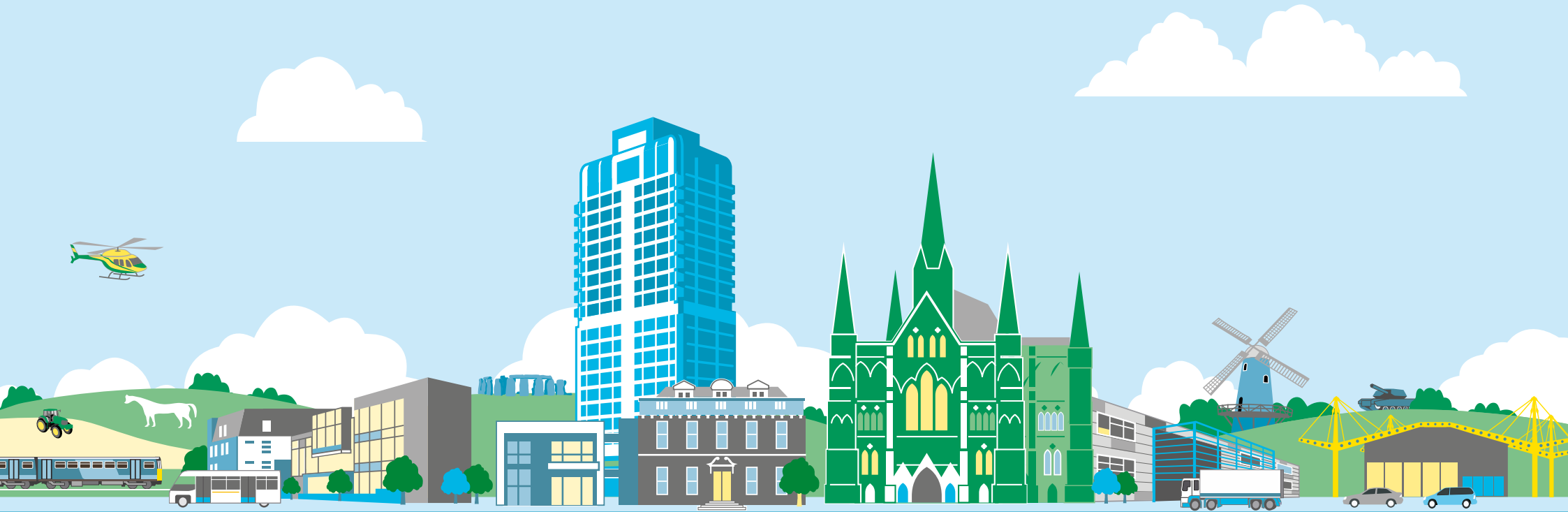


# Swindon & Wiltshire Growth Hub Impact Report: July 2021



**Growth Hub**  
SWINDON & WILTSHIRE LEP

Part of the Swindon & Wiltshire Local Enterprise Partnership



# About the Swindon and Wiltshire Growth Hub

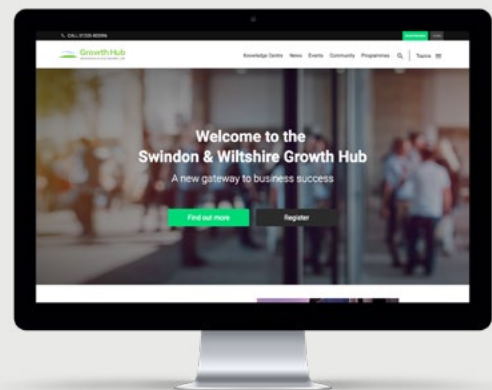
**The Swindon and Wiltshire Growth Hub is the business support arm of the Swindon and Wiltshire Local Enterprise Partnership (SWLEP).**

The SWLEP was established in July 2011 by central Government as a private sector led partnership between local businesses, Swindon Borough Council, Wiltshire Council, the military and the education sector.

Swindon and Wiltshire offers a highly competitive economy, ranked 12th out of the 38 Local Enterprise Partnerships in England. By 2026, SWLEP wants the area to be renowned for innovation, entrepreneurialism and great quality of life. The Swindon and Wiltshire Growth Hub supports that aim, providing fully funded (free) guidance and signposting for businesses.

During the pandemic the Growth Hub's service expanded from a web-based portal to a full information, advice and guidance service, a combination of planned growth and additional COVID-19 specific funding, taking the team from three to 12 strong.

This report documents the work of the Growth Hub from March 2020 – March 2021, reflecting the impact of the pandemic on the trading environment in Swindon and Wiltshire during this time and how businesses have adjusted, diversified, invested and upskilled to survive, and for some, to grow.





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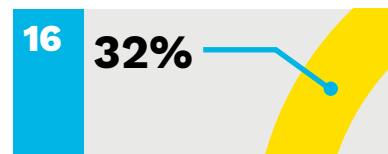
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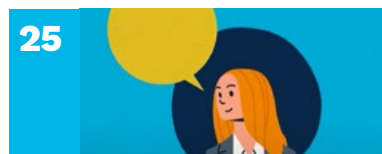
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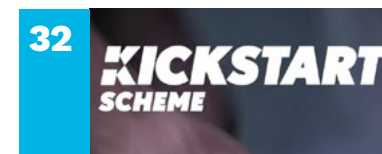
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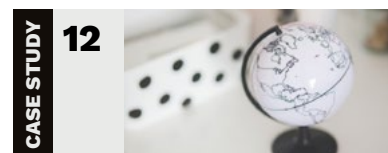


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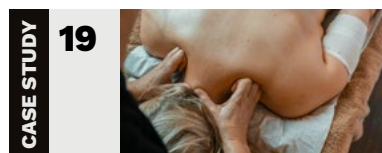
## CASE STUDIES



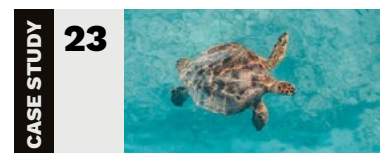
**CASE STUDY 12**  
Gera Solutions Limited



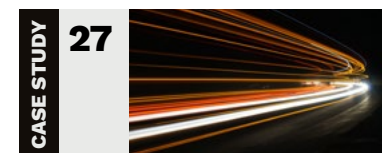
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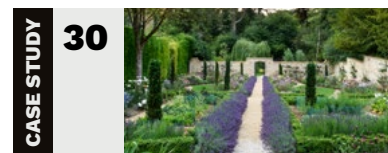
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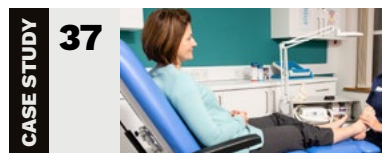
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# A note from the Growth Hub Manager



Unprecedented... furlough... pivot... pandemic... just some of the words we heard very little prior to March 2020, that have now been embedded in everyday business life.

Incorporating such words has meant huge change and challenge for SMEs whilst we recover from the past, and plan for the future having (in many cases) experienced the most difficult of trading periods in living memory. That said, with businesses changing and adapting operating practices and showing true entrepreneurial spirit, we must recognise that several SMEs have experienced growth.

Who could have seen this coming? If someone had said to me, 'Chris, you're going to be appointed as the Growth Hub Manager

and during your first year you will deliver business support services at the height of a global health and economic crisis' I would have thought they'd gone mad. I can honestly say it has been hugely challenging and I have been personally and professionally stretched, HOWEVER, it has been the most rewarding year of my professional career to date and it's a feeling shared by the entire Growth Hub team.

We are delighted to present this Impact Report for the Swindon and Wilshire area that seeks to document the trading environment

during this last financial year, to explore the extreme challenges businesses have faced and showcase the extraordinary resilience and adaptability the local business community has demonstrated.

The report also aims to illustrate the contribution the Growth Hub has made, supporting businesses through difficult times, together with the service's evolution from a digital support portal, to a full, direct delivery business support service, offering a plethora of information, advice, guidance, and business support

programmes. We would like to thank each and every business that has interacted with us over the last year. Their contributions have been invaluable in terms of shaping the ongoing support we offer but also to afford us a voice with central Government to provide intelligent and meaningful feedback around the requirements for SMEs as we move from response to recovery.

**Chris Stevens**  
SWLEP Growth Hub  
Manager



# From new decade optimism to lockdown uncertainty

**On Wednesday 1 January 2020 we welcomed in a new year and a new decade. We knew 2020 would bring change for the UK with Brexit and our departure from the European Union, but in general business optimism was high.**



***I urge you at this moment of national emergency to stay at home, protect our NHS and save lives.***

**Prime Minister Boris Johnson addressed the nation on Coronavirus, Monday 23rd March 2020.**

Many hoped 2020 would ring in new beginnings and the 20s could live up to its previous name of a century ago, the 'Roaring 20s'. Little did we know that the start of the 2020s would usher in complete change in an entirely different way.

On 31st January 2020 the first two Coronavirus cases were confirmed in the UK. For nearly two months many of us continued as usual, listening to the news that the risk was low. The Swindon and Wiltshire events calendar got underway, and many in-person networking events continued until early March when concern was starting to grow over the impact of the virus. On 11th March, The World Health Organisation (WHO) declared the Coronavirus (COVID-19) outbreak a global pandemic, with the mood quickly shifting and a national lockdown announced on Monday 23rd March 2020. The rest is history.

## An overview of the Swindon and Wiltshire Economy Pre-pandemic

- Population 722,200 living in Swindon and Wiltshire
- 60.6% working age
- Slightly higher levels of employment than UK average 78.4% vs UK av 75.7%
- Two thirds in full time employment which is under UK average
- More likely to be in managerial, professional or manufacturing roles compared to rest of UK
- Unemployment in September 2020 estimated at 2.3% in Swindon and Wiltshire compared to 4.2% across the UK
- 30,000 businesses across Swindon and Wiltshire in 2020.

