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December/January 2024



ESG EXPLAINED

In this edition we look at the latest green acronym - ESG (Environmental, Social and Governance) and look at the impact this has had on ethical business practice.



SMEs Small Business Sunday

In his regular column **Theo Paphitis** writes about how to deal with work/life balance as an SME.

Chamber News

News from Greater Manchester and Liverpool Chambers of Commerce.

Finance Latest news

Winning the battle against admin overload - LWA Chartered Accountants.

Public Safety & Security

Why your city should be protecting the public and how to get involved, an update on Martyn's Law with Figen Murray.

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Reports from across the UK sector.

AI News

Breaking barriers to AI adoption.

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editorial

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and join a fantastic forum for connecting businesses across all sectors and regions.

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

The magazine connects businesses across the UK and beyond, both in print and online, and is completely free.

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news

Microsoft invests £2.5b in a major AI infrastructure and skills investment in the UK

Microsoft have announced a major AI infrastructure and skills investment supported by a new partnership on security. It will help the UK seize the artificial intelligence (AI) opportunity and ensure that AI innovation and safety progress together while creating jobs, improving services, and protecting public security.

The company has committed to more than doubling its datacentre footprint in the UK, training more than one million people for the AI economy and supporting the UK's growing AI safety and research efforts through partnerships with the government and leading universities. The investment will cover three key areas:

Capacity: Over the next three years Microsoft will spend £2.5 billion to expand its next generation AI datacentre infrastructure, bringing more than 20,000 of the most advanced GPUs to the UK by 2026.

As the single largest investment in its 40-year history in the country, the company will grow its datacentre footprint across sites in London and Cardiff and potential expansion into northern England.

This infrastructure investment will help to meet the exploding demand for efficient, scalable and sustainable AI specific compute power.

To support research on AI, Microsoft will extend its Accelerating Foundation Models Research (AFMR) programme to include prioritised access to GPUs for the UK's science and research community.

AFMR drives interdisciplinary research on AI alignment and safety, beneficial applications of AI, and AI-driven scientific discovery in the natural and life sciences.

The aim is to harness the power of AI to accelerate scientific discovery via multiscale multimodal data generation through prioritised access to Microsoft's AI tools. The programme includes researchers from the UK's world leading participating universities including Cambridge, Oxford, Imperial College, UCL, Bath, and Nottingham.

Capability: Second is an investment into broad-based AI talent and education programmes.

To support UK workers across the AI economy, Microsoft will make a multi-million-pound investment to train one million people with the skills they need to build and work with AI. This will include expanded training for people looking to start, or move into, a career in AI.

Working in partnership with multiple learning and non-profit partners, the programme will focus on building AI fluency, developing AI technical skills, supporting AI business transformation, and promote safe and responsible AI development and use including the first Professional Certificate on Generative AI.

Microsoft will also turn all the lessons it has learned in operationalising responsible AI principles for its own AI engineers and developers, into learning modules for UK customers and partners.

This training will help the UK's AI developer ecosystem to embed safety and security measures into their own systems and processes.

Finally, to help ensure Microsoft technical trainers are adhering to the ethics and principles of developing AI solutions responsibly they will all complete and attest to Microsoft's "Responsible Generative AI" training.

Security: The final element of the investment will be in strong AI safety and security measures.

These will cover both Microsoft's own infrastructure and support for AI developers and customers deploying and using AI applications. Microsoft will operate its AI services and infrastructure in accordance with industry-leading responsible AI practices.

It will integrate the adoption and use of responsible AI principles into its Partner Pledge for its 25,000 UK partners and will collaborate with the UK Government and AI Safety Institute on the ongoing development of refinements and improvements in this field.

Farewell to Cartoonist Tony Husband



It is with great sadness that Business Connect Magazine is saying farewell to Manchester Cartoonist Tony Husband.

We met Tony at Sam's Chop House in Manchester through owner Roger Ward back in 2015, interviewing him for a double page feature in the magazine. From then on Tony has been a regular cartoonist for the magazine in every single edition.

Tony suffered a fatal heart attack on the way to a Private Eye party in London. He was 73, survived by wife Carole, and photographer son Paul (who has done some fantastic work for Business Connect Magazine).

As a cartoonist Tony had a formidable reputation featuring in some other well known magazines,



notably Private Eye with his long running strip 'Yobs'.

He has also published a number of books, some of which tackled some very personal challenging subjects: "Take Care Son" sharing his experience living with his Dad suffering from Dementia, also "From a Dark Place" about son Paul's issues with addiction.

A great talent and friend will be sadly missed.



Wilko confirms first three locations opening and more to follow



Everyday home and garden retailer will open five stores before Christmas ahead of a wider roll out in 2024

Wilko recently announced that it was to open five concept stores before Christmas and is today confirming the locations and opening dates for the first three at Plymouth, Exeter and Luton.

Wilko is planning to recruit up to 80 local team members per store, with the brand's new owner, CDS Superstores, which also owns The Range, pledging

to prioritise interviews for ex-Wilko employees.

Each of the new stores will offer Wilko branded products alongside well-known brands

This initial roll-out kickstarts a programme of store openings that will continue throughout 2024 and for the first time in the brand's history, will see Wilko stores arrive on high streets in Northern Ireland.

CEO of CDS Superstores, trading as Wilko and The Range, Alex Simpkin said; "We're proud to confirm we'll be reintroducing the brand to high streets in Plymouth, Exeter and Luton in the coming weeks. We're also glad to be bringing employment opportunities to these towns and for helping local families and communities."

Cowgills relocates in Bolton

North West accountancy and business advisory firm Cowgills has moved its head office to Parklands 5B at Middlebrook, Bolton. The company has taken 10,000 sq. ft of space on the fourth floor of the building, moving colleagues from its previous head office at 45-53 Chorley New Road in the town.

Commenting on the move managing partner Paul Stringer said: "We were established in Bolton forty years ago this year, so we were very keen to keep our headquarters in the town."

"The business has grown rapidly in the last five years, just this year we opened new offices in Manchester and Liverpool for our growing teams in both cities."

"Investing in the very best facilities is a huge priority for us and Parklands provides us with everything we need, including a state-of-the-art working environment and bright, open, flexible workspace."

Generative AI to spark revolution in FinTech and Financial Services

93 per cent of FinTechs believe that Generative AI (Gen AI) is poised to revolutionise the FinTech and financial services sector, according to research by the Gillmore Centre for Financial Technology.

The finding is part of the Gillmore Centre's report, titled, "In the AI of the storm: How UK financial services firms are using AI", polled via independent polling agency Censuswide, which surveyed 250 senior decision makers at UK financial institutions and banks to measure how they felt about the current state of Artificial Intelligence (AI) and its widespread use.

The study reveals that the majority (91 per cent) also foresee Gen AI playing a pivotal role in driving financial democratisation, bringing with it a new era of accessibility and inclusivity.

The findings shed light on the increasing integration of Gen AI into daily operations, with nearly one in five (18 per cent) organisations relying on Gen AI tools every single day. Notably, 29 per cent utilise Gen AI two to three days per week, demonstrating its widespread adoption. However, a small fraction (eight per cent) still refrain from using Gen AI altogether.

A substantial 84 per cent of organisations have already invested in Gen AI tools, with an overwhelming four in five (80 per cent) declaring that further investment in Gen AI ranks as their top organisational priority for the upcoming year.

Ram Gopal, Director of the Gillmore Centre for Financial Technology, said:

"These findings highlight the dynamic landscape of Gen AI adoption, showcasing both its transformative potential and the challenges organisations face in navigating its integration."

"As Gen AI continues to shape the future of financial technology, strategic investments and collaborative efforts are crucial to harness its full potential while addressing concerns and ensuring responsible use of the new technology."

"Guidance on AI adoption should take a collaborative approach, bringing together government, industry and academic research centres to continue exploring the boundaries of the technology in order to maximise its potential, in a safe manner, in our daily lives."

The diverse applications of Gen AI are evident, with 52 per cent leveraging it for data analysis, making it the most common use; 41 per cent employ Gen AI for fraud detection; 35 per cent for research; and 34 per cent for customer service.

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news

Distracted minds lose UK economy £19.9bn a year

Scrolling on social media, checking messages, daydreaming and other distractions are costing the UK economy a staggering £19.9 billion each year, groundbreaking new research by The QEII Centre has revealed.

The report *"The Distracted Economy: We are losing focus - how to hold attention and keep delegates*

engaged during business meetings and events" commissioned by the London-based conference and events venue, reveals that 83% of people admit to being distracted during in-person meetings while the number rises to 85% during online meetings.

And while the nation's dwindling focus is harming productivity and profitability, it is also something that's

worrying individuals. Over a third (38%) of workers claimed to be concerned about their ability to be fully focused during meetings or events, according to the findings.

The survey of 1,000 UK desk-based workers who attend both online and in-person meetings was carried out by The QEII Centre to better understand – and tackle – the growing concern of distraction.

The report takes a deep dive into the issue to better understand the challenges faced by delegates in their battle to stay focused.

Among the key findings are:

The crisis of attention: The research found that distraction during online meetings costs the UK economy more (£11.1 billion) than in-person meetings (£8.8 billion).

At work, over a third of people (38%) are concerned about their ability to be fully focused and fully concentrating during business meetings or events, and in everyday life, 43% admit to often being easily distracted during their leisure time.

Working in a post-pandemic age: Over two-thirds (36%) of respondents believe that their work colleagues have become more easily distracted during in-person business meetings and events.

Distracted economy: It is alarming to see that a significant majority - 83% - of respondents openly admit to losing focus during in-person meetings, and 85% during online meetings.

Senior management is not immune to distractions, with 40% of them admitting to being distracted for a third of the meeting.

1 in every 5 UK businesses are receiving insufficient internet speeds

A recent study reveals great opportunity for alternative network providers (AltNets) to meet growing demand for gigabit broadband, as it reveals 42% of UK businesses plan vital connectivity upgrades as part of growth strategy

A new study has found the business appetite for high-capacity connectivity is set to support the next surge of digital investment. 42% of UK businesses regard moving to higher capacity connectivity in the next two years as key to growth plans — rating it either 'integral' or 'greatly important' to their future success.

For those that have invested over the last 24 months, nearly one in eight businesses (11.2%) stated that investing in connectivity had a direct impact on business profitability. Plus, 98.3% of businesses said they saw indirect impacts such as productivity, staff retention or client collaboration.

Some of the top reasons businesses are prioritising higher capacity connectivity are increased computer power (22.4%), operational development meaning more data and higher capacity requirements (21.2%), and greater device usage for each employee (11.6%). One in 10 UK businesses are actively looking to increase their connectivity to better integrate AI into their processes.

The UK Business Gigabit Connectivity Report – conducted by business ethernet backhaul providers Neos Networks – gathered insights from business leaders and decision-makers at 160 UK companies.

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£5.1m Horizons partnership launches across Liverpool City Region



L-R Janice Mears, Growth Platform, Anthony Walker, LJMU, Dr Jo Leek, CA, Steve Rotheram, Andrew Borland, VEC, Sara Davies, CA, Michael Banford, Edge Hill University

The new £5.1m Horizons programme, funded by the Liverpool City Region's £44m UK Shared Prosperity Fund (UKSPF) allocation, will support more than 100 SMEs in its pilot phase.

The partnership aims to deliver industry-leading innovations across six boroughs, providing the expertise, facilities, and funding businesses need to drive innovation.

Launched by Liverpool City Region Mayor Steve Rotheram, Horizons is the first innovation support programme in the city region funded by the UKSPF and will prioritise supporting businesses providing sustainable

practices and technologies.

SMEs accessing the support, via a streamlined paperless process, can also apply for capital grant funding to further accelerate innovation, drive long-term success across communities and businesses, and support the upskilling of their people.

Since 2016, the VEC has led projects that have helped organisations across the Liverpool City Region contribute more than £121 million GVA to the local economy, creating more than 1,400 jobs across multiple businesses.

The Horizons programme, which was

developed following consultation with SMEs, and in partnership with the Combined Authority and the city's Universities, will deliver on Mayor Rotheram's ambitions to turn the Liverpool City Region into the UK's next science and innovation superpower.

Steve Rotheram, Mayor of the Liverpool City Region, said: "SMEs really are the cornerstone of our business community.

"Together, they account for a massive 99% of all businesses in our region and have a crucial role to play in helping to diversify our economy.

"Fortunately for us, we're home to some of the country's leading universities, who possess the expertise and world-class facilities that can really help our SMEs to unleash their full potential.

"Horizon is the first innovation support programme of its kind that directly connects our region's SMEs to our world leading institutions. It's my hope that this partnership will help more entrepreneurs and innovators

to achieve their ambitions and, more crucially, help us to catapult our area to the forefront of UK science and innovation."

Professor Andrew Levers, Executive Director of the Institute of Digital Engineering and Autonomous Systems (IDEAS) reflects on the impact of the project; "The University of Liverpool has set out a clear and compelling vision for regional impact under our Liverpool 2031 strategy.

"Horizons will help deliver our vision to drive prosperity in the city region by bringing the benefit of our ground-breaking research to local businesses and helping to ensure that the next generation of world-changing innovation is translated from research to industry by local SMEs.

We are determined to continue playing our part to drive a culture of ambition, inclusive collaboration and responsible innovation that bridges the academic and business communities, enabling us to break new ground and make a positive impact in the communities we serve."

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property & construction

Crane survey sees record number of office new starts in the capital



Deloitte's latest London office crane survey sees the highest volume of new offices being built since 2005. The study was extended to cover seven central London areas.

Currently, 124 schemes are under construction totalling more than 15m square feet in volume in the West End, Midtown, Southbank, Docklands, Kings Cross and Paddington with The City leading the way.

Deloitte real assets advisory director Sophie Allan said: "New builds have roared back from their post-pandemic nadir, which has likely been driven by large pre-lets and growing developer confidence in the demand for premium office space."

The winter survey has seen the start of five large schemes of 300,000 sq ft and more accounting for 40 per cent of the new start volume. At

nearly six per cent higher than the volume recorded in the last survey and with seven fewer schemes starting, the average new scheme rose to about 119,000 sq ft, from 88,000 sq ft previously.

The period has also recorded about four million sq ft of completed office space across 45 schemes in central London. More than 60 schemes with a total volume of about six million sq ft are expected to be completed by the summer survey next year.

"The future will see further skyscrapers added to the City's skyline, with three large developments recently obtaining planning permission," said Ms Allan.

Refurbishment starts have broken records for the second consecutive survey, comprising 34 schemes covering 3.3 million sq ft.

Planning sought for UK's £1bn newest Innovation District



Golden Valley in Cheltenham is a once-in-a-lifetime project at the heart of the UK's National Cyber Strategy.

Once complete, it will be one of Europe's largest purpose-built tech campus' and will play a crucial role in achieving the UK's ambition to be a Science and Tech Superpower by 2030.

Cheltenham is already home to one of the UK's most significant Technology Clusters and has the largest concentration of cyber companies outside of London, complemented by a diverse cluster of businesses specialising in AI, Deep Tech and Future Computing/Quantum.

Beyond enhancing the technology ecosystem, Golden Valley will also be a playground for innovators looking to test new, innovative Smart City concepts.

The site, which spans 47ha, will comprise 1 million sq ft of new commercial space and over 1,000 low carbon homes.

Planning has now been submitted for the scheme by Developer HBD and Factory Ltd who will deliver the expansive project alongside Cheltenham Borough Council and key local partners.

The proposed development will deliver a diverse Innovation District, and it is hoping to attract businesses with a focus on science and technology in particular, building on the existing specialist cluster in tech firms.

New homes will also be an important element of the project, providing over 1,000 low-carbon properties to rent and buy.

Research shows how a new boiler will add to property values

New research from boiler engineering firm Fair Fix, has show that a new boiler could not only see you achieve a higher price for your home in the current market, but it could also help you secure a buyer more quickly.

Fair Fix analysed current demand for homes listed with the benefit of a recent boiler replacement and how buyer appetite for such properties compared to those without a new boiler. They then looked at the current price being commanded by homes boasting a new boiler versus those without, and what this house price premium equated to after taking installation costs into consideration.

- On average, 54% of all homes listed with a new boiler have already sold, even in current cooling market conditions. This is some 14% higher versus homes without a new boiler, of which just 40% have already found a buyer.
- In fact, every city analysed by Fair Fix was home to a higher level of buyer

demand for homes with new boilers and nowhere more so than in Newcastle, where 78% had already sold versus just 45% of homes without a new boiler.

But it's not just buyer appeal that a new boiler can help boost. Fair Fix also analysed the asking price of both homes listed with and without a new boiler.

- The research shows that those listed with a new boiler command an asking price of £285,969 on average, 1.7% more than those without. While this may not sound significant, it equates to an asking price increase of almost £5,000.
- With the price of a new boiler coming in at £2,813 including installation costs, that's a house price boost of almost £2,000.
- Leeds is the most worthwhile city when it comes to a boiler upgrade. Homes listed with a new boiler command 4.7% more than those without in the current market - a price increase of £12,300. That's added value to the tune of £9,487.

YLEM set to commence construction on two new battery storage sites

Renewable Energy Solutions Specialist, YLEM Energy, is ready to begin construction on a 11MW and a 50MW battery energy storage solution (BESS) sites.

The Salford-based supplier of energy solutions is about to begin construction on two new battery storage sites located in Glasgow and Essex, bringing in a combined 61MW of storage for renewable energy.

The 50MW project on Broomloan Road in Ibrox, Glasgow was granted planning permission in March earlier this year, able to transfer 33kv to Govan SP Energy Networks for households and businesses to use at times of peak demand or when renewable generation is cheaper. Construction is set to begin early in the New Year, and the project is expected to energise in March 2025.

South of the border, the energy generation firm will be starting construction this side of Christmas at a 11MW site at Coryton Energy Park



in Essex. The battery storage site is expected to be fully operational in the Autumn of next year.

Commenting on the new sites, Ian Gadsby, Managing Director at YLEM Energy, said: *"It is fantastic to be ready to begin construction on two strategically important BESS sites. As the UK continues to decarbonise, BESS sites will play an important role in storing renewable energy for those days where it may not be as windy or sunny to meet our energy needs."*

"The construction of these two sites reinforces our commitment to offering businesses and communities sustainable solutions for their energy needs."

New standards for buildings could encourage workers back to the office

Major names in real estate are responding to the working from home issue by instituting new, codified standards. Major players in the real estate industry are responding to the post-pandemic trend of empty offices by joining a new scheme designed to raise social standards.

Certified Metrics ('CM'), the brainchild of sustainability technology and services company Evora Global and healthy building certification platform Fitwel, is a new method to measure the social standards of buildings.

CM measures factors such as air quality, access to daylight, walking opportunities and how a building interacts with its surrounding environment.

Sarah Coughlan, head of social wellbeing at sustainability services company Evora Global, says she wants CM to be used in large buildings across the world and for social standards to be taken as seriously as financial information. *"Since the pandemic offices have simply been under capacity as WFH continues to be the norm. But if the real estate industry wants this to change then it's going to have to get serious about social. The message is simple: get social or lose to WFH."*

The standard is now being piloted at hundreds of buildings in the UK, Europe and the US, including major names in real estate such as BGO, Hudson Pacific Properties, Lendlease Americas, QuadReal Property Group, Tishman Speyer and Vornado Realty Trust. The real estate industry sees this as a turning point and an opportunity to raise standards."



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ESG explained

ESG, an acronym for **Environmental, Social, and Governance**, represents a comprehensive set of standards designed to evaluate a business's influence on society, the environment, and its overall transparency and accountability.

The (CBI) reports that a significant two-thirds of investors consider ESG factors when making investment decisions, indicating the potential for ESG to foster business growth while simultaneously contributing to environmental and community well-being.

An ESG strategy serves as a tangible demonstration of a company's commitment to risk reduction, exemplified by the adaptation of manufacturing processes to align with anticipated environmental legislation.

This strategic move positions the business as a prudent choice for long-term growth.

As ESG continues to play a pivotal role in business expansion, it is crucial for organisations to comprehend the essence of ESG, identify avenues for adopting its principles and approaches, and discern how it can generate benefits for the entire organisation.

Understanding ESG

ESG encapsulates a collective evaluation of a business's impact on the environment and society, coupled with the transparency and robustness of its governance structures, encompassing leadership, executive compensation, audits, internal controls, and shareholder rights. It is a metric that measures how a business seamlessly

integrates environmental, social, and governance practices into its operations, business model, impact, and sustainability.

Environmental

The environmental component of ESG is focused on mitigating a business's impact on the environment.

It encompasses products/services, the supply chain, and operational processes. ESG empowers businesses to target various facets of their organisation, implementing sustainable and ethical practices.

Examples include the adoption of renewable energy sources, development of eco-friendly products, zero-waste initiatives, and reduction of carbon emissions through measures such as LED lighting.

Social

The social dimension of ESG examines how a business influences broader society and shapes workplace culture. Organisations can contribute positively to societal fairness by investing in equal opportunities and conditions for employees, supply chain workers, and local communities.

Social and ethical business practices include ensuring product safety, preventing supply chain abuses, supporting health and safety, and promoting workplace equality through diversity and inclusivity policies.

Governance

Governance, the third pillar of ESG, delves into decision-making processes, reporting mechanisms, and the logistical operations of a business.

It scrutinises the ethical behaviour and transparency of a business with stakeholders. Governance is intricately linked to the environmental and social aspects of ESG, examining the transparency and decision-making processes underpinning them.

Examples of governance practices include accurate reporting to stakeholders, ensuring accountability for risk and performance management, ethical business conduct, and promoting diversity in leadership while being transparent about executive pay.

Ensuring robust governance practices in a business not only appeals to investors and the supply chain but also facilitates overall business growth.

Why smaller companies should embrace ESG

Even for businesses not actively seeking investment, embracing an ESG framework yields multifaceted benefits, ranging from risk reduction and cost savings to bolstered reputation and enhanced customer attraction.

Improving company reputation

Incorporating ESG principles into an organisation signals a transparent commitment to environmental stewardship, diversity, equal opportunities, and ethical decision-making.

This, in turn, enhances the overall reputation of the business.

Lowering costs

ESG initiatives that reduce waste and optimise material usage, such as in packaging, contribute to cost reduction.

Similarly, adopting energy-efficient practices like switching to LED lighting not only aligns with ESG goals but also results in lower overheads through reduced energy bills.

Attracting employees

Eco-conscious employees are increasingly seeking employment in companies committed to favourable ESG policies.

Companies fostering a diverse and inclusive workplace, along with support programs for mental well-being and improved work/life balance, become attractive employers in the eyes of prospective talent.

Attracting customers

Consumers are more inclined to support ethical brands, even if the products come at a slightly higher cost. Research indicates that over 70% of people are willing to pay an additional 5% for a green product if it meets the same standards as non-green alternatives.

Securing investment

Research conducted by Charles Stanley reveals a significant trend, with up to 48% of investors expressing a desire to increase their ESG investments within the next three years. This underscores the growing importance of ESG considerations in investment decisions.

In conclusion, ESG is not merely a set of standards but a strategic framework that, when embraced, has the potential to drive comprehensive and responsible business practices.

It aligns businesses with sustainability, ethics, and societal well-being, providing a roadmap for thriving in a landscape where responsible business practices are increasingly valued and expected.

al & governance

Flight100: Virgin Atlantic flies its first 100% Sustainable Aviation Fuel flight



Virgin Atlantic's 100% Sustainable Aviation Fuel (SAF) flight has successfully landed in New York City recently to demonstrate the capability of SAF as a safe alternative to traditional jet fuel, compatible with today's engines, airframe and fuel infrastructure.

Shai Weiss, Chief Executive Officer, Virgin Atlantic said: "Flight100 proves that Sustainable Aviation Fuel can be used as a safe, drop-in replacement for fossil-derived jet fuel and it's the only viable solution for decarbonising long haul aviation."

Right now, SAF represents less than 0.1% of global jet fuel used for flights. And current fuel standards only allow a 50% SAF blend in commercial jet engines.

Flight100 proves that the challenge of scaling up production is one of policy and investment, and industry and government must move quickly to create a thriving UK SAF industry.

As well as proving the capabilities of SAF, Flight100 will assess how its use affects the flight's non-carbon emissions with the support of consortium partners ICF, Rocky Mountain Institute (RMI), Imperial College London and University of Sheffield. The research will improve scientific understanding of the effects of SAF on contrails and particulates and help to implement contrail forecasts in the flight planning process.

Employees prioritise working for ethical businesses over higher salaries

New research reveals that money isn't always the biggest motivator when it comes to people looking for their dream jobs, with nearly half of adults (46%) saying that working for an ethical business is more important to them than getting a higher salary.

Those aged 25-34 were most likely to agree with this sentiment (54%), as well as those working in the environment and energy sector (65%). Additionally, nearly two-thirds (62%) of adults value a better work-life balance over getting paid more, while 53% prefer to work for a company that gives the option to work remotely at least some of the time.

Outlined in the HR Unhooked PR and Marketing Report, the research questioned 2,015 UK adults on what they look for in an employer, as well as what motivates them in their work.

Corporate social responsibility was also deemed important by employees, with 52% of respondents saying it was important for them to work for a company



that gives back to local communities, while 46% said they would like to work for a company that has an environmental, social and governance (ESG) policy. More than half (57%) of people agree it's important to work for a company that champions diversity and inclusivity.

When applying for jobs, more than half (59%) said they would look at the businesses' own websites and social media channels for information about the culture, values and general ways of working, with the same number researching to see what recent news stories there were about the company. More than two-fifths of people (42%) said they would look to see what awards the business had recently been shortlisted for or won.

New sustainability regime from FCA

The Financial Conduct Authority (FCA) has released its Sustainability Disclosure Requirements, two days before the start of COP 28.

The FCA has released its Sustainability Disclosure Requirements (SDR) and investment labels regime. It sets out a package of measures designed to combat greenwashing and offer guidance for the rapidly expanding UK sustainable investment sector.

Dominic Rowles, lead ESG analyst, Hargreaves Lansdown: "The final shape of the regulation will make it easier for retail investors to find funds that align with their desired approach to sustainability."

"We look forward to continuing to work with the regulator and the broader industry to make sustainable investing

more accessible to retail investors.

"The policy paper is the result of a collaborative effort between the regulator and industry, with the goal of establishing a pioneering regulatory framework."

"The regime will see sustainable funds sorted into four buckets – 'sustainability focus', 'sustainability improvers', 'sustainability impact' and 'sustainability mixed goals'. The latter bucket was added as a result of industry feedback and will allow funds to blend the approaches they take."

The FCA will also consult on a new anti-greenwashing rule, which will help to ensure firms' sustainability-related claims are fair, clear and not misleading.



Sustainable Aviation Fuel made from sewage

James Hygate, founder and CEO of Firefly, which makes sustainable aviation fuel out of sewage, has commented on COP28: "The organisers of COP28 should make it a priority to reduce the carbon footprint of this event year-on-year. As it stands, it looks like COP is set to become ever more polluting."

"I want to see a world where all of the jets flying to COP are running on sustainable aviation fuel, rather than highly polluting standard jet fuel."

"The aviation industry wants to decarbonise and the only way it can be done is through sustainable aviation fuel, or 'SAF', as it's commonly called. However, there's just not enough SAF being produced right now. What's needed are really sustainable feedstocks to make it."

"Firefly has created jet fuel out of sewage which has a 90 percent lower carbon impact than standard jet fuel. Our message to COP28 is to embrace the power of sewage and let's start to clean up our act."

International Heat Pump supplier pledges £300m investment into the UK

Clean energy-tech champion Aira Invests £300 million in the UK to help one million British homes move away from gas. Swedish based clean energy-tech company, Aira, has launched in the UK with a pledge to invest £300 million in the next three years to accelerate decarbonisation. The company's ambition is to serve five million households across Europe, of which one million are in Britain, with affordable clean energy-tech solutions to take Europe off gas. Aira will reduce the UK's CO₂ emissions to the equivalent of taking two million cars off the nation's roads.

The UK still relies on 25 million fossil fuel boilers to heat homes, these account for 16% of the nation's CO₂ emissions. Switching to an air source heat pump substantially reduces household heating costs and carbon emissions. With Aira's innovative and accessible solutions, households save 25% on their heating related costs while simultaneously reducing CO₂ emissions by 75%. The Government's mission is to increase heat pump uptake to 600,000 installations a year by 2028 to reduce the nation's reliance on expensive, imported fossil fuels.

exporting



Why I'm going to stop talking about exporting...

International Trade Week took place in early November with over 3,000 businesses taking part in more than 170 events from across the UK and the World organised by the Department for Business and Trade.

One of these was a gathering in central London to celebrate 10 years since the first Export Champions were appointed with an address by Lord Malcolm Offord, the Minister for Exports. He said that his ambition was to increase the number of UK companies who export from 300,000 to 500,000.

In a discussion on why more companies do not get into exporting, our conclusion was that the word "exporting" was itself intimidating and off-putting. We agreed on an alternative strategy and as a result I decided that I am going to stop talking about exporting...

To understand my reasons, you simply need to look at what exporting is:

In its simplest form exporting is SELLING, no more, no less. Exporting is selling into new markets that are not your home market. And however you approach new markets is how you should embark on international trade.

At one level this seems like a trivial semantic difference, however I believe that the subconscious reluctance to overcome what many wrongly perceive as the extreme obstacles of exporting hold them back from ever trying. International trade isn't easy, but also selling isn't easy. Finding new customers isn't easy whether it is in your home market or overseas. But I ask you to ask yourself one simple question: **"Would you like to increase your profits?"**

If the answer is yes, the first place to start is by looking for markets that have similarities with your current customers.

The second event I attended during the week was jointly organised by The Department for Business and Trade and the Greater Manchester Chamber

of Commerce. We were fortunate to have Mayor of Greater Manchester, Andy Burnham, as guest speaker.

He expressed his personal commitment and support for companies from Greater Manchester to start, or grow, their international trade. I had worked with several others on behalf of the Greater Manchester Authority in developing an Exporting Trade Plan for Greater Manchester as I believe the region has the capability to be an engine for growth in manufacturing and services.

What both these events, and all the other events during International Trade Week, have in common was the commitment of so many businesses to taking their products and services around the world to find markets that are right for them. They know from their experience that international trade enhances both their turnover and their profitability.

Whilst nothing is easy in business neither is International trade as

complicated as many seem to believe. When you look at the experience of all these companies large and very many of them small, you can clearly see parallels with the companies that have not yet taken those steps. **Why is that?** It is completely understandable to feel nervous, but you should not feel alone as there is so much assistance out there to help you take the necessary steps.

So, it's time to stop talking about exporting, to see the world as your market place, and to find customers in whichever part of that market they exist. Don't differentiate, don't prevaricate, it's time for you too to grow your business and trade without boundaries.



Tony Goodman MBE is a successful exporter and has been doing so through a variety of different businesses. He is currently Marketing Advisor at Forest and Co who specialise in offering guidance on branding, exporting and sales: www.forestandco.com

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Focus on... France Line

When choosing a preferred partner for International logistics, it's always important to ensure the freight forwarder can be relied upon to offer not just a great service, but can demonstrate a trusted history of growth and development based on leadership by a safe pair of hands.

In the case of France Line International Transport Ltd, that steady level of growth can be followed when then branch manager Marie Boyer completed a management buyout of the business in 2017.

Since then, France Line has enjoyed incredible success, as businesses have sought solutions not just to the freight challenges presented by post-Brexit change, but also the cost of living, the fallout from the war in Ukraine, post-Covid supply challenges and more.

A £1.8 million turnover in FY21-22 increased by 56% to become a record £2.6 million in FY22-23, and figures for 23-24 look to be following that curve

showing strong client retention and growth of services that appeal to those companies looking to export to the Continent.

With Marie at the helm, the award nominated business seems to be following all the right paths in a saturated sector. We asked for more insight into how the business is flourishing:

"Our strength and potential for growth is firmly rooted in excellent customer service aligned with an up-to-date knowledge of fast moving legislation.

"For example, In mid-August 2023, a customer who moves packaging from the UK to France for the food industry was let down by their supplier. They needed next day delivery and didn't know who to turn to.

"France Line stepped in at the last minute, delivered in northern France the next day and developed such a good relationship with the customer

and the consignee over just one load that they have been handling this regular traffic ever since."

Delivering va-va-voom for customers

"We are flexible as well. Sometimes a customer needs an unusual item shipped – possibly a much smaller load, or vast piece of out-of-gauge steel equipment for the construction industry using low loaders and extended flatbeds?

"We have made it happen, and that va va voom isn't just evident in what our company moves, but how we move it."

Marie and her team advised clients on preparing for the changes in the UK/EU relationship.

They provide customs checklists. They offer advice on the most efficient transport services. And they provide advance warnings about anything which might impact the freight journey,



Marie Boyer,
Managing
Director,
France Line
International
Transport Ltd

such as bank holiday driving bans in France, strikes, or delays at ferry terminals.

Helping handle the hassle of customs

"The past few years have been extremely challenging for importers and exporters," Marie continued. "Our success has been built on the simplest of concepts: when our customers need better, cheaper, more efficient ways to get their goods to or from France and Europe, we help make it simple."



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logistics

Celebrating **10 years** delivering the best possible **same-day service**



Celebrating their 10 year anniversary, sales director Nick Thompson from The Courier Company Nationwide shared some thoughts on their success as a business.

"The earliest record of transporting of goods is from the ancient Egypt where the couriers would deliver documents carved in stone.

"Ancient Egyptians also had to move materials at great distances in order to

build the famous pyramids.

"In Ancient Greece, one of the most celebrated couriers is the Greek messenger who having participated in the Battle of Marathon ran 26 miles to Athens to announce his victory.

"This physical exertion caused him to collapse and die, but his memory lived on in the form of the Olympic Marathon.

"Here at The Courier Company Nationwide we pride ourselves on knowing what we are talking about, having knowledge of the history of the industry is great thing to have.

"2023 saw our business celebrate it's 10 year anniversary, no mean feat in our current climate.

"We have also expanded the business this year to 18 vehicles running nationally including establishing a small hub in the North West.

"As a forward thinking business we are always looking to build on our success, and we would love the opportunity to expand our network in the North West much like we have done in Cambridgeshire, all we ask is for the opportunity to quote!

"We also love to get involved in local communities and charities - always good to give something back.

"This year saw our local air ambulance (MagPas) forced to move to a new headquarters. To help with the smooth running of the move our company stepped in, and 7 volunteer colleagues spent a Saturday in September to help achieve this, utilising our fleet of vehicles and a huge amount of goodwill making sure this life saving charity could carry on doing what they do best."



Nick Thompson
Sales Director,
The Courier Company Nationwide



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gmcc news

Greater Manchester
Chamber of Commerce

The GMCC Excellence Awards



Greater Manchester Chamber of Commerce has announced the winners of this year's prestigious GMCC Excellence Awards.

The Chamber launched the awards in 2021 to showcase and celebrate business achievements and resilience, highlighting businesses, leaders and teams who have demonstrated success within their

industries and communities across Greater Manchester.

The awards, sponsored by BioPharma Dynamics, were presented at the GMCC Excellence Awards Lunch in November at Manchester Hall, Bridge Street, Manchester.

The Halle and Next Level Marketing Agency were Event Partners.

The award winners were:

Best Marketing Campaign

Winner: Hussel Marketing Ltd

The winning campaign showed resounding customer impact and outstanding content quality.

Charity Initiative of the Year

Winner: Rakem Group

The Group has strengthened inter-departmental relationships, resulting in stronger connections which help them collaborate more effectively.

Global Star

Winner: Genus Recycling

The business achieved global stardom through a combination of resilience and strategic innovation.

Growth Award

Winner: Cowburn Watson-Box

The winner demonstrated rapid revenue growth whilst offering a full turnkey solution, solving all client problems.

Large Business of the Year

Winner: Argyle North West Construction Limited

Despite having just 62 staff members, the company has increased its turnover by more than 48% in just two years.

People and Community

Winner: Lifeshare

In response to Manchester City Council's call for help, Lifeshare stepped in to provide Friday breakfasts for rough sleepers in 2022, even without funding.

SME Business of the Year

Winner - Ash Integrated Services Ltd

The company has excelled in an industry grappling with diversity and skills shortages, thanks to a people-focused strategy that strengthens its core.

Sustainable Solution of the Year

Winner - DiscreteHeat

DiscreteHeat showed that Innovating with a sustainable purpose helped guarantee a winning outcome.

For more information on how to get involved please contact Diane Elebert-Morgan: Diane.ElebertMorgan@gmchamber.co.uk
07740 196476 Visit: www.gmchamber.co.uk

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public safety & security

Figen Murray OBE



Figen Murray is the force behind Martyn's Law, an act of legislation that is currently going through parliament.

On the 22nd May 2017 Figen lost her son Martyn Hett to the terrorist bombing at the Manchester Arena, and since then she has tirelessly campaigned to get the law passed and in place at venues across the UK.

The law will require venues of over 100 capacity to improve security against the threat of terrorism, train their staff with free online training provided by the government, and require a counter-terrorism plan to be in place.

This began in early 2019 in Figen's kitchen as an online petition. Since then, she has been working with a team of co-campaigners and meeting government officials and ministers regularly to formulate how her vision would be put into practice and implemented as law.

During this time, Figen also completed a Master's Degree in counter-terrorism. She was awarded

an Honorary Doctorate from Salford University in 2022, and additionally made a Visiting Fellow at the Institute of Strategic Risk Management (ISRM).

She was awarded the Outstanding Contribution Award at the 2020 Counter Terror Awards, and is a member of the Senior Leadership team at TINYg.

She was also awarded an OBE in the 2022 New Year's Honours List.

By also visiting schools, colleges and universities, Figen hopes that through educating young people around the dangers of radicalisation, she can help stop attacks like the Manchester Arena one from happening in the future. She has so far spoken to more than 26,000 young people across England.

We asked Figen what did she think of the current announcement of the pending law in the recent King's speech:

"I was mid-air when the King delivered his much-awaited speech.

I was on my way to Germany to speak at a security conference. What followed were hundreds of messages of congratulations and "Well done's" on every social media platform I use.

"But my heart was heavy, my mood rock bottom and it led me to go quiet on these platforms during my two days in Germany. I needed to lick my wounds and feel all the emotions of disappointment and dig deep to emerge out of the dark place I had fallen into. Thankfully, two days later I came out of it with more determination than ever.

"Whilst I should have been very elated at the mention of the Terrorism (Protection of Premises) Bill, also known as Martyn's Law, it was blighted by a telephone conversation the day before the royal speech.

"The security minister, Tom Tugendhat MP spoke with me, and my fellow campaigners to let us know that there is still a process to go through which was clearly much more complex than we were originally led to believe.

"A discussion with the home office several months ago pointed to a mention in the King's Speech leading to the legislation being debated in parliament shortly after and that in early spring the King would give his royal assent. Sadly, the process is more complex and far lengthier than anticipated.

"The Home Affairs Select Committee findings were skewed by unfounded concerns around the possible closure of village halls as the legislation was deemed too onerous or costly.

"Martyn's Law is a proportionate law, and this seemed to have been overlooked by the committee when in addition a representative for small businesses was concerned about the financial burden of the legislation.

"There was talk of making the legislation applicable only for the Enhanced Tier (800+ people) which is a big cause for concern. Should this be the case it would endanger smaller venues and turn them into readily accessible softer targets. As campaigners we are very concerned about this and publicly opposed to it.

Martyn's Law

"The home office decided to do a further two-month public consultation for the standard tier. Although this is causing some delay, it may be a very positive step forward in terms of the industry now being clearer about what is suggested in the legislation. People will be able to respond to the consultation far swifter and more concisely.

"Whilst the legislation will enter parliament during November or December, there will be a second reading after this public consultation and various committees will have the opportunity to come up with suggestions and amendments.

"Royal assent may not happen until the end of summer. However, once signed off by the King, there will be a one-year implementation period to allow people to introduce all necessary measures to comply with the legislation. And of course, there is also the possibility looming that the government will simply run out of time to deal with Martyn's Law and it may fall onto the Labour government to make it a reality. Just in case this happens we have already formed strong links with relevant shadow ministers.

"Martyn's Law intends to make it mandatory for venues and publicly accessible locations to keep staff and customers safe.

"The terrorism landscape has changed dramatically since the days of the Troubles, when the IRA announced any planned attacks with phone calls or some indication that something bad was about to happen.

"In 2014 terrorism took a sinister turn with a Daesh spokesman circulating a video

online and it went viral in minutes. He encouraged people to no longer go to training camps abroad or wait for instructions. He said -

"...kill him in any manner or way however it may be. Smash his head with a rock, or slaughter him with a knife, or run him down from a high place, or choke him, or poison him."

"This put self-initiated terrorism firmly on the UK map and massively impacted the work of MI5 and the counterterrorism police.

"Individuals started to radicalise online, hired vehicles, bought knives, made IED's with step-by-step instructions found on the dark web, and started to randomly attack innocent citizens.

"There have been nine deadly attacks and 39 very late stage disrupted plots since 2017. Currently, there are 800 live investigations and over 2,500 subjects of interest who

are a cause for concern.

"Additionally, a further 30,000 people are at the margins of being subjects of interest. Whilst a big proportion of these people represent an Islamist ideology, far right extremism is on the rise. Sadly, some of these people infiltrate peaceful protests to disrupt.

"The current crisis in the Middle East provides many opportunities for the Far Right to seek out peaceful marches and inflame already precarious emotions.

"Terrorists could literally strike anytime, anyplace, anywhere. The notion of "It will not happen here" is a dangerous one. Martyn's Law will help save lives by significantly reducing opportunities for terrorists to attack venues.

"It will mandate that venues have proportionate security measures in place. Seeing security staff or security equipment at large venues can act as

a deterrent, having a website stating that the venue operates a state-of-the-art CCTV system and having both overt and covert security may again be a good deterrent.

"Martyn's Law has been criticised, and there is concern that small businesses and/or venues are at risk of closure because the cost and requirements are too onerous.

"The legislation is proportionate, and a lot of measures that are asked for are already falling under the scope of health and safety or fire safety.

"An example of proportionate measures is asking staff to do their ACT e-learning course, a total of 45 minutes free of charge training.

"Employers would need to pay one hour's staff wage. But in many of the standard tier venues this may be all that is required alongside staff knowing where to evacuate or invacuate in case of an attack.

"It is up to the government now to get the public consultation underway as soon as possible as the clock is ticking.

"There will no doubt be a lively parliamentary debate that follows the consultation and amendments put forward by various committees. The entire industry is holding its breath and eagerly awaits the outcome of Martyn's Law.

"Other nations are also keen to see the outcome of the legislation as it is unique. The global interest this has resulted in is a massive opportunity for the UK government to lead the way in becoming a key player when it comes to the safety and security of its citizens.

"As Martyn's mum, my hope is that the government will simply do the right thing to ensure the safety of citizens all over the UK."



Find out more - figenmurray.co.uk

Find out more about the draft legislation:

gov.uk/government/publications/terrorism-protection-of-premises-draft-bill-overarching-documents

Martyn's Law is reviewed on Protect UK

- The Counter Terrorism Alliance:

protectuk.police.uk/martyns-law/martyns-law-overview-and-what-you-need-know

public safety & security

Manchester City Council backs Martyn's Law

Originally billed as the Protect Duty, The Terrorism (Protection of Premises) Bill or, as it will commonly be known, "Martyn's Law" is now set to become law after being included in the King's Speech.

Fraser Swift, Principal Licensing Officer from Manchester City Council explains more about the bill:

"Named in tribute to Martyn Hett, who was killed alongside 21 others in the Manchester Arena terrorist attack of 2017, the legislation marks the culmination of the campaign by Martyn's mother, Figen Murray, to improve the protections in place at public premises from terrorism."

Who is responsible?

"The 'responsible person, which is an individual, partnership, unincorporated association, or a corporate body' in control of the premises or event."

Where will it apply to?

"The duty will apply to a building (including a collection of buildings e.g. a campus) or any other land which has a readily identifiable boundary (either temporary or permanent), with a public capacity of over 100 persons and where 'qualifying activities' take place in them, including retail; sale of food and drink (e.g. a bar or restaurant); a nightclub, social club or dance hall; entertainment venue (e.g. a theatre); sports ground; recreation, exercise or leisure centres; libraries; museums and galleries; exhibition halls; visitor attractions; hotels; places of worship; hospitals; bus and railway stations; schools; universities; public authority buildings (e.g. town halls)."

The capacity of the premises then defines the tier it falls into:

- 1. Standard Tier for smaller premises (100-799 persons)**
- 2. Enhanced Tier for larger premises and events (800+ persons)**

Temporary events with a capacity of 800 or over are also subject to broadly same requirements as enhanced duty premises."

Standard Tier

"The intention is that standard duty holders will need to undertake low-cost and simple activities to meet their obligations to improve protective security and preparedness, including ensuring relevant workers are given appropriate terrorism protection training to ensure staff are better prepared to respond quickly to evolving situations, aware of what processes they should follow, able to make rapid decisions and carry out actions that will save lives."

"The responsible person will also need to complete a 'standard terrorism evaluation' in which they consider how best to respond in the event of a terrorist incident (e.g. procedures to evacuate or lock down their premises, communicate with customers and neighbouring premises, availability of first aid equipment such as Public Access Trauma (PACT) kits).

"All places of worship and educational premises will fall under the Standard Tier regardless of capacity (unless commercial activities are within)."

Enhanced Tier

"A risk assessment and security plan that includes security measures and procedures considered to a 'reasonably practicable' standard will be required."

"This will allow duty holders to assess the balance of risk reduction against the time, money and effort required to achieve a successful level of security preparedness using a recognised standard in other regulatory regimes (including Fire and Health and Safety).

"A 'designated senior officer' must

also be appointed for the premises or event, who will be responsible for coordinating completion of the terrorism risk assessment, for example, as well as being the point of contact for any communication with the regulator."

Compliance

"A yet to be announced regulator will be established with powers of inspection and enforcement to seek to educate, advise, and ensure compliance with the duty."

"Where necessary, the inspectorate will use a range of sanctions to ensure that breaches are dealt with effectively, including compliance and restriction notices and financial penalties of up to a maximum of £10k (standard duty) and, for enhanced duty or qualifying public events, a maximum of £18m or 5% of worldwide revenue."

Co-operation and co-ordination

"In addition to the responsible person, there will be circumstances where there is another person or organisation that has some form of control."

"They will be required to cooperate with requirements placed upon the responsible person to ensure that they succeed in compliance, when it is within their power to do so."

Next steps

"Ahead of introducing the Bill in Parliament, the Government will launch a consultation on the standard tier to ensure the Bill's measures strike the right balance between public protection and avoiding undue burdens on smaller premises."

"Businesses should be aware that the Martyn's Law legislation is not yet final and may still be subject to change. Therefore, they should exercise caution in relation to any

companies offering services in connection with complying with the requirements."

"However, businesses would be well advised to start familiarising themselves with the proposals (see guidance below) and review what they can be doing now."

Since 2021, Manchester City Council in partnership with CityCo and Counter Terrorism Policing have delivered ACT (Action Counters Terrorism) training to over 1,800 individuals from over 600 of Manchester's hospitality businesses (cityco.com/event-type/act-awareness/)



Fraser Swift
Principal Licensing Officer
Manchester City Council
fraser.swift@manchester.gov.uk



MANCHESTER CITY COUNCIL

FURTHER INFORMATION

The ProtectUK website, launched in 2022 to provide a new central hub for counter terrorism and security advice: protectuk.police.uk/martyns-law/martyns-law-overview-and-what-you-need-know

Draft guidance and template documents including legislation and explanatory info: gov.uk/government/publications/terrorism-protection-of-premises-draft-bill-overarching-documents

Having **emergency medical supplies** in venues and public accessible locations of all sizes **saves lives.**



A PACT Kit (Public Access Trauma Kit) is specifically designed for non-medically trained people to treat immediate life threatening injuries such as a major bleed or someone who has absent or abnormal breathing.

Being prepared for a mass casualty situation is the difference between life and death!

The Manchester Arena public inquiry proved beyond doubt that better preparation saves lives.

Sir John Saunderson's Volume 2 report highlights the 'Care Gap' - the critical time waiting for the arrival of the emergency services following the incident having happened. Lives can be lost if no action is taken to save the casualties; making it essential that as much help as possible is provided by people on site or in the vicinity that are prepared to help.

Public Access Trauma Kits (PACT) have been designed to help fill this 'Care Gap' allowing for immediate, life saving treatment to the casualties by untrained members of the public whilst waiting for the emergency services to arrive.



What is a Public Access Trauma Kit (PACT)?

The Public Access Trauma Kit was designed for non medical trained use to support life threatening injuries such as a major bleed or someone who has absent or abnormal breathing.

In response to the devastating Manchester Arena bombing in 2017, the National Counter Terrorism Security Office collaborated with medical experts to create this kit, which has now become the government standard.

Specialist products for mass casualty incidents...

- To fill the care gap from the incident happening until the emergency services arrive
- Trauma Dressings designed in line with Military style dressings for major bleeds
- For use by the general public, including young people and people with no previous medical or first aid training
- Products allow for self treatment of the walking wounded
- Preparing businesses and public places for mass casualty incidents
- The contents can treat major bleeding, unresponsiveness and irregular or absent breathing

What is in a PACT Kit?

Each kit contains 2 tourniquets, 4 trauma dressings, 2 face shields for CPR, 2 triangular bandages, 4 PPE packs and a simple to follow instruction guide enhanced with a QR code linking to short how-to-videos.

Who should have this kit?

All Public Accessible Locations (PALs) such as Stadiums, Arenas, Museums, Bars, Restaurants and anywhere the public congregate should have at least one.

How many do I need?

This will depend on your size and risk assessments whilst also considering your vulnerability and counter terrorism plan.

How many people does a PACT Kit treat?

Each kit can treat 2-4 people depending on the severity of the injury. We can discuss larger options to suit your venue based on the number of people it holds.

Does a PACT kit replace a first aid kit?

NO - All businesses with over 5 employees must still meet their legal obligations for workplace first aid.

One call or email sets the ball in motion to a series of well thought out intelligent solutions that careful collaborations deliver!

Tel : +44 (0)161 902 3030 Email : PACT@steroplast.co.uk



public safety & security

Delivering emergency first aid training

Cookson First Aid was founded by entrepreneur and philanthropist Oliver Cookson, founder of the sports nutrition business Myprotein, and more recently Verve, to address barriers in access to emergency first aid training.

Oliver has fully funded Cookson First Aid from day one, with a clear mission; to save lives.

We are proudly a social enterprise with a clear purpose, and our aim is to become a fully sustainable business, operating across the UK to provide free training and access to life saving defibrillators to communities who need it most.

There are approximately

80,000

cardiac arrests not in hospitals each year.

Without immediate treatment

90-95%

cardiac arrests prove fatal.

Less than **1 in 10** survive an out of hospital cardiac arrest due to low bystander CPR knowledge.

Emily Harrison, CEO, explains in more detail: "As a social enterprise we have such a unique position, I think that is why people have really connected with Cookson First Aid, we are a business that operates solely for the community, and our message - that everyone needs to know how to save a life - is a powerful one."

"Since launching in Greater

Manchester in 2022, we have trained almost 3,000 people with a small team, and our innovative approach to teaching people to become lifesavers.

"Removing barriers to learning was our first goal, which is the aim of Oliver's foundation.

"Time, location of training and cost were the main reasons we found that people were not learning CPR, so we created a one hour course, delivered in the community.

"We purposefully train in locations where people are already accessing services, such as libraries, parks, and leisure centres - and most importantly it is free.

"When we started training last year, we quickly found a lack of accessible training options. So we reached out to a range of organisations who supported special educational need (SEND) families, groups where English was their second language and organisations supporting deaf, hard of hearing and visually impaired people to try and address this.

"We have since designed and delivered accessible training courses in partnership with them, so when we say free first aid for all, we really mean it.

"We have also worked with charities and youth groups to teach how to deal with bleeds and trauma, as this is just as important as CPR in learning how to save a life.

"In support of Martyn's Law we will be incorporating the Public Access Trauma (PACT) kits into our training, to raise awareness of their importance, and encourage use of these kits in an emergency.

"The number one way you can support our work is to use us as your first aid training provider. The more corporate training we deliver, the more free training we can provide, it's that simple."

Corporate Training

"We have created a range of options for businesses of all sizes who want to support our mission. Using us as a first aid training provider will enable you to nominate local community groups or charities to receive free training, so you are directly funding training in the areas you operate, as well as receiving quality training for your business.

"It is a win-win for everyone.

"We believe saving lives is all of our responsibility, not just your team's certified first aider, and we encourage businesses to offer first aid training to all of their employees to learn CPR and bleed control.

"With Cookson First Aid

a full course of accredited training comes with a free one hour training session for the rest of your team.*

We also offer special discounted prices for community, voluntary groups and charities.

"Our long term goal is to provide access to free first aid for everyone in the UK. It is a big ambition, but one we feel we can achieve by providing quality training to businesses who share our values.

"Get in touch to book your training. 100% of your investment will go towards achieving our mission."



"When I came into the office on Tuesday morning the last thing I wanted to do was First Aid training. We were very busy and I just saw it as a bit of an inconvenience, but within the first five minutes, Ric had managed to make me forget about all that and focus on learning in a really engaging way.

"Not only did I leave the room feeling like I'd learnt loads, I also genuinely enjoyed the day. Most importantly I feel prepared for any issues that may arise. I can't recommend Cookson First Aid enough."

15% DISCOUNT SPECIAL OFFER

For all readers of Business Connect Magazine a 15% discount is available off training, applicable on booking a full course (12 people), or on individuals attending accredited training courses.

To book your Corporate Training please email

hello@cooksonfirstaid.org and mention the code **BusinessConnect15'** to secure your discount**.



Cookson First Aid

Free First Aid for all

* Terms and conditions apply, a full course is for 12 people.

** Offer closes 31st March 2024.

cooksonfirstaid.org • hello@cooksonfirstaid.org



CONTEST - the UK Government's anti-terrorism strategy

The aim of CONTEST, the UK's counter-terrorism strategy, is to reduce the risk from terrorism to the UK, its citizens and interests overseas, so that people can go about their lives freely and with confidence.

The government updated the Integrated Review of Security, Defence, Development and Foreign Policy, in March 2023. That document sets out the UK's overarching national security and international strategy. Terrorism is just one of the threats covered by that strategy and CONTEST outlines the response to it in further detail.

Since the last version of CONTEST in 2018, concerted counter-terrorism efforts by the UK and key allies have largely been successful in driving down risk by suppressing the most serious terrorist threats. This has enabled a rebalancing of finite national security resource into

other areas of threat. The core CONTEST framework empowers government departments, devolved administrations, local authorities, frontline emergency services, intelligence agencies, and other partners, to work together to counter terrorism.

The core CONTEST Framework – Prevent, Pursue, Protect and Prepare – is a counter-terrorism programme aiming to make the significant majority of people feel safe from terrorism and are confident in the government's ability to protect the UK from terrorism.

However, the threat from terrorism is enduring and evolving.

Despite a prevalence of lower sophistication attacks in the UK, the threat seen today and in the coming

years, is more diverse, dynamic and complex, which makes the threat less predictable and harder to detect and investigate.

The government are committed to delivering Martyn's Law to improve security at public venues, and comment: "We continue to learn from past attacks, inquests and inquiries, including the Manchester Arena Inquiry, continuously improving our capabilities and closing vulnerabilities in our response to terrorist attacks.

"Our counter-terrorism response will be even more agile in the face of an evolving threat, more integrated so that we can bring the right interventions to bear at the right time to reduce risk and more aligned with our international allies to ensure that we continue to

deliver together against a common threat.

"We will realise the full potential of the UK's Counter-Terrorism Operations Centre (CTOC), bringing together the right teams, data and technology to more effectively identify, investigate and disrupt terrorists.

"We are ensuring that counter-terrorism investigations draw on an increased range of expert advice and non-law enforcement interventions to mitigate the evolving terrorist threat, connecting the counter-terrorism system with expertise in healthcare, education, social services and the criminal justice."



ACT Awareness event, delivered by CTPNW CTSA's

On 6th February 2024 Steroplast Healthcare, alongside CT Policing, and supported by Business Connect Magazine, will be hosting this event in the Greater Manchester area.

This is a great opportunity to learn more about preparedness, awareness and how to protect yourself and those around you in the event of a terrorist attack.

Pre-register your interest by email – pact@steroplast.co.uk

CURRENT NATIONAL THREAT LEVEL
SUBSTANTIAL - AN ATTACK IS LIKELY

The threat to the UK (England, Wales, Scotland and Northern Ireland) from terrorism is SUBSTANTIAL. Threat levels are designed to give a broad indication of the likelihood of a terrorist attack.



Source : www.protectuk.police.uk

The **ProtectUK** website offers a wealth of information and provides terrorism security with emergency preparedness advice to businesses and the public.

Latest updates on **Martyn's Law** will be published here too and you can also register for the ACT (Action Counters Terrorism) e-learning course.

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finance



How SME owners can **win the battle** against **admin overload**

In today's fast-paced business world, small and medium-sized enterprise (SME) owners are facing an increasingly common challenge: a relentless battle with administrative tasks that seem to consume their precious time. In our article below we provide practical advice on how to overcome these challenges.

The admin conundrum

A recent survey conducted by business insurer Superscript revealed that 33% of SME bosses feel they need an additional four hours in their working day just to manage the administrative burdens that come with running a business. While the thrill of entrepreneurship and the pursuit of their vision keep SME owners motivated, the sheer volume of administrative work can be overwhelming.

The elusive 20 extra hours

In an ideal world, these hardworking entrepreneurs would love to free up an additional 20 hours each week to focus on their core business activities, strategy, and growth. However, the harsh reality is that, on average, they only manage to dedicate a meagre 90 minutes to their administrative tasks each day. To make matters worse, a substantial 43% of business owners admit to taking these chores home with them, blurring the lines between work and personal life.

Beyond the tangible time-consuming tasks, SME owners face a variety of challenges that add to their administrative burdens. Chasing payments, a perennial issue for many SMEs, was highlighted by 14% of respondents.

Tax returns, cash flow, and supply chain – the main admin culprits

The survey pinpointed the most time-consuming administrative tasks that SME owners face. At the top of the list

is the perennial challenge of sorting out tax returns, with 29% of respondents citing it as a major time sink. Managing cash flow came in second, with 20% of business owners struggling to keep their financial ship afloat. Supply chain issues rounded off the top three, with 18% grappling with the complexities of this vital aspect of their operations.

How can business owners tackle admin challenges?

Here are a few strategies to consider:

- **Leverage technology:** Invest in tools and software that can automate and streamline administrative tasks, from accounting software to project management tools.
- **Delegate wisely:** Identify tasks that can be delegated to trusted team members or outsourced to professionals, allowing you to focus on strategic decisions.
- **Set boundaries:** Create clear boundaries between work and personal life to prevent burnout and maintain a healthy work-life balance.
- **Continuous learning:** Stay updated on best practices and seek opportunities for professional development to become more efficient in handling administrative tasks.
- **Outsource:** consider outsourcing specific administrative functions to experts, such as an accountant for tax-related matters.

Accountants are there to help you

Incorporating the expertise of a professional accountancy firm can be a game-changer for SME owners who are grappling with administrative overload. Here's how we can help alleviate some of the burdens highlighted above.

1. Tax returns made manageable

Tax returns topped the list of time-consuming tasks for SME owners.

However, with the assistance of experienced accountants, businesses can navigate the complexities of tax compliance more efficiently. Accountants can ensure that you:

- **Submit accurate and timely filing** of annual tax and quarterly VAT returns, helping you avoid penalties and compliance issues.
- **Identify potential tax deductions** and credits to minimise tax liabilities, saving your business money.
- **Stay updated** on and adhere to changing tax laws and regulations.

2. Mastering cash flow

Managing cash flow is crucial for the financial health of any business. Accountants can provide valuable insights and assistance in this area by:

- **Creating cash flow projections** to help business owners anticipate financial needs and make informed decisions.
- **Monitoring and analysing financial transactions** to identify areas for cost reduction or revenue optimisation.
- **Implementing efficient invoicing** and payment tracking systems to ensure that money flows smoothly in and out of the business.

3. Paperwork simplification

Endless paperwork can be a significant headache for SME owners. Accountants can streamline this process by:

- **Implementing digital document management** systems to reduce paperwork clutter.
- **Organising and categorising financial records** for easy access and retrieval.
- **Utilising tools** such as Xero and Dext to minimise bookkeeping tasks whilst also helping to make more informed business decisions with forecasting tools such as Futrli.

4. Financial insights and decision support

Beyond the specific administrative tasks, accountants offer invaluable financial insights and decision support. Supply chain management is another intricate aspect of business operations. LWA can help SMEs in this domain

by utilising our Non-Executive Finance Director service that helps businesses in:

- **Providing financial statements** and reports that offer a clear picture of the business's financial health.
- **Offering advice** on investment opportunities, cost-saving strategies, and growth potential.
- **Assisting with budgeting and financial planning** to help SMEs set realistic financial goals and track progress.
- **Conducting cost-benefit analyses** to determine the most cost-effective suppliers and logistics strategies.
- **Managing inventory efficiently** to prevent overstocking or understocking of goods.
- **Monitoring the financial health** of key suppliers to mitigate risks in the supply chain.

Whether it's tax compliance, cash flow management, supply chain optimisation, paperwork reduction, or financial guidance, our professional and approachable team at LWA provides the expertise and support needed to thrive in today's competitive business landscape.

If you need support to reduce the time spent on business administration, email mail@lwaltd.com or call us on **0161 905 1801** in South Manchester or on **01925 830 830** in Warrington.



Les Leavitt Managing Director
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small business news

The perfect work-life balance of a small business owner can be a tough nut to crack!

by **Theo Paphitis**

Almost every small business owner I've come across throughout my time in business so far is a passionate entrepreneur chomping at the bit to know what they can do to take their business to the next level, and one thing I always encourage them to do is think big!

The only problem some business owners find is that thinking big often comes at the expense of that perfect work-life balance. Well, the important thing to remember is that the pendulum is not always going to be balanced and that's ok!

Running a business is hard graft and not for the faint-hearted. It requires bucket-loads of passion, determination and more often than not, success demands a sacrifice in blood, sweat and tears.

Anyone who tells you otherwise has either been astonishingly lucky or has never been in a position where they've had to make a decision.

But, just because something is hard graft doesn't mean by default that you have to burn the candle at both ends.

I would even go as far as to say that one of the key ingredients to making your business a success, in other words, turning your dream into a reality, is finding the perfect split that works for you and this will always differ, depending on where you are at with your business.

Business, and life for that matter, is all about common sense. It's all well and good saying that you're going to work 15-hour days and 75-hour weeks, but that's not sustainable ad infinitum.

If you don't take care of yourself in the mix, ultimately, the only person you're doing a disservice to is yourself - tell me, where's the logic in that?

Business isn't a sprint - it's a marathon, and just like a marathon, you've got to make sure that you're not absolutely gunning for it in the first 10km, thinking you're on track for a world record, only to find yourself blue in the face, gasping for breath 5km further down the line.

Now, of course, there are always going to be moments when your

schedule is anything but balanced.

So, whether it's spending time in the great outdoors, sharing some laughs with family and friends or just simply indulging in a hobby to help you let off steam or re-focus, anything you can do to counteract all that graft will do you heaps of good in the long run as all work and no play takes its toll.

Burnout isn't an inevitability when running a business, but you have to recognise the ebb and flow of when you need to put that additional hard graft in.

If you set boundaries and allocate

some time for yourself there's no reason why you shouldn't be bouncing out of bed in the morning because, ultimately most people aren't just running their business for the money - they're doing it because they love what they do, and that's what makes them great at it!



Theo Paphitis
Theo Paphitis
Retail Group



THEO PAPHITIS
**SMALL BUSINESS
SUNDAY**

If you're a small business then check out Theo's free-to-enter **#SBS Small Business Sunday** competition which runs every Sunday between 5-7.30pm on X and Instagram - a free boost for small businesses with ambitions to grow and a chance to join one of the UK's small business communities. Further information is here: www.theopaphitissbs.com/about/



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AI news

Breaking barriers to AI Adoption



Bridging the gap to the 4th Industrial Revolution

As the dawn of the 4th Industrial Revolution (4IR) beckons, the allure of Artificial Intelligence (AI) is unmissable.

However, for the UK's Small and Medium-sized Enterprises (SMEs), stepping into the AI domain is often seen as venturing into uncharted territory. This article delves into the intricate barriers that SME owners face and highlights pathways to overcome these hurdles.

Cost - The cost barrier often looms large on the path to AI adoption.

However, the emergence of cost-effective AI packages is gradually changing this narrative, making AI an attainable goal for businesses of all sizes, from sole traders to multinationals.

Lack of Understanding - Delving into the realm of AI can be intimidating, especially given its technical nature. The barriers here

are quite pronounced:

- The primary hurdles include limited expertise (39%), rising data complexity (32%), and the absence of requisite tools or platforms (28%), which often deter businesses from exploring the AI frontier.
- A certain survey spotlighted a significant lack of understanding concerning AI among UK manufacturing SMEs, indicating a knowledge gap that needs bridging.
- Mesh-AI's report disclosed that 22% of respondents identified a lack of understanding of technology as the foremost obstacle to AI adoption.

The good news is, with the right guidance and resources, demystifying AI and realising its potential becomes an achievable feat.

Initiatives aimed at educating and providing the necessary resources to SMEs can play a crucial role in bridging this understanding gap.

Integration Challenges - The task of amalgamating AI into existing frameworks presents a set of challenges:

- AI integration is perceived as a linchpin in redefining operational and strategic landscapes for UK SMEs, opening doors to enhanced efficiency and competitive advantage.
- The recommendation of designating a "champion" or a small team to lead the AI integration process is seen as a viable solution to streamline the process, ensuring a focused and structured approach towards AI adoption.
- Deploying enterprise AI comes with its set of challenges, including finding or customising models and algorithms (67%), setting up infrastructure (43%), and preparing data (38%), each posing a unique challenge that demands attention.

Nevertheless, with a strategic approach, these hurdles can be surmounted, paving the way for a smooth AI integration that propels SMEs into the new age of digital innovation.

Skill Shortages - The scarcity of skilled AI professionals poses a significant challenge:

- Around 29% of SMEs view the

shortage of skilled workers as a high-risk factor, with merely 1-in-10 small businesses possessing in-demand AI skills.

This skill gap poses a risk to the successful adoption and integration of AI technologies.

- The tight labour market in the UK is further strained by a global shortage of AI data scientists, as highlighted by techUK members, amplifying the challenge of finding the right talent.

In conclusion, while the road to AI adoption may seem fraught with challenges, they are not insurmountable.

The right guidance, strategic planning, and access to resources can significantly ease the journey...

With expert assistance becoming available, the journey towards becoming a part of the 4th Industrial Revolution becomes not only achievable but also a promising venture towards a technologically empowered future.



Jonathan Taylor
The Automation Agency

ARE YOU IN... AI IS HERE TO STAY!

AI CAN BE A DAUNTING SUBJECT FULL OF TECH JARGON; HERE AT THE AUTOMATION AGENCY, WE PRIDE OURSELVES ON CUTTING THROUGH THE JARGON TO MAKE AI EASY TO UNDERSTAND AND EVEN EASIER TO IMPLEMENT INTO YOUR BUSINESS OPERATIONS, ALL AT AN AFFORDABLE COST THAT MAY SURPRISE YOU!

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data safety



Data backup strategies to safeguard your business



Data protection is a major concern for businesses, regardless of their size.

Due to limited resources, small and medium-sized businesses (SMBs) are more at risk of data loss. This is because it can be challenging for them to put comprehensive backup procedures into place.

Data is not just an asset; it is the core of your business. Losing it can have grave consequences that can negatively affect your operations.

In this article, we will explore the key elements of data backup strategies and safeguarding your business.

The importance of regular backups

Regularly backing up your data

is essential for protecting your valuable information. Accidental deletions, hardware failures, and cyberattacks can be unpredictable and devastating.

For small and medium-sized businesses like yours, establishing a solid backup schedule is crucial.

Whether you opt for daily or weekly backups depends on the frequency of your data turnover. We will work closely with you to determine the best approach.

Partnering with professional IT experts can be a cost-effective answer to ensure the safety of your data. We understand that SMBs often face resource limitations. We can design a tailored backup schedule that fits into your budget and needs. With automated backup systems in

place, you can be certain that your data is kept safe around the clock.

No more sleepless nights worrying about lost files or unexpected disasters!

A third party IT expert can efficiently handle the nitty-gritty so you can focus on what matters most - running a successful business!

Off-site storage

Storing backups on-site might seem convenient, but it carries a significant risk. Natural disasters, fires, theft, or equipment failures can render your on-site backups useless. To mitigate this risk, SMBs should consider off-site storage solutions.

Off-site storage involves keeping backup copies of your data in secure, remote locations. This ensures that even if your primary location faces a catastrophe, your data remains safe and accessible.

Secure cloud-based backup solutions are available that allow your data to be stored off-site.

Our data centres are equipped with state-of-the-art security measures to safeguard your information. With our assistance, you can enjoy the benefits of off-site storage without the hassle of managing it yourself.

Disaster recovery planning

A disaster recovery plan is essential for SMBs. It goes beyond creating backups, it's having a strong and reliable strategy in place to quickly restore everything when the unexpected strikes.

By having this plan, you can minimise downtime and get back on track faster than ever before. And that means no more lost revenue or shattered customer trust!

So, let's put those plans into action and save the day!

We specialise in disaster recovery planning, collaborating closely with our clients to develop customised recovery strategies that minimise downtime and ensure a seamless restoration process.

With our expertise, you can quickly get back to business, even in the face of unforeseen challenges.

To sum up, safeguarding your data is a must for SMBs to keep their crucial information safe and their operations running smoothly.

Regular backups, off-site storage, and disaster recovery planning are key.

We're here to help you put these strategies in place, offering peace of mind and ensuring your business stays strong in tough times.

Call us on **0330 0020 886** for a chat or drop us an email at **enquiries@nybble.co.uk**.

Your business' future may depend on it!



Ram Gupta
Nybble
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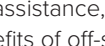
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wellbeing



Ever **fallen asleep** in an inappropriate place?

I'm sure we've all experienced that drowsy, post-lunch state when attending a long meeting, conference or lecture, especially if the room is stuffy and airless.

It can be almost impossible to keep our eyes open in those situations, hence the recent example of the juror who fell asleep and was snoring so loudly that the judge had to halt the trial and excuse him!

There are a myriad of reasons why someone might fall asleep inappropriately. Stress and overwhelm can sometimes escalate to such an extent that a person mentally walks away into a reverie, falling asleep to escape the situation. Being present in the moment may be too difficult to maintain.

Many of us will have heard of '**death by Powerpoint**', where a presenter tediously delivers their presentation in a monotone, laboriously reading each slide in turn.

It's very difficult to stay awake, particularly after lunch, and is the reason why many presenters now deliver shorter, interactive sessions, interspersed with break out groups and workshops. **A far more effective approach to delivering information!**

Recent research by Finnish university, Aalto, published in the Journal of Occupational Health Psychology, has revealed that another reason why we

become drowsy, yawn and potentially dose off inappropriately, perhaps in a Zoom meeting, is because we don't feel engaged, especially if we're not on camera.

We're free to become distracted, multi-task and do other things when there's no direct focus on us, or we may mentally drift off into a dozy sleep state, perhaps due to feeling irrelevant or immaterial to the meeting, especially if we're not required to contribute.

The Finnish research followed up with findings from the Finnish Institute of Occupational Health, echoing that employees with lower levels of engagement found virtual meetings very tiring.

Sitting through a session where we're feeling pointless or are not experiencing much mental stimulation can result in us detaching and going into an almost zombie-like state.

Being required to 'be present', as in face-to-face, demands a higher level of involvement, requiring that we keep alert. **Mental underload and boredom can cause sleepiness.**

People who are highly engaged in their work are able to stay active, interested and participative during virtual meetings, and so, tailoring the agenda to suit the requirements of the target audience helps everyone avoid falling asleep at an inappropriate time or place.

Sleep can offer an escape route from unpleasant or difficult situations.

In fact, parents are often advised that if their child starts to fall asleep so deeply that they're 'out of it', perhaps resulting in them bed-wetting after having been previously dry, it could be a clue that they're experiencing problems in an area of their lives.

They may be experiencing stress, distress or being bullied. It's a red light which often benefits from monitoring and investigating.

Long car journeys, especially at night on unlit motorways, can be trance or sleep-inducing. Roadway signs on long motorway stretches advise on the importance of stopping for a break.

Endless miles of driving in the dark can cause eyelids to droop and become heavy. But, if it's not possible to stop or share the driving it can help to open the window, put the radio on, maybe singalong to the songs being played or drive in stockinged feet. (In the UK it's legal to drive barefoot or in flip-flops so long as you're able to operate the vehicle safely).

However, driving in a dark, warm car is often a welcome solution for parents of a crying child who's refusing to go to sleep. Many parents have found that driving around for twenty-thirty minutes is an almost guaranteed way to calm a fractious child and soothe them to sleep.

Some medical conditions and the side effects of some medications can result in overwhelming tiredness, sleepiness and result in an inability to stay awake.

If you've found this to be the case and you're falling asleep inappropriately, it's worth arranging a check-up with your family doctor in order to discuss a more suitable treatment regime.

Consider, too, the importance of **looking after yourself** and ensuring you commit to a **healthy balanced diet**, with plenty of fresh, unprocessed food, minimal sugary drinks and snacks, and a commitment to exercise and fresh air.

A regular sleep pattern is also important, so calculate how much sleep you need in order to awaken feeling refreshed and recharged. Try to ensure that you go to bed at a 'sensible' time in order to achieve that outcome.

Taking a responsible approach and implementing a good self-care programme, which aims to maintain balance and equilibrium, is a proactive way to support good health and deliver a positive approach to managing stress and wellness.

Doing this helps you to become more fully engaged in your daily life.



Susan Leigh MNCH (ACC)

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, 'Dealing with Stress, Managing its Impact', '101 Days of Inspiration #tipoftheday' and 'Dealing with Death, Coping with the Pain', 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 please call **0161 928 7880** or visit **www.lifestyletherapy.net**

Liverpool Chamber. **news**

Innovative businesses large and small celebrate awards success

Liverpool Chamber hosts annual Innovation in Business Awards



Some of Liverpool's most exciting start-ups and its most established institutions came together as winners at this year's Innovation in Business Awards, organised by Liverpool Chamber.

Among those to receive awards were Brewery Bus Tours (New Business of the Year), Liverpool Empire Theatre (Experience Provider), Green Bell Packaging (Innovative Product or Service) and Ticket Quarter (Customer Excellence Award).

Creative merchandise business Wild Thang (Sustainable Business / International Business of the Year) and M&E building contractor Kimpton

(Talent Development / Chair's Award) each picked up two awards at the sold-out event, which welcomed 500 guests at St George's Hall.

Two awards were presented for Business of the Year; River Capital won the award for companies with fewer than 30 employees, while Liverpool School of Tropical Medicine won the award for larger businesses.

Yoga Nation (Innovation in Health & Wellbeing), Employability Solutions (Social Impact Award), Big Help Project (Community Impact Award) and Liverpool John Moores University (Skills Provider of the Year) were all victorious.

Meanwhile, there were individual awards for Noura Qusairy (Young Person of the Year) and Alison Pountney (Leadership Innovation Award), both from the University of Liverpool.

Paul Cherpeau, chief executive of Liverpool Chamber, said:

"Innovation is at the heart of all commercial success and, as this year's awards demonstrate, it can be found in businesses of all shapes and sizes."

"We introduced new categories for 2023, such as Innovative Product or Service and Leadership Innovation, to accurately reflect the changing face of business innovation."

"There were high-calibre entries and worthy winners across every category and the evening was an excellent reminder of the spirit of resilience, creativity and foresight that embodies our city region's business community."

"I would also like to offer huge thanks to our sponsors for their

support, without which this celebration of innovation would simply not be possible."

The Innovation in Business Awards 2023 were headline sponsored by Blok 'N' Mesh. Its CEO Simon Worsley said:

"There are numerous innovative organisations, large and small, doing great things here in the Liverpool City Region across a diverse range of sectors. It was a great pleasure for us to support and attend the awards again this year and share in the dynamism and achievements of our fellow local businesses."

The evening began with a VIP drinks event in the Concert Hall, sponsored by The Sovini Group, before a larger reception sponsored by ComCab Liverpool. Other sponsors of the Innovation in Business Awards include Lexus Liverpool and MSP Global along with event partners Puzzleduck, DWNTWN Big Creative Events and The Guide Liverpool. A separate winners' event will be hosted by Everton Stadium in early 2024.

Find out more - phone: **0151 227 1234**

Lizzie Johnson – Head of Commercial Services
lizzie.johnson@liverpoolchamber.org.uk

James Parker – Business Engagement Officer
james.parker@liverpoolchamber.org.uk

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out & about...

Liverpool Chamber.



Paul Mirage
Sarah Mullins



Lizzie Johnson



liverpoolchamber.org.uk
Liverpool Chamber at
#WellConnected Networking

Property Catalyst Club



Nick Thorpe, Brian Addlestone, Graham Shiers



L-R Nick Thorpe, Graham Shiers

Experienced property investor, developer, mentor and coach Nick Thorpe has joined forces with Business Catalyst Club founder Graham Shiers to launch the Property Catalyst Club, aimed at commercial and residential investors, landlords, developers and deal makers together with professional service providers. The October launch event saw over 80 top property professionals from as far afield as Leicester, Birmingham, Manchester and London attend the Leeds Lunch to network and share property and business opportunities.

For more information regarding
The Property Catalyst Club email
info@propertycatalystclub.co.uk
or visit
propertycatalystclub.co.uk



BUSINESS CATALYST CLUB



Kelly Williamson



Nick Thorpe



L-R Kelly Williamson,
Gary Jacques,
Graham Shiers



Ryan Mulhern



Steve Munro

For more information on the regular
Leeds or Manchester events, or to
arrange a guest invitation, please
contact Graham Shiers at
graham@BusinessCatalystClub.co.uk or visit
BusinessCatalystClub.co.uk



L-R Paul Mirage, Michelle Masters, Jon Cheetham

For more information email
info@carlisleambassadors.co.uk
or visit carlisleambassadors.co.uk



L-R Paul Mirage, Shaun Hinds

Find out more contact **Simon Edmondson**
on **07766 493428**,
email: Simon.Edmondson@business-network.co.uk
visit: business-network-south-manchester.co.uk

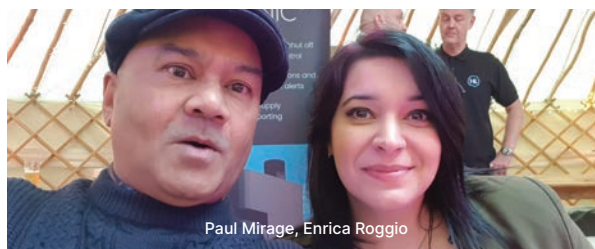


Well done to Di Elebert-Morgan from GMCC winning "Agent of Change" at the She Inspires Awards.

sheinspiresawards.com



L-R Ian Perton, Paul Mirage, Gavin Morton-Holmes



Paul Mirage, Enrica Roggio



Well done to Janice McMahon on winning the FM North Business Networker of the month (sponsored by Business Connect Magazine).

Join the FM North LinkedIn group
[linkedin.com/groups/8348707/](https://www.linkedin.com/groups/8348707/)
or contact ian@fmnorth.co.uk or
danny.cross@tenantco.com



mpostcode.co.uk

places to meet

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Marriott Manchester Victoria and Albert Hotel

148 bedrooms and suites,
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Marriott Hotel Liverpool City Centre

Brew Bar (food and drinks),
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capacities)

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liverpoolmarriott.co.uk

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Crompton (seats 10) and Hargreaves
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both come with Free WiFi,
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0161 667 8100
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**1 Lowry Plaza, The Quays,
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Business Connect Magazine available at your
venue and you'd like to feature in our Places to
Meet section please contact Paul Mirage at
paul@businessconnectpublishing.co.uk

If you'd like to host our magazine at your site
and feature on this page please contact Paul.

diary dates

Don't
forget your
business
cards!

BITA (British and Irish Trading Alliance)

BITA London Monthly Social Networking
13 Dec 6.00pm - 8.00pm, every 2nd Weds
Venue The Rising Sun, 61 Carter Lane,
Fleet Street, London EC4V 5DY
Cost FREE

BITA Liverpool Monthly Social Networking
14 Dec 5.00pm - 7.00pm, every 2nd Thurs
Venue Gaucho, 7 Water Street,
Liverpool L2 0RD
Cost FREE

BITA Leeds Monthly Social Networking
13 Dec 6.00pm - 8.00pm, every 2nd Weds
Venue Banyan Bar & Kitchen, Toronto Sq,
2 City Square, Leeds LS1 2ES
Cost FREE

BITA Manchester Monthly Social Networking
18 Jan 5.00pm - 7.00pm, every 3rd Thurs
Venue Clayton Hotel Manchester
City Centre, 55 Portland Street,
Manchester M1 3HP
Cost FREE

BNI Vision Stockport

Weekly every Weds 9.15am
Venue Bramhall Park Golf Club,
20 Manor Road, Bramhall
Stockport SK7 3LY
Cost Please enquire
Contact Stephen Gomes 0161 956 2656

BUSINESS FAIRS 2024

Annual business fairs across Northern venues.
Free to visit, all sectors welcome to exhibit
Business Connect Magazine are media partners at all events.

Liverpool Business Fair

21 Mar 10.30am - 3.00pm
Venue Anfield, Liverpool L4 0TH

Greater Manchester Business Fair

4 July 10.30am - 3.00pm
Venue AJ Bell Stadium, 1 Stadium Way, Eccles,
Manchester M30 7EY

Wirral & Chester Business Fair

26 Sept 10.30am - 3.00pm
Venue New Brighton Floral Pavillion,
Marine Promenade, New Brighton,
Wallasey CH45 2JS

Halton & Warrington Business Fair

9 Nov 10.30am - 3.00pm
Venue DCBL Stadium Halton, Lower House
Lane, Widnes WA8 7DZ
Cost FREE to visit (pre-registration required)

Contact for all events:
Tony Haines tony@liverpoolba.com
0151 709 8932

Business Catalyst Club

Manchester and Leeds Networking Lunches
Invitation only. Contact host for details
Costs, Timings, Venues and booking details - contact organisers below:

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

Carlisle Ambassadors

Regular showcase and networking events

Venue Carlisle Racecourse, Durdar Road,
Carlisle CA2 4TS
Cost FREE (pre-reg on Eventbrite required).
Contact Michelle Masters 07810 224 735
carlisleambassadors.co.uk

DTX Digital Transformation Expo

2 Day Expos in Manchester and London

22 May 9.30am - 5.30pm
23 May 9.30am - 4.30pm
Venue Manchester Central, Windmill Street
Manchester M2 3GX

2 Oct 9.30am - 5.30pm
3 Oct 9.30am - 4.30pm
Venue ExCeL London, Royal Victoria Dock,
1 Western Gateway, London E16 1XL
Cost FREE (pre-registration required).

Contact dtxevents.io/europe/en/page/dtx-europe

FM North

Networking event for professionals in the FM, Cleaning and Construction Sector

4th Weds of each month

24 Jan 4.00pm - 9.00pm
Venue The Lawn Club, Hardman Square,
Spinningfields, Manchester M3 3HG
Cost FREE

Contact danny.cross@tennantco.com
Tickets through allevents.in

Forwarder Events

Networking event for freight industry

8 Feb 12noon - late
Venue TBC - Leeds
Cost £75 - £125
Contact Paul Stoneman 07724 839620
forwarder.events/tickets

GC Business Growth Hub

Events and Networking - BGH Match

25 Jan Manchester
22 Feb Tameside
29 Feb Oldham
25 Mar Trafford

Venues and times TBC
Cost all events and networking FREE
Contact nick.shepherd@growthco.uk
businessgrowthhub.com/match

Greater Manchester Chamber of Commerce

Events, support, updates, revues, networking

Q4 Economic Review

14 Dec 8.30am - 10.30am
Venue Greater Manchester Business School
Great Moor Street, Bolton BL1 1SW
Cost £15 (FREE for members)

Business Women's Networking Lunch

18 Jan 12.30pm - 2.45pm
Venue Faculty of Business & Law,
MMU Business School, All Saints,
Manchester M15 6BH
Cost £60 (£30 for members)

Property and Construction Networking Lunch

2 Feb 12noon - 2.30pm
Venue Members Lounge,
Emirates Old Trafford, Talbot Road,
Old Trafford, Manchester M16 0PX
Cost £63 (£33 for members)

Wigan, Bolton, Bury Construction Club

8 Feb 8.30am - 10.30am
Venue Village Hotel Bury,
Waterfold Business Park,
Rochdale Road, Bury BL9 7BQ
Cost £40 (£20 for members)

Salford & Trafford Construction Club

13 Mar 8.30am - 10.30am
Venue The Lowry Theatre, Pier 8,
Salford Quays M50 3AZ
Cost £40 (£20 for members)

Contact Diane Elebert-Morgan 07740 196476
Diane.ElebertMorgan@gmchamber.co.uk

High Peak Business Club

Regular monthly breakfast networking

All meetings - Fridays 7.30am - 10.00am
Venue Chapel en le Frith Golf Club,
Manchester Road, Chapel en le Frith,
High Peak SK23 9UH
Cost £25

26 Jan **Fine Dining!** Tom Gouldbourn - Property
Entrepreneur - Restaurant renovations

23 Feb **Hotels!** Richard Short -
VC, Accor Hotel Group

22 Mar **Cranes!** Will Street from Street Cranes

Share Club meets monthly on Thursdays: **14 Dec**
Contact edwinacurrie@sky.com
highpeakbusinessclub.co.uk

K-Club

Networking for Entrepreneurs

Venue Manchester based
Contact Amanda Manson 07754 069 829
k-club.co.uk

MBH Business Networking

Business networking

Venue Manchester based
Cost FREE
Contact kyle@mpostcode.co.uk
manchesterevents.mpostcode.co.uk

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nicola.mccormick@pro-manchester.co.uk
pro-manchester.co.uk

SHOUT BUSINESS EXPOS

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Business Connect Magazine are media partners and supporters.

Lancashire Business Expo

22 Mar 9.00am - 3.00pm
Venue Preston Guild Hall, Lancaster Road,
Preston PR1 1HT

Liverpool City Region Business Expo

14 Jun 9.00am - 3.00pm
Venue Exhibition Centre Liverpool, King's Dock,
Port of Liverpool, Liverpool L3 4FP

Cumbria Business Expo

20 Sep 9.00am - 3.00pm
Venue Carlisle Racecourse, Durdar Road,
Carlisle CA2 4TS

North West Business Expo

18 Oct 9.00am - 3.00pm
Venue Bolton Stadium Hotel,
De Havilland Way, Bolton BL6 6SF

Cost FREE to visit (pre-registration required)
Contact shoutexpo.com

Shout Network

Fortnightly networking. Breakfast or lunch included. Venues across Lancashire, Greater Manchester and Liverpool.

Blackburn Friday at 8.00am
Blackburn Rovers Football Club BB2 4JF

Blackpool Friday at 12.00noon
Hampton by Hilton, Blackpool FY4 1NG

Bolton Tuesday at 9.30am

Dunscar Golf Club BL7 9QY

Bolton Wednesday at 8.00am

Bolton Stadium Hotel BL6 6SF

Burnley Thursday at 9.30am

Burnley Football Club BB10 4BX

Bury Tuesday 9.30am

Red Hall Hotel BL9 5NA

Chorley Thursday at 9.30am

Hartwood Hall PR6 7AX

Clitheroe Tuesday at 9.30am

Holmes Mill BB7 1EB

Leyland Thursday at 9.30am

Leyland Golf Club PR25 5UD

Liverpool Friday at 12.00noon

Delta Hotels by Marriott L1 1RH

Manchester Wednesday at 12.00noon

Worsley Park Marriott Hotel M28 2QT

Manchester Friday at 12.00noon

BizSpace M40 8WN

Preston Tuesday at 9.30am

Shout Connect HQ PR2 2YF

Preston Wednesday at 9.00am

Shout Connect HQ PR2 2YF

Preston Friday at 12.00noon

Shout Connect HQ PR2 2YF

South Ribble Tuesday at 9.30am

Civic Centre Leyland PR25 1NS

Southport Wednesday at 12.00noon

Waterfront Southport Hotel PR9 0DZ

Wigan Wednesday at 12.00noon

DW Stadium WN5 0UH

Wrea Green Friday at 8.00am

The Villa Wrea Green PR4 2PE

Fortnightly networking is on a sector lock-out basis. Please contact Shout Network for further information. Costs also vary.

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

Small Business Sunday #SBS

Competition every Sunday for Small Businesses to raise their profiles on X and Instagram 5.00pm - 7.30pm

Info www.theopaphitissbs.com/about/

The Business Network Manchester

Business networking lunch - inc seminars.

14 Dec 11.50am - 2.00pm
(Optional seminar 10.00am start)
Venue Lowry Hotel, 50 Dearmans Place,
Salford M3 5LH

31 Jan 11.50am - 2.00pm
(Optional seminar 10.00am start)
Venue Midland Hotel, 16 Peter Street,
Manchester M60 2DS

29 Feb 11.50am - 2.00pm
(Optional seminar 10.00am start)
Venue Hyatt Regency, 55 Booth Street West,
Manchester M15 6PQ

Cost for all events £49.95

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

The Business Network South Humberside

Business networking lunch - inc seminars (please inquire start time).

10 Jan 11.50am - 2.00pm
Venue Abbys Bistro, 12-16 Abbeygate,
Grimsby DN31 1JY

7 Feb 11.50am - 2.00pm
Venue San Pietro, 11 High Street East,
Scunthorpe, North Lincolnshire
DN15 6UH

Cost for all events £38.00

Contact Amy Heward 07908 258 354
amy@business-network.co.uk

business-network-south-humberside.co.uk

The Business Network South Manchester + Chester

Business networking lunch - inc seminars (all optional 10.30am start).

South Manchester

11 Jan 11.30am - 2.00pm
Venue The Tytherington Club,
90 Dorchester Way, Tytherington,
Macclesfield SK10 2JP

Chester
13 Dec 11.30am - 2.00pm
Venue DoubleTree by Hilton, Warrington Road,
Hoole, Chester CH2 3PD

10 Jan 11.30am - 2.00pm
Venue The Queen at Chester Hotel,
52 City Road, Chester CH1 3AH

7 Feb 12noon - 2.00pm
Venue DoubleTree by Hilton, Warrington Road,
Hoole, Chester CH2 3PD

Cost for all events £55.00

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

The Original Manchester Curry Club

Monthly Informal Networking for SMEs

20 Dec 1.00pm - 3.00pm

24 Jan 1.00pm - 3.00pm

Venue Rajdoot Tandoori, Carlton House,
Albert Square, Manchester M2 5PE

Cost £20 for 3 courses

Contact Kerry Bland 07966 275454

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Contact **Paul Mirage** to be in the next issue

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In this edition...

PUBLIC SAFETY & SECURITY, featuring **MARTYN'S LAW**
MAKE SURE YOUR CITY IS SAFE!

Don't miss out on our February/March Edition - we are featuring
WOMEN IN BUSINESS

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