

biz4Biz

Insight

AUGUST 2026 | ISSUE FIFTY

50

50 EDITIONS AT THE
HEART OF BUSINESS



biz4Biz IS A VOICE FOR BUSINESS

biz4Biz was created in 2009 followed by our ConneXions business networking group. We launched our first Insight magazine back in August 2014 and our phenomenally successful biz4Biz Awards programme in 2017.

biz4Biz has become a well-established and highly respected brand that provides a voice for the local business community. As part of our continued growth, we have expanded our activities to cover Herts, Beds, Bucks, Essex, and Cambs. We are now able to offer our clients the

ability to market their businesses via our Let's Work Together integrated digital marketing package which includes:

- **Advertising and editorial in our magazines:**
 - **Insight – East of England**
 - **Sustainable Biz - National**
 - **Manufacturing Biz – National & International**
- **Regular biz4Biz ConneXions networking meetings**
- **Regular WebeXions webinars**
- **Regular Newsletters**

- **Blog posts**
- **Email blasts**
- **Video content in the magazine and on the website**
- **Social Media posts**

In addition, we can offer specialised website promotion via our focused expert pages. These would be suitable for a wide range of professional services companies in accountancy, legal, HR, financial services, property services, corporate finance, IT, marketing, and insurance amongst others.



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MAGAZINE ARCHIVE

Welcome to the 50th edition of Insight

Insight 50



Reaching the 50th edition of Insight is a very special milestone for everyone associated with biz4Biz—and for the remarkable business community we are privileged to represent. Since its launch in 2014, Insight has developed into far more than a business magazine. It has become an independent voice for enterprise across Hertfordshire and the Home Counties north of London: celebrating achievement, examining the issues that affect our economy and bringing businesses, educators, local authorities and community leaders into one important conversation. This anniversary edition demonstrates exactly what makes Insight special. Its pages reflect the extraordinary diversity of our region — from aerospace, life sciences and advanced manufacturing to education, hospitality, professional

**"Thank you to our
readers, contributors,
advertisers and
partners for helping us
reach this landmark"**

services and the creative industries. We feature businesses of every size, while giving equal attention to the skills, infrastructure, leadership and public policy needed to help them succeed. Our location gives us enormous advantages. We sit immediately north of one of the world's greatest cities, with international airports, leading universities and excellent connections. Yet our counties possess their own powerful identities, economic strengths and entrepreneurial communities. Insight provides a platform through which those communities can speak with a collective and increasingly influential voice.

This 50th issue also celebrates the people and organisations that have supported us throughout our journey. Their contributions have enabled Insight to remain relevant, authoritative and closely connected to the realities of running and growing a business.

At biz4Biz, we have always believed that Business Builds Britain. Successful businesses create employment, develop skills, invest in communities and generate the prosperity upon which our public services depend. Insight exists to recognise that contribution—and to ensure that the experience and ambition of business are heard.

Thank you to our readers, contributors, advertisers and partners for helping us reach this landmark. I hope you enjoy this fabulous anniversary edition and will continue to join us as we begin the journey towards our next 50 issues.

ADRIAN HAWKINS OBE

Chairman - biz4Biz

Chairman - Hertfordshire Futures Board

Chairman - Stevenage Development Board

Chairman - Hertfordshire Skills & Employment Board



A Letter from our Editor

A warm welcome to the latest edition of Insight magazine and what an absolute pleasure it is to deliver this, our magazine number 50. Time truly does fly when you are having fun, and it is more than 12 years now since biz4Biz started this groundbreaking magazine which was the first of its kind to be created and distributed as a digital interactive title.

"So here's to our next 50 editions and continuing to be at the centre of business and the big conversation"

Where others have sought to follow, Insight has stayed well ahead of the pack in the region as we offer news, updates and marketing messages to members and general readers alike.

As digital has seen the rise of social media, rich content and new ways to reach audiences, we are proud that Insight has kept biz4Biz at the forefront of the business conversation, and will do so for years to come.

In these pages you will of course have to pardon us but we simply had to include some of the lovely things our readers have said about us over the years! Our testimonials show just how closely we work with clients and how we are engrained in the business community of the region.

Of course another aspect of this is our Business Awards which are already set for another amazing year. We are now at the voting stage, so please take a look at the feature in this magazine and follow the links to nominate and vote for businesses which you know deserve the plaudits. So here's to our next 50 editions and continuing to be at the centre of business and the big conversation.

DARREN ISTD
Insight Editor

You can follow us @biz4biz for news, articles and updates on our current stories.

Our articles get posted regularly to 2400 followers!



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Celebrating biz4Biz and Insight 50

"Hertfordshire is the county of Opportunity"-so we are told quite often...and how true that is. But Hertfordshire is more-it is also the County of Business and Entrepreneurship. However for businesses to thrive in our county and elsewhere they need to connect not only with their customers and suppliers but with each other. As His Majesty's Lord-Lieutenant one of my principal roles is to facilitate... to connect people and nowhere is that more important than in the business community. Biz4Biz has been instrumental in connecting business people across the county enabling companies to work with each other to their mutual benefit. Having spent over 40 years myself in business I know that people are the backbone of any organisation and biz4Biz talks to, and about, real people. The Insight Magazine evidences the good work

"I wish the business community of the great county of Hertfordshire well and continued good health"

being done and connections made in the county. Hertfordshire is possibly the most diverse county in the whole of the UK in so many aspects. Our vast business community is a true reflection of that diversity. We have some of the country's most renown businesses in many different sectors. From aerospace to film and tv, from bioscience

to food retailing-we have it all. But of course the vast majority of Hertfordshire's businesses are SME's of different sizes and in different business sectors. And I am particularly encouraged by the number and quality of young entrepreneurs who start their business lives here in Hertfordshire.

My own Lord-Lieutenant's Entrepreneur's Challenge held annually at the County Show and now in its 7th year-has demonstrated the high quality of young companies who rely on support from the business community as a whole. So in congratulating biz4Biz on the 50th edition of Insight, I wish the business community of the great county of Hertfordshire well and continued good health.

ROBERT VOSS CBE CSTJ

HM Lord-Lieutenant of Hertfordshire





George Hay Chartered Accountants are proud to have been established in Hertfordshire for over 40 years, and we have enjoyed collaborating with biz4Biz and Insight magazine, since its inception in 2014. Not only has the publication given us a platform to address important topics impacting the wider business community, over the past decade, but also to promote our own business, and share some of our milestones with readers. Our contributions have always been with the intention of being present, of generating meaningful conversation and of encouraging business owners to think

proactively about what the future holds. The willingness amongst business leaders, entrepreneurs and professionals in our county to collaborate and support one another is no more apparent than when organisations and the individuals working within them come forward to share expertise, to champion other's successes and to address common challenges, whether through the pages of Insight or elsewhere.

"Beyond the magazine, we have also been long-time supporters of the biz4Biz Awards"

Beyond the magazine, we have also been long-time supporters of the biz4Biz Awards, as both sponsors and judges, recognising the talent, resilience and ingenuity of businesses operating in Hertfordshire.

Looking ahead, we believe the businesses that will thrive are those that remain agile, that embrace creativity and that harness opportunity. At the same time, collaboration between businesses, educators, local authorities and industry partners will remain key to understanding evolving business priorities, and to unlocking growth, and we look forward to being part of that. While Hertfordshire already boasts a dynamic business community, it remains well placed to attract new investment, and nurture future business leaders. At George Hay, we work closely with businesses and individuals to help them achieve their financial goals, maximise tax efficiency and build lasting wealth. We offer a free, no-obligation consultation to prospective clients, to understand your needs and explore how our expertise can support your objectives.

For expert advice, or to find out more about our services, please contact us.
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Biz4Biz has been a valued partner of Oaklands throughout a period of significant change and growth. More than simply a business network, it has provided opportunities to build meaningful relationships, share ideas and connect with employers who help shape the skills our region needs for the future. Through events, introductions and ongoing collaboration, Biz4Biz has helped Oaklands strengthen links with businesses of all sizes, creating

opportunities for students while supporting local economic growth. The support of Biz4Biz has also extended beyond employer engagement. As Oaklands has developed its ambitious long term Master Plan, Biz4Biz has helped facilitate important conversations with business leaders, stakeholders and decision makers, ensuring the College remains closely connected to the needs and aspirations of the communities it serves. Alongside partners such as Hertfordshire

Chamber of Commerce, Hertfordshire Futures, University of Hertfordshire and local government stakeholders, Biz4Biz has played an important role in bringing together education, industry and public sector organisations to support economic growth across the county. These partnerships help ensure that skills provision remains aligned to employer needs, creating opportunities for learners while supporting the future workforce of Hertfordshire.
www.oaklands.ac.uk



Insight 50



The shared journey of Biz4biz Insight magazine and Co-Space goes back a long way. It all began with Insight issue No. 26, which featured a

spread celebrating the company's launch alongside the unveiling of Co-Space Stevenage. Now, Insight has reached its 50th issue; a remarkable milestone for Darren and the entire team. Co-Space is grateful to Insight and Darren for allowing them to be featured on a page or two in every release for the last 24 issues, spanning five whole years. While Co-Space and Insight may not have begun during the magazine's first issue in 2014, or even when Co-Space's first site in Reading launched, their working

relationship has only grown stronger with each new release.

William Stokes, Co-Space CEO & Co-Founder is delighted by this milestone achieved by Darren and Insight. "The support from biz4Biz, and the wider Insight magazine has been invaluable, supporting our growth across

"The support from biz4Biz, and the wider Insight magazine has been invaluable"

Hertfordshire and beyond. Through the Insight magazine, we've been able to showcase our spaces in front of a great business community. A huge congratulations to Darren, Adrian and the wider team on this milestone!"

www.co-space.co.uk





North Hertfordshire College is delighted to congratulate Adrian and the Biz4Biz team on the 50th edition of Insight magazine. This milestone reflects not only their longevity but their unwavering commitment to the community spirit of Hertfordshire, where collaboration and shared purpose drive meaningful progress.

Biz4Biz has long championed the creation of key networks and partnerships across the county and beyond. These connections enable organisations to thrive, innovate, and succeed within their sectors. Crucially, they also build vital bridges between industry, skills and education, opening doors for learners of all ages to engage with employers, develop skills, explore future career pathways, and in many cases gain a direct introduction, or reintroduction, to Hertfordshire's future workforce needs.

At North Hertfordshire College, these partnerships enrich students' learning, strengthen employability outcomes, and

"Biz4Biz has long championed the creation of key networks and partnerships across the county and beyond"

deepen our ties with local industry. At a time when opportunities for young people can feel uncertain, collaborative initiatives like these provide stability, clarity, and



genuine prospects for longterm career success.

Our standout partnerships demonstrate the power of this approach. Through our work with the NHS, we've developed the NHS Care Academy, giving students real insight into careers in care and a direct pathway into paid NHS roles upon completion of their studies. This excellent work was demonstrated in the recent BBC docuseries Natalie Cassidy: Caring Together, filmed at our Stevenage campus with our current Health and Social Care students. The series helped to raise the profile of the UK's care sector, shining a light on the daily realities and responsibilities of carers and other frontline health and social care workers and exploring our students' motivation and ambitions for wanting to work in the care sector. Similarly, our collaboration with the UCL Vax Hub has enabled Science students to undertake nineweek industry placements, developing essential lab techniques and confidence for their future careers.

Biz4Biz continues to be instrumental in expanding these opportunities, and their support in bridging education and industry remains invaluable. I look forward to many more years of partnership and shared success.

www.nhc.ac.uk

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FOUR UNITARY COUNCILS TO BE CREATED FOR HERTFORDSHIRE

The Government has announced its decision on Local Government Reorganisation (LGR) in Hertfordshire, confirming it will create four new unitary councils, subject to parliamentary approval.

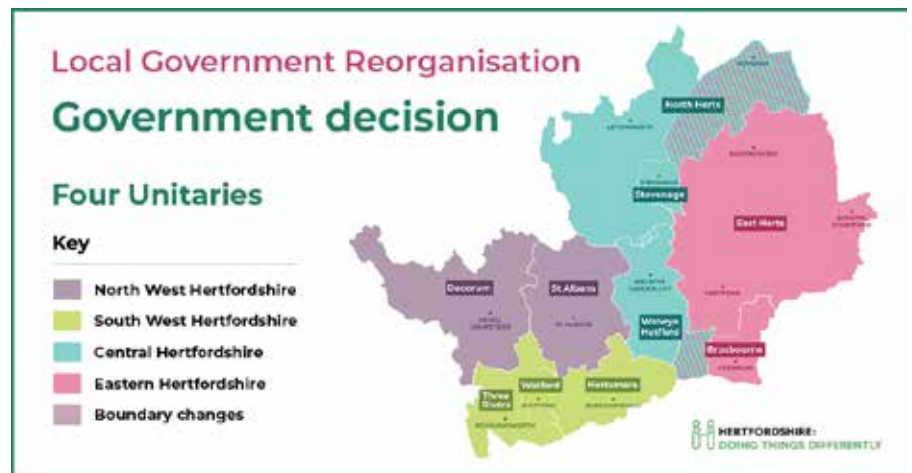
This means that from 1 April 2028 new authorities will take over responsibility for delivering the services currently provided by the county council and the district and borough councils in that area.

