

A summary of support available through local councils and support organisations in Milton Keynes, Oxfordshire and Buckinghamshire.



Your **handy guide** to the services that can help your business through these tough times.



Business Support in the South East

Credit Crunch

Health Check for your business

Get a free review of your business with a Business Link Adviser who can provide hands-on advice and help you access other Government help, including all the schemes mentioned here.

Alastair Broom, Garage Tek - as seen on Working Lunch with Business Link - "We have exceeded our targets in most years of trading, but did notice a drop in sales last year so we contacted Business Link for ideas and support. Our Business Link Adviser discussed ways in which we could diversify our products and services and make our marketing work more effectively. As a result, we have identified some fantastic new markets and improved our website which has generated some excellent leads. Business is now soaring again and we still have lots more ideas to develop."



Who can help? www.businesslink.gov.uk/healthcheck

Real Help for Business

A range of free support to find finance, raise productivity, or save money by reducing waste and saving energy. Whether you need to increase cashflow, keep your staff on, improve their skills and flexibility, or simply reduce costs, you can get real help to keep your business fighting fit.

Who can help?
www.businesslink.gov.uk/realhelp

Real help for businesses now



International Trade

Developing Your International Trade Potential

For new or inexperienced exporters with less than 250 employees and a turnover less than 50 million. This programme provides your business with a wide range of individualised free activities, including training, planning and ongoing support.

Who can help? Business Link



Skills & Support

Bite size training funding

Up to £1,200 of funding per learner towards training in business-critical areas. Bite-sized training in subjects essential to SMEs, such as business improvement, team working, customer service, and risk management.

Debbie White, Flight Line Travel Management: "Business Link provides a really personal service and make it much quicker and more efficient for us to deliver projects. They have linked us to excellent sources of funding for internal training through T2G."

Who can help?
Business Link 0845 600 9 006.



Leadership & Management Grant

£500 is available to MDs, owner managers and company directors.

- A further £500 (which must be match funded) is available to senior managers or the management team
- Funding can be towards one or a combination of training solutions
- Available to businesses with 5-250 employees

Arron Harnden, Shirtworks: "Business Link pointed me in the right direction for training and my adviser has been very helpful and saved me a lot of time. I could have spent hours trawling through the Internet to find the same information" Arron used the free resources from his local Business Link and managed to gain a grant which paid for a business coach from Action International.

Who can help?
Business Link 0845 600 9 006.



Knowledge Transfer Partnership

Access highly qualified people to spearhead your new projects for up to 3 years at a subsidised cost. The Knowledge Transfer Partnerships (KTP) programme helps businesses to improve their competitiveness and productivity through the better use of knowledge, technology and skills that reside within the UK knowledge base.

Who can help?
KTP Programme Office on: 0870 190 2829 or visit: www.ktponline.org.uk

Continuous Employment Support Service

The Continuous Employment Support Service is a joint initiative between the South East England Development Agency (SEEDA) and Jobcentre Plus to meet the needs of all those affected by redundancy.

Who can help? Oxfordshire:
Sarah.Young1@jobcentreplus.gsi.gov.uk
Buckinghamshire and Milton Keynes:
graemecarey@seeda.co.uk



Finance

Enterprise Finance Guarantee Scheme

For companies with an annual turnover of up to £25m, looking for a loan of up to £1m for a period of up to 10 years. It can also be used to convert an existing overdraft into a loan so that the overdraft facilities can be used to meet working capital demands. Please note that a premium of up to 2% per annum on the outstanding balance of the loan will be applied.

Who can help? Barclays, Clydesdale/ Yorkshire Bank, HBOS, HSBC, Lloyds TSB, RBS/Natwest and Northern Bank have signed up for the scheme.



Real help for businesses now

Capital for Enterprise Fund

Viable small businesses with high levels of existing debt can get real help to raise long-term finance. Professional fund managers will provide equity investment which can be used to pay off existing debt to free up capital for day to day cash flow and for investment for the future. The fund will invest through professional commercial fund managers making investments of between £250,000 and £2m into businesses.

