



PLYMOUTH
CITY COUNCIL

BUSINESS SUPPORT

GUIDE FOR

EXISTING BUSINESSES



FOREWORD

Welcome to the Business Support Guide for businesses currently operating or looking to relocate to Britain's Ocean City.

There is a large and yet frequently changing amount of business support available making it a full time job for businesses to keep up.

To make the process of finding appropriate support easier for businesses in the City, Plymouth City Council Economic Development Service produce and maintain two booklets focussed on helping start-ups and existing businesses to find support locally available:

[Click here](#) to see Business Support Guide for Start Ups

We aim to update this guide at six monthly intervals to ensure the contents stay relevant and up to date.

The information in this guide is subject to change and was accurate when published in May 2023.

If you notice any business support that has been left out, please contact us:

E invest@plymouth.gov.uk
www.investinplymouth.co.uk

SUPPORT PROVIDER	SERVICE	CONTACT	COST
Business Advice			
ACAS (Advisory, Conciliation and Arbitration Service)	Provides free and impartial information and advice to employers and employees on all aspects of workplace relations and employment law.	0300 1231100 www.acas.org.uk	Free.
Better Business for All	Up to date advice on business regulation to help you achieve accepted standards at minimum cost. They have access to a wide range of technical advice and where appropriate will direct you to other support available.	www.bbfa.biz	There may be cost implications from the service provider.
British Business Bank, in partnership with The Open University	The government backed Start Up Loans scheme has partnered with The Open University to give its customers, and other small business owners the opportunity to take free Open University business learning courses	https://www.startuploans.co.uk/learn-with-start-up-loans/	Free courses

SUPPORT PROVIDER	SERVICE	CONTACT	COST
Business and IP Centre Devon	Support to Business Owners, Entrepreneurs and Inventors. As a Business and IP Centre they follow a programme and ethos developed by the Business and IP Centre at the British Library, London. They offer events, database resources and more. If you want specific guidance on an aspect of your business, or want to chat through your idea to understand your next step, you can book a 1-to-1 session with one of our Business Experts	Bipc.librariesunlimited.org.uk	Free
Business Relationship Programme (BRP) Plymouth City Council	Business Relationship Programme – Free, impartial support to help businesses identify available property, relocation advice, recruitment, links to regional funding and skills schemes, network introductions, economic research and gateway to relevant Council services	invest@plymouth.gov.uk	Free
Business Support Helpline (England)	The Government’s Business Support Helpline (England) offers advice and guidance to new and existing businesses. It has information on national and local schemes, grants and loans to help businesses start and grow.	0300 456 3565 enquiries@businesssupporthelpline.org www.gov.uk/business-support-helpline	Advice is free. Call charges may apply.

SUPPORT PROVIDER	SERVICE	CONTACT	COST
Chartered Trading Standards Institute	Free impartial legal guidance for businesses that sell goods and/or services to consumers. Trading standards and consumer protection legislation	www.businesscompanion.info	Free, impartial legal guidance for businesses.
City Centre Company Business Improvement District		01752 398498 www.citycentrebid.co.uk stevehughes@citycentrebid.co.uk	Levy
Connecting Devon and Somerset	Advice and support for businesses to understand the benefits and adapt to faster broadband availability across Plymouth.	broadband@devon.gov.uk www.connectingdevonandsomerset.co.uk	Advice is free.

