

## Supporting Your Business

This factsheet has been put together by Bristol City Council to promote business support relevant to high street and local centre businesses across Bristol, as part of **Bristol Independents Day on 4th July**. See [www.bristolindependents.co.uk](http://www.bristolindependents.co.uk) for further details on this campaign.

## Funding and Business Rates

Want to improve your digital connectivity and make your business more competitive? Small businesses can apply for £200- £3,000 to improve their broadband connectivity. No match funding is required. See [www.connectionvouchers.co.uk/bristol](http://www.connectionvouchers.co.uk/bristol) and [www.connectingbristol.com](http://www.connectingbristol.com)

The West of England Growth Fund operated by the Local Enterprise Partnership is likely to reopen for applications shortly. See [www.westofenglandlep.co.uk](http://www.westofenglandlep.co.uk)

Business West provides access to a number of funding opportunities - Virgin StartUp - advice, mentoring and loans of between £1,000 and £25,000 to budding entrepreneurs; Growth Accelerator - up to £2,000 per senior manager (match funded) towards leadership and management training, plus coaching and workshops; UK Trade & Investment and Enterprise Europe Network - subsidised international trade services and support; Finance Navigator - bespoke finance support service. See [www.businesswest.co.uk](http://www.businesswest.co.uk)

There is business rate relief available for most businesses occupying premises with a rateable value of £12,000 or under, a £1,000 retail relief for businesses occupying a space with a rateable value of up to £50,000 and a re-occupation relief (equivalent to a 50% discount) where retail premises are re-occupied after being empty for at least one year. All reliefs are subject to eligibility criteria. See [www.bristol.gov.uk/rates](http://www.bristol.gov.uk/rates)

## Going green

Heard about Bristol as European Green Capital 2015? Over 500 businesses and organisations have pledged to support the work of the Green Capital Partnership and receive benefits from extensive networking to entry into schemes like the West of England Carbon Challenge, which cuts business costs and improves efficiency. See [www.bristolgreencapital.org](http://www.bristolgreencapital.org). For businesses interested in the 2015 programme, see [www.bristol2015.co.uk](http://www.bristol2015.co.uk) for details of the 2015 Company's progress to date.

## Marketing

The Bristol Pound local currency scheme aims to encourage local trading. Support includes free marketing for businesses via the internet, blogs and tweets (over 8,000 Twitter followers), regular business to business events with opportunities to meet with 650+ businesses who are members of the scheme. See [www.bristolpound.org](http://www.bristolpound.org)

The Bristol Business Guide, which includes a listing of Bristol businesses, is in the process of being updated. Further information on how to be included for FREE will shortly be posted at [www.bristolbusinessguide.co.uk](http://www.bristolbusinessguide.co.uk)

Destination Bristol is the destination management partnership for Bristol and South Gloucestershire. It works with over 600 major businesses and strategic partners with the aim of increasing business competitiveness within the city centre, supporting employment and growth within the visitor economy, and raising the profile of the Bristol city region as a world-class place to visit. See [www.visitbristol.co.uk](http://www.visitbristol.co.uk)

## **Advice for start-ups and existing businesses**

Outset Bristol has a range of support on offer including information sessions and FREE workshops to help you develop your ideas and learn to run your own business. They are also able to provide Start Up Loans for businesses in their first 12 months of trading. See [www.outsetbristol.co.uk](http://www.outsetbristol.co.uk)

BRAVE Enterprise provides low-cost advice and training to new and growing small businesses. They offer practical and informative business skills development workshops on topics such as bookkeeping, marketing, PR and sales techniques, designed to bring immediate benefits to your business. See [www.brave.org.uk](http://www.brave.org.uk).

Business West provides a number of services to help people start a business and for established businesses. The start-up support includes Ready for Business and Virgin StartUp. For ambitious existing SMEs looking to grow, there are a number of subsidised support programmes, including coaching, finance and funding advice, leadership and management, and support on international trade. Business West provides a range of training courses. See [www.businesswest.co.uk](http://www.businesswest.co.uk)

The City of Bristol College can offer access to funding for NVQ training, a free recruitment service, training and development courses for your staff. See [www.cityofbristol.ac.uk/employers](http://www.cityofbristol.ac.uk/employers)

Ways2Work provides free support to businesses seeking to employ additional staff, holding regular networking sessions and jobs fairs. See [www.ways2work.org.uk](http://www.ways2work.org.uk)

## **Property**

Looking for property to start or grow your business? Details of vacant commercial properties can be found on an online property database at [www.bristolandbath.co.uk](http://www.bristolandbath.co.uk). It's advisable to walk around the desired areas to have a look at what's available and then make contact with the agent.

## **Networking and lobbying**

The Federation of Small Businesses (FSB) represents over 1,700 small business owners, the self-employed and entrepreneurs in Bristol. The FSB is a lobbying organisation which works with the council, the Local Enterprise Partnership, MPs and other organisations to put over the issues that affect small businesses. The FSB also arranges a wide range of seminars, social events, networking meetings and business breakfasts. See [www.fsb.org.uk/119](http://www.fsb.org.uk/119)

Business West works with 18,000 businesses across the South West. Accredited by the British Chambers of Commerce, Business West runs the chambers in Bristol, Bath, Gloucestershire and Wiltshire. They provide Initiative membership, which influences strategic decisions and provides representation on key issues, including finance, regulation, tax, transport skills and more. See [www.businesswest.co.uk](http://www.businesswest.co.uk)

## **Great British High Street of the Year Awards 2014**

Could your high street win a Great British High Street of the Year Award? This competition is open for applications from Town Team and local partnerships until 1st August. See [www.thegreatbritishhighstreet.co.uk](http://www.thegreatbritishhighstreet.co.uk)

In addition to the above, Bristol City Council provides a range of support to businesses – assistance with finding sites or premises; planning advice; business information; licensing, trading standards, markets and street trading; procurement and local supply chains; environmental efficiency; health and safety; food safety; resilience, public health and transport.

There are many other initiatives run by local community, Town Teams, private businesses and traders'/business groups. Information is often shared and promoted via Twitter - @ShopLocalBris. To receive regular updates or make an enquiry, please email [business@bristol.gov.uk](mailto:business@bristol.gov.uk) with Bristol Independents in the subject box.