

Chancellor backs small businesses to thrive and grow

- Rishi Sunak hosts SME roundtable with Exchequer Secretary, visits small businesses and launches Google's nationwide skills training tour.
- Government support on offer highlighted in letter to thousands of SMEs including cuts to employment taxes and business rates alongside support for them to thrive and grow.

The Chancellor hailed small businesses as the "heart of our economy" today as he set out how the Government is backing firms to train and invest, helping the economy to recover and grow, and support jobs during a whistle-stop tour of Suffolk.

Rishi Sunak hosted a roundtable – at Suffolk Food Hall – with local SMEs that had benefited from the Help to Grow: Management programme to discuss how the government scheme has supported them.

He was joined by Exchequer Secretary Helen Whately and visited local businesses including a bakery, gardening and gift shop, before launching the Google Digital Garage nationwide skills training tour at an event hosted at Ipswich Town Football Club.

This consisted of a day of workshops and mentoring to support SMEs to learn new digital skills to grow their businesses and improve productivity. Levi Roots, the entrepreneur behind Reggae Reggae sauce, also attended to share advice with local businesses.

The government has today written to thousands of small and medium sized businesses (SMEs) outlining government help available to them including cuts to employment taxes and business rates alongside support for them to thrive and grow.

Following the visits, Chancellor of the Exchequer Rishi Sunak said:

Small businesses are the heart of our economy – creating jobs and prosperity across the UK. It's been inspiring to meet so many of them in Suffolk today.

I want them to know we will always stand behind them which is why we have written to thousands of businesses across the country to highlight government support on offer to support them in the uncertain months ahead.

From cuts to employment taxes and business rates, to incentivising firms to train and invest more, we want to create the conditions

for our SMEs to thrive, helping the economy to recover and grow, and support jobs.

Managing Director for Google UK and Ireland, Ronan Harris, said:

The UK's growing digital economy has created opportunities for record numbers of British businesses to thrive, and we're committed to helping them make the most of that opportunity as they adapt to a hybrid world.

That's why we're launching the next phase of our in-person digital skills training and offering Google Career Certificates scholarships to help small businesses to develop the high impact tech skills needed to maximise their earning potential and level up.

Whilst in Ipswich, the Chancellor and Exchequer Secretary also visited some small independent businesses in the town centre. This included a gift shop, coffee shop and Ukrainian-owned affordable womenswear shop, whose owner is helping the war effort.

The Chancellor announced a series of measures in the [Spring Statement](#) to help businesses boost investment, innovation, and growth – including a £1,000 increase to Employment Allowance to benefit around half a million smaller firms.

Further information

Five ways the Government is supporting SMEs:

1) Cutting employment taxes for small businesses

- Employment Allowance is a tax relief which allows eligible businesses to reduce their National Insurance Contributions (NICs) bills each year. Last month we increased the Employment Allowance from £4,000 to £5,000.
- That's a new tax cut worth up to £1,000 for nearly half a million SMEs (30% of all businesses). This includes around 50,000 businesses which will be taken out of paying NICs and the Health and Social Care Levy entirely.

2) Help to Grow

- Help to Grow: Digital is a UK-wide government-backed scheme that aims to help you choose, buy and adopt digital technologies that will help you grow your business.

- Eligible businesses can receive a 50% discount on buying new software worth up to £5,000 per SME alongside free impartial advice and guidance about what digital technology is best suited to boost your business performance.
- Our Help to Grow: Management scheme provides small businesses with access to world-class business expertise on everything from leadership and financial management to marketing and digital adoption- and is 90% funded by the Government.

3) Business rates reliefs

- From April this year, small retail, hospitality, and leisure businesses can benefit from [50% off their business rates bills](#). This is the biggest single-year cut to business rates in 30 years.
- From April 2022 there will be no [business rates](#) due on a range of green technology including solar panels and batteries, whilst eligible heat networks will also receive 100% relief. Together these will save businesses around £200 million over the next five years.

4) Super-deduction and Annual Investment Allowance

- To spur business investment, the [super-deduction](#), the biggest two-year business tax cut in modern British history, allows companies to cut their tax bill by 25p for every £1 they invest in any qualifying machinery and equipment. This can include the purchase of computers, most commercial vehicles and office furniture.
- On top of this, we have extended the temporary £1 million limit for the [Annual Investment Allowance](#) to the end of March 2023.

5) Fuel Duty

- We have cut fuel duty on petrol and diesel by 5p per litre for 12 months – effective from 23 March 2022.
- This the largest cut, in cash terms, that has ever been applied across all fuel duty rates at once. This cut, plus the freeze in fuel duty in 2022-23, represents a £5 billion saving.

About Google's Digital Garage

[Google Digital Garage](#) – is one of Google's flagship investment programmes in

the UK, providing free digital skills training to individuals and businesses both online and in person. Since its launch in 2015, Google has trained 800,000 people in more than 500 villages, towns, and cities across the UK. Google will advertise details of each of its 30+ skills training events in 2022 locally, and share details on how local people and businesses can sign up.

The Google Digital Garage digital skills training programme will visit over 30 towns and cities this year to deliver free in-person digital skills training to help businesses grow in the new hybrid world, including Ashford, Boston and Skegness, Leeds, Lincolnshire, Maidstone, Salisbury, Perthshire and Watford.