

Growth Hub Newsletter

November 2025

Support for your business

We offer SMEs within Oxfordshire fully funded businesses support. Complete the Enterprise Oxfordshire Business Support Tool today, to get started and receive your business support plan signposting you to profit boosting, market growing business support.

Get started...

Complete Enterprise Oxfordshire's Business Support Tool:

Business Support Tool

If you have any questions or requests for support please email us directly at: business@enterpriseoxfordshire.com



Enterprise Oxfordshire Business and Department for Business and Trade (DBT) partnership

Enterprise Oxfordshire Business are pleased to announce its partnership with the UK Government's Department for Business and Trade (DBT) on the new Business Growth Service, designed to make it easier for businesses across the UK, including in Oxfordshire to find and access the support they need to start, grow and succeed.

The new service addresses feedback from businesses that support has previously been difficult to navigate, by connecting support from the UK Government with the vital services also delivered through local partners.

Developed as part of the Government's plan for small businesses, the new service responds directly to SMEs, supporting and complementing the experiences of existing business advice systems.

The Business Growth Service aims to streamline access to funding, expert advice and export opportunities too, helping businesses to start, grow and better thrive in today's economy.

Delivered through a partnership model, the service looks to integrate national strategy and support with locally-led delivery via Growth Hubs, including Enterprise Oxfordshire Business.

In addition to support already provided by Enterprise Oxfordshire Business, the Business Growth Service has also introduced a new digital platform, which aims to act as a single-entry for those looking to access tailored support via a national digital route.

To support awareness of the Business Growth Service and to highlight its close relationship with Growth Hubs in England, Enterprise Oxfordshire Business has committed to a number of initiatives – this includes integrating the new service into its communications and promotional activities where possible.





Enterprise Oxfordshire Business and Department for Business and Trade (DBT) partnership

Enterprise Oxfordshire Business has demonstrated the importance of local business support for over a decade.

Through the combined support offer alongside the Business Growth Service, Enterprise Oxfordshire Business believes a robust level of fully funded support and advice is now available to SMEs.

Helen Brind, Enterprise Oxfordshire's Head of Business and Skills, said: "Enterprise Oxfordshire has a legacy of bringing leaders and entrepreneurs together, creating a solid network of likeminded people as well as an ability to provide guidance and support, whether they are looking to start-up, grow or take on a new business challenge.



Helen Brind Head of Business and Skills,
Enterprise Oxfordshire

"As we enter our fifteenth year in operation – and with the recent changes associated with Enterprise Oxfordshire – we are more determined than ever to lead and coordinate a community that is effective for SMEs.

"We're delighted to partner with the Business Growth Service as it backs this ambition even further and this collaboration will ensure businesses in our community can easily find the right help when they need it most."

Businesses in Oxfordshire can also access a wider range of support from the Business Growth Service:

Business Growth Service

or by contacting Enterprise Oxfordshire Business:

Enterprise Oxfordshire Email

Enterprise Oxfordshire Wesbite



A celebration for West Oxfordshire and Cherwell Spark and Accelerator

The Enterprise Oxfordshire Business Accelerator and Business Spark programmes are run of behalf of the West Oxfordshire and Cherwell County Councils. The Business Support Programmes are fully funded initiatives and are designed to help you grow, whether you're scaling an existing business or launching that idea you've been wanting to explore!

Both programmes are delivered by Enterprise Oxfordshire and funded through the UK Shared Prosperity Fund. They are part of a wider mission to support local economic growth and innovation in West Oxfordshire and Cherwell.

Nearly 100 entrepreneurs went through the first phase of the Spark programme in 2024, with over 50 now running their own businesses! In addition, 230 businesses completed the Accelerator programme, gaining the tools and confidence to thrive.

We are excited to celebrate the completion of phase two of these programmes at an inspiring afternoon of celebration, connection, and opportunity, bringing together entrepreneurs and business leaders from across West Oxfordshire and Cherwell Districts.

Over the past year, more than 40 exciting new start-ups and 50 established businesses have benefitted from our tailored business support programmes delivered locally. Now, we're gathering to showcase achievements, share future ambitions, and strengthen the spirit of enterprise across our districts.

