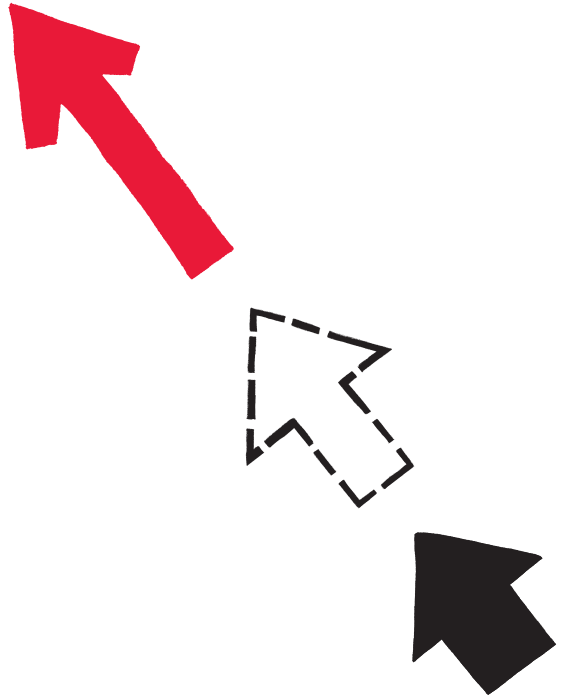


Solutions for Business

Funded by
government

Government Funded Business Support



INTRODUCTION

A Guide to Government – Funded Business Support

Help for businesses during the economic downturn, and support for securing future economic prosperity and growth.

This booklet summarises the support from government to help your business succeed.

Solutions for Business is the name for the government's portfolio of streamlined business support available in England. Businesses told us that government support for business was confusing, so we have simplified access, reduced the number of support products on offer and given them a consistent look and feel under the Solutions for Business brand.

The support products on offer provide a range of help for businesses, covering the whole business life cycle from start-up to development and growth.

Most products are free, or subsidised, but you need to check you are eligible. If you are looking for business support, contact the Business Link service to receive free, impartial advice on the most appropriate support for your business.

Business Link provides businesses with an impartial gateway to all of the business advice and help available in a Region. It is supported by a national website, www.businesslink.gov.uk and national helpline 0845 600 9 006.



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Starting Up a New Business

Product Name	Description
Starting a Business	<p>Free advice to help those wishing to start a business. Advice and information on all aspects of setting up and running a successful business, from an assessment of a business idea to advice on business planning and finance. Also includes post start-up guidance.</p> <p>Eligibility: Individuals and groups starting a business.</p>
Intensive Start Up Support	<p>Free advice and intensive assistance (in addition to what's provided by Starting a Business) for under-represented individuals to help them start their own business.</p> <p>Eligibility: Prioritised based on locality and the needs of the individual. This includes, but is not restricted to, women, people with disabilities and black and minority ethnic communities.</p>
Starting a High Growth Business	<p>Free help for new businesses (and people developing a business concept) identified as having high-growth potential. Intensive individual coaching through workshops, networks and online resources to help achieve rapid growth. One to one mentoring is also envisaged.</p> <p>Eligibility: Companies in specific sectors that have the potential to achieve turnover of £500,000 to £1 million or higher within three years of starting to trade.</p>

For more information on the range of support available to start a business, contact Business Link 0845 600 9 006 or visit www.businesslink.gov.uk

