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April/May 2021

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Interview with Lawyer Tariq Hussain, Managing Director of Petherbridge Bassra Solicitors, looking at potential problems with businesses being accused of crimes including furlough fraud.

Electric all the way

Ireland's commercial vehicle distributor success story Harris Group create a new base in Warrington. Interview with COO John McEvoy.

Manchester's home for Gin

The Atlas Bar on Deansgate share their experience in the hospitality sector over the last year of being on the frontline of restrictions.

Preparing to trade with the EU and Ireland

Looking at the impact of the new trading relationship with Michael Nolan, CEO of Irish customs clearance specialists, Declaron.

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Tariq Hussain, Managing Director of Petherbridge Bassra Solicitors

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welcome to the latest edition of GM Business Connect

and join the fastest growing business to business across Greater Manchester and the North.

GM Business Connect is a dynamic business to business bi-monthly magazine that is crammed full of local and regional news, articles, interviews and regular columnists.

The magazine connects businesses across Greater Manchester and the North, and is completely free.

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editorial

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news

Manchester Airport Group calls for roadmap to restriction-free travel



The UK's largest airport group, Manchester Airports Group (MAG), has responded to the recent update from the Prime Minister regarding the restart of international travel. While welcoming moves towards a risk-based approach to reopening the sector, the group has expressed significant disappointment at an apparent lack of any provision for a return to restriction free travel when conditions allow.

MAG owns and operates Manchester, London Stansted and East Midlands Airports, handling over 60m passengers per year prior to the pandemic.

A MAG spokesperson said:

"MAG welcomes the government's desire to see international travel resume as soon as possible, and that it is still working hard to make 17 May the day when people can begin travelling overseas again."

"Throughout this crisis, the travel industry has recognised the need for measures to prevent the spread

of the virus, and to respond to the emergence of new variants of concern, both in the UK and abroad.

"That is why it is good to see that the GTTF has developed a 'traffic light' system, based on the risk associated with travelling to different countries, and taking account of the success of the UK's vaccination programme.

"However, it is hugely disappointing that the proposed framework includes no provision for a return to restriction-free travel, either now or in the future when the conditions are judged to be appropriate.

"Aviation has been the sector hardest hit by the pandemic, and its revival is key to the UK's wider economic recovery. It supports more than one million jobs, helps British businesses to become global success stories and enables families to stay in touch and enjoy holidays abroad.

"It is vital that all those who rely on aviation - for holidays, employment or trade - can see a full roadmap to normality."

New partnership launch the UK's first-ever Centre of Excellence at Media City

HOST, Salford's Home of Skills & Technology at Media City, have announced its partnership with Unity (NYSE: U), the world's leading platform for creating and operating real-time 3D (RT3D) content, to establish the first Unity Centre of Excellence in the UK.

The Centre of Excellence at HOST will offer extensive in-person support to students, professionals and small businesses with a mission of becoming the 'Beacon of the North' for best-in-class technical skills and innovation across industries.

According to XQ Institute's report High School & the Future of Work, the biggest change between the workforce today and the workforce in 2030 will be the demand for advanced IT and programming skills.

This Centre of Excellence will upskill learners to prepare for the jobs of tomorrow, promote immersive technology usage across sectors, create highly skilled jobs and establish a central home for the thriving UK video games industry at MediaCityUK.

Creators, ranging from game developers to artists, architects, automotive designers, filmmakers, and more, use Unity to make their imaginations come to life, with an average of 5 billion downloads every month in 2020.

While the UK video games market hit a record high of £7 billion last year as lockdown caused an unprecedented



Mo Isap, CEO of IN4.0 Group and Dr Maria Stukoff, Director of the University of Salford's Maker Space

surge in the popularity of mobile games, consoles and virtual reality headsets.

In line with HOST's commitment to removing the present barriers impacting diversity and inclusivity, the Centre of Excellence will launch a comprehensive training programme working with UK universities and industry to deliver professional Certified Unity training.

"This is an incredible coup for us, we are immensely humbled and privileged for Unity to have chosen us. We can now massively accelerate startup growth, business innovation, incentivise the creation of thousands of jobs, and provide fair access to high-quality career starts with ground-breaking initiatives such as the Unity Cadets," said Mo Isap, CEO of IN4.0 Group, operators of HOST. *"Unity is the leader in real-time 3D development so the Centre of Excellence at HOST will establish MediaCityUK as a global destination for the growth of the gaming and immersive technology industry."*

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Bruntwood Works and Trafford Council launch consultation for Stamford Quarter

Bruntwood Works and Trafford Council want to hear from the local community as they share plans for the future development of the Stamford Quarter in Altrincham.

The vision, which has been put forward by the joint venture between Bruntwood Works and Trafford Council, is to transform the Stamford Quarter into a mixed-use destination.

At the heart of the proposals are plans to reshape the high street by blending retail, leisure, commercial and residential space in a bid to encourage more people to come into the town centre.

Councillor Andrew Western, Leader of Trafford Council, said: "Trafford Council is keen to gather as many views as possible on these plans and wants the local community to take the lead. Your views are vitally important to us and will shape our future."

"We have made creating successful and thriving places a top priority and the plans for the regeneration of the Stamford Quarter meet our commitments. The exciting mix of retail, residential, leisure and commercial will create a Stamford Quarter to be proud of and one for all generations to enjoy."



End of furlough may trigger 275,000 job losses

274,720 jobs are at risk of being lost following the end of the furlough scheme, according to new analysis by insolvency score Red Flag Alert.

The firm's most recent data shows that 26% of the 741,285 companies making claims under the Coronavirus Job Retention Scheme (CJRS) are showing signs of extremely poor financial performance. This means 193,721 companies are vulnerable to the risk of going out of business, with 12,600 of these failing within six months of furlough ending and leaving almost 275,000 people unemployed.

Analysis by Red Flag Alert shows these struggling companies are experiencing varying degrees of distress, with some at more imminent risk of failure.

Dr Nicola Headlam, incoming head of public sector at Red Flag Alert, explains: "A smaller number of businesses, around 5,000, which are registered under the Coronavirus Job Retention scheme are already insolvent or very close to insolvency. Realistically, come the end of September, these companies will be in a position where tens of thousands of jobs have already been lost or will disappear very quickly. Sadly, this is the very thin end of the wedge."

"There's a much larger proportion of

companies claiming furlough, which won't be able to pay 100% of wages after 30 September. This will see a wave of cost cutting measures as many try to repair balance sheets and fight for survival and will inevitably lead to company failures and job losses in the six months after the scheme has finished. These are struggling businesses saddled with debt and without the cashflow or prospects of sufficient revenue to sustain employment and operation."

Dr Headlam points to issues of corporate debt putting the future of a further 103,404 companies at risk, which employ 1,105,402 people. She explains: "103,404 businesses drawing on the Coronavirus Job Retention Scheme are surviving because they have access to cheap credit and Government COVID-19 support."

"These companies have a chance of bouncing back from the pandemic, but they are in a perilous position. They are reliant on flexible and extended repayment terms on their liabilities, which gives them much needed breathing space to continue to trade. If interest rates rise or job losses and insolvencies spook the organisations they owe money to, companies may find increasing pressures to settle arrears and debts."



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news

Delsys move to Sale



L-R Steven Lindley, Delsys Europe with Dean Richards, Orbit

Delsys, worldwide manufacturer of a portfolio of high performance electromyography instruments, has moved its European HQ into new offices in Sale.

The company makes a range of physiological and biomechanical sensors that are used in all types of human movement research and education, playing a fundamental role in helping thousands of researchers and educators in 85 countries understand and solve human movement disorder problems.

The four-strong team from Delsys Europe has now moved from a smaller Salford base into Orbit Development's Stamford House, taking just over 2,000 sq ft on the first floor.

The European office was set up in 2014 as a central hub for European customers to provide them with sales support, technical insights and educational forums.

Delsys European Director, Steven Lindley, said the new offices were in keeping with a global technology leader and would enable his team to better serve and host international customers and colleagues.

"It is much better accommodation for us, providing quality, professional space in which to work for our existing team and, in the future, to attract the next generation of academic talent looking for local routes into this kind of industry."

"Delsys make very cool products designed to disrupt the marketplace – it's a great place to be for an aspiring STEM professional."

Stamford House is right in the centre of Sale, with excellent amenities,

good road and rail links close by and easy access to the airport. It also enjoys the services of a dedicated building manager.

Steven added: *"It is really handy to have someone in the building to talk to about any day to day matters. The extra office space will also help us meet obligations around making sure people are socially distanced as they return to work. There is ample space for desks in a modern environment. It suits our needs perfectly."*

Dean Richards, Leasing Manager, said it was great to welcome an innovative, global brand like Delsys to Stamford House. *"We are delighted to be providing the accommodation for their new European head office at an exciting time of growth and opportunity for them."*

Enviroo receive planning permission for first plant

Specialist PET (polyethylene terephthalate) recycler, Enviroo has had its planning application approved for its first plastic recycling facility in the UK. The facility will be able to re-use 100% of the PET it takes in and help recycle some of the 4.9 million tonnes of plastic waste created in the UK annually.

The successful application means the plastic recycling facility will be operational in Summer 2022 at Peel NRE's 54-hectare strategic energy and resource hub, Protos, near Ellesmere Port, Cheshire.

The facility will take PET – the main material used for food and drinks packaging such as plastic bottles and

Customs Union: First phase of new EU import control system – ICS2 – comes into operation

The European Commission has launched its new import control system (ICS2), a major reinforcement of the Customs Union's 'first line of defence' against security and safety threats posed by illicit traffic in goods across the EU's external borders. In its first phase, ICS2 will focus on postal and express consignments coming to or through the EU by air, before eventually being applied to all modes of cargo transport.

ICS2 is the new advance cargo risk management platform at the heart of the reform of the EU's Customs Pre-arrival Safety and Security programme. It will gradually replace the existing import control system in three releases between 15 March 2021 and 1 March 2024.

Paolo Gentiloni, Commissioner for the Economy said: *"The launch of this new import control system will bring a step-change in the capacity of customs to protect our citizens and the EU's internal market from threats posed by the traffic of dangerous and illicit goods. It will help deliver a more efficient and effective risk-based approach to customs controls in our rapidly evolving supply chains, while supporting a level-playing field and facilitating legitimate trade across our external borders."*

Starting this year with Release 1, the programme will progressively introduce improved supply-chain data collected by customs and new tools and processes in order to enable, for the first time, real-time collaborative risk analysis while goods are still moving through their supply chains to or through the EU.



certain food packaging – and convert it into the raw material for new food-grade packaging. It will see an investment of around £20 million into the local economy and create 50 new, permanent jobs.

Enviroo will use proven technology to sort and wash the waste, before creating r-PET (recycled -PET) pellets that can be used by packaging manufacturers to create new packaging products. This technology is able to re-use 100% of the PET it takes in.

This will become increasingly important from this time next year, when a new law will see any packaging that contains less than

30% recycled PET taxed. Some manufacturers have gone further, pledging to include up to 50% recycled material in their packaging under the UK Plastics Pact. The facility will therefore help to meet growing UK demand for recycled PET.

Ahmed Detta, CEO & Founder of Enviroo, said: *"We are delighted to have our planning application approved. After a positive consultation with the community, we now look forward to being able to get down to business and deal with plastic waste here on our shores and importantly help to create a greener North West. Our first facility will hopefully be one of many."*

UK small business owners gave up £7,000 of their own savings on average to keep their businesses going

Small business owners have been tested to the limit over the past year, thanks to the pandemic putting intense pressure on cashflow and jobs. New research from QuickBooks reveals the range of personal sacrifices small business owners have taken just to keep their businesses afloat and employees in roles, including digging deep into their own savings.

