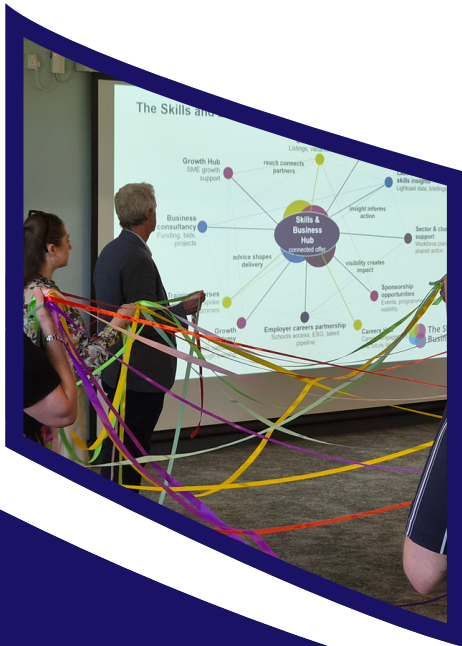
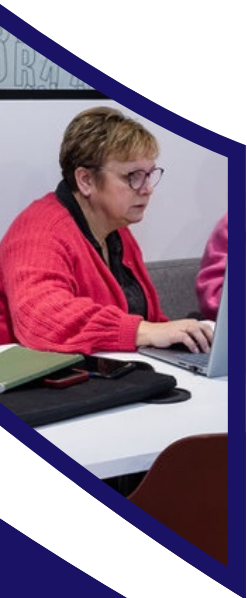




ANNUAL REPORT AND IMPACT STATEMENT



Driving Economic Growth from
Classroom to Boardroom

August 2026

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2025–26 has been a year of consolidation and strengthened direction for The Skills and Business Hub. As Chair, my focus is on ensuring that our governance, partnerships, and long term strategy remain robust, and this year has demonstrated the value of that foundation.

The organisation has now fully completed its transition from the Berkshire Local Enterprise Partnership and established a clear identity and purpose. The Board has overseen continued improvements in governance, financial stewardship, and organisational capability—ensuring our programmes are delivered with transparency, accountability, and impact. On behalf of the Board, I would like to thank our Chief Executive, the senior leadership team, and all staff for their dedication and professionalism.



The Board is proud of what has been accomplished this year and confident in the organisation's direction for the future. We have deepened our collaboration with Berkshire's local authorities, employers, and educators. My thanks to our partners, funders, and delivery organisations, whose support enables us to achieve meaningful impact and contribute to wider regional priorities. Being a collaborative partner remains one of our greatest strengths, and the Board is committed to maintaining and enhancing that role.

Looking ahead, our priority is sustainable growth as we diversify our offer, strengthen sector and cluster work, and continue to expand our reach beyond Berkshire. The organisation is well positioned for the future, with a strong leadership team and a clear strategic direction.

Together, we are building a resilient organisation that delivers long term value for Berkshire.

Bob Beveridge, Chair, The Skills and Business Hub



2025–26 has been a defining year for The Skills and Business Hub, establishing ourselves as Berkshire's dedicated organisation for skills, business support, and economic insight. This evolution has strengthened our purpose: to drive economic growth from classroom to boardroom, supporting individuals, employers, and communities across the region.

Our delivery this year has been both stable and high performing, delivering in Berkshire the Growth Hub and Careers Hub and managing the Skills Bootcamps Programme. Our Growth Academy has expanded delivery beyond Berkshire and continues to receive exceptional feedback, demonstrating the value of high quality, employer led training in supporting business resilience and workforce development. We have continued to strengthen our organisational infrastructure, launching a new website, enhancing our digital marketing capability, and improving how people access our programmes and services.



As we look ahead, we will continue to deliver high quality, government funded programmes while expanding our commercial offer, strengthening our sector and cluster work, and deepening our partnerships.

I am immensely proud of what we have achieved this year. I am equally excited about the opportunities ahead.

Thank you to our partners, funders, delivery organisations, employers, and the thousands of individuals and businesses who have engaged with us. Together, we are shaping a stronger future for Berkshire.

