

KEEPING THE SOUTH EAST WORKING



HELP AVAILABLE IN BERKSHIRE

BERKSHIRE ECONOMIC STRATEGY BOARD



BERKSHIRE ECONOMIC STRATEGY BOARD (BESB)

Summary of Support

Introduction

A group of strategic organisations (including the Berkshire Economic Strategy Board (BESB), Business Link, Job Centre Plus (JCP), Local Authorities, South East England Development Agency (SEEDA) and Learning Skills Council (LSC) have come together to ensure a co-ordinated response to economic recovery in Berkshire.

As a first step, this Berkshire Support Guide has been collated which gives an overview of support available for skills, employment and business. The guide will be distributed to support agencies and strategic partnerships throughout Berkshire. The guide has been prepared so that you are able to advise businesses and individuals find out about the main support available to help them.

The Guide is in 2 sections

Section 1	Support Organisation Contact Details
Section 2	Overview of Support Available

For more information, please call Joanna Birrell on 0795 2558471 (Berkshire Employment and Skills) or Claire Gillon (SEEDA) on 0788 159 1183

Section 1 Support Organisation Contact Details

Name	Contacts
Government	
Directgov	www.direct.gov.uk
Real Help Now	www.realhelpnow.gov.uk/
Colleges and Universities	
AimHigher Berkshire	http://www.aimhigher.ac.uk/berkshire/news/index.cfm
Berkshire College of Agriculture	www.bca.ac.uk 01628 824 444
Bracknell and Wokingham College	www.bracknell.ac.uk 0845 330 3343
East Berkshire College	www.eastberks.ac.uk 01753 443855
Henley Business School	http://www.henley.reading.ac.uk/ 01491 571 454
HERO	http://www.hero.ac.uk/uk/home/index.cfm
Local Authority Adult and Community Learning service	Bracknell: 01344 354128 Reading: See New Directions, Reading Slough: lifelonglearning@slough.gov.uk , 01753 875247 West Berkshire: acsteam@westberks.gov.uk , 01635 519060 Windsor and Maidenhead: adult.education@rbwm.gov.uk , 01628 796 584 Wokingham: to be confirmed
Newbury College	www.newbury.ac.uk 01635 845 000
New Directions, Reading	www.newdirectionsreading.co.uk/ 0845 842 0012
Reading University	www.reading.ac.uk

	0118 378 6161
Thames Valley University	www.tvu.ac.uk 0118 967 5510
West Berkshire Training Consortium	www.wbtc-uk.com 01635 35975
Local Authorities	
Bracknell Forest Borough Council	www.bracknell-forest.gov.uk 01344 352000
Reading Borough Council	www.reading.gov.uk 0118 939 0900
Royal Borough of Windsor and Maidenhead	www.rbwm.gov.uk 01628 798888
Slough Borough Council	www.slough.gov.uk 01753 475111
West Berkshire Council	www.westberks.gov.uk 01635 42400
Wokingham District Council	www.wokingham.gov.uk 0118 974 6000
Advice and Guidance Services	
Adult Learning Grants	0800 121 8989
Careers Advice	www.careersadvice.direct.gov.uk/ 0800 100 900
Career Development Loans	www.direct.gov.uk/en/EducationAndLearning/AdultLearning/FinancialHelpForAdultLearners/CareerDevelopmentLoans/index.htm 0800 585 505
Citizen Advice Bureau	www.citizensadvice.org.uk/index/getadvice.htm
Executive Job Clubs	01753 870664 www.tvexecutivejobclubs.org.uk
JobCentre Plus	0800 055 6688 www.jobcentreplus.gov.uk
Law Centres Federation	http://www.lawcentres.org.uk
LearnDirect	www.learndirect.co.uk

