

Thousands of business advisers to offer free services to small firms

The Recovery Advice for Business scheme, supported by the government and hosted on the [Enterprise Nation website](#), will give small firms access to free, one-to-one advice with an expert adviser to help them through the coronavirus pandemic and to prepare for long-term recovery. The platform is now live.

Advice offered will include bespoke, specialist assistance from accountancy, legal, and advertising to marketing, recruitment and digital to help businesses adapt to difficult circumstances and to bounce back as the UK economy recovers.

Business experts, supported by the UK's major professional and trade bodies, have rallied behind the government-backed initiative, with thousands of expert advisers already on hand and ready to do their bit to help small businesses recover and rebuild.

Small Business Minister Paul Scully said:

We have stood by small businesses throughout this crisis, offering a wide-ranging package of financial support. However, it is also important that business owners get easy access to expert advice and support.

It is incredible to see so many professional advisers stepping up to do their bit for small businesses across the country. This advice platform will help to boost our recovery from the impact of coronavirus, giving small businesses extra support to adapt their business models and come back fighting.

Emma Jones, founder of small business support network Enterprise Nation, said:

The COVID-19 pandemic has left thousands of SMEs facing a set of completely new challenges now and into the future. There has never been a more important time for firms to turn to the trusted advice of a professional and start on a path to recovery.

We've been overwhelmed and astonished by the generosity of the adviser community, thousands of whom have stepped forward to give their time and knowledge to revive, guide and support the nation's small businesses through the pandemic to regain the momentum and restore the economic confidence with which we started the year.

Running a business can be isolating at the best of times, and this

initiative will mean founders will not have to face the future alone.

Each adviser has offered at least one hour of free advice a month until the end of 2020 which could deliver a lifeline to thousands of SMEs looking for support.

The Chartered Institute of Personnel Development (CIPD), the Institute of Chartered Accountants England & Wales (ICAEW), the Advertising Association, the Law Society and the Management Consultancies Association (MCA) are among the professional bodies to have signed up for the scheme.

Tamzen Isacsson, Chief Executive of the Management Consultancies Association, said:

Despite lockdown, our consultants have been supporting private and public sector clients across the UK enabling businesses to recover, deliver critical new services and plan for an uncertain future. We're proud to be supporting this joint initiative to help restore the UK back to economic growth and help advise small businesses which are the backbone of our economy.

Peter Cheese, Chief Executive of the CIPD, the professional body for HR and people development, said:

The CIPD is delighted to partner with Enterprise Nation to launch the Recovery Advice for Business scheme, supported by the Department for Business, Energy and Industrial Strategy. Throughout the coronavirus pandemic people professionals have been at the heart of the organisational response in these challenging times. This new scheme is an important step forward in supporting small firms through the next stages of the crisis.

The CIPD is calling on its members who are independent consultants and have experience in working with small firms to help by volunteering an hour of their time per month to advise on people and organisational challenges. We hope we can play our part as a profession to help lessen the devastating impact the coronavirus crisis could have on businesses of all sizes.

Mark Fox, Chief Executive of the Business Services Association (BSA) said:

Supporting Britain's SMEs is vital to economic rebuilding and the levelling up agenda. BSA members large and small, and from the private and VCSE sectors, stand ready to help.

It is critical that everyone now draws together in common

endeavour, just as they did during the pandemic. Our sector has been helping keep the country going during lockdown and now has the capacity and reach to play its full part in recovery – supporting in particular those communities and sectors which have been particularly badly hit.

Sharron Gunn, BFP FCA, Institute of Chartered Accountants England and Wales, Executive Director, Members, Commercial & Shared Services, said:

Throughout the Coronavirus crisis, ICAEW Chartered Accountants have acted as trusted advisers to businesses of all shapes and sizes. Now, as companies seek to recover and rebuild, we are proud to support the Recovery Advice for Business scheme to better connect firms to the high-quality professional advice they need. Whether it's cash flow management, tax advice or securing access to finance, I know our members will want to help any small businesses who may be struggling, and support the UK to get back on its feet.

Stephen Woodford, Chief Executive of the Advertising Association, said:

We are proud to be part of the Recovery Advice for Business scheme. It is a huge opportunity for our industry to help Britain's challenger brands and businesses as the economy rebuilds, supporting entrepreneurs to get their businesses back on track to fast growth and with real impact.

President of the Law Society of England and Wales, Simon Davis, said:

The coronavirus crisis has significantly impacted small businesses across the country, and now more than ever they need expert legal advice to help weather the storm.

I welcome this opportunity for solicitors to play their part in this effort to support the national recovery by offering valuable legal advice to small businesses.

Participating businesses will be directed to the scheme on the [Enterprise Nation platform](#) via the GOV.UK website and other business support channels.

Businesses will then be asked questions on the 'Make a Plan' diagnostic tool. This will allow Enterprise Nation to assess and identify both the level and specific areas of support needed.

They will then be directed to a personalised dashboard where they will receive a detailed action plan which will include links to suggested tailored advice and relevant professional advisers willing to help.

Advice will focus on key areas:

- accounting and finance
- people and building a team
- planning, strategy and pivoting
- marketing, PR and social media
- Technology and digital tools

Over 12,000 advisers in the existing Enterprise Nation community are available to provide advice through the platform, with more new professional advisers being signed up specifically to support the scheme.

The scheme is open to small businesses and expert advisers throughout the UK.

Advisers will need to belong to a professional or trade body and hold valid Professional Indemnity Insurance (PII) to join the platform and offer advice. They will then need their Trade Body Coupon Code, demonstrating their membership of a professional body, and the link to the Enterprise Nation adviser sign-up page. This will enable advisers to sign up as part of the programme, for free membership, for the duration of the programme until the end of December 2020. It will also ensure that all advice is provided by appropriate expert advisers.