



GROWTH HUB NEWSLETTER

September 2024

Support for your business – OxLEP Business is the Growth Hub for Oxfordshire, simplifying the business support landscape and helping individuals and businesses to connect more easily. We are 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.

Get started..

Complete OxLEP's Business Support Tool to get started and receive your business support plan signposting you to profit boosting, market growing, fully funded business support:

[Business Support Tool](#)

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

OxLEP Business

OxLEP Business Marketplace and Celebration 2024

OxLEP Business Marketplace and Celebration is taking place on the 3rd October 2024, at the Oxford University's Examinations School. Delivered with support from the Institute of Directors it promises to be an exciting event.

Designed to bring together and celebrate Oxfordshire's business community, this event will showcase the Oxfordshire SMEs that have been supported by OxLEP Business since April 2022.

Starting at 3.00pm with our marketplace designed to provide an opportunity for OxLEP Business clients to exhibit their business, make connections and network, you can visit our online marketplace to see who will be there: <https://oxlepbusiness.co.uk/marketplace-and-celebration-event-2024-exhibitors/> followed by an awards evening from 5.30pm supported by our clients as award sponsors, event supporters.

For more information please visit: <https://oxlepbusiness.co.uk/oxlep-business-marketplace-and-celebration-2024/>

If you have not confirmed you attendance at this exciting event there is still time. Please email business@OxfordshireLEP.com for more information.

With thanks to our 2024 award sponsors and supporters



OxLEP Business

West Oxfordshire Business Support

Entrepreneurs, start-ups and businesses wanting to grow in West Oxfordshire are now benefiting from two new business support programmes.

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.

Outline of support

The West Oxfordshire Business Spark programme

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.

The West Oxfordshire Business Accelerator programme

The West Oxfordshire Business Accelerator will back SMEs in the area with big potential to grow and create further jobs. 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.

Click the link below for more information: 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.

<https://oxlepbusiness.co.uk/west-oxfordshire-business-support-programme-overview/>

Exploring Peer Networks for West Oxfordshire Businesses

Date: September 10, 2024 - Time: 10:00 am - 11:00 am - Online

<https://oxlepbusiness.co.uk/event/exploring-peer-networks-for-west-oxfordshire-businesses-2/>

This Programme could be the key to building extra resilience, creating new opportunities, accessing new funding and achieving your goals.

Eligibility

If you are registered and trading in the West Oxfordshire District Council area then you can register for this event.

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The West Oxfordshire Peer Networks programme allows businesses to:

- Overcome business challenges and recognise and act on new opportunities
- Build a trusted network of connections to support you now and in the future
- Improve your long-term personal and business performance

Delivered through a series of high-impact group sessions, businesses meet on zoom for 3 weeks to explore problems, collaborate and share knowledge. The topics covered are chosen by participants – each week one participant shares the issue or challenge of their choice, followed by a facilitated discussion and sharing from Peers.

This taster webinar is an opportunity to ask questions and find out if the programme is a good fit for you!

West Oxfordshire Business ACCELERATOR Networking

Date: September 16, 2024 - Time: 4:30 pm - 6:30 pm - Venue: OX29 9UN

<https://oxlepbusiness.co.uk/event/west-oxfordshire-business-accelerator-networking/>

Join fellow established business owners / leaders at this Fat Squirrel Outdoor campfire networking event.

The West Oxfordshire Business ACCELERATOR programme aims to bring together 200 local small businesses and support them to grow and thrive.

Join this exclusive and fun networking event on 16th September 4:30-6:30pm so that you can meet new business owners like you, find out about the support and have a fun time.

A Fat Squirrel Outdoor campfire is a great place to meet up and get to know new people.

West Oxfordshire SPARK – Business Fundamentals and Business Model Canvas

Date: September 24, 2024 - Time: 9:30 am - 12:30 pm - Venue: Carterton Community Centre

<https://oxlepbusiness.co.uk/event/west-oxfordshire-spark-business-fundamentals-and-business-model-canvas/>

Thinking of starting your own business? Or recently started? You are in good company, let us help you to succeed!

