

BUSINESS LINK YORKSHIRE

SERVICE UPDATE FOR PARTNERS

This paper provides an update on Business Link and UKTI services available in Yorkshire and the Humber.

BUSINESS LINK SERVICES

Current situation

- The regional Business Link services finish on the 25th November 2011.
- Information and advice is available until then on 08456 048048
- The final programme of events for pre-starts and for established businesses has been produced. PDF versions or Flash Flip Guides of the programmes can be viewed and downloaded through our website www.businesslinkyorkshire.co.uk

Future situation

1. From 25 November 2011, individuals and businesses will be able to receive business information and guidance on starting, improving and growing their business online at www.businesslink.gov.uk

- This will be the first place to go to access essential information, support and services for businesses
- Businesses can access all the necessary government services such as paying VAT, PAYE or registering a business with Companies House
- By registering online, businesses can receive regular updates and information tailored to the specific needs of their business and industry
- Businesses can search for public sector procurement opportunities using businesslink.gov.uk/contractsfinder
- There's also information and guidance available on regulations
- From November 2011, the national Business Link website will be updated to provide easy-to-use, tailored information to help businesses start up, improve or grow. New features will include:
 - A new 'growth and improvement' service giving access to the information needed to make business work better; including tools to help diagnose and solve business problems, a business support finder, tutorials and video case studies, information on events in the local area and links to business discussions and other services.
 - For those looking to start a business a whole new area of the Business Link website called 'My New Business' will provide tailored information and training to guide people through the process.

2. From 25 November 2011, a Business Link helpline will be available to support people who can't find what they need on the Business Link website on 0845 600 9 006

- Businesses and individuals who are unable to access the internet or have difficulty in doing so can also ring the helpline although it will not offer access to the kind of personalised support previously available via the Business Link regional services.

3. Business people looking for an experienced business mentor can access mentoring organisations through www.mentorsme.co.uk

- Mentorsme.co.uk will put people in touch with mentoring organisations across the UK who can help to find an appropriate mentor
 - Plus there's advice on what to look for in a mentor
 - Those who would like to be a mentor and share their experience with a less experienced business person, can use this mentoring portal to find an organisation which can help.
4. A new service, Business Coaching for Growth will be established across England at some time between January and June next year
- The Business Coaching for Growth programme will provide high quality business coaching support for small and medium sized firms with high growth potential, to enable them to develop and implement growth plans.
 - It will also fast-track them into finance, knowledge and other networks and to other services such as UKTI.

Developments to date

BIS has

- Launched a free Contracts Finder service on Businesslink.gov.uk which businesses can use to search for government procurement opportunities, including lower-value contracts worth £10,000 and above.
- Launched the mentoring portal: www.mentorsme.co.uk which provides a single point of access for those seeking mentoring and those seeking to be mentors, covering the whole of the UK
- Migrated the content of the RDAs' and regional Business Link websites onto the national Business Link website to ensure businesses can still access the information they need

UKTI SERVICES

The UKTI International Trade Team will continue to deliver UKTI services across the region through to the end of March 2012 and will work with key partners to continue to support both new and existing exporters.

The UKTI team can be contacted through Business Link until the 25th November, after which the regional UKTI delivery team can be contacted directly on 0300 365 1000.

Yorkshire and Humber companies will continue to have access to international trade support through UKTI core services and the tailored events programme. A copy of the events guide can be accessed through the following link:

www.businesslinkyorkshire.info/eventsguide/UKTI/UKTIYorkshireEventsGuide.pdf

Those who are considering export are able to review the steps they need to take by attending the Are You Ready to Export? workshop; where perceptions of international trade are challenged and both the benefits and potential pitfalls are assessed. Companies have the opportunity to review their business and its ability to take advantage of export markets – outlining the resources and commitment required.

New or inexperienced exporters can access a programme of intensive support, through the Passport to Export programme, which is designed to help new exporters plan and implement an international trade strategy. The programme takes up to 12 months to complete, during which time companies will work with one of UKTI Yorkshire's International Trade Advisers to help them gain the skills to grow through international trade.

Companies who already have experience of international trade can work on developing their strategy through the Gateway to Global Growth programme, which provides more experienced exporters with the ongoing support needed to increase sales overseas. It is completely tailored to each company's needs and will be completed within 12 months.

In addition, companies will continue to be able to access a direct link to local experts overseas, located in our British Embassies, High Commissions and Consulates across the world. The Overseas Market Introduction Service provides fast access to tailored services to meet company's needs.

UKTI services will continue in the region from April 2012, following a procurement process.

September 2011