Who can help? Capital for Enterprise Fund Registration
Helpline on: 0845 459 9780.



Real help for businesses now

Business Payment Support Service

Tax bill payment support from HM Revenue & Customs eligible for new enquiries only. HMRC staff will review your circumstances and discuss temporary options tailored to your business needs, such as arranging for you to make payments over a longer period.

Who can help? Call the Business Payment Support Line on: 0845 302 1435
or visit: www.hmrc.gov.uk/pbr2008/businesspayment.htm



SEEDA Bridging Mezzanine Debt Fund/ Transition Loan Fund

As a direct response to business need resulting from the credit crunch, SEEDA, working with Finance South East, has established the £3m Bridging Mezzanine Debt Fund (BMDF) for businesses with a minimum of £1m turnover. The BMDF makes assistance available to businesses rapidly. Key elements of the BMDF are:

- Unsecured loan up to £148,000
- Up to one year term, which can be extended on request
- No capital repayments or interest payments until maturity
- Rolled up interest so payment is at maturity
- No notice to repay loan as other funding becomes available
- No arrangement fees

Who can help? Business Link or Finance South East on: 01276 608510
or visit: www.finance-southeast.com



All information is correct as of – March 2009.

Aspire Fund

Established in November 2008, the £12.5m Aspire Fund targets support for Women led businesses across the UK. The fund is able to make equity investments of between £100k and £1m, on a co-investment basis, in order to help strong businesses grow. The fund will provide up to 50% of funding for any one investment, alongside other private investors.

Who can help? Business Link 0845 600 9 006.



Leader Programme

£2.4m of funding for farmers, foresters, rural businesses and community organisations is now available in the Chilterns, Aylesbury Vale and Rural Milton Keynes, Southern Oxfordshire and North Wessex Downs. The funding is for farmers, foresters, other small rural businesses and community groups to enable them to strengthen their support for the local economy. Grants of up to £50,000 are available. Farmers and other rural businesses can receive up to 50% of eligible project costs and community projects can apply for up to 70% of the costs. For example providing or improving community facilities such as village halls and community shops.

Who can help? Business Link
www.southernoxfordshireleader.org.uk



Grant for Business Investment

A grant is offered for businesses making a substantial investment in the South East to support the acquisition of key assets, such as buildings, plant and machinery and to support the creation of new jobs or to safeguard existing ones. Minimum investment £50k.

Who can help? www.seeda.co.uk/Global_Competitiveness/Funding_&Advice
From April 1st, Finance South East on:
01276 608510 or visit: www.finance-southeast.com



Grant for Research and Development

Grants of up to £250,000 available for R&D work on technologically innovative products and processes for businesses with a turnover of no more than £9 million.

Who can help? www.seeda.co.uk/Work_in_the_Region/Funding_&Advice or contact the SEEDA Business Grants Executive on: 01483 470164.
From April 1st, Finance South East on: 01276 608510 or visit: www.finance-southeast.com



South East Commercialisation Fund

Up to £60,000 repayable finance available to SMEs for proof-of-concept and commercialisation activities that enable a new business idea to gain first revenues and market traction. The fund offers two "phases" of investment; Phase 1 is for proving the technical ability or performance of a new idea or innovation, Phase 2 is for gaining market entry once the product is viable. The total amount repayable may be up to 200%, level of repayment from gross sales may be up to 10%.

Who can help? Finance South East
www.finance-southeast.com



A summary of localised support available to businesses in Milton Keynes, Oxfordshire & Buckinghamshire

Your local district council will offer advice and support on a range of issues including **business rates, licensing, commercial property** and **business support**. They will always try to help if you ring and talk to them. See back page for contact details.

