



Torfaen Business Voice
Llais Busnes Torfaen

Making Your Local Business Connections **AUGUST 2022**

**Next Event:
15th September, 4:30pm**



<http://bit.ly/twitter-TorfaenBiz>



<http://bit.ly/Facebook-TorfaenBiz>



<http://bit.ly/youtube-TorfaenBiz>

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21 years celebration
Evening – June 2022

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What is Springboard
Business Innovation
Centre?

DATES FOR YOUR DIARY

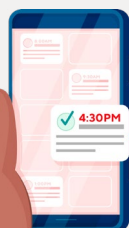
SEPTEMBER

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**BOOK YOUR
PLACES FOR
OUR
SEPTEMBER
MEETING
HERE!**



NOTES FROM OUR CHAIRMAN

It was great to see so many people at our 21st anniversary celebration in June enjoying the networking and entertainment. Having the chance to chat with so many of you at the event I was proud to see the benefit you take away from the club and the opportunities it provides.

In this exciting edition of the newsletter there is helpful information about funding for IT software together with other news and advice that could help your business. At the next meeting we have two excellent speakers bringing you up to speed on diverse topics such as Net Zero and Sustainability – which you'll all recognise is a growing pressure for businesses and individuals alike – and radical upcoming changes to the telephone network which your business will have to plan for and adapt to.

I've no doubt that our next event on 15th September will be as enjoyable and informative as the last one so I look forward to seeing you all there. These events are a great opportunity to promote your business and make new contacts so why not bring a guest to the next one in September.



**Ashley
Harkus**

Chairman,
Torfaen Business
Voice

BE PART OF THE CLUB! *Membership from £48 for the year for all the benefits!*

What do you get from your All Inclusive Membership:

- 2 places at all our face to face and online meetings
- Quarterly digital newsletter with articles, tips and business events and information tailored for local Torfaen businesses.
- Varied networking opportunities
- E-mail bulletins with relevant, vetted information
- Advance notice of other Torfaen County Borough Council business events and opportunities, including business breakfasts, workshops & seminars
- Your company details listed on the business voice membership section See our current members list [here](#).
- Exclusive sponsorship and advertising opportunities for member companies to reach the local business market



Sign up and join today!

TORFAEN BUSINESS VOICE 21 YEARS CELEBRATION EVENING – JUNE 2022



Picasso Griffiths!

A big thank you to Picasso Griffiths for providing great entertainment at the meeting! To see what he got up to during the meeting, please click [here](#)!

TORFAEN'S NEW FOUNDATIONAL ECONOMY OFFICER

Katie Hancock has recently joined Torfaen as the Foundational Economy Officer to support and strengthen local businesses and businesses looking to establish themselves in this area. Based in the Hyb2 within Pontypool Market, Katie can also provide support in the following areas:

- **Training** – this is completely free and can cover any areas needed. Any start-ups, SME businesses or micro businesses can get involved and benefit from this.
- **Mentoring** – providing guidance/support/advice and working together to achieve your business goals.
- **Signposting** – for support/financial support including two grants, subject to eligibility.
- **Professional advice** – Signposting to stakeholders to offer professional advice in any areas that may help with your needs.

You can find Katie on Instagram at [foundationaleconomytorfaen](#) with this page being regularly updated with news/information relating to Foundational Economy in Torfaen. Alternatively, please email at Katie.Hancock@Torfaen.gov.uk.



YOUNG PERSON'S START UP GRANT

Following the pandemic, the Welsh Government is committed to helping young people in Wales under the age of 25, reach their potential with support to gain a place in education, training, help to get into work or become self-employed.

The Young Person's Start Up Grant has been developed as part of our commitment to the [Young Person's Guarantee](#). To make sure we understand the needs of young entrepreneurs, we have held conversations with young people through the Youth Voice and our Youth Agents who told us that accessing finance, business knowledge and confidence remain key constraints to starting a business.

Big Ideas Wales want to help you overcome these challenges and will play a key part in delivering support for young people to become self-employed. This will help you learn about business, work with an adviser to prepare for self-employment and potentially access a financial grant to help you start up. The Young Person's Start Up Grant will be available up to 2025 to enable young people not in education, employment or training to start their own business, create a social enterprise, become self-employed, a freelancer or social entrepreneur in Wales.