Alison Webster, Chief Executive, The Skills and Business Hub

A handwritten signature in black ink that reads "Alison Webster".

ABOUT US

[Read our success stories](#)

The Skills and Business Hub is an independent not-for-profit organisation committed to driving sustainable economic growth. Established in 2011 as the Berkshire Local Enterprise Partnership, today our organisation has evolved while maintaining its core mission which is to unlock potential and create opportunity through people, skills, and collaboration. Any surpluses are reinvested in delivering our mission.

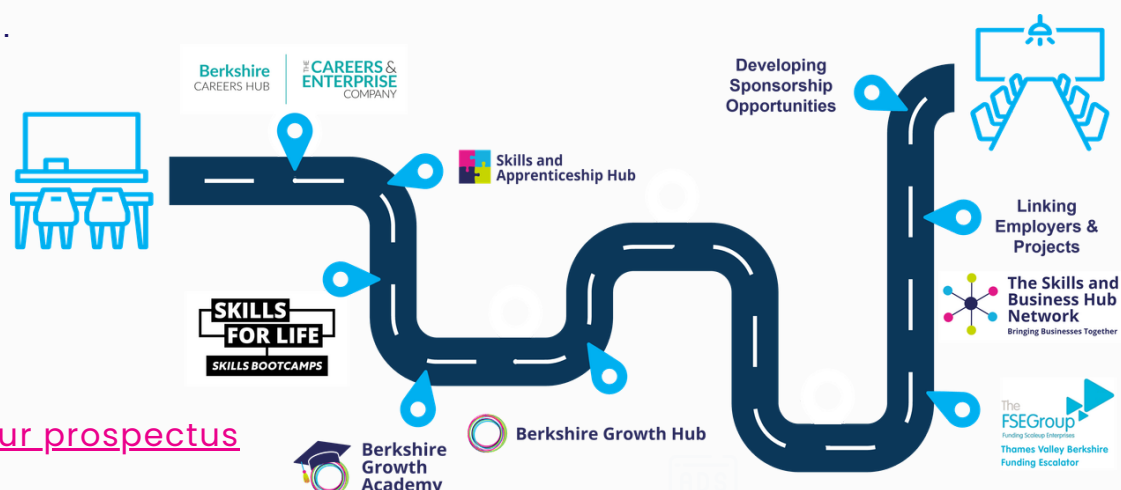
We support individuals, businesses, and communities through a blend of business support, skills development, careers education, and strategic initiatives—bringing together public and private sectors to meet evolving needs. Our work spans the full talent and business pipeline, from classroom to boardroom. Our programmes are designed to be responsive, and impactful—supporting inclusive growth and strengthening long-term economic resilience.

We deliver government-funded programmes including the Berkshire Growth Hub, Berkshire Careers Hub, and Skills Bootcamps, alongside strategic projects such as the Thames Valley Berkshire Funding Escalator. Our Growth Academy is an Ofsted accredited Independent Training Provider delivering tailored, business-specific skills programmes and flexible employer-led training. Through these programmes, we help businesses start, grow, and innovate; support young people to make informed career choices; and enable adults to gain industry-aligned skills that unlock new opportunities.

OUR MISSION

We collaborate with businesses, educators, partners and key stakeholders to deliver flexible and agile solutions that drive impactful local growth for our communities.

As a not-for-profit organisation any surpluses are reinvested back into delivering our mission.



[View our prospectus](#)

BERKSHIRE GROWTH HUB

Business Support Service



Rated: 4.7 out of 5

PROGRAMME SUMMARY

The Berkshire Growth Hub is a government-funded programme providing free business advice and support to businesses in Berkshire at any stage of their journey. We offer any business 1-2-1 support of up to 12 hours to create growth. To inspire entrepreneurship and drive economic growth, we run a comprehensive Start-Up Course designed to give new founders the tools and confidence to succeed. Complementing this, our Business Booster Webinars provide practical insights on specific business topics to help owners strengthen and grow their enterprises



Business Support

1, 274

locally based
businesses engaged
and supported

Delivery



47 people helped
to start a new
business



352 growing
businesses
supported



875 SME businesses
received triage and
diagnostic support

Annual turnover of the 352 businesses
receiving medium intensity support:

£145m



PROGRAMME HIGHLIGHTS



49 high street stores visited
and provided specific support

Businesses assisted
to create new jobs

41

New products and services
launched with Hub Support

28



2,498 hours of
business support
provided by Business
Advisers



16,376 visitors to the website
and **890** views of support
and resources



PLUS...

