

CHERWELL BUSINESS  
**ACCELERATOR**

Supporting Business  
Success  
2024/25

Cherwell Business Accelerator programme



ALP Synergy Ltd



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# Supporting established businesses to thrive!

Cherwell District Council received funding from the UK Government through the Shared Prosperity Fund to support local small and medium sized businesses to get started and grow.

The target audiences for this support were retail businesses, businesses that form part of the rural economy, the visitor economy and other SMEs.

Cherwell District Council chose to work with OxLEP Business to deliver this support due to their strong pedigree for supporting profit and purpose driven businesses across the County.

The 'Business Accelerator' programme is designed to help to focus expertise and support, so that small businesses with big potential could grow and create jobs.

The support provided included:

- Carrying out a strategic business review to create a support delivery plan and a 3-year Business Growth Action Plan
- Providing Masterclasses on key business, innovation, and growth topics
- Providing a Leadership Development programme for senior managers in the businesses
- Providing facilitated peer-to-peer learning opportunities
- Providing expert 1-2-1 support on productivity, innovation, growth and connecting businesses with funding opportunities
- Providing fun and interactive networking opportunities (see Camp Fire Networking shown below)

This showcase report highlights a number of case studies from just a few of the businesses supported through this programme. If this inspires you to want to engage with support then flick to the back page and get in touch



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When we founded Core Plus Tuition Ltd, our vision was clear: to support students in reaching their full potential through personalised tuition in English, Maths, and Science. We created a learning environment that is both engaging and supportive, offering 1:1 and small group sessions, both in person and online. Our aim has always been to bridge educational gaps while building confidence and fostering success.

Over the past year, we have made incredible strides in growing our business. We have increased revenue, student numbers, and tuition hours while expanding our team of dedicated tutors. A major milestone was the successful launch of our small group tuition programmes in local community spaces. Beyond direct tuition, we have extended our expertise by mentoring and supporting other small business owners in marketing and business growth strategies, helping them navigate challenges and achieve their goals.

A key factor in our success has been the invaluable training provided by OxLEP. Through their Start-Up Bootcamp, we gained vital business insights, explored AI's role in education, and enhanced our leadership skills. These initiatives have refined our operations, strengthened our service delivery, and positioned us for long-term sustainability.

Looking ahead, we are committed to further growth. We plan to recruit more tutors, develop workshops to support parents in bridging the gap between school and home, and expand our services for small business owners. By offering tailored programmes and mentorship, we aim to empower others to succeed, just as we have. At Core Plus Tuition Ltd, our journey is one of continuous learning, growth, and impact—and we are just getting started.

[www.coreplustuition.com](http://www.coreplustuition.com)



[www.oxfordduplicationcentre.com](http://www.oxfordduplicationcentre.com)

Our award-winning digitisation and archiving company is dedicated to preserving the past while embracing the future. From a single family wedding VHS tape to large-scale corporate and heritage projects, we provide an industry leading service that ensures your collections are digitised once and preserved forever to National Archive Industry Standards.

Based just outside the beautiful city of Oxford, our state-of-the-art facility offers secure in-house storage and an expert team of engineers and technicians who deliver the highest levels of preservation. We are proud to be ranked 3rd in the UK as a leading provider of digitisation and archiving services, with a clear ambition to expand further, investing in cutting-edge machinery and growing our team to become the number one provider in the country.

We have been fortunate to receive exceptional support from OxLEP, including a grant that enabled us to purchase vital reprographic equipment. This investment allows us to compete effectively within the UK market, and we already have a queue of eager clients awaiting our enhanced services. Additionally, participation in business coaching sessions has been invaluable, helping me embrace a leadership mindset that empowers my team to influence and innovate.

Our commitment to the business community extends beyond our own growth. This year, we are proud sponsors of The Cherwell Business Awards' Micro Business Category, a category we won three years ago. Winning that award was a pivotal moment in showcasing our professionalism and expertise, and I am passionate about giving other small businesses the same opportunity.

With exciting developments ahead, including the launch of our new reprographic services, our company is poised for an incredible future. We look forward to continuing to support individuals, businesses, and heritage organisations in safeguarding their precious archives for generations to come.



At Cherwell Collective, we say, "Come for the food, stay for the revolution." What began as an initiative to tackle food insecurity has evolved into an internationally recognised movement for circular economy innovation. While our roots lie in third-sector food services, our mission extends far beyond. We are building a hyper-local circular economy, reducing waste, repurposing resources, and fostering community-driven solutions to climate action.

Through education, skills sharing, and practical initiatives, we empower our community to be part of the solution. Our work connects individuals, businesses, and organisations to create a resilient, sustainable future.

Through projects like Cherwell Larder Marketplace, Climatarian Kitchen, Harvest @ Home, and WISH (Waste Innovation Station HQ), we redistribute surplus, repurpose non-food waste, and provide essential resources to those in need. The Oxford Party Library allows us to extend this ethos further, ensuring that even celebrations are sustainable.

