

Access all areas



Business Link

Access to all the information, advice and support to start, maintain and grow a business.

“Thanks to the drive and
ongoing support
of Business Link, our
progress is phenomenal.”

Richard Roberts
Partner
Heny Loveday and Keighley Solicitors



Welcome to Business Link

providing access to information, advice and support to start, maintain and grow any aspect of your business

Business Link is available for anyone just thinking about setting up in business – to those already trading. With a network of local area access points it has never been easier to make contact - either in person, by phone, email or internet.

Access all areas

Contact Business Link on **0845 058 6644** email info@businesslinkem.co.uk or visit the award winning website www.businesslink.gov.uk/eastmidlands to realise your full potential and achieve your business goals.

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Business Link's continued support has proved **invaluable** in developing our business. They have become an important partner in our success. »

Chris Pocklington
Managing Director
Pocklington's Bakery Ltd

Access the experience to achieve your business goals

Whether you are starting out in business or already trading, Business Link can help you access all the information, support and advice you need to realise your full potential.

We provide access to information and advice which helps you make the most of every opportunity, brokering solutions that give you access to the highest quality business expertise.

With knowledge of every corner of the business support network – public, private and third sectors – we help you access markets, find the best suppliers, and obtain the most relevant and timely, impartial advice and support in order to help your business grow and develop.

Business Link recognises that we all have a part to play in stimulating our economy. We aim to give anyone who is considering starting a business, or who already trades as a small or medium sized company, access to the best possible business support – whatever their type or structure of business.

We aim to make a difference and to be here as and when you need us. What drives us is quality, and much of the help and advice we provide to businesses is free.

We are part of a national network of Business Links and contacting us couldn't be easier.

Access the latest information, advice and support available – by calling our dedicated Enquiry Line on **0845 058 6644** (calls are charged at local rate) or log on to our award winning website www.businesslink.gov.uk/eastmidlands – for 24/7 business information at your fingertips.

Free online registration allows you to access all the latest interactive tools and regular e-news alerts covering all the latest initiatives and legislative changes to help improve your own business competitiveness. Business Link also gives you access to a team of experienced Business Link Advisers, as well as bringing companies together for mutual benefit through networking, industry forums, local events and the sharing of good practice.

If you want to start, maintain or grow any aspect of your business - then make the most of Business Link's service – it's second to none!

“ The great thing is that Business Link gives you **access to everything** from one central point. This is invaluable and saves a great amount of time that would otherwise be spent trying to track down information. Business Link continues to be our first point of contact whenever we need to find the best solution to meet our needs. ”

Leslie McDonald
Executive Director
Nottingham Counselling Service



Access to world class business support

With a dedicated regional team of local Business Link Advisers, we can provide you with access to the best impartial advice and assistance that helps define your business goals and tackle key issues affecting your company.

Our Business Link Advisers will work with you as your business grows, acting as the stimulus to change and can also introduce you to specialist experts across all areas such as design, technology, e-business, marketing, manufacturing, finance, IT and International Trade.

With access to comprehensive and up-to-date business information, they can offer impartial and confidential advice that is always tailored to meet your individual needs.

Business Link is an inclusive service with the sole objective of giving companies access to the best information, advice and support to start, maintain or grow – irrespective of sector, type of business or background.

Business Link is uniquely placed to offer access to a wide range of services and solutions to meet real business needs. It does this by bringing together and simplifying the range of support offered to businesses by government departments, their agencies and local authorities in England.

Accessibility is our objective so whatever your business requirements, from family firms, women entrepreneurs, service providers and social enterprises through to manufacturing companies, ethnic business and sole traders – we are here to help.



“Our aim is to turn our customers’
ideas into reality
and that’s exactly what Business Link
has done for our own business.”

Kelle-Marie Baines & Hayley Carver
Directors
Lemon Jelly Arts

Access support to start & grow

Let the Business Link Regional Start-up Service help you achieve success in turning your business idea into a business reality.

We can help you to set realistic targets and put the plans in place to achieve them. We also lead a regional support network set up specifically to help people starting a business and will introduce you to other companies who are successfully tackling the same issues as you.

Research proves that companies who access external advice when starting up survive in greater numbers and report more growth in their first few years of trading.

Business Link can provide FREE access to the following:

- Professional business support arranged to fit around your needs
- One-to-one mentoring support sessions during the early stages of trading
- Online start up diagnostics and planning tools
- Structured training workshops in critical skills development, including:
 - Deciding to start
 - Business planning
 - Financial planning
 - ICT for your business
 - Managing money
 - Managing risk
 - Sales & marketing

When you are ready to grow and expand, our Business Link Advisers are here to help you access all the information and support you need to investigate new premises, new equipment, finance, technology, e-commerce, environmental issues and staff development.



