

Prime Minister hosts Spring Showcase at Downing Street to promote best of British business

- Downing Street transformed into street market with stallholders from across the UK to champion best of British businesses
- Stallholders include IGS Vertical Farming from Scotland, Tregothnan Tea from England and Flawsome!Drinks from Wales
- Prime Minister joined by Cabinet ministers to support businesses who are seizing global opportunities for growth, jobs and investment

The UK Prime Minister has hosted a Spring Showcase at Downing Street today (Monday 09 May) to fly the flag for British food and consumer goods and showcase small independent businesses who are exporting their goods internationally.

Ten businesses held market stalls across Downing Street to exhibit their finest products including Blaenafon Cheddar Company, a Welsh family business, IGS Vertical Farming, based in Scotland and Dogtooth Technologies, a technology start-up building state-of-the-art intelligent robots for soft fruit picking.

The Prime Minister was joined by Cabinet Ministers including the International Trade Secretary Anne-Marie Trevelyan, Environment Secretary George Eustice and Business Secretary Kwasi Kwarteng who also met with stallholders.

There are now more opportunities than ever for businesses thanks to the trade deals that have been agreed across 70 nations, including countries in the EU – accounting for £808 billion of UK bilateral trade in 2021. We had the fastest economic growth in the G7 last year and international trade is essential in achieving our mission to level up and drive growth across the whole country.

UK Prime Minister Boris Johnson said:

Putting the best of British business on the global market is a vital part of growing our economy – with exports bringing £640.3 billion last year alone.

Every corner of the UK is filled with exceptionally talented businesses and I'm delighted that today we have been able to showcase some of the best of what this country has to offer.

Those invited to the event also include the Founder and CEO of Genius Foods, Lucinda Bruce-Gardyne, also chair of Scotland Food and Drink, Michael Bell,

CEO of the Northern Ireland Food and Drink Association (NIFDA) and Chair of the Food and Drink Federation Karen Betts who works closely with the Department for International Trade as the voice of the UK food industry.

International Trade Secretary Anne-Marie Trevelyan said:

It's fantastic to see so many examples of great UK businesses thriving thanks to the trade and export opportunities we've made available to them.

As we continue our journey as an independent free-trading nation our Export Strategy offers a wealth of support for existing as well as new-to-market traders.

We're rightly proud of our small business exporters, and I want to see more of our brilliant products made here in the UK sold to the world.

CEO of St Evals Ian Greaves said:

As a British manufacturer based in rural Cornwall, we are delighted to be given the opportunity to showcase St. Eval alongside some of the best of British business at this event.

People and planet are at the very heart of all that we do and we greatly appreciate the opportunity to share our passion for sustainability far and wide. From using renewable energy to power our factory, through to plastic-free packaging and protecting and nurturing the natural world around us; high-quality craftsmanship and minimising our environmental impact are of the utmost importance.

In recognition of our commitment to sustainability, in 2021 we were honoured with a Queen's Award for Enterprise in Sustainable Development. As the first-ever Queen's Award for a candle manufacturer, we strive to set the standard for actions to preserve the natural world around us and pioneer leadership in sustainable British manufacturing.

Last year the Government launched an Export Strategy which will help businesses across the UK double exports and sell their world-class products around the globe. The 12-point export strategy will give businesses the tools they need to become a nation of exporters and reap the benefits of our free trade deals.

[Students in Wales are reminded to apply for student finance before deadline](#)

It's estimated that more than 1.5million people will attend college or university this autumn, and the Student Loans Company (SLC) is urging students to [apply for student finance](#) in plenty of time.

SLC's role is to enable opportunity for students to invest in their futures through access to further and higher education, and new full time, undergraduate students in Wales have just under three weeks to apply for funding before the deadline on Friday, 27 May.

Students should apply online now even if they don't have a confirmed place at university. By submitting their application before the deadline, they can ensure their finance will be in place for the start of the academic year.

Returning students in England also need to reapply for student finance every year, and the deadline for applications is Friday, 17 June.

Chris Larmer, SLC Executive Director, Operations said: "Our mission is to enable opportunity and we are committed to supporting students to achieve their ambitions.

"Our application window opened earlier this year, which gives students plenty of time to apply before the deadline to ensure they have the best possible start to their further or higher education journey. We know that this can seem daunting, particularly for new students, but there is a range of content on our website and social media channels to help guide students, and their parents or partners, through the process. Applying early means that busy students can tick at least one thing off their list as they prepare for university life."

Chris added: "Applications can take around six to eight weeks to process and for the vast majority, the whole experience will be online. Students can monitor their application's progress via their online accounts and if we need any further information, we will get in touch directly."

Students can continue to apply for finance throughout the summer, but SLC is not able to guarantee that funding will be in place for the start of term.

Tips for applying for student finance

- [Apply online now](#) even if you don't have a confirmed place at university – It only takes 20 minutes to apply and the quickest and easiest way to do so is online at <https://www.studentfinancewales.co.uk/discover-student-finance>
- You should apply now even if you don't know what course you are doing,

or which university you are going to. Select the course you are most likely to do, and you can update the application easily later, if required.