Leading the WISH Partnership, we are driving systemic change by developing circular infrastructure across Oxfordshire, enhancing well-being, and influencing grassroots policy for climate resilience. Our focus on waste infrastructure is key.

Our journey has been strengthened by OxLEP's invaluable support. Their leadership training, peer networking, and accelerator workshops have provided the knowledge and connections we need to take our initiatives to the next level. With their guidance, we're refining our strategies and aligning our goals with broader economic and sustainability objectives.

Excitingly, our WISH Hub is reopening after extensive renovations. This new space will offer skills-sharing courses, cooking workshops, expanded cafe hours, catering services, and youth activities, including a gaming centre.

[www.cherwellcollective.com](http://www.cherwellcollective.com)

[www.theemploymentgroup.co.uk](http://www.theemploymentgroup.co.uk)



At The Employment Group, our mission is clear: to be the first choice for excellence among candidates and clients alike. We believe in treating every candidate with respect, nurturing their skills, and supporting their ambitions. Our long-term approach fosters a loyal temporary workforce and ensures that permanent candidates find fulfilling careers.

We take pride in our strong partnerships with a diverse range of clients, supplying highly skilled temporary staff across multiple industries. Unlike traditional recruitment agencies, we go beyond matching CVs to job descriptions. Our consultants take the time to understand not only the skills required but also the character fit necessary for success. This personalised approach allows us to consistently place the right people in the right roles.

With over 30 years of combined industry experience, we have refined our recruitment strategies to ensure we secure the most competent candidates on the first attempt. We have channelled our expertise into a bespoke service that is adaptable to the evolving needs of our clients, enabling us to continuously enhance our service levels as we grow within the industry.

This year marks an exciting period of expansion for The Employment Group. In 2025, we opened a new office in Milton Keynes to extend our reach and better serve our growing client base. Later this year, we plan to open another office in Coventry, further solidifying our presence within the UK. Additionally, we have strengthened our operations through strategic partnerships with companies in Pakistan, enabling us to provide additional outreach services that enhance our daily operations.

We also believe in continuous learning and professional development. Through OxLEP, I have personally attended peer-to-peer networks and engaged in multiple one-to-one mentorship sessions. These experiences have provided valuable insights that help shape our business strategy and service offerings.



At VN Accountancy, we take pride in being a friendly and approachable team, dedicated to alleviating the financial burdens of our clients. Founded in early 2022 by Vicky and Natalie, our mission has always been to provide precise and reliable accounting, tax, and bookkeeping services, allowing our clients to focus on what they do best, growing their businesses.

Building strong relationships based on trust, transparency, and respect is at the heart of our work. We understand the unique challenges faced by business owners and offer tailored solutions that drive success. Whether supporting startups or established enterprises, we help our clients navigate the complexities of business finance with confidence.

We aspire to be a leading provider of accounting services for local businesses. Our approach is not just about numbers; it's about delivering personalised support that makes a real difference. Thanks to the Strategic Business Review offered by OxLEP, we have been able to refine our processes, enhance our services, and make strategic decisions that align with our long-term vision. The invaluable one-to-one support sessions with a specialist business advisor encouraged us to step outside our comfort zone, tackle challenges head-on, and ensure sustainable growth.

Our commitment extends beyond our clients to our team. We believe that a supportive work environment is essential for success, and we strive to create a workplace where our staff feel valued, motivated, and empowered. Our core values, treating everyone with kindness and respect, acting with integrity, and always striving for improvement, guide everything we do.

Looking ahead, sustainability is a key focus for us. Over the next six months, we will be implementing practices to reduce our environmental footprint while helping our clients do the same. By integrating sustainable financial practices, we aim to support local businesses in achieving both financial stability and environmental responsibility.

[VN Accountancy & Bookkeeping Limited](#)



At Ampersand Studio our mission is to help businesses create websites that not only look great but also connect with their target audience on a psychological level. We specialise in website design, development, and hosting, while also offering branding and SEO services to enhance our clients' online presence.

We focus on how a website feels and functions for the end user. By understanding the psychology behind user experience, we help businesses build websites that engage, convert, and retain customers.

As we continue to grow, we aim to expand our team, bringing in new talent to support our vision. We love working with businesses that want to truly understand how their website performs and how it can be improved to better serve their customers.

To support our growth, I attended an OxLEP Boost session and a marketing workshop, which provided valuable insights into strategy and outreach. Now, we are excited to launch a LinkedIn Live and podcast series, breaking down key topics in web development and digital marketing in a way that business owners can easily understand and apply.

<https://ampersandstudio.uk>

# EXTRACTUS

At Extractus, we pride ourselves on being more than just a contract research organisation, we are a trusted partner in ensuring the safety and compliance of pharmaceutical and medical device products. Our expertise lies in Extractables and Leachables (E&L) testing, where we identify potentially harmful chemical substances that could migrate into products from packaging, manufacturing systems, or medical devices.