The new unitary authorities will be:

- North West Hertfordshire - serving the communities of the existing Dacorum Borough Council and St Albans City & District Council
- South West Hertfordshire - serving the communities of the existing Hertsmeire Borough Council, Three Rivers District Council and Watford Borough Council
- Central Hertfordshire - serving the communities of the existing North Herts Council (minus five district council wards), Stevenage Borough Council and Welwyn Hatfield Borough Council (minus the Northaw & Cuffley borough council ward)
- Eastern Hertfordshire - serving the communities of the existing Broxbourne Borough Council and East Herts District Council, plus the Northaw & Cuffley borough council ward from the existing Welwyn Hatfield Borough Council area and Royston Heath, Royston Palace, Royston Meridian, Ermine, Weston and Sandon district council wards from North Herts Council.

Outlining the reasons behind its decision, the Government said that the four unitary council model reflects Hertfordshire's distinct economic areas, the connection to local communities, a tailored approach to services and provides a strong foundation for devolution in Hertfordshire. Hertfordshire is seeking the establishment of a Strategic Mayoral Authority with a directly elected Mayor for Hertfordshire as soon as possible to help unlock the county's full potential. Local Government Reorganisation is an important step towards this.

The devolution of powers, funding and



"I believe this decision is the best option for Stevenage and for Hertfordshire"

decision-making away from central government to a locally elected Mayor will enable better decision making about key economic drivers specifically designed around what works best for Hertfordshire."

Cllr Richard Henry, Leader of Stevenage Borough Council said, "I believe this decision is the best option for Stevenage and for Hertfordshire. It simplifies services for residents, saves money, keeps the local in local government and will support growth and opportunity for our communities.

"I am pleased with the government's decision and welcome the clarity it provides. From the outset we have supported the four-council model, recognising it as large enough to secure meaningful efficiencies while remaining closely connected to the identities and priorities of our local communities.

"Over the past year we have built constructive partnerships with the other Hertfordshire councils, and we have worked closely together in preparation for a range of outcomes. Therefore, we

are well positioned to move forward with confidence.

"Our focus now is to ensure a smooth transition that safeguards local services and makes the most of the opportunities that reorganisation will create. We will continue to provide high-quality services right up until Stevenage Borough Council becomes part of the new unitary authority in April 2028."

Cllr Val Bryant, Leader of North Herts Council, said: "I'm pleased that the Government has decided to create 4 unitary authorities for Hertfordshire as this was the option supported by North Herts Council's Cabinet through our democratic process. "I'm looking forward to continuing to work positively with neighbouring councils to embed the new arrangements. Our Councillors now have a clear mandate to help guide our residents to the changes coming on the 1 April 2028."

All councils in Hertfordshire remain committed to ensuring residents continue to receive high-quality services now and in the future.

Elections to the new authorities will take place in May 2027. These elected councillors will help set up the new councils and operate in a "shadow" capacity ahead of the new authorities being established on 1 April 2028.

More information about Local Government Reorganisation in Hertfordshire can be found at www.hertfordshire-lgr.co.uk/

Rediscovering Ambition:

WHY NOW IS THE TIME FOR UK SMES TO REIGNITE THEIR GROWTH



For almost the last 20 years, a generation of British business has been quietly living within its means. Where American and Chinese entrepreneurs have borrowed optimistically against future growth, many UK SME owners have preferred to grow at the pace their cash flow allows — steady, cautious and largely debt-averse. How did we arrive at this mindset? Its worth examining, because it has a traceable root cause, and because the conditions that created it have now finally changed. The 2008 financial crisis hit every G7 economy, but the UK's recovery of business confidence lagged behind most of its peers for the best part of a decade. A significant part of the explanation lies in how British banks responded to the Basel II capital adequacy rules that followed the crash. Encouraged by creeping regulation, rather than simply meeting the new requirements, UK lenders arguably were encouraged to gold-plate them; building risk-weighting and provisioning practices more conservative than the regulation strictly demanded, and holding that stance long after the initial shock had passed. The practical effect was a decade-plus in which mainstream bank appetite for SME lending, particularly unsecured or growth-stage lending, simply was not there. Into that gap stepped private credit funds and

"A generation of business owners learned to run lean, avoid leverage, and treat growth ambition with caution"

alternative lenders — flexible, fast, but priced accordingly. For business directors weighing double-digit interest rates against uncertain returns, and often being asked to underwrite the debt through a personal guarantee, the maths, and the appetite, frequently did not stack up. Borrowing became seen as something to avoid rather than a growth-enabling tool to deploy. The cumulative effect on the UK economy has been significant. A generation of business owners learned to run lean, avoid leverage, and treat growth ambition with caution. A "subsistence" mindset quite different from the debt-fuelled expansion culture seen in the US, or the state-backed scaling seen in China. Balance sheets across the UK SME sector remain, on

average, notably under-levered relative to their growth potential.

The encouraging news is that this picture is changing now, and quickly. High street banks are visibly back in the game, with renewed appetite to lend to SMEs at sensible rates and on moderate terms. Offering asset-backed facilities for property and machinery, working capital, and, significantly for acquisitive owners, funding lines specifically for growth through M&A. Pricing is now more sensible and the appetite for structured, secured lending has returned in a way not seen since before the long-forgotten crash. Government policy is reinforcing the shift. The British Business Bank's Growth Guarantee Scheme, which provides lenders with a 70% government-backed guarantee, received a £6.5bn uplift in July, extending facility terms and widening eligibility criteria. This gives participating banks room to explore opportunities that do not perfectly fit their standard lending criteria.

For SME owners, this is worth pausing on. If your balance sheet has been under-leveraged for the best part of a decade out of habit rather than analysis, now is a sensible moment to ask whether that caution is still serving your business, or quietly capping it.

Barclays, among others, has earmarked billions in growth funding for UK SMEs — a conversation with your relationship bank costs nothing and may reveal more headroom for growth than you think. The macroeconomic implication is far greater than any single balance sheet. UK GDP growth can't be restored by government policy alone, but instead will be built deal by deal, investment by investment, by business owners choosing ambition over caution.

With affordable, accessible growth-finance now available again — on sensible terms, for those prepared to use it — the real question for every SME owner reading this is no longer whether the money is there, but whether a growth mindset is.

The restoration of Great Britain's growth ambition starts with each of us.

Hertfordshire Futures sets course for the county to become the UK's innovation heartland

Hertfordshire Futures has set out how it will accelerate economic growth, unlock investment, and deliver on the county's long-term ambitions – as leaders from across business, education, not-for-profit, and the public sector convened at the Investing in Hertfordshire's Future conference.

The event shifted the focus to delivery, with Hertfordshire Futures outlining its role in driving forward the county's newly launched Economic Strategy to 2036, with its vision for the county to become globally recognised as the UK's innovation heartland.

Opening the conference, Dr John Howie DL, Hertfordshire Futures Board Member, set out the scale of the ambition: "We're looking to grow the economy from £50 billion to £63 billion, to increase jobs in priority sectors to 270,000, and to support the delivery of 200,000 homes."

He emphasised that growth must result in tangible benefits to local communities. "Because frankly, growth only really matters if it's felt for the people that live here and the places they live in."

TURNING AMBITION INTO ACTION

The event heard that Hertfordshire Futures is now focused on translating its economic strategy into action – developing a pipeline of investable propositions to accelerate growth, unlock opportunity, and attract both private and public investment into the county.

This includes targeted action to support high-growth sectors such as life sciences, advanced manufacturing, digital and creative industries – alongside practical interventions to strengthen the wider economy and ensure opportunities are accessible to Hertfordshire's businesses and communities.

These include:

- establishing a taskforce to manage and maximise the impact of major infrastructure investment, including data centres and digital infrastructure
- supporting innovation and growth across priority sectors and business clusters



"We've grown by £10 billion in the last 10 years alone. We can deliver this – but the way we need to deliver it needs to change"

through collaboration with R&D partners

- strengthening globally significant industries such as defence and space and their supply chains
- helping more people into work by developing the foundational economy
- enabling high-growth businesses to scale internationally through export support and the global promotion of Hertfordshire

Neil Hayes, Chief Executive of Hertfordshire Futures, said: "We are a powerhouse economy. We've grown by £10 billion in the last 10 years alone. We can deliver this – but the way we need to deliver it needs to change."

He emphasised the importance of taking a broader view of the economy: "About two-thirds of the people employed in Hertfordshire aren't in those priority sectors – they're in the everyday economy, which is vitally important."

Hertfordshire Futures has committed £30 million investment over the next three years to drive this activity and unlock significantly greater levels of funding.

A STRONG FOUNDATION FOR GROWTH

The Sector Health Checks Panel reinforced Hertfordshire's competitive advantage, **with Professor Damian Ward, Dean of Hertfordshire Business School, highlighting the strength of its sector mix:** "If you look at Hertfordshire and you look at Government's industrial strategy, we've arguably got the most aligned sectors in this country – advanced manufacturing, pharmaceuticals, digital and creative industries... that's a fantastic base to start from."

Despite wider economic challenges, confidence in the county remains high: "It's really good to be in Hertfordshire. The opportunities here are immense." Innovation and global reach were also key themes. **Vanessa Viney, Head of Innovation at Airbus Defence & Space UK, said:** "We've built a Mars rover... spacecraft going to Mercury... a third of

geostationary satellites started here in Hertfordshire.”

She highlighted the importance of local supply chains in driving growth: “We (Airbus Defence & Space, Stevenage) have around 2,000 suppliers... about half of which are SMEs, and we really help them to grow.”

Investing in skills to power the economy. Developing the skills pipeline needed to support growth remains a central priority.

Mo Alavijeh, CEO of Pharmidex, highlighted the growing demand for advanced capability: “What we need are people who are not only scientists but also understand AI and machine learning – and that kind of talent is not easily available at the moment.”

Professor Anthony Woodman, Vice Chancellor of the University of Hertfordshire, reinforced the university’s role as a key local employer, driver of growth and enterprise, and partner in delivery: “We are a university for Hertfordshire... a major anchor institution with over 3,700 employees and 34,000 students, playing a central role in powering the county’s growth.”

Ensuring growth benefits everyone. A central theme of the conference was ensuring that economic growth is inclusive and benefits all communities.

Introducing the Next Gen and Next Steps panel, **Hertfordshire Futures Board**

Member Celia Taylor, Head of Media Trust Films and Under-represented Talent (Chair), inspired audiences: “If you’re a child, you dream of being an astronaut, a movie director, a cutting-edge scientist, a farmer. These are all jobs you can do in Hertfordshire. It’s an amazing county.”

And highlighted the urgency for inclusivity: “Youth unemployment is at its highest level in decades, and we still have a significant disability employment gap – so if we want growth, we have to address inclusion.”

Keely Siddiqui-Charlick MBE, CEO of Sunnyside Rural Trust, challenged organisations to act: “If you really believe you want Hertfordshire to be great, then ask yourself – where do you spend your money?... young people and people with disabilities need opportunity, and you may not realise your business has tons of them.”

Temi Fawehinmi, Head of Diversity and Inclusion at Hertfordshire County Council, also addressed misconceptions around inclusive employment: “Most reasonable adjustments cost less than £100 – but the cost of missing out on that talent is far greater.”

And reinforced the broader challenge: “Talent is not rare. It is opportunity that is rare – and it is for us to create that opportunity.”

SHAPING THE FUTURE WITH THE NEXT GENERATION

Young people also played a central role in the conversation, calling for a more active role in shaping the future economy:

Mohammed Kir-Allah, Development and Inclusion Lead, GSK; and Career Coach and Mentor, University of Hertfordshire, said: “AI isn’t just a risk – it creates opportunities. But young people need to be part of shaping how it’s used.”

He also issued an appeal to leadership: “Don’t make decisions about us without us.”

A COUNTY OF OPPORTUNITY

Closing the event, **Robert Voss CBE CStJ, Lord-Lieutenant of Hertfordshire, highlighted the county’s strengths and the importance of collective action:**

“Hertfordshire is incredibly diverse... and that diversity is one of our real strengths.” **Speaking on behalf of Hertfordshire Futures Chair, Adrian Hawkins OBE, he added:** “Hertfordshire possesses both the ambition and the capability to deliver and to do so collaboratively.”

He concluded with a call for collective action: “Success depends on how we all act and work together... so let’s make sure that Hertfordshire remains – and continues to build on – being the county of opportunity.”