This celebratory event will be a unique chance to meet the faces behind West Oxfordshire and Cherwell's growing business community. From innovative new ventures to experienced enterprises, you'll hear first-hand stories of resilience, creativity, and growth. It's a wonderful opportunity to connect with people who share your drive and ambition.

The event will also feature contributions from our programme funders, West Oxfordshire District Council and Cherwell District Council. They will outline their ambitions for supporting small business success in the future. Additionally, Enterprise Oxfordshire Business will share highlights and key outputs from the programme, reflecting the impact it has had across our region.

You must be based in the West Oxfordshire district or Cherwell District to attend this programme.



Christmas Networking Event

The festive season is just around the corner, and while many are gearing up for their traditional Christmas parties, small business owners and entrepreneurs often find themselves working harder than ever. But what if you could mix a bit of festive cheer with some genuine business growth?

That's exactly what the Enterprise Oxfordshire Business Christmas Networking Evening on Wednesday, 3 December is all about!

This is your chance to celebrate a successful year with like-minded, ambitious individuals. However, this isn't just a festive get-together; it's a strategic opportunity. The Christmas Networking Evening is designed to help you wrap up 2025 on a high note and set the stage for success in 2026.

We're excited to host this vibrant event at the award-winning Loose Cannon Brewery in Abingdon! Known for its innovation and resilience, it's the perfect setting for some inspiring conversations. Your ticket not only gets you in the door but also includes delicious festive food and drinks to get you in the holiday spirit, plus a fascinating behind-the-scenes tour of Loose Cannon Brewery – see where the magic happens!

The evening will also feature a special address from Cllr Ben Higgins, Oxfordshire County Council's Cabinet Member for Future Economy and Innovation. With a background in setting up businesses, Cllr Higgins will offer valuable insights on our local business landscape during the event.

And there's more!

Enterprise Oxfordshire will be officially launching the Oxfordshire Apprenticeship Awards 2026. Be among the first to hear the details and discover how you can get involved in celebrating our county's talent.



Don't miss out on this unique opportunity to blend business with pleasure and kickstart a prosperous new year. We look forward to seeing you there!

Book Your Tickets!



Enterprise Oxfordshire Business Directory

Join our fast growing Oxfordshire Business Directory.

Enterprise Oxfordshire have developed a Business Directory platform for businesses to support each other and promote themselves.

Business Directory



Oxfordshire Networking Groups

Looking to make valuable connections and boost your business success? Discover the best ways to find networking groups and events near you.

Oxfordshire Networking Groups



Other Resources Available to Businesses

As part of Enterprise Oxfordshire's ongoing commitment to provide the best possible service to Oxfordshire's SMEs we always try ensure that other services and grant opportunities which may be available to business within Oxfordshire are highlighted and signposted on our 'External Recourses' website page.

External Resources



Enterprise Oxfordshire Business Events

We have lots of exciting events planned for November 2025, including the few listed below.



This event will help you to decide if you should care about Net Zero in your business, and if you think you do, what to do next?

Register Here



A 1-hour live session to help you attract clients, build trust, and drive conversions in 2026!

Register Here



Are you looking for advice about financing growth in your business in 2026?

Register Here

View All Events



Connecting Futures: How Oxfordshire Careers Hub United Employers and Educators in October

Last month, Oxfordshire Careers Hub delivered two impactful events - Aspirations Day and Reimagining Meaningful Work Experience - that brought together employers and schools / colleges from across the county to help strengthen the bridge between education and employment.

Aspirations Day: Empowering SEND Students

Held on 13th October at Leonardo Royal Hotel Oxford, Aspirations Day was a careers fair for students with Special Educational Needs and Disabilities (SEND), which provided a tailored careers experience. The event welcomed over 250 students from 16 local special schools and colleges, who met with 25 exhibitors, including employers, training providers and employment support organisations, such as Yellow Submarine, Williams Jet Tenders, Oxfordshire County Council, FarmAbility Kier, Sodexo, Thames Water and Laing O'Rourke.

Exhibitors showcased inclusive career pathways and provided hands-on activities to help students explore their interests and aspirations. The event built on the Careers Hub's ongoing work to ensure that every young person has access to meaningful career guidance and opportunities.