	Call free on 0800 101 901 from 7am to 11pm 7 days a week
Next Step	www.nextstepsoutheast.org.uk/ 0800 1954 700
Business Support	<i>* Please note there is a specific Business Support Guide for Berkshire</i>
Apprenticeship Service	http://www.apprenticeships.org.uk/
Business Link Berkshire	www.businesslink.gov.uk 0845 600 9 006
Continuing Employment Support Service	Maria Wright 07919 413921
Federation of Small Business	www.fsb.org.uk Karen Durcan on 0118 945 6848 (Thames Valley Region)
Finance South East	www.financesoutheast.com/ 01276 608510
Sector Skills Councils (SSCs)	www.sscalliance.org
Social Enterprise Berkshire	www.seberkshire.org 0118 901 5799
Thames Valley Chamber of Commerce	www.thamesvalleychamber.co.uk/ 01753 870 500
Thames Valley Innovation and Growth Team	www.thamesvalleyhub.co.uk/ 0118 935 7369
Train to Gain (Accessed via Business Link)	www.traintogain.gov.uk 0800 015 5545
Third Sector	
AdviceUK	www.adviceuk.org.uk 020 7469 5700
Age Concern	www.ageconcern.org.uk
Consumer Credit Counselling Service	www.cccs.co.uk 0800 138 1111
Councils for Voluntary Service (CVS) / Volunteer Bureau	Bracknell Forest Voluntary Action www.bfva.org 01344 304404 Community Action West Berkshire 01635 523861 Reading Voluntary Action

	<p>www.rva.org.uk 0118 9574123</p> <p>Slough CVS www.sloughcvs.org.uk 01753 524 176</p> <p>Voluntary Action Wokingham Borough www.vawb.org.uk/ 0118 912 3140</p> <p>Windsor & Maidenhead Voluntary Action www.wmvolaction.org.uk 01753 622433</p>
The Prince's Trust	<p>www.princes-trust.org.uk 0800 842842</p>
The Business Debtline	0800 197 6026
Shelter	0808 800 4444

Section 2 Overview of Support Available


Organisation	Support Available
Government	
Real Help Now and DirectGov	Practical help is available for people and businesses on a wide range of issues. Find out more at www.realhelpon.gov.uk or directgov.gov.uk (Easy access to the public services you use and the information you need, delivered by the UK government).
Colleges and Universities	<i>Please note that there are a range of providers who provide training programmes in addition to universities and colleges such as local authorities, private providers and community and voluntary sector organisations.</i>
Aimhigher Berkshire	If you are aged 14-19 and thinking of going into higher education, an adult thinking of returning to education, a parent/carer of a young person who is thinking of going into higher education or the teacher of young people who are looking to enter higher education then visit the Aimhigher website to find out more information.
Berkshire College of Agriculture	BCA is actively promoting the Train to Gain funding to businesses in the South East, for both our NVQ programmes and also our short ILM accredited Leadership and Management programmes.
Bracknell and Wokingham College	Bracknell and Wokingham College offers a wide range of training solutions to suit employers' needs. Whether it is an industry-standard qualification or a one-day IT course they will do their best to get employees trained to the level required. To enquire about a course, please contact the Business Development team on 0844 701 8304 or email business@bracknell.ac.uk .
East Berkshire College	East Berkshire College is one of the largest Further Education colleges in the south east. It has two campuses, one in Langley (near Slough) and the other in Windsor. They have around 3,000 full-time and 12,500 part-time students, studying a wide range of both academic and vocational subjects. The College serves a very diverse community in what is considered to be a buoyant local economy. It is located close to Heathrow and is actively involved in major projects such as the construction of T5 and the new Heart of Slough initiative.
Newbury College	<p>Newbury College is one of the leading providers of learning and development in the region. The College offers a huge range (around 2,000) full and part time courses delivered in some 50 venues across West Berkshire as well as at employer premises across the region. Courses cover all levels from beginners to Higher Education and a wide range of delivery types including full and part time courses, distance and workplace learning. They can design bespoke courses to meet specific needs.</p> <p>The College is seeking to help organisations and individuals through the economic downturn in 2 main ways</p> <p>Outplacement Service for Employers This service provides employers with a cost effective solution to helping them work through the process of releasing staff. The service is tailored to specific organisational needs but can include counselling, psychometric assessment, careers advice and job search training and support. The college works closely with the other agencies included in this leaflet to provide a complete and seamless solution delivered collaboratively.</p> <p>For more information please contact Newbury College Business Development Solutions 01635 845229, email business@newbury-college.ac.uk or visit www.newbury-college.ac.uk/employers</p> <p>Workskills Training for Individuals</p>