Investing in Hertfordshire's Future



Don't Abolish Success:

WHY BRITAIN WAS WRONG TO SCRAP LOCAL ENTERPRISE PARTNERSHIPS



For fourteen years I have had the privilege of supporting Hertfordshire's Local Enterprise Partnership (LEP), working alongside outstanding business leaders, local authorities, universities, colleges and government departments to drive economic growth across one of the UK's most successful counties. Today, as Chair of Hertfordshire Futures, that work continues through its integration into Hertfordshire County Council. The name has changed, but the mission remains the same: creating opportunity, supporting business and delivering prosperity for our communities.

That is why the decision to abolish Local Enterprise Partnerships remains so difficult to understand.

LEPs were never designed to be political organisations. They were created to provide a direct connection between government and the businesses that create wealth, employment and innovation. They brought together people who understood local economies, local opportunities and local challenges far better than officials sitting hundreds of miles away in Whitehall.

Across Hertfordshire, that partnership model delivered exceptional results. Businesses, education providers and public sector organisations worked

together to improve skills, attract investment, support innovation, strengthen infrastructure and help thousands of businesses grow. The county became one of the UK's leading economic performers because decisions were increasingly shaped by those with first-hand knowledge of the local economy. The principle was simple but powerful: those closest to the economy are usually best placed to identify what it needs. Britain remains one of the most centralised countries in the developed world, with far too many important decisions controlled from Westminster. Successive governments have recognised this problem and spoken passionately about devolution, yet meaningful power has often remained firmly held at the centre.

The challenge has never been a shortage of capable local leadership. It has been the tendency of national governments to continually reorganise institutions before they have been given sufficient time to mature. Regional Development Agencies were abolished. LEPs followed. New structures emerged. Valuable expertise was dispersed, relationships had to be rebuilt, and institutional knowledge was repeatedly lost. Businesses value certainty,

consistency and long-term thinking. Constant restructuring achieves the opposite.

Thankfully, Hertfordshire has largely avoided losing that expertise. Through Hertfordshire Futures, we have retained the partnership between business and local government that made the LEP successful in the first place. Business remains at the heart of economic decision-making while benefiting from closer integration with the County Council and its wider public services.

This evolution demonstrates that successful organisations should be strengthened rather than discarded. If Britain is serious about improving productivity, attracting investment and creating sustainable growth, local leadership must be trusted with greater responsibility. National government should establish the framework and provide resources, but local economic priorities should be shaped by those who understand their places best.

The lesson from Hertfordshire is clear. Long-term partnerships between business, education and government deliver results. They build confidence, attract investment and create lasting prosperity. The objective should never be to continually reinvent the machinery of economic development, but to give successful local partnerships the stability, powers and confidence to deliver over decades rather than political cycles.

Economic growth is not created in Whitehall. It is created in our towns, cities, businesses and communities. The role of government should be to empower those places—not repeatedly reorganise them. Hopefully this will be where Andy Burnham MP PM places his support.

ADRIAN HAWKINS OBE

Chairman - biz4Biz
Chairman - Hertfordshire Futures Board
Chairman - Stevenage Development Board
Chairman - Hertfordshire Skills & Employment Board



BUSINESS BOARD NETWORK STARTS TO DELIVER

The Government has promised to “move power and money out of Westminster, into every postcode in Britain” and to “retain a buffer to protect us against uncertainty”. The Business Board Network and its members are ready to help turn that ambition into delivery. Across the country, experienced business leaders are giving their time to strengthen local economies, unlock potential and improve lives.

Government’s role is to provide the right economic and regulatory framework. If it does, business will invest and create the jobs that drive growth. Whatever the Chancellor’s first Budget contains, a stronger buffer against uncertainty would be welcome. Business needs confidence to plan, yet the past decade has brought repeated disruption: seven prime ministers in ten years, shifting ministers and strategies, repeated initiatives, new ten-year plans, fresh funding pots and constant reviews of business support.

Yet business has shown extraordinary resilience, adapting to political and policy swings. Business Boards and their equivalents, including the Business Alliance envisaged by Andy Burnham in Manchester, have endured because they are effective, valued and rooted in the local leadership devolution needs. They are proof of business as a force for good, keeping growth at the heart of local decision-making.

Whatever their label, Business Boards are central to devolution and are recognised through the English Devolution Accountability Framework. They are the only locally appointed forums that bring together Mayors, business leaders, the representative organisations such as the Chambers of Commerce, the CBI, FSB, universities, FE colleges, elected representatives, the third sector and unions in pursuit of growth. Drawn from businesses of every size and sector, their shared asset is deep regional insight and a commitment to give time and expertise freely, to make a difference.

They have survived because they are essentially apolitical, add value and

"The Business Board Network and its members are ready to help turn that ambition into delivery"

give local government an independent business voice. They bring commercial rigour to investment decisions and help ensure projects are delivered and outcomes achieved. Brought together by the Business Board Network, they are a collective force capable of accelerating growth.

In 2012, Lord Heseltine’s “No Stone Unturned: In Pursuit of Growth” made 89 far-reaching recommendations to rebalance the British economy by shifting power, funding and responsibility from Whitehall to local areas and the private sector. That led to Local Enterprise Partnerships. In 2024, with Network CEO Mark Livesey, I briefed Lord Heseltine on the evolution of LEPs into business boards for his book, “From Acorns to Oaks, an urgent agenda to rebuild Britain”. As my good friend Adrian Hawkins argues in his article, many of the same challenges remain unresolved, while repeated tinkering and reviews have diverted scarce resources from the local economies where they are most needed.

I am immensely proud of my time as Chair of Hertfordshire LEP and of seven years chairing the LEP Network, now the Business Board Network. I am proud of what colleagues across the country achieved with minimal working capital while managing more than £20bn of complex programmes, often despite significant restrictions. I am also proud of what my successor, Adrian, continues to achieve with Hertfordshire Futures. We have shown what business leaders can deliver for local economies, with resilience

in the face of repeated attempts to weaken our voice. We have done it the business way: through delivery.

As the Prime Minister and his team set out their stall, government should resist the urge to change things yet again and give the devolution structures we have worked so hard to build the chance to bed in and work. Let’s not waste this hard-won asset. Let’s enable it properly this time, with clear policy and appropriate funding. Do that, and business will do the rest. As the national catalyst for business boards, the Business Board Network will share best practice, help colleagues learn lessons once, embed the best of business in local decision-making, provide a simple channel to Ministers and Senior Officials, and give the Chancellor confidence that every precious pound can deliver maximum value.

They say a rolling stone gathers no moss. This time let’s stop shifting the stones around and start building with them. If government gives Business Boards stability, clarity and the means to act, business will bring the leadership, pace and delivery our local economies need. Let’s leave no stone unturned, not in another review, but in pursuit of the growth our country needs and our people deserve.



ABOUT THE AUTHOR

Mark Bretton MBE TD DL FCIEx is Chair of the Business Board Network that brings together business boards in England. He is the previous Chair of the Hertfordshire LEP and had a 40 year career in business. He was awarded an MBE in the 2023 Birthday Honours List for services to business, the economy and to charity, especially during Covid 19.



Britain's Next Medical Revolution Will Not Be Built on Pharmaceuticals Alone

Cambridge will continue to discover tomorrow's medicines. Hertfordshire could help deliver tomorrow's cures. Britain's Life Sciences Strategy must recognise the difference. GSK's announcement of a £400 million investment in a new global Research and Development centre on the Cambridge Biomedical Campus is welcome news. It reinforces Britain's standing as a world leader in pharmaceutical research and confirms Cambridge's position as one of the most important centres of biomedical discovery anywhere in the world. The investment will bring together more than 1,000 scientists within one of Europe's largest biomedical campuses, surrounded by internationally renowned universities, teaching hospitals, biotechnology companies and artificial intelligence specialists. Few locations can rival Cambridge's ability to generate scientific discovery. Yet the announcement also highlights

"Increasingly, the greatest breakthroughs will not come from developing another medicine designed for the masses"

a strategic question that Britain cannot afford to ignore. Are we investing as confidently in the future of medicine as we are in its past? For more than a century, pharmaceutical companies have transformed healthcare through medicines manufactured for millions of patients. Antibiotics,

vaccines, cardiovascular drugs and cancer treatments have extended life expectancy across the globe and remain fundamental to modern medicine.

However, medicine is entering a fundamentally different era. Increasingly, the greatest breakthroughs will not come from developing another medicine designed for the masses. They will come from therapies created for individual patients using their own cells or genetic material to correct the underlying cause of disease itself.

This is not simply the next chapter of pharmaceutical development. It represents a different application of medical science.

Traditional pharmaceuticals largely manage disease, control symptoms or slow progression. Cell and Gene Therapies increasingly seek to repair, replace or reprogramme the body's own biological systems, offering the possibility of long-term remission and, in some

cases, genuine cures for conditions that conventional medicines have never been able to overcome.

One only has to look at Autolus, established in Stevenage, whose pioneering CAR-T cell therapies harness a patient's own immune cells to fight certain forms of leukaemia. For patients who had exhausted conventional treatment options, this technology has demonstrated that personalised medicine can achieve outcomes that traditional pharmaceuticals alone could not. This is precisely why Hertfordshire deserves greater national recognition. Over the past decade, Stevenage has quietly become one of the world's leading centres for Cell and Gene Therapy. The Cell and Gene Therapy Catapult, Stevenage Bioscience Catalyst and an expanding community of advanced biotechnology companies have created one of the most sophisticated ecosystems for developing, manufacturing and commercialising personalised therapies anywhere in Europe.

Confidence in Hertfordshire's future extends beyond Stevenage. The opening of Hertfordshire Medical School at the University of Hertfordshire this September, the county's first medical school, will help develop the future workforce needed by the NHS while strengthening capacity for health and social care research and innovation. This builds on the University of Hertfordshire's established strengths in teaching, research and enterprise across health, social care and the life sciences, supporting advances in patient outcomes and delivering benefits for local communities.

The University has long-standing strategic partnerships across the county, including with the Cell and Gene Therapy Catapult and Stevenage Bioscience Catalyst, and works closely with innovative businesses such as ImmuONE, the Stevenage-based biotech company, that transforms cutting-edge academic research into real-world solutions for industry clients.

Through partnerships with organisations including North Hertfordshire College in Stevenage, the University is also creating clear progression routes into careers in the life sciences sector, supporting a diverse and highly skilled future workforce. Alongside this, the University's £103 million Health Innovation Campus,

"Hertfordshire is becoming a nationally significant centre where education, research, advanced manufacturing, clinical practice and commercial innovation converge to shape the future of healthcare"

opening in 2028, will create world-class facilities for educating healthcare professionals, advancing medical research and strengthening collaboration between universities, the NHS and industry. These are not isolated investments. Together they demonstrate that Hertfordshire is becoming a nationally significant centre where education, research, advanced manufacturing,

clinical practice and commercial innovation converge to shape the future of healthcare.

This should not become a debate about Cambridge versus Hertfordshire.

Cambridge excels in scientific discovery. Hertfordshire is increasingly demonstrating how those discoveries can be translated into advanced therapies, commercial manufacturing and life-changing patient treatments.

Together they create a complete innovation pathway—from laboratory discovery to personalised cure.

Government's forthcoming Life Sciences Strategy should therefore look beyond individual locations and recognise the emergence of a Cambridge–Hertfordshire Life Sciences Corridor. Such a partnership would combine one of the world's greatest centres of scientific discovery with one of the world's most exciting centres for advanced therapies and healthcare innovation.

Britain's ambition should not simply be to discover more medicines.

It should be to lead the world in developing treatments that eliminate disease altogether.

If Cambridge helps discover tomorrow's science, Hertfordshire is increasingly showing how Britain can transform that science into cures.

That is the future of medicine—and it is a future Britain must choose to lead.



The Rise of Artificial Intelligence Careers:

WHAT THE FUTURE JOB MARKET LOOKS LIKE

Al is changing who UK businesses hire, and for what. New job titles are appearing on organisation charts that did not exist five years ago, from Prompt Engineers to Chief AI Officers. The World Economic Forum's Future of Jobs Report 2025 ranks Artificial Intelligence (AI) and Machine Learning (ML) Specialists among the fastest-growing roles worldwide. At home, the UK government's AI Opportunities Action Plan (January 2025) has set a national target to scale AI

"For UK business leaders, the question is no longer whether to hire for AI, but for which roles, at what level, and how soon"

capability and talent at pace.

For UK business leaders, the question is no longer whether to hire for AI, but for which roles, at what level, and how soon. This article maps the AI careers your business should plan for now.

WHY UK BUSINESSES ARE CREATING NEW AI ROLES

Three forces are driving the shift.

The first is investment and sector growth.