One exhibitor said: "This is my third consecutive year attending the Aspirations Day and the enthusiasm and engagement of the young people in attendance was brilliant. It was once again a very rewarding experience, as the young people seemed extremely engaged and were very happy approaching the stand to ask questions."

Di Waine, Careers Leader at Orion Academy said: "The Aspirations Day is a great way to start the year for students in Year 10 and 11, it opens discussions about post 16 options and also opens students' eyes to the career choices out there!"

Andrew Hemming, Assistant Headteacher at Chilworth House Upper School said: "One Year 11 student didn't see the point in going as his parents and school staff keep talking to him about next steps and he still didn't know what to do. Halfway around the event, the student spoke with me and said he was glad he went as it's been fun, got lots of new information and will be looking and different types of careers now."





Reimagining Meaningful Work Experience

Modern work experience, supported by the government's Work Experience Guarantee, is a progressive, multi-faceted approach to career education for young people, moving beyond a single placement to include a variety of encounters with the world of work over their secondary education. This initiative, guided by the Equalex framework from The Careers & Enterprise Company (CEC), aims to provide every student with the equivalent of 10 days of high-quality experiences to build career readiness and make informed choices.

This equitable approach will benefit both young people as they start their career journeys and employers looking to find the next generation of employees - by facilitating a variety of experiences starting early, connecting education and young people with industry and unlocking the skills and opportunities of the future workforce.

On 21st October, Oxfordshire Careers Hub hosted Reimagining Meaningful Work Experience at The Kassam Stadium, a full-day event that brought careers professionals, education leaders and employers together to work collaboratively on shaping the future of workplace experiences for young people and co-design modern, inclusive and impactful work experience models.

Representatives from 26 employers, including Milestone Infrastructure, Grundon, Oxford University Hospitals NHS Foundation Trust, Thames Valley Police, AWE, Rebellion, Barrus and Oxford Playhouse, participated in discussions about how to better support schools and colleges in delivering work experience that reflects the evolving world of work. The morning focused on helping employers understand school / college needs, while the afternoon facilitated networking and planning between the employers and careers professionals and senior leaders from 22 schools / colleges. Input from Marnie Bourne, Andrew Webster and Kerry Senatore from The Careers & Enterprise Company helped guide the day.



Reimagining Meaningful Work Experience

Stacey Lynch, Early Careers, Talent & Outreach Advisor at Tokamak Energy, said: "We were inspired to improve and expand our work experience efforts and engagements with our local schools at the Reimagining Work Experience event. It was extremely useful to have the opportunity to generate ideas and knowledge share with other employers and to begin the process of co-designing our work experience programmes with schools."



Joe Dunne, PE/Geography teacher, Cover Manager and Careers & Work Experience Lead at Greyfriars Catholic School said: "It was a fantastic afternoon exploring how we can design and deliver truly meaningful work experience opportunities for young people. From learning about the Equalex framework to collaborating with employers and careers leaders, the focus was clear - ensuring every student can access experiences that prepare them for the modern world of work. I'm excited to take away new ideas to help shape impactful employer partnerships and sustainable work experience programmes for our students."



Oxfordshire Careers Hub - Opportunities for Employers

Oxfordshire Careers Hub is funded by Enterprise Oxfordshire and The Careers & Enterprise Company and supports 60 local schools and colleges - including mainstream secondary, special schools, alternative provision and further education colleges - to provide their students with a careers programme which enables them to make informed decisions about their best next step.

Businesses play a vital role in this by equipping future generations with the inspiration and skills they need for work and there are numerous ways that you can support schools and students across the county, including volunteering to support careers events and initiatives, offering experiences of the workplace and becoming an Enterprise Adviser.

Learn more

Opportunities to support schools and colleges

Our schools and colleges list their opportunities for employers to engage, including careers events and requests for work experience, on our website, so you can find out how you could support students in your area:

Learn more

Employer newsletter

We send out a regular newsletter that includes useful updates for employers and links to forthcoming events.

View Latest Issue

Subscribe

Follow the Oxfordshire Careers Hub on LinkedIn

Get in touch

If you are looking to develop your school outreach, perhaps as part of your CSR programme, to offer volunteering opportunities for staff, or to develop your future talent pipeline, please get in touch with the Careers Hub team. We are very happy to talk through your ideas and see how we can support you.