A grant of up to £2,000 is available to help young people starting a business. To ensure the business has the best possible chance to succeed, the grant will be available alongside a package of support that will include one-to-one advice, webinars to build confidence in business practices and develop plans for starting a business. The package of support has defined learning phases so that young people can join at the stage best suited to their needs and allows them to progress at their own pace. So whether you need intensive support to get started or longer-term support to help think through and develop your business ideas, an adviser can talk through your needs and advise you on the best path; or a lighter touch that guides you through to launching your business.

ELIGIBILITY CRITERIA

A grant of up to £2,000 is available to help young people under the age of 25, living or returning to Wales to become self-employed. The business case will need to demonstrate that it has the potential to become the main source of income.

EXPRESSIONS OF INTEREST

A link to the Expression of Interest (EOI) form can be found [here](#). Following the EOI and prior to completing an application form, all applicants will be expected to undertake some prestart support with their business support provider. **Full Guidance Notes are available [here](#).**

BARRIERS TO START-UP GRANT FOR 25 YEAR OLDS AND OVER

The Barriers to Start-up Grant for 25-year-olds and over, is a revenue grant to enable economically inactive and unemployed individuals aged 25 and over to start up a business in Wales and will particularly target individuals that are facing barriers to business start-up and the employment market. A grant of up to £2,000 is available to help individuals with the essential costs of starting the business.

Eligibility criteria for this grant are:

- You are economically inactive or unemployed
- Looking to start up a self-employed business in Wales

Applicants will need to complete an **expression of interest** (EOI) form to begin the application process, once completed the document must be returned to Barriers2SUG@BusinessWales.org.

Once approved, you will be offered pre-start 1-to-1 support and confidence building webinars to reduce barriers to starting your business. Business Wales advisors will also assist applicants and provide advice, guidance and support as well as accessing further start-up support. Business Wales will apply discretion for grant awards based on the evidence of need outlined within a business case and application.

The Barriers to Start-up Grant for 25-year-olds and over is open to EOI from 12 July 2022.

For further information visit: [Barriers to Start-up Grant for 25 year olds and over | Business Wales \(gov.wales\)](#)

Deadline for submitted applications is the 24 March 2023. However, if funds are fully utilised before this date the scheme will close.

FINANCE FOR TECH VENTURES

Are you a tech business looking for funding to support your business needs?

We can invest in start-up, early stage or established companies looking to develop and exploit technology.

The Development Bank of Wales and Torfaen County Borough Council – Economy & Enterprise team are delighted to be holding a TECH Business Support Clinic from 10:00 – 14:00 on the following date:

**Wednesday 28th September
at Springboard Business Innovation Centre,
Llantarnam Park, Cwmbran**

As locally based representatives we are dedicated to ensuring that the businesses we work with secure the

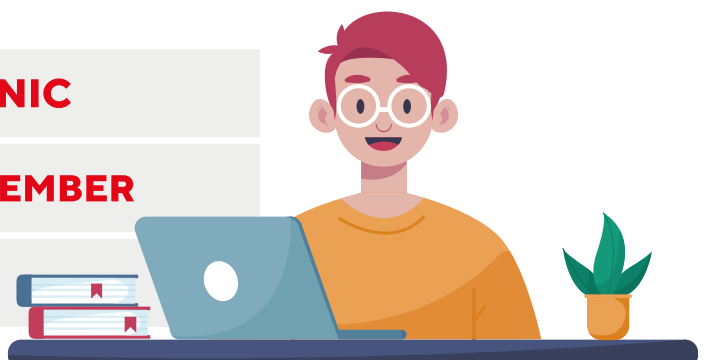
funding and support they need to help with start-up costs or to grow your existing TECH business.

At the session, you can find out more about local support available for your business. Working together we can provide funding to start or expand a tech venture business, supporting you with funding in order to purchase new equipment or even to buy a business.

Whether you're a start-up or existing business, why not come and talk to us about your business and future plans?

To book a 30 minute chat please click the [link](#). Please email: info@southwalesbusiness.co.uk if you have any further questions.

EVENT	BUSINESS SUPPORT CLINIC
DATE	WEDNESDAY 28TH SEPTEMBER
TIMES	10:00 – 14:00



OVER A QUARTER OF UK BUSINESSES ARE BEING HIT BY MORE LATE PAYMENTS DUE TO THE RISING COST OF LIVING

- **Over a quarter (26 per cent) of businesses report that late payments from customers have become more frequent as the cost of living crisis starts to impact SMEs**
- **Nearly two fifths of businesses (39 per cent) have involved solicitors or taken legal action to reclaim late payments**
- **Barclays and the Small Business Commissioner continue their call to champion the small business community in tackling this issue and call on larger businesses who don't pay on time to meet their obligations**

Over a quarter (26 per cent) of UK small or medium-sized enterprises (SMEs) have seen the number of late payments they receive increase since the cost of living has gone up, according to new research from Barclays.