SUPPORT PROVIDER	SERVICE	CONTACT	COST
<p>Co-operatives UK</p> <p>The Hive</p>	<p>The UK's network for Co-operatives. With a mission to 'promote, develop and unite' co-operatives, they are the main treasure trove of information and support. The Hive helps to start a co-op. Provides a support service that links specialist co-operative development advisors across the UK.</p>	<p>https://www.uk.coop/the-hive/</p>	<p>Membership is free, but members are encouraged to make a donation.</p>
<p>Co-operative College</p>	<p>An Education Charity that 'empowers and inspires individuals and communities to build a fairer world'. Its services include workshops and e-learning courses.</p>	<p>0161 8193000 membership@co-op.ac.uk https://www.co-op.ac.uk/# https://www.co-op.ac.uk/co-op-essentials</p>	<p>College membership fees apply. Co-op Essentials Package of courses - £45.</p>
<p>Economic Development Plymouth City Council</p>	<p>Officers within Economic Development team who understand Co-operatives and want to see this great business model used more in Plymouth. Not specialist Co-operative Development Advisors but can introduce to people who are. Guidance through the process to setting up a co-operative and help to access any Council support that is available.</p>	<p>01752 398048 coop@plymouth.gov.uk</p>	<p>Free advice and guidance</p>
<p>Cyber Essentials</p>	<p>Help to guard against the most common cyber threats and demonstrate your commitment to cyber security.</p>	<p>0808 2812459 info@digitalxraid.com www.cyberessentials.ncsc.gov.uk</p>	<p>Free online resource.</p>

SUPPORT PROVIDER	SERVICE	CONTACT	COST
Devon and Cornwall Training Providers Network	A not-for-profit organisation that covers both Devon and Cornwall, providing Training, Skills, Apprenticeships info and support, Workforce Development and Apprenticeship Levy.	01752 294187 enquiries@trainingprovider.com www.trainingprovider.com	Membership fee applies.
Diversity Business Incubator	Business support for the Black, Asian Minority Ethnicity (BAME) living in Devon to help them thrive in business and integrate effectively into their wider community.	07376 790747 info@dbi.org.uk www.dbi.org.uk	Initial free consultation followed by two free days of business support to BAME businesses followed by chargeable support.
General Data Protection Regulation (GDPR)	Advice for people to have more control over their personal data and be better protected in the digital age.	www.gov.uk/government/news/government-to-strengthen-uk-data-protection-law www.heartofswgrowthhub.co.uk/start-grow-business/gdpr-for-businesses/	Free online resource.
Great Business	Support, advice and inspiration for growing your business.	0300 456 3565 www.greatbusiness.gov.uk	Great Business is a free online resource.
Growth Hub Heart of the South West LEP	The Growth Hub service is the first point of contact for both new and established businesses seeking business support.	03456 047 047 info@heartofswgrowthhub.co.uk www.heartofswgrowthhub.co.uk	Free service.
Health and Safety Executive (HSE)	Online health and safety toolbox, providing relevant information to SMEs that applies to their industry.	www.hse.gov.uk	A vast amount of information is available for free through the HSE website.

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HMRC	Support and advice to help businesses understand their tax affairs. Aimed at new, start-up and expanding businesses, and contains videos, interactive tools, factsheets and online presentations, as well as signposting to other services.	www.hmrc.gov.uk	Information on the website is provided free. The website also allows businesses to download relevant documents and forms for free.
ICO – Information Commissioner’s Office	Find out about your obligations and how to comply, including protecting personal information and providing access to official information.	0303 123 1113 www.ico.org.uk	There is a data protection fee and there are three tiers of fee but for most organisations it will be £40 or £60.
Institute of Chartered Accountants England and Wales Business Advice Service	Business advice session with a chartered accountant including subjects such as business growth, securing loans, capital and finance, export planning, meeting tax and regulatory requirements.	www.icaew.com	ICAEW offers one hour free business support.
Intellectual Property Office	The Intellectual Property Office provides advice and guidance to educate businesses about their IP rights and responsibilities including trademarks and designs.	0300 300 2000 www.gov.uk/ipo	Information supplied by the Intellectual Property Office is free but to protect IP will have a cost associated with it.
MentorSME	MentorSME is a gateway for businesses that are looking to contact a mentor in their area.	www.mentorsme.co.uk	Free service. Some mentors on the website charge for their services, each is different and some offer free information to SMEs.