The UK government's AI Sector Study identifies more than 3,000 active AI



companies in the UK, generating around £10 billion in AI-related revenues. With AI named as a strategic growth sector, UK businesses will increasingly compete with the public sector and well-funded scale-ups for the same talent.

The second is adoption. [McKinsey's State of AI 2025](#) finds that 78 percent of organisations now use AI in at least one business function. The leaders in that group are appointing dedicated AI leaders and creating new roles inside business units, not just inside IT.

The third is regulation. The UK has set out a [pro-innovation, principles-based approach](#) to AI, coordinated across regulators such as the [ICO](#), [FCA](#), and [CMA](#). Any UK business selling into the EU also falls under the [EU AI Act](#). Together with the international standard [ISO/IEC 42001](#) (certified in the UK through [BSI](#), [NQA](#), [LRQA](#), [SGS](#), [DNV](#) and other [UKAS](#) accredited bodies), these rules have turned AI governance into a defined business function, with named roles, budgets, and reporting lines.

The Emerging AI Job Titles to Know AI roles fall into three groups: people who build AI, people who apply it inside the business, and people who govern it. The table below lists the most common emerging titles in each group.

Emerging AI Job Title	What the Role Focuses On
AI Automation Lead	Builds or adapts AI tools and models for the business.
AI Project Owner	Decides which AI features or tools to adopt and tracks whether they're delivering value.
AI System Coordinator	Makes sure AI tools connect properly with existing business systems and customer-facing channels.
AI Governance Lead	Responsible for AI risk, compliance, and ethical use, often a part-time addition to an existing role rather than a dedicated.

PUTTING AI TO WORK IN THE BUSINESS, AND KEEPING IT IN CHECK

For most small and medium-sized

"With the UK government targeting AI as a strategic growth sector, competition for this talent will only intensify."

businesses, this is where things are growing fastest, and it's also where owners often don't realise just how much is changing. New roles are popping up to manage AI day to day. Someone needs to own how AI tools are being used and whether they're delivering results. Someone needs to write and refine the instructions that make these tools work well, a job that barely existed a few years ago. And someone needs to make sure AI tools, data, and existing systems all fit together properly. Other people might focus purely on how customers experience chatbots or AI assistants. None of this requires a computer science degree. It's mostly about good judgement and understanding the business, which is exactly why SMEs can often fill these roles by upskilling existing staff rather than hiring expensive specialists.

At the same time, new rules and regulations mean businesses need someone keeping an eye on the risks, making sure AI is used responsibly, safely, and legally. Larger companies are hiring a dedicated Chief AI Officer for this. Most SMEs won't need to go that far, but it's worth making sure someone on the team is clearly responsible for AI governance, even if it's just one part of their existing job.

AI Ethics and Responsible AI Leads embed fairness and transparency into how AI is built. AI Governance and Compliance Managers align AI use with [ISO/IEC 42001](#) (standard for establishing, implementing, and continually improving an Artificial Intelligence Management System), and the [ICO's guidance on AI and data protection](#). AI Auditors provide independent assurance.

WHAT THIS MEANS FOR YOUR BUSINESS

For the executive team: AI talent strategy is now part of business strategy. The UK government's AI Opportunities Action Plan signals a national push that will tighten the labour market further. Decide which AI capabilities to own and which to buy, and sequence the build, apply, and govern hires in that order. If you operate in a regulated sector or sell into the EU, budget for at least one named AI risk role within the next 12 months.

For HR and talent leaders: Stop treating AI as a single skill. Build distinct hiring tracks for each of the three groups above, and link them to existing pay bands and career ladders. The [WEF reports that 85 percent of employers plan to prioritise workforce upskilling by 2030](#), and that 39 percent of workers' core skills will change in the same period. Internal pathways are cheaper than open-market hiring, and faster.

For employees: Build a visible portfolio that shows you have used AI to solve a real business problem. Industry certifications from [AWS](#), [Microsoft](#), [Google](#), and [IBM](#) map to specific role families, and [BCS](#), [BSI](#), [ISACA](#), and [IAPP](#) all offer UK-recognised AI governance and audit credentials aimed at the new risk roles.

CONCLUSION

The rise of AI careers is not one trend but three: a deeper technical core, a fast-growing layer of applied AI roles, and an entirely new AI risk and governance profession. With the UK government targeting AI as a strategic growth sector, competition for this talent will only intensify. The question for UK business leaders is no longer whether AI will reshape your workforce, but which of these three AI job families belongs on your org chart first, and what it will cost to get there ahead of your competitors.

FURTHER INFORMATION

1. [AI Opportunities Action Plan](#) — Department for Science, Innovation and Technology (UK), January 2025.
2. [The Future of Jobs Report 2025](#) — World Economic Forum, January 2025.
3. [The State of AI: How organizations are rewiring to capture value](#) — McKinsey & Company, 2025.



AIRBUS FORECASTS TRAFFIC GROWTH DRIVEN BY URBANISATION AND INCREASED CONNECTIVITY MADE POSSIBLE BY AIRCRAFT EFFICIENCY

Urbanisation and GDP growth are driving long-term air travel demand according to Airbus' 2026-2045 Global Market Forecast (GMF). In the next 20 years, urbanisation is shifting to smaller cities. With a rise in middle classes and the diaspora this will lead to new city pairings made economically viable thanks to increasingly efficient aircraft and growing passenger traffic volumes. Not only is aviation essential for the transportation of high value, quick to market goods, aviation also connects people for a multitude of reasons across the globe, providing an economic lifeline to many communities. Networks are decentralising. The number of smaller urban centres will grow at a significantly faster pace than larger ones, reflecting shifting urban populations. Alongside aircraft efficiencies the Airbus GMF forecasts expanding connectivity beyond trunk routes to smaller and medium city-pairs. Routes such as Riga-Tenerife or Melbourne-Alice Springs can be already efficiently served by aircraft like the A220. Enhanced aircraft range is also opening new city pairs, allowing direct connections. Such routes include Lisbon-Recife with the A321neo, Dublin-Nashville with the A321XLR, Algiers-Kuala Lumpur with the A330neo and Taipei-Phoenix with an A350. Airbus product strategy echoes market demand. This is evident in Airbus' record

"By 2045, the middle class demographic most likely to fly will increase by 1.4 billion people (+34%)"

order book which stands at some 9,000 aircraft, underpinning the full product production rates from the A220 to the A350, including rate 75 for the A320. Currently, over 70% of the A320 Family backlog is for the largest A321neo and XLR, ideal aircraft for new city pairs. Higher capacity routes can be served by the A330neo and the longest haul routes by the A350. The A350 is also proving extremely popular in the quick to market cargo segment, with the Freighter variant. Passenger traffic growth remains resilient. By 2045, the middle class demographic most likely to fly will increase by 1.4 billion people (+34%). Global air traffic is robust and inextricably linked to world economic growth as well as people's desire to travel. Short term disruptions like regional conflicts and high fuel prices are not dampening demand long term as historic data shows. In the next 20 years, the Airbus GMF forecasts passenger

traffic to grow 3.9% annually, thanks to global GDP growth (+2.6%), rising urban populations (+1.3 billion) and increasing middle classes. By 2045, air traffic will more than double, reaching about 10 billion passengers per year. Mirroring an economic shift toward the Asia-Pacific (APAC) region, demand is evolving accordingly. Traffic patterns are evolving due to robust growth in developing economies like India, Vietnam, Indonesia and Malaysia. A significant evolution includes increased international migration and family-related passenger travel (VFR: visiting friends and relatives). Demand for new efficient aircraft continues to be strong. Of the requirement of 42,060 aircraft in the next 20 years to compensate for 19,820 aircraft replacements of older aircraft and 22,240 for growth, some 81% will be single aisle and 19% widebodies. This reflects the continued trend for more cost- and CO₂-efficient aircraft. Fleet renewal and record replacements are driving efficiency. Post-COVID fleet aging is accelerating replacement demand, especially favouring fuel-efficient, flexible, new-generation single aisle and widebody aircraft to profitably open both low-density and longer-haul routes. By 2045, Airbus forecasts the percentage of the global fleet that will be made up of the newest generation aircraft will reach almost 100% from around 39% in 2026.

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Good Growth Needs More Than Good Intentions

Andy Burnham's address set out an ambitious vision for Britain—one built not on the concentration of power in Westminster, but on trusting local communities, businesses and civic leaders to shape their own futures. Whether one agrees with every proposal or not, his central argument deserves serious consideration.

For decades, governments of every political persuasion have promised to rebalance the economy. Yet the United Kingdom remains one of the most centralised democracies in the developed world. Decisions affecting towns, cities and counties are still too often made hundreds of miles away by people with little understanding of local opportunity or local challenge.

Burnham's answer is devolution on a scale not previously attempted. His proposal for a "No. 10 North" and a decade-long mission to raise living standards recognises something many business leaders have argued for years: sustainable growth cannot simply be instructed from Whitehall—it must be enabled locally.

His concept of "good growth" is particularly noteworthy. Economic success should never be measured solely by GDP. It should also be reflected in secure employment, affordable housing, modern infrastructure, thriving high streets, effective transport, strong technical education and opportunities for young people. Growth should improve the daily lives of residents, not simply increase national statistics.

Many of the proposals echo what successful regional partnerships have already demonstrated. Where business, education, local authorities and civic organisations work together around a shared vision, investment follows, skills improve and confidence grows. Greater Manchester has become one such example, but similar partnerships are emerging across counties including Hertfordshire, the West Midlands, Tees Valley and elsewhere.

"Ultimately, the real test of any political vision is whether it can improve living standards over the long term"

Perhaps the most significant aspect of Burnham's speech was his challenge to political culture itself. Calls for collaboration over confrontation, long-term planning over short-term headlines, and problem-solving over political point-scoring are difficult to disagree with. Britain faces too many structural challenges—from productivity and housing to skills and infrastructure—to allow politics to remain trapped in perpetual conflict.

Of course, vision alone is not enough. Delivering meaningful devolution requires government departments to relinquish power they have traditionally guarded. It requires accountability, fiscal responsibility and clarity over where responsibility sits. Local leadership must also demonstrate that devolved powers

lead to better outcomes.

The emphasis on industrial strategy, sovereign manufacturing, apprenticeships and social value within public procurement also reflects a growing consensus that public investment should deliver wider economic benefits. If taxpayers fund infrastructure, communities should expect lasting returns in jobs, skills, local supply chains and business growth.

Ultimately, the real test of any political vision is whether it can improve living standards over the long term. Britain's productivity gap, regional inequalities and infrastructure challenges have developed over decades and cannot be solved overnight. But they will be even harder to solve if decision-making remains concentrated in Westminster.

Whatever one's political perspective, the broader message is difficult to ignore. Britain's future prosperity will depend less on which department controls the purse strings and more on whether every region, city, town and community is genuinely empowered to build its own success. If "good growth in every postcode" is to become more than a slogan, the next decade must be one in which government trusts local leaders, businesses and communities not simply to implement policy—but to help create it.





Care Home Residents Enjoy Memorable Visit to Oaklands College Zoo

Oaklands College was delighted to welcome residents from Woodlands View Care Home in Stevenage and River Court Care Home in Watford for a heartwarming zoo visit at the College's St Albans Campus. The visit brought together residents, staff and students for a memorable day filled with animal encounters, learning opportunities and community connection.

On arrival, residents were warmly welcomed by members of the Oaklands College Marketing Team, alongside Ellie from the Animal Management department and T Level students Jacqui and Lucy, who supported and guided activities throughout the day. Their enthusiasm, care and knowledge helped create a positive and engaging experience for everyone involved. During the visit, residents had the opportunity to meet and learn about a wide variety of animals and insects, including snakes, turtles, pigs, sheep, lambs, goats, owls, meerkats, rabbits, birds and spiders. Students provided insightful commentary throughout the tour, sharing their knowledge and answering questions, adding an



educational element to the experience. One of the standout moments of the day was the opportunity for residents to meet and interact with the baby lambs, which brought great joy to both residents and staff.

Feedback from attendees was overwhelmingly positive, with resident Barbara Creber sharing: "Thank you, Oaklands. I'm so glad I was

able to attend the visit. I've loved every second of it."

The visit highlighted the importance of community engagement and the positive impact meaningful experiences can have across generations. Oaklands College is proud to continue creating opportunities that bring together students, local organisations and the wider community in such a positive and inspiring way.

KING'S BIRTHDAY HONOURS RECOGNISE HERTFORDSHIRE'S LEADERS, INNOVATORS AND CHANGEMAKERS

Hertfordshire residents have been recognised in The King's Birthday Honours 2026 for their outstanding contribution to public service, education, healthcare, business, justice, sport, and community life.

This year's honours celebrate a diverse group of 20 leaders, innovators, and volunteers recognised for services ranging from children's oral health and emergency care to digital skills, clean energy, offender rehabilitation, education, and homelessness support.