If you are based in West Oxfordshire, and you would like to start your business, then you can register for this event.

Workshop 1 – Business Fundamentals and Business Model Canvas

Learning Objectives

- Developing critical thinking skills
- Developing a collaborative mindset
- Developing creativity
- Developing understanding of why businesses succeed or fail

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Cherwell Business Support Programme

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

Outline of support

The Cherwell 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.

The Cherwell Business Accelerator will back SMEs in the area with big potential to grow and create further jobs. 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.

Eligibility

These programmes of support are only available to residents and businesses based within the Cherwell district. If anyone is interested in business support outside of Cherwell, they will be directed to the main Growth Hub support via OxLEP Business which is available across all of Oxfordshire.

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

Please follow this link for more information: <https://oxlepbusiness.co.uk/cherwell-business-support-programme-overview/>



OxLEP Business Events

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

Reducing pressure, increasing performance

Date: September 6, 2024 - Time: 12:00 pm - 2:00 pm - Online

<https://oxlepbusiness.co.uk/event/reducing-pressure-increasing-performance-2/>

A workshop to explore a healthy approach to supporting yourself and your people. You know how it feels when you and your staff are at your best. Things tend to go relatively smoothly, and challenges can be converted into opportunities with relative ease.

In these times however uncertainty, change and the need to act quickly can deplete people's energy and enthusiasm. This of course, can affect morale, business performance and worryingly, people's health.

Resilience skills are crucial for owners, leaders and staff. Join us in this concise interactive workshop where we will be sharing some easy to implement tools and techniques you can use immediately to support yourself and your people. This is about investing two hours on yourself, 'on your business', for immediate and long term benefits.

OxBOoSt Monthly Networking

Date: September 10, 2024 - Time: 4:00 pm - 5:00 pm - Online

<https://oxlepbusiness.co.uk/event/oxboost-network-september-2/>

The 'Oxfordshire Business Opportunities & Support network' for all OxLEP Business clients and anyone who wants to learn more.

OxLEP Business engages with thousands of business owners and leaders every year providing knowledge, advice and other business development support. But until now there hasn't been an easy way to help these businesses to network. Problem solved... The OxBOoSt network will meet on the first Tuesday of every month (public holidays taken into account) from 4pm to 5pm and is open to all Oxfordshire based businesses to join (and its free!).

Barrier Free Business Start-Up: Identifying Barriers and Requirements

Date: September 18, 2024 - Time: 5:00 pm - 6:30 pm - Online

<https://oxlepbusiness.co.uk/event/barrier-free-business-start-up-identifying-barriers-and-requirements/>

This programme is designed to support individuals with disabilities to explore Access to Work funding to initiate their own businesses.

The Barrier-Free Business Start-Up programme is designed to support Oxfordshire based individuals with disabilities in exploring how they can utilise Access to Work funding to initiate their own businesses. While the programme will touch upon business planning, its primary focus will be on leveraging Access to Work resources effectively. Participants will also have the opportunity to engage with OxLEP's broader business start-up support network.

OxLEP Skills

Opportunity to support the Oxfordshire Apprenticeship Awards 2025

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

The Oxfordshire Apprenticeship Awards 2025 will open for entries and nominations on 21 November. Being a sponsor or supporter of the awards is a fantastic opportunity to be part of a very special event, while showcasing your organisation and celebrating your apprenticeship success.

There is a range of opportunities available, from being the headline sponsor, judging and awarding a category, to making a small financial contribution to help make the celebration evening a special occasion:

- Headline sponsor – lead sponsor, will choose Oxfordshire Apprentice of the Year from the winners of the apprentice categories
- Category sponsor – responsible for a specific award, including judging the entries, selecting the finalists and presenting the awards at the celebration evening
- Awards sponsor – contribute towards the celebratory event and drinks reception
- Awards supporter – support with covering the cost of event decorations, drinks reception etc, helping to ensure that it's a really special occasion!

Download the sponsor brochure for full details of the sponsorship packages.