“ There is so much to learn in business and you never know what’s around the corner. Working with Business Link was a **great benefit,** in particular they helped us identify and successfully apply for financial support that enabled us to move our business operations up a gear. ”

Andy Bray
Commercial Director
The Spiderlift Company

Accessing sources of finance

There are lots of reasons why you might be looking for business finance. Choosing the right finance option for your business is vital, and could mean the difference between profit and loss.

Business Link is here to help you to put sound financial plans and projections in place.

We can help you investigate the various forms of financial assistance including loans, venture capital initiatives and grants that might be available.

Business Link Advisers will also help you access specialist resources to manage and improve day-to-day business functions such as book-keeping, debt chasing and cashflow - often the source of problems for many small businesses.

Our Advisers will discuss the specific needs of your business, help you to search for potential sources of finance and check your eligibility for different schemes. They can also help you to complete the necessary application forms and paperwork.

You can also access our dedicated Grants and Support Directory by visiting www.businesslink.gov.uk/eastmidlands/grantsdirectory

If you are looking for funding to start, expand, develop products or processes, increase manufacturing, invest in equipment or tackle a particular business issue, Business Link will help you find the right solution for you and your business.

“Business Link has been invaluable in helping us to generate new sales leads and our Business Adviser is excellent, **supporting us** as the company has grown and developed.”

Tanya Rostron
Managing Director
Water at Work Ltd



Accessing information

Knowing where to find the answer to a business question can be a problem. But a single phone call to the Business Link enquiry team will quickly help identify the information you need.

Our team has access to a comprehensive range of local, regional, national and international data, an extensive knowledge bank of business publications and a self-regulated Supplier Network.

Whether you are looking for a quick answer to a business question, sources of finance, product information, director's briefings on key topics, factsheets, business opportunities, mailing lists, legislative reports or company information, the enquiry team is ready to assist.

The regional Business Link service gives East Midlands' companies access to even more Advisers in their local area. Business Link Advisers are based in each county which also has a Business Link dedicated office – with everything linked to a central information hub to speed up the service and increase efficiency. This process gives the Business Link Advisers access to an unrivalled network of organisations and information for local businesses.

You can tap into all of this expertise through our central Enquiry Line (**0845 058 6644**), the first point of contact for all your business enquiries. We have excellent knowledge of the real help available to support local businesses and will provide information or direct you to the relevant source to deal with your enquiry effectively.

Access all areas

“ This nationally recognised quality standard has helped to boost morale and proves to clients that we have a competent and highly trained workforce providing a **high standard** of work. ”

Peter & Gill Baker
Directors
PBG Broadcasting Ltd



Access knowledge to develop skills

Everyone has heard the phrase that people are your most important asset – and it's true.

The lack of suitably skilled staff at levels in a business can be one of the biggest barriers to success. Business Link will work with you to help you find the right people, get the best from them and develop their skills to give your company the edge.

One way that businesses can reinforce their commitment to encouraging and supporting employee development is by signing up to 'The Skills Pledge'.

The Skills Pledge is a voluntary commitment that a business will support all of its employees to develop their skills and work towards relevant, valuable qualifications to at least Level 2 (equivalent to 5 good GCSEs).

A Business Link Adviser can talk to you about how your business can make this public commitment to developing your staff and how skills development can benefit your business. They will also let you know if you're eligible for any funding towards your training needs.

National standards

We know that most small companies do not have a dedicated Human Resource department, but through Business Link you can access all the expertise you need.

You can build a strong workforce, raising skills by working towards national standards such as Investors in People and ISO quality accreditation. We can help you achieve these standards and make sure you are tackling important issues such as employment legislation, recruitment and training.



“ Our business operates in a niche market and our recent success is in no small part due to the guidance of Business Link. Our Business Adviser continues to work with us to help us realise our **maximum potential**, helping us to evaluate and look objectively at the business as well as identifying new opportunities.”

Dr. Simon Broughton
Managing Director
Chemivate Ltd

Access specialist support

Developing new products and services is a vital part of business success.

If you've got an idea for a new product or service but don't know how to get it to market, your first call should be to Business Link.

Our Business Link Advisers can put you in touch with industry experts who can help you to investigate the needs and trends of the market and customers within your sector. They can also help you integrate any new developments into your overall business plan.

Through Business Link you can be guided through issues such as protecting your idea, design, financing, manufacturing, marketing and sales. Business Link Advisers can also identify other areas of relevant support that may be available to help turn your business ideas and plans into reality.

With access to the latest information, we can quickly put you in touch with specialist suppliers and manufacturers.

We can also help to make sure that any new product conforms to the required legislation and help you identify and target international markets if you decide to export.

Business Link works closely with iNets - organisations established to encourage innovation in the East Midlands. Those involved in iNets include small and large businesses, universities and colleges, representatives of the public sector and individuals with an interest in innovation.