## Businesses by employee size in Swindon, Wiltshire and the UK (2020)

	Swindon	Wiltshire	UK
Micro (0 to 9)	89.1	91.5	89.5
Small (10 to 49)	8.2	7.0	8.7
Medium-sized (50 to 249)	1.8	1.2	1.5
Large (250+)	0.7	0.3	0.4





# Pandemic timeline

## 2020

31 January – Brexit:



The UK officially exits the European Union

12 March

SWLEP Commissioning Group members agree that Growth Hub should be the go to support portal and service to support SMEs through the pandemic, allowing local Councils to provide relief support and grants

20 March



Government announces Coronavirus Job Retention (Furlough) Scheme

23 March



First lockdown begins and remains in place until 14th June 2020

24 March

Growth Hub Business Support Triage Plus service promoted and available to SMEs

1 April – March 2021



The Growth Hub's evolution from a purely digital offering to a support delivery service for local business

15 June



England's retail parks, high streets & shopping centres welcome customers, while zoos and safari parks open their doors for the first time since March

16 June

SWLEP awarded £2.4million in European Regional Development Funding to create the SME Competitiveness Programme for Swindon and Wiltshire to provide Business Navigator Support for three years to also include specialist start-up and scale-up support from Growth Hub's delivery partner

1 July

Swindon and Wiltshire Growth Hub appoints three new Business Navigators to support with the new SME Competitiveness project

4 July

Pints poured in pubs and couples finally say "I do" as lockdown restrictions are eased across England

13 July



Beauty salons, nail bars and tattoo shops welcome customers for the first time in four months

14 July

Department for Business, Energy & Industrial Strategy announces Peer Networks programme

24 July



Ministry of Housing Communities & Local Government announces ERDF grant funding for SMEs

3 August



The Government's Eat Out To Help Out scheme launches, with restaurants, pubs and cafes offering half price meals to diners during August

1 September

The Swindon and Wiltshire Growth Hub's This Way Up programme gets underway

11 September



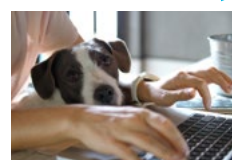
The R value of Coronavirus transmission across the UK rises above 1 for the first time since early March

14 September



ERDF Grant Window opens to Swindon and Wiltshire SMEs

22 September



Government advises that people work from home if able to do so

24 September



10pm curfew on pubs, bars and restaurants introduced

12 October



Government announces three-tier system of local alert levels for England

19 October

Application window closes for ERDF grants; over 600 applications received in Swindon and Wiltshire

31 October

Boris Johnson announces that people in England will be told to stay at home for four weeks as the country is placed under another national lockdown, with the closure of hospitality and non-essential shops

5 November



Lockdown 2 begins

20 November

The Growth Hub's This Way Up programme exceeds original targets set



# Pandemic timeline

## 2020

27 November

Department for Business, Energy & Industrial Strategy announces EU Transition Business Readiness Programme

1 December

The Swindon and Wiltshire Growth Hub's Peer Networks programme hosts first cohort session

2 December



Lockdown 2 comes to an end and is replaced by a strengthened three-tier system (Wiltshire placed in Tier 2)

14 December



New strain of Coronavirus identified in southern England

15 December

EU Transition Programme gets underway in partnership with Inspire, Business West and The Export Department

16 December

Growth Hub mobilises four Business Navigators to deliver EU Transition Support, a programme to complete in March 2021

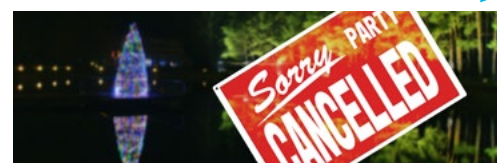
17 December



Coronavirus Job Retention Scheme extended until 30th April 2021

## 2021

19 December



The Prime Minister cancels Christmas for almost 18 million people across London and eastern and south-east England by moving them into a newly created Tier 4 for two weeks after scientists warn of the rapid spread of the new variant. In the rest of England, the planned Christmas easing of restrictions – allowing three households to meet over the festive period – is severely curtailed to apply to Christmas Day only

30 December

It is announced that an additional 20 million people in England will move to the tightest restrictions, making a total of 44 million in Tier 4, or 78% of the population

4 January



Vaccination rollout begins in the UK

5 January



Third National Lockdown for England with schools shut to most students and people urged to stay at home to prevent the NHS from being overwhelmed by surging Coronavirus infections

10 January

This Way Up programme smashes targets, engaging 2,484 participants

28 February



The number of people receiving a first COVID vaccine passes 20 million

3 March

Coronavirus Job Retention Scheme extended until 30th September 2021

30 March

The stay-at-home order for England comes to an end, as two households or six people are allowed to meet outside. Weddings with up to six people are also permitted again

31 March

SME Competitiveness Programme reached 120 Growth Hub referrals for start-up provision, 28 into scale-up and 60 businesses in receipt of ongoing support from the Growth Hub Business Navigator team

31 March

1,800 Growth Hub Community Members reached

12 April

COVID rules are eased across the UK and in all of the Home Nations, with changes including the reopening of non-essential retail. Hospitality venues can serve people outdoors only. Funerals continue with up to 30 people, and the numbers to attend weddings, receptions and commemorative events such as wakes rises to 15 (from 6)





# Growth Hub Response to the Coronavirus Pandemic

**Claire Alexander, Director of Programmes and Strategic Lead for SWLEP's Growth Hub Business Support function, shares the Growth Hub's COVID-19 story**



## Working on the business frontline

Whilst we had planned for steady expansion within the Growth Hub during 2020 based on programmes and activities that we were proactively bidding for, clearly, we did not predict the pandemic and all that followed. Some of our decisions were instinctive and importantly we felt equipped to react and confident to respond. We mobilised resources as effectively as possible to ensure that business support was readily available, relevant and was of course free of charge, with a goal that the Growth Hub would be considered a trusted advisor and reliable source of both information and ongoing support.

In a matter of weeks, the Swindon and Wiltshire Growth Hub was transformed from what was previously a mostly digital business support resource to a much more enhanced service. We organised a new Triage Plus Business Support Service with a dedicated support line and a team of six Business Navigators working directly with local businesses. Our initial mobilisation efforts were kindly supported by Wiltshire Council's Employment and Skills team, who were briefly seconded. As a result of activating and sustaining this service, thousands of businesses have been in receipt of intensive support, which included guidance

to apply for Small Business Grants, Job Retention Schemes and Discretionary Grants provided by central Government and facilitated in many instances by local Government.

Providing front line business support was our priority, but we also consciously balanced this with ensuring that our business community had access to timely guidance and reliable information. As did many, we launched a COVID-19 support page where all the latest news, announcements and advice could be found, and we stepped up our newsletter frequency to share vital messaging.

As things started to improve in summer 2020 (or so they seemed), our next challenge was to maintain the support we had instigated as a result of the pandemic. SWLEP had bid for European Regional Development Funding (ERDF) back in 2019 and were delighted to be awarded a three-year contract of £2.4m to fund the SME Competitiveness Programme, providing business support and specifically start-up and scale-up support to the Swindon and Wiltshire business community. This funding has been instrumental in supporting local businesses in the last year, helping them through the challenges





***There is no mistaking the challenges we face at this moment. Working together we can rise to meet these challenges.***

**Paddy Bradley,  
SWLEP CEO,  
March 2020**

of the pandemic and for some, aiding ambitious growth plans. This funding, combined with further funding from the Department of Business, Energy and Industrial Strategy, enabled the Growth Hub team to grow and deliver a number of new initiatives, such as the This Way Up webinar series and mobilise the Peer Networks and ERDF grant programmes. We were also delighted to be able to support young people within our community through the Department for Work & Pensions Kickstart programme. By the summer of 2020, the Growth Hub team had grown from three to 12 and at the height of our support was 15 strong.

The pandemic has helped the newly formed Business Navigator team and Growth Hub to forge even stronger relationships with other business representative

organisations in our area who were all keen to ensure that the pressures facing SMEs was fed back to central Government by SWLEP. It also ensured that all support organisations understood the numerous relief funding arrangements so that appropriate referrals could be made, easing the complexity and burden on SMEs to determine their eligibility. We work more closely than ever before, meeting regularly and hosting roundtable sessions to discuss and debate the thorny issues, and working coherently to support the local business community better.

The pandemic has for many been the intervention to pause and reflect, regroup and refocus, and as a result the Swindon and Wiltshire Growth Hub is in a stronger place than ever before to support our area's 30,000 registered businesses.

Businesses of any size or status within our area are able to draw upon the Growth Hub's expertise and guidance to support them through both the challenges and opportunities they face. Whether they're looking for guidance on how to access finance as they continue to grow, how to trade online and deal with workforce issues such as furlough and redundancy, or of course to support those who want to capacity build not only themselves as organisations but also their employees to operate and trade differently. For many this meant online training during these uncertain and ever-changing times.

I'm incredibly proud of the team's strength and endurance over the last year. It has been a tough

time all around, and for the Growth Hub there have been lots of positives. We are now proactively working with thousands of businesses across the area, all with differing support needs. For me that is the underlying strength and remit of the Growth Hub; support for businesses when they need it, on their terms and at their pace. We have been successful in what we do and have achieved, and we thank all those that have worked with us and supported us to do so. There are too many to list.

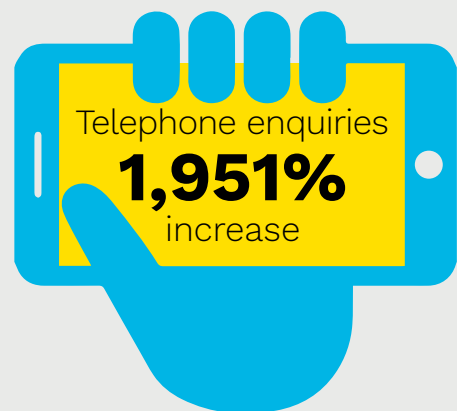
**Claire Alexander**  
*SWLEP Director  
of Programmes*

**Visit the Swindon & Wiltshire Growth Hub online at:**  
[www.SWGrowthhub.co.uk](http://www.SWGrowthhub.co.uk)



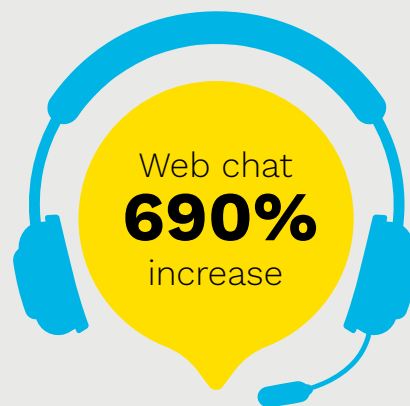
# Pandemic business support

March 2020-March 2021



**281 vs 5,484**

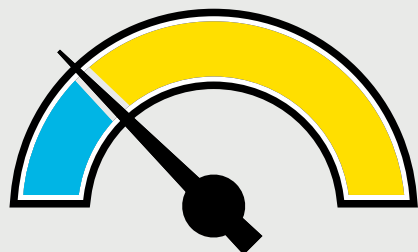
(this represents the introduction of the Navigator service)



