

# GROWTH HUB NEWSLETTER

April 2024

## **OxLEP Business Support Tool**

It is our aim to signpost the county's businesses to the most-appropriate business support, schemes and events. Businesses can engage with our fully funded expert support via this link:

**[Business Support Tool - OxLEP Business](#)**



If you have any questions or requests for support  
please email us directly at  
**[business@oxfordshirelep.com](mailto:business@oxfordshirelep.com)**

# OxLEP Business

## Get Supported!

OxLEP Business is the Growth Hub for Oxfordshire, simplifying the business support landscape and helping individuals and businesses to connect more easily. We're here to help SMEs and entrepreneurs find the support they need, offering prompt, friendly, impartial advice. We signpost businesses to the right no cost business support both locally and nationally.

If you haven't completed OXLEP's Business Support Tool in the last 6 months then you could be missing out on profit boosting, market growing, fully funded business support: <https://oxlepbusiness.co.uk/business-support-tool/>



## **OxLEP announces two new support programmes for West Oxfordshire businesses, backing entrepreneurs, start-ups and growing SMEs**

Budding entrepreneurs, ambitious start-up and established business leaders and organisations ready to start or grow in West Oxfordshire are set to benefit from two, new business support programmes being brought to the area.

Set to launch this April, the Oxfordshire Local Enterprise Partnership (OxLEP) will introduce two new programmes for businesses, namely the West Oxfordshire Business Spark programme and the West Oxfordshire Business Accelerator.

OxLEP Business will be delivering the programme on behalf of West Oxfordshire District Council, with the project funded by the UK Government through the UK Shared Prosperity Fund.

The two new programmes will support organisations to develop, commercialise ideas and bring them to market, as well as supporting already established businesses to grow further.

# OxLEP Business

The West Oxfordshire Business Spark strand of the programme will help more people to start their own successful business, or create a profitable 'extra income stream', with support covering key areas including business fundamentals, understanding customers, marketing and sales, financial planning and developing a first-year action plan. Join the [Spark introductory webinar](#) to find out more.

The West Oxfordshire Business Accelerator will back SMEs in the area with big potential to grow and create further jobs. Join the [Accelerator introductory webinar](#) to find out more.

The support will be built around conducting a strategic business review to create a support delivery plan and a three-year business growth action plan, as well as providing a leadership development programme for senior managers in the business, plus one-to-one support on key areas such as productivity and innovation.

Helen Brind – Growth Hub Manager for OxLEP – said: "This new support programme provides entrepreneurs and small business leaders with a growth mindset with fantastic guidance, advice, practical skills and strategies, as well as openings into potential finance opportunities and indeed, the window to a new network of likeminded individuals, local to their organisation."

The programme will run for 12 months and support will only be available to residents and businesses in West Oxfordshire. A link to register for this support is below.

Although this programme is only available to West Oxfordshire-based organisations, OxLEP are keen to point out that businesses right across the county can continue to benefit from multiple areas of support, provided by them.

# OxLEP Business

OxLEP previously announced that between October 2016 and March last year, it had worked with over 6,200 businesses from across Oxfordshire, providing around 18,000 hours of support and advice, worth over £28.75 million.

Helen Brind added: "Given our track record of supporting thousands of Oxfordshire businesses over the past decade, we are delighted to have secured the opportunity to deliver this support on behalf of West Oxfordshire District Council and hope that we can bring some positive influence and results to this part of the county's business community.

"I would like to stress though that our commitment to the whole of Oxfordshire very much remains the case.