Four sector specific iNets bring together those with a shared interest in a market sector or the technologies that underpin it. The iNets cover:

- Transport
- Food and Drink
- Sustainable Construction
- Healthcare and Bioscience

Each iNet utilises existing, informal networks of organisations and facilities, and will strengthen links between them.

“ Business Link not only supported us in streamlining our systems by the effective use of IT, they also brokered a solution that opened up **global marketing opportunities** which have enabled us to reach new customers all over the world. ”

Suada Aslanova
Owner
Infero Ltd



Access technology to grow

Introducing technology to your business can be hugely beneficial. Whether you are introducing computers to an office or technology to manufacturing, it can give your business that all-important competitive edge.

Business Link has information on the latest industry developments, equipment and processes that could help you realise your goals.

e-business

Many companies are already realising the benefits of using the internet for business – expanding their markets, finding suppliers, trading on line and building new business relationships.

Business Link is committed to supporting the region's businesses as they adopt the use of Information Communication Technology (ICT) to help increase their efficiency and competitiveness.

Our comprehensive network of suppliers can help implement a successful e-commerce strategy that is right for you and your business.

Our network of specialists can provide access to guidance to help plan and evaluate technical aspects, equipment purchase, security, to site design, functionality and development.

“Exporting can be a minefield if you have no previous experience, but Business Link provided access to its associated partners who took care of all the exporting-related issues which meant we could focus on the product and the business.”

Craig Burdon
Managing Director
Crane Plastic Fabrication



Access International markets

Could your products and services be sold abroad?

If you want to find out how to develop your international trade potential and access international markets outside the UK or need to know the procedures and legislation surrounding exports - then Business Link is on hand to help.

It doesn't matter if you are an experienced exporter or just starting out; our team of International Trade Advisers has a sound knowledge of many world markets.

By working closely with our partners in UK Trade & Investment, we are able to offer comprehensive help and support for companies wanting to explore international markets.

Our network can assist with all aspects of global trading, from researching the market and developing a strategy, through to meeting legal requirements, translating your literature, and marketing your company abroad.

If there is an international market for your products and services, we can help you find the best route to develop your international trade potential and help you reach new customers all over the world.

Access all areas

“ The support from Business Link allowed me to concentrate on running the business instead of spending time worrying about whether I was **up to date** with the legal technicalities. ”

Nick Pancisi
Director
MX Display Solutions



Access the latest legs & regs

Finding out what legislation is relevant to your business and then making sure you abide by it doesn't have to be a headache.

There's so much to deal with – tax, VAT, protection of designs and trademarks, health and safety, insurance and environmental regulations, to name just a few.

Business Link can reduce the worry by assisting you in making sure your company is a safe and efficient place to work, your designs are protected, and that your products and services meet legal requirements.

We will also help you access the best expertise and the latest tools and resources to make sure your finances and company papers are in order, and advise you on issues such as VAT registration.

With increasing pressure on companies to be environmentally responsible, we can also help you to assess your current situation and identify areas of improvement and ways to be more cost efficient.

Companies that sign up for our regular newsletters and e-bulletins can make sure they are kept up to date with all the latest news and information about legislative changes that can affect their business.

Business Link – reducing the fear factor associated with legislation.

“ We’ve taken part in some really useful workshops and met some great business contacts.

Business Link continues to be an **invaluable** source of advice and encouragement.”

Seema Edwards
Director
Edwards & Edwards



Access the widest network

Business Link's extensive events programme is specifically designed to support the development of your company and your people.

Our events team works closely with leading companies and organisations to make sure you are able to access solutions to address real issues facing businesses today.

Our packed events programme provides access to all the latest management development and networking opportunities available to businesses - both locally and regionally.

The rolling schedule takes in a variety of formats including business breakfasts, evening seminars and full day practical workshops. So there's an opportunity to suit even the busiest schedule!

Networking with other businesses can bring many benefits. Not only can you use the opportunity to promote your business, you may also identify potential suppliers or partners. Business networking and personal recommendation are ideal ways to generate new business, gaining momentum as your reputation is communicated.

And if you can't find the event you are looking for, then you can contact Business Link's Enquiry Line and one of our team will be happy to search the full events database to find the event that's right for you.



Access all areas

■ ■ Through Business Link you gain access to a joined up network that spans all areas of the wider business support system. From our point of view, this approach has brought real **bottom line benefits** to our business. ■ ■

Séan Maguire
Managing Director
SEL Engineering Solutions



Make the Link...

To access all the information, advice and support needed to start, maintain or grow any aspect of a business, contact Business Link on **0845 058 6644** email **info@businesslinkem.co.uk** or visit our award winning website **www.businesslink.gov.uk/eastmidlands**