

Chancellor marks Help to Grow scheme launch with teach-in alongside business owners

- Chancellor visits Aston Business School to take part in government Help to Grow: Management lesson with small businesses leaders
- Programme gives 30,000 SMEs access to world-class business expertise on everything from financial management to marketing.
- Over 600 businesses have now signed up for the scheme with a further 10,000 registering interest

Rishi Sunak joined a class taking part in the government-funded management scheme at Aston Business School alongside small business owners to see first-hand how it is giving them the tools they need to innovate, grow and help drive the recovery from Covid.

The Chancellor delivered a talk to participants at the business school in Birmingham on the critical role small businesses can play in boosting UK productivity. He then took part in a group activity and led a discussion about their own business models and opportunities for growth.

The scheme, which was announced by the Chancellor at the March Budget and opened for applications in May, will give 30,000 SMEs access to world-class business expertise on everything from financial management to marketing, and is a pivotal part of the government's Plan for Jobs.

The Chancellor of the Exchequer, Rishi Sunak, said:

Small businesses are key to our innovation and economy and will therefore be an essential part to our recovery from the pandemic, which is why we are levelling up their skills through the Help to Grow schemes.

I want to bring some of the best bits of management training from around the world to help boost productivity here in the UK.

Help to Grow: Management will ensure our brilliant SMEs seize every opportunity to grow, fuelling our Plan for Jobs by boosting productivity in all corners of the UK.

Five universities have already started to offer courses – Aston, Portsmouth, Derby, Nottingham, and Birmingham City. Over August, four universities will

follow – Coventry, Kingston, Strathclyde and Nottingham Trent.

The programme is being delivered by business schools across the country and was developed in close partnership with the business community to ensure it is as relevant as possible.

Leading business groups – including CBI, FSB, BCC, IoD and Make UK – have also played a key role in supporting the programme design.

According to the ONS, making small improvements in management practices can lead to a 10% increase in productivity. Analysis from the CBI suggests that boosting the productivity profile UK SMEs to match that of Germany could add up to £100bn to the economy.

Lord Karan Bilimoria, CBI President, said:

SME's have shown a real tenacity throughout the crisis, and innovation has often been at the heart of this. Help to Grow is a perfect way to capitalise on this newly found dynamism, productivity and digital adoption among businesses.

Management training, access to digital advice and supporting firms to make productivity-enhancing investments will help firms to scale up and reach the next level. I wish this first cohort every bit of success as they build a more profitable, resilient and productive businesses.

NatWest, Barclays and HSBC will support thousands of places on the executive training programme through combined funding of £2.75 million. They will also contribute their significant expertise to the curriculum, mentoring programme and alumni network. By playing an active role in promoting the scheme to their SME customers, the banks will help us ensure a wide range of businesses benefit from Help To Grow: Management.

In addition, an expert advisory council with senior representatives from Goldman Sachs, the CMI, Social Enterprise UK and the SME Micro-Fresh, is providing expert insight and external challenge to the design of the programme.

Mark Hart, member of the expert advisory council and Professor at Aston Business school, said:

The launch of the Government's Help to Grow: Management programme for SMEs is a welcome addition at a critical time to the range of support available to small business leaders across the UK.

Small firms will drive the recovery as they have always done in previous economic downturns and equipping their leaders with the leadership and management skills from the UK's leading business schools will ensure that they will build even more resilient,

innovative and sustainable businesses capable of responding to the emerging opportunities in their chosen markets.

This is a practical, intensive 12-week programme designed by some of our top academics to provide the skills required to improve the performance and productivity of small firms across all sectors of the economy.

Further information:

- [Pictures from today's visit](#) are available online
- [Businesses can apply for a Help to Grow course and view participating business schools online](#)
- The Help to Grow: Management Programme: offers a 12-week executive training programme to small business leaders, delivered by the UK's leading business schools and is a pivotal part of the government's Plan for Jobs.
- The scheme combines a practical curriculum with 1:1 mentoring from a business expert, peer-learning sessions to give businesses the opportunity to learn from one another, and an alumni network. By the end of the programme participants will develop a tailored business growth plan to lead their business to its full potential.
- The programme is being delivered by Small Business Chartered business schools across the UK. 30,000 places will be available over three years and courses will be added on a rolling-basis. The programme is being coordinated by the Chartered Association of Business Schools.
- [The LinkedIn live](#) is available to watch online.