The new findings indicate that rising prices have started to impact payments between businesses, as 16 per cent of SMEs said that they're finding it more difficult to pay suppliers themselves because of the cost of living crisis, rising to a third in the Manufacturing (33 per cent) and the Construction & Real Estate (33 per cent) sectors.

Late payments negatively impact a business's income, which can result in cash flow instability, and are the single biggest cause of business failure. For some businesses, this owed money might prevent new hiring opportunities or investment back into the business, as 10 per cent said that the amount they are owed in late payments could be used to recruit more staff and 12 per cent said they could expand their products or service offering, growing their business.

For some business owners, the stress of waiting on late payments has more than just an impact on their finances as over a quarter (26 per cent) said they have felt anxious or their wellbeing has suffered as a result of late payments and a fifth (21 per cent) of business owners responded that they have had sleepless nights.

However, over half (58 per cent) say they would refuse a job with a potential customer if they were known for paying late.

Small Business Commissioner, Liz Barclay, said: "It is utterly distressing to see that late payments for some are becoming more frequent. However, given the cost of living crisis, increases in material costs and staff wages, it isn't surprising as many firms are delaying payments until they themselves are paid.

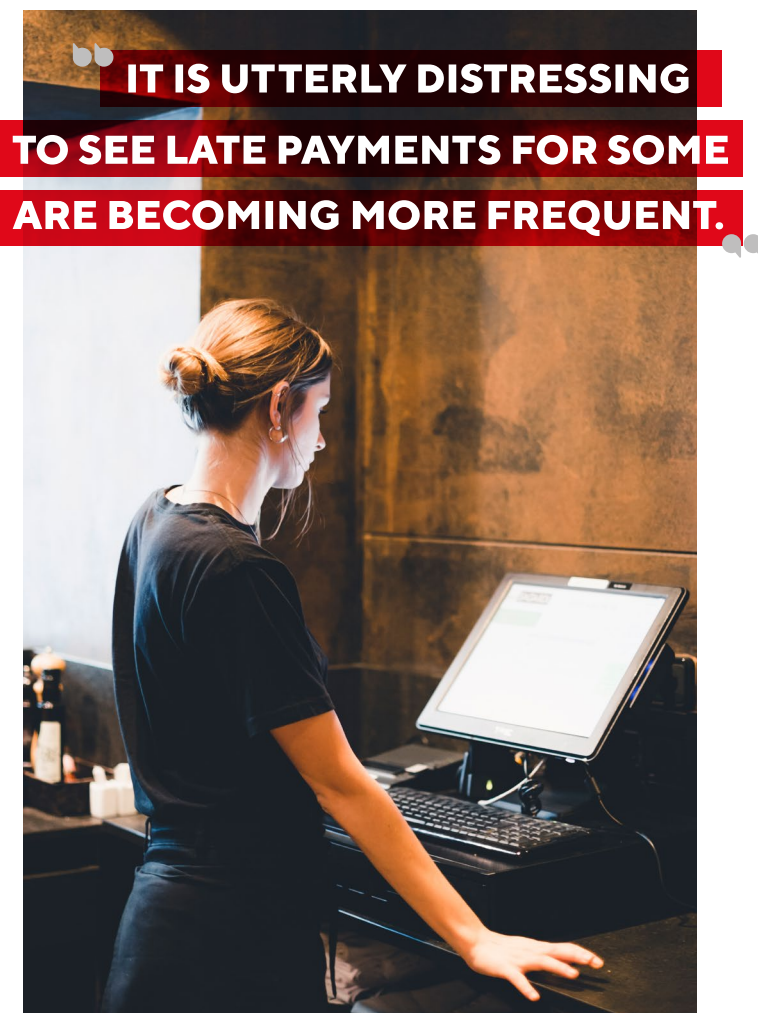
"The biggest companies with the deepest pockets must realise that if they delay payments or offer unfair extended

payment terms the whole of their supply chain suffers. The talented people who keep them supplied with goods and services from which they make their money will go to the wall and struggle with mental health issues.

"It's expensive in time and money to find new suppliers. Now more than ever bigger customers must treat smaller suppliers fairly and #PayDontDelay. Call us for help before taking legal action."