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<p>Plymouth City Council</p> <p>Business Relationship Programme</p>	<p>Free impartial support to help businesses identify available property, relocation advice, recruitment, links to regional funding and skills schemes, network introductions, economic research and gateway to relevant council services.</p>	<p>01752 304820</p> <p>invest@plymouth.gov.uk</p> <p>www.visitplymouth.co.uk/invest/how-we-can-help</p>	<p>Free service.</p>
<p>Plymouth City Council</p> <p>Public Protection Service (PPS)</p>	<p>Advice, guidance and training courses to all businesses concerning regulation and best practice. Operates the assured trader scheme 'Buy With Confidence'.</p>	<p>public.protection@plymouth.gov.uk</p> <p>www.plymouth.gov.uk/publicprotectionadviceandsupport</p>	<p>Free thirty minute advice session.</p>
<p>Plymouth Octopus Project (POP+)</p>	<p>Provides infrastructure support for the Voluntary and Community Sector in Plymouth.</p>	<p>01752 395131</p> <p>info@plymouthoctopus.org</p> <p>www.plymouthoctopus.org</p>	<p>Free website resource.</p>
<p>Plymouth Social Enterprise Network</p>	<p>Promotes social enterprises in and around Plymouth. It provides a range of networking and membership services.</p>	<p>hello@plymsocent.org.uk</p> <p>www.plymsocent.org.uk</p>	<p>Membership fees start at £25.</p>
<p>Plymouth Waterfront Partnership</p>	<p>Support to Business Owners, Entrepreneurs and Innovators who need assistance with Waterfront BID area introductions and conversations</p>	<p>07929 828634</p> <p>businessliaisonmanager@waterfrontbid.co.uk</p>	<p>Levy</p>

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Small Business Saturday	Small Business Saturday UK is a grassroots, non-commercial campaign, which highlights small business success and encourages consumers to 'shop local' and support small businesses in their communities.	comms@smallbusinesssaturdayuk.com www.smallbusinesssaturdayuk.com	Free website content.
South West Cyber Security Cluster	A not-for-profit collaboration raising cyber security awareness and best practice in the South West.	01392 247007 www.southwestcsc.org info@southwestcsc.org	Free service.
SWMAS – South West Manufacturing Advisory Service	We help and inspire ambitious SME manufacturers to improve their productivity, develop their capabilities, and enter new markets.	01278 767 010 info@swmas.co.uk www.swmas.co.uk	Funded consultancy and capital grants available for eligible companies.
University of Plymouth Business School	The University of Plymouth Business School's purpose is to inspire and enable students, staff, alumni and communities to achieve their full potential.	01752 585650 fobfacultysupport@plymouth.ac.uk www.plymouth.ac.uk/schools/plymouth-business-school	Free service.
Enterprise Solutions	Enterprise Solutions helps you to navigate your way to the University of Plymouth's internationally renowned research expertise, facilities and business services.	0800 052 5600 enterprisesolutions@plymouth.ac.uk www.essupport.com	Services are free via the website. Fee based for research and other services.
Inspiring Futures	Opportunity for free business consultancy advice from Plymouth Business School talented students. We engage with a range of businesses, social enterprises and charities	inspiringfutures@plymouth.ac.uk www.futurescentre.org	Free service.

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	of all sizes from pre-start-ups to large enterprises.		
YTKO	We give expertise in supporting both new and established businesses from a wide range of sectors.	0800 587 7707 info@ytko.com www.ytko.com	Free.

Exporting

Business West Import and Export Training	Whether you are new to export and looking for direction, an experienced exporter with ambition to break into new markets, or simply considering international trade for the first time, then our collection of support services have exactly what you need to kick start your journey.	01275 370 944 www.businesswest.co.uk/export/training	Some services are free. Training courses from £170.00 & VAT
China Britain Business Council	The China-Britain Business Council helps businesses and organisations work together in China, the UK and third markets around the world.	020 7802 2000 enquiries@cbbc.org www.cbbc.org	Some services are free. Membership fee applies.
Department for Business and Trade	Through the Department for Business and Trade (DBT) you can gain access to an experienced international trade adviser who will act as your guide to help develop your international business strategy.	020 4566 5998 Department for Business and Trade - GOV.UK (www.gov.uk)	Most services provided by DBT are free, but cost may vary for some services.