Grow Your Business

Product Name	Description
<p>Understanding Finance for Business</p>	<p>Free advice and support from specialist advisors to ensure that entrepreneurs and businesses understand their options for getting the money they need to start and grow a business. Includes a diagnosis of financial needs and facilitated introduction to potential sources of finance.</p> <p>Eligibility: Small and medium start-up and growth businesses (under 250 employees) lacking an understanding of finance options and the skills to develop their propositions and access to potential investors.</p>
<p>Small Loans for Business</p>	<p>Small loans up to £50,000 to help small business owners, entrepreneurs, charities and social enterprises start up, develop and expand their business.</p> <p>Eligibility: Individuals starting a business and small and medium sized businesses with a viable business plan, growth potential and evidence of being unable to raise funding needed from mainstream lenders.</p>
<p>Finance for Business</p>	<p>A range of finance funds for businesses with viable business plans unable to get support from commercial banks and investors. Nationwide options and Regional Development Agency options are available.</p> <p>Eligibility: Small and medium sized businesses (under 250 employees) and those who have not been able to secure finance from other sources.</p>
<p>Innovation, Advice and Guidance</p>	<p>Innovation advice and guidance from experts, providing businesses with expert knowledge and highly specialised and technical skills to innovate and improve performance.</p> <p>Eligibility: Small and medium sized businesses (under 250 employees) and social enterprises seeking innovative approaches to tackling barriers to growth. Advice to businesses with 250 or over employees are provided but at full market rate.</p>

Grow Your Business Continued

<p>Rural Development Programme for England Business Support</p>	<p>Support for businesses in the farming, food and forestry sectors. Includes access to specific training and grants for business development and expansion.</p> <p>Eligibility: Farmers, foresters, businesses in the food industry and rural areas.</p>
<p>Designing Demand</p>	<p>Support programme for businesses to improve their performance, become more competitive and increase profits through the strategic, effective use of design.</p> <p>Eligibility: Micro through to small and medium-sized businesses (under 250 employees) with ambition to grow, an appetite for change, and the resources and management time to invest in running strategic design projects.</p>
<p>Coaching for High Growth</p>	<p>A free structured coaching programme, helping new and existing businesses with the desire and potential to achieve significant growth. The coaching is a customised intensive, one-to-one programme from experienced mentors. It is supplemented by workshops, networks and online resources.</p> <p>Eligibility: Small and medium sized businesses (under 250 employees) with the potential to achieve high growth.</p>
<p>Grant for Business Investment</p>	<p>Grants providing help for business investment projects which increase productivity, skills and employment in disadvantaged areas.</p> <p>Eligibility: Most businesses in Assisted Areas can apply. Small and medium sized businesses (under 250 employees) in other disadvantaged areas, as defined by Regional Development Agencies.</p>

For more information on the range of support available for growing a business, contact Business Link 0845 600 9 006 or visit www.businesslink.gov.uk

Improve the Efficiency of Your Business

Product Name	Description
Improving Your Resource Efficiency	<p>Advice, guidance and support in various forms (e.g. on site visits, loans, grants) to help businesses become more resource efficient, reduce costs along with their carbon footprint and increase their competitiveness.</p> <p>Eligibility: Most of the support is available to all business and much of it can be implemented at low, or no, cost. Further specialised support is available for those with significant potential to reduce their environmental impacts. Some help under this product is chargeable.</p>
Train to Gain	<p>Skills and training support for businesses to develop the skills of their employees as a route to improving overall business performance. Through a national network of Business Link advisers, free, expert support is available to help employers to make an assessment of their skills needs, and identify and access appropriate training solutions. Eligibility for funding or subsidies is identified to enhance the employers' own investment in skills, reflecting the shared responsibility for training.</p> <p>Eligibility: Open to employers of all sizes and sectors in England.</p>
Manufacturing Advisory Service	<p>Specific support for manufacturing companies in the form of free and subsidised practical advice from experts to help businesses reduce costs and improve productivity and effectiveness.</p> <p>Eligibility: Small and medium sized (under 250 employees) manufacturing firms. Support to businesses with 250 or over employees is provided but at full market rate.</p>

For more information on the range of support available to improve your businesses' efficiency, contact Business Link 0845 600 9 006 or visit www.businesslink.gov.uk