Milton Keynes

MK Economy Task Force

Some of the most influential business support organisations in Milton Keynes have joined forces to tackle the impact of the recession on businesses. The Milton Keynes Economic and Learning Partnership, Invest MK, Milton Keynes Council, MK Council of Voluntary Organisations and Business Link have set up a task group and devised a four point action plan to help local firms. The plan covers the key areas of Business Support, Employment and Skills, People and Communities and the MK Offer.

A new website has been created to help provide information and support for Milton Keynes businesses during this current time
www.mkrecession-busters.info

Buy With Confidence

Buy with Confidence aims to beat the cowboys and provide Milton Keynes consumers with a choice of approved trader.

email tsd@milton-keynes.gov.uk

Milton Keynes Adult Continuing Education

A huge variety of training courses available including free English and Maths Skills for Life courses.

www.milton-keynes.gov.uk/adulteducation

Milton Keynes Council's Trading Standards Service Helping Milton Keynes Businesses

By supporting businesses with advice on systems for compliance and when possible advice on individual products and service, the Trading Standards Division aims to help you understand and meet your legal requirements

email tsd@milton-keynes.gov.uk

Trading Standards Newsflash Service

The purpose is to broadcast to members alerting them on the latest business news to hit the city ie legislation changes, product recalls and scams.

email tsd@milton-keynes.gov.uk

Oxfordshire

Oxfordshire Economic Partnerships' Business Support Task Force

The Oxfordshire Economic Partnerships' Business Support Task Group (comprising local authorities, Federation of Small Businesses, Institute of Directors, Oxfordshire Town Chambers Network and Business Link) brings together a range of organisations to help ensure that businesses receive the support they need from the public sector

A task group is working together to mitigate the impact of recent announcements on BMW agency staff. More information can be obtained on the OEP website.

www.oep.org.uk

Buy With Confidence Approved Trader Scheme

Oxfordshire Trading Standards runs the Buy With Confidence Approved Trader scheme for the Home Improvement market. It aims to beat the cowboys and provides Oxfordshire consumers with a list of approved traders.

www.oxfordshire.gov.uk/tradingstandards

Credit Help

Oxfordshire Trading Standards will help find the best organisation offering a helping hand to people with money worries, during the current financial climate. They also give advice on credit agreements and the law.

www.oxfordshire.gov.uk/tradingstandards

Oxfordshire County Council's Trading Standards Service Helping Oxfordshire Businesses

The Business Advice & Regulation team of Oxfordshire Trading Standards offers help and advice on business law and regulations. They give advice on misleading marketing and scams aimed at Oxfordshire businesses.

www.oxfordshire.gov.uk/tradingstandards

Contracts

Cherwell District Council is now publishing tenders for local companies to bid for on its website.

www.cherwell-dc.gov.uk and search for 'Tenders available'.

Banbury Jobs Support

Oxfordshire residents looking for employment advice can ask the experts for help every Friday at the country's first job club. Held every Friday 11am - 1pm, The Mill Banbury.

Call **01295 221863** or email info@banburyjobclub.com

Oxfordshire Business Enterprises

Free advice service for people seeking help starting a business or in the early stages of running one. If you are thinking of starting, or have recently started, a business in the Oxfordshire area, Oxfordshire Business Enterprises is here to help you.

www.oxonbe.co.uk

TBAC Mentoring Services

A business mentoring service for Oxfordshire which is free to use, confidential and independent. Mentors all run small businesses and offer their experience as their way of giving back to the community. TBAC is a non-profit Company.

Contact Louise or Mike on 01865 893305 or visit www.tbac.org.uk

South Oxfordshire Help

South Oxfordshire District Council's "Quick guide to business support" and "Worried about facing redundancy guide" are available to download from a dedicated web page on SODC's website. The Council also produces a free monthly e-newsletter "Vision" available to all businesses and will be attending the Thame recession networking event at the Spread Eagle Hotel on 16 April.

www.southoxon.gov.uk/ccm/navigation/business-and-economic-development/support-for-businesses/dealing-with-the-economic-downturn/

Oxfordshire Adult Learning

Oxfordshire Adult Learning is the county council's adult learning service, providing a wide range of learning opportunities across the county. It offers career development and jobsearch skills training through an Information Advice and Guidance team.

www.oxfordshire.gov.uk/adultlearning

Ethnic Minority Business Service

EMBS can offer skills training, in ICT, ESOL, Learndirect training and jobsearch support. Call 01295 269999.

