

ANNUAL REPORT 2018-2019

Helping businesses in the county to grow, scale and innovate, strengthening the Hertfordshire economy



Foreword



Nitin Dahad

Chair, Enterprise and
Innovation Board



I am delighted to present Hertfordshire Growth Hub's Annual Report which gives a succinct summary of our achievements over 2018/2019. As our Executive Summary infographic attests, the numbers speak for themselves, with the vast majority of customers saying they are very satisfied with the service received and would recommend the Growth Hub to other businesses.

Hertfordshire Growth Hub has been successfully co-ordinating integrated business support since 2014. In this financial year, Hertfordshire LEP awarded the contract to a consortium of public and private sector partners, significantly strengthening its offer to local businesses.

Over the past year, we have focused our attention on the development of a new digital platform, supplementing the work of our revamped advisory team, that together will transform the way that businesses can access support by bringing together a network of leading local, regional and national business support providers in one central location.

This means that Hertfordshire Growth Hub is now the entry point to all business support provision within the county and is responsible for the seamless coordination, alignment and collaboration of services. This platform will help us to consolidate further our position within the Growth Hub Network to 'integrate national and local business support so it is

easier for businesses to access the help and advice they need to thrive and grow'.

In this year alone, we have made nearly 1,700 referrals to other business support providers and 100% of customers who received in-depth support were also referred to further provision. Our ambitious free events programme connected more SMEs than ever before to the knowledge needed to scale up their businesses. The hugely popular All The Help You Can Get event returned again, scoring a 98% satisfaction rating with over 140 SMEs taking part. It has also served as a beacon of excellence, with another Growth Hub seeking advice on how to replicate this hugely successful event in their area.

I am tremendously proud of the progress made this year. In its Industrial Strategy, the Government stated its aim to make Britain the best place to start and grow a business. Here in Hertfordshire, we are unashamedly ambitious in seeking to create the optimum business environment where innovation and entrepreneurship thrives.

A year in numbers



95% likely to recommend the service



93% of customers satisfied



Worked with in excess of **100** publicly funded and commercial B2B suppliers



100% of customers who received in-depth support were referred to further provision



1,693 referrals made to other provision in the county



A **positive** impact already has or will be had on **84%** of businesses

Customers



Combined turnover of over **£648m**



Combined employee count of **47,414**

Nearly **4,000** businesses received support from HGH and co-located partners*

Co-located partners key statistics*



DIT East of England

- Value of export wins: **£1.1bn**
- Number of export wins: **660**

Innovate 2 Succeed

£18.1m contributed to the economy

59% helped to commercialise new products and services

Commitment to create **623** jobs



75% cited an improvement to their approach to innovation

*Co-located partners are these services delivered by Exemplas, Enterprise Europe Network, Department for International Trade and Innovate 2 Succeed.



What are Growth Hubs?

Helping businesses to grow

Growth Hubs are local public and private sector partnerships led by their Local Enterprise Partnership (LEP). The service is free at the point of access and provides a mechanism for integrating national and local business support so it is easier for businesses to access the help and advice they need to thrive and grow.

In its Industrial Strategy White Paper, Building a Britain Fit for the Future, the Government recognised the importance of Growth Hubs and pledged to ensure: “all businesses have access to a local Growth Hub”. Hertfordshire Local Enterprise Partnership receives funding directly from Government to deliver this service.