View Latest Issue



Oxfordshire Net Zero Business Support

Visit our webpage for advice on how to make your business net zero. Read inspiring stories, find net zero support, and discover funding and grants available to support your net zero journey. Along with lots more.

Net Zero

Other Net Zero Support

Innovate UK's Net Zero Supplier Directory is now live!

Are you a SME delivering net zero solutions, or a public sector organisation involved with procuring SMEs?

Developed by Innovate UK Business Connect, this free, UK-wide platform helps public sector organisations discover and connect with innovative UK SMEs delivering net zero solutions across energy, transport, circular economy, built environment, and more.

Why use the Directory?

- Easily search by region and sector
- Access a growing pool of vetted Net Zero suppliers
- Request direct introductions through our team
- Accelerate your sustainability and procurement goals
- Reduce risk and save time with pre-screened listings

Innovate UK are inviting SMEs to sign up and be part of this growing network. By joining, you'll benefit from:

- Increased visibility to public sector buyers
- Opportunities to pitch to public sector audiences with live feedback
- Access to Innovate UK events and webinars on procurement and contracts
- A full review of support available across the IUK system and beyond
- Regular updates on Net Zero procurement opportunities
- A badge to display on their website and email signature

Explore the Directory here: https://iuk-business-connect.org.uk/net-zero-supplier-directory/

Sign up to be a part of the Directory and access tailored support here: https://info.ktn-uk.org/p/2VFU-J7D/supplier-network-application-form



New net zero visual guides available

Want to get started on your net zero journey? Perhaps you're already making changes, but want to know how you can go the extra mile? South Oxfordshire and Vale of White Horse District Councils have put together a series of visual guides specifically for businesses to help inspire you.

- Getting started on your net zero journey
- How to measure your carbon footprint
- How to write a sustainability plan
- Meaningful actions that won't cost the earth
- Energy focus
- Sustainable procurement
- Telling the story
- Success stories to inspire

Find and download the guides from the <u>South Oxfordshire</u> and <u>Vale of White Horse</u> District Councils websites.

Free energy assessments for Oxfordshire businesses

As the colder weather approaches, you might be thinking about energy saving in your business, though energy saving is always worth considering.

Join other businesses in Oxfordshire in applying for a free (fully funded) workplace assessment from Energy Solutions Oxfordshire (ESOx). The assessment will be carried out by a team of energy experts, and all businesses will receive an action report with customised energy efficiency recommendations tailored to your specific business needs, along with practical and effective advice that will have a measurable impact on your business. Assessments are offered free to businesses, thanks to funding from the UK Government's Shared Prosperity Fund and Low Carbon Hub's renewable portfolio project surpluses.

Businesses who receive an assessment can then apply to the ESOx Green Fund for funding to help pay for the cost of measures recommended.

https://www.energysolutionsoxfordshire.org/free-energy-assessment/



Would you or your business like to invest in community-owned clean energy?

Help to create a clean energy future by investing in the Low Carbon Hub's Community Energy Fund – making community-owned clean energy projects happen and paying you interest in return for your support.

Join 2,000 people who have invested over £10 million, helping to build 56 renewable energy projects, from solar on school roofs to the UK's largest community-owned solar park.

With your support, the Low Carbon Hub can:

- Develop battery storage at our ground mount solar park, to maximise renewable generation at the site
- Develop new ground mount solar projects
- Expand rooftop solar projects for schools and businesses across Oxfordshire.
- 100% of the project surplus is re-invested in local communities driving even more action on climate change.

Next share deadline: Midnight, 30 January 2026.

Open to businesses, organisations and individuals.

Invest from £100 up to £100,000.

Target interest rate: up to 5%.

View the offer: Invest - Low Carbon Hub



Oxfordshire Business Support

Made Smarter: Factories of the Future

Want to learn how new tech can make your manufacturing smoother? We're here to help, talking best practice and how you can get support

- •20th November, 9.30 2pm with lunch included.
- •Cranfield University in the TEDx Auditorium TEDx Cranfield University Auditorium, University Way Wharley End MK43 0JR
- •There is no fee to exhibit or attend as a delegate.
- •The day includes tours of Cranfield's technology facilities including a pit stop in the F1 zone.