- Have your important documents to hand when applying – Have your National Insurance Number, passport and bank details to hand before you start your application, as you will be asked for this information as you apply. If you don't have a bank account in your own name, we would encourage you to set one up to ensure you receive your funding.
- Provide your supporting evidence online – To make an application you will need to create an online account and you may be asked to provide evidence to support your application. Don't forget to submit any evidence you are asked for. All evidence, apart from some forms of ID or residency evidence, can be submitted digitally via your online account.
- Tell us if your household income has changed – If you have applied for a Maintenance Loan based on household income, then your sponsor – usually your parents or partner- will be asked to provide details of their household income for the previous tax year. For 22/23 academic year applications, that's the 20-21 tax year. If your sponsor expects their income to drop by 15% or more, it is possible to request a Current Year Income (CYI) assessment.
- A CYI can only be requested once you have submitted your application and your sponsor has also submitted their household income for the 20-21 tax year to support your application too. To do this, visit <https://www.studentfinancewales.co.uk/parents-and-partners/how-does-household-income-affect-an-application.aspx> to download a digital version of the form once you have filled it in you can then upload it directly from your online account.
- Make sure you understand how much funding you may be entitled to Students in Wales can apply for a Tuition Fee Loan to pay for tuition fees and a Maintenance Loan and Grant to help with living costs. Visit the SFW website to find out what's available. Watch the Discover Student Finance film to find out more.
- Find out if you could be eligible for extra support – Extra funding may be available if you have a disability or a child or adult dependant who relies on you financially. <https://www.studentfinancewales.co.uk/undergraduate-finance/full-time/welsh-student/>
- Follow Student Finance Wales (SFW) on social media Students can stay up to date with all the latest student finance information by following SFW on [Facebook](#) and [Twitter](#).

Cultural venues to receive £128 million to improve access to arts and

culture

- Access to arts and culture in areas with low levels of cultural engagement to be boosted through the £30.8 million Cultural Development Fund
- Local library services to be improved with £20.5 million Libraries Improvement Fund
- Urgent museum maintenance and infrastructure works to be funded through £63.3 million Museum Estate Development Fund

Cultural venues including museums, galleries and public libraries are to benefit from up to £128 million of funding to help improve accessibility to the arts and safeguard their futures.

Organisations are now being encouraged to submit expressions of interest to receive support following the previous allocation of £48 million worth of funding to 60 organisations earlier this year.

Venues across the country have already benefited from the fund including the Birmingham Museum & Art Gallery, which earlier this year received £5 million to fund structural work to safeguard the building for future generations, and Bletchley Park, which was given £468,000 for essential maintenance works to its buildings.

Funding of infrastructure projects at museums, improvements in local library services and investment in community-focused cultural sites will ensure that these cultural assets at the heart of communities will help regional economies and protect their unique local heritage for generations to come.

Support will be targeted to areas which have historically had lower levels of cultural investment as part of the government's commitment to levelling up access to culture across the country.

Funding will be targeted on locally-led cultural projects, museums and public libraries in England.

Arts Minister Lord Parkinson said:

Cultural institutions form the heart of communities across the country and it is important that we provide them with the support they need.

This funding will help make culture more accessible to everyone, including people who may not have enjoyed its benefits before, as well as supporting vital maintenance work to secure the future of

many venues. It is an important part of our plan to level up the country, for the benefit of everybody.

Darren Henley chief executive of Arts Council England said:

Artists, arts organisations, museums and libraries have the power to animate and energise villages, towns and cities in amazing and innovative ways.

This new investment in culture and creativity will help people across the country to enjoy happier lives.

Hedley Swain, CEO of the Royal Pavillion & Museums Trust in Brighton, which previously received £1.4 million through the first round of the Museum Estate and Development Fund, said:

We are so grateful to the Department for Digital, Culture, Media & Sport and Arts Council England for this important award from the Cultural Investment Funds, including Museum Estate and Development Fund (MEND). It will allow us to make urgent and timely repairs to the roof of Brighton Museum and Art Gallery allowing us to stay open and plan with confidence for the future. Additional funding will be provided by Brighton & Hove City Council to whom we are also deeply grateful. Brighton Museum is an important historic building in its own right, part of the Royal Pavilion estate. It's so important that buildings like this are maintained for the benefit of current and future generations".

Councillor Sue Smith, cabinet member for communities and cooperation at Rochdale Borough Council, which previously received £4,199,365 through the Cultural Development Fund, said:

The CDF funding means we can take forward our exciting plans for a new Rochdale Cultural District, bringing together our outstanding heritage and cultural assets to attract more visitors, create new opportunities for residents and to complement the growing town centre retail, food and leisure offer. We will also be creating a new cultural partnership to develop and deliver more projects across the borough, increasing opportunities for residents, creatives and creative businesses.