With over half (58%) of the small businesses (1-10 employees) surveyed unable to trade at some point in the past year, small business owners spent an average of £7,000 out of their personal savings to keep their staff on payroll and their business going.

The new study highlights that a third (33%) of small business owners gave up their own salaries to keep employees on during the pandemic, while nearly half (46%) gave up holidays, 41% gave up bonuses, and

30% gave up their dividends.

The personal burden on these small business owners has not just been restricted to financial sacrifice. Owners have had to take action to retain their staff, with 57% having to work extra hours or on the weekend to keep on top of changes to payroll regulations, such as the furlough scheme. Of these, 50% have spent more than eight working days in the past year learning about the changing regulations to be able to put them into practice.

Since the start of the pandemic in March 2020, 67% of small business owners have been forced to make challenging business decisions that could never have been anticipated, in order to avoid serious cash flow issues and even business failure. Over a third (35%) have had to furlough staff, 24% have had to freeze recruitment, and 21% have had to freeze pay for staff to stay afloat.

To help navigate the changing business climate and make these difficult decisions, small business owners have turned to support networks for advice.

Accountants have taken on an increasingly important role for small businesses, with a third (33%) of owners turning to their accountants for support on changing regulations and processes such as payroll. Other leading sources of support were family members and government websites.

However, despite all the challenges of the past year, small business owners are feeling more optimistic with half (50%) saying they now feel more positive about the year ahead than they did at the start of the pandemic restrictions in March 2020.

Pauline Green, Head of Product Compliance at QuickBooks, said: "Payroll took on a new emotional

significance in 2020 as small business owners were forced to weigh up challenging decisions such as putting staff on furlough or making pay cuts, and the resulting impact on employees and their families.

"Despite facing intense pressure for a long time, small business owners showed remarkable resilience and determination to keep their businesses going and their employees in jobs, with huge numbers making unforgettable personal sacrifices.

"Our recent data found that two thirds of small businesses now plan to keep all of their furloughed staff and one in three are even planning on expanding their workforce in 2021. It is brilliant to see small business owners' commitment to keeping their company going and staff on their payroll now starting to pay off, as we look forward to the end of lockdown."

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news

Two Manchester high growth tech businesses secure place on mentoring programme

Eleven high-growth UK technology companies have secured a place on the AG Elevate programme – a unique fast-track legal mentoring scheme for early-stage businesses. Designed and delivered by lawyers at Addleshaw Goddard, successful candidates will now be assigned to a legal mentor and receive a package of support over the next 10 months. The 2021 cohort will also receive access to professional industry networks, bespoke collateral designed by Addleshaw Goddard and a collaborative online hub, as well as the opportunity to work alongside like-minded business professionals in the tech ecosystem to help elevate and grow their firms. With more than three times the number of applications received compared to previous years, the eleven companies selected span the UK, from Aberdeen to London. Lawyers from across all six of Addleshaw Goddard's UK offices will now mentor and work with the dynamic firms which include Manchester-based Voly and Assif.



Elvan Hussein, Corporate Finance Partner, Addleshaw Goddard

Elvan Hussein, a Corporate Finance Partner at Addleshaw Goddard, who specialises in technology said: *"The pandemic has accelerated digital innovation and the integration of technology in all aspects of our lives. We must recognise the vast array of opportunities and expertise tech companies across the UK bring towards the growth and rebuilding of our economy."*

"We're incredibly excited to welcome our 2021 AG Elevate cohort on board. Every company selected champions innovation and pragmatic solutions in the technology sector in which they operate."

Industrial estate appoints new MD to drive growth and sustainability



Neill Wood, Managing Director, George Moss & Sons

Leigh business, George Moss & Sons Ltd, has appointed a new managing director to drive the family business forward as it enters its second century.

Neill Wood has been appointed by the current owner of the one-hundred-year-old family business, Sebastian Moss, to drive the growth and sustainability of Moss Industrial

Estate, on St. Helen's Road in Leigh, and to share the strategic and operational leadership of the business.

George Moss & Sons celebrated its 100th birthday last September.

Prior to joining George Moss & Sons Ltd, Neill was the financial controller of City Football Group, where he was responsible for the group's financial accounting, risk management and finance systems as well as all the external reporting for Manchester City Football Club.

After graduating in 2006, Neill completed the graduate programme with EY (Ernst & Young) and qualified as a chartered accountant in 2010. He then spent seven years consulting with EY including secondments with RBS, Thomas Cook and Microsoft, based in Dublin and then at its head office in Seattle.

DLA appoints new head of design

DLA Architecture, with studios in Manchester, Leeds and London, has promoted Mark Redfern as Head of Design across all three sites. The newly created role has been generated by a business restructure and succession plan announced earlier this year.

Mark, who joined the practice in 2006, operates across all office locations and drives the design ethos within the practice. As Head of Design, he will take the lead in developing a more integrated design culture to deliver the company's ethos of contextual narrative-led architecture across all the DLA studios.

Mark commented, *"I am delighted to take on this new role at DLA and see tremendous value in embracing the collective design expertise across all our offices to enrich our design culture. This is a very exciting time for the future of the practice and indeed*



Mark Redfern, Head of Design, DLA Architecture

the property industry as we emerge, post pandemic, with an evolved perspective on the effects of the built environment around us."

DLA Architecture has been established for more than 40 years with offices in Leeds, Manchester and London. The practice employs over 75 architects, landscape architects, architectural technologists, and graphic designers.

CoolMed announce warehouse move to Trafford Park

Medical refrigeration experts, CoolMed, have relocated their Manchester premises to allow for further expansion amid growing demand for medical refrigerators. The move will see CoolMed remain in Manchester but relocate to a much larger facility in Trafford Park.

The new Trafford Park premise will provide CoolMed with much more space to accommodate their growing stock levels and develop their future expansion plans. The facility will also offer a central and accessible base, allowing them to supply all corners of the British mainland and Northern Ireland with medical refrigeration quickly and efficiently.

Regarding the move, Stephen Johnson, Managing Director of CoolMed said: *"CoolMed only started trading in 2017, so we're thrilled to be able to scale-up so quickly. The demand for medical refrigeration has never been higher, so we needed to relocate our headquarters to allow us to keep up with that demand. Our new headquarters in Trafford Park will allow us to accommodate the large orders that we're seeing and expand our product range even further."*

Originally founded in the early 2000s, CoolMed has grown year-on-year under several different brand names. The CoolMed brand was launched in 2017 to bring high quality, hi-tech refrigeration products to the medical industry at cost-effective prices.

Since 2017 the business has seen demand for its products increase exponentially. In the past 3 months alone they have supplied over 1,900 medical refrigerators to businesses throughout the UK and seen turnover reach £1.3 million. The company is currently on track to achieve £2.5 million turnover in 2021.

Due to the recent COVID-19 pandemic, medical-grade refrigerators have been more in demand than ever, and the subsequent vaccine roll-out recently led to one of CoolMed's biggest contract wins to date. CoolMed are now Lloyds Pharmacy and Lloyds Pharmacy Clinical Homecare's exclusive supplier of medical-grade refrigerators and will be for the next three years.

Experts call for action to strengthen the events offering in the North

A new ranking developed by Leeds based events specialist AYRE Event Solutions reveals the 'events capitals' of the UK, with London taking the top spot.

The new ranking is based on the following:

- 1 The number of large event facilities in the city.
- 2 Successful Business Event Growth funding applications.
- 3 The number of major events held in the location.
- 4 Percentage of corporates and associations which chose the location for events.
- 5 The total number of events related jobs available in the area.

Unsurprisingly, with a whopping 60 large event facilities across the city, London takes the top spot across all metrics but is closely followed by Manchester, Birmingham and

Glasgow. The top ten locations in the UK for events as revealed by the new study are:

- 1 London
- 2 Manchester
- 3 Birmingham
- 4 Glasgow
- 5 Bristol
- 6 Liverpool
- 7 Edinburgh
- 8 Leeds
- 9 Belfast
- 10 Brighton

Starting with the total number of large event facilities in each location, London leads the way by a significant amount with 60 facilities compared to Edinburgh and Manchester, which have 13 large event facilities. Glasgow is not too far behind with 12 and Birmingham comes in fourth with 11.

AYRE managing director, Chris Ayre says it's the discrepancy between the number of large event facilities which is holding back towns and cities north of London: "Obviously London is the capital city and many businesses have their head offices there, but the Northern Powerhouse in digital and tech business is rising in cities such as Leeds and Manchester.

"It's still disappointing to see that outside of London, there is a long way to go in terms of building large events facilities to meet the events' need. Local councils and the Government need to place more investment in these conference centres and arenas outside of London so that these locations can effectively compete with the capital and host big scale events."

AYRE's ranking also delved into successful applicants for The

Business Events Growth Programme funding between 2016 and 2019. The Business Events Growth Programme forms part of the Government's commitment to building the business events sector.

Since its launch in 2016, the programme has supported 40 events and bids across the UK, with more than £700,000 awarded. Of these 40 events, London was home to a quarter (10 events), with Liverpool, Glasgow and Manchester, all successfully hosting the next highest number of applicants (4 each).

Chris Ayre added: "This insight again reflects that the lack of facilities and trust in destinations north of London means that businesses and event spaces in the capital are receiving more funding than their northern counterparts. Moving forward, more needs to be done to split the funding and grants available evenly".



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news

Ives & Taylor Insurance joins forces with Partners&



Phil Barton, CEO, Partners&

Bolton-based independent insurance broker, Ives & Taylor, has joined forces with Partners&, a new insurance and employee benefits advisory business with 12 offices throughout the UK. The move is in line with the Partners& strategy to build a hub in the North of England and brings strong commercial lines, professional indemnity, and private client practices into the Partners& portfolio.

Ives & Taylor was established in Bolton in 1965 and has built a strong reputation as a well-respected community broker with many

long-term relationships with local businesses. It employs 13 people.

Stephen Buckley, Managing Director of Ives & Taylor, said: "We're excited to be joining Partners&. We believe in the vision that Phil has for the business, and the opportunity it brings for our people and clients. We're proud of our heritage, service and care we bring to our clients, so it is of critical importance to us to be part of a values-based organisation which share our core principles around clients and people."

Phil Barton, Partners& CEO, said: "Creating a hub in the North of England is an important step for us in developing our national footprint. For us to continue our mission, which seeks to return the market to the best traditions of advice and relationships, combined with modern thinking and intelligent use of technology, it was critical that we aligned ourselves with a business which shares our values and will fit in with our culture. We have found that in Ives & Taylor and I'm confident it will be a good move for the team, their clients and of course, Partners&."

Senior appointment to Hyatt Regency and Hyatt House Manchester

Jodi Hinks has been appointed as Director of Commercial Strategy for Hyatt Regency and Hyatt House Manchester, reporting into the properties' General Manager, Assumpta McDonald.

Previously the Director of Sales & Marketing with Rocco Forte Hotels in Manchester and Prague, Jodi's 20+ years of experience in the hospitality sector encompasses a number of leading hotel, catering and sports industry brands.

Born and raised in Bolton, Jodi says, "I am passionate about working in the hotel and hospitality industries, especially within the North of England, there is no better satisfaction than a customer or guest



Jodi Hinks, Director of Commercial Strategy, Hyatt Regency and Hyatt House Manchester

leaving with a smile knowing that we have provided a fantastic experience. I have seen first-hand how hotels are places where remarkable talent from all genders and diverse backgrounds can thrive."

LINX migrate Manchester internet exchange to disaggregated network

The London Internet Exchange (LINX) are close to completing a full network migration at their regional UK interconnection point, LINX Manchester.