Hannah Bernard, Head of Business Banking at Barclays, said: "The past two years have been some of the most challenging in living memory for businesses. Along with consumers, SMEs now face the bite of the cost of living crisis.

"It's more important than ever for businesses to have confidence in their cash flow, which is why we're working with the Small Business Commissioner to continue our call for higher standards, and urging larger businesses to make good on their commitments and pay their suppliers on time.



"We need to put an end to late payments to unlock the full potential of the nation's hard working businesses. Many could use the money owed in late payments to reinvest and grow, generating a boost for the wider economy."

Making sure customers pay on time can be difficult, as over a third of businesses (39 per cent) said that they had involved solicitors or taken legal action to reclaim late payments. However, this is less common among smaller businesses, with only 31 per cent of businesses with turnover less than £2m responding that they had taken legal action, compared to half (51 per cent) of businesses with turnovers above £2m.

Businesses can claim late payment interest and compensation if a payment deadline is missed. However, whilst three fifths of businesses (60 per cent) surveyed say they're aware that they can take action, only 16 per

cent had done so, with 26 per cent unaware that this was an option. Through the Prompt Payment Code (PPC) businesses are also able to check the payment terms companies have committed to.

Over the last few years, Barclays has announced a number of partnerships in their push to give businesses alternative methods of finance and protection for their enterprises and their cash flow, including **MarketFinance** and **Nimbla**, which provide invoice financing and invoice insurance respectively.

To find out more about Barclays support for businesses click [here](#). To find out more about the Prompt Payment Code, click [here](#).



TRADE WASTE TORFAEN



Welsh Government is looking to further extend the responsibility of both businesses and waste collection authorities with regards to recycling. **The Environment (Wales) Act 2016** already requires businesses and waste collection authorities to separate out paper, plastics, cans and glass for collection and processing.

The purpose of the legislation is to drive up levels of recycling, reduce disposal to landfill and end the incineration of specified recyclable materials.

It is likely that the legislation changes will come into force in 2023. The new legislation will ban all paper, plastic, cans, glass, food, cardboard, textiles and small WEEE (waste electrical and electronic equipment) from the general waste bin, making recycling compulsory for businesses.

This legislation will apply to:

- **Business**
- **Local authorities**
- **Private waste management companies**

We will keep you informed of the changes as they are announced by Welsh Government as we receive them. We understand there will also be a national campaign by Welsh Government to assist businesses to prepare themselves for the changes.

However, it is really important that you start to prepare your business for these changes. You will no longer be able to place the target materials into your general waste bin and your waste collector will not be able to collect any bins containing these materials.

Further information on the proposed changes can be found [here](#). Please feel free to contact the waste team at: **waste@torfaen.gov.uk** with any queries and we will do our best to answer any questions you may have



CUSTOMS DECLARATION SERVICE

New importers must register on the Customs Declaration Service to make declarations for goods they bring into the UK. The Customs Handling Import and Export Freight (CHIEF) service will no longer accept registrations from new importers.

SUBSCRIBE TO THE CUSTOMS DECLARATION SERVICE

How to subscribe or check if you have access to the Customs Declaration Service. Subscribing your Government Gateway user ID to the Customs Declaration Service will allow you to do things such as:

- **Submit import and export declarations using software**
- **Get your postponed import VAT statements or get your import VAT certificates so you can complete your VAT return**
- **Pay Customs Duty and import VAT**

HOW TO SUBSCRIBE

You'll need the Government Gateway user ID and password that you use for:

- **Your business or organisation**
- **Yourself, if you're applying as an individual**

If you do not have a user ID, you can create one when you start. You cannot use an agent Government Gateway user ID. You'll need to tell us:

- Your **Economic Operator Registration and Identification (EORI) number** that starts with GB
- **Unique Taxpayer Reference (UTR)** – **find your UTR** if you do not know it
- **The address for your business that we hold on our customs records**
- **National Insurance number** (if you're an individual or sole trader)
- **The date you started your business**

Your EORI number and Customs Declaration Service accounts will be linked to your Government Gateway. You cannot apply for more than one EORI number using your Government Gateway account. **[Subscribe now.](#)**

WHAT IS SPRINGBOARD BUSINESS INNOVATION CENTRE?

WHAT IS SPRINGBOARD BUSINESS INNOVATION CENTRE?

We are a business incubator where science and technology businesses can flourish and turn their potential for high growth into reality.

WHO DO WE CATER FOR?

We help new and early-stage science and technology businesses overcome obstacles to success and provide an environment where they can prosper. We also act as a base for international companies looking for a foothold in the Welsh, UK and European markets.

