

Corporate Policy Development & Scrutiny Panel

Invest in Bath Service Overview

Appendix 1 – Outline of Key Business & Skills Support Initiatives

Business Support and Grants

[COVID Grants and Financial Support](#)

Local Restrictions Support Grants and Additional Restrictions Grants are currently open for applications.

Restart grants expected to launch in April – we are currently awaiting guidance.

The council grants page linked above also details other relevant COVID assistance available for local businesses.

[Business Growth Grant Fund](#)

The Business Growth Grants are designed to support SMEs in the West of England with their plans to drive growth by implementing new business practices or adopting new ways of working.

The grants are open to businesses across all sectors, from sole traders to established SMEs.

[Green Business Grants](#)

West of England Green Business Grants support SMEs to improve their energy efficiency and reduce carbon emissions. A free energy audit is carried out first in order to identify interventions.

[Universal Business Support](#)

The universal business support programme 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. It can support businesses in any sector, from retail to removals.

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 one to one support, workshops and resources to help with everything from digital marketing to accountancy

Universal business support is free, and open to all entrepreneurs, start-up businesses and established SMEs in bath & North East Somerset

West of England Growth Hub

The West of England Combined Authority's Growth Hub is a free service full of tools and resources to help SMEs drive sustainable growth and profit. They offer one-to-one business support via their team of Enterprise Executives. They will help assess your needs and share a wide range of services, programmes and events you can use to achieve your objectives

Creative Scale Up

Creative Scale Up is a two-year pilot programme funded by the Department for Digital, Culture, Media & Sport. It aims to help creative businesses in the West of England access finance through an intensive sustainable growth support programme.

Business Innovation Fund

Businesses can get help to accelerate innovation and bring new products, processes and services to market through a new programme.

Accountancy Support Programme

The Accountancy Support Programme is a West of England Combined Authority initiative, delivered in partnership with the Institute of Chartered Accountants in England and Wales (ICAEW).

Trading Better Online

Trading Better Online is a West of England Combined Authority initiative which provides free, expert business support to enhance your digital presence and increase online sales

Mentoring for Growth

New Mentoring for Growth programme in partnership with Be the Business. It is designed to connect business leaders from large, multinational companies with key decision makers and owners from SMEs.

Peer Networks

Peer Networks is a national peer-to-peer networking programme for SME leaders that want to grow and develop their organisation for future success.

Employment & Skills

Achieve in B&NES

Achieve B&NES provides a job and course search service for anybody wishing to enter the workplace or progress their career. There are several free and funded courses from local providers on offer.

Achieve in B&NES is a built network of local businesses as well as support services, who can confidently offer real jobs, opportunities in the routes to employment and support which meets the needs of the residents, both now and for a productive future. Their focus is to build an accessible network of support to help individuals reach their full potential and goals.

Future Bright

Future Bright offers free career coaching, training and support to develop your skills and increase your pay. All conversations are confidential and focus on what you want to achieve; your coach will help you take your next step.

Future Bright is open to local residents who are: Aged 19 and over, Living in the West of England – that's Bath & North East Somerset, Bristol and South Gloucestershire. Currently in paid work – this can be full-time, part time or anything in between f& Receiving benefits or tax credits – Universal Credit, Working Tax Credit, Child Tax Credit, Job Seeker's Allowance, Income Support, Employment Support Allowance, Housing Benefit, or Means-Tested Council tax Reduction.

Employment & Skills Pod

Working in partnership with other key organisations to provide training and upskilling opportunities for not only for people who have been made redundant due to Covid-19, but also those that are short or long term unemployed, require upskilling in order to keep their jobs, or are looking change careers.

The Employment and Skills Pod will also help individuals think about the type of jobs they could do, looking at wider options on returning to work and gain work experience. The employment and skills pod will offer individuals structure, direction and practical tools in order to progress forward into employment.

Kickstart

Kickstart will provide high quality 6-month work placements aimed at those aged 16-24 who are on Universal Credit and at risk of long-term unemployment. For each new job created, funding is available for 100% of the relevant National Minimum Wage for 25 hours per week, plus the associated National Insurance contributions and start-up costs.

Bath & North East Somerset Council will be acting as an intermediary for the Kickstart Scheme.

Women Work Lab

The Women's Work Lab is launching their first Bath program in April in conjunction with B&NES Council. An initiative to help disadvantaged and unemployed women who have struggled to get a job after having children back into employment.

Our bespoke classroom training and work placements focus on building confidence, ambition and employability skills. They specialise in unlocking potential and laying the foundations for a brighter future.

Outcomes for participants include new careers, positive role modelling for their families and communities and the creation of a vital support network.

Workforce for the Future

Workforce for the Future provides tailored, in-depth support to help your business plan and adapt for the future by identifying your current and future skills needs, implementing development plans to upskill or retrain employees, and supporting you to bring in apprenticeships or work placements to drive your business forwards.

Thrive

A new support programme is offering West of England employers help to respond to mental health concerns in the workplace, particularly those arising from Covid-19. The West of England Combined Authority (WECA) is investing in the two-year Thrive at Work West of England programme, which aims to address the key mental health issues that businesses say are affecting their employees, and impacting productivity. The package of support, including training resources, is available through WECA's Growth Hub website. It includes mental health e-learning to equip managers with the confidence and skills to have supportive conversations with their staff about mental health and wellbeing, particularly in these challenging and changing times.

Disability Confident

The Disability Confident scheme supports employers to make the most of the talents disabled people can bring to your workplace. Disability Confident is creating a movement of change, encouraging employers to think differently about disability and take action to improve how they recruit, retain and develop disabled people.