SUPPORT PROVIDER	SERVICE	CONTACT	COST
<p>Plymouth and Devon Chamber of Commerce</p>	<p>Devon & Plymouth Chamber of Commerce is the largest network of businesses in the South West – small, medium and large organisations who want to be better at business.</p> <p>We help you connect with other businesses, support your company's growth with our expertise and use our knowledge to help you succeed, all while campaigning on your behalf.</p> <p>We provide business support, events & training and unparalleled expertise in everything from access to grant funding to international trade.</p>	<p>01752 220471</p> <p>reception@devonchamber.co.uk</p> <p>www.devonchamber.co.uk</p>	<p>Membership fee applies.</p>
<p>Enterprise Europe Network</p>	<p>Helping ambitious businesses innovate and grow internationally. Expert advice and support for businesses looking to commercialise ideas and succeed in new markets.</p>	<p>0300 1233066</p> <p>contact@enterprise-europe.co.uk</p> <p>www.enterprise-europe.co.uk</p>	<p>Advice and services are generally free.</p>
<p>Open to Export</p>	<p>Free online information service provided by the Institute of Export & International Trade, which is dedicated to helping small UK businesses get ready to export and expand internationally.</p>	<p>admin@opentoexport.com</p> <p>www.opentoexport.com</p>	<p>Free online resource.</p>

SUPPORT PROVIDER	SERVICE	CONTACT	COST
UK-ASEAN Business Council	The UKABC is the leading UK-based organisation promoting trade and investment between the UK and Southeast Asia's dynamic markets.	020 7828 3431 info@ukabc.org.uk www.ukabc.org.uk	Some services are free.

Finance

British Business Bank Finance Guide	The business finance guide is an invaluable tool for directors managing established or growing companies of all sizes.	www.thebusinessfinanceguide.co.uk	Advice is free.
Business, Energy and Investment Strategy (BEIS) Angel CoFund (ACF)	The Angel CoFund (ACF) is a UK based venture capital fund that co-invests alongside syndicates of sector-smart Angel investors, to fund and scale some of the best high-potential early-stage businesses.	info@angelcofund.co.uk www.angelcofund.co.uk	The fund invests right across the UK and is happy to consider investments in almost any sector.
Crowdfunder	Advice, tips and crowdfunding methods for anyone looking to raise funds from the crowd.	support@crowdfunder.co.uk www.crowdfunder.co.uk	Free advice on how to run a crowdfunding project, but there are cost implications to using the service to raise finance.
Devon and Cornwall Training Providers Network	A not-for-profit organisation that covers both Devon and Cornwall, providing funding, workforce development and Apprenticeship Levy.	01752 294187 enquiries@trainingprovider.com www.trainingprovider.com	Membership fee applies.
Fredericks Foundation	Loans to individuals who are unable to access funds from mainstream lenders for business start-up and growth. We cover England and Wales.	01276 472722 mail@fredericksfoundation.org www.fredericksfoundation.org	The loan will need to be paid back to Fredericks Foundation through an agreed format.

SUPPORT PROVIDER	SERVICE	CONTACT	COST
Funding Central	Database of grants and funding available to the voluntary and community sector including social enterprise.	fundingcentralhelp@ncvo.org.uk www.fundingcentral.org.uk	Subscription based service free if an organisation's annual income is below £100,000, if above £100 excl. VAT.
Funding Circle	An online marketplace which can help businesses access finance exclusively focused on small businesses.	0800 048 2467 www.fundingcircle.com	Costs associated with Funding Circle services.
Innovate UK	Drives productivity and economic growth by supporting businesses to develop and realise the potential of new ideas.	0300 321 4357 support@innovateuk.ukri.org www.innovateuk.ukri.org	Service is free.
Patent Box	The Patent Box enables companies to apply a lower rate of Corporation Tax to profits from exploiting patented inventions.	www.gov.uk/guidance/corporation-tax-the-patent-box	You can only benefit from the Patent Box if your company is liable to Corporation Tax and makes a profit from exploiting patented inventions.
Research and Development tax relief (R&D)	R&D is a Corporation Tax (CT) tax relief that may reduce your company's tax bill.	www.gov.uk/guidance/corporation-tax-research-and-development-rd-relief	Companies can only claim for R&D tax relief if an R&D project.
SWIG Finance Limited	Non-profit organisation that provides risk capital to businesses in the South West	01872 223883 info@swigfinance.co.uk www.swigfinance.co.uk	The majority of money is available through a loan scheme.
Thincats	Thincats is a leading alternative finance provider, dedicated to funding growing and ambitious SMEs up to £5m.	01530 444040 admin@thincats.com www.thincats.com	Service is free.