**103 vs 711**

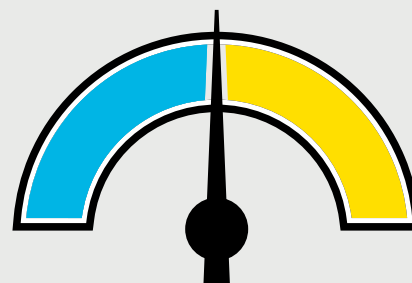


**7,542 vs 26,346**



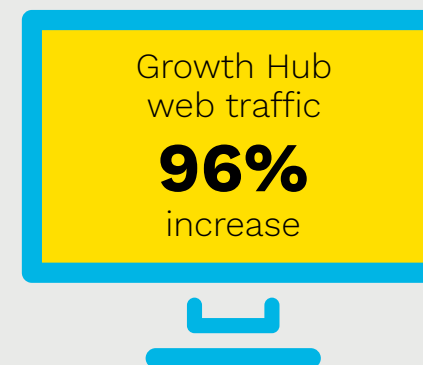
**483%**  
increase

**133 vs 643**



**1,125%**  
increase

**24 vs 270**

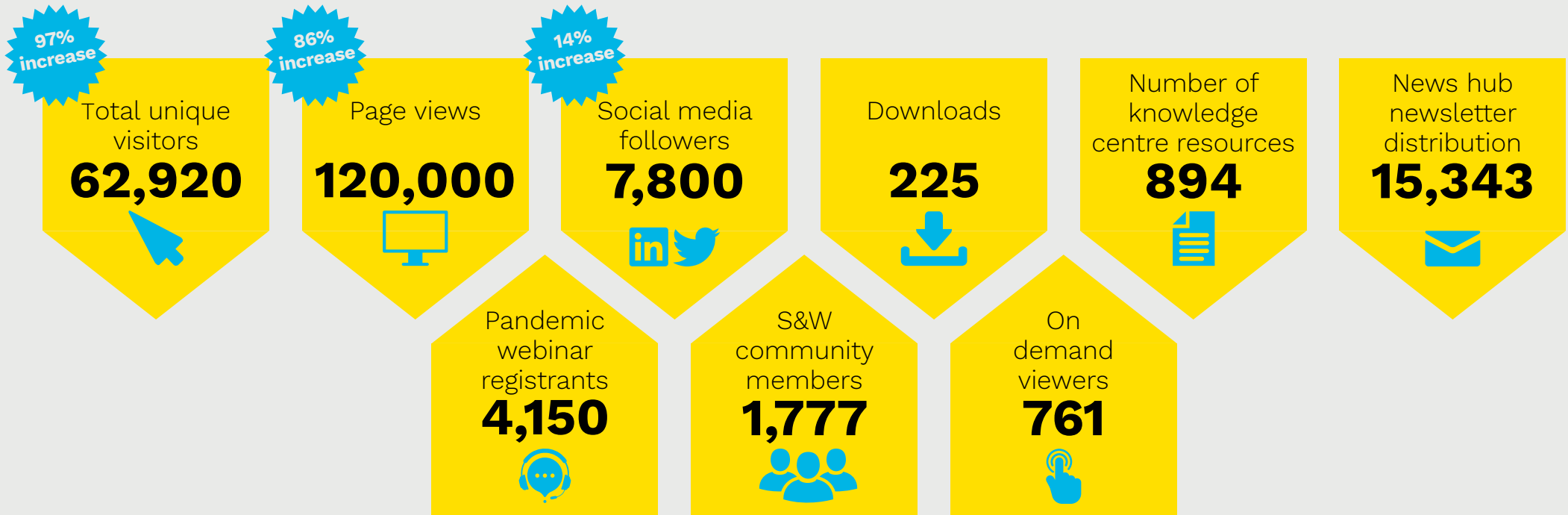


**32,297 vs 63,392**



# Digital engagement during COVID-19

March 2020-March 2021





**CASE STUDY**

## **Gera Solutions Limited: a start-up tale**

**Anita Gera shares her journey**





**Business:** Gera Solutions Limited

**Location:** Salisbury

**Founded:** 2020

**No of employees:** 2

***We received Discretionary Grant support which enabled us to continue trading without having to take on debt***

Gera Solutions Limited is a language consultancy, working with clients to integrate corporate and brand voice across all platforms and across different languages.

We help ensure communications deliver your intended message, using clear and consistent wording for those crucial moments in the corporate journey. Our experience ranges from crafting video voiceovers and website copy to drafting holiday messages and ad wording.

Our text quality assurance service is a new and unique offering. We can vet your translation agency by carrying out random checks, allowing you to be confident that any translated texts faithfully reflect content. Our checks also evaluate how well specific messages reflect your organisations' values and identity.

### Starting a new business during COVID-19

I founded Gera Solutions Limited in the middle of the pandemic. All our work is exclusively online as both our clients and our team are spread around the world. Having a global team allows us to offer colloquial, localised language advice to all our clients and their projects. We all work largely from

home: for us, it is just the way we do things. In that respect lockdown restrictions didn't affect us. However, I knew I needed business support and practical help; having lived for many years in Germany and other European countries, as well as in the USA, most of my working life has been outside the UK. I have been self-employed for almost 30 years, during which time I founded and ran two companies in Germany. Although I know how to provide a premium B2B language service, I wasn't experienced in setting up a company in the UK and needed to learn more about the process of running a business here. The Swindon and Wiltshire Growth Hub was so supportive right from the start and able to provide much of the help I needed.

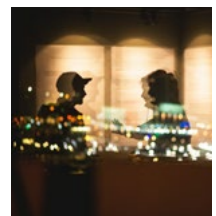
### Growth Hub support

I registered as a Growth Hub member and connected with the team, who have provided introductions to other businesses and to organisations, such as the Department for International Trade, that can offer advice and

support. I was also invited to join the first round of the Peer Networks programme (the Women in Business cohort), which enabled me to forge valuable links with other local business leaders. The Gera. Solutions website has benefited from a Digital Review which helped us immensely in fine-tuning our digital presence; in addition, we have been invited to many informative, useful webinars.

### Looking to the future

We are very optimistic about the future and hope to grow substantially, helping more British firms looking to the German market as well as German clients looking to expand into the UK. Giving back is a core value; we are therefore proud to have recently signed the Armed Forces Covenant, showing our support of military families. We look forward to being able to travel and attend business events around Europe so that we can introduce our premium service to potential clients.

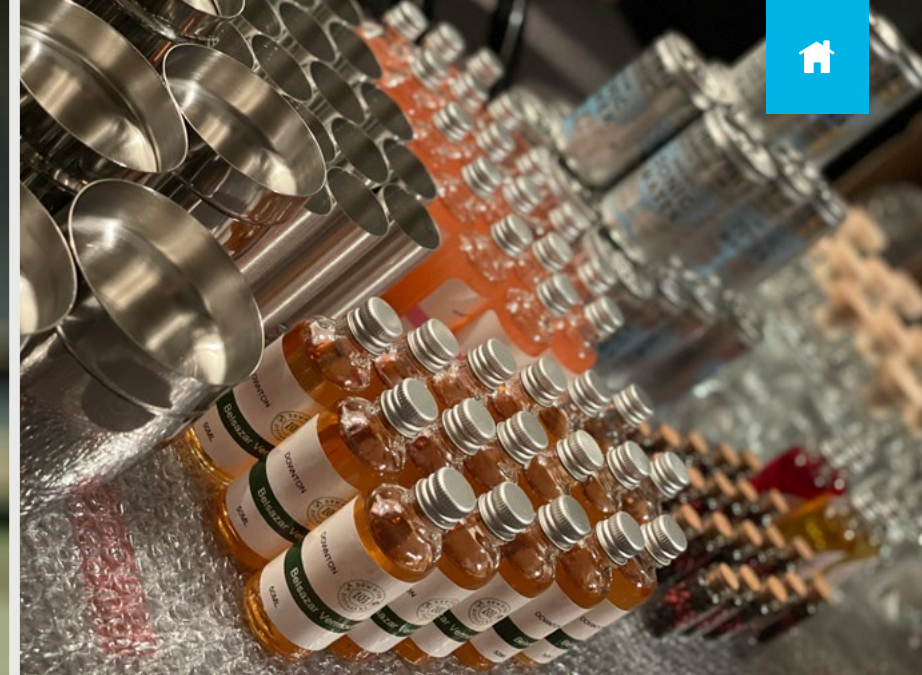


**Web:** [www.gera.solutions](http://www.gera.solutions)

**Email:** [anita@gera.solutions](mailto:anita@gera.solutions)

**LinkedIn:** [Gera.Solutions](https://www.linkedin.com/company/Gera.Solutions)





**CASE STUDY**

# How COVID-19 impacted Downton Distillery

Founder, Hugh Anderson explains...





# CASE STUDY



**Business:** Downton Distillery  
**Location:** Downton, Near Salisbury  
**Founded:** 2018  
**No of employees:** 1

**The pandemic has shown how important local community is, with companies and locals supporting each other**

Downton Distillery is the home of Explorer's Gin, a handcrafted London-dry gin made in the heart of Wiltshire.

## Pivot Power

Running a distillery allowed me to pivot at the start of the pandemic. Watching the news knowing it was only a matter of time until we started to see cases in the UK, the British Distillers Alliance started to lobby HMRC to remove alcohol tax on making hand sanitiser. At the end of March 2020 this tax was removed allowing us to deliver our first 500L of hand sanitiser to both frontline services and care homes. We continue to supply to both care homes and local schools.

## New routes to market

Without access to markets and larger events, our route to customers had to be word of mouth and through customer experiences. This led us to creating a series of gin evenings. The aim was to create something fun, where people could learn and interact with others. We all know the impact that lockdown has had on individuals. Both new and current customers could learn about the brand and what makes our gin unique whilst learning a fun skill - how to make a series of cocktails with everyday ingredients. These evenings continue to be a great success. I do not

know of many bars where you can get five quality cocktails for £35!

## The importance of community and collaboration

The pandemic has shown how important local community is, with companies and locals supporting each other. During the first national lockdown we ran a series of hand sanitiser points around the villages of Salisbury, where customers could put an order in for a bottle of Explorer's Gin.

We also worked closely with Downton Brewery, allowing customers to refill and reuse their bottles whilst saving 20%. In partnership with Regent Tailoring in Salisbury, we ran a click & collect service. Customers could pick up their bottles whilst browsing the latest clothes within the shop.

## Building strength through adversity

During the first lockdown we were recognised by the UK Spirits Alliance for our work. We also became one of Theo Paphitis's #SBS Small Business Sunday winners.

## Growth Hub Support

A desire for knowledge led me to the Swindon and Wiltshire Growth Hub. I was keen to learn from other businesses and see how the hub could help the distillery grow as a business. It just so happened that the pandemic broke out at the same time.

The Hub has been a very useful tool to both network and learn through. The support and spectrum of webinars that I have attended have been very impressive. Whilst some issues and challenges have been particular to my sector the advice and guidance has been excellent.

## Looking to the future

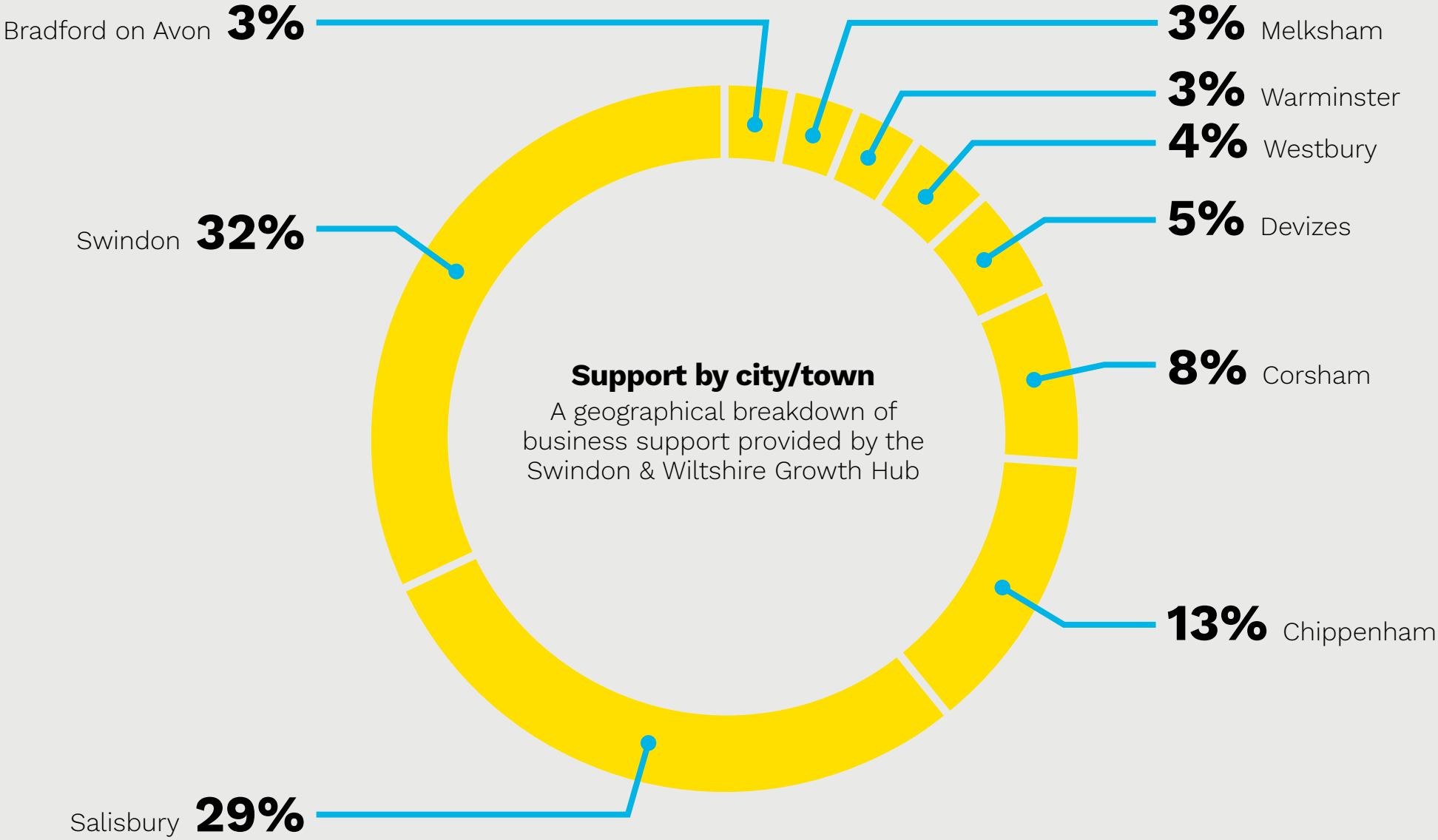
With the vaccine rollout and restrictions being eased I am feeling very optimistic as I look forward to meeting both new and current customers at events and markets. Nothing makes me happier than meeting new customers who fall in love with the Downton Distillery brand.



**Web:** [www.downtondistillery.com](http://www.downtondistillery.com)  
**Email:** [info@downtondistillery.com](mailto:info@downtondistillery.com)



# Business support provided by area

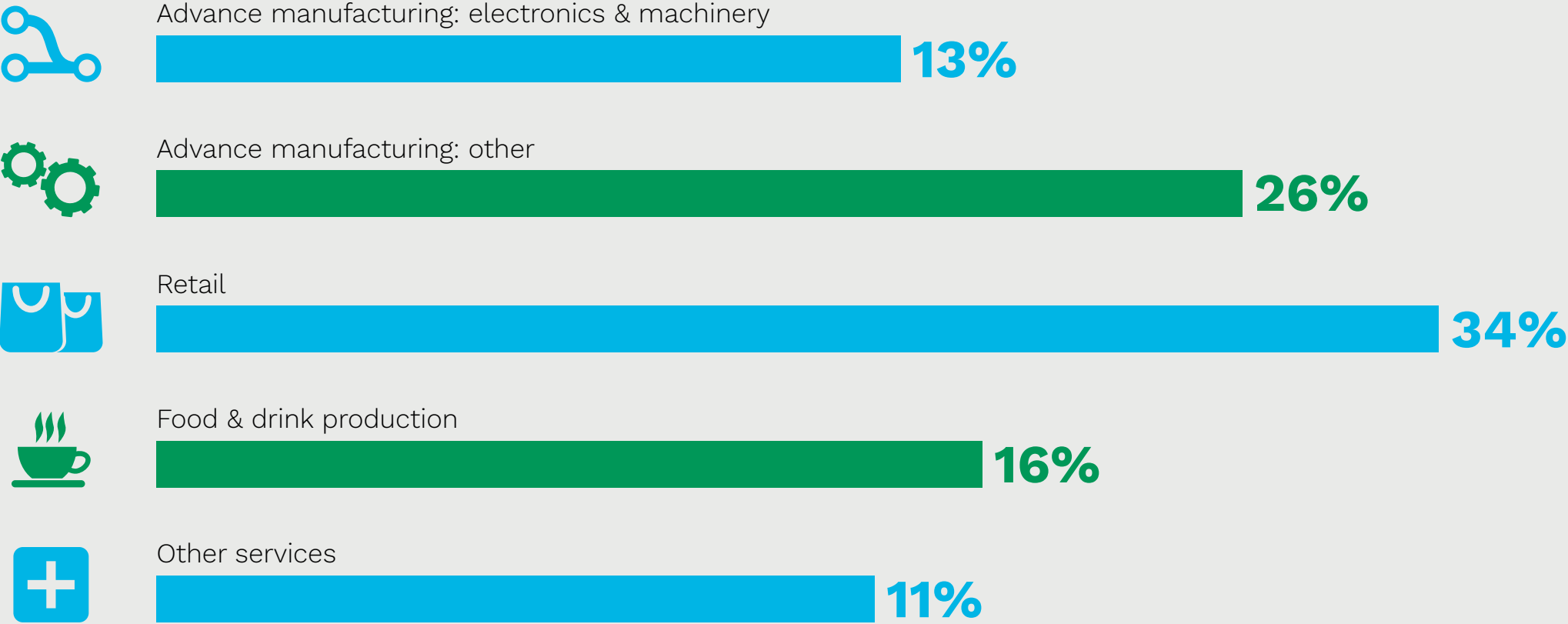






# Business support provided by sector

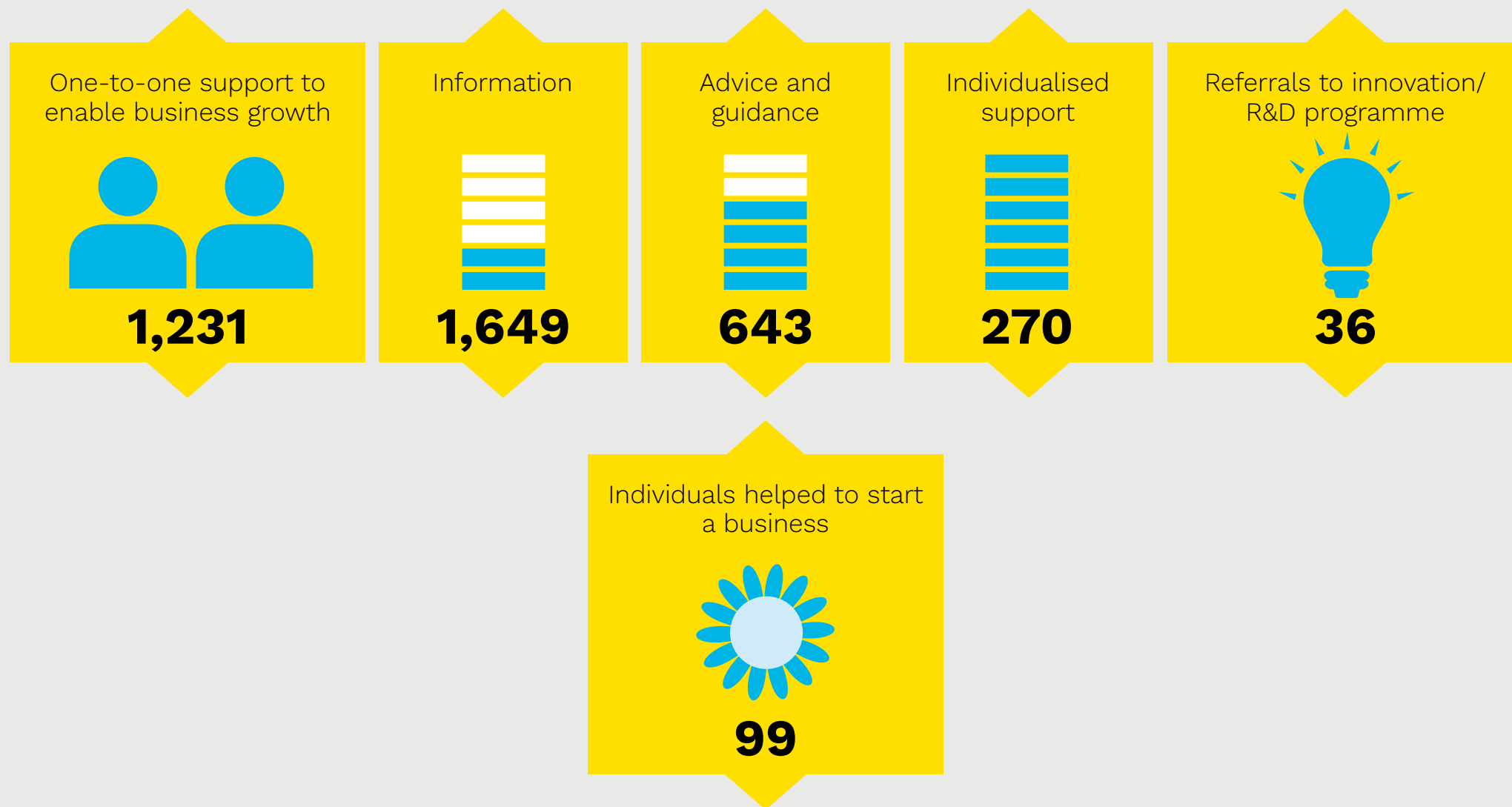
The Growth Hub team has provided assistance to a real cross-section of business sectors during the pandemic, including: aerospace, advanced manufacturing, creative industries, life sciences, media, transport, professional services firms and more. Here are the top five:



**Percentage of interactions by business sector**



# Intensive business support provided by type





**CASE STUDY**

# How COVID-19 impacted Le Petit Beauty Room

Owner, Rachel Barber explains...



