



GROWTH HUB NEWSLETTER

March 2025

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 is proud to provide business support to Oxfordshire's SME's

As we approach the end of the financial year, OxLEP Business is proudly looking back at some of the outputs that have already been delivered across the OxLEP Business Programmes, including those for West Oxfordshire District Council and Cherwell District Council:

- Over 4141 hours of support have been delivered since 1st April 2024.
- 882 Businesses have completed the Business Support Tool since 1st April 2024.
- The enhanced delivery of programmes by OxLEP for West Oxfordshire and Cherwell has seen engagement from businesses in those Districts more than double.
- In January 2025 alone:
 - 109 Businesses engaged through the Business Support Tool (BST),
 - 27 Business Support events delivered,
 - 310 Business interactions (support of 1 hour or more) took place,
 - 645.5 hours of support were delivered.

The full evaluation of outcomes has not yet been carried out, but OxLEP Business support has helped Oxfordshire SME businesses to protect or create over 750 jobs since 1st April 2024. That is at least £27m secured in the local economy! We expect these numbers will increase when reporting is completed.

See attached Impact Report Infographic for delivery in 2023/2024 for more information of the support provided to Oxfordshire over 23-24.

Driving Investment & Sustainable Growth for Oxfordshire (DISGO) APRIL 2023 - MARCH 2024

DOWNLOAD
the latest
Impact Report



Provided over
2800
hours of expert
business support



365 hours of expert one-to-one
support helped create **73** jobs



43 webinars
& workshops

750+ businesses

1444 hours of support



Supported
over

1790
businesses
from across
all Districts

OxLEP Business

Celebrating Business Start-Up and Success

Thu, 27 Mar 2025 12:30 - 16:30 GMT

Leonardo Royal Hotel Oxford, Godstow Road, Wolvercote OX2 8AL

An inspiring afternoon awaits as 200 passionate entrepreneurs and small business leaders gather to celebrate success, share ambitions, and build meaningful connections.



The event kicks off with networking lunch from 12:30, where attendees can mingle, exchange ideas, and lay the foundation for future collaborations.

The programme funders, West Oxfordshire District Council and Cherwell District Council, will share their ambitions for small business success, and OxLEP Business will share the key outputs from the programmes.

The celebration will then move into full swing, with a session dedicated to recognising the successes of those in the room. Stories of perseverance, innovation, and growth will inspire all, highlighting the significant impact small businesses have on the community and economy.

A keynote presentation on Personal Resilience in Business will follow, providing valuable insights on navigating challenges and maintaining motivation. An experienced entrepreneur will share their journey, offering wisdom on adaptability and perseverance.

The afternoon will conclude with a focus on Growing Connections and Collaborations, encouraging meaningful networking and idea-sharing. This event promises to be an unforgettable celebration of success, resilience, and the limitless potential of small business leaders.

Why you should attend

This event will bring together 200 passionate and ambitious entrepreneurs and business leaders from across the West Oxfordshire and Cherwell Districts. It is a chance to celebrate the range of business successes, and to build and strengthen business connections, from start-ups to established, from West to North. This is the event that businesses will be talking about all year!

You must be a resident of, or from a business based in West Oxfordshire District Council area or Cherwell District Council area to attend this event.

To book your place please follow this link: <https://www.eventbrite.co.uk/e/celebrating-business-start-up-and-success-tickets-1260577082989?aff=oddtcreator>

Marketplace and Celebration Event 2025

OxLEP Business is delighted to be hosting our yearly Marketplace and Celebration in September 2025.

The event was designed to bring together and celebrate Oxfordshire's business community, showcasing the Oxfordshire SMEs that have been supported by OxLEP Business since April 2022 through both a Marketplace and an Awards evening.

Date: Thursday 18th September 2025

Venue: Oxford Town Hall, Oxford

Time: 6.00pm – 8.00pm

If you are interested in supporting or supporting this event, please email: business@oxfordshirelep.com

Please follow this link to read more about last years event:

<https://oxlepbusiness.co.uk/oxlep-business-marketplace-and-celebration-2024/>

The Marketplace and Awards winner in 2024 where:



Socially Responsible Business of the Year
Sponsored by: The Sky Wave Distilling Co.
Winner: Send it to Alex

Employer of the Year
Sponsored by: The Motivation Agency
Winner: 923 Jobs



Growth Business of the Year
Sponsored by: Howden
Winner: Beyond Carbon Associates

Environmentally Sustainable Business of the Year
Sponsored by: ALP Synergy
Winner: BioBright Ltd



Innovator of the Year
Sponsored by: P3MO
Winner: After Cloud

Business Leader of the Year
Sponsored by: Institute of Directors
Winner: Active Leaders Ltd (Penny Snowden)



Start-up of the Year
Sponsored by: Cypher
Winner: Velocity Cycle Couriers

Export Potential of the Year
Sponsored by: Stephen Spencer + Associates
Winner: Legacy Marketplace – Sustainable Event Management



OxLEP Business Events

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

OxBOoSt Network - February

Tue, 4 Mar 2025 16:00 - 17:00 GMT - Online

<https://www.eventbrite.co.uk/e/oxboost-network-march-tickets-1244581569979?aff=oddtcreator>



The Number 1 regular meet-up for Oxfordshire businesses who want to connect, collaborate and exchange ideas.