Develop and Test New Products and Markets

Product Name	Description
Developing Your International Trade Potential	<p>Advice and funding for businesses who are considering exporting or entering new overseas markets or who need help in communicating with overseas customers. Provides tailored training, workshops and networking to help businesses prepare to trade internationally.</p> <p>Eligibility: Businesses of all sizes and sectors in England.</p>
Accessing International Markets	<p>Specialist, tailored and in-depth market research and advice on identifying opportunities for businesses considering exporting into new overseas markets or wanting help in existing ones. Provides an overview of the chosen market and access to relevant contacts as well as market research reports. Also includes financial support towards the costs of overseas trade fairs and missions and detailed marketing research projects.</p> <p>Eligibility: Small and medium sized businesses (under 250 employees) and large firms (250 and over employees). Some help under this product is chargeable.</p>
Knowledge Transfer Partnerships	<p>Support for the placement of a recently qualified person (for example, a postgraduate or doctorate) in a business. Allows a business to work collaboratively with knowledge base institutions (e.g. Higher Education Institutions) to share the risks and costs associated with innovation.</p> <p>Eligibility: Businesses of all sizes and sectors in England who show willing and potential to develop innovative products, processes or services. Government makes a contribution towards the project cost via a grant paid to the knowledge base partner with the balance paid by the business. The business contribution is dependent on the cost of the project.</p>
Innovation Vouchers	<p>Funding for businesses to purchase research and development support from knowledge base institutions (e.g. Higher Education Institutions) in order to explore opportunities for future collaboration in developing and exploiting new ideas.</p> <p>Eligibility: Small and medium sized businesses in England who show willing and potential to develop innovative products, processes or services.</p>

Develop and Test New Products and Markets *Continued*

<p>Collaborative Research and Development</p>	<p>Financial grants for businesses working together to share knowledge, expertise and spend on research and development. Also to encourage collaborative working on research and development between businesses and knowledge base institutions (e.g. Higher Education Institutions).</p> <p>Eligibility: Businesses of all sizes and sectors in England who show willing and potential to develop innovative products, processes or services.</p>
<p>Grant for Research and Development</p>	<p>Financial grants to assist businesses to develop and exploit new ideas, overcome technical barriers and scientific risk and increasing research and development activity.</p> <p>Eligibility: Individuals starting a business and small and medium sized businesses (under 250 employees) within all sectors, except defence industry. Large firms (250 and over employees) are eligible when support is sought for low carbon technologies.</p>
<p>Transformational ICT (pilot phase)</p>	<p>Support for ICT to enable a completely different (i.e. transformed) business model which could simply not be delivered without that ICT and which, potentially, brings substantial new benefits to the business, for example, in terms of productivity, competitiveness, market access or carbon neutrality.</p> <p>Eligibility: Small and medium sized businesses (under 250 employees)</p>

For more information on the range of support available to develop and test new products and markets, contact Business Link 0845 600 9 006 or visit www.businesslink.gov.uk

Other Support

Government guaranteed bank lending and insurance:

Product Name	Description
Enterprise Finance Guarantee	<p>Government loan guarantee facilitating additional bank lending for small businesses, intended primarily to improve the availability of working capital. It also supports lending for business growth and development in cases where a sound proposition may otherwise be declined due to a lack of security. Eligible businesses are able to borrow between £1,000 and £1,000,000 when this would not otherwise have been possible.</p> <p>Eligibility: Viable small and medium sized businesses (under 250 employees) in the UK with an annual turnover of up to £25 million who have no or insufficient security. Decisions to lend are fully delegated to the participating lenders.</p>
Export Credit Insurance	<p>Insurance policies, guarantees for bank loans and political risk insurance for contracts involving the export of capital equipment and project related goods and services.</p> <p>Eligibility: Any person doing business in the UK who is exporting capital goods and services or is investing overseas. Eligibility is subject to credit risk assessment.</p>

Funding for intermediaries to provide infrastructure:

Networking for Innovation	Intermediaries are funded to help businesses build relationships with other businesses, intermediaries and knowledge base institutions (e.g. Higher Education Institutions) to develop and exploit new ideas. Business Link can inform you of any networks in your region and their specific eligibility criteria.
Business Collaboration Networks	Intermediaries facilitate opportunities for businesses to collaborate on projects they would have been unable to pursue alone. Business Link can inform you of any networks in your region and their specific eligibility criteria.
Business Growth: Specialist Facilities and Environments	Intermediaries provide specialist facilities such as incubator units, science parks and demonstrator facilities. Business Link can inform you of facilities that have vacancies. Each facility has its own entry criteria.
Business Premises	Intermediaries provide cost-effective managed workspaces and business parks in priority areas to help new and existing businesses grow. Business Link can inform you of premises that have vacancies. Each premises has its own entry criteria.

