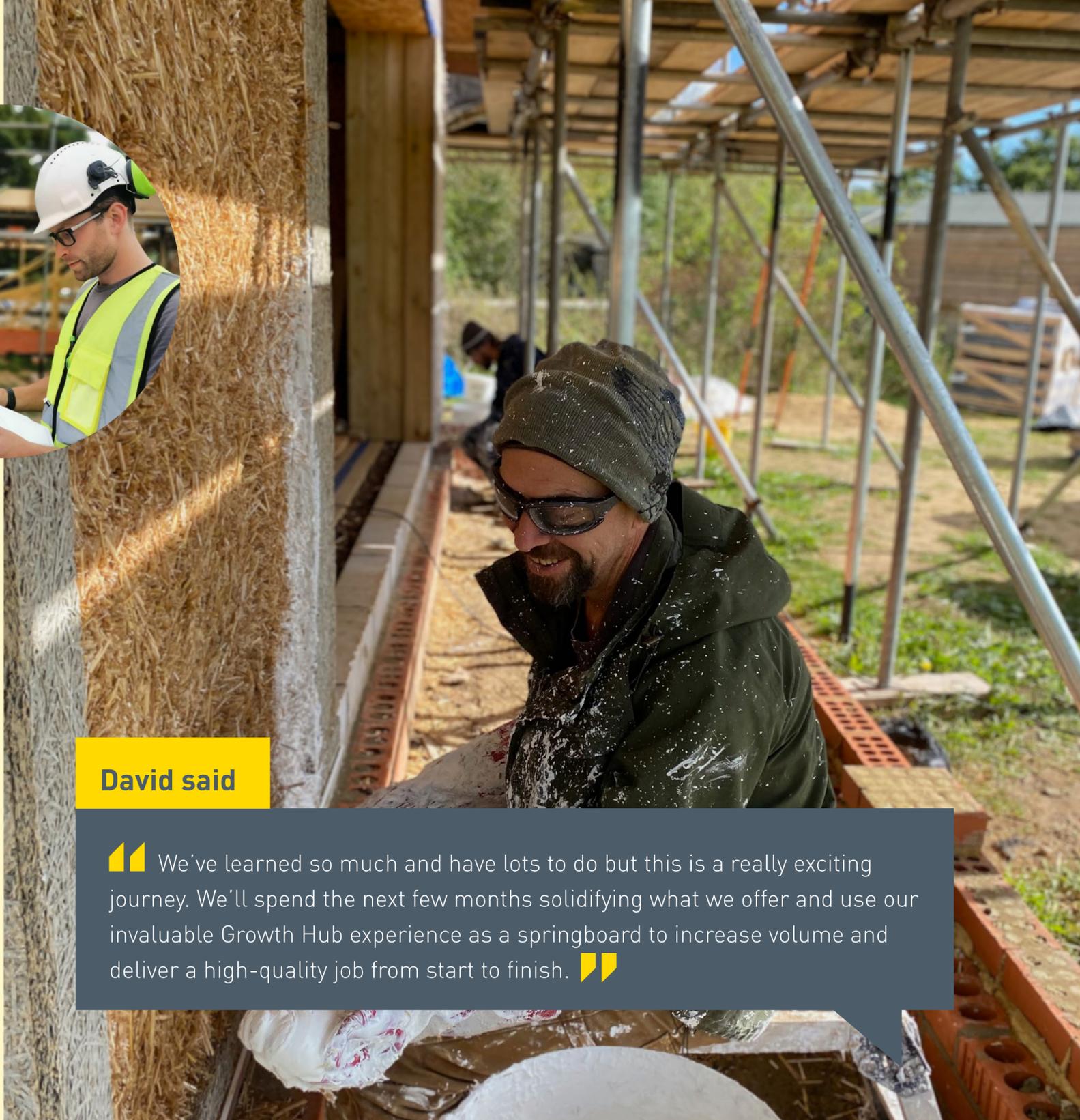
Signing up to the West of England Good Employment Charter was a valuable process for us, we ticked nearly all the boxes which we found really empowering, reaffirming we’re on the right path.”

What’s next? Well, Hawkland have just joined the Tech for Growth programme where they’ll get support to use tech effectively to communicate who they are and what they do to grow the business further.



David said

“We’ve learned so much and have lots to do but this is a really exciting journey. We’ll spend the next few months solidifying what we offer and use our invaluable Growth Hub experience as a springboard to increase volume and deliver a high-quality job from start to finish.”



TECHNOLOGY & INNOVATION

WHAT DO I GET?	ELIGIBILITY CRITERIA	MORE INFO
<p>Made Smarter</p>		
<p>Made Smarter is a wide-ranging digital technology and transformation service for manufacturing businesses.</p> <p>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.</p> <p>You could get:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • 1:1 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. <p>Made Smarter West of England is delivered in partnership with the National Composites Centre and the University of the West Of England.</p>	<p>Manufacturing industry.</p> <p>With 2-249 employees.</p> <p>A minimum turnover of £75k a year.</p> <p>Located in Bath and North East Somerset, Bristol or South Gloucestershire.</p> <p>Able to match fund certain support services.</p>	

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 Combined Authority's West of England Investment Fund.

The Business Innovation Fund is supported with £1,451,825 of funding from the European Regional Development Fund (ERDF), which is part of the European Structural and Investment Funds 2014-2020. The Department for Levelling Up, Housing and Communities is the Managing Authority for ERDF.



Able to match fund the cost of your project.
 Less than 250 employees.
 Business and project is West of England based.

TECHNOLOGY & INNOVATION

WHAT DO I GET?	ELIGIBILITY CRITERIA	MORE INFO
Tech for Growth		
<p>We offer fully-funded help to improve your business's digital presence and grow. Delivered in partnership with our partner TechSPARK, the Tech for Growth programme matches you with a expert consultant.</p> <p>You'll get up to four days of hands-on and bespoke support to develop and adopt technology. This support can help you:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none">• Create a new website or improve your existing one with strategies for Search Engine Optimisation• Develop a digital marketing strategy including using pay per click and Google Adwords• Increase social media engagement and create clear sales paths• Install and/or update eCommerce platforms• Build effective marketing campaigns and automate sales strategies• Research and adopt new systems including Customer Relationship Management systems, financial and project management.	<p>Trading for at least a year.</p> <p>Aspirations to grow turnover or staff numbers.</p> <p>A minimum turnover of £50k a year.</p>	

GREEN BUSINESS SUPPORT

WHAT DO I GET?	ELIGIBILITY CRITERIA	MORE INFO
Green Business Support Pillar		
<p>The West of England 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 pillar. The pillar comprises of 8 steps which support on the journey to creating a green business and in turn, contributing to a greener economy.</p> <p>The 8 steps are:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none">• Build your plan• Attend events• Measure and report• Get structured support• Take action• Connect with organisations• Search for funding support• Keep up to date <p>Make your business more sustainable today.</p>	<p>Less than 250 employees. A legal entity, such as a private limited company.</p>	

GREEN BUSINESS SUPPORT

WHAT DO I GET?	ELIGIBILITY CRITERIA	MORE INFO
<h2>Carbon Surveys</h2>		
<p>Get a free Carbon Survey and Decarbonisation Report to understand and improve your business's energy use and greenhouse gas emissions:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Understand current energy use and carbon emissions, and pinpoint carbon hotspots in your business activities • Identify practical ways to reduce emissions and energy bills, including actions that could require low or no investment to implement • Discover and find out more about new and emerging technologies in their industry • Set priorities and budgets for future improvements • Access sources of funding. <p>To date, over 250 businesses have received a Carbon Survey and Decarbonisation Report, identifying an average greenhouse gas saving of 7 tCO₂e* and £2,000 in utility bills per business per year.</p> <p>Carbon Surveys are funded from the European Regional Development Fund and West of England Recovery Fund.</p> <p>* Calculated with BEIS 2017 Conversion Factors.</p>	<p>Less than 250 employees.</p> <p>A legal entity, such as a private limited company.</p>	



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 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 Combined Authority, our team of Enterprise Advisors can also help you navigate the Government's national and regional support programmes, funding and business advice.