SUPPORT PROVIDER	SERVICE	CONTACT	COST
UK Angel Investor Network	Helping SMEs to find equity finance and business angels. It assists private investors to search for company investment opportunities in businesses with growth potential.	info@angelinvestmentnetwork.co.uk www.angelinvestmentnetwork.co.uk	Costs associated with UKAIN services.

Networks

Devon and Cornwall Training Providers Network	A not-for-profit organisation that covers both Devon and Cornwall, providing a voice for the training provider sector, as well as giving practical support and partnership opportunities for members.	01752 294187 enquiries@trainingprovider.com www.trainingprovider.com	Membership fee applies.
Plymouth and Devon Chamber of Commerce	Plymouth's local chamber providing opportunities to make new connections meet other businesses and stay informed about activities taking place in the local business community.	01752 220471 reception@devonchamber.co.uk www.devonchamber.co.uk	Membership costs vary.
Digital Plymouth	Connecting Plymouth's digital community. An opportunity to network and learn about the amazing things that are being created right here in Plymouth.	www.digitalplymouth.com	Events are free to attend.
Federation of Small Business (FSB)	Wide range of vital business services including advice, financial expertise, support and a powerful voice in government.	0808 2020888 customerservices@fsb.org.uk www.fsb.org.uk	Membership costs.

SUPPORT PROVIDER	SERVICE	CONTACT	COST
Knowledge Transfer Network (KTN)	Knowledge Transfer Network is Innovate UK's network partner and also provides innovation networking for other funders in line with its mission to drive UK growth. KTN can lead businesses to potential partners, horizon expanding events, bespoke support and innovation insights relevant to their needs.	03333 403250 enquiries@ktn-uk.org www.ktn-uk.co.uk	Service is free.
Mylor Ventures Angel Network	Mylor Ventures Angel Network (MYVAN) is a private network of active business angels looking for exciting opportunities.	01326 727088 www.mylorventures.co.uk/angel-network	Membership costs vary.
Plymouth Law Society	Share best practice, discover new career opportunities or simply engage with like-minded individuals that face the same challenges.	www.plymouthlawsociety.co.uk	Membership costs.
Plymouth Manufacturers' Group	An informal network of manufacturing companies from across the Plymouth travel-to-work-area.	www.mypmg.co.uk thepmg@outlook.com	Membership cost.
Empowering Woman in Business	An opportunity for women business owners and decision makers to meet with local, like-minded business focused women, once a month, at a well-structured and facilitated network meeting.	www.empoweringwomenplymouth.com marketing@nash.co.uk	Free to attend.
Six O'Clock Club	The Home Of Brighter Business Networking. Great business networking events in Plymouth & London.	www.sixoclockclub.com	From £25.00 pcm

SUPPORT PROVIDER	SERVICE	CONTACT	COST
South West Business Council (SWBC)	The South West Business Council is the economic partnership for the South West of the UK, representing the interests of businesses across the region, nationally, and globally.	01752 395665 info@swbc.co.uk www.southwestbusinesscouncil.co.uk	Membership costs.
South West Women in Construction	SWWIC provides women in the south west from any discipline, trade or organisation involved in construction with the opportunity to meet, network and share knowledge and experience.	info@swwic.co.uk www.swwic.co.uk	£30 per year
The Cream Tea Club	The Cream Tea Club provides an opportunity to network in a relaxed atmosphere with other local businesses over a cream tea in a collection of South West venues.	www.creamteaclub.co.uk	Tickets are £15.00 + VAT with a donation from the proceeds going to the Club's chosen charity of the year.