Join the Made Smarter East of England team to discuss how you can use technology to your advantage and become more productive.

You'll have the opportunity to meet other manufacturers, service providers, academics and public sector supporters so that you can learn best practice, find out how to get the best support in the next steps of your journey.

If you're interested in taking part in year 2 of the Made Smarter East of England programme, then this is the perfect chance to meet the team and find out just how much you can benefit.

Sign Up





Oxfordshire Business Support

South East Investment Fund

The British Business Bank is expanding its geographically-focused initiatives and will be committing £2.6bn of capital to to support entrepreneurs wherever and whoever they are to access capital, driving the growth of smaller businesses across the UK's Nations and regions, including high-growth innovation clusters across the country.

The British Business Bank is holding an online information session about the South East Investment Fund on Wednesday 5 November 2025 to share the overarching investment objectives, economic analysis which has helped to shape the strategy and an outline of anticipated timelines.

Join an online information session sharing an overview of the South East Investment Fund announced as part of the Spending Review earlier this year.

Sign Up

Routes to the UK Defence Market for Small & Medium Enterprises - Friday, November 28 · 9am - 3pm GMT

The MOD's Strategic Defence Review (SDR) and more recent Defence Industrial Strategy (DIS) have set out the new Government policies to support UK innovation and SMEs in order to rapidly modernise our defence capabilities.

To provide further insight into these policies and their implementation, the MOD is hosting an event. This event will explore how the MOD will deliver these policies, and how SMEs can prepare for successful engagement with MOD.

This is a fantastic opportunity for SMEs to understand the landscape of defence innovation and to position themselves for future collaboration and success.

Sign Up



"Bicester Vision Partnership Meeting: Understanding the Impact of Development on Bicester's Road Network

We are pleased to invite the wider business community to the upcoming Bicester Vision Partnership Meeting, taking place on Wednesday, 12 November 2025, from 13:30 to 15:30 at the John Paul II Centre, Bicester.

This event will bring together local businesses, stakeholders, and infrastructure experts to discuss how current and future development is shaping Bicester's road network. Attendees will have the opportunity to gain insight into strategic transport planning, hear from key contributors, and engage directly in discussions about the impact on the local community and business environment.

Confirmed speakers and contributors include:

- Oxfordshire County Council Managing transport and infrastructure strategy
- Puy Du Fou Development insights and large-scale visitor impact planning
- Bicester Town Council Open Q&A on town centre developments and priorities

Agenda highlights:

- Networking and informal introductions
- Presentations from Puy Du Fou and Oxfordshire County Council
- Open Q&A with our speakers and Bicester Town Council
- Refreshments provided
- Opportunity to share your news and updates with the group

This is an open invitation to local organisations and professionals. We encourage you to join us to contribute to this important conversation about the future of Bicester's transport infrastructure

Sign Up



Oxfordshire Business Support

As part of our ongoing commitment to provide the best possible service to Oxfordshire's SMEs, we always ensure that other services and opportunities which may be available to business within the county are highlighted and signposted.

Business & IP Centre Oxfordshire

At the Oxford Westgate Library Supporting Oxfordshire residents to start, protect and grow their own business.



Learn More

OSEP

OSEP provides support, empowerment, and advocacy for local social enterprises, enterprising charities, and purposeful businesses in Oxfordshire. Email: hello@osep.org.uk



Learn More

OIEP (Oxfordshire Inclusive Economy Partnership) Social Value and Procurement Seminar

19th November, 18:30 The Old Fire Station, George Street, Oxford OX1 2AQ

As we work together to build a more inclusive economy in Oxfordshire, every action counts – and that includes the way we buy, sell, and engage with suppliers. We're committed to helping businesses and suppliers make a positive impact by integrating social value into their procurement practices.

Whether you work in a procurement team and are looking to source responsibly or a supplier to find out more about how you can deliver social value, this event will provide you with the essentials to get started as well as hearing from other businesses who have delivered social value through procurement.

Learn More



Oxfordshire Business Support

As part of our ongoing commitment to provide the best possible service to Oxfordshire's SMEs, we always ensure that other services and opportunities which may be available to business within the county are highlighted and signposted.