Among those honoured is Hertfordshire Futures Board Member Chris Hulatt CBE, Co-Founder of Octopus Group, who has been awarded a CBE for services to Entrepreneurship.

We extend our warmest congratulations to Chris and all those honoured, and thank them for their contribution to the county and beyond.

KNIGHTHOOD

KNIGHT BACHELOR

The Right Honourable David Michael Gauke – Chair of the Independent Sentencing Review. For services to the Justice System – Rickmansworth

COMMANDER OF THE ORDER OF THE BRITISH EMPIRE (CBE)

Christopher Neil Jones – Director, Home Office. For Public Service – St Albans

Helen Jane Palmer – People Director, Department for Science, Innovation and Technology. For services to the Public and Charity Sectors – St Albans

Julia Natasha Pyke – Joint Managing Director, Sizewell C Ltd. For services to the UK Nuclear Energy Industry and other Clean Energy Technologies – Hitchin

OFFICER OF THE ORDER OF THE BRITISH EMPIRE (OBE)

Dr Urshla Devalia – President, British

Society of Paediatric Dentistry. For services to Children's Oral Health – Watford

Dr Nicola Jayne Rose – Interim Executive Director of Science and Research, Medicines and Healthcare Products Regulatory Agency. For services to Science and Public Health – Waltham Cross

Professor Susan Elizabeth Sentance – Research Professor and Director, The Raspberry Pi Computing Education Research Centre, University of Cambridge. For services to Education – Royston

Nicholas Guy Wilkinson – Lately Chief Executive Officer, Dunelm. For services to the Retail Sector – Hemel Hempstead

Richard John Willmott – For services to the Construction Industry – Letchworth Garden City

MEMBER OF THE ORDER OF THE BRITISH EMPIRE (MBE)

Audrey Valerie Beale JP – Trustee and Chair, Hertfordshire Association for the Care and Rehabilitation of Offenders. For services to the Rehabilitation of Offenders and to the Administration of Justice – St Albans

Tom Fogden – Chief Operating Officer, Ada National College for Digital Skills,

London. For services to Further Education – Sawbridgeworth

Clifford William Jones – For services to Welsh Football – Waltham Cross

Chloe Kelly – For services to Association Football – Hitchin

Dr Simon James Lewis – Medical Director, Magpas Air Ambulance. For services to Emergency Care – Baldock

Kerry Lesley McCafferty – Chief People Officer, St Mungo's. For services to Charity and to People Leadership – Watford

Paul Rawlinson – Lately Chair, Barts Charity. For services to Health Sector Charities – Harpenden

John Paul Rochford – Liveryman, Worshipful Company of Gardeners. For services to Horticulture – Hertford

Alessia Mia Teresa Russo – For services to Association Football – Radlett

Heather Jayne Spence – Interim Chair for Northern Ireland, Royal British Legion. For voluntary services to Veterans – Ware

BRITISH EMPIRE MEDAL (BEM)

Pauline Jenifer Odbert – Volunteer Store Manager, New Hope. For services to Homeless People in Watford – Watford

Explore the [full list of honourees](#).



BREXIT WAS THE RIGHT CHOICE.

The numbers show the UK is stronger, more independent, and trading with the world.

- ✓ **Exports are higher.**
Average annual exports rose from \$710bn before 2016 to \$899bn after.
- ✓ **Global, not just European.**
EU share of exports fell from ~46% before Brexit to ~41% after—while total exports grew.
- ✓ **Taking back control works.**
Brexit delivers the freedom to set our own rules, secure our borders, and strike new trade deals.



Business Builds Britain

Brexit remains one of the most contested political decisions in modern British history, yet the economic record since the 2016 referendum provides a credible defence of the decision to leave the European Union. Average annual UK exports before the referendum stood at approximately \$710 billion. In the decade following the vote, that figure rose to roughly \$899 billion per year, despite the severe disruption caused by the COVID-19 pandemic. While critics often highlight individual trade frictions, the broader picture suggests that Britain retained its position as a major global trading nation outside the EU. Before Brexit, approximately 46% of UK exports went to the European Union. In the years following Brexit, that proportion declined to around 41%, reflecting a diversification of British trade toward global markets beyond Europe. At the same time, total exports still increased overall in monetary value, particularly in services such as finance, technology, legal expertise, and consulting. Imports also followed a similar pattern. Average annual UK imports rose from approximately \$820 billion before Brexit to around \$1.01 trillion afterward. Prior to Brexit, around 53–55% of imports

"Before Brexit, approximately 46% of UK exports went to the European Union"

came from the EU, whereas post-Brexit this reduced to approximately 48–50%. Although the EU remained Britain's largest trading partner, the UK increasingly sourced goods and services from the United States, Asia, and emerging international markets. Supporters of closer EU alignment, including Wes Streeting and Andy Burnham, have increasingly argued for rebuilding stronger institutional ties with Europe, while critics suspect Sir Keir Starmer's government is gradually steering Britain back toward EU structures. Much of the political argument now centres on practical inconveniences such as passport queues, travel friction, and mobility restrictions. These concerns are genuine, but they are relatively minor

when weighed against the constitutional issue that motivated many Brexit voters: democratic accountability and the right for the UK Parliament to control laws, borders, and trade policy independently. Brexit has not been without shortcomings. Smaller exporters have faced additional bureaucracy, some industries experienced labour shortages, and trade with the EU became administratively more complex. However, opponents often overlook that the UK economy simultaneously expanded service exports, strengthened trade relationships beyond Europe, and demonstrated resilience during one of the most difficult global economic periods in generations. The central Brexit argument was never simply about convenience. It was about sovereignty, national decision-making, and long-term flexibility. Measured against those objectives, and alongside the continued strength of UK exports and imports, there remains a strong case that leaving the European Union was the correct decision for Britain.

ADRIAN HAWKINS OBE

Chairman - biz4Biz

Chairman - Hertfordshire Futures Board

Chairman - Stevenage Development Board

Chairman - Hertfordshire Skills & Employment Board



Natalie with her classmates

Natalie Cassidy enrolls at local college for new BBC series

As part of a BBC One and iPlayer series, Eastenders star Natalie Cassidy enrolled at a leading Hertfordshire further education college to fulfil her lifelong ambition to become a qualified carer.

'Natalie Cassidy: Caring Together' follows Natalie's experience studying a BTEC in Health and Social Care at North Hertfordshire College's Stevenage campus, alongside a group of their current students.

The series aims to raise the profile of the UK's care sector, with each episode shining a light on the daily realities and responsibilities of carers and other frontline health and social care workers. Natalie and her classmates often reflect on their own personal experiences. They explore their motivations and ambitions for wanting to work in the care sector, such as Natalie's time caring for her own father, to a classmate's experience of being a young carer since the age of four. Throughout the documentary, viewers will

"It's an honour for North Hertfordshire College to be supporting the BBC in raising the profile of the care sector"

see how Natalie and her North Hertfordshire College classmates are taught and then apply their classroom learning to their placements at real-life care settings.

To prepare students for their industry placements, Health and Social Care tutors delivered theory and hands-on practical sessions in the College's NHS-standard mock hospital ward and fully equipped independent living space.

Principal and CEO of North Hertfordshire

College, Kit Davies, commented: "I am incredibly proud to see North Hertfordshire College's Health and Social Care provision showcased in 'Natalie Cassidy: Caring Together'.

"I'd like to say a huge thank you to the BBC, Big Mountain Productions, and Natalie Cassidy for their hard work in producing this series with our college. It's an honour for North Hertfordshire College to be supporting the BBC in raising the profile of the care sector.

"Another big thank you to our fantastic tutors and our employer partners for their ongoing commitment to the development of our students, which has been highlighted in every episode of the documentary. Through a combination of teaching expertise, and amazing collaborations with employer partners, audiences will see exactly how NHC Health and Social Care learners gain essential practical care skills and empathy needed to enter the healthcare sector.

"On behalf of everyone at NHC, a heartfelt

thank you to the inspiring Health and Social Care students who feature in the series. Each of you represent North Hertfordshire College fantastically. It's clear to see your mature approach to tackling difficult subjects and your unwavering commitment to the sector." Cheryl Hall, Deputy Head of Health and Social Care at NHC, added:

"We're so proud of our students who appeared in the series. As a college, we know that our staff, students, and facilities are brilliant, but it's amazing to have the opportunity to show just how brilliant they are to a wider audience.

"It was a true privilege to welcome Natalie Cassidy into this year's Health and Social Care cohort to help her achieve a lifelong ambition. Just watching Natalie gain confidence in her caring abilities with every lesson and placement experience has been such a rewarding experience for our team.

"Seeing just how much this qualification means to Natalie has reminded us all why we do the job we do."

Reflecting on her time studying at North Hertfordshire College, Natalie Cassidy said: "I loved every second of studying at the College. Walking back into education wasn't easy, but the tutors and students made me feel so welcome and I slotted in very quickly. The college is bustling with energy and enthusiasm, full of hard-working great people. I'm honoured to have been a part of it."

NHC Health and Social Care student, Tilly, who is featured in the series, added: "It was really great to study with Natalie at the College, she was so easy to get on with. We loved it when she brought her acting skills to the classroom when we were doing role play, she could be a very realistic patient! It's been great to be a part of this journey with her and show what it's really like to study and work in care."

'Natalie Cassidy: Caring Together' will cover Natalie's North Hertfordshire College journey from enrolment to results day, providing real insight into the College's Health and Social Care training provision, as well as the work they do with a wide range of local health employer partners.

BBC's Caring Matters Week shone a light on the experiences of unpaid carers and the role they play in families and communities across the country.



**Principal and CEO of
North Hertfordshire
College, Kit Davies**



VISIT HERTS BRINGS HOSPITALITY SECTOR TOGETHER TO ADDRESS SKILLS CHALLENGES AND FUTURE OPPORTUNITIES

Through its Hospitality Forum, Visit Herts is creating a stronger voice for Hertfordshire's visitor economy, connecting businesses with support, and helping them prepare for opportunities ahead.

At Visit Herts' latest Hospitality Forum, hotel operators, attractions, venues, and other visitor economy businesses convened at Sopwell House (St Albans) to discuss workforce development, skills, and sector priorities.

The forum is part of Visit Herts' commitment to helping businesses respond to current challenges and ensuring they are well placed to maximise growth opportunities on the horizon. This includes the rising popularity of screen tourism, increasing demand for domestic short breaks, the expansion of London Luton Airport, and the development of the Universal United Kingdom Resort in Bedfordshire.

The theme, Building Skills: Strengthening Hospitality, was chosen in response to issues raised by businesses during the first forum which took place earlier this year. Skills, recruitment, and workforce development emerged as some of the sector's most pressing concerns, affecting overheads, productivity, and growth potential.

As the UK's third-largest employment sector, hospitality plays a vital role in creating jobs, developing skills, and supporting social mobility. It is one of the largest employers of young people, accounting for around 40% of first jobs and providing more apprenticeships than any other sector. With 80% of managers not holding a degree, it also offers significant opportunities for inclusive career progression and talent development. Despite this, many businesses continue to face challenges recruiting and retaining staff, particularly in a competitive labour market. This is exacerbated by rising employment costs, skills shortages, and the need to develop future talent pipelines.

The forum helped address these concerns by connecting businesses with practical



"Hospitality plays a vital role in Hertfordshire's economy"

support available through Hertfordshire Futures' family of services, which Visit Herts is part of, to help employers attract, develop, and retain talent.

This includes:

- **Hertfordshire Opportunities**, which supports employers through apprenticeships, Skills Bootcamps, the Connect to Work and Youth Guarantee programmes, and the HOP portal where businesses can promote vacancies and connect with local talent.
- **Step2Skills**, which supports businesses to adopt inclusive hiring practices and reap the benefits of a diverse workforce.
- **Hertfordshire Careers Hub**, which supports employers to build future talent pipelines through its Modern-Day Work Experience programme.

- **Invest Hertfordshire**, which supports businesses looking to expand and relocate to Hertfordshire, and monitors growth opportunities across the county's priority sectors.

Daria Godding, Visitor Economy Manager at Visit Herts, said:

"The Hospitality Forum is about more than bringing businesses into a room. It's about addressing the challenges they face, strengthening local partnerships, and helping them prepare for the opportunities ahead. Hospitality plays a vital role in Hertfordshire's economy. By working together and building a stronger voice for the sector, we can ensure a more skilled, resilient, and competitive visitor economy."

As the Hospitality Forum continues to grow, Visit Herts is strengthening its role as the voice of Hertfordshire's visitor economy – connecting businesses, championing the sector, and supporting its growth trajectory.