- 14 Business Booster sessions delivered
- 15 Business expos supported
- Promoted the new National Business Growth Service

FUNDING
PROVIDED

The
FSEGroup
Funding Scaleup Enterprises

To SMEs unable to source other loans:

£2,100,000

Releasing private investment over:

£23,050,000

BERKSHIRE CAREERS HUB

*“Talent is
everywhere,
but
opportunity
is not
”*

PROGRAMME SUMMARY

The Berkshire Careers Hub works with schools, colleges, employers and strategic partners to help young people develop the skills, knowledge and experiences needed for future success. Funded by the Department for Education and supported by The Careers & Enterprise Company, the Hub provides practical support, resources, events and employer engagement opportunities that strengthen careers education and raise awareness of education, training and employment pathways across Berkshire.



Berkshire Careers Hub works with **97%** of eligible schools in Berkshire.

★3.75

High student rating (out of 4) for a recruitment and apprenticeship workshop.

Our ExperienceX pilot programme

19 schools supported with more than 600 student experiences, enabling schools to access employer opportunities.

Delivery



Careers Leader Conference attended by **70** delegates.
Digital Futures Live: 37% students reported that their future thinking had changed.



7 large Berkshire companies supporting delivery as key **Cornerstone Employers.**



75+ employers engaged with Careers Hub initiatives.



PROGRAMME HIGHLIGHTS

3,477

Pupils completed a **Future Skills Questionnaire**



Workplace Encounters

Delivered by **Futures For All** resulted in **76%** of young people feeling more confident that they can achieve their future career ambitions.

Careers Guidance effectiveness:

Berkshire

3.9

Nationally

3.5

Match funding provided by The Skills and Business Hub

£117,000



PLUS...18,400 viewers watched our [Myth-Busting Digital Career Paths](#) broadcast aimed at inspiring and informing students about the variety of digital roles available in local businesses, highlighting career pathways and required skills.

Our Careers Hub **digital bulletin board, Padlet**, has had 559 views, 203 unique visitors and an engagement time of 14 hours since May 2026.

[View our Padlet](#)

SKILLS BOOTCAMPS

PROGRAMME SUMMARY

We are the managing authority for Skills Bootcamps in Berkshire, responsible for the delivery through a network of independent training providers and colleges. Skills Bootcamps are flexible, employer-led training programmes funded by the Department for Work & Pensions. Designed to tackle skills shortages and support economic growth, they help individuals upskill for in-demand roles and enable employers to build the talent they need. Whether you're returning to work, changing careers, or growing your team, Skills Bootcamps offer a practical route to new opportunities and are making a real impact— supporting individuals, businesses, and communities alike.

 **Over
£6.6 million**

of government funding
secured and invested in
training people of Berkshire



8
Industry
Sectors

Delivery



13
Training
Providers



33
Skills Bootcamps
subjects

Employers engaged with
design, delivery or outcomes.

61

Co-funding provided
by employers: **£244,452.34**



PROGRAMME HIGHLIGHTS

1,278

Learners

130,671

guided learning hours funded

1,083

acquired new skills

747

Skills Bootcamp graduates found
employment, progressed in
existing careers, or acquired new
work/contracts



PLUS...

- To support house building in Berkshire, we have increased delivery of construction-related Skills Bootcamps - a key delivery component of the Berkshire Local Skills Improvement Plan.

