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# **Businesses hit by Covid-19 to access support through Northumbria University**

**Small businesses hit by Covid-19 in the North of England can access support through a multi-million pound government-funded partnership with**

## **Northumbria University, Newcastle.**

Newcastle Business School, at Northumbria University, is working with the Small Business Charter to deliver a specialised government funded programme for leaders of small businesses across the North East and North West region to survive and thrive in the coming months and post coronavirus.

This new scheme comes as part of a £20 million package the government are providing to help small businesses in the long term.

To aid business resilience and future growth in the current climate, the [Small Business Leadership Programme \(SBLP\)](#) will create peer groups to develop stronger leadership, innovation, operational efficiency, marketing and finance.

Newcastle Business School was accredited by the Small Business Charter (SBC) in 2015, a national accreditation awarded by small businesses to business schools who excel in supporting SMEs and the local economy.

Coronavirus has put untold pressure on directors and CEOs of small companies trying to navigate uncharted waters. According to a recent McKinsey online survey of UK SMEs, 80 percent of small businesses reported their revenues were declining in June in 2020.

The Government has made up to £30 billion available to support economic recovery ahead of the Autumn and businesses can continue to draw upon a range of financial support during this challenging time, including loans, tax deferrals and cash grants. The SBLP will help businesses to bounce back from the impact of coronavirus and prepare for any future disruption.

The practical syllabus provides business leaders with access to small business and management experts from Newcastle Business School. The Small Business Leadership

Programme is free and fully funded by the Government to enhance small business resilience and recovery from the impact of COVID-19 and develop potential for future growth and productivity.

The short and focused programme will be delivered online through a structured course of eight 90-minute webinars over the course of 10 weeks and will provide the knowledge needed for businesses to tackle crisis situations. It will also give businesses the opportunity to strengthen their business network. Participants will develop strategic leadership skills and the confidence to make informed decisions to boost business performance.

Professor Andrew Wathey CBE, Vice-Chancellor and Chief Executive of Northumbria University, said: “Universities have a key role to play in supporting the country’s economic recovery both during and after Covid-19. Northumbria University is well placed to support the resilience, recovery

and growth of SMEs as part of the Small Business Leadership Programme.

“We are committed to supporting SME leaders to enhance and develop their businesses throughout this challenging period, and to finding innovative ways of applying our expertise to deliver demonstrable benefits and impact for business across the North East”.

Dr Hannah Hesselgreaves, who is co-leading the programme alongside Dr Matthew Sutherland at Newcastle Business School, said: “At Northumbria, we have a strong track record in leadership development, business coaching, and expertise in supporting SMEs to increase productivity. Our approach is collaborative, engaging, and focused on a business’ needs.

“We would like to hear from owners, managers, and leaders within SMEs in the North East and North West of England, who want to harness a free opportunity to hone their leadership and management skills and improve their resilience, productivity, and sustainability.”

Northumbria University, Durham University, Newcastle University, Sunderland University and Teesside University are all members of the [North East COVID-19 Economic Response Group](#), which was established by the North East Local Enterprise Partnership (LEP) at the beginning of the coronavirus pandemic to provide business resilience and ensure a collective response to the economic impact of COVID-19 on the North East economy.

Helen Golightly, Chief Executive of the North East LEP, said: “Universities play a very active role within our SME community and the support, expertise and knowledge sharing they provide will be vital as our economy begins to recover from the coronavirus pandemic.

“Businesses need access to additional support right now as many are having to adapt or diversify so they can continue trading. Northumbria University’s role on the Small Business Leadership Programme is another example of how our universities are strengthening the region’s economic recovery and ensuring North East businesses have the skills they need to not only survive this current crisis but achieve growth in the future too.”

Anne Kiem, OBE, CEO of Chartered Association of Business Schools and Executive Director of the Small Business Charter: “As we continue to grapple with the Coronavirus crisis it is also essential, we look long term to ensure small businesses are supported to build resilience, survival and growth. Business schools can provide the expertise and knowledge all business owners and directors need to continue to thrive in uncertain times.”

Small Business Minister Paul Scully said: “The strength of small businesses up and down the country will be vital as we begin to bounce back from coronavirus and re-build our economy. The Small Business Leadership Programme will help to equip small business leaders with the leadership

and problem-solving skills they need to grow their firms in the wake of this pandemic.”

The programme will begin in September 2020. Newcastle Business School will be running 11 start dates in the North East and North West and registrations must be received before December 2020.

For more details and to register with Newcastle Business School, email [s.e.a.stephenson@northumbria.ac.uk](mailto:s.e.a.stephenson@northumbria.ac.uk)

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