Launched in 2012, LINX Manchester is located at four data centre sites in the city, two at Equinix, M247 and TeleData. Networks connected to LINX Manchester from these data centre facilities benefit from regional peering, which means exchanging their traffic locally with other networks. This improves network latency as it avoids traffic 'tromboning' to and from London more often than it needs to.

The aim of the LINX Manchester migration project is to shift the current technical set up to the successful disaggregated model, deployed on LINX's LON2 network in London back in 2018. LINX were the first Internet exchange in the world to deploy this disaggregated set up on such a large scale, using hardware from Edgecore Networks and software from IP Infusion.

The engineering team will be mirroring the LON2 set up at LINX Manchester with suppliers Edgecore Networks and IP Infusion, moving away from the single supplier source, to give local members increased flexibility and continued value for their membership.

Mark Lloyd, Principal Network Engineer at LINX says; "The disaggregated set up is more cost effective and allows us to deliver more long-term technical improvements and capabilities faster."

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Raytheon Professional Services develop digital skills in Greater Manchester and Lancashire



Raytheon Professional Services, in partnership with the Greater Manchester Combined Authority, the Department for Digital, Culture, Media and Sport, and Lancashire Digital Skills Partnership, has successfully recruited and developed a diverse cohort of cyber security specialists in Greater Manchester as part of the RPS Cyber Academy.

Delivered virtually from Salford, the Cyber Academy reskilling programme

was one of the first of its kind in the UK and is currently supporting more than 90 Greater Manchester and Lancashire residents with accessible routes into better quality digital employment. Graduates of the RPS Cyber Academy have been recruited from a range of sectors including hospitality and tourism and, after a blended delivery programme that equated to 40 days of learning through our digital boot camp, are

being developed for entry into junior cyber security roles within employers that include Salford City Council and Morson Projects. The Cyber Academy reached its conclusion in March 2021.

RPS held a virtual event to celebrate the achievements of the graduates and showcase their employability and talent to the Greater Manchester Tech sector on March 18. Keynote speakers included Paul Dennett, mayor of Salford; Steve Thompson, director of Business Development for Raytheon Professional Services; Jon Corner, Salford chief digital officer; Raj Badiani, head of Digital for Raytheon UK; and a special message for the graduates from Greater Manchester Mayor Andy Burnham.

"Raytheon Technologies has always been a benchmark for excellence, and they brought all their expertise to this academy for the benefit of Greater Manchester and Lancashire

residents and employers," Jon Corner said. "Raytheon Technologies clearly identified the challenges posed by the significantly increasing skills gap and met this challenge by developing a programme of learning that could recruit and develop cyber skills for residents in all walks of life and backgrounds.

"It has provided them with university-level skills to prepare the delegates for the exciting tech challenges that Greater Manchester and the UK faces as it rises from the pandemic."

The RPS Cyber Academy has recruited and developed a diverse cohort of ready-to-work IT employees. The programme covered basic to intermediate information technology and networking, plus entry-level cyber security. This ensures delegates have a diverse knowledge and skill set to enter multiple areas of the digital sector.

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news

One year on: Cost to UK's SMEs to exceed £126 billion, double last year's projection

Approaching the anniversary of the first national lockdown, a new report reveals the cost of Covid-19 to UK SMEs is set to exceed £126.6 billion – nearly double the £69 billion initially projected a year ago.

The study by small business insurance provider Simply Business revealed that on average, SMEs have lost £15,673 each so far in earnings due to the pandemic and subsequent lockdowns, up from the £11,779 small business owners initially estimated that Covid-19 would cost in May last year.

The financial impact on SMEs

A year into the global pandemic, SMEs now fear they will lose a total of £22,461 each on average, suggesting there are still more losses to come. Almost one in 10 (8%) expect the pandemic to cost them over £50,000 in total.

What's more, over 840,000 SMEs are not sure their business will ever return to pre-pandemic trading levels, bringing a huge blow to both the small business community and the UK economy.

With six million SMEs in the UK, accounting for over 99% of all businesses, 33% of employment and 21% of all economic turnover, the total cost of Covid-19 to UK SMEs – set to exceed £126.6 billion – has the potential to send ripples through our economy and communities.

A lack of government support?

Overall, 81% of SMEs still say they haven't had enough support from government – with 41% saying they don't feel supported at all and 40% believing they've had some support but not enough.

In terms of financial support, over 2.2 million SMEs (37%) still haven't been able to access government schemes and grants, seen by many as a lifeline to help small businesses through the pandemic.

For those that have been able to access government support, a third (33%) have been able to receive the Self-Employed Income Support Scheme, a quarter (26%) have utilised the Bounce Back Loan Scheme, and one fifth (18%) have accessed the Local Restriction Support Grant.

So far, only one in 20 (5%) have been able to make use of the business rates holiday, and just 3% have been able to use the Coronavirus Business Interruption Loan Scheme. Despite the government offering a range of financial schemes to support small businesses, it's clear that many haven't been able to access the vital help needed for their recovery.

What small businesses needed from government

Well over two fifths (46%) of SMEs believe the government should have offered a wider range of financial support schemes – highlighting how difficult small business owners have found it to access the schemes on offer.

One quarter (24%) believe finance should have been released quicker, and the same number feel there should have been greater communication and transparency from the government about the impact on small businesses and the self-employed.

A further 23% of SME owners also believe there should have been more clarity around restriction and regulations within their industry, and

one in 10 (9%) think the applications should have been easier to fill out.

Emerging from lockdown

Looking ahead, roughly half (54%) of SMEs believe the government's roadmap out of lockdown has given them some level of reassurance to start planning the future of their business – leaving 46% still uncertain in the coming months.

In recouping the money lost during the pandemic, the majority predict it will take anywhere from 18 months to two years (18%), or two to three years (20%) to get back the money lost.

One in five (20%) think three years or more, meaning they might not return to pre-pandemic levels until 2024 or later.

When it comes to returning to pre-pandemic levels of trading, over 860,000 SMEs (14%) are not sure that their business will ever return to pre-pandemic trading levels, but others are more optimistic.

A quarter (25%) believe they will return to pre-pandemic levels by spring or summer 2022. Well over a tenth (14%) think faster, and predict they'll be back to normal trading levels by the end of this year.

Overall, over half (53%) of SMEs remain concerned about their business' future, but hope to survive until the end of 2021.

Alan Thomas, UK CEO at Simply Business, comments: "No business, big or small, has been able to escape the impact of the Covid-19 pandemic – with 12 months of restrictions, lockdowns, and uncertainty always likely to take its toll.

"The scale of the impact across this

last year felt by the self-employed is abundantly clear in our latest research. Covid-19 will cost SMEs an estimated £126.6 billion – double what owners predicted it would cost them when asked a year ago. This £126.6 billion hole in the books of small businesses is a huge blow to the economy.

"Beyond the unquestionable economic hit, we should also recognise that behind each of these small businesses is a small business owner – each with families, livelihoods, and dreams. The impact of the pandemic on so many of these individuals has been devastating, both financially and emotionally.

"While the government support packages have proven a lifeline to many small businesses through the pandemic, our research reveals that 81% of self-employed people feel it hasn't been enough – with over two million SMEs unable to access any financial support.

"Yet in all of this, we have seen countless examples of the resilience, resourcefulness, and creativity that we have come to associate with the UK's small business owners.

"Insuring over 450,000 small businesses – from plumbers to accountants to restaurants – has allowed us to see first-hand the impact on this audience, and the impressive way in which they've responded.

"As we emerge from what is hopefully the worst of the pandemic – with SMEs across the country looking to kickstart their operations – it is important that we all support small businesses, knowing that they will be crucial to our collective recovery."



Manchester baby business secures major export contract

Family-owned Manchester business Cosatto has secured its first export to Australia in 15 years, shipping £130,000 of its bespoke baby products with the financial support of UK Export Finance (UKEF). The UK and Australia are important economic partners. A new free trade agreement between the two countries would be worth billions of pounds to the UK economy and is close to being signed.

Cosatto already sells to retailers large and small in the UK, and sales to distributors in countries like Japan account for 15% of its growing export business.

However, when it came to arranging the insurance for a major deal with a distributor in Melbourne, their insurance broker would not cover the risk if the deal fell through. At risk of losing the contract, Cosatto turned to UKEF, the UK's export credit agency, which was able to step in with its export credit insurance scheme. This enabled the business to export 300 prams, 750 strollers and 200 highchairs to another family-owned business.

Remote work has intensified data protection challenges for two thirds of UK businesses

Barracuda Networks, a provider for cloud-enabled security solutions, has released a new report titled 'The State of Office 365 backup', which reveals that the worldwide shift to remote work during the pandemic has intensified the challenges with protecting Office 365 data.

The report findings revealed that nearly two-thirds (64%) of UK businesses are concerned about ransomware attacks facing its Microsoft Office 365 data.

Furthermore, nearly half (45%) have already experienced a ransomware attack, and 55% know an organisation that has experienced a ransomware attack and struggled with recovery.

To shed light on this issue, the report surveyed global IT decision makers in the UK to capture their opinions and perspectives about Office 365, data security, backup and recovery. The findings revealed that a

comprehensive data backup solution with unlimited storage is an important priority for 84% of UK organisations this year.

It also revealed that granular restoration of Exchange, SharePoint, OneDrive and Teams data is an important factor for three quarters (76%) of IT decision makers; the ability to download a copy of recovered items is important for 89%, and, backing up a cloud application is important for 79%.

Furthermore, seven in 10 businesses (70%) that they are concerned about complying with data privacy requirements, suggesting that regulatory concern is as much of a motivator for cloud backup solutions as security and accidental deletion. This is understandable when fines for violations can be as much as €20 million or a certain percentage of the previous year's annual

revenue, whichever is greater.

When asked about their attitudes to cloud backup solutions, a majority (71%) of IT leaders expressed enthusiasm for a simple, all in one licensing solution. 68% also would

prefer a SaaS (Software as a Service) backup for O365, so that there is no hardware to maintain.

Also 79% stated that being able to start running back up right away is an important factor to them.

Salford firm appoint experienced receivables specialist

Sharon Lornie has been appointed as a Receivables Specialist at Cerberus Receivables Management (CRM) in Salford. CRM works with asset-based lenders, restructuring firms and directly with business owners to help determine financial difficulties and develop and implement strategies to overcome them. It is part of the Cerberus Group. Sharon will have a UK-wide remit with responsibilities including undertaking offsite system reviews



for clients, verifying sales ledgers and collecting books and records. She will also be involved in planning, implementing and working through collection strategies for both CRM's funder and restructuring clients.

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interview

Anyone

can be a



GM Business Connect recently caught up with Tariq Hussain, Managing Director at Petherbridge Bassra Solicitors Ltd, part of the Petherbridge Bassra Group. The national firm are headquartered in Bradford and offer multiple specialist law services across the North.

Please tell us about your role at Petherbridge Bassra Solicitors, also can you describe what your firm covers?

"My role is Managing Director of the Petherbridge Bassra Group, who are a multi-disciplinary practice specialising in business crime but offering a wide range of services such as personal injury, civil litigation, family law, wills, probate and conveyancing. I've been with the firm since 1993, which has been growing steadily throughout that time. We had a significant merger in 2008, bringing together my business Petherbridge Hussain, where I was a Partner, with Bassra Solicitors.

"We now specialise in many diverse areas of law, and as well as running the business as Managing Director, I have particular oversight of the commercial clients, with a particular emphasis on criminal and regulatory matters."

Can you tell us more about your particular area of expertise?