# CASE STUDY



**Business:** Le Petit Beauty Room

**Location:** Old Town, Swindon

**Founded:** 2009

**No of employees:** 4

*With zero revenue and monthly bills that still needed paying, we had to come up with new ways of generating income*

Le Petit Beauty Room is a beauty salon based on the High Street in Old Town, Swindon.

We offer a number of carefully chosen treatments for both face and body which are natural, organic, vegan-friendly and cruelty free. Treatments include relaxing facials and massages, manicures and pedicures, waxing, eyelash and eyebrow care.

Our business relies on a constant flow of clients enjoying services within our salon to survive and thrive. The pandemic forced us to shut our doors for almost a year and during the months we were able to get back to it in 2020, due to restrictions, we were unable to offer our full treatment range which also affected our bottom line.

With zero revenue and monthly bills that still needed paying, we had to come up with new ways of generating income.

## From challenge to opportunity

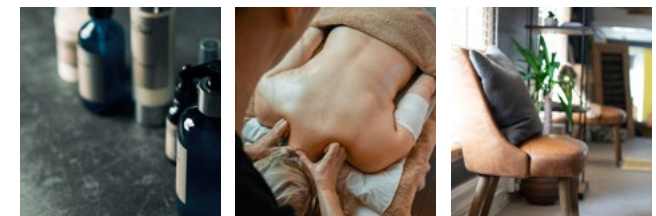
During the first lockdown we developed our own Le Petit beauty range which includes hand and body washes, lotions, face masks, balms, exfoliants and cleansers, and a selection of hand-poured candles. The range is free of parabens, sulphates, petro-chemicals, artificial fragrances and colours, and all of our products are suitable

for vegans, with no animal testing or animal-based ingredients. Many of our products are also made in small batches here in Wiltshire.

We are hoping that once normal business resumes Le Petit Beauty Room will be in a stronger position to meet any future challenges. We are excited to showcase our new product range to our customers visiting the salon to raise awareness of them and boost sales for both self-care and gifting.

## Growth Hub support

We were introduced to the Growth Hub by the team at Swindon Borough Council. Following the intro we managed to access COVID-19 grant support. Without this funding I don't think Le Petit Beauty Room would have survived. The grant helped us to meet our monthly outgoings and to build a new website to sell our new beauty range.



**Web:** [www.lepetit.uk](http://www.lepetit.uk)

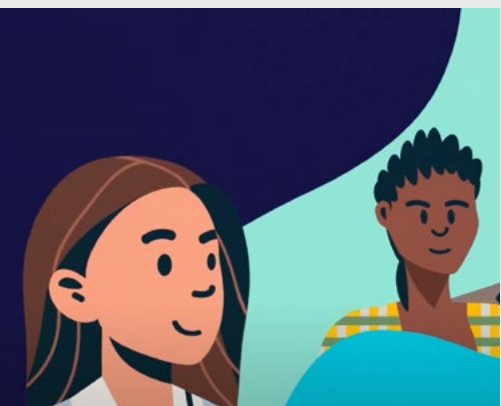
**Email:** [info@lepetit.uk](mailto:info@lepetit.uk)

**Telephone:** 01793 423 969





# Are you an SME looking to grow and need access to finance?



The SWLEP's Growing Places Infrastructure Fund (GPIF) is a capital only fund of circa £8m used to invest in projects that create jobs and deliver economic growth to the area.

It is a repayable loan scheme, with negotiable repayment terms, that helps accelerate the delivery of projects that stimulate innovation, enterprise, growth or productivity gains.

Loan payments are made in line with the development schedule drawn up in consultation with SWLEP.

There is an open call for applications. These are assessed by a Working Group that will make a recommendation to the SWLEP Board, which meets every two months.

The minimum loan is £150,000 to around £1.25m, with the term usually around four years. The interest rate reflects the nature of the project and can be loaned on an unsecured basis and to pre-revenue firms.

Projects supported to date include the expansion of manufacturing lines (with funds to expand or alter buildings and purchase new plant and machinery), investment in research and development capability and the creation of co-working space. SWLEP

has so far loaned £6.93m across ten projects, and all the loan beneficiaries have been SMEs, with the majority employing less than 25 staff.

The loans have supported companies that wouldn't have been able to raise the funds through traditional High Street lending, for example because of a lack of collateral or a short trading history.

To date, the loan programme has led to the creation of circa 160,000 sq. ft of new productive floorspace and approximately 100 new jobs. The job numbers will rise further as companies complete their projects, with a forecast of an additional 565 new jobs in the next three years.

**To find out more about the GPIF programme email:**  
[hello@SWGrowthHub.co.uk](mailto:hello@SWGrowthHub.co.uk)



# GPIF funded projects



**Business:** PRP Optoelectronics

**Funding amount:** £1.1m

**Funding used for:** Specialist capital equipment and growth into an additional building of 10,000 sq ft.



**Kevin Peart, Managing Director, said:**

“We are very excited for the future and with the support of SWLEP we can look forward to continued investment in product and employment growth.”

**Business:** Recycling Technologies

**Funding amount:** £1m

**Funding used for:** Speeding up the production of its RT7000 machines as well as stimulate innovation, growth and productivity gains.



**Adrian Griffiths, CEO, said:**

“We have a goal to triple Europe’s current plastic recycling capacity by 2027 through the provision of 10 million tonnes of urgently needed new waste plastic recycling capacity. We believe our manufacturing facility in Swindon will be capable of manufacturing 200 RT7000 machines a year to meet the growing demand for plastic recycling capacity in the UK, Europe and the rest of the world.”



**CASE STUDY**

# How COVID-19 impacted Workplace Wellness

Dr Fiona Tees explains...





# CASE STUDY



**Business:** Workplace Wellness

**Location:** Bradford on Avon

**Founded:** 2017

**No of employees:** 6

***The Peer Networks programme has helped us look at issues in different ways. As a result, we are now reviewing many of our processes for greater efficiencies***

## Workplace Wellness provides a tailored occupational health service to keep people happy, healthy and safe in the workplace.

Services include Fit for Work assessments, Health Surveillance risk assessments, immunisations and a range of services to help organisations promote a healthy lifestyle and wellbeing at work.

Our occupational health business receives referrals from organisations about the wellbeing of their staff and provides health testing of employees as required by law. When COVID-19 hit, some of our clients stopped working and those that carried on had a whole different series of questions about their employees that needed answering. Our first need was to make sure that we had accurate and comprehensive knowledge about the virus; the illness, the medicine, antigens, antibodies, testing and the Government-led response.

Our clients needed rapid answers about implementing lockdown regulations; which employees were 'clinically vulnerable' and 'extremely clinically vulnerable', and how could they be best protected in the workplace and at home.

We developed a rapid COVID-19 assessment service, taking 15 minutes, giving comprehensive

advice to employee and employer over the 'phone followed up with email.

### **Diversifying to survive and thrive**

For the usual type of referral, which formerly occurred face-to-face at our premises, we introduced an encrypted secure video service to enable us to conduct remote consultations. This has been very successful being more convenient for employees, whether working from home or the workplace.

Guided by advice from the Health and Safety Executive, health testing has become a remote exercise except where required for safety critical roles. This changeover occurred smoothly and enabled companies to discharge their duty of care to employees without interruption.

### **From challenge to opportunity**

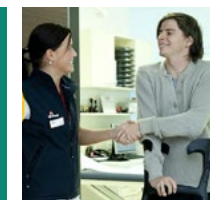
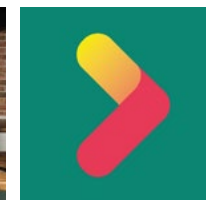
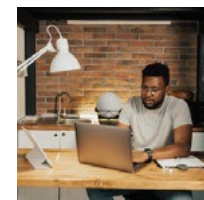
Our biggest achievement over the past year has been looking at the pandemic as an opportunity. While income initially fell, expenses fell further and have stayed low, so profitability has increased. We have achieved this expense reduction by a combination

of restructuring, furlough, new technology and more efficient processes. We believe the business is in a good position for growth in the future.

### **Growth Hub support**

We were introduced to the Growth Hub by Bradford on Avon networking organisation, BoA Business. We received an ERDF grant administered by the Growth Hub which was used to help us promote our services to a new sector for us – construction. We also accessed the Digital Health Check enabling us to move from an unreliable server to the Cloud giving us better and more accessible IT services.

In addition, we received a mentoring session and joined the Peer Networks programme where we benefitted from being introduced to like-minded business owners. We also joined the government's Kickstart Scheme - co-ordinated by the Growth Hub, it provides funding for employers to create job placements for 16-24 year olds.



**Web:** [www.workplacewellness.health](http://www.workplacewellness.health)

**Email:** [info@workplacewellness.health](mailto:info@workplacewellness.health)

**Telephone:** 01225 809 099

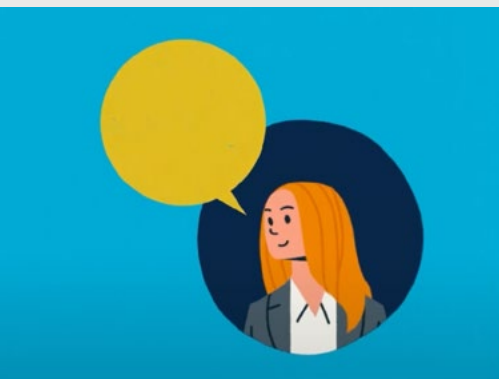




# The power of Peer Networks

**The Peer Networks programme is funded by the Department for Business, Energy and Industrial Strategy (BEIS) in response to a commitment made in the 2019 Business Productivity Review.**

The programme's long-term objectives are focused on reducing the UK productivity gap by helping business leaders find practical solutions to strategic and operational challenges.



