ANNUAL REPORT 2018-2019
Helping businesses in the county to grow, scale and innovate, strengthening the Hertfordshire economy
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

<table>
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<tr>
<th>95% likely to recommend the service</th>
<th>93% of customers satisfied</th>
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<td>100% of customers who received in-depth support were referred to further provision</td>
<td>1,693 referrals made to other provision in the county</td>
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**A positive impact already has or will be had on 84% of businesses**

**Customers**
- Combined turnover of over £648m

**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

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

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

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

Hertfordshire Growth Hub is part of a network of 38 Growth Hubs, each led by a Local Enterprise Partnership (LEP)
Our role

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**.
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.

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 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

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.

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.

Nitin Dahad
Chair, Enterprise and Innovation Board, Hertfordshire LEP

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

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<th><strong>£12.2m</strong> contributed to the economy</th>
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<td>34% of businesses have already <strong>increased profits</strong></td>
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<td><strong>65%</strong> have or plan to accelerate <strong>innovation</strong> strategies and activities in their business</td>
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<td><strong>71%</strong> improved their approach to <strong>growth</strong></td>
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<tr>
<td><strong>69%</strong> are already or planning to make better use of digital technology in their businesses</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>65%</strong> have or plan to <strong>accelerate innovation</strong> strategies and activities in their business</td>
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<td><strong>62%</strong> have secured or are looking to raise finance</td>
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Some figures relate specifically to the Get Growing programme which supported established high growth customers only.
Andrea Allen runs former British Takeway 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

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

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.

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.

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.
CASE STUDY

Taking a new product to market

Laundreez

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
CASE STUDY

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
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