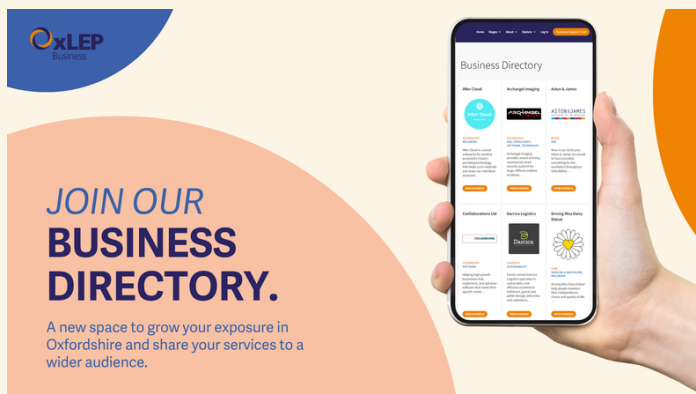
"We continue to offer a vast array of support to our business community at whatever stage they are at and our business support tool – which takes a short time to complete, resulting in a bespoke business action plan – remains the best way for organisations to make initial contact with us and we call on interested businesses to do this."

If you are interested in receiving support from this new programme, you should attend the webinars linked above or register through OxLEP's business support tool, via: <https://oxlepbusiness.co.uk/business-support-tool/>

# OxLEP Business

## OxLEP Business Directory

Exciting News for Oxfordshire Businesses!



We are excited to announce the launch of our OxLEP Business Directory. A space where Oxfordshire businesses, across a variety of sectors, can share details of their company, the work they do and their achievements to OxLEP's online audience of other businesses based in the county and beyond.

To find out more follow this link: <https://oxlepbusiness.co.uk/business-directory/>

## OxLEP Oxfordshire Networking Groups

If you are looking to make valuable connections and boost your business success?

Discover the best ways to find networking groups and events near you. There are abundant opportunities to connect with fellow business owners. With the power of social media, digital marketing, and online events, locating and participating in networking events has never been more convenient.



Click her for more information: <https://oxlepbusiness.co.uk/business-directory/oxfordshire-networking-groups/>

Or please email [business@oxfordshireLEP.com](mailto:business@oxfordshireLEP.com) to list your networking group.

# OxLEP Business Events

All our planned fully funded events can be accessed and booked here: <https://oxlepbusiness.co.uk/event/oxboost-network-april/>

## **OxBOoSt Monthly Networking**

We also host the very successful OxBOoSt networking group monthly networking which meets next on Tuesday 9th April on-line at 4.00pm - 5.00pm, which has no cost associated with it.

To join please follow this link and register for your place: [OxBOoSt Network - April - OxLEP Business](https://oxlepbusiness.co.uk/event/oxboost-network-april-oxlep-business)

## **An Investor's View on Business & Growth**

What are investors looking for in your business and in your growth projections?

This webinar is part of a new programme of 'Investment Readiness' supported by some of Oxfordshire's leading innovation and investment experts. **Wayne Tica**, with over 10 years of experience in buying, transforming, and growing businesses will be your speaker. Wayne is an expert in mergers and acquisitions, especially in the HVAC, M&E, and Engineering sectors.

To book your fully funded please click here:

<https://oxlepbusiness.co.uk/event/an-investors-view-on-business-growth/>

## **The OxLEP Investment Readiness Club**

Smaller businesses are less likely to secure investment to support their growth. Many of these smaller businesses also perceive that access to finance is too complicated, and therefore restrict their own ambitions for growth.

This support is designed to meet four aims:

- To support businesses in deciding whether they should be seeking investment to support their accelerated growth,
- To equip business leaders with the knowledge and skills that they will need to be investment ready,
- To provide 1:1 support for businesses to explore their growth through investment opportunity,
- Mentoring for businesses who are on an investment journey.

To book your fully funded please click here:

<https://oxlepbusiness.co.uk/event/an-investors-view-on-business-growth/>

# OxLEP Skills

## **Apprenticeship webinar series for employers**

<https://oxlepskills.co.uk/apprenticeshipwebinarseries>

OxLEP Skills are excited to be providing a fully funded online webinar series to lend a helping hand to Oxfordshire employers who employ apprentices and are aiming for successful achievements!

