

LONDON

Business Matters

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Celebrating Asian business in the capital

Secrets of the Thames

Navigating trade war tariffs

City of sport

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Letter from the editor

Welcome to the 200th issue of *London Business Matters*. The magazine was first published in January 2004 when Ken Livingstone was coming to the end of his – and London's first term as the capital's mayor and Tony Blair was Prime Minister. In 22 years, *LBM* has strived to bring an eclectic mix of news and features to a business audience who appreciate art and culture as well as trade and commerce. The focus is London of course but its status as a global city means that we are local, national and international in our approach and coverage.

Significant

LBM is eight years shy of the three decades during which the Asian Business Association (ABA) has been championing companies which hail from the Indian sub-continent and which have made such a significant contribution to the London economy. Trace the ABA's progress and development on pages 12-13, culminating in the group's latest reception (p 54). Many such companies originate in India, the subject of a week-long series of events (p 28) in London, coincidentally timed to mark the country's imminent trade agreement with the UK.

Navigating tariffs

Staying with international matters the UK-EU summit (p 33) has been welcomed for putting

trade at the forefront of the partnership while Leipzig (p 32) is making a name for itself as Germany's tech hotspot. Meanwhile 30 exporters joined LCCI's 'beyond the scenes' tour of DP World London Gateway, import and export hub for Europe and beyond (p 30). This issue's Big Read (p 52-3) is on navigating tariffs, with guidance for SMEs on how to manage costs and stay resilient.

In our Diversity and Inclusion section (p 49) we focus on deaf awareness in the office and the rise of female entrepreneurship and provide evidence of London business community's commitment to the cause.

Ambassador

Finally, I am delighted to welcome the first of a series of regular columns (p 10) from LCCI president Michael Mainelli. Professor Mainelli served as Lord Mayor of London 2023-24 and remains an international ambassador for the City. He is chair of Z/Yen, the City of London's leading commercial think-tank, known for its work in economics and finance, and science and technology. His subject on this occasion in *As I see it ...* is international trade, a subject close to the heart of many *LBM* readers.

Peter Bishop

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Business borrowing – and how to make the best of it

London businesses are carrying the highest levels of debt in the UK, according to a report by funding platform Swoop, which analysed the borrowing data of over 50,000 companies across the UK

The findings show that the capital alone is responsible for £4.9 billion of business debt, equivalent to 26 per cent of all SME borrowing in the UK. The next closest cities, Manchester and Birmingham, trail far behind at £370 million and £346 million respectively. Several London boroughs, including Croydon, Harrow and Hounslow, appear in the top 20 debt-heavy areas nationally.

Uncertainty

The *Business Debt Report* explores debt levels across UK regions, industries and business demographics - including the gender of business owners and the age of businesses. It comes at a time of continued economic uncertainty and cautious lending, as businesses navigate inflation, high interest rates, and the ongoing cost-of-living crisis.

Deeper dive

A deeper dive into business debt across the UK reveals



a correlation between a company's age and its borrowing behaviour.

Start-ups – those within their first five years – have already accumulated over £2.5 billion in debt. Yet it's not the youngest companies that carry the largest liabilities. That distinction belongs to firms aged 21 to 25 years, whose collective debt surpasses £1.5 billion, underscoring the financial

weight that mid-maturity businesses often bear.

At the opposite end of the spectrum, companies aged 46 to 50 report the lowest levels of debt.

Magnet

Geography adds another layer of complexity. London, long known as a magnet for innovation and start-up activity, leads the pack in young business debt, with

fledgling firms shouldering £761 million.

This disparity points to a broader trend: while older businesses often manage substantial liabilities, younger firms appear to be accumulating debt at a more aggressive pace – a trend that may have long-term implications for financial resilience across sectors.

www.swoopfunding.com/uk/business-debt-report

Utilising business debt for growth

Andrea Reynolds, chief executive of Swoop Funding, shares her tips for entrepreneurial success

1. Business debt isn't inherently bad. In fact, business loans are vital for growth as you are borrowing to invest in your business; the debt you take on when used correctly will repay you multiple times over.
2. Your bank is not the only source of funding. Many business owners go to their bank to borrow, but there are many reasons why a bank will say "no" that have nothing to do with whether your business is viable.
3. Cash flow is vital to your business.

Borrowing may be essential to ensure that you are able to pay invoices, payroll and utilities on time. Look for products such as VAT funding that are built to address a specific need and keep your finances afloat.

4. It's easy to let small loans accumulate over time. Keep on top of what you owe and consider consolidating borrowing. You may be able to include these smaller debts on a commercial mortgage which will mean simpler repayments as well as

purchasing a major asset for your business.