"Within criminal law there are a wide variety of types of crimes that occur. In addition to the obvious crimes that exist though, we have a specialist arm called Opus Law. Here we deal with matters of serious fraud and the more serious and complex business crimes – which include regulatory offences.

"So, for example, a company could breach Health & Safety regulations, and some of those breaches often result in criminal offences. An example of this is when a regulatory breach results in a corporate manslaughter charge.

"Also as a direct result of the pandemic we are seeing a substantial increase in allegations concerning false claims for grants and furlough support. Many businesses may unwittingly fall foul in this situation and be accused of criminal intent due to misunderstanding the process for claiming the grants.

"This risk includes any business that has claimed such a grant. That's where we come in. Using our specialist team we have decades of experience of defending businesses accused in these types of situations. We also have professional working relationships with prosecuting authorities, and we are able to

employ this to seek an end to any investigation at an early stage."

Can you go into more detail regarding specific areas of criminal law that affect businesses?

"Our various teams within the Group cover every single criminal offence that anyone can be charged with – assault, theft, burglary, possession of drugs, etc – and whilst those general crimes may be committed by everyday people, we have a dedicated team that has a more focused approach for businesses. By definition businesses don't tend to be viewed as thieves or 'vagabonds', but there are lots of rules about running companies, and those who fall foul of those are often involved in civil proceedings, or even criminal proceedings.

"The areas we are looking at include instances of proposed furlough fraud, also R&D tax fraud. In fact, there are many areas in business, particularly since the pandemic measures were rolled out, where the authorities take a view that if information provided by a business is misleading in order to claim monies falsely, it's a fraud.

"Now, that may be a misunderstanding by the authorities, but if the business is charged with an offence they will need defending in an attempt

to bring a resolution to the matter as quickly as possible.

"Another common situation is when key individuals within a business rely heavily on being able to use their driving licences – directors, business development and sales staff for example.

"When 12 points are reached the minimum first ban on driving would be for 6 months. This can be catastrophic, not just for individuals but for the businesses themselves. One of my areas of expertise is to aim to convince a magistrate to let the offender retain their licence even after accruing 12 penalty points."

When a business or individual approaches you for help, how do you proceed?

"The first thing to do is to understand the problem, and letting them know someone is on their side. Empathy, and being able to listen, are vital attributes of this job. There are times when one could say that a corporate manslaughter situation is far more serious than losing a licence, particularly when the former situation may end in a prison sentence. However, for a client to lose their licence could be disastrous for them in many different ways, and it's important to understand and appreciate how important the ramifications are for that particular person."

Do Petherbridge Bassra collaborate with other law firms – and if so can you describe how that works?

"When I became Chair of the Leeds chapter of BITA (British and Irish Trade Alliance) we were pleased to offer our full range of legal services to the members.

"At the same time though, an area that members were keen to engage with was general commercial work which isn't in our domain, so we guide businesses to Blacks Solicitors, with whom we have had a very good relationship with over the years."

Going back to allegations of fraud, are there any alternatives to having to go to court?

"Yes, often in negotiations with government bodies like HMRC, there can be an accommodation that can be

accused of a crime...

reached, for example, paying back a sum of money. Basically, treating the issue as a civil disposal in order to avoid court proceedings. Much depends on the attitude of a government body, and also the evidence in the case, and ultimately whether it's right to repay the money.

"Sometimes a business has been overpaid by a certain amount from an external body, and the overpayment has to be returned. The question is sometimes whether that overpayment is the result of criminal activity, or simply a mistake. There can be a very fine line between both situations.

"Sometimes paying the money back can result in a negotiation where there is a diversion from the criminal courts, and the matter can be brought to an end. We actively pursue that on behalf of our clients."

What do you enjoy most working for Petherbridge Bassra?

"My favourite part is representing individuals and businesses. Taking the pressures caused by being in these situations and the anxiety that follows and being able to walk them through the journey and get a result at the end of that journey that resolves those pressures.

"It's the process of being there for my clients throughout the whole journey, dealing with those difficulties and guiding and supporting them."

In your view what qualities make a good lawyer?

"Firstly, it's crucial that you only take on cases in areas that you are skilled in working, specifically within your area of specialism.

"Secondly, it's very important to supply your client with the reassurance that they need at any given stage during that process and show them that you're on their side – you have their back and you will do everything to defend them.

"With criminal law it's also crucial you are available for your clients 24/7. I really believe to do everything you can takes a lot of effort and expertise, but it's vital a client has confidence in his solicitor. It's up to your abilities as a good lawyer to develop that confidence."

How do you see the firm developing over the next five years?

"At the moment we're developing the firm after having acquired a nearby practice called Bird & Daniels Solicitors. They specialise in wills, probate and conveyancing. We operate under the over-arching brand of the 'Petherbridge Bassra Group', which we're currently expanding to offer even more services.

"Another area mentioned before is the problem of potential fraud as a result of the pandemic. We're aligning our services to cater specifically for this kind of support to all businesses in all sectors."

How about yourself – where do you personally want to be in five years.

"I'd like to be in a position by then to ensure the practice is worthy to be passed down to the directors and shareholders in a succession strategy. I would personally want to continue to develop and maintain the firm's reputation to that point and beyond.

"The legacy that I will be looking at will be a firm that has grown solidly over the previous 30 years and that over the next five years will develop and grow with the addition of many more services."

You recently became Chair of BITA Leeds Chapter (British and Irish Trade Alliance) network group. How has this benefitted Petherbridge Bassra Solicitors?

"There's a real alignment between what I can offer people on a professional level and the personal relationships developed through regular networking. When a group of people come together and

get to know each other in the way we operate BITA, there are real positives to be taken through not just the wellbeing of belonging to such a group, but for doing good business too.

"From the firm's perspective, the more people that personally get to know me, the more those people can benefit if they were to encounter any of the legal difficulties mentioned above. It's a case of spreading the word beyond the shores of Yorkshire through an organisation which is

based throughout the country. This is of course the case for any business joining a networking group like BITA."

"As a firm we are not simply bound by geography when looking to help businesses, and it is the national nature of BITA that helps raise not just our firm's profile but every member of BITA that engages with the current offer of national zoom networking. This fits really well with the fact that we are already travelling the length and breadth of the UK supporting clients."

Tariq Hussain,
Managing Director,
Petherbridge Bassra Solicitors Ltd

Find out more about Petherbridge Bassra Solicitors Ltd, visit: petherbridgebassra.com
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interview

Electric all the with the



The Harris Group is a great example of a business grown through the vision of its iconic founder.

For more than 60 years Pino Harris had grown the Dublin-based business to become a commercial vehicle distributor with a global supply chain, pan-European customer base and an extensive network of dealers. After his death in 2017 his wife Denise Harris took over as Chief Executive Officer.

The Group are now creating a new base in Birchwood Park, Warrington to grow its MAXUS Commercial Vehicle operations in the UK.

GM Business Connect were invited to find out more with John McEvoy, Chief Operating Officer of the Group:

When you took the role of Chief Operating Officer, what were your challenges, and what experience did you bring to the job?

"When I came to Harris Group, I was following in the footsteps of an industry legend.

"Everyone's perception of Harris was Pino Harris, the late founder. He was the figurehead, the leader, the brand personified. After Pino, the company's identity had to evolve,

so when I came on board, my job was to pull people together and help them find belief in our new ways of working, which was no longer about the person in charge. I could not, and did not, want to fill Pino's shoes. So, I had to try to restructure the business for the future and get people to believe in Harris Group's mission and believe in Harris as the business.

"We have been incredibly lucky that Denise Harris has stepped into the role of CEO. She is an amazing, influential woman with a tremendous vision of her own. She appreciates new thinking and new technology

and is doing a tremendous job of leading our business.

"My experiences at Kerry Group and Wincanton and the people I met there have had a huge impact on who I am today. Did they prepare me for the next stage of the journey? Of course they did. Every day is a school day!"

What challenges do you see in the future market of electric commercial vehicles?

"I don't see challenge as a negative thing. You have to deal with them, no matter what or where you are in life - you deal with them, you just keep moving. They are there to make you and your business stronger.

"That's why I think new thinking is so important to us. As part of our core values and methodology, it's ingrained in the company's history. And you can't talk about new thinking without mentioning EV. We have taken this challenge and invested in research and key partnerships to build new vehicles that offer zero-emissions technology, lower running costs and reduced environmental impacts.

"We have an ever-expanding range of electric vehicles from LCVs to buses. In fact, our growing range of electric LCVs and buses rivals diesel in terms of power and mileage. Our current offering includes the road-ready Maxus e DELIVER 3 and Maxus e DELIVER 9 electric vans and the Higer STEED, a 100% electric, metro-ready bus."





Way Harris Group



John McEvoy,
Chief Operating
Officer,
Harris Group

What does Harris Group specialise in and how much involvement in R&D does the company have?

"As Ireland's pre-eminent distributor of commercial vehicles in Ireland and the UK, Harris Group has set itself apart from the competition for the last 60 years through a spirit of innovation and a commitment to excellence in customer service. At the end of the day, we specialise in supporting our customers.

"We work very closely with our partners in China, who are so far ahead in EV technology. We are even exploring alternative fuels such as hydrogen and are looking at all opportunities. It's what's going to happen - it's the way forward. There are people in the sector who still believe that they have to have diesel because of better mileage and power, but that is changing, and soon this thinking will be consigned to history. At Harris Group we are proud to play our part in leading this change."

What's the biggest challenge for commercial vehicle users moving from diesel and petrol?

"In terms of challenges - range anxiety, battery efficiency, charging times and battery life-spans are definitely factors that people are concerned about on the journey to move away from fossil fuels. That is why we have now been accredited and certified to repair and service batteries here. So for the people who may have been concerned about the expense of replacing a battery, five, ten years down the line - they need to understand, that's not the case anymore. We can repair them here, now. That fear is over.

"We have a new 8-metre bus here and it's incredible, it is astounding the people who are testing it. This has a charging time of approximately one hour and twenty minutes and a range of over 300km. We also have 12-metre options coming up - and these will change the game completely. I have to say, we are really excited about these innovations."

What services will the Warrington base be concentrating on in the UK

and what size workforce will the Group be looking to recruit for the new base?

"We are really excited about our expansion into the UK, and our new home in Birchwood Park, Warrington will be instrumental to our continued growth.

"The new premises is strategically located near the M6 and M62 motorway interchange, providing seamless access to the surrounding markets and beyond. This facility will accommodate MAXUS' UK-based employees as well as acting as a Harris CAS distribution centre and Parts Depot with offices and a warehouse on site, headed up by Simon Bunn.

"It will also include its own EV technical centre as part of our commitment to sustainable transport, and a training facility will

also be established for engineers taking part in MAXUS' technical training academy which will be headed up by Harris UK Engineering Manager, Tony Close. We will continue to grow our support team in Warrington in line with our ambitious growth plans."

What investment does Harris Group offer its employees as in personal development and promotion, are there any recognised qualifications or skills that can be transferred?

"At the core, our business is all about people. We refer to our extended team as the Harris Family. We actively promote within the company, in recognition of the commitment that individuals make. We actively encourage people from a professional and personal development point of view.



In addition to our investment in in-house training technology, and of course our new MAXUS Academy here in the UK, we also engage with specialist external training and development resources."

What legacy would you like to leave behind for the Group, and what has been the biggest lesson you have learned in business which you can pass on?

"The key learning which I would like to pass on is simply, to turn challenges into opportunities.

"It's important for everyone to remember their history, and Harris Group's history is Pino and his way of interacting with customers. With him the kettle was always boiling before you walked in the door, no matter who you were, you were very welcome; it was that kind of place, and that's never going to change.