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 via zoom on Tuesday 4th March from 4:00pm to 5:00pm and is open to all Oxfordshire based businesses to join (and its free!).

Each meeting will include 5-8 pre-arranged slots for businesses to share their story or pitch for collaboration and a forward look of business support from OxLEP. And of course there will be plenty of time for networking.

Trouble Shooting Your Pitch Deck

Tue, 11 Mar 2025 13:00 - 15:00 GMT - Online

<https://www.eventbrite.co.uk/e/trouble-shooting-your-pitch-deck-tickets-1224849019389?aff=oddtcreator>



This trouble-shooting session is all about you sharing a little of your pitch deck, asking questions and learning from the experts and your peers.

A small number of participants will be asked to share 4 minutes of their pitch, some parts they feel are sorted and bits they want help with. Through this shared learning, each participant will be able to improve their pitch deck and feel more ready to join and pitch at the final in-person event.

This webinar is part of a series of three 'Investment Readiness' support events coordinated by OxLEP Business:

Part 1: Creating the Best Pitch Deck for 2025 - online

Part 2: Trouble Shooting Your Pitch Deck - online

Part 3: Pitch to the Panel – Thrive in 25 – an in-person event where you get to pitch to an expert panel, take questions and learn from others.

By attending this webinar and joining this programme, you will equip yourself with the knowledge to position your business as an irresistible investment opportunity, setting the stage for success in Oxfordshire and beyond.

OxLEP Business Events

Stop Winging it - Getting Your Service Business Ready to Scale

Mon, 17 Mar 2025 12:30 - 13:30 GMT - Online

<https://www.eventbrite.co.uk/e/stop-winging-it-getting-your-service-business-ready-to-scale-tickets-1248035320239?aff=oddtcreator>



I've been there – you're a small business providing a service. You know your service is absolutely top class and you want the whole world to be using it – after all, why wouldn't they? It's that good!

You want to scale. The couple of employees or sub-contractors you have are with you, they know you're on to a good thing. But here's the rub: you're firefighting. You're so busy you hardly have time to work on the deliverables that are bringing in the revenue, to work on finding leads and to improve the service in those ways you already know you can, forget working on the business itself. Bottom line, the infrastructure of your business is suffering, or most likely, there isn't an infrastructure there. You're amazing at what you do, and you're winging it in your business. Sound familiar?

How to Attract and Keep Your Ideal Clients

Tue, 25 Mar 2025 09:30 - 11:30 GMT - Online

<https://www.eventbrite.co.uk/e/how-to-attract-and-keep-your-ideal-clients-tickets-1260720682499?aff=oddtcreator>



This workshop is aimed at established and ambitious businesses who want to attract and retain more customers.

Most thriving business owe their success to a deep understanding of their customers. They don't just sell products, they solve real problems. By actively listening to feedback, anticipating needs, and adapting to changing preferences, they consistently deliver value that resonates.

Their personalised approach makes customers feel seen and appreciated, fostering loyalty and trust. They leverage data insights to tailor experiences, ensuring every interaction is meaningful. This customer-centric mindset drives innovation, keeps them ahead of competitors, and turns satisfied clients into enthusiastic brand advocates.

By attending you will develop your understanding of:

- The different types of customers
- The customer lifecycle
- Your ideal client, and, what makes them tick; and,
- Actions you can take to Love Your Customer.

To attract and keep your customers, you need to understand them.

You will leave this workshop with the knowledge and confidence to grow your customer base.

OxLEP Skills

Apprenticeship levy pledge success stories

<https://oxlepskills.co.uk/national-apprenticeship-week-2025-apprenticeship-levy-pledge-success-stories>

During National Apprenticeship Week last month, we shared some success stories from Oxfordshire SMEs and charities - In Friendship Ltd, Live Wire, Oxford Creators and Oxfordshire Community Foundation – who have all benefitted from receiving apprenticeship levy transfers from the University of Oxford to fund apprenticeship training and assessment, with support from OxLEP Skills.

We also shared the story of Serco, a multinational defence, health, space, justice, migration, customer services, transport and community services company, who are making a real impact by donating to SMEs, charities and other organisations to fund apprenticeships through their levy gifting in partnership with OxLEP Skills: <https://oxlepskills.co.uk/sercocasestudy>

If you'd like to find out about accessing pledged apprenticeship levy funds for your organisation, or would like to make a pledge, please contact our Apprenticeship Advisors Leah Bryan and Nikki Cooper by emailing skills@oxfordshirele.com



Apprenticeships webinar for parents and carers recording

<https://careersliveuk.com/partner/oxfordshire-careers-hub>

Are you a parent or carer? Would you like to know more about apprenticeships to help you support your young person with deciding what to do when they leave school or college? There is so much choice for young people in terms of what they can do at 16 and 18 and it's important that all young people learn about all the pathways available to them so that they can decide on their best next step.