UPCOMING HOSPITALITY FORUM DATES:

October 2026
January 2027



Building Future Talent:

#GETCAREERREADY AT OAKLANDS COLLEGE

In today's fast-changing employment landscape, success requires far more than qualifications alone. At Oaklands College, our mission is to prepare every learner not only for work, but for a rewarding and sustainable career, and for life beyond education. We achieve this by recognising every student as an individual and supporting them within a professional, contemporary and community-focused environment. This personalised approach enables learners to develop the confidence, resilience and ambition needed to thrive after education. As Andrew Slade, Principal and CEO, reflects: "At Oaklands, we believe education is more than a stage of life – it's the foundation for every future ambition." Central to this is our #GETCAREERREADY programme, developed in direct response to employer expectations and designed with industry partners to reflect real workforce needs. It underpins the student experience across the College, equipping learners with the knowledge, skills and real-world experience needed to progress into their next steps with a clear advantage. Through employer-led opportunities, students can benefit from a range of outcomes: work experience placements, routes into employment and apprenticeships. Employers increasingly

look beyond qualifications alone, seeking individuals who demonstrate communication, adaptability, initiative and enterprise, and our approach ensures students are genuinely workplace ready. A key strength of Oaklands College is its close collaboration with employers, which sits at the heart of our #GETCAREERREADY programme. Working with more than 2,500 organisations and through our Industry Boards, which bring employers and educators together, we ensure our curriculum remains aligned with current and emerging skills needs and reflects real workforce priorities. These partnerships create clear progression routes through apprenticeships, workforce training,



Skills Bootcamps and levy-supported programmes, while also strengthening employability across Hertfordshire. Just as importantly, they provide meaningful exposure to real working environments, directly reinforcing #GETCAREERREADY by bridging the gap between education and employment.

Employers can be part of #GETCAREERREADY by joining the Oaklands College Employer Advantage Scheme. Free to join, the scheme offers flexible opportunities to engage with students through mentoring, guest speaking, work experience, live projects and other activities tailored to sector needs and business capacity. This reciprocal model creates mutual benefit: learners gain valuable insight, experience and confidence, while employers help shape the future workforce and access a talent pipeline of career-ready students for apprenticeships, work experience placements and part-time employment opportunities.

Through #GETCAREERREADY and its embedded employer partnerships, Oaklands College is helping to develop a skilled and adaptable workforce, get involved today by emailing Ollie.Watts@oaklands.ac.uk

SBC's late CEO
Dr Sally Ann
Forsyth OBE DSc



OBITUARY: Dr Sally Ann Forsyth OBE DSc

Dr Sally Ann Forsyth OBE DSc was one of the UK life sciences sector's most respected and influential leaders, dedicating her career to supporting science, innovation and collaboration across the scientific community. Throughout more than three decades in the sector, she played a significant role in helping ambitious science flourish in the UK, supporting generations of entrepreneurs, researchers and growing companies, and championing the translation of scientific discovery into real world impact.

Sally Ann passed away peacefully at home on Saturday 2 May following a long illness. Her passing will be deeply felt across the life sciences community and by the countless colleagues, partners and organisations whose lives and careers she influenced over many years.

Originally from Bathgate in Scotland, Sally Ann studied Genetics and Biological Sciences at The University of Edinburgh before completing both an MPhil in Genetics and a PhD in Biotechnology and Molecular Biology at the University of Cambridge. Alongside her scientific training, she also qualified as a chartered management accountant, allowing her to bring together an unusual mix of scientific, strategic and commercial expertise throughout her career.

Over more than three decades, Sally Ann held multiple influential leadership roles across science, innovation and research commercialisation. Sally Ann's career included almost 18 years at Unilever, joining the company as a management trainee in agribusiness after completing her PhD. Whilst there, she held several senior positions including Director of

Colworth Science Park and Principal of Unilever Ventures Life Sciences. Sally Ann later became Director of Science Parks at Goodman International, overseeing the strategic development of Harwell and Colworth Science Parks, before serving as Chief Executive Officer of Norwich Research Park.

In 2018, Sally Ann joined Stevenage Bioscience Catalyst (SBC) as Chief Executive Officer, where she led the organisation through a significant period of growth and development. Under her leadership, SBC strengthened its position as one of the UK's leading life science innovation campuses, supporting pioneering therapeutics companies working across areas including oncology, neuroscience, cell and gene therapy and rare disease.

Sally Ann cared deeply about supporting

early stage health innovation and helping next generation science reach patients who needed better treatments. She became known for bringing together academia, industry, investors and government to help create the right environment for scientific innovation and entrepreneurship to thrive. Generous with her time and knowledge, Sally Ann was always willing to support others and share advice. Beyond her national contribution to the life sciences sector, she enjoyed playing an active role across the communities in which she worked, including board positions on Local Enterprise Partnerships in Oxfordshire, East Anglia and Hertfordshire, alongside longstanding involvement with UKSPA. Sally Ann was also recognised as one of the early female leaders within a traditionally male led sector and believed strongly in creating opportunities for future generations entering the life sciences industry. Fairness, collaboration and supporting talented people regardless of background remained values she championed throughout her career.

Sally Ann was awarded an OBE for services to business and science in the 2020 New Year Honours in recognition of her longstanding contribution to UK life sciences, innovation and entrepreneurship.

Her outstanding contribution was further recognised in 2023 through the award of an honorary Doctorate of Science (DSc) from the University of Hertfordshire.

Professor Jackie Hunter CBE, Chair of the SBC Board, said:

“Dr Sally Ann Forsyth OBE DSc made an extraordinary contribution not only to Stevenage Bioscience Catalyst, but to the wider UK life sciences sector. She cared deeply about supporting innovation, collaboration and scientific progress, and her leadership, insight and generosity will be remembered by many across our community and beyond.”

The team at SBC, together with colleagues and friends from across the life sciences community, has been deeply moved by the many tributes shared following Sally Ann’s passing. On 1 July 2026, SBC hosted a memorial ceremony where colleagues, collaborators, friends and family gathered to celebrate her life through personal reflections, readings and the planting of a Celtic rowan tree in her memory.

OBITUARY: Julie Newlan

Students and former colleagues at the University of Hertfordshire have been mourning the loss of Julie Newlan, who has died at the age of 68.

A senior manager at the University, she rose to be deputy vice-chancellor. Her time at the university is particularly remembered for two key initiatives: the establishment of a medical school that is due to receive its first group of students later this year, and the forging of a marketing team in the university’s international department that has helped to make it one of the most popular destinations for foreign students.

Although born in London, Julie attended Hatfield girls grammar school, after which she worked for a publishing company and as a hotel manager. Taking on managerial posts at Guinness Retail Holdings and the retailing company Martins, she then became a senior consultant for Fifth Dimension, a management consultancy firm specialising in market gap analysis and strategic market positioning, with a particular focus on the healthcare sector.

She joined the University of Hertfordshire in 1996 and was appointed dean of the university’s business school in 2006, then pro-vice-chancellor for business, marketing, communications and international development in 2011, and deputy vice-chancellor in 2022, a position she held until her retirement in 2024.

Made MBE in 2014 for services to higher education, she was appointed a professor in enterprise development in higher education in 2019.

Julie was also active in Hertfordshire LEP and was a chair of the board of trustees of the Bishopsgate Institute in London after retirement.





The Puppet Company celebrates 25 years of fun in Hamleys display!

FIRST-EVER PUPPET COMPANY WINDOW DISPLAY HIGHLIGHTS
JOY OF PUPPETS FOR SIX MAGICAL SUMMER WEEKS

Hitchin business The Puppet Company has taken centre stage at Hamleys Regent Street this summer with its first-ever dedicated window display, celebrating 25 years of puppets, imaginative play and family fun. The installation transformed one of the world-famous Hamleys windows into a magical puppet-filled summer scene for visitors to discover in the heart of London. The display in Window One of the shop's four main window sections, celebrated the company's 25th anniversary in one of the most famous toy stores in the world. To mark the occasion, a very special guest unveiling the window alongside The Puppet Company's family team: Elmer, the much-loved patchwork elephant. Elmer is a core part of The Puppet Company's character offering, bringing his stories and his message of

"This display is perfect for the carefree summer months"

individuality, kindness and self-expression to life for children and families through play. The display, entitled 25 Years of Fun!, featured puppets from The Puppet Company in a magical, summery funfair scene, at the centre of which puppets play on an enchanting moving Ferris wheel with puppets in the seats, while a hot air balloon floats in the background. In the foreground viewers could spot

colourful sock puppets and hand puppets, monkeys, monsters and more – Eagle-eyed visitors may also spot a selection of familiar characters hidden throughout the display. Families are encouraged to look closely as they explore the window, with several well-loved faces making surprise appearances amongst the puppets, creating an extra layer of discovery and delight.

There's even a nod to the forthcoming World Cup in the shape of three puppet lions playing football!

The display will also be a wonderful reminder of the long-standing relationship between Hamleys and The Puppet Company. There's even a replica of the iconic and much-loved Hamleys Puppet Theatre, which runs puppet shows using The Puppet Company's puppets. The replica theatre also includes special

moving puppets to create more magic and even more fun for everyone!

The Hamleys Puppet Theatre, one of the most popular family attractions within the Regent Street store, hosts daily puppet performances throughout the year and welcomes visitors from across the UK and around the world.

All the puppets showcased in the Window One display can also be found in the large area of the ground floor devoted to The Puppet Company, centred around the Puppet Theatre and loved by children and adults alike.

The display is a combined effort, bringing together Hamleys' highly experienced team with The Puppet Company's founders the Lockey family and its own talented team to produce a window that brings to life The Puppet Company's mission to bring fun to everyone, expressed through its founding motto "Have a puppet – have fun!"

William Hamley opened his toyshop in London 1760. The signature building in Regent Street, London opened in 1881 to cope with demand. Today the shop, at 188-196 Regent Street, is known throughout the world for its seven wondrous floors of all the best toys and games. Hamleys as a global brand is currently trading across 13 countries with 175 stores.

Keane Herman, Head of UK Retail

Trading at Hamleys, says: "This display is perfect for the carefree summer months. We're delighted to be working with our friends at The Puppet Company on this marvellous project – especially as they celebrate 25 years of bringing puppets – and fun – to children and adults across the globe."

Sue Lockey, Owner & Co-Founder, The

Puppet Company, says: "Like many other families, we have fond memories of the whole family visiting Hamleys over the

years. Being a regular supplier to the famous shop and helping with its puppet shows has been a wonderful experience – but being in the window is a dream come true. It's something that my husband and our late co-founder Peter Lockey would have absolutely loved: bringing the magic of our puppets to life!"

Alice Milner-Watt, Head of Brand, Andersen Press, which publishes Elmer's adventures, says:

"We're thrilled that Elmer will feature in the wonderful Hamleys window display. It's a fantastic celebration of imagination, storytelling and the joy of bringing stories to life with puppets and play." The display will be visible to the millions of visitors who pass through Regent Street each year and forms part of Hamleys programme of immersive in-store experiences, bringing together toys, entertainment and family fun in the heart of London's West End.



UK COMPANIES COULD DO MORE TO STRENGTHEN CRITICAL SUPPLY CHAINS, REPORT FINDS

UK companies can play a bigger role in strengthening the nation's critical supply chains, but barriers including procurement complexity, limited visibility of opportunities and buyer engagement prevent many from doing more, finds survey.

The findings from the new UK Supply Report by the Critical Supply Group (CSG) show that almost three-quarters of the surveyed UK suppliers to critical sectors are capable of providing further support. The report comes at a time when supply chain resilience is an increasing priority for governments and businesses, following conflict in the Middle East, the war in Ukraine, and other ongoing shifts in global geopolitics.

Critical sectors are the foundational systems, assets, and networks that are vital for a society and economy to function. They include health, defence, transport and energy infrastructure.

Headline findings from the UK Supply Report 2026 include:

- Almost three quarters of surveyed UK companies that supply a critical sector (74%) believe they could supply more, with defence, civil nuclear and space the most commonly identified.
- Procurement and tendering complexity (67%) is the biggest barrier preventing companies from supplying more to critical sectors, followed by limited visibility of opportunities (64%) and limited buyer engagement (39%)
- Energy is the operational dependency companies rely on most, ahead of transport and communications, underlining its importance to the resilience, competitiveness and security of UK supply chains.
- Europe is regarded as the UK's most trusted international supply partner, with 62% of companies identifying it as offering the most secure and reliable supply, ahead of the United States (27%) and China (18%).
- Access to critical inputs remains stable for most businesses but is becoming more



constrained. Companies experiencing a change were almost four times more likely to report access deteriorating than improving.

George Middleton, Co-Chair, Critical Supply Group and Director, MAP UK & International, said:

"Supply chains are fundamental to national resilience, security and growth. This report highlights significant capability and willingness within the UK supply base, with many businesses that could play a greater role in supporting the nation's critical sectors. "The UK is a trading nation and we will continue to depend on and support trusted international partners, but we also need strong domestic capability. "Through the Critical Supply Group, we bring together leading companies, government, academia and other stakeholders to produce and share information, build connections and enable collaboration. This helps support policy, procurement and investment decisions to strengthen the critical supply chains on which our daily lives depend."