**Peer Networks enabled me to forge valuable links with other local business leaders from whom I have learned so much.**

**Anita Gera from Gera Solutions was a participant in the Women in Business cohort.**

The programme also aims to provide actionable insight to tackle the short-term issues and those related to the pandemic.

Peer Networks began as a national pilot scheme in October 2020 originally intended to launch in the Spring of 2020 but slightly delayed owing to the various pulls on resources due to the pandemic. SWLEP committed to deliver a number of cohorts and at the end of the initial pilot period had successfully delivered seven with over 70 participants. Delivered by the Swindon and

Wiltshire Growth Hub, during 18 hours of free intense business support was delivered over a two to three month period. This consisted of both 1-2-1 support with a dedicated mentor and group work. The first cohort groups 'graduated' at the end of March 2021.

Due to fantastic feedback and the success of the first seven cohort groups the Swindon and Wiltshire Growth Hub is delighted to have secured further funding to continue the Peer Networks programme until March 2022.

Peer Networks is open to SME businesses which have operated for at least one year, have at least five employees, a turnover of at least £100,000 and an aspiration to improve. The Growth Hub team tailor-make the groups and the following cohorts have been established:

- Manufacturing
- Tourism
- Food and Drink
- Sports
- Health
- Rural

- Professional Services
- Women in Business
- Retail
- Community.

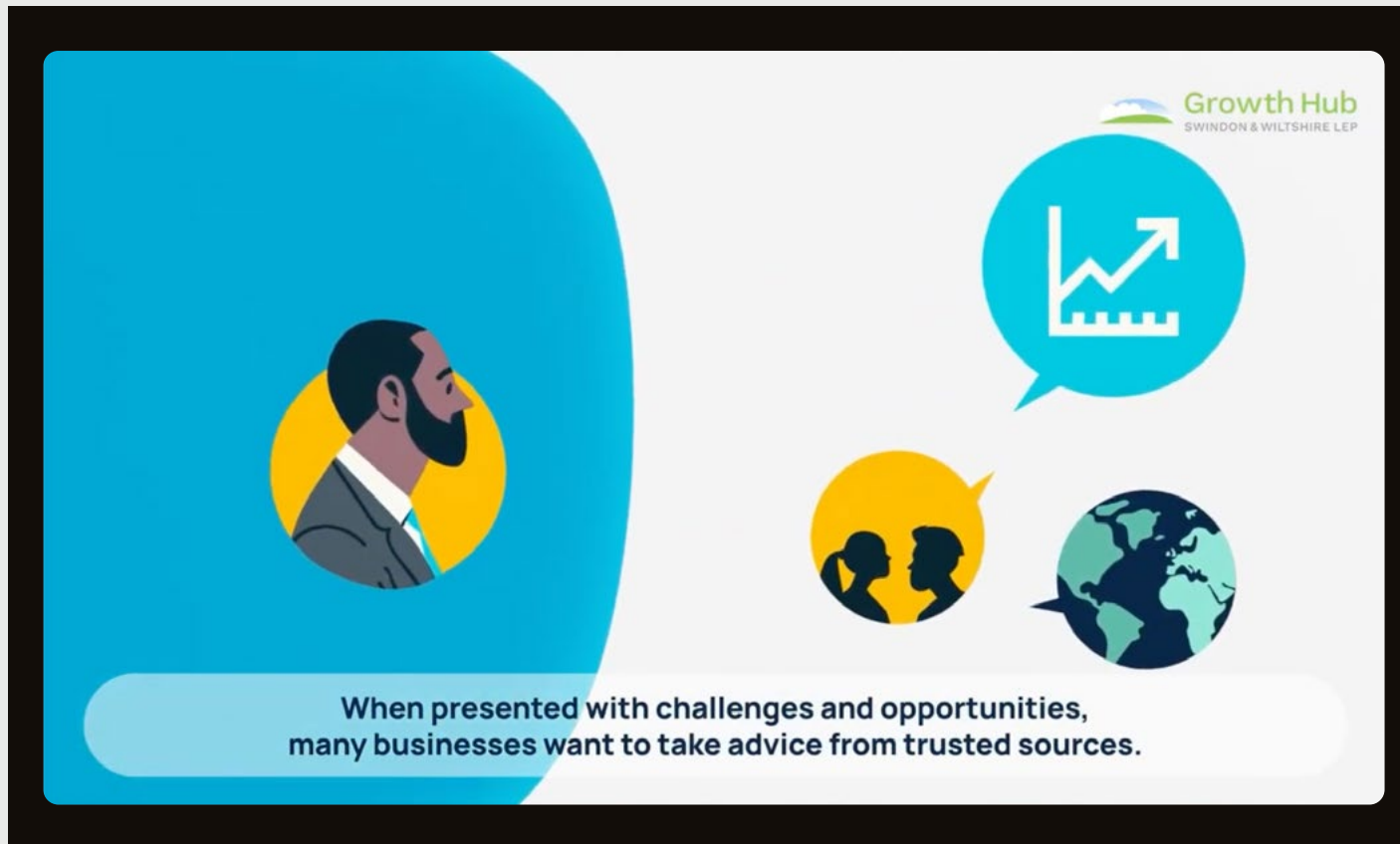
Take a look at our video on the next page which gives an overview of the Peer Networks concept.



**To find out more about Peer Networks email:**  
[peernetworks@swlep.co.uk](mailto:peernetworks@swlep.co.uk) or call: 01249 477 287



# The power of Peer Networks



The infographic features a large blue circle on the left containing a profile of a man with a beard. To the right, there are three speech bubbles: a blue one with a white line graph, a yellow one with two silhouettes of people, and a blue one with a globe. The Growth Hub logo is in the top right. A white rounded rectangle at the bottom contains the text: "When presented with challenges and opportunities, many businesses want to take advice from trusted sources."

**Growth Hub**  
SWINDON & WILTSHIRE LEP

When presented with challenges and opportunities,  
many businesses want to take advice from trusted sources.



Please click to view video in your browser



**CASE STUDY**

# How COVID-19 impacted data2impact

Director, Nicki Patrick explains



# CASE STUDY



**Business:** data2impact

**Location:** Bulford, near Salisbury

**Founded:** 1999

**No of employees:** 20 in total, 5 in UK

***The Growth Hub team was exceptionally good at supporting us with the Peer Networks programme.***

## data2impact specialises in delivering bespoke tools for data management, business analysis and reporting.

We combine technical expertise with pragmatic, high quality solutions to deliver data consolidation, web and mobile app development, simulation tools, PowerPoint automation, interactive dashboards and advanced analytics. The business has its UK headquarters near Salisbury but has experts in Denmark, Germany and America.

We've been running successfully for over 20 years but the pandemic meant that we saw a decline in work for the first time and we had to innovate to survive.

### From challenge to opportunity

We had to adapt quickly, re-evaluating our processes and priorities. We embarked on a number of sustainable changes including investing in technology and our marketing strategy.

Investing in Office 365 allowed employees to work from home and communicate and collaborate effectively with our colleagues and clients worldwide. We also migrated our services to the Cloud and developed skills in PowerApps and other Microsoft Cloud Services.

To help with our sales and marketing strategy we invested in an employee's skills in digital marketing. The short-term appointment of a LinkedIn consultant gave us a starting platform and increased our presence locally and globally, in turn increasing our SME client base. Our LinkedIn strategy has been a company wide effort and we have doubled our audience, using it to communicate company news as well as develop contacts.

### Growth Hub support

We were introduced to the Growth Hub in April 2020 via Wiltshire Council. The support we've received since then has been impressive. Our Business Navigator is in regular contact, advising us on support available, taking the time to listen and providing us with a wide range of connections and resources.

The Growth Hub helped us successfully apply for the COVID-19 Additional Restrictions Grant which allowed us to increase staff hours after furlough and build a new SME service. The team was

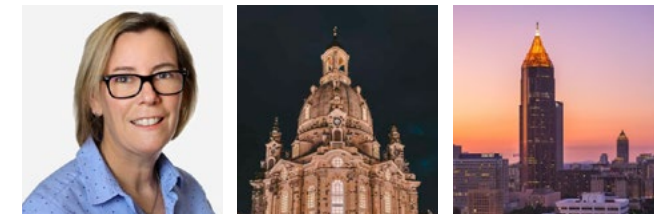
instrumental in us gaining ERDF funding which we used to migrate over to Microsoft Cloud services.

We regularly engage in the Peer Networks programme which has been invaluable, enabling us to meet local SMEs, listen to their challenges, and draw on the group's expertise to explore new opportunities. In return, we've been able to offer advice on data problems.

### Our biggest achievement

Our biggest achievement in the last year was creating an 'early warning tool' for an NHS Trust to forecast COVID-19 hospital admissions and determine how and when demand would exceed capacity using rate limiting factors such as oxygen supply and nursing capacity.

The pandemic has also resulted in some positive changes to our business, one of which is clients now being more open to online meetings allowing us to support them remotely.



**Web:** [www.data2impact.com](http://www.data2impact.com)

**Email:** [nicki.patrick@data2impact.com](mailto:nicki.patrick@data2impact.com)

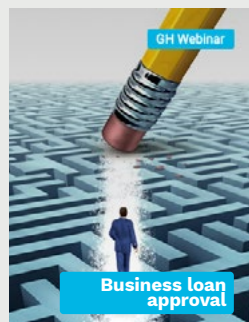
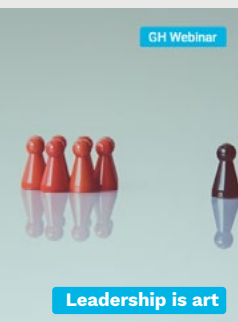
**Telephone:** 07767 355 120





# This Way Up

## Webinar support for Swindon and Wiltshire businesses



The ‘This Way Up’ programme is a series of webinars launched by the Swindon and Wiltshire Growth Hub to help local businesses deal with the impact of the pandemic and thrive beyond it.

One of the key drivers for the initiative was to capacity build by providing guidance on the current challenges businesses were facing and offering knowledge building opportunities to allow them to grow.