The Cultural Investment Fund covers the following three streams:

Cultural Development Fund

The £30.8 million Cultural Development Fund aims to give people access to

arts and culture in areas with historically low levels of cultural engagement to help support economic growth. The fund helps transform cultural sites which are at the heart of communities such as Middlesbrough Council Cultural Services and Barnsley Museums.

Libraries Improvement Fund

The £20.5 million Libraries Improvement Fund will transform library services in England by helping them upgrade their buildings and improve digital infrastructure. Local authorities can bid for the money on behalf of their library services.

Museum Estate and Development Fund

The £60.3 million Museum Estate and Development Fund (MEND) helps fund urgent museum maintenance and infrastructure works beyond their day-to-day budgets. Arts Council England accredited museums in England that are not directly funded by DCMS can apply. This could include organisations like the Bristol Museum & Art Gallery, Wolverhampton Art Gallery and Hull & East Riding Museum.

In March, £48 million was awarded to 60 cultural institutions in England through the first round of the Cultural Investment Fund, with venues including the London Transport Museum and Leicester Museum & Art Gallery receiving money. Sandwell Library and Information Service in the West Midlands was also awarded £495,000, while Berwick Barracks in Northumberland was awarded £4 million to turn it into a year-round cultural venue.

Ends

Notes to Editors

[Cultural Development Fund](#)

[Libraries Improvement Fund](#)

[Museum Estate and Development Fund](#)

These funds follow a number of other successful government interventions to support the UK's cultural organisations. The £2 billion Culture Recovery Fund helped thousands of organisations survive the pandemic. Earlier this year the government also announced an additional £75 million of arts funding, which will be distributed by 2025 to places that have been culturally under-served in the past. This is part of its efforts to level up access to the arts through the highest level of investment by the taxpayer in culture in the post-war period.

[Previous Cultural Investment Fund recipients](#)

Creating a sustainable future through property

Louisa LeRoux, Net Carbon Zero Programme Manager for the Government Property Agency, looks at maximising energy efficiencies and reducing carbon emissions across property portfolios. And how changes and initiatives enable offices to play a leading role in creating a sustainable future.

The property industry has a huge role to play in reducing carbon emissions and maximising energy efficiencies as the world tackles climate change.

The Government has updated plans to achieve Net Zero by 2050 with the UK setting the world's most ambitious climate change target. In June 2021, the new target was published in law that would reduce Scope 1 emissions by 78 percent which means that the UK will be more than three quarters of the way to Net Zero by 2035. As the delivery body for the Government's office and warehouse portfolio strategies, we have committed to reaching the same target for Government buildings – the ones that we manage – by 2032, three years ahead of the Government's target.

Scope 1 emissions are direct emissions such as those from vehicles and gas boilers, as well as what we use as individuals. To reduce these emissions in buildings, the aim is to decarbonise and move away from fossil fuels and adopt sustainable forms of electricity.

Achieving the required 78 percent carbon reduction by 2032 will not be easy, and to achieve this we will need both concerted effort and work to deliver the quick wins.

Maximising sustainable, clean technologies

We currently manage more than 700,000 square metres of the Government's office portfolio. This offers us a huge opportunity to maximise the use of sustainable, clean technologies and low and zero carbon energy wherever possible. For example:

- Through insulation and reduced consumption by optimising heating, ventilation and air conditioning (HVAC) and building management system (BMS) technology, use of micrometres, sensors and light-emitting diode (LED) lighting.
- Use green energy and move to decarbonised electric by switching to a renewable supplier.
- Generate and store renewable energy locally through integrated generation, storage and use.

Across the industry, we are seeing more businesses shift focus to a wider array of green initiatives such as sub-metering. This is allowing greater understanding of energy usage so that the right measures can be identified. These measures mostly include switching to suitable green tariffs, and

landlords installing more EV charging units and revisiting their heating and cooling units. We are also seeing smarter use of design elements on buildings to allow sustainable solutions to blend in better with the facade and fabric of older buildings.

Retrofitting can be done

It's been proven that retrofitting can be done within heritage buildings to improve sustainability. For example, we are in the process of planning to decarbonise our Whitehall District Heat System which will go a long way to reducing carbon emissions on our Central London heritage estate.

Workplace Design Guide, Net Zero

In August 2020, we published the [Government Workplace Design Guide](#). This includes the [Net Zero and Sustainability Annex](#) covering construction and operational energy. The Guide was created with flexibility in mind, because we understand not all buildings are or should be the same. It supports buildings to operate as sustainably as possible, whether it's a new build, renovation or refurbishment.

I'm sure we can all agree that the property industry is facing some unique challenges to achieve Net Zero. But we do have many ways in which we can overcome them. At the GPA, we plan to lead by example and encourage every stakeholder in property to not just reach a standard, but to innovate and find ways to push higher and achieve better.

Louisa LeRoux
Net Zero Carbon Programme Manager
Government Property Agency
Connect with [Louisa on LinkedIn](#)

[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.