"It might be an old-fashioned approach to the customer, but it's important to us and is still alive today. Only now there are more of us doing the meeting and greeting.

"One of the lessons which we have all learned from COVID is to adapt to new ways of working with people. This has encouraged us to embrace new technologies, which have become the new normal. We have modernised and upgraded our IT systems and telecoms, all to keep us MORE in contact, not LESS.

"In terms of leaving a legacy - well I have no intention of retiring just yet! Our future is very bright and I do hope that my legacy will be to have protected and enhanced the legacy left to us, by our founder Pino Harris."

Find out more
about Harris Group:
harrisgroup.ie

interview



One of the hardest hit sectors of the restrictions to businesses over the past year has been the hospitality sector. GM Business Connect caught up with husband and wife owners Elaine and Mark Wrigley of the Atlas Bar on Deansgate, to hear about their story of perseverance over the past year.

The Atlas Bar is seen as the Manchester home of Gin, how many brands do you actually stock?

"At the last count just over 540. We continue to add new lines when interesting brands come along, particularly those with an intriguing provenance or history. We're particular though, especially with Gins that are gimmicky or seem to have a marketing ploy attached.

"For example, we had some bubblegum flavoured lines offered, and also some Rhubarb and Custard flavoured Gins that were simply too sweet and not of the quality that we look for.

"We're at heart traditionalists, very much looking for the London Dry

Gin style of brand. However, we also look at the flavoured Gins available, specifically quality brands, which are very popular with our customers."

Has the Atlas Bar always specialised in Gin?

"We took over the bar in 2012, and were looking for something that would make us different and stand out. Vodka had been done to death at the time, and we looked to the Britons Protection round the corner from us who at that time specialised in over 500 Whiskey brands. We got on really well with the owners and it was they who suggested looking at Gins, so we opened with 28 brands of Gin which was a first for Manchester.

"We were very lucky with timing as we had started our Gin journey before craft Gins became a thing, and we started off slowly seeking out brands that fitted with our idea of a quality Gin. Once the interest in Gins picked up, we were being approached directly by the distillers, especially as our reputation grew.

"The journey has been fantastic. We have made so many friends across

Manchester

many countries, especially as our range is truly international. We stock brands from New Zealand to South Africa and across to North America."

We've been in and out of lockdown for a year now, how have you both managed to cope with the stresses of dealing with this?

"We are both very pragmatic, dealing with things in front of us and trying not to worry about things that may or may not happen. This has helped us stay focused and emotionally steady over the year.

"In our view the government's communication, particularly to the hospitality sector, has been very poor. For example, when we opened last year on the 4 July, there was very little guidance available. We developed our own system for keeping both our customers and staff safe involving table ordering apps, booking systems, PPE protocol, and we worked through the issues as we had to. This cost us a lot in terms of further investment, but it did help us to stay well mentally as we were doing our best to ensure safety and that was a very positive thing for us.

"The other massive source of support was the surrounding business community. Not just the hospitality sector but all businesses, especially those in the city centre.

"We've made a lot of new friends over the past year as we've all been

lobbying government. There's no doubt hospitality businesses in the Northwest and particularly Greater Manchester have been impacted by the lockdown restrictions. In fact, we have been the region locked down the longest in the UK, followed by Leicester as a close second.

"There are many people championing our situation and still lobbying hard for us. Andy Burnham, Lucy Powell, Graham Brady, Sacha Lord – who is still fighting in the courts for a fairer timetable for our sector to come out of lockdown. These people are giving us hope, and knowing that so many are pushing for getting the City Centre re-open really helps us all to deal with the emotional and mental pressure."

Was there ever a time where you thought about throwing in the towel and walking away from the business and doing something else?

"We've been asked that many times, and the answer is a firm no. The amount of work we put in over the past 8 years to build the business from scratch, coupled with our fantastic team that we see as our family, have resulted in a very solid business prior to Covid.

"When the pandemic arrived in March last year we saw the Chancellor standing up and saying that if you're a viable business we'll stand side by side with you. Sadly, that hasn't been the case for city centre businesses. There's no doubt the furlough scheme has helped, but we've still had to make half our staff redundant.



Mark and Elaine Wrigley, Owners, Atlas Bar

er's home of

"Saying that though, we are determined to get through this, and the thought of giving up has never entered our heads."

Did you diversify the business over the past year? If so, what did you do and how did you tell customers?

"Because we offer such a range of rare Gins we had already established an online shop. During the past year we have really pushed that side of the business through social media and word of mouth. It has grown, but not as fast as we'd like."

"Another area that we promoted pre-Covid was Gin tasting at the bar as an experience. We took this online by offering Gin Experience kits, available through our website, and this has been very popular as family and friends can share in the Gin tasting experience virtually. In fact, we're very excited to see over the past few months an uptake in corporate orders. This also means that when the sector re-opens, the online tasting experience can still be a source of enjoyment for work colleagues to enjoy who are located all over the country."

"Another aspect of the tasting experience is that we host the event virtually from here, and customers have commented they felt in a way they were at the bar. The virtual tasting has been really successful in staying connected with our customers."

You mentioned you had to make half your staff redundant. Can you describe how the past year has been for your team?

"Although as a business we weren't eligible for the available grants as our rateable value was over £50,000, the furlough scheme has been crucial in helping us to retain our staff. In the first lockdown we were able to retain most of our people, however, when returning back in the summer we realised we couldn't keep everyone on due to the reduced hours imposed and trade that we had, and unfortunately we had to let a good number of staff go to keep going as a business."

"It was during the second tiered lockdown when Greater Manchester found itself as one of the first regions to close down again, that we found it really hard. Staff were again on furlough, although this time only 66% of salaries were covered. It simply wasn't enough for our team to survive on who had struggled on 80% of salaries for most of the year."

"We took the decision to promise to top their salaries up to 80% in whatever way we could. It was at this time Andy Burnham famously highlighted publicly the inequality of this, although it wasn't until London ended up in tiered lockdown that the government finally brought back the 80% furlough help."

"All this uncertainty has taken its toll over our team, and we find it crucial to keep communicating with everybody, especially during lockdown. We've engaged with online staff training, kept the social channels open with Facebook and



WhatsApp groups, and ensured everyone is supported."

How have you managed with your supply chains during the last year?

"We've had a certain number of issues, especially with our overseas suppliers. A big problem has been logistics, and the disruption to exporting chains across the world due to Covid restrictions."

"However, by far the biggest impact on our supply chain has been the whole hospitality sector being unable to trade. We're seeing many smaller brands really struggling, and especially when those suppliers have more customers in the hospitality sector rather than retail are where we're seeing problems."

With the doors opening on 14 April for outside serving only, how are you gearing up for a gradual emergence from lockdown?

"We have been up-skilling our team in preparation for the 14th. During furlough we've been able to do some training sessions as you are allowed to do learning and development under the scheme. The week before we'll be running full health & safety training for our team, re-looking at things like

distancing to keep customers and staff safe. Also, we'll be getting back up to speed with table ordering - essentially we'll be operating more like a restaurant than a bar."

"During the entire period of re-opening last year we had established a series of measures that we knew made our customers and staff feel safe. We'll be doing the same again this time. We were proud that not one instance of track and trace indicated that any Covid was caught at the bar, and we look forward to putting the safety of our customers and team as our number one priority again."

Obviously you're currently working on re-opening and the safety aspects of that. Have you got any other future plans for the bar?



"We're really proud to announce our very own brand of 'Atlas' Gin."

It's going to be launched at our first supper club on 25 May, and is inspired by our travels to distilleries around the world, botanicals from each continent, as well as a 'nod' to our Manchester roots."




The Atlas Bar will be open for business from 14 April with their unique outdoor space - no booking required. For more information visit: www.atlasbarmanchester.com Tel: 0161 834 2124

exporting

Preparing to **trade** with the



Michael Nolan,
Chief Executive
Officer,
Declaron

Michael Nolan, CEO of the Irish customs clearance solution, Declaron.ie, spoke to us about some of the issues British companies have been encountering trading with the EU, and Ireland in particular, since 1 January and his advice on avoiding them.

"It has been a tough 1st Quarter for everyone, with official numbers showing imports from the UK into Ireland down 65% in January of this year. The Free Trade Agreement that was agreed on Christmas Eve 2020 didn't give businesses enough time to prepare, and everyone underestimated the amount of paperwork that would be required to continue trading.

"When you compound this with the impact on trade caused by COVID lockdowns across Europe, businesses are really facing a perfect storm. We are starting to see some recovery, but British companies are still facing a lot of challenges trading with Ireland and the rest of the EU."

"At Declaron, having designed our



Customs Clearance Solution to be focused on ease and compliance, our experienced Customs Clearance Agents have been in a great position to help our British customers overcome a lot of these set up issues in the last 3 months.

"Unfortunately, we continue to see the same issues happening with Customers joining up with us today to import into Ireland. These issues delay them from being able to make their first declaration, so we want to get the message out there to help get businesses prepared regardless of what customs clearance agent they use.

"The first thing we would urge UK Businesses to do is to understand who is going to be the importer of their goods into Europe. The importer must be established somewhere in the EU. This does not have to be in the country you are importing into.

"For Instance, we have seen UK companies, with say a Danish entity importing with us into Ireland.

"If as a UK business, you don't have an entity established in another EU country, you should decide if you want to establish an entity in an EU country. Generally, those UK Customers who have gone this route are not doing so simply to act as the importer, they have other business reasons for doing this, but being able to act as an EU importer helps them maintain their customers.

"If you don't have a European entity and aren't looking to open one, you need to see if your customer in Europe is willing to act as the importer of record.

"Once it is understood who the importer will be, they will need to

register with the appropriate European authority to carry out the import. In Ireland, this is the Irish Revenue Commissioners.

"You will need to get your Economic Operators registration (EORI) and with it your Tax Account Number (TAN). Your TAN is what you will need to fund to pay any duties that are payable on the goods you are exporting from the UK.

NOTE: Don't think that because there is a Free Trade Agreement that there will be no duties to be paid, this has taken a number of businesses by surprise!

"The determining factor on whether duties are paid is where the goods originate from. If you are bringing goods into the UK from another country and then sending them on to Europe, then duties will be payable on those goods. For the goods to change to being of the UK origin they need to have undergone 'substantial transformation'.

"The part that really took businesses by surprise was that the Free Trade Agreement only covered bringing EU goods into the UK but not if the same goods were then sent from

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EU and Ireland

the UK back to the EU (and vice versa).

"This has particularly impacted UK/Irish trade of goods brought from mainland Europe into the UK for both the British and Irish markets.

"Another element that British businesses need time to adjust to is the increase in paperwork outside the actual Customs Declaration. You will need to make sure that your processes allow you to produce the supporting documentation for an import into Europe in time to make and submit the import declaration.

"Documents such as an invoice and road consignments will be needed, and you will need to confirm that your transport partner is ready to produce pre-boarding notifications (PBNs) and safety and security declarations (ENS).

"Getting these documents as part of your standard process can take time and cause frustration when starting to export into Europe again.

"British companies should also be aware that the European authorities are being very strict from the start with the new trade relationship. This has led to many shipments being stopped at European ports and being orange and red routed.

"Having your goods stopped and delayed in a port will only add costs that will need to be paid by someone.

"Also, businesses should not think that the import process is finished when the goods leave a port. Tax authorities will audit importers as they do any other tax returns.



"The Irish Revenue Commissioners can audit importers in the current tax years and the subsequent three tax years so you need to keep your documentation for four years.

"British authorities have been more lenient with requirements initially,

but we know that Irish Revenue has already indicated that they are auditing imports into Ireland from the UK.