Working with local experts to bring the webinars to life and support the Swindon and Wiltshire economy, the Growth Hub team facilitated a webinar series covering a wide range of topics to enable businesses to trade online and cope with remote working through lockdown. Topics included

leadership, finance and digital, and were delivered for free as live events which were then recorded and shared as a go-to resource for businesses to access at any time through the Growth Hub website.

Support for the programme was provided by The Department of Business, Energy and Industrial Strategy (BEIS) and funded the local experts’ time, as well as a dedicated Digital Advisor for the Swindon and Wiltshire Growth Hub.

Local experts who contributed to the This Way Up series included:

- Tim Thurston, Director of Swindon-based Team Doctor. Tim hosted sessions such as ‘looking after your mental health and wellbeing at work’.
- Dan Smith, Director of Corsham-based South West Business Finance (SWBF) hosted a session on ‘how effective commercial finance can help your business prosper’.
- Alison Edgar MBE, Director of Chippenham’s Sales Coaching Solutions hosted a session on the secrets of successful sales.
- Hayley Chamberlain of Corsham-based Purple Lime Accountancy hosted several sessions looking at business finance reporting, top tax tips and why cash is king.
- Nicki Kinton, Director of Swindon-based Confident Cashflow hosted a session looking at how to avoid late payments and boost cashflow.

**‘This Way Up’  
smashed its  
targets with over  
4,150 webinar  
registrants**

**To watch webinar sessions on demand go to:**  
[growthhub.swlep.co.uk/events](https://growthhub.swlep.co.uk/events)





**CASE STUDY**

# How COVID-19 impacted Johnstone Landscapes

Director, Tessa Johnstone explains...





# CASE STUDY



**Business:** Johnstone Landscapes

**Location:** Chippenham

**Founded:** 1990

**No of employees:** 10

***There is a greater spirit of intrapreneurship amongst the team and I am excited about the next 12 months***

Established over 30 years ago Johnstone Landscapes designs and builds gardens across the south west and south of England.

Our team regularly works with Chelsea Best in Show and Gold winner designers, offering commercial landscaping, maintenance and planting plans as well as finding innovative solutions to add water and lighting to projects. Commercial clients include care homes and supermarket grounds as well as looking after many green infrastructure projects.

When the pandemic began our biggest challenge was finding new ways of working to keep the business moving and the team safe. The whole team agreed to work in two 'bubbles' which would ensure we could keep going if someone fell ill in one of the teams. However, this did come with its challenges and costs in order to adhere to the Government guidelines - separate travel, increased PPE, hygiene facilities and people taking days off when self isolation was necessary in order to keep everyone safe and avoid closing down.

We also had to navigate logistical issues in terms of a consistent supply of materials. Supply chain problems really do impact our business and we had to work hard to manage clients' expectations.

## From challenge to opportunity

We secured a Bounce Back Loan which allowed us to keep moving in the right direction. Once we knew we could keep the doors open and avoid redundancies, we worked hard to win our largest projects yet - two domestic gardens, each project breaking a £1m glass ceiling. COVID-19 has allowed us to become more focused on the jobs we really want and what we need to do to win them, and in winning them we thankfully haven't needed to use the loan.

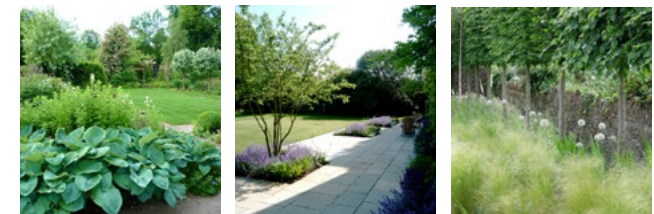
We successfully applied for a COVID recovery grant and were awarded £1,600 to purchase a new A1 printer. This has changed the type of tenders we are able to successfully and efficiently participate in, saving us time as we can immediately see the drawings in the scale we need without involving an external printer.

## Connecting with the Growth Hub

I found the Growth Hub whilst searching for support online. The team has helped me with questions around Brexit and trade changes, and I have also taken part in one of the Peer Network

cohorts which ran for around eight weeks. I found the process highly engaging. The mentoring support (3.5hrs) included in this programme was provided by Alison Edgar MBE, my cohort facilitator, and we have remained in contact. Alison was invaluable and incredibly supportive to me, introducing me to some key business changes I would never have achieved on my own. It is thanks to the Growth Hub that this introduction happened.

We are now looking at investing in augmented reality in order to meet the expectations of our clients and enable greater engagement in the design process. I also feel that we are in a stronger place and the team has a greater vested interest.



**Web:** [www.johnstonelandscapes.co.uk](http://www.johnstonelandscapes.co.uk)

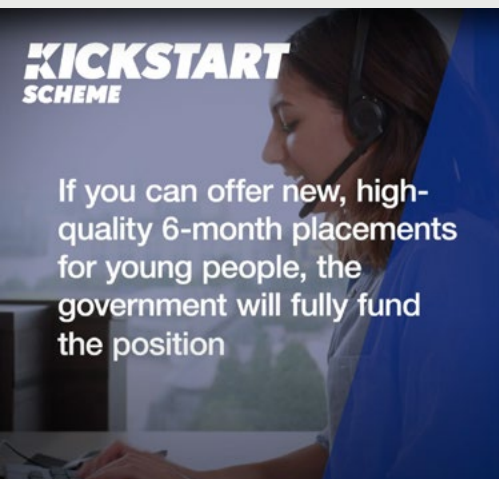
**Email:** [tessa@johnstonelandscapes.co.uk](mailto:tessa@johnstonelandscapes.co.uk)

**Telephone:** 01380 859 100

# Giving young people a kickstart

**In September 2020 the Government launched the Kickstart Scheme, an initiative devised to help tackle youth unemployment.**

Youth unemployment rose to 14.5% between August and October 2020, with 587,000 people aged 16 to 24 unemployed, up from 11% in the same period in 2019.



**Youth unemployment rose to 14.5% between August & October 2020**

The rise was driven by the pandemic, with young people working in the most affected sectors or leaving college and entering a really difficult labour market.

The Kickstart Scheme, which is open until the end of December 2021, provides funding to employers to create six-month job placements for young people age 16 to 24 who are currently on Universal Credit and at risk of long-term unemployment.

The Swindon and Wiltshire Local Enterprise Partnership was selected as a local Gateway Organisation for the Kickstart programme supporting businesses

in the area able to offer Kickstart placements.

Since going live in September 2020, SWLEP's Growth Hub has supported 200 businesses in the area with information, advice and guidance on the Kickstart programme, and at the time of writing is looking to have over 300 placements approved by the Department for Work and Pensions. SWLEP itself has also made a commitment to create five placements with three Kickstarters having already started. Paddy Bradley, SWLEP's CEO, said, "We wanted to not only offer the employability skills and experience to local



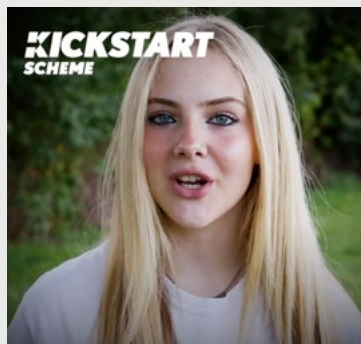




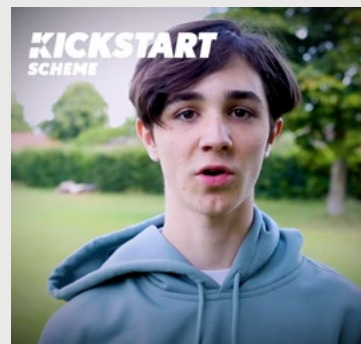
young people but also to be able to experience the host journey, so that we can appropriately support the 300 places that we are facilitating on behalf of SMEs in the area.”

Funding for each Kickstarter covers:

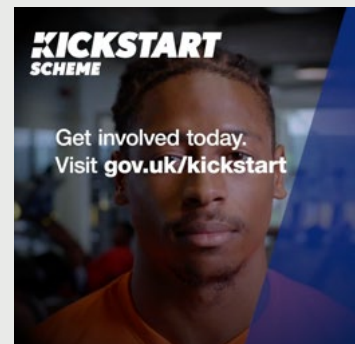
- 100% of the relevant National Minimum Wage for 25 hours a week
- The National Insurance Contribution
- Employer minimum automatic enrolment contributions



Chippenham-based Purpol Marketing showed great leadership and entrepreneurial flair in its commitment to the Kickstart scheme, flying the flag for Swindon and Wiltshire nationally. Denise O’Leary created 50 remote kickstart placements with students taking part from across



England, Wales and Scotland. As part of the Purpol Marketing internship, students designed an innovative career development course to help other young people.



If you have been inspired and are interested in registering for the scheme, please email: **kickstart@swlep.co.uk** with your company name, company or charity number (as registered with Companies House), the number of placements you can offer and your contact details.

**If you can offer 30+ Kickstart placements visit:**  
[www.gov.uk/government/collections/kickstart-scheme](http://www.gov.uk/government/collections/kickstart-scheme)



# EU transition – business readiness

**Supporting businesses in Swindon and Wiltshire to continue to work and trade in Europe post EU exit.**



In readiness for the UK's exit from the EU Single Market and Customs Union on 1st January 2021, the Government was proactive in providing extra funding to Growth Hubs.

**2,500 businesses were proactively contacted by the Growth Hub to discuss any potential EU transition related concerns**

The aim was to help businesses navigate new customs and border processes which were set to be implemented by EU member states as soon as the clock struck midnight on New Year's Eve 2020.

In December 2020, to prepare for the start of the new year the Swindon and Wiltshire Local Enterprise Partnership recruited a Programme Controller for a new EU Transition Support Service to help local firms understand what the customs changes meant for them. An EU Business Readiness team was formed by the SWLEP's Swindon and Wiltshire

Growth Hub in partnership with other business support organisations.

A team of dedicated Business Navigators was set up to reach out to the business community, providing information and advice on moving goods between the UK and EU, as well as access to expert support. Staff were seconded from Inspire was Business West and the Export Department retained to support with specialist enquiries.

From the beginning of January to the end of February 2021, over 2,500 businesses were contacted to discuss their needs

relating to the EU exit, with 60 referrals made into specialist provision to discuss issues and formulate plans on tackling them.

In addition to the specialist advice service, a range of six webinars were delivered across a range of topics including VAT, Rules of Origin, HR and Changes to Import/Export Documentation. A dedicated section of the Growth Hub website was also set up packed with guidance for local businesses.

The EU Transition Support Service came to an end at the end of March 2021, but a whole host of resources are still available via the Growth Hub website.

