

ADVERTORIAL: Innovation is not just for big businesses

Continuous improvement is a key driver when it comes to building a successful business.

Being open to new opportunities, finding inspiration in different places and looking beyond the here and now, are all vital contributors to building a culture of innovation.

The Business Gateway Growth Hub highlights the importance of innovation for all businesses, both big and small.

With so much support available to businesses in the Leicestershire region it can become an overwhelming experience for business owners. Providing fully-funded advice and support for small and medium-sized businesses, looking to grow or make improvements, Business Gateway advisers are helping create a clear path to growth and success.

This is why it comes as no surprise that the Business Gateway Growth Hub is an associate partner at this year's [LeicestershireLive Innovation Awards](#).

For the fourth consecutive year, the [LeicestershireLive Innovation Awards 2022](#) will celebrate the region's notable digital advances, technology, services and creative thinking.

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Rachel York, Business Gateway manager commented: "One meeting or conversation could spark an idea that makes a big difference to the business. It's our job to facilitate this through our advisers, connections with other support providers and events like the Leicestershire Innovation Awards.

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"We're very much looking forward to the awards this year, and if we can help any businesses start or continue their

innovation journey, we're just a telephone call away."

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[UKBITS](#) of Ashby-de-la-Zouch is one of many companies supported by Business Gateway. A forced office move and the pandemic saw revenues fall for the IT support provider. However, with the benefits to the environment caused by the lockdown coming into focus, the business developed an idea. This would not only help with its green credentials but also create another source of income.

UKBITS was started in 2006 by Simon Kilmister and Pete Rowell. Technician Tom Brecknell and sales coordinator, Helen Sutton make up the team of four. The IT company focuses on all

aspects of business IT support, from desktops and laptops through to servers, cloud-based solutions and anything in between.

Helen explained: "It was during a regular catch up with Business Gateway adviser, Aruna Bhagwan we found out about the Leicestershire Recovery Grant and our ideas began to formulate around a recycling project."

[Ashby IT Recycle](#) was created after the team successfully received a £3,000 grant. It works on a repair, resell or recycle principle. When clients upgrade equipment, they often want to get rid of their old items. Ashby IT Recycle take these off their hands and repair them for resale or, after wiping them of any private data, break them down into components for recycling. This service along with IT advice is aimed at individuals as well as businesses, opening them up to a wider audience.



Technician Tom Brecknell destroys computer parts using a vintage Denbigh press

(Image: Sarah Salotti Photography)

Over the last nine months Ashby IT Recycle has helped 200 new local customers and is establishing itself as the “go-to” for securely recycling used IT equipment. The business has recently pledged to plant a tree for every computer recycled.

Helen has also attended several Business Gateway workshops, both face to face and online, following advice from Aruna on which of these would be the most beneficial.

Helen added: “Catching up with Aruna regularly helps me focus. As a small business, we wear lots of different hats. It is easy to get away from my core role of sales, but I want the business to succeed and Aruna reminds me about what needs to be done to help us grow. We all need that from time to time!”

Business Gateway manager, Rachel York commented: “Diversifying with a new service, like UKBITS or tweaking a process to cut costs and increase efficiency all counts as innovation. Any business of any size can make innovations, it often starts with developing the right culture. It’s crucial to adapt when circumstances change – that’s where innovation comes in or can help.”

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BusinessLive

Now in its fifth year, the [Leicestershire Innovation Festival](#), formerly Innovation Week, is being held over a fortnight. It aims to inspire and showcase innovative projects, achievements and experiences of individuals and businesses in the county.



It starts with a launch event at Space Park Leicester on Monday, 14 February continuing until Innovation Friday on 25 February. [The LeicestershireLive Innovation Awards](#) take place on Thursday, 24 February at the King Power Stadium and other

events are being added daily to the calendar.

If you want to find out about support from the Business Gateway call 0116 366 8487, email growthhub@bizgateway.org.uk or visit the website, [here](#).

The Business Gateway Growth Hub is part-funded by the European Regional Development Fund and the government. It is delivered by a partnership that includes Leicester City Council, Leicestershire County Council, East Midlands Chamber (Derbyshire, Nottinghamshire, Leicestershire) and the Leicester and Leicestershire Enterprise Partnership Limited (LLEP).