"So be sure to choose wisely when selecting a Customs Clearance Agent to act on your behalf."

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DKT 
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China to Liverpool

DKT Allseas (part of Allseas Global Logistics), has announced it will operate a number of supply chain critical container vessel sailings from Shanghai and Ningbo to Liverpool. The first service due to depart Shanghai on 8 April, with two additional sailings towards the end of April.

The new initiative by DKT Allseas, is intended to provide relief to customers who are facing increased ocean freight rates, as well as, reduced reliability due to the knock-on impacts of the global pandemic.

The service will have a 28 day transit time and the vessels will be feeder size, rather than panama or larger. This will offer multiple benefits to cargo owners as it will significantly reduce the chance of port delays, as there are no multi-port callings, and will ship directly into the heart of the UK market, where many

of Allseas' customers are located. It also offers guarantee that once space is booked, the cargo will be shipped.

Darren Wright, Managing Director Allseas Global Logistics said: *"This service which is under our own direct charter, has been born out of necessity and frustration with the current supply and demand issue. By taking a progressive approach we can offer a guaranteed service, without deviation or additional Port calls from Shanghai and Ningbo into Liverpool, at a sensible price."*

"We hope that the demand particularly by North UK customers, can support a longer term, frequent niche service from China direct into Liverpool."

Port owner, Peel Ports, believe the

new service will offer customers greater reliability and competitive freight options.

The Port of Liverpool is uniquely positioned to offer proximity to market benefits, which will allow goods to reach their end destination more reliably. This is a need which has been crucial in response to demand patterns that have been seen this year.

A port's proximity to markets also has other indirect benefits, not only acting as a strategic gateway, but as a facilitator of supply chain activity, and as a catalyst for reducing carbon emissions of a journey.

DKT Allseas understand the importance of building supply chain resilience, moving away from the UK's historical over reliance on

southern ports, and moving their customer's cargo entry point, to ports which are closer to the end destination.

David Huck, Managing Director, Peel Ports said: *"Cargo owners need assurance during these challenging times that their supply chain partners can be both reliable and provide innovative solutions to mitigate the effects of the pandemic."*

"The Port of Liverpool continues to demonstrate its strength, agility and resiliency to relieve pressure on traditional routes and provide a gateway direct into the heart of the cargo owning community of the UK."

"We continue to play a vital part in the transformation of UK logistics by enabling innovative solutions like this".



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bita news



Upsides

Although the upsides to lockdown have been few and far between, one is that people have become experts with online communication platforms like Zoom.

This has had a massive, positive impact on the growth of our BITA Global Forum.

Whereas once we would have faced an uphill struggle to make people realise that the initiative was viable without face-to-face meetings, we are now expanding our forum to include even more people and nations.

The Forum was first set up as a platform to discuss the issues and potential solutions that are at the forefront of national conversations – plastic pollution and mental health.

Although it started small with the UK, Ireland, Isle of Man and the USA represented, it has now expanded to include people from Australia, UAE, Israel, Poland, Germany and Tunisia. As I write this, we are speaking to new people in the Algarve, among others.

Our Ambassadors are engaged and enthusiastic and are keen to not restrict their participation to the Global Forum. Therefore, many of them have agreed to be Ambassadors for BITA International, spreading the work and ethos of BITA to new territories.

Plastic pollution and mental health have no borders, they are issues that affect us all, and ones that we need to address as individuals, organisations, and nations.

There are no simple solutions,

but by working with passionate individuals with a wealth of experience in various industries, we hope to promote new technology, green solutions, and awareness to help make small, incremental changes.

Every journey starts with a single step.

One thing that never changes is that good businesses adhere to best practice, an awareness of their people, and to embody generosity of spirit. People want to belong to something good and to do good.

Now more than ever, people have reassessed what they are doing and how they operate and are finding that BITA resonates with them.



Paul Whitnell

President of British and Irish Trade Alliance

www.bita.ie

For more information please visit www.bita.ie, email Paul on paulw@bita.ie, or email Laura, BITA's operations manager laura@bita.ie

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finance

What the **Spring Budget 2021** means for your business

Starting his Budget announcement on 3 March 2021, the Chancellor, Rishi Sunak, confirmed that the economy has shrunk by 10% but that more than £280 billion in support has been offered so far.

At LWA, we have summarised the key points from the Budget relevant to businesses to ensure you make the most of what's being offered to help the economy recover.

The Coronavirus Job Retention Scheme (CJRS or the furlough scheme)

The furlough scheme has been extended until the end of September 2021.

There will be no change for employees who will continue to receive 80% of their wage/salary for hours not worked until the end of the scheme.

For employers, the scheme will continue as is until July when they will be asked to contribute to the cost of paying furloughed employees starting from 10% in July and 20% in August and September.

Loans

A 'loan recovery scheme' will be introduced (after the 31 March deadline for CBILS and the BBLS) for businesses to apply for funding between £25,000 and £10 million until the end of 2021 and the government will provide a guarantee to lenders of 80%.

VAT

The VAT registration threshold will remain at £85,000 until April 2026.

For the hospitality and tourism sector, the 5% reduced rate of VAT will be extended until the end of September 2021. From 1 October

2021 it will increase to an interim rate of 12.5% then back to the main rate six months later on 1 April 2022.

Business tax

Corporation tax rates will increase to 25% in April 2023. However, struggling businesses (i.e. loss-making business) will not be affected as they will usually not have a tax liability. In addition, marginal rates of tax will see a return as small businesses with taxable profits of £50,000 or less continuing to pay corporation tax at 19%.

For taxable profits of £50,001 up to £250,000 a taper will be introduced. Therefore, only businesses with taxable profits of £250,000 or more will pay corporation tax at the full 25% rate.

For the next two years, the treatment of losses will be made more generous by allowing businesses to carry back losses of up to £2 million for up to three years.

There will be a 'super deduction' for businesses investing in assets for the next two years, which could allow a company to reduce their tax bill by 130% of the cost of the investment.

Business rates

100% business rates holiday for all eligible businesses in the retail, hospitality and leisure industry has been extended for the first three months of the tax year until the end of June with up to 66% relief for the rest of the year.

For closed businesses, rates will be discounted up to two thirds up to a value of £2million for the remaining nine months.

Additional grants and funding

£700 million worth of grants will be

made available in 'restart grants' to arts and sports organisations, including £400 million to help arts venues in England, to help them reopen, and a £300m recovery package for professional sports and £25 million for grassroots football.

A new 'restart' grant will be made available for non-essential businesses which will open according to the Prime Minister's 'roadmap'. Non-essential retail are due to open first so they will receive a £6,000 grant per premises. Those which will open later, such as hospitality and gyms, will receive grants up to £18,000 per premises to compensate those entities that are subject to a further delay in opening.

There will be funding available for apprenticeships of £3,000 for each new apprentice hired between 1 April to 30 September 2021.

Self-Employed Income Support Scheme (SEISS)

A fourth SEISS grant will be paid covering the period February 2021 to April 2021. This will equate to 80% of the average trading profit for the three-month period up to a maximum of £7,500.

A fifth and final grant from May 2021 will also be paid and applications for the fifth grant will open in July 2021.

The SEISS grant will be based on

the 2019/20 self-assessment income tax return information provided the taxpayer has submitted their 2019/20 tax return with HMRC by midnight on 2 March 2021.

This is expected to allow an additional 600,000 individuals who became self-employed last year to claim the fourth and fifth grants.

Self-employed individuals whose turnover has fallen by 30% or more will continue to receive the 80% grant. Self-employed individuals whose turnover has fallen less than 30% will receive a 30% grant.

If you need support as a result of the Chancellor's Spring Budget, please contact a member of our team - we're here to help.

Call **0161 905 1801** in Manchester or **01925 830 830** in Warrington, or you can email us via mail@lwaltd.com.



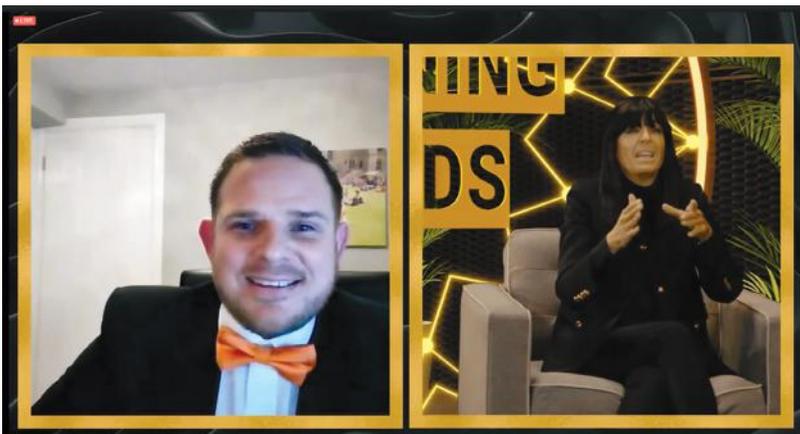
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apprenticeships

Victory at the Learning Awards for Apprenticeships at Salford City College



On the evening of 18 February 2021, Apprenticeships at Salford City College were awarded the Gold award for 'Learning Provider of the Year' at the 2021 Learning Awards.

The Learning Awards is an annual awards ceremony hosted by the Learning and Performance Institute (LPI). It recognises innovation and achievement in workplace learning. The 'Learning Provider of the Year' Award is presented to an enterprise that provides learning services to external clients. Winners are chosen through demonstrating consistent high-quality and innovation, strong client value propositions and evidence of business impact.

The event, which was this year held virtually, took place on Thursday 18 February and was hosted by television presenter Claudia Winkleman.

With entries from across the country, the competition was tight, however Apprenticeships at Salford City College wowed the judging panel and received the 'Learning Provider of the Year' Gold Award. The Gold Award is the highest level awarded at the ceremony, having unanimous votes from all the judges.

When awarding the team with the highly-commended award, the judges said: "Apprenticeships at Salford City College's inspiring goal to reduce unemployment and create inclusive and accessible learning opportunities can only be celebrated by the well-deserved Gold Award for 'Learning Provider of the Year'."

The judges were impressed by their innovative approach to transforming their face-to-face workshops to the digital space, enabling apprentices to carry out and evidence their learning.

The judges added: "The passion and care for students was profound with testimonials from the College's employees, students and employers. Clear evidence of transforming learners' lives and impressive pass rates leading to successful careers made Apprenticeships at Salford City College a standout winner."

Commenting on the achievement, Allan Milne, Head

of Apprenticeships at Salford City College, said: "I am incredibly proud of the achievement. It is testament to the hard work, passion and dedication displayed by my apprenticeship colleagues every day. They are exceptionally talented people who want to make a very positive difference to the lives of our apprentices and learners."

Access Government Grants and an Award-Winning Apprenticeship Service

The Government has once again chosen to extend the incentives for employers who employ a new apprentice, meaning that employers of all shapes and sizes can access business support to cover the cost of employing apprentices.

Now available until 30 September 2021, employers who employ a new apprentice from 1 April can receive £3,000, regardless of the apprentice's age. This is on top of the existing £1,000 payment already available for new apprentices aged 16 – 18 and those under 25 with an Education, Health and Care Plan, meaning that some employers could receive £4,000 in total.

Payments are made direct from the Government, via the new digital apprenticeship service.

Prior to Rishi Sunak's budget announcement where the extension was revealed, Allan Milne, took to morning television show BBC Breakfast to voice his thoughts on the extension of the employer incentives.



Allan said: "For a lot of small businesses who have struggled significantly throughout the Covid crisis, this opportunity of additional financial incentive to support new people into their business can only help them move forward."