**[View our wave 5
impact report](#)**



OUR GROWTH ACADEMY

PROGRAMME SUMMARY

The Growth Academy is an Ofsted-rated, Independent Training Provider delivering tailored, business-specific skills programmes and flexible employer-led training designed to help people upskill, reskill and unlock new career opportunities in high demand sectors. We are proud of our popular Skills Bootcamps in Sales, AI for Business, Retail Ready and Entrepreneurship, designed to assist the self-employed and employees to realise growth in their businesses.



10
cohorts



4
subjects



4
counties



PROGRAMME HIGHLIGHTS

180 Learners

Completion rate

95%

Drop out rate

5.1%

170 completed training and
acquired new skills

153 demonstrated an
impact on career

- Extended delivery beyond Berkshire
- Growing network of highly experienced trainers
- Growing alumni community of over 200 past learners



Expert training

“Organisations that provide meaningful training are 17% more productive and 21% more profitable, underlining the value of practical, workplace-focused learning.”

Source: Gallup (2024/25)

From September 2026 we will be expanding our offer to include real-time, expert-led training designed for immediate impact. We have handpicked the best trainers, sourcing industry experts far and wide to deliver live, interactive sessions that actively build key business capabilities and support practical application.

From leadership and communication to digital confidence and commercial awareness, our courses, delivered in collaboration with our trusted training partners, will equip individuals and organisations with the skills they need to succeed in today's evolving workplace.

[View training](#)



The Skills and Business Hub

”

The **Berkshire Growth Hub** website was clear and easy to use. I received a phone call responding to my enquiry within 24 hours.

It was incredibly useful to go over the major steps and timelines of an acquisition and to understand the process in more depth. Lesley was very clear and concise and gave me hope that the process would be a manageable one. I was pleased that we are able to organise future sessions as and when we need further support, and am very encouraged that this is a free service offered to Berkshire businesses.

What people say about us

”

I've completed the **Berkshire Growth Hub's** Launch into Business session and am currently attending the AI for Business course. I also had 1:2:1 sessions with both Andre and Tony (finance). My experience so far has been excellent, and I can already see the value of the guidance I'm receiving, especially through the 1:2:1 sessions.

”

As part of the **Berkshire Careers Hub's** wider strategy to develop and showcase best practice, the school was selected to pilot an enhanced Careers in the Curriculum lesson...Overall, it was viewed as a “refreshing, memorable and highly impactful” experience that successfully connected classroom learning to real world applications.

”

My experience as an **Enterprise Adviser** with **The Berkshire Careers Hub** has shown me that even small contributions—an hour's talk, a workplace visit, a mock interview session—can have a transformative impact on a young person's confidence and direction. If more businesses stepped forward, the collective impact on Berkshire's talent pipeline would be extraordinary.

”

The **Skills Bootcamp** gave structure, momentum and access to training our graduate might otherwise have struggled to secure. Once Nick started his new role as a Trainee Busbar Installation Engineer, the impact of the Skills Bootcamp became even clearer. Six months into his employment, Nick has already become an integral part of team.

”

Shortly after completing the **Skills Bootcamp**, I secured an Early Years apprenticeship at a local nursery and transitioned into full-time employment. Within my first month, I was offered a promotion. The Skills Bootcamp in Early Years was a vital stepping stone in my career journey.

”

The Growth Academy sessions are run really well with plenty of mapping theory to real-life, making it easier to implement straight away. Within the first three sessions, I was able to implement strategies and saw real results. In fact, I have made more sales in a couple of weeks than I have in the past. It's also useful for marketing as I've been able to map concepts to it.

”

Really good course with **The Growth Academy** and clearly delivered, the tutor deals with question's very well and accommodating throughout the course. It really benefits me in my work, hobbies and personal life. Given a massive boost in confidence, been recommending it to people as its invaluable and feeling like i'm getting ahead of the AI curve.



WHAT'S NEXT?

Next year our plans are to:



Strengthen our sector and cluster work to increase our business community's voice in shaping the region.



Grow The Skills and Business Hub products and services, expanding our reach and impact across communities and businesses.



Strengthen our government contract portfolio and continue expanding our reach beyond Berkshire.



Grow our events programme, offering more opportunities for individuals to connect learn and grow.



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UK Government**