<https://oxlepskills.co.uk/oaawards2025sponsorinvite>

See what some of our previous sponsors have to say in this short film:

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=9QiTum-tVDg>

If you'd like to find out more about the options for sponsorship, please contact melanie.ringer@oxfordshirelep.com

Inspire the next generation as an Enterprise Adviser

OxLEP jointly funds the Oxfordshire Careers Hub with the Careers & Enterprise Company (CEC) with the aim of helping every young person in Oxfordshire find their best next step. This academic year, the Hub is supporting 61 Oxfordshire schools and colleges to develop strong careers provision for students in Years 7-13, giving us full coverage of state funded secondary education across the county, including further education, special educational needs and disabilities (SEND) schools and alternative provision.

We are looking for volunteers from business to support our schools and colleges as Enterprise Advisers, helping to create opportunities to inform and inspire students about the world of work, with the support and guidance of OxLEP Skills. We are especially keen to hear from volunteers who would like to work with our SEND schools.

OxLEP Skills

Find why your experience matters and how you can help schools and colleges shape future as an Enterprise Adviser:

<https://www.careersandenterprise.co.uk/employers/your-experience-matters-help-schools-and-colleges-shape-futures>

Find out more about the Oxfordshire Careers Hub at:

<https://oxlepskills.co.uk/employers/working-with-schools-colleges> or contact Nikki Wakefield, Careers Hub Lead, at nikki.wakefield@oxfordshirelep.com

Becoming an inclusive employer training

Oxfordshire Careers Hub, a partnership between OxLEP Skills and The Careers & Enterprise Company, has arranged for BASE (British Association of Supported Employment) to deliver a series of workshops for employers. These sessions will support you to work with young people with neurodiversity, disabilities and/or mental health conditions.

The unemployment rate for disabled people is 6.2%, compared to the unemployment rate for people who are not disabled, which is 3.4%, yet we know that there is a clear case for recruiting disabled employees, including:

- Recruit from a wider availability of labour
- Reduced recruitment costs
- Supported selection process gives accurate job-client match
- Improved retention
- Improved image and external reputation
- Team-building and internal reputation
- Diversity-improved services and products
- Corporate social responsibility
- Reflecting local communities

Workshop 1: Understanding the needs of people with disabilities – 19th September 2024

In this first workshop, we welcome you to discuss what working with disabled people can mean to you and your business. During this session, we will work with you to break down the barriers, stereotypes and misconceptions that may be held with the aim to empower you to feel more comfortable and confident when working with people with disabilities. We will also cover what support is available to you as employers, from giving someone work experience to having a diverse workforce, covering a range of pathways. We strongly believe that employment is for everyone and you, as an employer, are a valued and integral customer for employment pathways, who also has support requirements.

OxLEP Skills

Workshop 2: Working with people with disabilities – 6th November 2024

In this second session, we will be joined by local employers and providers who currently work with and support people with disabilities. We will hear from these employers and providers to learn more about the different employment pathways and opportunities to employ and support people with disabilities. We will build on the conversations and plans from the previous workshop and support you to come up with actions to take back to your workplace.

Where possible, we would like the same person to attend both sessions. The venues and times are being confirmed, with the first session likely to be in Oxford. To register your interest please, complete this form: <https://forms.office.com/e/PDH5Be0xqN>. If you have any questions, please get in touch with Eleanor at eleanor.gordon-martin@oxfordshire.gov.uk

Oxfordshire's Aspirations Day – 14th October 2024

This was born out of Oxfordshire special schools feeling their students needed a more bespoke and quiet careers fair type event. The first iteration ran in May 2021, it was hugely successful, but we realised we needed more businesses and a bigger venue! The event is now held annually in October and is kindly hosted by Leonardo Royal Hotel.

Events like this are key to supporting this group of students to become successful adults. Students with Special Educational Needs and Disabilities (SEND) are more likely than their peers to become NEET (Not in Employment, Education or Training) at Post-16 and Post-18. There has been some interesting research around the positive impact of work on people's quality of life and mortality. Sadly, the stats for adults with SEND aren't great when it comes to employment, e.g. 65% of people in the UK with learning disabilities wanting to work, yet only 4.8% actually employed.