Organisation	Support Available						
	<p>The College is offering a suite of Job Search and work related skills training for individuals that have been made redundant and/or are not in work. The courses all lead to nationally recognised qualifications and we are seeking to recruit learners for the following packages</p> <table border="1" data-bbox="450 341 1234 1331"> <tbody> <tr> <td data-bbox="450 341 844 587"> <p>Package 1 Job Search</p> <p>Searching for a job Applying for a job Preparing for an interview Interview skills Self assessment Career progression</p> </td> <td data-bbox="844 341 1234 587"> <p>Package 4 Entrepreneurial Ventures</p> <p>Planning an enterprise activity Running an enterprise activity Producing a product Building working relationships with customers Managing your money</p> </td> </tr> <tr> <td data-bbox="450 587 844 992"> <p>Package 2 Performance Development at Work</p> <p>Develop personal skills for leadership Practising leadership skills Communicating solutions to others Effectiveness at work Working in a team Building working relationships with colleagues and customers</p> </td> <td data-bbox="844 587 1234 992"> <p>Package 5 Volunteering and Work Experience</p> <p>Alternatives to paid work Preparing for work placement Safe learning in workplace Working as a volunteer Learning from work placement</p> </td> </tr> <tr> <td data-bbox="450 992 844 1331"> <p>Package 3 Administration in the workplace</p> <p>Presenting accurate documents Taking notes at meetings Summarising documents Learning from more experienced people Positive attitudes and behaviours at work</p> </td> <td data-bbox="844 992 1234 1331"> <p>Package 6 Increase confidence in the workplace</p> <p>Speaking confidently at work Contributing to meetings Positive attitudes and behaviour at work Self Assessment Communicating solutions to others</p> </td> </tr> </tbody> </table>	<p>Package 1 Job Search</p> <p>Searching for a job Applying for a job Preparing for an interview Interview skills Self assessment Career progression</p>	<p>Package 4 Entrepreneurial Ventures</p> <p>Planning an enterprise activity Running an enterprise activity Producing a product Building working relationships with customers Managing your money</p>	<p>Package 2 Performance Development at Work</p> <p>Develop personal skills for leadership Practising leadership skills Communicating solutions to others Effectiveness at work Working in a team Building working relationships with colleagues and customers</p>	<p>Package 5 Volunteering and Work Experience</p> <p>Alternatives to paid work Preparing for work placement Safe learning in workplace Working as a volunteer Learning from work placement</p>	<p>Package 3 Administration in the workplace</p> <p>Presenting accurate documents Taking notes at meetings Summarising documents Learning from more experienced people Positive attitudes and behaviours at work</p>	<p>Package 6 Increase confidence in the workplace</p> <p>Speaking confidently at work Contributing to meetings Positive attitudes and behaviour at work Self Assessment Communicating solutions to others</p>
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Henley Business School	<p>Henley Business School at the University of Reading is a leading international business school based in the UK. One of the few business schools globally to hold triple accredited status, we were also the first UK business school and are one of the oldest in Europe. The University itself is ranked among the world's top 200 institutions and as one of the most research intensive universities</p>						

Organisation	Support Available
	<p>in the UK.</p> <p>They are home to established undergraduate, postgraduate masters and doctoral degrees, leading-edge executive education programmes and the world-ranked Henley MBA. Henley Business School comprises five distinctive units: the School of Economics, the ICMA Centre, The School of Management, the School of Real Estate & Planning and Executive Education.</p> <p>A truly international business school, they have around 7,000 students from more than 140 countries. From the UK and Europe, to Asia and Africa, from North and South America to Australasia. We are also proud of our growing alumni network, which features over 30,000 members.</p>
HERO's 'University Finder'	Makes it easy to find your local universities and colleges and gives contacts for their dedicated business teams.
New Directions	<p>New Directions provides free employment services for people living in the Reading area. Its Central Reading Centre opposite Reading Station provides the following free services</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> . Help with CV Writing . Careers Advice and Guidance . Self-Service computers for Job Searching . Careers resources . Jobcentre Plus Job Point <p>Call or visit: New Directions, Central Reading Centre, Thames Tower, 35 – 47 Station Road, Reading</p>
Reading University	The University of Reading is consistently one of the most popular higher education choices in the UK. They receive, on average, eight applications for every undergraduate place. Their broad portfolio of full- and part-time degree programmes covers the arts, humanities, sciences and social sciences. They offer courses and research in the specialist areas of agriculture, construction management, horticulture, cybernetics, meteorology, real estate and typography, where there are few other national providers. They regularly update programmes as new ideas emerge and industry needs change.
Thames Valley University	<p>Thames Valley University already does much to help and support local businesses, but are keen to do more in the current economic climate. Businesses, large and small, need to respond appropriately to current economic challenges to ensure survival.</p> <p>Many businesses will be working hard just to stand still. Recruitment budgets are being reduced and some businesses may be in a situation where redundancies are inevitable. TVU can support you through the difficult times and help you emerge in a stronger position.</p>
West Berkshire Training Consortium	West Berkshire Training Consortium is a local Training Provider that provides Apprenticeship and Train to Gain opportunities to upskill the workforce. They work closely with Connexions, Jobcentre plus and Employers to deliver our programmes. Their aim is to support people back into work and enhance the skills of those already in the workplace. They also provide local businesses with access to government funds to support training and development costs, delivering across a wide range of sector areas.
Local Authorities	
Bracknell Forest	There is lots of information and links at the Council website:

Organisation	Support Available
Borough Council	http://www.bracknell-forest.gov.uk/bus-credit-crunch.htm
Reading Borough Council	Lots of information and advice available on debt management, training and employment at http://www.reading.gov.uk/beatthecrunch/
Royal Borough of Windsor and Maidenhead	There is lots of information and links at the Council website: http://www.rbwm.gov.uk/web/econ-dev_credit_crunch.htm
Slough Borough Council	<p>Slough Economic Taskforce (SET) has brought together the council's senior management team and specialist officers. SET meet each week to ensure vulnerable people and small businesses are able to access the advice, resources and support they need through the present pressures.</p> <p>The SET has developed the credit crunch 10 point plan:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • advice and information on dedicated web pages for residents and businesses • a series of employment seminars and workshops to be launched in the New Year explaining the range of support available for those unemployed or those fearful of unemployment • a series of seminars and workshops for small and medium sized businesses on how to survive the recession • the development of job matching services • a leaflet providing information on the range of support available to residents and businesses • increased support proposed for volunteering opportunities • increased resources being made available for advice services • paying small local businesses sooner • increasing advice and information for the homeless • increasing advice and information for people who are in debt
West Berkshire Council	The Council, working with the West Berkshire Partnership, has developed an Action Plan to help alleviate the impact of the recession. There is lots of information and links at the Council website: www.westberks.gov.uk
Wokingham District Council	To be completed
Advice and Guidance	
Adult Learning Grants	It's never too late to learn new skills, and with the Adult Learning Grant (ALG) , you could get up to £30 per week while you're studying - letting you focus on getting where you want to be in life.
Careers Advice	You can call the Careers Advice service free on 0800 100 900 to talk in confidence to a trained adviser or visit the Careers Advice website . You may be eligible for financial support for training particularly if you have few qualifications and are low paid.
Career Development Loans	A Career Development Loan (CDL) can help you gain the experience, training and qualifications you need to improve your job skills or even launch a new career. Call the CDL helpline on 0800 585 505 from 8am to 10pm seven days a week to ask for an application pack and to get advice.
CITIZENS ADVICE BUREAU	The Citizens Advice service helps people resolve their legal, money and other problems by providing free information and advice, and by influencing policy makers. <i>Our principles and aims</i>