“Growth Hubs integrate national and local business support so it is easier for businesses to access the help and advice they need to thrive and grow”

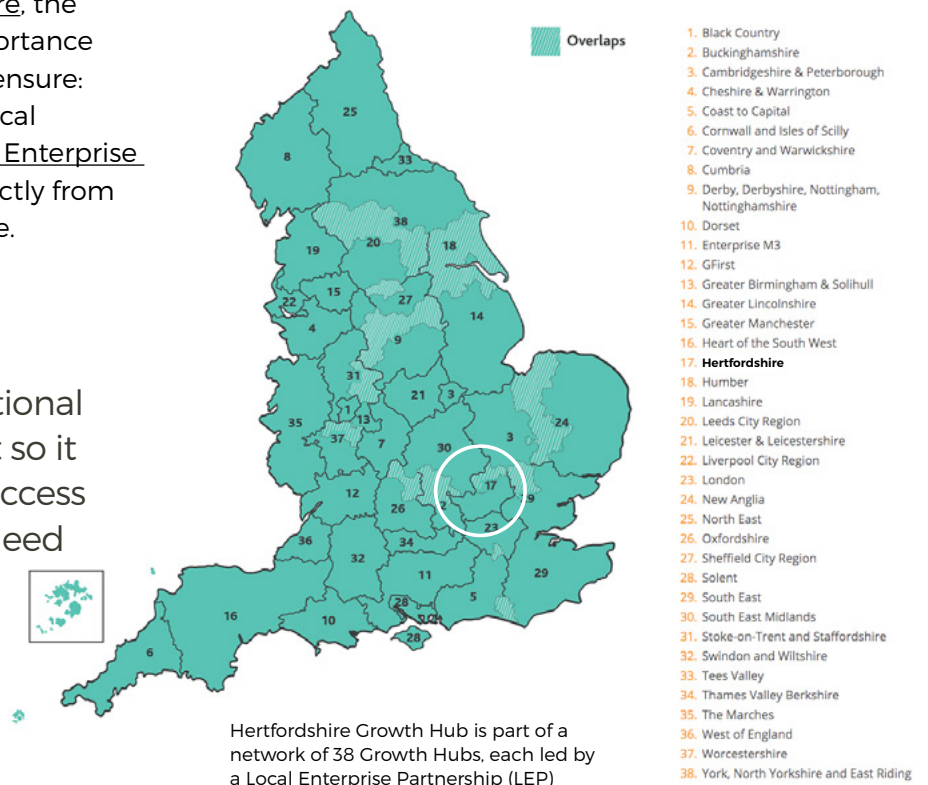
Growth Hub Network



“

Our Industrial Strategy aims to make Britain the best place to start and grow a business... we will ensure all businesses have access to a local Growth Hub”

Industrial Strategy White Paper
Building a Britain Fit for the Future





Business support is an important element in achieving Hertfordshire LEP's desire for growth and it understands that starting, running and growing a business can be a challenging process. The Growth Hub has invested in the resources to give start-ups and businesses access to advice and guidance that enables them to grow, scale and innovate.

Hertfordshire Growth Hub has been successfully co-ordinating integrated business support since 2014, led by leading business support services provider Exemplas. In this financial year, Hertfordshire LEP awarded the contract to a consortium of public and private sector partners, significantly strengthening its offer to local businesses and helping it to achieve its vision to **deliver the best growth hub in the country**.



Who are we?

Meet the consortium partners



For over 25 years, Exemplas has worked on behalf of Government departments and public bodies to support SMEs - thanks to its understanding of the challenges facing businesses, experience and knowledge of what makes them tick, and ability to get them to where they want to be. Adopting a blended approach, Exemplas ensures its services are relevant and accessible to SMEs. Combining digital, phone and face-to-face support, SMEs can access information, advice and networks in a way that best suits their individual needs.

“

We are ambitious for the future and believe that our combined capabilities and digital proposition will become an exemplar model for other Growth Hubs ”

David Moule
CEO, Exemplas



An enterprising and agile institution, the University of Hertfordshire is renowned as a business-facing university passionate about supporting the growth of our local and national economy. It drives innovation through research across all business sectors and provides consultancy support and assistance on a huge variety of projects. The University also offers a wide range of qualifications from apprenticeship training to professional accreditations that not only boost employee morale and motivation but also create a company culture that fosters productivity and new ideas.