Skills

Apprenticeships	UK National apprenticeship programmes.	www.gov.uk/apply-apprenticeships nationalhelpdesk@findapprenticeship.service.gov.uk	Free website information. There will be a cost implication to employing apprentices.
City College Plymouth	We work closely with local businesses, to ensure that the training and education we provide benefits both students and employers.	01752 305026 employers@cityplym.ac.uk www.cityplym.ac.uk/help-advice/employers	Free website information.
Devon and Cornwall Training Providers Network	A not-for-profit organisation that covers both Devon and Cornwall, providing Training, Skills, Funding, Skills Analysis, Workforce Development.	01752 294187 enquiries@trainingprovider.com www.trainingprovider.com	Membership fee applies.

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SUPPORT PROVIDER	SERVICE	CONTACT	COST
Gradsouthwest	The graduate job board for south west England. They advertise graduate jobs, graduate schemes, paid graduate internships and degree apprenticeships.	01392 241302 admin@gradsouthwest.com www.gradsouthwest.com	Cost is from £80 exc VAT.
Skills Support for the Workforce	Free bespoke training for businesses, to raise attainment levels and to reduce skills shortages that restrict business growth.	theskillsnetwork.com	Free to small medium enterprises.
The Federation for Industry Sector Skills and Standards	Represents, promotes and supports the 21 Sector Skills Councils (SSCs) across the UK, working with over 550,000 employers to define skills needs and skills standards in their industry. Provides certification and assessor services for Apprenticeships.	0300 303 4444 info@fisss.org www.fisss.org	Free.

Tech Support

Centre for Modelling & Simulation (CFMS)	Independent, non-for-profit organisation, committed to accelerating the delivery of more intuitive and powerful simulation-based design processes.	0117 906 1100 info@cfms.org.uk www.cfms.org.uk	There will be a cost implication of using CFMS.
i-DAT	i-DAT is an Open Research Lab for playful experimentation with creative technology.	01752 586262 contact@i-dat.org www.i-dat.org/	There may be costs associated for the required facilities.

SUPPORT PROVIDER	SERVICE	CONTACT	COST
National Composites Centre	Independent, open-access national centre that delivers world-class innovation in the design and rapid manufacture of composites and facilitates their widespread industrial exploitation.	0117 370 7600 info@nccuk.com www.nccuk.com	Tiered memberships option available or pay-per-use for private venture work.
Regen	Regen is an independent, mission led organisation that is working to transform the energy system. We support government, local authorities and business to work towards a democratic, decentralised and decarbonised energy system.	01392 494399 tcrook@regen.co.uk www.regen.co.uk	There may be a cost implication depending on what services are used.
University of Exeter Centre for Alternative Materials and Remanufacturing Technologies	Providing industry focused research support for the more sustainable manufacture of polymers and composites.	01392 725831 p.mccutchion@exeter.ac.uk www.emps.exeter.ac.uk/engineering/research/calmare/	A range of cost structures available including support with gaining collaborative grant funding.
University of Exeter The Centre for Additive Layer Manufacturing	Conducting collaborative materials research for Additive Manufacturing with polymers.	01392 725831 calm@exeter.ac.uk www.emps.exeter.ac.uk/engineering/research/calm/	A range of cost structures available including support with gaining collaborative grant funding.
University of Plymouth Enterprise Solutions	Enterprise Solutions can provide access to University of Plymouth's facilities, expertise and services.	0800 052 5600 enterprisesolutions@plymouth.ac.uk www.essupport.com/	There may be a cost implication depending on what services are used.

SUPPORT PROVIDER	SERVICE	CONTACT	COST
<p>University of Plymouth</p> <p>Plymouth Electron Microscopy Centre</p>	<p>Offers expert, specialist support to companies in imaging and analytical microscopy, acting as an 'outsourced lab' for many businesses in Plymouth and the surrounding areas.</p>	<p>01752 586125</p> <p>emc@plymouth.ac.uk</p> <p>www.plymouth.ac.uk/emc</p>	<p>There may be costs associated for the required facilities, but funding is available. Please enquire for prices.</p>

Business Support – A guide for businesses in the city
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