Organisation	Support Available
	<p>The Citizens Advice service provides free, independent, confidential and impartial advice to everyone on their rights and responsibilities. It values diversity, promotes equality and challenges discrimination.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • To provide the advice people need for the problems they face • To improve the policies and practices that affect people's lives <p>Our structure There are 426 Citizens Advice Bureaux across England and Wales, and a further 22 bureaux in Northern Ireland, all of which are independent registered charities. They are all members of Citizens Advice, the membership organisation - also an independent registered charity - that provides training and support to member bureaux, and coordinates national policy work. Together they make up the Citizens Advice service.</p> <p>Advice services We deliver information and advice through face-to-face, telephone and email services, and online via Adviceguide.org.uk. In the last year alone we helped 1.9 million people to solve 5.5 million new problems</p>
CONNEXIONS	<p>Connexions offers advice for young people up to 19 years of age on a wide range of topics. More information is available at www.connexions-direct.com</p>
Disability Training and Employment Services	<p>Need help with access to work, and then please see our Social employment and training webpage which gives details on how to contact organisations that offer advice and support on employment and training issues.</p>
Executive Job Clubs	<p>Careers Springboard is a self-help group supporting out-of work professionals, executives and Managers in Berkshire who are seeking a new job.</p> <p>Job seeker benefits include</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> . Meetings – weekly meetings for practical tips . Individual Guidance sessions – personalised help on job search . Emails about meetings and other news . Job vacancy database – access to a country wide database of jobs . Adult directions – a career planning tool . Interview practice – 1 to 1 interviewing practice . and more <p>There are currently 5 executive job clubs funded by the Branshaw Foundation and they are in Aylesbury and North Bucks (Aylesbury Careers Springboard), Gerrards Cross and Chilterns (Careers Springboard), Bracknell (Bracknell Careers Springboard), Windsor and Maidenhead (Windsor and Maidenhead Executive Job Club); Newbury and West Berks (West Berks Careers Springboard). There is no charge for meetings or any of the benefits</p> <p>For further information contact</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Careers Springboard, West Berks

Organisation	Support Available
	<p>www.careerswestberks.org.uk</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Windsor & Maidenhead Executive Job Club www.executivejobclub.org.uk
Jobcentre Plus	<p>Redundancies are challenging for everyone involved. Jobcentre Plus works with a range of providers to provide tailored solutions to help minimise the impact and provide help and advice when redundancies are taking place.</p> <p>For Business: if you need to make groups of people redundant then Jobcentre Plus and partners can offer you the right support for you and your employees. You can download a Jobcentre Plus leaflet on how to find out about the key services that Jobcentre Plus can offer your business – including support for training, recruitment and redundancies http://www.jobcentreplus.gov.uk/JCP/Employers/Dev_016101.xml.html</p> <p>If you have a query regarding redundancy payments, or your responsibility as an employer, you can get help from the Department for Business, Enterprise and Regulatory Reform’s Redundancy Helpline on 0845 145 0004 Or go to www.businesslink.gov.uk/redundancy</p> <p>Alternatively contact Maria Wright on Maria.wright1@jobcentreplus.gsi.gov.uk or call Maria on 07919 413921</p> <p>For Employees: Jobcentre Plus can help you get back to work quickly. Even in an economic downturn, many new jobs are available. Also Jobcentre Plus will step in by paying you benefits and helping you look for work or learn new skills. For more information see the following website www.jobcentreplus.gov.uk/JCP/Customers/back_to_work/index.html</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ➤ Looking for work? For information on our vacancies call Jobseekers Direct on 0845 6060234 ➤ To make a new claim call 0800 0556688 ➤ To find out which benefits you may be entitled to call 0800 882200
	<p>Through Learn Direct, you can find out about getting qualifications, training for your business, improve your career prospects and get general advice. Visit Learn Direct website for more information.</p>
NATIONAL DEBTLINE	<p>The National Debtline is a national telephone helpline for people with debt problems in England, Scotland and Wales. The service is free, confidential and independent. The service was set up in 1987. National Debtline is part of the Money Advice Trust, (registered charity no 1099506). The service provides self-help advice to its callers and also produces written self-help packs and factsheets to back this up. The service can also assist callers with the setting up of Debt Management Plans for England & Wales or Debt Management Plans for Scotland.</p>
NEXTSTEP	<p>Nextstep is a government funded service that provides face to face information and advice on learning and work. Nextstep are committed to providing a quality service, working with employees facing redundancy to help them prepare for a positive future beyond the current situation.</p> <p>What can Nextstep do for your company? As well as offering services to individuals, Nextstep also supports companies facing the difficult task of downsizing their</p>