Oxfordshire Careers Hub and CareersLive held an apprenticeship awareness broadcast for parents and carers and a roundtable discussion during National Apprenticeship Week, which you can now watch on demand to hear from local employers and apprentices and learn more about a pathway that has opportunities for everyone.

OxLEP Skills

Careers Fest 2025 – session for parents and carers

<https://careersfest2025twilightsession.eventbrite.co.uk>

Are you a parent or carer of a young person in Year 9 or above? Like to know more about their options for when they leave school or college to help you support them with taking their best next step?

Oxfordshire Careers Hub are holding a twilight session for parents and carers at Careers Fest on Wednesday 19 March from 16:00 – 19:00 at The Kassam Conference & Events Centre, which will be an opportunity for you to meet with a wide range of employers, further education colleges, universities and training providers and find out about all the options on offer. Visiting Careers Fest with your young person is a fantastic way to get those careers conversations started and help you feel equipped with the right information to support them with deciding on their next step.



OxGROW virtual mentoring platform

Our OxGROW virtual mentoring platform helps Oxfordshire residents (18+) who are looking for support and guidance from a mentor on how to successfully navigate the challenging world of job seeking, or looking to change career direction. It enables them to connect with experienced local business professionals to receive advice on job hunting, CV writing and preparing for interviews.

Could you give the gift of your knowledge, advice and expertise?

If you'd like to give something back to support local people whilst developing your mentoring skills, please get in touch at skills@oxfordshirelep.com to find out more.



If you know of anyone that would benefit from this support, please direct them to <https://ox.connectr.co.uk/grow>

OxLEP Skills

'No Limits' inclusive recruitment programme – employability support

<https://oxlepskills.co.uk/individuals/employability>

The 'No Limits' inclusive employability support programme, developed by OxLEP Skills, aims to remove barriers that Oxfordshire residents aged 16+ might have getting into, or returning to work, education or training.

The programme is being delivered through two of Oxfordshire's most inclusive charities, SOFEA Didcot and Aspire Oxfordshire and is funded until March 2025 by Cherwell District Council, Oxford City Council, South Oxfordshire District Council, Vale of White Horse District Council and West Oxfordshire District Council through the UK Shared Prosperity Fund (UKSPF).

The programme provides up to 30 hours of 1-1 support with finding employment, education, or training through help such as CV writing, application forms and preparation for interviews. It also offers support through the provision of travel bursaries for getting to interviews or the first month of a job or apprenticeship, if this is a barrier – and the provision of electronic devices, data and informal digital training programmes for individuals experiencing digital poverty.

Other barriers to employment, education or training – such as access to certifications or training – can also be funded through the programme.

If you know of anyone that would benefit from this support, please direct them to our [employability page](#) to find out what support is available where they live.

Here's what one of our 'No Limits' participants had to say about the support they received:

"I did not have a job or school. Then I met Taraji and she helped me with my CV and we looked at courses I could do. I started college in a motor vehicle course and got help with a laptop. Then I started attending the job club as I wanted part-time work.

"They encouraged me, did mock interviews and advised me to look around and not just stand in one place when I got there. Because of that, I got hired and three months down the line, I received an award for Best Customer Service Assistant. Without this support, it may have been difficult for me."



Taraji Ogunnubi (pictured left), Programme Manager for the 'No Limits' inclusive recruitment programme.

Oxfordshire Net Zero Business Support

Oxfordshire Greentech

<https://oxfordshiregreentech.co.uk/>

Oxfordshire Greentech is a business network supporting the growth of the low-carbon sector in Oxfordshire. We bring together businesses and organisations to encourage innovation, collaboration and knowledge transfer, to facilitate the transition towards a sustainable, low carbon future in Oxfordshire and the world.

Energy Saver app

<https://www.oxfordshire.gov.uk/residents/environment-and-planning/energy-and-climate-change/retrofitting-your-home/retrofit-help-you/energy-saver-app>

Energy Saver App is a new, free mobile app from Oxfordshire County Council that will help you save money on your home energy bills (on average 8% or over £200 a year) and reduce your household emissions.

The Good Waste Charter is a strategic waste plan drafted by Cherwell Collective's WISH project to guide local policy and action. WISH is a county wide partnership seeking to build infrastructure in Oxfordshire for the first truly circular economy in the UK.



The aim of the Good Waste Charter is to guide local policy and action, setting a standard for good waste practices for individuals and businesses locally. We are interested in very practical decarbonization efforts, helping people build habits around buying and wasting less stuff and keeping the stuff we have in circulation. Our focus is linking businesses to support tighter, local supply chain resilience. We think with good policy we have an opportunity to build meaningful economic resilience, to support our local businesses, to reduce costs and increase profit margins as well as have a meaningful impact on climate resilience.

For more information see attached 'Oxfordshire Good Waste Charter' PDF.

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.

<https://www.oxfordshire.gov.uk/business/business-and-intellectual-property-centre-bipc>



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

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/>