To find out more how you could work with an award-winning apprenticeship provider and access funding for your business, contact Apprenticeships at Salford City College today on **0161 631 5555** or email **apprenticeships@salfordcc.ac.uk**

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economy

The UK Economy could grow by over **20%** in the next **3 years**

Analysis from Dr John Ashcroft on the economic impact of Covid-19

The IMF now sees a brighter outlook for the world economy. The Bank of England is feeling more optimistic about the UK. The Office For Budget Responsibility forecasts real growth of 11% over the next two years.

Forecasts for the UK will be revised up. In nominal terms the UK could grow by over 20% over the next three years, underpinning growth for jobs and business in the medium term.

The International Monetary Fund is preparing to raise its forecasts for the global economy in 2021 and 2022. In January, the organisation released its latest Economic Outlook. Growth of 5.5% was expected in the world economy this year, followed by a growth of over 4% in the following year.

Thanks to the success of the vaccination programme, the pressures of the pandemic are easing, providing a stimulus to growth. Thanks to the approval of President Biden's spending plan, the American and world economy will benefit from his \$1.9 trillion fiscal boost.

In the US forecasts for growth are increasing to over 6%. The Bank of America is forecasting growth of 6.5% this year and 5% next. The BoA has become more convinced, consumers will get out and spend, as the \$1,400 dollar stimulus cheques drop through the letterbox.

The Governor is feeling more optimistic...

In the UK, The Governor of the Bank of England is feeling more optimistic about the prospects for the year. The vaccination programme continues at pace. The slowdown in the economy, in the first quarter, is better than expected. Domestic holiday

reservations are rising. Consumer confidence is on the rise. Business confidence in manufacturing and construction is particularly high.

Asked what sort of recovery the UK could expect, Andrew Bailey said *"I am now more positive but with a large dose of caution. We now see upside risks to our January forecast, with some chance the peak in unemployment may be lower than expected."*

In January, the Bank were forecasting growth of 5% for the current year. An upward revision seems probable. 6% to 6.5% growth, seems possible.

Economic output fell in January, as lockdown returned to the UK. The month on month comparison was better than expected by many. Better than expected, according to forecasts from the Bank of England. The Bank had been braced for a 4% setback in the quarter as a whole.

Commenting on the data, Chancellor Rishi Sunak said *"The figures highlight the impact the pandemic continues to have but we have reasons to be hopeful."*

"We have set out a roadmap out of the pandemic, the NHS have vaccinated over 23 million people. My budget set out our three point plan, to protect the livelihoods of the British people."

Boris Johnson's timetable for recovery suggests the hospitality sector could be in full recovery mode from the end of June. According to Andy Haldane, Chief Economist at the Bank of England. The UK economy is like *"a coiled spring"*, set to release lots of financial energy.

"Consumer confidence will surge back, the economy will be firing on all cylinders. Success with the vaccination programme and the easing of lockdown will



assist the process," he said.

British households have amassed an astonishing £150 billion of cash apparently. They will be ready to return to the restaurants and book a much needed holiday. They may even take a trip to the cinema.

Unemployment actually fell in February to 5%, a modest improvement in the jobs market. Latest data from HMRC confirms that 4.7 million were on furlough at the end of February. Over one million of which, were in the accommodation and food sector.

The number of workers furloughed is expected to drop rapidly in the second quarter. In September last year, the total number had dropped to 2.5 million as growth returned.

A big bounce back is expected in the leisure sector as pubs, restaurants and hotels reopen for business.

According to the latest IHS Markit/CIPS data, business activity across the UK increased in March. The rate of expansion was the fastest for months. The expansion was fuelled by a rise in new orders, attributed to a bounce back ahead of easing lockdown measures.

Stronger consumer confidence and a surge in demand for residential property services also featured.

Business expectations for growth surged to the highest since comparable data were first available in 2012. Employment rose for the first time since the pandemic struck, as firms expanded capacity to meet demand.

Shops are due to re-open on 12 April. The Chancellor is urging people to *"get out there and spend"*. *"Go have fun and spend money"*. Rishi Sunak said, people should *"do their bit"* by spending savings they had built up during the lockdown ...socially distanced of course.

Dr John Ashcroft specialises in economics, strategy and financial markets.

He is author of *The Saturday Economist*, great updates every week on the UK and World Economy. *The Saturday Economist Live* is now available as a podcast and on Zoom.

"Fast Moving, Content Rich and Fun." Find out more...

www.thesaturdayeconomist.com



wellbeing

prevent
breast
cancer



The importance of checking for cancer symptoms

England's top cancer doctor has urged people not to hesitate to get checked as new research revealed that nearly half of the public have concerns about seeking help during the coronavirus pandemic.

One in 10 people would not contact their GP even if they had a lump or a new mole which did not go away after a week, the survey found. Another third of people would worry about seeking help, according to polling carried out by Portland.

Getting coronavirus or passing to family were among the top reasons that people would not come forward when they have cancer symptoms along with fears that they could be a burden to the health service.

Professor Peter Johnson, NHS clinical director for cancer, stressed NHS staff had worked hard to make sure people can get cancer checks and treatment safely, so there is no need to delay. Waiting to get help could have serious consequences for patients and put a greater burden on the NHS, Professor Johnson said.

GM Business Connect sees the importance of ensuring physical health not just a personal issue but a corporate necessity to ensure a happy and safe workforce.

Many businesses would benefit from embracing and supporting many of the cancer charities, and here we feature messages from two covering the most prevalent forms of cancer affecting both men and women in the UK today. Prevent Breast Cancer have teamed up with Prostate Cancer UK to provide critical health information for everyone.

Both charities promote awareness, early referral, and early diagnosis.

Their risk awareness talks can be promoted jointly, and held back-to-back over the course of an hour, or alternatively on separate days, depending on your business's preference.

To find out more or to arrange a prostate and/or breast cancer awareness talk please email:

info@preventbreastcancer.org.uk
or visit prostatecanceruk.org

BREAST CANCER SIGNS AND SYMPTOMS – WHAT YOU NEED TO KNOW

Prevent Breast Cancer has a unique mission - to fund ground-breaking research with the sole aim of preventing the disease for future generations.

Founded 25 years ago in Manchester as a national research charity and is based in the UK's only breast cancer prevention centre. Adapting the national breast screening programme it is now national if not global.

Our world-leading research is bringing us ever closer to a world where breast cancer is preventable, and thousands of lives are saved from ever experiencing this terrible disease.

Breast cancer is the most common cancer in the UK and the biggest cause of death for women between 35 – 49. To ensure we protect ourselves, our mothers, our sisters, our daughters, including men – it is extremely important to be aware of signs, and symptoms of breast cancer.

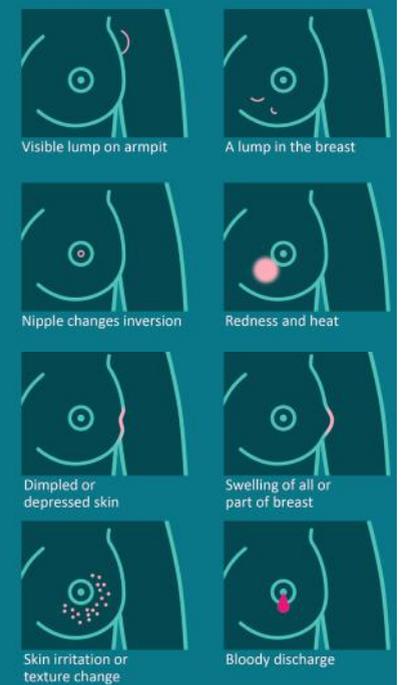
On the graphic shows the major signs and symptoms to be aware of – it is vitally important that women self – check on a regular basis. If there is any sign of these symptoms it is critical to refer yourself to a GP without delay. Although there have been delays in breast screening during the pandemic, if a GP feels that you need to be seen at a breast cancer clinic then this will be arranged for you on a two-week referral basis.

We know that there were many fewer referrals from GPs to breast clinics last year – over 107,000 in fact.

The sooner that breast cancer is diagnosed the better. An early diagnosis will lead to less invasive surgery, less radiotherapy and chemotherapy and a shorter time on preventative drugs.

For any further info or to see our "how to check yourself" video just email info@preventbreastcancer.org.uk

What to look out for



PROSTATE CANCER: KNOW YOUR RISK, GET CHECKED!

Prostate cancer is the most common cancer in men – and now the most commonly diagnosed cancer in the UK. If it's caught early, there's a good chance it can be successfully treated. But unlike other cancers, most men with early prostate cancer don't have any signs or symptoms, and there's no screening programme for it. That's why it's vital that men at highest risk of prostate cancer speak to their GP about their risk.

Men are at higher risk of prostate cancer if they are aged over 50 or their father or brother has had the disease, or if they are black. You can check your risk in 30 seconds and find out what to do next at prostatecanceruk.org/riskcheck. Anyone experiencing symptoms, such as urinary problems, should also speak to their GP.

It has never been more important to raise awareness of prostate cancer. Urgent referrals by GPs in England have dropped by around 52,000 since the pandemic began. As a result, around 8,600 fewer men started treatment for prostate cancer in 2020 than in the previous year.

As we have passed one year of lockdown, help Prostate Cancer UK find these 'missing' men by sharing our thirty-second risk checker, or booking a virtual awareness talk, delivered by one of our speaker volunteers.

If you have any concerns or questions about the disease, Prostate Cancer UK's Specialist Nurses are available on weekdays on **0800 074 8383**.

Are you at risk of prostate cancer?

Most men with early prostate cancer don't have any symptoms. That's why it's important to know about your risk.



1 in 8

In the UK, about 1 in 8 men will get prostate cancer in their lifetime.



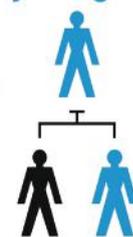
Prostate cancer is the most commonly diagnosed cancer in the UK.

Over 50 years old

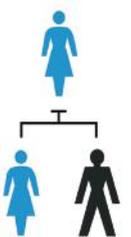
Prostate cancer mainly affects men over 50 and your risk increases with age. The most common age for men to be diagnosed with prostate cancer is between 65 and 69 years.

Family history and genes

You are two and a half times more likely to get prostate cancer if your father or brother has been diagnosed with it, compared to a man who has no relatives with prostate cancer.



Your risk of getting prostate cancer may also be higher if your mother or sister has had breast cancer.



Ethnicity



Black men are more likely to get prostate cancer than other men, and at a younger age. In the UK, about 1 in 4 black men will get prostate cancer in their lifetime. If you are a black man, your risk may increase once you're over 45.

wellbeing

When will I see you again?

Many people have expressed their distress at not being able to see close family and friends during the global pandemic and, indeed, this lack of contact has caused serious emotional and mental hardship to many people.

Students missing being able to return home to visit family, grandparents not seeing their newly born grandchildren are just two examples of the overwhelming sense of loss being endured at this time.

Those in business have worked hard to cultivate long-standing relationships with customers, clients, suppliers and others in the business community through a steady stream of in-person meetings, events and networking.

Whilst these people may not be part of our inner circle, never coming to our homes or to family events, they're a significant part of our orbit. Keeping in contact now via zoom meetings is a poor substitute for real face-to-face communication.

Then there are other, lesser relationships which are suffering, which in turn, causes subtle, yet significant impact, resulting in feelings of loneliness and separation.

These are the people we'd typically recognise, nod and maybe exchange a handshake with when we meet. Being acknowledged and sharing a few words helps us feel accepted, included, important, a part of the group.

But when all but essential business is

cancelled and we're only occasionally 'allowed' to go out, are then expected to keep our distance and not engage with others it means that we're missing the more casual, yet important day-to-day relationships which reinforce our sense of community and belonging.