The UK Supply Report is based on a survey of almost 200 businesses of all sizes and was delivered by MAP UK & International in collaboration with organisations including Made in Britain, the All-Party

Parliamentary Manufacturing Group, Chartered Institute of Procurement & Supply (CIPS), Confederation of British Industry (CBI) and Federation of Small Businesses (FSB), as well as organisations representing a range of critical sectors including healthcare, aerospace, defence, logistics and technology.

In the UK, government policy reflects the growing need to strengthen supply chain resilience through interventions such as the establishment of a Supply Chain Centre and ongoing procurement reform.

Minister of State at the Department for Business and Trade, Sir Chris Bryant MP said:

"At a time of global uncertainty, secure supply chains are vital to our continued prosperity and growth.

"UK companies need to be at the forefront of our critical supply chains, and with the Supply Chain Centre, we now have an extra string to our bow to ensure our world-leading global trade status is protected."

The UK Supply Report sets out a range of other practical recommendations for government, public operators, strategic suppliers, major buyers and SMEs. These include further strengthening strategic procurement and processes, improving supplier visibility, making better use of existing UK capability, supporting



resilience planning and deepening understanding of critical supply chains. Many major buyers and operators of Critical National Infrastructure are actively reviewing procurement and supply chain strategies as resilience becomes an increasingly important commercial and strategic priority.

John Pearce, Chief Executive of Made in Britain said: "British manufacturing has never lacked capability. Across the UK there are thousands of businesses already supplying world-class products into healthcare, energy, defence, transport and countless other sectors. The question isn't whether we can make it here, but whether we're making the most of what British industry can offer.

"Global trade will always be essential, but recent events have reminded us that resilience matters. Buying British isn't about turning our backs on the world, it's about building stronger domestic supply chains, creating confidence through trusted relationships and recognising the wider economic and social value that British manufacturers deliver every single day."

Ben Farrell, CEO of the Chartered Institute of Procurement & Supply (CIPS) said: "This report sends a clear message: the UK already has much of the capability it needs to build more resilient supply chains, but we are not yet making full use of it. Procurement has a critical role to play in connecting UK capability with commercial opportunity, strengthening national resilience and ensuring that security, competitiveness and growth are considered together. In an increasingly uncertain world, resilient supply chains are no longer simply an operational issue – they are a strategic national priority."

John Foster, Chief Policy and Campaigns Officer at the Confederation of British Industry (CBI) said: "The resilience of the UK's critical supply chains is built on the expertise, capability and commitment of UK businesses. Businesses are ready to play a bigger role in supporting the UK's critical sectors, but they need procurement processes to give

capable suppliers greater visibility of opportunities. By working in partnership, government and industry can strengthen resilience, boost competitiveness and drive long-term economic growth and security."

The report's findings have been shared with the UK Government and collaborating industry organisations via a dedicated briefing. They were also introduced at the latest in an ongoing programme of Critical Supply Group roundtables, which bring together supply chain leaders from many of the UK's most strategically important companies alongside government representatives. These initiatives are helping to bridge resilience policy and industry practice across critical supply chains.



The full UK Supply Survey & Report 2026 is available at:
www.criticalsupply.group/uk-supply-report-2026

The Critical Supply Group welcomes collaboration with businesses, government, academia and other organisations committed to strengthening critical supply chains. The Group will continue to build on this work through future Supply Surveys & Reports, ongoing industry engagement and practical initiatives that strengthen resilience, readiness and long-term competitiveness.

For information about the UK Supply Survey & Report, the Critical Supply Group, partnership opportunities or other enquiries, visit www.criticalsupply.group or email info@mapukinternational.com.





Elle - Community Associate



Karolina - Community Manager



Jay - Sales Manager



Gigi - Resident mood-booster

New kids in town?

NOT QUITE — JUST THE CO-SPACE
ST ALBANS COMMUNITY TEAM!

With the launch of our newest site, we're excited to give you a closer look at what's waiting for you at Co-Space St Albans and more importantly, who makes it all happen. The phone rings, and it's Elle who answers, our friendly Community Associate and often the first voice you'll hear. Elle's favourite part of the role is interacting with new and exciting clients and making them feel welcome from the moment they arrive which brings energy and warmth to the space every day. Working alongside her is Karolina, our Community Manager, who keeps everything running smoothly behind the scenes. Karolina especially enjoys helping members settle in during their move-in process, creating a warm and welcoming experience that truly elevates life at the site. You'll also spot Jay, our Sales Manager, who's regularly on-site helping clients find the perfect workspace. Jay's favourite part of the job? Help companies find their ideal office space that, in turn, provides a launch pad for

their growth throughout their time as a Co-Space Member and allows them to focus on what's important, while removing the hassle of managing an office space daily. And of course, no introduction would be complete without our four-legged team member. Meet Gigi, our resident mood-booster who's always ready to brighten your day. Be sure to say hello when you visit! Beyond the team, Co-Space St Albans is all about community. From monthly events that bring members together to the simple pleasure of a good cup of tea or coffee (on us!), there's always something to enjoy. Whether you're a member or just stopping by, the kettle's always on. With spring in full swing, our roof terrace is quickly becoming a favourite spot. The perfect place for getting some work done or catching up with fellow members under the sun. It's a little reminder that work and wellbeing can go hand in hand. We'd love to welcome you soon — come by, meet the team, and experience everything Co-Space St Albans has to offer. Tea and coffee on us.

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YTKO APPOINTED TO LEAD NEXT CHAPTER OF HERTFORDSHIRE GROWTH HUB

Hertfordshire Futures has appointed YTKO as the new provider of its Hertfordshire Growth Hub business support service, effective Thursday 14 May, following a competitive procurement process. Hertfordshire Futures has appointed YTKO as the new provider of its Hertfordshire Growth Hub business support service, effective Thursday 14 May, following a competitive procurement process.

Businesses will continue to access the same expert, impartial support through the Growth Hub, with no change for service users as a result of this transition. YTKO Ltd is one of the UK's leading business support providers, with over 45 years' experience in delivering high-impact business support, skills, and growth programmes. It has supported more than 30,000 businesses and 70,000 individuals nationwide, helping to create jobs, improve productivity, and strengthen local economies. Most recently, it has delivered the Growth Hub for the Cambridgeshire & Peterborough Combined Authority (CPCA) and the Suffolk element of the New Anglia Growth Hub.

The Hertfordshire Growth Hub service was previously delivered by a consortium of partners led by Exemplas Ltd., together with the University of Hertfordshire and Hertfordshire Chamber of Commerce.

Adrian Hawkins, Chair of Hertfordshire Futures, said: "Over the last decade, our Growth Hub has made a major contribution to the county's economy. It has supported more than 14,000 businesses, worked with over 150 partners, and helped to create and safeguard over 2,800 jobs during a period of significant economic turbulence. We are grateful to Exemplas and consortium partners for their leadership, commitment, and impact over this period."

Lee Hughes, CEO of YTKO, said: "We are delighted to be partnering with Hertfordshire Futures to deliver the Hertfordshire Growth Hub and support businesses across the county. SMEs are the backbone of the local economy, and our focus will be on providing practical, high-quality support that helps businesses grow, innovate, and adapt with confidence. "We look forward to building on the strong foundations already established and working collaboratively with partners, stakeholders and the business community to maximise economic impact across Hertfordshire."

Future priorities

Hertfordshire's Economic Strategy sets a bold ambition for the county to become the UK's innovation heartland by 2036. To meet this goal, our focus has evolved from volume to impact – with greater emphasis on actively supporting businesses with

strong growth potential through a more targeted advisory offer.

However, the Growth Hub will remain the primary gateway to business support in Hertfordshire through its triage and signposting service. It will also continue to prioritise business resilience, helping SMEs respond to the challenging economic climate.

Strong relationships with the wider business support ecosystem will remain a priority. The Growth Hub will work closely with local and national delivery organisations to ensure businesses are connected to the most appropriate support at every stage of their growth journey.

The Growth Hub plays an integral role within Hertfordshire Futures' wider business support offer, working alongside programmes such as Get Enterprising and the upcoming Creating Growth programme to provide a comprehensive pathway for businesses – from start-up and early-stage development through to scaling and innovation-led growth. We look forward to working with YTKO to build on the Growth Hub's strong foundations and to support businesses in Hertfordshire to innovate, accelerate, and thrive.

Visit: hertsgrowthhub.com

Call: 01752 936065

Email: enquiries@hertsgrowthhub.com

Herts returns to Watford FC's sleeve as Hornets unveil retro-inspired new kit

The University of Hertfordshire is proudly back on the sleeve of Watford FC's brand-new home kit for the 2026/27 season – a striking retro design inspired by one of the most iconic eras in the club's history. Revealed ahead of the new Championship season, the "History Reloaded" shirt takes its inspiration from Watford's famous mid-1980s kits, featuring the club's traditional yellow colours with bold red and black chest bands.

Eagle-eyed Hornets supporters will spot the University of Hertfordshire logo on the left sleeve, as the University continues its long-standing role as Watford FC's official higher education partner.

Stephi Brett-Lee, Chief Marketing Officer at the University of Hertfordshire, said:

"Can't wait to see the new kit on display throughout the season. Come on you Horns!"

"It's fantastic to see Herts back on the sleeve of Watford FC's new kit. Our partnership is built on shared values – championing opportunity, supporting our communities and inspiring the next generation across Hertfordshire and beyond. As the new season approaches, we're delighted to continue our

relationship with one of the county's most recognisable sporting institutions and look forward to another year together."

The new shirt combines nostalgia with a fresh look for 2026/27. Produced by technical partner Kelme, it pays tribute to the Watford sides of 1985-88 while introducing new front-of-shirt sponsor BOXT.

Stephi added: "Whether cheering from the stands at Vicarage Road, following from afar or studying at Herts, supporters will be able to wear a shirt that celebrates both the club's rich heritage and its future ambitions. We wish everyone connected with Watford FC every success and can't wait to see the new kit on display throughout the season. Come on you Horns!"



MAJORITY OF VOTERS IN EAST OF ENGLAND DISAGREE WITH CHANGING PRIME MINISTER SO FREQUENTLY

A new MRP poll has revealed that over half (59%) of voters in the East of England think it's a bad idea to keep changing Prime Minister so frequently, with just 7% saying it was a good thing.

The growing frustration with the political instability comes as Labour launches a new leadership contest, with Andy Burnham the front runner to take over as Prime Minister following Kier Starmer's resignation.

The research, conducted by Ipswich-based communications agency PLMR Genesis in partnership with Electoral Calculus, also reveals the East of England is becoming increasingly politically fragmented with Reform being squeezed by Labour, the Conservatives and Restore Britain.



SEAT BY SEAT POLLING

Whilst Reform were polling at 32% in April in the region, this fell to 26% in June. During that same period, support for Labour has increased from 14% to 21%. Similarly, the Conservatives have seen their vote share rise from 11% to 20%. For the first time, the polling also includes Restore Britain which is currently polling at 6% in the East of England. This suggests they are taking votes away from Reform. The seat by seat breakdown reveals, if an election were held tomorrow, the Conservatives would win the most seats in Essex with 9, followed by Reform with 7, Labour with 1, and the Liberal Democrats with 1. In Suffolk, Reform would lead with 4 seats, followed by the Conservatives on 3, and Labour with 1.

In Norfolk, Reform and the Conservatives would both win 3 seats, followed by Labour with 2, the Liberal Democrats with 1, and Restore Britain with 1. In Cambridgeshire, the Liberal Democrats would finish with 3 seats, followed by the Conservatives on 2, Reform on 2, and Labour on 1.

A HUNG PARLIAMENT

At a national level, support for Reform

has also fallen whilst Labour and the Conservatives are starting to recover. Labour and Reform are currently tied on 22%, with the Conservatives close behind on 20%.

Despite this, no party is on course to secure an outright majority. Instead, the polling points towards a hung Parliament, with Labour projected to win 217 seats, the Conservatives 151 seats, and Reform 127. A party needs to win 326 seats to hold a majority which means a coalition with the Liberal Democrats and the Greens, with 72 and 30 seats respectively, still wouldn't be enough for any party to get over the line.

QUOTES AND INSIGHT

Commenting on the latest findings, **Tim Miller, Managing Director of PLMR Genesis, the East of England team for PLMR, said:** "One of the clearest messages from this polling is that voters in the region are tired of the political instability in Westminster. Whatever their political views, most people don't think regularly changing the person at the top is good for the country. They want the government to focus on delivering, rather than constantly resetting.

"Interestingly in the East of England we're seeing support for Reform fall, with Labour and the Conservatives recovering ground. The emergence of Restore Britain appears to be squeezing Reform's vote share. However, no party is yet close to securing enough support to govern alone. This leaves the political outlook as open and unpredictable as it has been since the last election."