Organisation	Support Available
	<p>workforces. Nextstep advisers with knowledge of local labour markets can support your staff by providing workshops or one to one sessions to employees facing redundancy. Examples of the practical workshops we can provide include</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> . CV writing and covering letters . Application forms . Interview techniques and advice . Confidence building . Job searching . Advice on courses and training
<p>The Law Centres Federation</p>	<p>The Law Centres Federation is the voice of Law Centres®, which provide free independent legal advice and representation to the most disadvantaged members of society.</p> <p>The LCF is the national body for a network of community based Law Centres. Law Centres provide help in solving everyday problems, such as getting decent housing, dealing with discrimination, or obtaining the correct benefits. The LCF believes that every community should have a Law Centre and calls for a national network of independent Law Centres to stand up for people’s fundamental and human rights. Law Centres are members of the LCF and provide an independent specialist legal advice, assistance and representation service.</p>
<p>Business Support</p>	
<p>APPRENTICES</p>	<p>Whether you are an individual looking for an Apprenticeship, or an employer looking for an apprentice, there is a whole range of information available to help you decide if Apprenticeships are the right route for you visit the Apprentice Ships website for more information.</p>
<p>Business Link Berkshire</p>	<p>Business Link provides support to businesses from the very smallest upto 250 employees, whatever their situation or industry, in good times and bad.</p> <p>There is a range of free support to find finance, raise productivity, or save money by reducing waste and saving energy. Whether you need to increase cash flow, keep your staff on, improve their skills and flexibility, or simply reduce costs, you can get real help to keep your business fighting fit.</p> <p>You may have to face some difficult decisions but there is real help available for your business to build on its strengths and to weather the difficulties. One of the key ways to do this is to take a free health check of your business with a professional business adviser who can provide hands on advice and guide you to other government help, including all the schemes recently announced. An experienced adviser will help you step back and take stock of your situation, focus on your priorities and create an action plan to take your business forward.</p> <p>To access a free health check for your business, call the Business Link helpline on 0845 699 9006</p> <p>A ‘Guide to doing business in tough times’ is available free by calling the same number. The booklet offers practical guidance focusing on key areas such as finance, planning; customer and markets; productivity and people and skills and highlights action you can take to succeed.</p>

Organisation	Support Available
	<p>A further source of information and online tools is available to help you manage your way through these tough times. Visit the Business Link website at www.businesslink.gov.uk</p>
<p>CONTINUING EMPLOYMENT SUPPORT SERVICE</p>	<p>Anyone made redundant in the region, or any employer forced to contemplate redundancy, can gain access to free advice and support from the Continuing Employment Support Service, joint funded by SEEDA and the Jobcentre Rapid Response which will do everything it can to get those facing redundancy back into employment. Support with CV's, interview techniques, training opportunities and information on State Benefits are available</p> <p>For more information contact Maria Wright Maria.wright1@jobcentreplus.gsi.gov.uk or call Maria on 07919 413921</p>
<p>Federation of Small Business</p>	<p>Variety of support available to members. The Federation of Small Businesses is the UK's largest campaigning pressure group promoting and protecting the interests of the self-employed and owners of small firms. Formed in 1974, it now has 215,000 members across 33 regions and 230 branches.</p> <p>Their lobbying arm - led by the Westminster Press and Parliamentary office - applies pressure on MPs, Government and Whitehall and puts the FSB viewpoint over to the media. Policy Managers work alongside Regional Development Agencies to further FSB influence at a regional level.</p> <p>In addition, Member Services is committed to delivering a wide range of high quality, good value business services to members of the FSB. These services will be subject to continuing review and will represent a positive enhancement to the benefit of membership of the Leading Business Organisation in the UK.</p>
<p>Finance South East</p>	<p>Helps ambitious companies to grow through direct investment and associated support.</p> <p>Their specialist range of products and services include advice on funding strategy, introductions to funding sources, fund management and mentoring and investor networks.</p> <p>Their team consists of highly experienced finance professionals with many years experience of small business finance.</p> <p>Key objectives are to:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> * Provide direct investment of over £5million each year for South East businesses from Proof of Concept funding to expansion capital * Raise an additional £7million of finance each year for the region's growth businesses * Advise on the best and most appropriate financial support for growth companies across the South East <p>Finance South East has already helped companies in the region raise in excess of £30million.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • A Small Business Finance Scheme offering up to £1 billion of bank lending, guaranteed by the Government - additional help on top of the existing Small Firms Loan Guarantee Scheme • A £1 billion guarantee facility to support bank lending to small exporters from the Export Credit Guarantee Department

