

## 2024 – The year of the SME

2024 seems to be a good year to be a small business. The UK Government is doubling down on its commitment to the nation's 5.5 million small businesses by announcing the launch of a new Small Business Council.

Small businesses are the backbone of the UK economy, comprising 99.9% of all businesses and supporting a staggering 27 million jobs across the country, with an annual turnover of £4.5 trillion. Recognising their pivotal role in the UK economy, the government has declared 2024 as the year of the SME.

The Small Business Council is tasked with working alongside the Prime Minister's Business Council to tackle key issues facing small businesses. The Council will provide an opportunity for small business leaders to have direct access to the government.

The Council will include organisations dedicated to helping small businesses, such as Small Business Britain, the Federation of Small Businesses and Family Business UK, as well as representatives from SMEs themselves.

In addition to establishing the Small Business Council, the government has revamped the Help to Grow campaign and website to provide a comprehensive resource hub for small businesses. This 'one-stop shop' aims to simplify access to vital information such as funding

opportunities, webinars, and guidance on setting up and scaling a business.

A 12 week programme, called the Help to Grow: Management Course, is also available and is designed to help with learning leadership and management skills. An additional course, Help to Grow: Management Essentials, will launch in April 2024. This will cater for micro-businesses and those that want a condensed version of the leadership course.



The government have also expressed a commitment to tackling the ongoing problem of late payments and providing financial support through schemes like the start-up loan scheme and business rates relief. Accessing finance and dealing with large businesses who do not pay in a timely way can be significant issues for small businesses, so this support will be most welcome.

For more information visit The Help to Grow website:

[www.helptogrow.campaign.gov.uk](http://www.helptogrow.campaign.gov.uk)

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