Restore LEaP

Restore's LEaP project provides ongoing individual support for people with mental health problems, to help them achieve their employment and training goals. This includes help with CV's, application forms, interview technique, confidence building. Contact Joan or David on 01295 276345.

Buckinghamshire

Bucks Economic and Learning Partnership

Employer support

The Bucks Employers Support Group, led by Buckinghamshire Economic and Learning Partnership (BELP) is working in partnership with SEEDA and other local key stakeholders including Job Centre Plus, the County Council and Local Authorities, Bucks New University, Aylesbury College, Learning & Skills Council and Business Link to signpost all workers facing employment challenges to a local package of advice and guidance.

South East Region European Social Fund Community Grants of up to £12,000 are available for charity, voluntary and community organisations who are supporting the most disadvantaged individuals not in employment to access further learning opportunities or progress to employment.

Bucks County Council pledge £100,000 for new business support ideas. The funds are being made available to support ideas that will have a strong positive impact on businesses during the economic downturn. An assessment and report back will be delivered Bucks Economic Summit September 2009. Businesses are invited to submit their ideas to BELP.

www.belp.co.uk

Contract Opportunities

The home of Stoke Mandeville hospital, birthplace of the Paralympic movement, and the Olympic and Paralympic venue Dorney Lake, Buckinghamshire has a significant role in the 2012 legacy. For further information for businesses and voluntary groups contact Ian Barham, Buckinghamshire Manager for the 2012 Games ibarham@bucks2012.org Tel: 01296 585184 / 0784 3311837.

www.buckssport.org/2012

Aylesbury Vale Grants

Vital villages grant scheme - grants of up to £5,000 are available for businesses and community groups to improve the economic and social viability of community.

www.aylesburyvaldc.gov.uk

Buy With Confidence

Buy with Confidence aims to beat the cowboys and provide Buckinghamshire consumers with a choice of approved trader.

www.buckscc.gov.uk/bcc

Bucks Adult Learning

Free 'First Steps Back to Work' courses to help you build your skills and confidence.

www.adultlearningbcc.ac.uk

Surviving The Recession Guide

Wycombe District Council has produced a Surviving the Recession Guide - practical help and advice on beating the recession is now available for local residents and businesses online and in the form of a printed guide.

www.wycombe.gov.uk

The Skill Centre

Based in Little Market House in High Wycombe The Skills Centre provides a range of vocational training aimed at improving the skills of local employees and improving the job prospects of residents who are currently out of work.

www.wycombe.gov.uk

Chiltern District Help

The CDC has published a page for small businesses and the self employed facing problems in the recession.

www.chiltern.gov.uk and click on 'Need help in the recession?'.

Aylesbury Vale District Council

The Aylesbury Vale Business Grant - aimed at promoting local entrepreneurship and encouraging business and employment growth. £3,000 for start up businesses and £5,000 for established businesses.