Let's get matching, Oxford City Council

Oxford City Council invites you to a special networking morning on 5 November to explore how local businesses and community organisations can collaborate to promote social value.

Discover the Match My Project platform <u>Match my project</u>, hear real success stories, and meet potential partners. Whether you're looking to offer support or need support for your projects, this event is for you.



Learn More



Non Business News/Events:

Help shape the future of Oxford's workforce – employer survey now open Oxford City Council is developing a new Skills Strategy to address current and emerging skills gaps across the city. As part of this, they're inviting local employers to complete a short survey to share insights on recruitment, training and workforce challenges.

The survey takes around 15 minutes to complete and will focus on:

- Skills shortages in your sector
- Partnerships with colleges and training providers
- Recruitment and retention challenges
- Support needed to build a skilled, local workforce

Your input will help shape practical solutions that support business growth and create quality jobs for Oxford residents, and help build a fairer, more inclusive local economy.

Deadline: Sunday 15 February 2026

Complete Survey

Abingdon, Sports and Leisure:

The Snowman Live with Wantage Band 2025 - 14th December 2025 -

More Info

New Oxford Living Wage rate for 2026/27

Oxford City Council has announced that the Oxford Living Wage will increase to £14.06 per hour from April 2026. The Oxford Living Wage, set at 95% of the London Living Wage, is a voluntary minimum wage employers can opt to pay, designed to help workers meet the high cost of living and working in Oxford. In 2024/25, over 175 organisations committed to pay the Oxford Living Wage, benefiting more than 30,000 employees – the highest participation since the initiative began in 2018.

Councillor Chewe Munkonge praised the milestone and urged more employers to adopt the new rate: "As we announce the new amount for 2026/27, I encourage all our current employers, and many more organisations in the city, to commit to paying their staff at least the Oxford Living Wage and help to make Oxford a better and fairer place to live and work."

More Info



Oxfordshire - Community Catalysts

Community Catalysts support local people to create and run sustainable enterprises that offer care and help at home for older people and disabled people – as well as setting up a group or activity for local people to be involved in and enjoy.

Micro-enterprises are very small ventures (fewer than eight staff) offering a wide range of support and services, from help at home to arts and crafts, exercise classes and social clubs.

For those wishing to set up an activity in their community, for people with learning disabilities we have some start up grants available.

Community Catalysts help people offering support to get started, with advice on what they need to think about to do it right. We also help people who already run a small enterprise to do something different from what they are currently doing.

The programme covers key requirements and considerations for setting up and running a small enterprise. This includes help and support at looking at what is needed and required to "do it right"

Find out more:

Contact Community Catalyst Oxfordshire - Anita Wingad

Email: a.wingad@communitycatalysts.co.uk



Point of Difference

Discover our new meeting room in the heart of Banbury.

We're excited to introduce our brand-new meeting room in Banbury, located in the beautiful, Victorian surroundings of The Manse. Designed with comfort and productivity in mind, this welcoming space is perfect for client meetings, team catchups, workshops, or interviews.

Our fully equipped meeting room includes business grade WiFi, a large screen for presentations, whiteboard, refreshments from our new kitchen area, and comfortable seating for up to 6 people. The space is light, bright, professional and ideal for creating the right impression with clients or for focusing on your next big idea.

Conveniently located in the heart of Banbury, The Manse meeting room offers easy access, nearby parking, and a calm, inspiring environment to work in plus we're just steps from great cafés and shops, ideal for a post-meeting lunch or wind-down drink.

At just £18 + vat per hour, this really is a fabulous space to work and we make booking effortless – just contact one of the PoD team on 01869 690126 or email hello@pointofdifference.co.uk to reserve your slot and experience a space that blends professionalism with warmth and charm.

We look forward to welcoming you soon!







District Council Support for Businesses

Cherwell District Council

Oxford City Council

South Oxfordshire District Council

Vale of White Horse District Council

West Oxfordshire District Council



The Oxford Magazine: What's on in Oxfordshire

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Oxfordshire County Council News

Learn More

Experience Oxfordshire: What's on

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If you have anything you would like sharing in future editions, please email: <u>business@enterpriseoxfordshire.com</u>