The Aspirations Day gives these students a better idea about the progression opportunities for them in Oxfordshire, it helps them and their support networks to make decisions around their next steps after school/college. The students attending have a range of abilities and skills, many will not obtain GCSEs, and so we are looking for a variety of organisations who can offer opportunities, information and support to these young people.

This year:

The event is being hosted by Leonardo Royal Hotel Oxford on 14th October 2024. We still need to confirm timings for the day but expect it to be similar to previous years with businesses arriving from 8/8:30am and finishing at 2/2:30pm. We are trying to make the day as easy and accessible for the schools and their students so the lunch break will be around 11:30/12 to work with the school day.

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Students will be around Year 10 (14-15 years old) and up but will all have different abilities. Many of the students will not receive any formal qualifications, i.e. GCSEs, so please bear this in mind. Together with the schools, we will be pulling together some information to help prepare and support you to have the most meaningful interactions with the students. We will share that, and additional logistical information, with you closer to the time so that you and the students can get the most out of the day.

Please complete this form if you or someone from your organisation would like to attend: <https://forms.gle/ARZGZrW2AcM4zGcW6>. We will provide lunch, some refreshments, tables and chairs but please add details of any additional requirements in the form. If you have any questions, please get in touch with Eleanor at eleanor.gordon-martin@oxfordshire.gov.uk

Employability Day: 13th September - OxGROW virtual mentoring

Employability Day is the UK's largest celebration for organisations supporting local people to gain, sustain and progress in work. This year's theme is: Employment Support for Every Citizen.

Our OxGROW virtual mentoring platform is easy to use and allows residents of Oxfordshire aged 18+ to connect with experienced local business professionals to receive advice on job hunting, CV writing and preparing for interviews. If you know of anyone that would benefit from this support, please direct them to <https://ox.connectr.co.uk/grow>

For further information about OxGROW, please email skills@oxfordshirelep.com

Oxfordshire Business Support

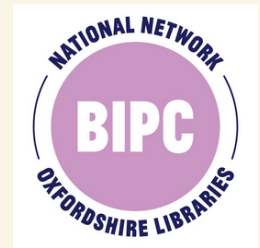
Other Resources: As part of our ongoing commitment to provide the best possible service to Oxfordshire's SME's we always ensure that other services and opportunities which may be available to business within Oxfordshire are highlighted and signposted.

For more information visit here: <https://oxlepbusiness.co.uk/external-resources/>

Business & IP Centre Oxfordshire

At the Oxford Westgate Library

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



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

Oxfordshire Business Park Information



Doing right by people and considering our planet is a top priority for us all.

Take a peek at [Oxfordshire's sustainable business parks](#), created by the Jennings team.

Have a ramble... jennings.co.uk

Non OxLEP News/Events

Decarbonisation Grant Funding - Coming Soon....

The councils have secured capital UKSPF funding under the intervention E29: Supporting decarbonisation and improving the natural environment whilst growing the local economy, making grants available to local organisations to support decarbonisation projects.

Our Business Decarbonisation Grant will shortly open for applications from South and Vale based organisations. Funding will be made available from a minimum of £1,000 up to a maximum value of £10,000 per grant.

Who can apply to the scheme?

- Private sector companies
- Sole Traders
- Partnership
- Registered charities
- Social enterprises, for example CIC's

Eligible projects

This scheme will provide capital funding to:

- Support implementation of decarbonisation activities, including purchase of equipment, premises adaptations and establishment of net-zero infrastructure
- Support businesses to lower greenhouse gas emissions and adopt new processes and/or technologies.

All projects must complete before 31 March 2025. Examples of eligible projects include replacing gas/oil boilers with air-source heat pumps, smart energy devices, electric vehicles, e-bikes, bicycle courier equipment and business infrastructure, solar panels, and new or enhanced green infrastructure at your site or building. Please note that we cannot support projects that include energy/building improvements for premises that also function primarily as domestic accommodation.

Application links will be available via our [South](#) and [Vale](#) websites. A further newsletter will be sent out as soon as the application window opens.

Oxfordshire County Council: <https://www.oxfordshire.gov.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](#)

Oxfordshire County Council: <https://www.oxfordshire.gov.uk/>