



Advice for businesses

The effects of the current recession are likely to be felt for some time to come. Whether your business needs help now, or whether you want to make sure your business is well placed for recovery when it comes, this factsheet provides useful information and directions to other sources of advice.

More information on the topics covered here can be found at www.eastsussex.gov.uk/beatthedownturn



Business rates and taxes

Regulations came into force on 31 July 2009 which enable businesses to defer payment of 60% of the increase in their business rates bill until 2010/11 and 2011/12. To defer part of your business rates, your local rating authority must receive your application form by 31 March 2010. Contact your borough or district council.

Small Business Rate Relief

Small businesses are generally entitled to Small Business Rate Relief if the rateable value of their premises is less than £15,000. Additional properties with rateable values below £2,200 are disregarded. To find out more, contact your borough or district council. They can also tell you about other forms of available Business Rate Relief, such as Empty Property Relief and Rural Rate Relief.

Rateable value and appeals

The amount of Business Rate you pay is based on the property's rateable value, a calculation of its market rental value made every five years. You can check your property's rateable value on the Valuation Office website at www.voa.gov.uk/business_rates, or by calling them on **0845 602 1507**.

If you are having problems paying your Business Rates, get in touch with your borough or district council. For payment difficulties with other tax bills, call the Business Payment Support Service on **0845 302 1435**.

Debt problems?

For free, confidential and independent help to deal with business debt problems, call Business Debtline on **0800 197 6026** or go to www.bdl.org.uk

Financial support

Many different organisations offer grants and support – the trick is to find the right one for your needs. Here are some suggestions:

- Business Link provides a lot of useful information, including a Grants and Loans Factsheet, a Grants and Support Directory and Guide to doing business in tough times. The website also offers an Interactive Funding Database – go to www.businesslink.gov.uk or call the helpline on **0845 600 9 006** for more details. The organisation also works with various partners to provide schemes such as the Small Firms Loan Guarantee, Prince's Trust Business Programme, Royal British Legion Small Business Advisory Service & Loans Scheme, The Prime Initiative, Capital Business Support and The Accelerator Fund. Some of these are geared towards specific types of business so it is best to talk to a Business Link advisor to decide which option suits your needs.
- Finance South East manages a range of funds for high potential growth businesses – visit www.financesoutheast.com or call **01276 608510**.

- European Union support for the rural economy is available from the Wealden and Rother Rural Partnership – www.warrpartnership.org.uk, telephone **01424 787400** – and the Sussex Downs and Low Weald LEADER Programme – telephone **01243 756755**.
- The Enterprise Finance Guarantee provides a 75% guarantee for business loans up to £1 million. To find out which lenders it is available from, call Business Link on **0845 600 9 006**.
- The Capital for Enterprise Fund, run by the Department for Business Innovation and Skills, can provide an equity stake of up to £2 million for viable businesses with growth potential.

Other organisations providing useful advice and support are:

- Ten Sixty Six Enterprise, the enterprise agency for Hastings and Rother – www.1066enterprise.co.uk, telephone **01424 205500**.
- Eastbourne and District Enterprise Agency Limited (EDEAL) – www.edeal.org.uk, telephone **01323 489800**.
- Sussex Enterprise aims to provide practical business support, information, training and advice, and has over 2,500 members – www.sussexenterprise.co.uk, telephone **0845 67 888 67**.
- The South East England Development Agency (SEEDA) – www.seeda.co.uk, telephone **01483 484200**.
- East Sussex Federation of Small Businesses – www.fsb.org.uk, telephone **01323 482018**.
- Train to Gain can help small businesses increase the skills of their workforce – www.traintogain.gov.uk, telephone **0845 600 9 006**.
- Locate East Sussex helps businesses find suitable premises – www.locateeastsussex.org, telephone **01424 205512**.
- The Insolvency Service – www.insolvency.gov.uk, telephone **0845 602 9848**.
- The Equality and Human Rights Commission's Here for Business guide helps businesses tackle equality and discrimination issues during the recession – www.equalityhumanrights.com, telephone **0845 6046610**.

Local authorities – how we can help

If you need to gain planning permission, pre-application discussions with your borough or district council can save time and money and help you make the most of your property assets. Council officers can also advise your business on health and safety at work, licensing and food safety, and how best to meet a range of statutory regulations. Advice is available through all the services who deal with regulations as part of their day-to-day role.

Some councils also provide specialist help for local businesses – for example, networking opportunities such as 'business breakfasts', support for accommodation and tourism businesses and commercial property services to help with lettings, acquisitions and disposals.

Check out what business support your local council can offer:

Eastbourne Borough Council – www.eastbourne.gov.uk/business, telephone **01323 410000**

Hastings Borough Council – www.hastings.gov.uk, telephone **01424 451066**

Lewes District Council – www.lewes.gov.uk, telephone **01273 471600**

Rother District Council – www.rother.gov.uk, telephone **01424 787000**

Wealden District Council – www.wealden.gov.uk, telephone **01323 443322** or **01892 653311**

East Sussex County Council – www.eastsussex.gov.uk, telephone **0345 60 80 190**

Doing business with local authorities?

The South East Business Portal has information about existing and forthcoming contracts with some 74 local councils – go to www.businessportal.southeastip.gov.uk to find out more.

And don't forget you

The recession is affecting every business in the UK, but try not to let it affect your personal life too. The NHS operates a Credit Crunch Stressline, with advisers offering practical advice and directions to other sources of financial and personal support – call **0300 123 2000** between from 8am and 10pm.

Getting more copies of this leaflet

You can get all our leaflets in large print, easy read format, in Braille, on audio tape or CD, or in other languages.

They are also available in PDF form, which you can download from our website at eastsussex.gov.uk

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