“

We are committed to giving local businesses the best advice and support to be entrepreneurial and are therefore delighted to be working with our consortium partners to deliver Hertfordshire Growth Hub ”

Julie Newlan
Pro Vice-Chancellor
Business and International
Development, University of
Hertfordshire





As a privately run membership organisation, Hertfordshire Chamber of Commerce opens doors for local businesses and organisations by helping them to grow their profile and connect with other businesses locally, nationally and globally, through a range of membership benefits and networking opportunities. The Chamber works on behalf of their members to support and encourage the development of an economic environment in which their business and employees can prosper.

“

This contract aligns very well with the Chamber's strategy to support the needs and growth of businesses and organisations in Hertfordshire”

Neville Reyner

CBE, DL, President,
Hertfordshire Chamber
of Commerce



A strengthened Growth Hub: from left, Nitin Dahad, Hertfordshire LEP, Mary Sykes, Hertfordshire Chamber of Commerce, Julie Newlan, University of Hertfordshire and David Moule, Exemplas, at the Growth Hub's hugely popular All The Help You Can Get event

Our vision

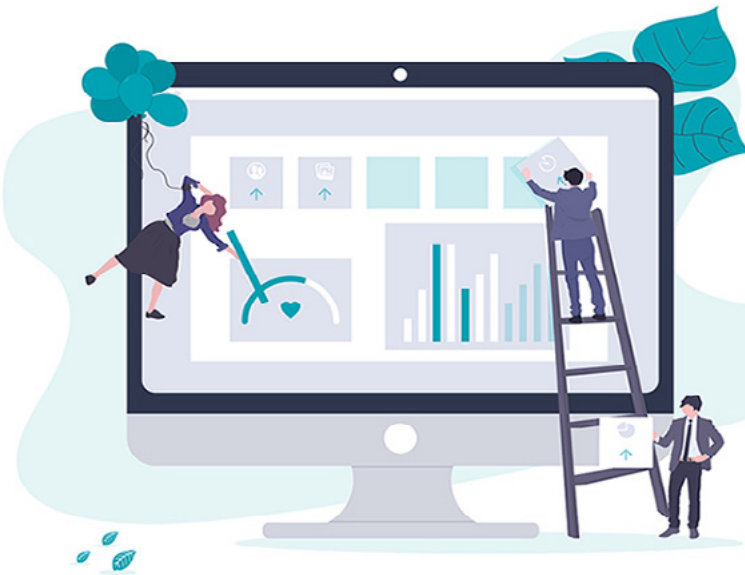
Transforming access to business support

We are constantly monitoring and evaluating our service to ensure that we can meet our vision to be best in class. To help us realise this, we have worked hard over 2018/2019 to enable us to deliver a digital platform that will transform the way that businesses can access support.

This new service is an important step in bringing businesses and business support into the 21st century by giving pre-start, start-up and existing small businesses fast access to advice, resources and events at a time of their choosing.

The platform brings together a network of leading local, regional and national business support providers in one central location. Through an easy-to-use diagnostic questionnaire, the platform identifies what stage a business is at and what challenges it faces, highlighting specific needs and directing them to the most appropriate support, relative to those needs.

Businesses will receive a wealth of online support and, if they are eligible, they can access advice from the experienced Growth Account Manager team. As part of the Growth Hub's ongoing proactive commitment to engage with partners and suppliers to build a strong ecosystem of business support services, two new roles have been created. These are focused on bolstering partnership development and helping to deliver an ambitious events programme.



A central point of access

The new digital platform ensures that Hertfordshire Growth Hub is now the entry point to all business support provision within the county and is responsible for the seamless coordination, alignment and collaboration of services. Businesses at all stages are directed to support appropriate to them, either through the Growth Hub or the wider business support ecosystem, enabling them to access services at the time and place they need.