With over 45 years of combined experience in the biomedical industry, we offer comprehensive risk assessments and tailored analytical services to help our clients meet and exceed regulatory standards. Our recent achievement of receiving the Cherwell Rural England Prosperity Fund award has been a significant milestone, enabling us to acquire an Inductively Coupled Plasma – Mass Spectrometer. This cutting-edge instrument enhances our ability to perform precise elemental analysis, expanding our service offerings and strengthening our position in the industry.

Thanks to invaluable support from OxLEP's business programmes, particularly the Start Up Bootcamp and the Cherwell Business Accelerator, we refined our business strategy and successfully secured funding. The REPF grant has since enabled us to attract new clients, generate additional revenue streams, and drive business growth. Looking ahead, we are committed to achieving UKAS accreditation to ISO 17025, further cementing our reputation for quality and excellence.

We are excited to be exhibiting at Medical Technology UK in Coventry this March and speaking at the Global Extractables and Leachables Forum in Amsterdam in April. As we continue to expand into new sectors, including consumer health and food and beverage, we aim to recruit our first employee later this year, marking another exciting step in our journey.

[Extractus.co.uk](https://www.Extractus.co.uk)

# AIM HIGHER TRAINING

At Aim Higher Training, we are passionate about driving positive change in workforce development. Our mission is to equip businesses with the skills and knowledge needed to thrive in today's evolving workplace. We specialise in bespoke training solutions and accredited work-based qualifications tailored to meet the unique needs of each organisation. By taking a holistic approach, we help companies address current skill demands, improve staff retention, and build a strong foundation for long-term growth and success.

To expand our reach, we have actively engaged with the Cherwell Accelerator programme and OxLEP webinars. The in-person networking events and online webinars have been enjoyable, insightful and have strengthened our expertise and connections.

One of our latest initiatives is the launch of our Disability Impact Assessment Training, designed to help businesses and HR professionals create inclusive work environments. Additionally, our corporate training packages focus on upskilling employees in management, soft skills, and business acumen. Through strategic partnerships, we collaborate with local businesses to co-develop impactful training programmes.

To reward our loyal clients, we've introduced a Referral & Loyalty Programme, offering incentives for frequent referrers and discounted pricing for returning learners. We also provide limited-time training offers, including early bird discounts and seasonal promotions, ensuring accessible learning opportunities for all.

<https://www.aimhighertraining.com/>



# Pass the Keys<sup>®</sup>

As owners of Pass the Keys West Oxfordshire, we, Andrew & Lisa Davidson, take immense pride in offering a fully managed, hassle-free service for second home owners and property investors in the short-let market. Our mission is to provide a seamless hosting experience, delivering 5\* service to both property owners and guests alike.

Our award-winning standards, combined with local expertise and cutting-edge technology, ensure that our clients' properties stand out in a competitive market. From listing and guest vetting to 24/7 guest support and professional cleaning, we handle every detail, allowing owners to enjoy the benefits of hosting without the stress.

The support we've received from OxLEP has been invaluable in shaping our business strategy. Attending networking events and workshops has helped us refine our marketing, sales, and financial planning. A one-to-one session with Jane Abbott from The Marketing Shed provided key insights into targeting the right audience and strengthening our brand.

Looking ahead, we aim to grow our property portfolio by 50%, expanding our team and network of service providers while maintaining our commitment to excellence. With a strong foundation and clear growth strategy, the future is bright for Pass the Keys West Oxfordshire!

<https://www.passthekeys.com/en/england/south-east/westoxfordshire/>

# Celebrating Business Start-Up & Success event!

Leonardo Royal Hotel Oxford  
27<sup>th</sup> March 2025





## From the 1<sup>st</sup> of April 2025 OxLEP became Enterprise Oxfordshire.

From 1 April 2025, we have operated under the trading name of 'Enterprise Oxfordshire', with the change marking the completion of a two-year process that saw the economic development functions – previously led by Local Enterprise Partnerships – altered so that they are overseen via a mechanism agreed by respective upper-tier local authorities. In this instance, Oxfordshire County Council.

Oxfordshire County Council now act as our 100% shareholder, known as a Teckal company arrangement, with Enterprise Oxfordshire maintaining our independent company status.

Building on our significant legacy as OxLEP, Enterprise Oxfordshire oversees the delivery of a comprehensive set of business, skills, investment and trade support services, as well as supporting a variety of strategies backing Oxfordshire's economic potential to be delivered in a sustainable and inclusive manner.

Engage with Enterprise Oxfordshire Support by completing the Business Support Tool.

You will then receive your fully funded Business Support Action Plan.

**Click here:** [Enterprise Oxfordshire Business Support Tool](#)

Scan here:



**ALP Synergy Ltd**

Delivery of this Business Growth programme was supported through Enterprise Oxfordshire Business by ALP Synergy Ltd. ALP Synergy Ltd is on a mission to support 10,000 small UK businesses to start, grow or thrive by 2030 as part of a sustainable and fair economy. [www.alpsynergy.co.uk](http://www.alpsynergy.co.uk)