www.aylesburyvaldc.gov.uk

Useful National Links

ACAS	0845 747 4747	www.acas.org.uk
Association of Chartered Certified Accountants	020 7059 5000	www.accaglobal.com
BERR – Department for Business, Enterprise and Regulatory Reform	020 7215 5000	www.berr.gov.uk
British Chambers of Commerce	020 7654 5800	www.britishchambers.org.uk
Carbon Trust	0800 085 2005	www.carbontrust.co.uk
Companies House	0870 333 3636	www.companieshouse.gov.uk
DEFRA	08459 33 55 77	www.defra.gov.uk
Designing Demand		www.designingdemand.org.uk
Direct Gov		www.direct.gov.uk
Energy Saving Trust	0800 512 012	www.energysavingtrust.org.uk
Enterprise Hubs		www.thamesvalleyhub.co.uk
Envirowise	0800 585794	www.envirowise.gov.uk
Equality and Human Rights Commission	0845 604 6610	www.equalityhumanrights.com
Finance South East	01276 608510	www.financesoutheast.com
Health and Safety Executive	0845 345 0055	www.hse.gov.uk
HM Revenue and Customs		www.hmrc.gov.uk
• Working For Yourself	0845 915 4515	
• New Employers Helpline	0845 607 0143	
• Employers Helpline	0845 714 3143	
• VAT	0845 010 9000	
• Payment Support Line	0845 302 1435	
Information Commissioner	01625 545 745	www.ico.gov.uk
Innovation and Growth Teams		www.seeda.co.uk/innovation
Institute of Chartered Accountants in England and Wales	020 7920 8100	www.iacew.co.uk
Institute of Directors	020 7766 8866	www.iod.co.uk
Job Centre Plus		www.jobcentreplus.gov.uk
Knowledge Transfer Partnership		www.ktponline.org.uk
Law Society	020 7242 1222	www.lawsociety.org.uk
Learning and Skills Council (LSC)	0870 900 6800	www.lsc.gov.uk
Manufacturing Advisory Service	0845 609 2121	www.mas.dti.gov.uk
National Debt Line	0808 808 4000	www.nationaldebtline.co.uk
Office of Fair Trading	0845 722 4499	www.of.gov.uk
SEEDA	01483 484200	www.seeda.co.uk
The Chartered Institute of Management Accountants	020 8849 2287	www.cimaglobal.com
The Chartered Institute of Marketing	020 7379 7400	www.cim.co.uk
The Department for Innovation, Universities & Skills		www.dius.gov.uk/business
Trading Standards	0870 872 9008	www.tradingstandards.gov.uk
Train to Gain	0800 015 5545	www.traintogain.gov.uk
UK Trade and Investment	020 7215 8000	www.uktradeinvest.gov.uk

Useful Local Links

Aylesbury Vale District Council	01296 585858	www.aylesburyvaledc.gov.uk
Buckinghamshire Councils Online		www.bucksonline.gov.uk
Bucks and Milton Keynes Sports Partnership		www.buckssport.org
Bucks County Council	0845 3708090	www.buckscc.gov.uk
Cherwell District Council	01295 221863	www.cherwell-dc.gov.uk
Chiltern District Council	01494 729000	www.chiltern.gov.uk
Federation of Small Businesses	0118 945 6848	www.fsb.org.uk
Milton Keynes Chamber of Commerce	01908 259000	www.mk-chamber.co.uk
Milton Keynes Council	01908 691691	www.milton-keynes.gov.uk
Milton Keynes Economy and Learning Partnership	01908 660101	www.mkelp.co.uk
Oxford City Council	01865 249811	www.oxford.gov.uk
Oxfordshire County Council	01865 792422	www.oxfordshire.gov.uk
Oxfordshire Economic Partnership	01865 810149	www.oep.org.uk
Oxfordshire Rural Community Council	01865 883488	www.oxonrcc.org.uk
Oxfordshire Town Chambers Network		www.otcn.co.uk
South Bucks District Council	01895 837200	www.southbucks.gov.uk
South Oxfordshire District Council	01491 823000	www.southoxon.gov.uk
Thames Valley Chamber of Commerce	01753 870500	www.thamesvalleychamber.co.uk
Vale of White Horse District Council	01235 520202	www.whitehorsedc.gov.uk
West Oxfordshire District Council	01993 861485	www.westoxon.gov.uk
Wycombe District Council	01494 469000	www.wycombe.gov.uk

The Business Link service is available locally and provides the information, advice and support you need to start, maintain and to grow a business.

For more information call: 0845 600 9 006
or visit: www.businesslink.gov.uk/southeast