WHAT ACCOMMODATION DO WE PROVIDE?

We provide three storey modern office spaces, from 105 sq ft to 1126 sq ft which include high bandwidth connectivity, VOIP, reception service, meeting rooms and breakout areas.

WHAT ELSE IS INCLUDED?

We have an experienced in-house business support team included and can offer strong links with local and national business support agencies who can provide essential advice and support to help resident companies grow and manage their business.

WE CAN MAKE THE CONNECTIONS FOR YOU

Our connections with leading national and international companies and academics give you plenty of networking opportunities. We help you to build strong, mutually beneficial relationships. **Together, we aim to help you turn your potential for high growth into reality. Interested? Why not book an appointment to have a look around? Email: SIcreception@torfaen.gov.uk**



WILTAN MAGNETIC COMPONENTS AWARDED CRUCIAL FUNDING TO GAIN COMPETITIVE EDGE



Wiltan Ltd has successfully secured grant funding from Welsh Government's Productivity Enhancement Programme to purchase two specialist machines that will increase productivity, give them the competitive edge in difficult market conditions whilst reducing their carbon footprint.

The programme was launched in Torfaen in 2020 by the Economy & Enterprise Team at Torfaen Council in partnership with Welsh Government and has seen a significant amount of capital investment awarded to Torfaen's manufacturing sector.

The UK's leading manufacturer and supplier of strip wound cores in electrical steels based in Pontypool has put the grant funding to good use in the purchase of two new automated toroidal core winder machines to replace existing machinery which will, as part of a larger investment programme, help to increase the company's productivity and competitiveness in both national and international markets. Alison Itani, Director of Wiltan Ltd said "Working with the Tech Valleys – Business Productivity Enhancement Project, was very straightforward, we were well supported by officials. We found the whole process was very well managed and easy to navigate.

Timescales were extremely responsive; we started the process in September 2021 and had the new equipment on order the following month and delivered installed and commissioned by the beginning of March this year. We are extremely grateful for this support; it will be transformative for the business."



**WE ARE EXTREMELY GRATEFUL
FOR THIS SUPPORT**

ABOUT THE PRODUCTIVITY ENHANCEMENT PROGRAMME

The programme aims to increase efficiency, develop new products and explore new markets within the business. Participants are assigned a Welsh Government Relationship Manager and Innovation Specialist to help review productivity enhancement and support them through the business-friendly application process. Furthermore, expert manufacturing advice is provided through a funded productivity consultancy that can help with advice surrounding factory layout, automation and digital, technical manufacturing challenges and quality marking requirements.

GET IN TOUCH

If you are a manufacturing business based in Torfaen who would like to explore this programme, please contact Torfaen Economy & Enterprise team:

Email: info@southwalesbusiness.co.uk

Visit the Business Wales website [here](#).

ARE YOU LOOKING FOR A DIGITAL APPRENTICE?



Exciting opportunities have arisen through Aspire Shared Apprenticeship Programme for companies throughout South East Wales.

The Shared Apprenticeship Programme is a strategic partnership between the Ebbw Vale Enterprise Zone, Education, Industry and Blaenau Gwent County Borough Council to increase skills within Manufacturing and Digital Companies. It aims to enhance business growth; whilst tackling unemployment and also to provide aspirational opportunities for young people within South Wales. This Apprenticeship programme is designed for new entrants to a role in IT Solutions Development & Support, Apprentices can work in areas such as: Software Development, Web Development, Software Testing, Software Support and Software Project Management An Apprenticeship is essentially a set of qualifications called a 'framework' developed by what are known as sector skills councils. this framework will be delivered by Coleg Gwent. Read more [here](#).

MORE THAN A MILLION BUSINESSES NOW ELIGIBLE FOR HELP TO GROW AS SOFTWARE SCHEME RECEIVES A BOOST

Help to Grow: Digital Scheme eligibility expanded to businesses which at least one employee, meaning up to 1.2 million businesses could benefit.

- The government's Help to Grow: Digital scheme is nearly tripling in reach, supporting up to 1.2 million UK businesses to adopt the latest digital technology
- Businesses with 1 to 249 employees can now access discounts worth up to £5,000 on approved software
- From today, eCommerce software has been added to the scheme, helping businesses to sell online and reach new markets

A flagship government scheme that slashes the price of leading software, boosting productivity and growth of the UK's small businesses, will benefit even more firms from 25 July 2022.