Other Support Continued

Specific calls made to aid the development of particular technologies:

Product Name	Description
Low Carbon Energy Demonstration	<p>Finance to assist a business in a range of demonstration activity in order to commercially exploit research and development in low carbon energy-generating technology. Invitations to apply for funding will be made when opportunities arise to support the development of specific energy-generating technology.</p> <p>Eligibility: Businesses based in the UK engaging in low carbon energy-based technology. Each invitation to apply for funding will have its own eligibility criteria.</p>

Proactively stimulate interest in enterprise within groups that would otherwise not get involved in enterprise:

Product Name	Description
Enterprise Coaching	<p>Flexible one-to-one support at a local level to stimulate interest amongst people with the desire and potential to start their own business. Includes talks, visits, presentations and mentoring support.</p> <p>Eligibility: Prioritised based on locality and needs of the individual, but includes residents of areas of deprivation, people with disabilities, women and black and minority ethnic communities.</p>

Information and advice for inward investors:

Product Name	Description
Maximising Foreign Direct Investment	<p>Information, advice and tailored help for potential and existing inward investors to the UK to help them with the decision to invest in the UK and develop their UK-based business.</p> <p>Eligibility: Overseas companies identified by UK Trade and Investment (UKTI).</p>

The portfolio is flexible, and new business support products will be available when the need exists. Possible future inclusions include business mentoring, which would give owners/senior managers of SMEs access to the knowledge and expertise of another business leader, and a Supplier Development Service, which would provide businesses with the advice and skills to supply the public sector.

NB: The Government has put in place a number of temporary business support measures, some of which carry the Real Help branding, for example Trade Credit Insurance Scheme (TCIS).

Devolved Administrations

Solutions for Business covers England only. Other support for businesses is available in Devolved Administrations through the following:

- Northern Ireland – Invest NI, www.investni.com/, no national no. but eight regional offices. Ballymena 028 2564 9215, Belfast 028 9023 9090, Coleraine 028 7028 0055, Craigavon 028 3839 0140, Derry 028 7126 7257, Enniskillen 028 6634 3942, Newry 028 3026 2955 and Omagh 028 8224 5763
- Scotland – Business Gateway, www.bgateway.com/, 0845 609 6611
- Wales – Flexible Support for Business, www.business-support-wales.gov.uk/, 030006 6 03000

Indicative guide to Solutions for Business by company size and stage

Product	Pre-Start up	New Company	SME	Large Firm
Accessing International Markets			X	X
Business Collaboration Networks		X	X	X
Business Growth: Specialist Facilities and Environments			X	X
Business Premises			X	X
Coaching for High Growth			X	
Collaborative R&D			X	X
Designing Demand		X	X	
Developing your International Trade Potential			X	X
Enterprise Coaching	X			
Enterprise Finance Guarantee		X	X	X
Export Credit Insurance			X	X
Finance for Business		X	X	
Grant for Business Investment		X	X	X
Grant for Research and Development	X	X	X	X
Improving your Resource Efficiency			X	X
Innovation Advice and Guidance			X	X
Innovation Vouchers			X	
Intensive Start-up Support	X	X		
Knowledge Transfer Partnerships			X	X
Low Carbon Energy Demonstration			X	X
Manufacturing Advisory Service		X	X	X
Maximising Foreign Direct Investment			X	X
Networking for Innovation		X	X	X
Rural Development Programme for England Business Support	X	X	X	X
Small Loans for Business			X	
Starting a Business	X	X		
Starting a High Growth Business	X	X		
Train to Gain			X	X
Understanding Finance for Business	X	X	X	

NB: Large companies may have to contribute to the costs of some products.
Some products specifically offer more support to smaller companies.

