

More than a million businesses now eligible for Help to Grow as software scheme receives a boost

- The government's Help to Grow: Digital scheme is nearly tripling in reach, supporting up to 1.2 million UK businesses to adopt the latest digital technology
- businesses with 1 to 249 employees can now access discounts worth up to £5,000 on approved software
- from today, eCommerce software has been added to the scheme, helping businesses to sell online and reach new markets

A flagship government scheme that slashes the price of leading software, boosting productivity and growth of the UK's small businesses, will benefit even more firms from today (Monday 25 July).

With Customer Relationship Management software proven to boost firms' productivity by 18% on average, the Help to Grow: Digital scheme offers businesses discounts worth up to £5,000 on approved software.

Previously, only businesses with more than 5 employees were eligible for the scheme. From today, businesses with at least 1 employee are now eligible to benefit. This boosts the number of eligible businesses by 760,000 so that it now reaches up to 1.24 million.

Today it's also announced that eCommerce software is available through the scheme to help businesses ramp up sales of products and services online. This includes helping them to manage their inventory, take payments and gather data and insights on customers' needs. Businesses which adopt eCommerce software see on average [a 7.5% increase in employee sales over 3 years](#).

This means businesses can now access a £5,000 discount on 30 software solutions from 14 leading technology suppliers for eCommerce, Digital Accounting and CRM software.

Additionally, the government has announced that Help to Grow: Digital will support one-to-one advice for SMEs on how best they can adopt digital technology. The government will be launching applications for advice platforms to partner with the scheme from today, and the advice service will go live later this year.

Business Minister Lord Callanan said:

"Boosting productivity isn't some abstract concept to be sniffed at – for individual SMEs it means bigger sales and breaking into new markets. It can add £100 billion to the British economy overall, creating jobs and opportunity across the country.

“Adopting the latest technology is proven to help businesses make the most of their potential, and by making more than one million firms eligible for the scheme, we’re helping to level up the UK economy and bolster the ability of our businesses to compete with the best worldwide.”

Exchequer Secretary to the Treasury Alan Mak said:

“Extending our Help to Grow: Digital scheme will enable thousands more SMEs to become more innovative, more competitive, and more profitable.

“Helping them adopt new technology to support customers, manage accounts and sell online will save them time and money. This will boost productivity and help create jobs and prosperity across the UK.”

The Help to Grow: Digital sits alongside the Help to Grow: Management scheme as the government’s flagship programme to help small and medium-sized businesses to scale-up and grow. Help to Grow: Management offers business leaders 50 hours of leadership and management training across 12 weeks, with government covering 90% of the costs involved.

The schemes help businesses to boost their productivity and grow, which can lead to more high-skill, high-wage jobs. This is part of the government’s commitment to grow the economy to address the cost of living and level up opportunity across the UK, alongside standing behind businesses by cutting fuel duty and raising the Employment Allowance.

Martin McTague, National Chair of the Federation of Small Businesses (FSB) said:

“We are very pleased to have worked hard with BEIS to adopt our ask to expand the eligibility criteria of the Help to Grow: Digital scheme to support more small businesses getting the software they need.

“Our research shows the smallest firms are least likely to have adopted tech products because of the lack of resources although they would make the most productivity gains through adoption.

“It’s good that Ministers are listening. Together with the addition of e-Commerce software and one-to-one advice for SMEs on technology adoption, this will help small businesses enhance their operations and drive efficiency and growth.

Murray Lambell, Vice President and General Manager, eBay UK said:

“This is extremely welcome news for a significant number of the 300,000 small businesses who use eBay every day to grow their business. Many of our commercial sellers are micro-businesses who are extremely entrepreneurial but inevitably time poor.

“Being able to purchase e-commerce and other productivity-enhancing software at a discount could really help give rocket boosters to what are already fast-growing businesses. And given that three quarters of our small businesses are based outside London and the South East, this also has the

potential to boost the government's Levelling Up agenda.”

Notes to editors: