



Business Clinic students with clients Hexham Organics

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Northumbria wins share of £2 million Government fund

Government funding worth more than £44,000 has been awarded to Northumbria University's Newcastle Business School to develop a digitally-enabled service offering free student-led consultancy to SMEs.

The funding is part of a new £2 million *Business Basics Fund* launched by the Department for Business, Energy and Industrial Strategy (BEIS) under the Government's Industrial Strategy to boost productivity and back business. Newcastle Business School is among just 15 successful bids across the UK to

win funding on the projects designed to help small businesses make better use of technology and modern management practices. It will now develop a Digitally Enabled Business Clinic (DEBC) model – based on the success of its own [Business Clinic](#) where final year students work on a range projects with real clients.

The concept of the DEBC is that it can be scaled up and offered to SME's as a free consultancy service by other universities across the UK.

Newcastle Business School established its Business Clinic in 2013. Since then the total value of the students' free consultancy advice and reports has been estimated by more than 200 clients to benefit, to exceed £1.2m.

Nigel Coates, Director of the Business Clinic, said: "Winning this funding is a significant achievement that reflects the positive impact our business clinic has - both for our clients and in the learning experience it offers to our students. Thanks to quality and commitment of colleagues and our students we were able to make a compelling case to the BEIS.

"We will now create, test and evaluate a DEBC model that can be implemented quickly and cost effectively by other universities. We know how successful our own Business Clinic has been in helping small businesses and organisations in areas such as marketing, product development and strategic planning. The advantages of a digitally-enabled model with open access digital tools means that this support will be easily available to more SMEs."

The Business Basics Fund forms part of the Government's plan to boost national productivity through its modern Industrial Strategy and is delivered in partnership with Innovate UK and global innovation foundation NESTA.

Small Business Minister Kelly Tolhurst said: "Small businesses are the backbone of our economy and as part of our modern Industrial Strategy, we are supporting them with new investments in areas that will boost their productivity and ensure they can continue to thrive in the future.

"Today's investment will support innovative projects that test how Government and private sector companies can help small businesses adopt a range of technologies and management practices that boost productivity."

Northumbria is a research-rich, business-focused, professional university with a global reputation for academic excellence. To find out more about our courses go to www.northumbria.ac.uk

If you have a media enquiry please contact our Media and Communications team at media.communications@northumbria.ac.uk or call 0191 227 4604.

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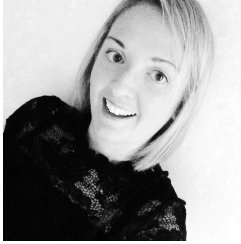


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