“

The digital platform will help Hertfordshire Growth Hub to fulfil its ambition to be best in class and set the benchmark for business support, not just locally or regionally but nationally. One of the foundations of productivity in the Government's Industrial Strategy is to create the right business environment to start and grow a business. This enhanced service will go a long way to delivering this”

Nitin Dahad

Chair, Enterprise and Innovation Board,
Hertfordshire LEP



“

Thanks to the strength of its consortium partners, Hertfordshire Growth Hub's new digitally enhanced business provision has the potential to transform the way companies can access support. This is a great step forward and aligns very closely with the LEP's fundamental principle to provide the foundations for growth”

Adrian Hawkins

Deputy Chair, Hertfordshire LEP, and Chair, Skills and Employment Board



Our impact

Total investment/leverage over 2018/2019 for Get Growing projects

A total of £570k was leveraged, which included £300k of European Regional Development Funds (ERDF), allowing more SMEs to access intensive support and grant funding via the continuation of the successful Get Growing project. The Growth Hub has secured further funding to deliver Get Growing 2 enabling it to continue to target support to high growth businesses.

This means that hundreds of small and medium-sized businesses across Hertfordshire can access new grants of up to £3,000 or one-to-one advice. The Get Growing project is the second funded by ERDF, with the first having successfully helped over **200 businesses, created 190 jobs and generated £12.2m for the local economy.**



Following initial registration, eligible companies meet with expert Growth Account Managers, who carry out a free in-depth diagnostic to understand their challenges and barriers to growth. A detailed growth action plan is then put in place and the Growth Hub works with the SME to implement the key actions identified either directly, or through its network of local specialists, who can provide support in areas such as marketing, cyber-security, recruitment, productivity and product development.



Get Growing 2 provides a structured package of comprehensive support for SMEs that have the potential to grow or scale up ”

Sian Ryan

Hertfordshire Growth Hub
Head of Service



Get growing



£12.2m contributed to the economy

34% of businesses have already **increased profits**



73% recognise they have already or will soon embed an improved **leadership culture**



65% have or plan to accelerate **innovation** strategies and activities in their business



£8.30 generated for every **£1** invested into the project



41% have already or will soon be introducing new products or services



71% improved their approach to **growth**



73% have or plan to improve productivity



69% are already or planning to make better use of digital technology in their businesses



69% have or expect to have a better talent pipeline



36% of businesses supported created a total of **190** jobs



62% have secured or are looking to raise finance

Some figures relate specifically to the Get Growing programme which supported established high growth customers only.

Fast profits for fast-food business



Andrea Allen runs former British Takeaway Award-winning restaurant Galos in Hertford, which offers nutritious, home-cooked Mediterranean food. Andrea felt she needed to review the firm's marketing strategy to respond positively to the growth in food delivery businesses and find ways to increase business revenue and retain customers. Get Growing linked her up with a branding expert, finance specialist and restaurant investor, enabling her to make significant changes to her business and increase its profits.



Get Growing made me look at the numbers, the mechanics of the business and how you market yourself. It gave me a sense of focus and direction and I found the process positive and motivational ”

Andrea Allen

Managing Director, Galos,
Hertford



Transforming patients' lives



Stevenage-based AKL Research & Development Ltd is changing the way drugs are developed, by seeking inspiration from nature to combat some of the biggest challenges facing modern healthcare. It is transforming patients' lives through novel therapeutics for inflammatory diseases, including osteoarthritis, Alzheimer's disease, rheumatoid arthritis and scleroderma, a rare connective tissue disease.

AKL sought support from the Growth Hub to access funding for further drugs development targeted at inflammatory diseases. Thanks to a Get Growing grant, AKL went on to secure £675,000 of R&D grant funding.