With Customer Relationship Management software proven to boost firms' productivity by 18% on average, the Help to Grow: Digital scheme offers businesses discounts worth up to £5,000 on approved software.

Previously, only businesses with more than 5 employees were eligible for the scheme. From today, businesses with at least 1 employee are now eligible to benefit. This boosts the number of eligible businesses by 760,000 so that it now reaches up to 1.24 million.

Today it's also announced that eCommerce software is available through the scheme to help businesses ramp up sales of products and services online. This includes helping them to manage their inventory, take payments and gather data and insights on customers' needs. Businesses which adopt eCommerce software see on average a **7.5% increase in employee sales over 3 years**. This means businesses can now access a £5,000 discount on 30 software solutions from 14 leading technology suppliers for eCommerce, Digital Accounting and CRM software.

Additionally, the government has announced that Help to Grow: Digital will support one-to-one advice for SMEs on how best they can adopt digital technology. The government will be launching applications for advice platforms to partner with the scheme from 25 July 2022, and the advice service will go live later this year.

Small businesses who would like to know more about Help to Grow should visit the **Help to Grow: Digital site**.



The poster features a red header with the Welsh Government logo. The main text reads 'Innovation support & funding for your business'. Below this, it asks 'Are you a business involved in semiconductors, electronics, or their supply chains?' and 'If so our package of Innovation support could be for you.' The central part of the poster has the word 'INNOVATION' in large, spaced-out letters. To the right, it lists 'We are offering:' followed by three bullet points: 'up to 8 days fully funded support to plan and implement productivity and design improvements', 'free expert support and advice for you to adopt digital technologies', and 'staged innovation funding taking you from feasibility to marketing'. Below these, it says 'support and funding for collaborative projects and partnerships'. At the bottom, it states 'To find out if your business is eligible contact us through this enquiry form.' The footer includes logos for the Welsh Government, the European Union, and COHESION Interreg Europe, along with the text 'This support is provided by the Welsh Government under the EU funded SMART Innovation programme as pilot for the Interreg COHESION project.' and 'WG45489 / © Crown copyright 2022 OGL'.

NOT A MEMBER? MAKE 2022 THE YEAR TO JOIN!

Membership is affordable with a one off payment. There are no hidden charges and membership gives you two free places per meeting.

Call 01633 648644

Email: info@southwalesbusiness.co.uk

Click [here](#) to visit our website



£48 for companies trading less than 1 year or first time member.

£60 inclusive of VAT for companies with 1 - 10 employees

£80 inclusive of VAT for companies with 10+ employees

Learn. Share. Implement.

Take action to become an age-inclusive employer.



UNLOCK THE BENEFITS OF AGE INCLUSION IN THE WORKPLACE & PARTICIPATE IN THE WALES AGE-INCLUSIVE LEARNING NETWORK

Many organisations are finding it challenging to recruit and retain talented employees. Ensuring your organisation is implementing age-inclusive policies and practices means your business can access a wider talent pool and keep hold of valuable talent.

Studies show that an age diverse workforce drives innovation through different perspectives, can reduce employee turnover, improves overall performance and provides an environment where employees of all ages can thrive.

Business in the Community Cymru can support businesses across Wales to develop more age-inclusive workplaces through the **Age at Work** programme, supported by the National Lottery Community Fund.

Part of the wider Age at Work programme of support, the **Age-Inclusive Learning Network** brings together a small group of individuals from businesses who are interested in age inclusion in the workplace, such as HR, Diversity & Inclusion, Wellbeing. The Network includes four facilitated sessions of about 90 minutes each where participants share good practice, discuss opportunities and challenges and hear from expert speakers. Some topics covered in the sessions include: inclusive recruitment, retaining skilled employees, supporting working carers, menopause, financial wellbeing and more.

Participants complete an Age-Inclusive Business Review before attending all four sessions and create a simple age action plan to share at the last session. The Review takes around 20 minutes to complete and is considered an important first step in unlocking the benefits of age inclusion in the workplace.

The next Age Inclusive Learning Network is planned to start at the end of September 2022.

[Click here to register your interest in the Age-Inclusive Learning Network](#) or for further information on how BITC Cymru can support your business on age inclusion, contact Jill Salter, Age at Work Programme Manager, Business in the Community Cymru, jill.salter@bitc.org.uk 07793 443893.

**STUDIES SHOW THAT AN AGE
DIVERSE WORKFORCE DRIVES
INNOVATION THROUGH
DIFFERENT PERSPECTIVES**