



Digital Accelerator Programme (DAP)



Gosport Borough Council have a local priority to support SMEs with digital adoption. As part of their UKSPF priorities GBC would like to deliver an impactful SME support project that focusses on digital/tech adoption. This will help fuel greater productivity, growth and future proofing of the SMEs in receipt of the support.

Our Proposal :

The Solent LEP will work in partnership with Gosport Borough Council to deliver the **Digital Accelerator Programme (DAP)** offering intensive digital support to a minimum of 10 SME's (max of 20) for a period of 12 months. DAP will broaden the knowledge of SME's on digital adoption to help productivity, growth and future proofing of their businesses. We will deliver a hybrid model utilising technology to deliver 121 sessions and also use local facilities in Gosport such as the Imagination Refinery on Gosport High Street to encourage the utilisation of existing resources.

We will facilitate:

- 1) **121 virtual mentoring.** Minimum of 3 hours with a local lead mentor.
 - Session 1: Needs Identification** - Helping the business owner to identify top priorities (with a focus on digital) that align to their business objectives. They will then be assigned a progressive action plan and learning schedule to progress their knowledge. This may consist of specific 121's (eg: Deep dive 121 mentoring session on SEO or E-Commerce), peer to peer meetups or a webinar to learn more about a specific subject.
 - Session 2: Progress Tracking** - A chance to review progress and interventions (examples named above) and accountability check by the lead local mentor. A critical part of the mentoring journey. A consistent and trusted person to help progress the needs identified.
 - Session 3: Impact Assessment** - A final review of progress and capturing the impact the mentoring and learning journey has had on the business owner and business.

- 2) **Online and Face to Face Peer to Peer Meetups** - meetups to encourage and share ideas between participants and help idea generation, peer learning and assign accountability partners to encourage progress and actions. Face to face meetups could be held at the Imagination Refinery on Gosport High Street
- 3) **Online or Face to Face Webinars/Masterclasses** - subject specific digital and tech related webinars/masterclasses in a group learning environment.

Suggested Eligibility:

- SMEs registered in the Gosport Borough Council area looking to develop digital capabilities and make step changes with a focus on digital/tech resources.
- Business owners or leaders classified as Cohort 1 = "incubators/start-ups" , Cohort 2 = "accelerators" and Cohort 3 = "Retail/hospitality" sectors (GBC to provide classification parameters). NOTE: Incubators (start-ups) must have UTR codes (HMRC letter confirming) and a basic business plan with some evidence of trading.
- SME`s in any sector can be supported under this programme (apart from the specified Retail/Hospitality cohort).

Setup:

- 1) Solent LEP will design and develop branding for the Digital Accelerator Programme in agreement with the Gosport Borough Council Marketing team.
- 2) Solent LEP will handle all enquiries in relation to the project and utilise the existing and established Solent Growth Hub and associated programmes as a resource and gateway for referrals.
- 3) An enquiry form will be developed into the GBC and Solent LEP/Growth Hub websites which would be monitored and tracked by Solent LEP.
- 4) Interested parties will be asked to complete an application as agreed by GBC/Solent LEP and each applicant will be booked in for a pre-qualification call with The Solent LEP. Places will be allocated on a first-come-first-served basis or as directed by GBC.

Delivery Model:

- **Stage 1: Month 1- Introductory mentoring 121: Needs Identification** - 1.5 hour session with the participant to discuss digital needs and create initial action plan



- **Stage 2 - Months 1-6: Interventions delivered** as identified from Stage 1 in the form of topic specific 121's, peer to peer workshops & subject specific workshops. (These may include Web Development, Digital Design, SEO, AI, Productivity Tools, Cyber Security, Digital Marketing etc)



- **Stage 3 - Month 6: Progress Tracking** - Mid-journey virtual 121 with lead mentor to check progress and actions complete.



- **Stage 4 - Months 6 - 11: Continuation/pivot of support.** Following Stage 3 review, circumstances may have changed and therefore a "pivot" may be required and a new action plan created. Further support is then offered through topic specific 121's, peer to peer workshops & subject specific workshops.



- **Stage 5 - Month 12: Impact Assessment.** A 121 with the lead mentor to help review progress, sign off the final support and discuss impacts over the service period. Also acts as an opportunity to capture further support that may be needed in the future. Note "service period" depends on business need so could last a couple of months or longer. Clear detailing of how much support is available is critical to make clear from the onset.



- **Stage 6 - Month 12: The Final Showcase Event:** Solent LEP will convene an expert panel of investors/business support experts. This could include GBC executives/Leader. Business Owners will receive valuable feedback and the opportunity to network as they move into the next phase of their business journey.

All participants will have access to unlimited free support from the Solent LEP Growth Hub team throughout the programme, and once the programme is completed.

Evaluation:

Solent LEP will produce an end of programme impact evaluation. We would monitor, track and record all activity and note any progress or challenges the businesses encounter with digital adoption. This would also log any job outcomes, new services or products created and increase in sales or business growth in general. We would also collect trackable business owner insights with evaluation questions that would glean answers such as "I now feel more confident to sell online" or "I now have the skills to develop my digital marketing strategy". Scales out of 10 can be used to track pre and post differentials. Case Studies will also be produced post project for x2 of each cohort specified.

Costings:

The below cost breakdown considers the following:

- A cohort consists of x10 businesses. This is the optimum amount to create an engaged peer group and enable the local meetups to be focussed on learning, networking and an inclusive support ecosystem.

Activity	Budget
Sign up website pages creation	£1,000
Digital Boost white label website to include Gosport/LEP branding	£3,000
Digital Accelerator Programme brand design and social templates	£1,500
"Incubator" Cohort Growth Hub Resourcing - admin, marketing, mentoring, peer group facilitation	£25,000
"Accelerator" Cohort Growth Hub Resourcing	£25,000
"Hospitality/Retail" Cohort Growth Hub Resourcing	£25,000
Impact Measure Reports & Case Studies	£5,000
End of Year Event	£5,000
Business Engagement - Telemarketing	£10,000
	£100,500