Each webinar covers a different topic on the journey of an apprentice, starting with apprentice recruitment and ending with end point assessment. Hawk Training are delivering the webinars with and on behalf of OxLEP Skills.

There are four webinars remaining in the series:

### **Apprentice engagement**

Wednesday 17th April, 12:00-12:45

[www.eventbrite.co.uk/e/aprentice-engagement-webinar-tickets-840217672677](http://www.eventbrite.co.uk/e/aprentice-engagement-webinar-tickets-840217672677)

### **Apprentice resilience (Including mentoring)**

Wednesday 8th May, 12:00-12:45

[www.eventbrite.co.uk/e/resilience-including-mentoring-webinar-tickets-840222296507](http://www.eventbrite.co.uk/e/resilience-including-mentoring-webinar-tickets-840222296507)

### **Apprenticeship end point assessment (EPA) process**

Wednesday 12th June, 12:00-12:45

[www.eventbrite.co.uk/e/epa-process-including-gateway-and-planning-webinar-tickets-840229287417](http://www.eventbrite.co.uk/e/epa-process-including-gateway-and-planning-webinar-tickets-840229287417)

### **Apprenticeship EPA projects**

Wednesday 10th July, 12:00-12:45

[www.eventbrite.co.uk/e/projects-at-epa-webinar-tickets-840271443507](http://www.eventbrite.co.uk/e/projects-at-epa-webinar-tickets-840271443507)

The webinar series will be made available to watch on demand via the OxLEP YouTube channel at:

<https://www.youtube.com/channel/UCTckOrs9FTuWeGdHjtShBNQ/videos>

Our expert Oxfordshire Apprenticeship Adviser Andrea Harrison offers fully funded support with all aspects of apprenticeships, including completions. If you'd like some help and advice, get in touch with Andrea at [andrea.harrison@oxfordshirelep.com](mailto:andrea.harrison@oxfordshirelep.com)

## OxLEP Skills

### **Opportunity for employers and education/training providers, as new 'Skills Bootcamps' launched through funding secured by OxLEP**

<https://www.oxfordshirelep.com/news/article/opportunity-employers-and-educationtraining-providers-new-%E2%80%98skills-bootcamps%E2%80%99-launched>

OxLEP Skills are inviting responses to a new opportunity relating to the delivery of the new 'Skills Bootcamps' programme, which aims to support residents in the county to acquire new skills and – in turn – a pathway to employment. The Skills Bootcamps programme – part of the Department for Education's 'Skills for Life' activity – is being led in Oxfordshire by OxLEP Skills and is set to open to residents this summer.

Offering a range of free, flexible courses of up to 16 weeks, the Skills Bootcamps programme aims to give people the opportunity to build up a variety of sector-specific skills, helping to fast-track individuals to an interview opportunity with an employer and ultimately, paid work.

OxLEP Skills will be managing the £1.7million Skills Bootcamps programme across Oxfordshire, collaborating with procured partners to deliver training. In the coming weeks, OxLEP will procure suppliers able to provide those first-class training opportunities through the programme, helping to ensure people have a greater 'direct line of sight' into employment, as well as building up solid skills for life. The procurement process opened on 21st March, with submissions due by 9am on 2nd May.

A proposed total of 10 courses will be running through Skills Bootcamps, ranging from introductions to digital marketing through to gaining a better understanding of data analytics. In addition, those attending Skills Bootcamps will be able to develop more practical skills, via courses focusing on areas such as hospitality, green construction and e-bikes.

### **OxLEP Skills' Social Contract Programme apprenticeship levy pledge successes**

<https://oxlepskills.co.uk/news>

OxLEP Skills' Social Contract Programme, which aims to retain investment in the county whilst supporting the creation of apprenticeships, has now generated £2.5 million-worth of pledges, with critical funding continuing to find its way to small businesses all the time. These three case studies illustrate how the apprenticeship levy transfer scheme is working for both large and small businesses.