They were extremely responsive and moved really fast. The interaction was great and the people were good to deal with. It was a seamless process. It was a small grant but they dealt with it professionally and expeditiously ”

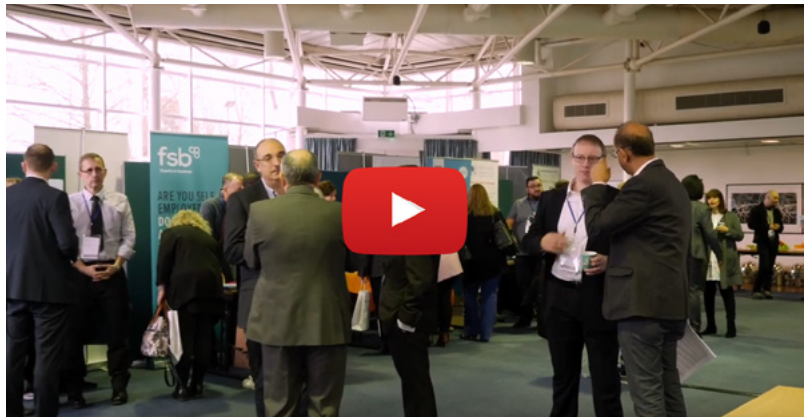
David Sharples

CEO, AKL Research & Development Ltd,
Stevenage



Developing knowledge and connecting businesses

All The Help You Can Get



“

This was a fantastic and well organised day, offering a wide variety of options to everyone. I took away plenty of good from the day, learned lots of new things and met some great people while networking ”

Sarah Marquis

Complete Tenders Ltd,

All The Help You Can Get event, March 2019

For the past three years, Hertfordshire Growth Hub has brought together hundreds of SMEs with publicly funded support providers. This year, it extended this to private sector providers and integrated a series of workshops and a conference alongside the exhibition. This resulted in a **98%** satisfaction rating with over **140 SMEs** taking part. It has also served as a **beacon of excellence**, with another Growth Hub seeking advice on how to replicate this hugely successful event in their area.

The impact of technology on business productivity

Targeted at businesses trading for over three years with more than five employees, All The Help You Can Get focused on how businesses embrace technology to improve their productivity and the efficiencies this can bring. The event delivered ways to improve productivity and implement technology and demonstrated the impact this can have on a business.

It achieved a satisfaction rate of 95% and 90% left with an increased understanding of technology and productivity.

Other events covered a wide range of topics including cyber security, sales and marketing, barriers to international trade and scale-up.

Taking a new product to market



This video shows how Hertfordshire Growth Hub supported the company Chapel Solutions to bring its new travel accessory product to market. Laundreez enables people to launder clothes while on the move.

Thanks to a tailored package of support accessed via Hertfordshire Growth Hub, the company successfully brought its product to market and secured a £1000 grant to help grow the business.

Here, Ann Chapell, Laundreez inventor and CEO, and specialist Growth Hub advisers talk through some of the support mechanisms that were put in place. These were accessed via the Growth Hub.

Read more about how Hertfordshire Growth Hub has helped real businesses in the county grow, develop and realise their potential.

[Visit case studies](#)



“

Laundreez approached the Hertfordshire Growth Hub with help in taking their product to market and growing their business. We have helped Ann tremendously by looking at and refining her business model. Ann attended sales and marketing events and also learnt how to convert leads ”

Dr Abrar Jawaid

Technology and productivity specialist,
Hertfordshire Growth Hub

“

What I really appreciated was the one on one support, meeting them at least 10 times, often around the kitchen table, to discuss the next stage forward ”

Ann Chapell

Laundreez inventor and CEO



Meet your Growth Hub team



Sian Ryan
Head of Service



David Zerny
Partnership Development



Jenny Wasmuth
Events Manager



Steve Armitage
Lead Growth
Account Manager



Wendy Gibbs
Growth Account Manager



Edgar Davies
Growth Account Manager



Liza Armstrong
Growth Account Manager



Kieran Thorpe
Growth Account Manager

Contact us



enquiries@hertsgrowthhub.com



01707 398168



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European Union
European Regional
Development Fund



**Hertfordshire
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HM Government