We all have similar scenarios

Think of the coffee or sandwich shop where they know our order, the shops and service providers where they remember little details and treat us well.

I recall how I smiled when my usual supermarket cashier expressed surprise when there were no flowers in that week's shopping!

Being recognised and acknowledged at a network meeting or awards dinner reinforces our connections with others, making us feel noticed, valued and less isolated.

It matters little that these people are not friends whose names we hardly know. These relationships are part of a very different, yet important category.

What about the arena events, the huge concerts and sporting dates, the networking expos where hundreds or maybe thousands of people congregate together with a shared collective enthusiasm, all cheering on their teams, singing the words and dancing to their favourite songs, meeting and exchanging potential business contacts.

Again, that shared connection unites us with strangers who have similar interests. We may smile at each other, dance together, share anecdotes, stories and reminiscences for a time.

Connecting with others raises our spirits

We're part of that club for a while, and it feels good, adding to the quality and satisfaction of our overall experience.

Children, too, learn about relationships from face-to-face contact. Running up to a group of children who are playing, learning to share, take turns, lose, not get picked are all ways that children hone their abilities to communicate, tune in to facial cues and body language, discover what works and what doesn't work.

Yet today, many of our opportunities for friendly interaction have been put on indefinite hold, only to be replaced by the delivery driver who now calls on a regular basis, the take-away restaurant that's familiar with our name and regular order, the pre-arranged zoom meeting.

Many of these transactions are now undertaken virtually, with orders left on the doorstep and little human contact.

There have been some new friendships made during lockdown

Many people have started to take their daily exercise at a similar time, maybe going for a walk, run or bike ride.

Meeting the same people can mean that a nod and polite greeting gradually evolves into a smile and perhaps a few words of conversation, but these exchanges are often made cautiously, from a distance.

We may know very little about who we're meeting, but the sense of having shared interests in walking or nature creates a special bond and

ensures a friendly acknowledgement when we meet.

We may not have realised until now that a diversity of relationships is important in life

Not everyone we come into contact with has to be hugely relevant in every area of our life. Many are more whimsical, light connections, specific to certain interests and activities, but all nonetheless add sunshine and a feeling of belonging.

A smile, a nod, a few words here or there; losing that is a huge blow to all of us. Let's hope we see them again in the near future.



Susan Leigh MNCH (ACC)

Altrincham, Cheshire and South Manchester counsellor, hypnotherapist, relationship counsellor, writer and media contributor offers help with relationship issues, stress management, assertiveness and confidence. She works with individual clients, couples and provides corporate workshops and support.

She's author of 3 books, all on Amazon and with easy to read sections, tips and ideas to help you feel more positive about your life.

To order a copy or for more information, help and free articles visit www.lifestyletherapy.net

For more articles, information or to make contact please call **0161 928 7880** or visit www.lifestyletherapy.net



Virtual diary dates

Due to the exceptional circumstances we find ourselves in, many business networking events, shows, expos and 'face to face' events have been cancelled, postponed or reworked as virtual events until further notice.

Rest assured the Greater Manchester business networking community will be back as soon as the current crises fades and we get clear advice from government that all is well, but in the meantime we are presenting a series of 'virtual' solutions available to the business community to keep networking but stay safe. We're also listing a number of events that are pencilled in for later in this year and next in the hope that the situation has changed by then, and we're also featuring some re-arranged events that have recently moved.

Regular readers will also note our 'places to meet' page has been omitted.

Again, once the situation changes we'll be re-introducing this.

4 Networking

Online networking

Cost £5+VAT per meeting.
Membership £19.99+VAT per month.
Contact www.4networking.biz

page 24 BITA (British and Irish Trading Alliance)

Online networking using Zoom

BITA Joint Manchester+Leeds every fortnight
16 Apr, 30 Apr, 14 May 4.00pm - 5.00pm

BITA Liverpool every week
15 Apr, 22 Apr, 29 Apr 11.00am - 12.00pm

BITA London every week
16 Apr, 23 Apr, 30 Apr 8.00am - 9.00am

BITA Irish Networking every month
13 May, 10 Jun 8.00am - 9.00am

Seminar - Cyber Crime - past, present and future
22 Apr 4.00pm - 5.30pm

Cost FREE until further notice

Contact Paul Whitnell paulw@bita.ie
www.bita.ie

BNI Alchemy Didsbury

Online networking using Zoom

Weekly every Thurs 6.30am - 9.00am

Cost FREE until further notice

Contact Andy Walsh 0161 250 5040

Notes Please contact Andy Walsh to arrange joining as a guest

BNI Graphene Manchester

Online networking using Zoom

Weekly every Weds 10.00am - 12.30pm

Cost FREE until further notice

Contact John Galloway 07971 161621

Notes Please contact John Galloway to arrange joining as a guest

ConnectWorking Breakfast

Business breakfast networking

Next event TBC 9.30am - 11.00am

Cost £5 (Forever Manchester contribution)

Contact Paul Mirage 07708 987518
paul@businessconnectpublishing.co.uk

Notes Check gmbusinessconnect.co.uk for future events. Live networking at the Belmore Hotel, 143 Brooklands Road, Sale M33 3QN once restrictions are eased.

Digital Transformation Expo 2021 Manchester

2 Day Expo and Conference

19 May 9am-5pm 20 May 9am-4pm

Venue Manchester Central, Windmill Street, Manchester M2 3GX

Cost FREE (please pre-register)

Contact dt-x.io/manchester

Notes GM Business Connect are media partners.

Dynamic Networking

Zoom Networking

Cost FREE

Contact natalie@dynamicnetworking.biz
www.dynamicnetworking.biz

www.facebook.com/groups/DynamicNetworkOnline/

First Friday ConnectWorking

Next event TBC - contact Paul Mirage for details 4.00pm - 6.00pm

Cost £5 (Forever Manchester contribution)

Contact Paul Mirage 07708 987518
paul@businessconnectpublishing.co.uk

Notes Tickets available through Eventbrite. Entry covers a tombola ticket for Forever Manchester.

High Peak Business Club

Regular monthly breakfast networking + high calibre speakers

Contact Edwina Currie for further information

Contact edwinacurrie@sky.com
www.highpeakbusinessclub.co.uk

K-Club

Entrepreneur's networking events

Virtual Lunch - Speaker + networking

For further details please contact Amanda Manson.

Contact Amanda Manson 07754 069 829
www.k-club.co.uk

M Postcode Business Hub

Monthly online zoom networking.

Multiple breakout rooms.

21 Apr 2.00pm - 3.30pm

Cost FREE

Contact 0161 505 1054
www.mpostcode.co.uk

Manchester Business Expo

1 Day Expo and Conference

** Postponed **

Notes Originally scheduled for 2020 at Event City. GM Business Connect are media partners and will publicise updated information as soon as it is available.

Contact 01772 935930
www.shoutexpo.com

page 32 The Northern Business Expo 2022

2 Day Expo and Conference

15 + 16 March 2022 10.00am - 4.00pm

Venue Manchester Central, Windmill Street, Manchester M2 3GX

Contact northernexpo.biz

Notes GM Business Connect are media partners.

Northern Restaurant and Bar

2 Day Expo and Conference
29 + 30 June 2021 10am-5pm

Venue Manchester Central, Windmill Street, Manchester M2 3GX

Cost FREE (Trade only)

Contact www.northernrestaurantandbar.co.uk

pro-manchester

Hot topic breakfasts, Sector lunches, Economic Updates, Panel debates - all face to face events postponed or cancelled.

Full programme of webinar-based events available

Contact Nicola McCormick
07929 671755
nicola.mccormick@pro-manchester.co.uk

Full listings of online and offline events can be found on: www.pro-manchester.co.uk

Stockport Expo

1 Day Expo and Conference

** Postponed ** 10am - 4pm

Venue Stockport County FC, Edgeley Park, Hardcastle Road, Stockport SK3 9DD

Cost FREE

Notes Originally scheduled for 2020. GM Business Connect are media partners and will publicise updated information as soon as it is available.

Contact www.stockportexpo.co.uk

The Business Network Manchester

Online networking to replace monthly face to face networking

28 Apr, 20 May, 23 Jun, 22 Jul, 18 Aug
11.50am - 1.30pm

Cost £15

Contact Helen Bennett
0161 823 1384
helen@business-network.co.uk
www.business-network.co.uk

The Business Network South Manchester

Mix of online networking running with face to face networking.

20 May Contact Simon Edmondson for timings

Venue Mottram Hall, Wilmslow Road, Mottram SK10 4QT

10 Jun Contact Simon Edmondson for timings

Venue Best Western Pinewood Hotel, 180 Wilmslow Road, Handforth SK9 3LF

Cost £46.80

Contact Simon Edmondson 07766 493428
Simon.Edmondson@business-network.co.uk
www.business-network.co.uk

Please note If you plan to link to any of the above events please ensure all details are correct in advance. Whilst every effort has been made to confirm accuracy some details may be subject to change.

Some of the following organisations may be active with online networking.

Please check their websites regularly for more up to date information:

Altrincham & Sale Chamber

Contact 0161 941 3250
www.altrinchamchamber.co.uk

Bowdon Business Club

Contact Members@BowdonBusinessClub.co.uk
www.BowdonBusinessClub.co.uk

Business for Breakfast

Contact centralservices@bforb.co.uk
www.bforb.co.uk

Business over Breakfast

Contact Tracy Heatley 07812 076946
www.bobclubs.com

Carrington Business Park

Contact 0161 776 4000
lisa.graham@cbpl.co.uk
www.cbpl.co.uk

FSB - Federation of Small Businesses

Contact Rose McAteer 07917 628916
rose.mcateer@fsb.org.uk
www.fsb.org.uk

Greater Manchester Chamber of Commerce

Contact 0161 393 4321
www.gmchamber.co.uk

Manchester Business Breakfast Club

Contact info@manchester-bbc.co.uk
www.manchester-bbc.co.uk

Manchester Business Catalyst Club Lunch

Contact Graham Shiers 07818 675 310
www.businesscatalystclub.co.uk

M62 Connections

Contact Bill Dove 07932 044 743
www.m62connections.co.uk

Shout! Network

Contact 01772 935930
info@shoutnetwork.co.uk
www.shoutnetwork.co.uk

SK8 Networking

Contact Chris Jones
0161 437 5999 / 07757 710199
www.sk8networking.co.uk

The South Manchester Business Association

Contact 0161 962 5195
smba.org.uk

Trafford Business Club

Contact David Lawton 07973 502595
www.traffordbusinessclub.co.uk

Women's 20/20

Contact Catherine Sandland
enquiries@2020network.co.uk
www.2020network.co.uk

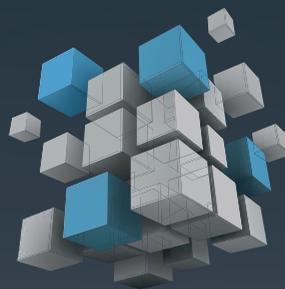


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Pick up insider tips from the keynotes, master vital skills in the workshops, and make significant connections in the networking sessions.



SMALL BUSINESSES

You'll find easy steps to enhance and scale your business.

Make genuine connections in the networking sessions, develop your skills in the workshops, and pick up inside knowledge and motivation from the keynotes.



PROFESSIONAL OR MANAGER

You'll find simple tips for a healthy career in the seminars and expert advice counters.

Get motivation from the keynotes, master professional skills in the workshops and make useful connections in the networking sessions.

Manchester Central
15th & 16th March 2022

TICKETS ARE FREE ONLINE NOW
www.northexpo.biz



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