Martin Baxter, founder of Electoral Calculus, said: "Our figures show that if a general election were held now, it would result in a hung parliament where even a three-way coalition of Labour, the Liberal Democrats, and the Greens would fall short of a majority.

"For the first time, Restore Britain has been included in our polling, and they are cutting directly into Reform's vote share. That leaves Nigel Farage fighting on two fronts, with the Conservatives also recovering ground. Meanwhile, Burnham's return to Westminster has given Labour a boost, but only time will tell if he can persuade a pessimistic public that another spin of No 10's revolving door will deliver progress, or if it will just leave the country going in circles."

biz4Biz

OUR biz4BIZ APP IS AVAILABLE FOR YOU TO DOWNLOAD!

The app offers a number of exciting features with networking at its heart, allowing you to build meaningful connections with like-minded individuals and businesses within our vibrant community.

We are also renowned for our variety of curated magazines which each offer a unique perspective on topics ranging from business to lifestyle. You can use the app to explore Insight, Sustainable Biz and Manufacturing Biz and see these stories and this rich multi-media experience come to life.

The app also moves you closer to a wide range of biz4Biz events and not only offers seamless registration but allows you to manage your attendance and access full event details from one centralised platform.

While making sure you never miss any of our must-attend events, the app also ensures that you completely maximise all of our exclusive membership packages and fully benefit from all of our enhanced features.

Finally, as you would expect from a cutting edge organisation, we also keep you informed instantly, allowing you to access the latest news and breaking stories in the region and around the world.



 **CLICK HERE** to download from the **Apple App Store**

Global Events, Local Effects and Your Exit

An unprecedented number of private company owners are now considering selling their businesses. Are you?

Running a profitable business with a sizeable revenue and workforce is no small achievement. For most owner-managers, it represents decades of early mornings, difficult decisions, and hard-won relationships. But if you're in your mid-to-late fifties or beyond, there's a question that has probably started surfacing with increasing frequency: what happens next?

It's a question that today's economic conditions are making harder to ignore.

"The best exits are planned, not reactive. In a volatile world, that planning horizon matters more than ever."

According to a recent survey by Shawbrook Bank, surveying more than 500 senior UK SME owners, over 40% are already considering an exit from their business within the next five to ten years — with 17% saying they will definitely do so. When asked how they would prefer to exit, private sale and acquisition jointly topped the list, among 55% of respondents.

The World Has Changed — Again
The conflicts in Ukraine and the Middle

"Hundreds of thousands of profitable, well run businesses risk disappearing not because they failed, but because no succession was ever planned."

East have redrawn the global energy map in ways that continue to reverberate through UK supply chains and input costs. Oil and gas volatility is feeding stubbornly persistent inflation. Coupled with a rising tax-burden, it's squeezing margins across manufacturing, logistics, professional services, and retail alike. Interest rates are still oscillating at levels that constrain business investment and dampen buyer confidence in certain sectors.

For business owners of a certain vintage — those who have already weathered the 2008 financial crisis, Brexit, and the pandemic — this latest wave of uncertainty may prompt a different kind of reflection. Not panic, but pragmatism. If the business is performing well today, how long is that window likely to remain open? And are you prepared to ride out another cycle, or would you rather exit from a position of strength?

The Succession Gap Nobody Talks About

Across the UK and Europe, there is a quiet but profound challenge unfolding. Hundreds of thousands of profitable, well-run businesses are owned by founders approaching retirement age with no clear succession-plan in place.

Many will, sadly, simply close. Staff will lose their jobs. Customer relationships will evaporate. Decades of enterprise value will be destroyed — not because the business failed, but because no transition was ever properly planned.

This is not inevitable. But it does require action, and it requires finding the right kind of successors to own and operate such businesses.

Owner-Operators: A Better Kind of Exit

The conventional assumption is that selling a business means engaging a City advisory firm, enduring a protracted process, and ultimately handing over to a trade acquirer or a private equity house that will strip out costs and flip the asset within five years. For many founders, that prospect is deeply unappealing.

There is, however, a growing cohort of acquisition entrepreneurs — ambitious, commercially astute individuals who are actively seeking to acquire and operate established businesses. They are not financial engineers. They want to lead, build, and preserve. For a retiring founder who cares about their people and their legacy, a sale to an owner-operator can be the most satisfying exit imaginable.

Turnkey Succession

BizCrunch was built precisely for this moment. Its AI-powered platform connects established UK business-owners with serious acquisition entrepreneurs, streamlining the entire succession process from valuation and deal preparation through to completion.

The model is designed to make highquality M&A advisory accessible to businesses that have historically been underserved by traditional intermediaries — and to do so with speed, intelligence, and discretion. It is "Turnkey Succession". You've built something valuable. BizCrunch helps you transition it in the right way, to the right person, at the right time.

The Time to Start Is Now

Waiting for certainty — geopolitical, macroeconomic, or personal — is a strategy that rarely serves business owners well. The best exits are planned, not reactive. In a volatile world, that planning horizon matters more than ever. If you're generating revenues of £3 million or more and succession is beginning to occupy your thinking, the first step costs nothing.

Visit bizcrunch.co/sell to begin your Turnkey Succession journey.

THE CHARITY HUB

Supported by
The Lord-Lieutenant of Hertfordshire

The Charity Hub at Leavesden, supported by the Lord Lieutenant of Hertfordshire, is a collaborative office space at [Warner Bros. Studios Leavesden](#) for local charities, offering reduced-rate desks, networking, and modern facilities to foster partnerships and support community impact, with organisations using it as a base for services.

It provides charities with affordable space to work alongside each other, share resources, and connect with businesses, enhancing their effectiveness in the Watford and surrounding areas.



Forever Young People strive to be at the heart of our community and to be flexible and responsive in our approach. We aim to inspire individuals to feel valued, empowered, and confident in their abilities and to motivate individuals Educationally, Socially and Emotionally. [CLICK HERE](#) for more information



Herts Schools Outreach (HSO) is a mental health charity that works with schools to support and empower all children and young people, across the UK, who are at risk of poor mental health to recognize early warning signs and prevent them from escalating in crises.



Home-Start Watford and Three Rivers helps families in Watford, Three Rivers and Hertsmere, with at least one child

under 5, deal with the challenges they face. We intervene early to support parents as they learn to cope, improve their confidence and build better lives for their children.

[CLICK HERE](#) for more information



Supporting local residents back into employment. This support will include: At Bridge The Gap Hub we provide helping hand for job applications and CVs, providing interview tips and training for successful job applications. We provide mock interview practices. Bridge the Gap supports businesses by providing recruitment and selection training for companies.

Companies also benefit from training for issues such as work place anxiety and depression, Providing support to local businesses, social enterprises and charities helping them to identify talents within the community. Support for recruitment best practice by Linking businesses with local residents, running recruitment events in the community, company and in partnership with local schools and supporting the local job centre, assisting with job advertisement [CLICK HERE](#) for more information



Keech Hospice Care is an all-age hospice, providing care for children with a life-limiting condition from Bedfordshire, Hertfordshire & Milton Keynes, and adults from Bedfordshire, and their loved ones. The hospice was built for the community by the community. It has been caring for adult patients for over 30 years and child patients for over 20 years. We provide a

range of services both within our hospice buildings in Streatley and now in Bedford, but more extensively out in our local community.



Watford & Three Rivers Trust W3RT has worked for 50 years, which we will celebrate in May 2024, to ensure that our community benefits from voluntary groups that are welcoming, effective, accountable and sustainable, and to ensure that people can contribute to the design and delivery of the services on which they rely. Our vision is of a thriving community in which people are prosperous, informed, connected and take responsibility for the wellbeing of themselves and others. W3RT lead the CVS service supporting charities with fundraising, governance and providing support, advice, partnership opportunities and guidance to ensure their ongoing success. With support from key partners and donors, we have raised and distributed nearly £1m to local charities and have supported our member organisations to raise more than £1m. Charity Registration number: 1085518 E: llch@w3rt.org T: 01923 216950



Mediation Hertfordshire is a not-for-profit organisation that started in 1998 in the Borough of Dacorum in Hertfordshire to support people experiencing conflict in the community. Since that time, we have extended our reach across the County and now offer mediation and conflict resolution services to those experiencing disputes in the community, the family, in schools and in the workplace. We also offer training about conflict resolution. [CLICK HERE](#) for more information



Electric Umbrella believes that there is no such thing as normal! Through their work, they have created a vibrant community dedicated to empowering learning disabled and neurodivergent people through creativity and connection.

[CLICK HERE](#) for more information



Say it with a Smile is a registered Charitable Incorporated Organisation (1203759) supporting people diagnosed with dementia and their loved ones in Watford and the surrounding areas. We were granted charitable status in June 2023 and were honoured to have the Lord Lieutenant of Hertfordshire attend and speak to our 70 guests at The Grove Hotel. A substantial number of our Smile guests and Carers attended the launch alongside key partners such as the Alzheimer's Society, W3RT, Hertswise (Mind), Mayor Peter Taylor and Luther Blissett OBE.

[CLICK HERE](#) for more information



Sunnyside Rural Trust is a charity and social enterprise supporting young people and adults with learning disabilities and those on the autistic spectrum with training and employment services. We offer wellbeing support, animal care, training, work experience, paid roles and job coaching. Our social enterprises include gardening, design and plant growing, making our produce, cafés and farm shops and so much more. We have horticultural sites across Dacorum, St Albans and Three Rivers and offer outreach across Hertfordshire.

[CLICK HERE](#) for more information



A Project of W3RT. Supporting the business community of Watford and West Hertfordshire. Helping our members develop their businesses, and bring benefit to the wider community in which they trade. Connecting Commerce with Community

[CLICK HERE](#) for more information



Former Players Club has been created by the original Rocket Men and Golden Boys who rose to glory under Graham Taylor OBE at Watford FC and have united to continue his teachings and community spirit. They run a series of projects across Watford and the surrounding areas including supporting Ukrainian guests as well as current and former veterans living in the town.

[CLICK HERE](#) for more information



The Steve Sinnott Foundation works with teachers and educators to deliver projects that progress the achievement of Sustainable Development Goal 4 – ensure inclusive and equitable quality education and promote lifelong learning opportunities for all. We are proud to work toward making this goal a reality.

[CLICK HERE](#) for more information



Goods For Good is a humanitarian charity delivering hope, comfort, and care to vulnerable people across the UK and around the world. The charity repurposes

high-quality new and unsold essentials — including clothing, footwear, bedding, and hygiene products — that might otherwise end up in landfill. These items are distributed to people living in crisis and poverty, helping to restore dignity, relieve hardship, and promote environmental sustainability by reducing waste.

Website link [Supporting people to thrive | Goods for Good](#)

Contact info@goodsforgood.org.uk



Accountants for Charities is a specialist accountancy service dedicated to supporting charities, not-for-profit organisations, and social enterprises. Supporting small charitable organisations to amplify their impact, we work with a range of charities to deliver positive social impact.

We understand the unique financial, governance, and regulatory challenges the sector faces, and we provide expert guidance to ensure compliance, transparency, and long-term sustainability. Our services include preparing annual accounts and independent examinations, managing day-to-day bookkeeping and payroll, and offering strategic financial advice tailored to trustees and management teams. We also assist with Gift Aid claims, VAT considerations, and charity registration, helping organisations maximise their resources and remain fully compliant with Charity Commission and HMRC requirements.

At Accountants for Charities, we combine professional expertise with a genuine commitment to the sector. Our mission is to give trustees and charity leaders peace of mind, enabling them to focus on their cause while we take care of the financial details.

Whether you are a small community group or a large charitable trust, we provide clear, affordable, and practical accountancy solutions to help you grow and thrive.



HERTFORDSHIRE BUSINESS AWARDS 2026

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The Hertfordshire Business Awards programme organised by biz4Biz, returns for their seventh year. These Awards are impartial, independent and open to Hertfordshire-based businesses. The Hertfordshire Business Awards programme organised by biz4Biz, is recognised as the best business awards programme in Hertfordshire as it brings together the highest number of nominees from across the county and provides physical judging. Winning a biz4Biz Award is coveted and award winners continue to expand their businesses and extend their economic contribution to the greater success of Hertfordshire. There are many excellent award schemes but none have such a high level of support and engagement, or attract the volume of nominations from across the county and all business sectors. Our 2024 Awards programme was a great success and set a record for the number of nominations,

votes and engagement in the press and on social media. Entry and participation are completely free of charge.

Adrian Hawkins OBE
Chairman, biz4Biz



[!\[\]\(9500e4e0b06f494c3391c456117a0e37_img.jpg\) **CLICK HERE**
To see the current voting state of play](#)

HERTFORDSHIRE BUSINESS AWARDS 2026

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