## OxLEP Skills

Case Study: The power of apprenticeships – LCMB on receiving apprenticeship levy transfer

<https://oxlepskills.co.uk/lcmbcasestudy>

Harriet Stuchbury, Senior Consultant at building performance specialists LCMB explains how SMEs can benefit from the OxLEP apprenticeship levy transfer scheme and how they have used a levy pledge from Howdens to fund training for their degree apprentice consultant.

Case Study: The Hill Group supports construction apprenticeships in Oxfordshire through levy pledge

<https://oxlepskills.co.uk/hillgroupcasestudy>

Siân Rebourg, Head of Social Value at Hill, explains how straightforward making a pledge is with support from OxLEP Skills and how Hill has pledged £70,277 to support construction apprenticeships in Oxfordshire.

Case Study: Richardsons Chartered Accountants and the OxLEP Skills apprenticeship levy scheme

<https://oxlepskills.co.uk/richardsonscasestudy>

Jack Armstrong, Client Director at Richardsons Chartered Accountants, explains how OxLEP Skills' apprenticeship support and levy transfer scheme have had a significant positive impact on the firm, including financial benefits, improving staff recruitment and retention and enriching the professional development of their staff.

To find out how your organisation could pledge or receive apprenticeship levy funds, contact our expert Apprenticeship Advisors Leah Bryan and Nikki Cooper at [skills@oxfordshirelep.com](mailto:skills@oxfordshirelep.com)

### **Give something back as an OxGROW mentor**

Could you share your knowledge and experience to support local people to get closer to employment through light touch virtual mentoring?

The OxGROW virtual mentoring platform, developed by OxLEP Skills in partnership with Connectr, links volunteer mentors with people (18+) who are looking for support and guidance with how to successfully navigate the challenging world of job seeking, or looking to change career.

- ✓ Develop skills whilst making a real difference to the lives of local people
- ✓ Just 1 hour a week on average
- ✓ Mentors manage their availability
- ✓ Discover a diverse pool of potential talent
- ✓ Meet Corporate Social Responsibility (CSR) goals
- ✓ Meaningful volunteering opportunity
- ✓ Free vacancy and event promotion

Email [skills@oxfordshirelep.com](mailto:skills@oxfordshirelep.com) to find out more about becoming a virtual mentor.

## OxLEP Skills

Oxfordshire Careers Hub celebrates the power of employer engagement in supporting Year 11 students at Meadowbrook College to find their best next step

<https://www.oxfordshirelep.com/news/article/oxfordshire-careers-hub-celebrates-power-employer-engagement-supporting-year-11>

Employers and training providers came together with students from Meadowbrook College to celebrate the success of Oxfordshire Careers Hub's 'Positive Destinations' programme, culminating in a 'Talent Workshop' in March.

The project – funded by The Oxfordshire Careers Hub and delivered by Adviza – set out to support students attending alternative provision institutions who are at risk of NEET (Not in Education, Employment or Training) after Year 11 – to help these young people find a sustained place in employment, education, or training six months after leaving school.

The project equipped 24 students with the opportunity to partake in the programme, which included a 1-2-1 careers guidance session, followed by creating an individual action plan for each student which then led into a six-week employability workshop series which included workplace and college visits.

Over the course of the six weeks, students were provided with the knowledge, skills and experiences to make informed decisions about their next steps, which – alongside considered interactive visits to both employers and further education colleges – work to reinforce, inspire and enable students to reach their full potential.

A total of 11 employers were involved in the project and two colleges were involved in the programme.

# Grants and Other Oxfordshire Business Support



## **About the Goldman Sachs 10,000 Small Businesses UK Programme**

This fully funded programme brings together leaders of small businesses from across industry sectors and creates unique networking and peer learning opportunities.