Organisation	Support Available
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • A £50 million fund to convert businesses' debt into equity • A £25 million regional loan transition fund to help businesses over the next six months based on a recently launched West Midlands initiative
Social Enterprise Berkshire	<p>Social Enterprise Berkshire (SEB) is a business support organisation with a difference. Social enterprises are businesses which trade for a social purpose. Their aims are:</p> <p>To provide an information, advice and support service for the development of new social enterprises in Berkshire</p> <p>To improve the performance of existing social enterprises to ensure a successful social enterprise sector in Berkshire</p> <p>To provide excellent quality capacity building initiatives and training to build the skills of people to set up, work in and manage social enterprises</p>
Thames Valley Chamber of Commerce	<p>Variety of support available to members. The Thames Valley Chamber of Commerce Group is a membership organisation which promotes and lobbies for business development in the Thames Valley. With over 2500 members, they are one of the largest accredited Chambers in the UK. They hold more than 240 events per year, ranging from networking get togethers to formal dinners, and offer a wide range of cost-saving, support and business development services. They encourage the forging of strong links within the Thames Valley business community to ensure an exchange of skills and best practice, which will act to the benefit of all.</p> <p>The Thames Valley Chamber of Commerce Group is made up of nine local Chambers which monitor and respond to issues of specific local relevance. As a membership organisation, it is paramount that each Chamber remain close to its members to ensure that our services and lobbying are relevant to you and your business. However, each of the local Chambers also draws on the strength of the Thames Valley Group, which means more services, better events and the assurance that your interests will be represented by a voice that has influence.</p>
Thames Valley Innovation and Growth Team	<p>Innovation & Growth Teams build local communities of innovation, peer groups of innovative businesses connected into the knowledge base, industry sectors and market specialists. Their overall target is to increase the revenue generated by new or significantly improved products and services. They are charged with engaging with businesses that possess the characteristics to grow dramatically.</p>
Train to Gain (accessed via Business Link)	<p>Train to Gain is the Government's flagship service which supports employers in England, of all sizes and in all sectors, to invest in the skills of their employees. Specialist brokers can advise you on your business' skills needs, the courses available, the most appropriate providers of training and the public funding available. There is specific government funding now available for small and medium sized businesses and voluntary organisations, including funding to retrain employees and for short courses.</p> <p>To find out more about the extra support available for your Business visit Train to Gain website.</p>
Sector Skills Councils (SSCs)	<p>Are independent, employer-led organizations responsible for tackling the skills and productivity needs of their industry sectors UK-wide. SSCs aim to increase the competitiveness of the sectors they represent, by:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> o providing labour market intelligence, identifying skill needs at all levels o influencing the UK's education and learning infrastructure o mapping training and education supply to ensure it meets sector demand o raising skills demand among employers in their sector <p>The Sector Skills Councils Alliance is a new organisation comprising all 25 licensed UK SSCs. It acts as the collective voice of the</p>

Organisation	Support Available
	SSCs.
Third Sector	
AdviceUK	AdviceUK is the largest UK network of advice-providing organisations. Please note that we do not give advice ourselves. Click the Get Advice link for details of advice giving agencies.
Age Concern	The UK's largest charity working with and for older people. http://www.ageconcern.org.uk/
Consumer Credit Counselling Service	CCCS is a registered charity offering free, confidential advice and support to anyone who is worried about debt. For more information about this service visit the CCCS website .
Councils for Voluntary Service (CVS) / Volunteer Bureau	CVS assist and promote voluntary and community sector activity. Core activities of a Council for Voluntary Service: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Supporting and developing volunteering opportunities - Providing services and support for voluntary, community and faith organisations. - The provision of opportunities for closer working together within the voluntary, community and faith sectors and with statutory authorities; and to encourage multi-agency cooperation. - Creating and promoting forums and networks through which other organisations may make representations. - The development of new ideas, strategies and organisations. - Enabling the effective involvement of the local voluntary, community and faith sector in strategic partnerships.
The Prince's Trust	Are you aged 18-30, unemployed, have an idea for a business but can't raise all the cash you need from anywhere else? Start-up support from The Prince's Trust could help you get up and running.
The Business Debtline	To get free, confidential and independent help to deal with business debt problems so you can successfully manage your way through financial difficulties, call Business Debtline, 0800 197 6026 .
Shelter	Shelter is a charity that works to alleviate the distress caused by homelessness and bad housing, giving advice, information and advocacy to people in housing need, and by campaigning for lasting political change to end the housing crisis for good. For housing help and advice contact Shelter's free housing advice help line on 0808 800 4444 or visit the Shelter website .