



**SMALL
BUSINESS
LEADERSHIP
PROGRAMME**

**Helping businesses
to survive and
thrive beyond
COVID.**



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**SMALL
BUSINESS
CHARTER**



Northumbria
University
NEWCASTLE

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Programme supports region's small businesses on road to recovery

A leadership programme, created specifically to help SMEs build resilience and manage the impact of Covid-19, is set to help more than 130 businesses across the North East and Cumbria to recover.

With a small number of places remaining for next year, the first cohort completed the [Small Business Leadership Programme](#) (SBLP) earlier this month. More than 90% of participants said that the Programme had helped them to develop strategic leadership skills, respond to the impact of Covid-19 and plan for future growth.

Supported by the Department for Business, Energy & Industrial Strategy, the SBLP is a free, 10-week training programme for senior leaders in SMEs. It covers a range of practical topics and is delivered online by small business experts – including entrepreneurs, business leaders and academics – from Newcastle Business School at Northumbria University.

The first group to complete the programme included businesses from a diverse mix of sectors – from manufacturing, engineering and bio science to design, events, IT and dentistry.

Speaking about his experience on the Programme, David Lovenbury, Commercial Director at Newcastle-based brand and creative agency JUMP, said: “I’d urge anyone running or helping to run an SME to get involved. Regretfully I didn’t study beyond my first degree and this has felt a little like a stealth or micro MBA; it has been really challenging, and also a lot of fun.”

Donna Wilson, Commercial Manager at TaperedPlus, a Stockton-based manufacturing business specialising in flat roof design and building services, also completed the Programme this year; Donna said: “It’s given me the right tools and a structured plan to help us recover from Covid-19. We’ll be continuing to take forward these new models and ways of working as they’re undoubtedly making our business stronger.”

With eight, 90-minute webinars, alongside independent and peer-to-peer learning, the programme is designed to support and fit in with business delivery. 100% of participants from the first cohort agreed that the Programme was comfortably manageable alongside their day-to-day workload. Over 90% also said that they had strengthened their business network as a result of taking part.

Dr Hannah Hesselgreaves, who is co-leading the programme alongside Dr Matthew Sutherland at Newcastle Business School, said: “With the roll out of the Covid-19 vaccine underway and the glimmer of a more positive year ahead, we’re continuing to offer professional development, networking and support for SME leaders looking to refocus and rebuild.

“We’re delighted to have more than 130 businesses signed up already and whilst there is still time to register, there are just a small number of free spaces remaining for dates in the New Year. If you run or lead a small business and would benefit from new knowledge, skills, support and

networks, I'd encourage you to sign up straight away and join us."

Justin Turner, Entrepreneur and Director of digital accountancy business Orange Umbrella, is part of the Small Business Leadership Programme delivery team; Justin added: "I can't speak highly enough about what the Programme can do for a business, whether they are struggling or successful – it is full of tools to help. It's sometimes hard as a business owner to open up about your worries and concerns. Business coaches are an expensive resource that many, especially during a financial downturn, just can't afford. This programme offers invaluable support by bringing together the knowledge from universities and experience from business owners who are specialists in their field."

To find out more about the Programme, visit the [Northumbria University website](#) - or to secure a free place within the remaining January cohorts, visit the Small Business Charter website: <https://smallbusinesscharter.org/sblp-registration/>.

The Small Business Leadership Programme is being delivered across the country by a consortium of business schools accredited by the Small Business Charter (SBC). Newcastle Business School at Northumbria University was accredited in 2015; the national accreditation recognises business schools that excel in supporting SMEs and the local economy.

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