**For further resources, please visit:**  
[growthhub.swlep.co.uk/support/EUExit](https://growthhub.swlep.co.uk/support/EUExit)





**CASE STUDY**

# How COVID-19 impacted Elevana

Managing Director, Malcolm Pitcher explains...





**Business:** Elevana

**Location:** Royal Wootton Bassett

**Founded:** 2017

**No of employees:** 15

***The next 12 months are going to be tough, but there is no doubt that our business is in a much stronger position than it was before the pandemic***

Elevana is a leading name in the house building business. Our unique services help clients save time, reduce costs and minimise stress levels to boost customer satisfaction.

Our expertise lies in creating Instructional videos, demonstration and handover services to builders, customer service training, and home demonstration and handover training.

Our business had to change completely as a result of the pandemic. Prior to the lockdowns, all of our services, except videos, were delivered face-to-face.

We have gone from a face-to-face only training and demonstrations company, to a firm that has e-learning and virtual classroom capability, a unique augmented reality home demonstration system and a large order book for instructional videos.

### Finding our strengths

Furlough was a great help at first, giving us some breathing space to look at our options. Our turnover fell dramatically in the first six months.

Luckily, the Elevana team is flexible in its thinking, and we relish change which means that everyone could come together and discuss ideas to steer

our future. In our business there is no such thing as a stupid question or a silly idea.

### Investing in technology

As face-to-face demonstrations and training were no longer on the table, we had to find new ways to support our clients. We created a package of technology-led training, demonstration and instructional videos. To enable this to work we needed to invest in new video camera equipment to support the increase in demand for video work.

### Engaging with the Growth Hub

I'd known of the Swindon and Wiltshire Growth Hub for several years and got in touch to see if they could help us. With the team's support we successfully applied for a grant and received funding for a new video camera. They also introduced us to a local Swindon company to help us find an apprentice to support us with the video work. We successfully appointed the right candidate, and she is already very accomplished behind the camera. Thanks to these steps we

now have the ability to double our output in the future. We have also been looking at exporting opportunities as we believe there is potential for some of our business to start trading overseas. We recently attended a series of Growth Hub exporting webinars which we found useful in getting to grips with what's needed to achieve this goal.

### Looking to the future

I think the next 12 months are going to be tough, but there is no doubt that our business is in a much stronger position than it was before the pandemic in terms of being able to offer a more diverse set of services to our clients. We have invested in a new Learning Management System and a system that allows us to conduct demonstrations remotely over the internet. Once things open back up properly, we are looking forward to achieving a healthy mix of digital and face-to-face work.



**Web:** [www.elevana.com](http://www.elevana.com)

**Email:** [info@elevana.com](mailto:info@elevana.com)

**LinkedIn:** Elevana Ltd





**CASE STUDY**

# How COVID-19 impacted Total Foot Health

Practice Director, Graham Simpson explains...



**Business:** Total Foot Health

**Location:** Salisbury

**Founded:** 2007

**No of employees:** 10

## Total Foot Health is an award-winning podiatry business based in the centre of Salisbury.

It is accredited by the College of Podiatry and offers a range of services including foot and nail care, biomechanics, sports injury and pre and post-op rehabilitation, sports performance and therapeutic podiatry.

### Diversifying through COVID-19

During this time, we introduced virtual assessments in order to be able to advise patients on diagnosis, self-help treatment where applicable or directing them to attend our clinic for treatment where that was the most appropriate course of action. This was especially important during the first lockdown when we were only treating key workers and those with an urgent medical need.

To get started we had to first create a process for virtual assessment and get patients used to the idea. We also had to establish COVID-19 secure protocols in clinic to ensure the safety of patients and staff. We introduced a digitalised registration process to reduce time in reception and also reduce paper handling.

To improve understanding of our full patient offer we created a new website through lockdown which was enhanced by links to our social media marketing which we expanded in preparation for release from lockdown in June 2020. The final part of that plan is the development of an online booking system which is set to go live soon.

### Growth Hub support

We discovered the Growth Hub through a webinar session we found online. The feedback form at the end of the webinar captured our areas of need and the Growth Hub contacted us directly to discuss ways it could help. Since then, it has supported us in a number of ways. We have dipped into those most relevant training webinars for the development of Total Foot Health. The sales and marketing sessions by Alison Edgar MBE were especially helpful in shaping our marketing approach. We've also benefitted from the Peer Networks programme. Through the action learning approach we've further developed our thinking around an online booking system. Plus we continue to benefit from ongoing connection with the businesses within this group.

***We used the ERDF grant to create a secure video to show patients how we are applying our protocols to keep them safe***

The Digital Leadership Course had a significant impact in helping us digitalise many processes and join systems together, creating greater efficiencies, saving costs and improving patient services.

On top of that we've received advice and support regarding available grants, successfully receiving an ERDF grant administered by the Growth Hub as well as the Additional Restrictions Grant.

Through our links with the Growth Hub, we have been able to develop a digitalisation development plan which will help improve services for patients and staff, and put us in a stronger place than before the pandemic.



**Web:** [www.totalfoothealth.co.uk](http://www.totalfoothealth.co.uk)

**Email:** [info@totalfoothealth.co.uk](mailto:info@totalfoothealth.co.uk)





# Enabling local SME growth

**The SME Competitiveness Programme is a three-year programme providing bespoke support to businesses in the Swindon and Wiltshire area and is funded by the European Regional Development Fund (ERDF).**



It is a broad and exciting programme delivered by the Swindon and Wiltshire Growth Hub in conjunction with chosen delivery partners. It has three main elements:

1. Pre-start and start-up support
2. Growth and scale-up support
3. Support for individuals being made redundant within the area wishing to start a business

The Growth Hub Business Navigator Team led by Rob Creer under the direction of the Growth Hub Manager, Chris Stevens, recognises that businesses need access to trusted business support advisers, enabling them to grow. Timely, informative and useful guidance; signposting to the best options available and a knowledgeable ear are essential at all stages of operating a business; more so now than ever as a result of the pandemic and needing to manage the dynamic expectation of both customers and employees.

The Business Navigators at the Growth Hub have decades of collective experience as well as the ability and sensitivity to assist businesses at any stage of their development. They find the best possible solutions to problems whether the business is an embryonic idea or is well-established; with staff or without. As part of the programme, they identify the myriad of support available; offering free and impartial advice and highlighting the right route for the particular business to consider taking, following an effective and initial diagnostic conversation.

The support capabilities of the programme's chosen delivery partners, YTKO, SETSquared, Swindon Borough Council and Wiltshire Council ensure that all aspects of an SME's journey are covered and easily accessed.

SETSquared provides tailored workshops to specifically support digital businesses; YTKO offers those referred by the Growth Hub the opportunity to attend one of its valuable Outset programmes and start-up businesses might also be referred to The Enterprise Network, led by Wiltshire Council, which provides workspace as well as support, training and advice.

Another intrinsic part of the SME Competitiveness Programme is to support with known economic shocks such as the closure of the Honda factory in July 2021. The programme funds support for those wishing to start up their own business following redundancy as well as companies in Honda's supply chains. In addition, there is also a coordinated approach to contacting companies who might need staff with the skills of ex-Honda workers. This support has been made available thanks to the match funding made available by Swindon Borough Council.



**To find out more email:**

**hello@SWGrowthHub.co.uk or call: 01249 477287**



# Competitiveness and recovery

**As the region begins to emerge from the economic shocks of the pandemic it is apparent that the need for impartial free and high-quality business support has never been greater.**

**OUR PLAN TO REBUILD:**  
The UK Government's  
COVID-19 recovery strategy

For many their journey to recovery has not yet started, however with the furlough scheme coming to an end, we recognise that this will pose a significant challenge to local businesses. The Growth Hub is funded by central Government to support businesses and individuals through this time, with Skills Advisors to hand if businesses need to make redundancies and to provide high quality advice, guidance and signposting if re-skilling is required.

During the height of the pandemic local authorities across the UK were charged with administering grants to local businesses and a number of grant relief schemes were made available and extended. This worked in tandem with other Government initiatives such as the Coronavirus Business Interruption Loan Scheme (CBILS) and access to grants such as those offered locally via the Growth Hub's European Regional Development Fund (ERDF) Recovery Grants (closed for application October 2020).

The Growth Hub will continue to deliver programmes to improve overall business knowledge and acumen, including business planning, digital skills, mentoring and support with accessing new markets. Through this support the team aims to raise business ambitions and the leadership and entrepreneurship of the area. Despite the challenges of the last year, the Swindon and Wiltshire Growth Hub is in better shape than ever before to support businesses with their needs and is ready to embrace the task. Through chosen delivery partners specific and tailored support is available to

existing businesses that have aspirations and plans to grow, and for those entrepreneurs with a budding business idea and concept, start-up and pre-start-up support is also available.

The Swindon and Wiltshire Growth Hub recently commissioned Wavehill, the social and economic research specialists to evaluate its work and the needs of the local business community in the coming year (April 2021-April 2022). The report revealed businesses' key challenges and the areas of support that are likely to be required. Feedback from businesses which engaged with the Growth Hub is that liquidity is a real and distracting issue, with businesses concerned about cash flow and access to finance. The Growth Hub's ongoing support will be tailored to these needs, helping businesses to remain resilient to the ongoing socio-economic challenges that the pandemic has created, whilst supporting businesses to adapt or pivot to fresh opportunities as the new operating environment emerges.

**A huge thank you to the Swindon and Wiltshire business community and our delivery partners for your continued strength, resilience, entrepreneurial flair and passion for our area. Together we will achieve our goals.**





# Join our community

**The Swindon and Wiltshire Growth Hub provides a single gateway to access support, whether you are starting, running or growing a business.**

Accessing the Growth Hub, you can find direct support from our telephone helpline or arrange a face-to-face meeting with an impartial business adviser. The Growth Hub directs you to a wide range of impartial business support and advice, as well as providing valuable insights, access to events, specialist programmes and funding to help your business thrive.

Conceived as a collaborative platform, the Growth Hub provides the Swindon and Wiltshire business community with a connected network to share ideas and information. You can build your contacts, share your news, events and opportunities or offer help to encourage other businesses to succeed.



**Get in touch and register as a Growth Hub member for free via the website:**

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

**e:** [hello@SWGrowthHub.co.uk](mailto:hello@SWGrowthHub.co.uk)

**t:** 01249 477287

**@SW\_GrowthHub**

**Swindon & Wiltshire Growth Hub**

  
Department for  
Business, Energy  
& Industrial Strategy



**European Union**  
European Regional  
Development Fund