For those small business leaders selected to participate, the core of the programme is a high quality, practically-focused business and management education, delivered over 100 hours through a blend of online and in-person residential sessions. The curriculum has been designed specifically for this programme by world-class international and national experts in entrepreneurial learning.

The programme will include three residential sessions and will rotate between residential and online learning. The online curriculum has been developed to meet your needs and the online platform will provide you ultimate flexibility as a small business owner.

During the course of the programme every small business owner develops a customised Growth Plan to direct their organisation's business strategy and expansion.

The success of the programme is contributed to the right balance of formal learning, mentoring, and peer-to-peer support. Participants of the programme will benefit from:

- Specialist workshops
- One-on-one business advice
- Business coaching
- Access to professional experts
- Networking opportunities and
- A network of 10,000 Small Business graduates

# Grants and Other Oxfordshire Business Support



Eligibility/criteria:

The programme is offered on a fully funded basis to small businesses and social enterprise leaders who desire to grow their businesses, create local employment and have scalable business models. This programme is not intended for start-up businesses, sole traders or businesses that are not seeking to grow.

The following eligibility criteria also apply:

- The applicant must be the primary owner / co-owner of the business, or the most senior decision-maker if the business is not limited by shares
- The business must have been operating for at least three years and will generally have between 5 and 50 employees
- The business should have an annual turnover of at least £250,000 and no more than £15 million
- Social enterprise applicants must be commercially operated businesses that achieve their social purpose through trading rather than grant funding
- The business must be scalable and capable of generating additional local employment
- Applicants should not have had extensive recent management education

## Application

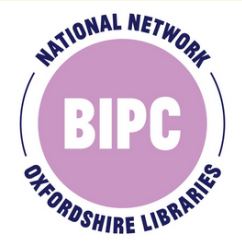
Applications are now open for National Cohort 21, commencing in September 2024.

Apply here: <https://www.goldmansachs.com/citizenship/10000-small-businesses/UK/apply/index.html>

Application closing date: Monday 29th April 2024

Interviews: May 2024

# Grants and Other Oxfordshire Business Support



## **Business & IP Centre Oxfordshire**

At the Oxford Westgate Library

Supporting Oxfordshire residents to start, protect and grow their own business.

Events and workshops, 1:1 business information sessions, market research databases, Intellectual Property guidance, co-working desks, Photography and videography Marketing Suite, business books and more.

website: [www.oxfordshire.gov.uk/BIPC](http://www.oxfordshire.gov.uk/BIPC)

Email: [BIPC@oxfordshire.gov.uk](mailto:BIPC@oxfordshire.gov.uk)



## **OSEP**

OSEP provides support, empowerment, and advocacy for local social enterprises, enterprising charities, and purposeful businesses in Oxfordshire.

OSEP, a local Social Enterprise itself, plays a crucial role in fostering a community where businesses prioritise positive societal impact alongside their financial success.

Website: <https://www.osep.org.uk/>

Email: [hello@osep.org.uk](mailto:hello@osep.org.uk)

# Oxfordshire Business Park Information



Doing right by people and considering our planet is a top priority for us all. So, when it comes to finding the right home for your business, take a peek at [Oxfordshire's sustainable business parks](#), created by the Jennings team.

Monument Park was established in 1980 on land formerly used by the Jennings family's farming business in South Oxfordshire and carried the principle of being a values-led business with it. Focused on doing business differently, Jennings puts people and relationships first to shape a community that nurtures and supports its tenants. Monument Park's serviced offices and operations are also proud to be [net-zero carbon and B Corp certified](#).

Have a ramble... [jennings.co.uk](http://jennings.co.uk)



## Non OxLEP News/Events

**The Oxford Magazine:** What's on in Oxfordshire -  
<https://theoxfordmagazine.com/>

**Oxfordshire County Council News:** [News from Oxfordshire County Council](#)

**Experience Oxfordshire:** [Top 10 Things to Do in Oxford and Oxfordshire – Experience Oxfordshire](#)