5. Borrow responsibly. How much you can borrow - and what it will cost you to do so - will depend on your credit score. If you have a low score, you may struggle to find a lender as you will be considered a high risk.

www.swoopfunding.com/uk/business-debt-report





Recognition at the castle

Following his award of an OBE in the New Year Honours List for services to international trade, LCCI chief executive Karim Fatehi's investiture took place at Windsor Castle. He is seen here with HRH Princess Anne who hosted the ceremony.

Champion

Fatehi's recognition has been described by LCCI chair Julia Onslow-Cole as not only a testament to his

exceptional contributions "but also a reminder of the excellent work done across the wider community of professionals and organisations working tirelessly to expand opportunity and prosperity through trade. Under his guidance, LCCI continues to champion international trade and provide invaluable support to members as they navigate the complexities of the global marketplace."

Accolades of achievement

LCCI's SME London Business Awards are back for another year. The awards are a sought-after accolade of achievement and an endorsement of success in business. They offer marketing and PR opportunities as well as increasing a company's credibility and standing in the eyes of peers and your customers.

Up for grabs

There are 21 awards up for grabs, ranging from best employer of the year to best new business and recognition for high growth, social responsibility and sustainability. Businesses of



How LBM covered the 2025 awards

up to 250 employees are invited to enter up to three different categories.

www.londonchamber.co.uk

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Introduction to the Annual Tax on Enveloped Dwellings

By David Portman, Partner



For property investors or developers, a tax often overlooked is ATED.

Whilst ATED is not payable by all corporate entities, there is an obligation to comply if conditions are met. The penalty regime can be costly if not adhered to.

What is ATED?

It's an annual charge on UK dwellings held by a Non-Natural Person (NNP).

It applies where a dwelling is worth more than £500,000; the term dwelling covers residential properties and a NNP means a company or other corporate type entities.

Exemptions apply for commercial property, boarding school accommodation, student halls of residence, care homes, hospitals, and hotels.

The ATED charge applies unless the company is eligible to claim a relief.

ATED returns

All NNPs with residential property value over £500,000 will need to file a return, whether the charge is applicable or not. If a relief can be claimed, a relief declaration return will need to be filed.

The ATED year runs to 31 March and unlike most UK taxes, returns are filed, and tax paid, at the start of the period.

If property is acquired or developed in the year, the deadline is 30 days from completion or 90 days from when the dwelling is deemed to come into existence for Council Tax purposes.

What is payable?

The amount you'll need to pay is worked out using a banding system based on the value.

The ATED due for each band increases in line with inflation each year. For the 2026 year, the smallest band (for properties valued between £500,001 to £1 million) has an annual charge of £4,450 and the top range is £292,350 if over £20 million.

Reliefs against an ATED charge

The main reliefs are:

- commercial lettings business, provided a third-party tenant is in occupation
- property development business
- property that is for public use on at least 28 days per annum
- property owned by a trader as the stock of the business for the sole purpose of resale.

To speak to a trusted advisor regarding ATED, get in touch with Partner, David Portman (davidportman@lubbockfine.co.uk).

Penalties for late filing or payment

Late filing	Late payment	Penalty
Miss filing deadline		£100
	30 days late	5% of tax due
3 months late		Daily penalty £10 per day up to 90 days (max £900)
6 months late		5% of gross tax liability or £300, if greater
	6 months late	5% of tax outstanding at that date
12 months late		5% of gross tax liability or £300 if greater
	12 months late	5% of tax outstanding at that date

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Rewarded

The members' lounge at LCCI's City HQ was the venue for a recent round of King's Awards for Enterprise presentations.

Hosted by Chamber chief executive Karim Fatehi OBE (a multiple-time winner), the awards were presented by Sir Ken Olisa

OBE, Lord-Lieutenant of Greater London.

Panellists in the discussion that followed included award winners Holly Jack of Social Pantry, Pranav Chopra, Nemi Teas and Ben Drury of Yoto.



A sporting life

The legendary sports promoter Barry Hearn was the guest speaker at a recent joint networking event run by the Brentwood and Havering Chambers of Commerce.



Worldwide

A local lad, Hearn started out on the path to sports promotion with the purchase of a snooker hall in Romford. Matchroom Sport, his company, has

its worldwide headquarters located in Brentwood, so Hearn could not have been a more appropriate speaker for the event.

Perhaps best known for his promotion of snooker and boxing, he is also active in darts, pool, tenpin bowling, golf, table tennis and fishing.

www.brentwoodchamber.co.uk
www.haveringchamber.co.uk

Lord Johnson CBE with Karim Fatehi OBE



Round the table

Lord Johnson CBE, co-chair of the Conservative Party and former Minister for Investment and Exports at the Department for Business and Trade, was the guest speaker at a recent LCCI roundtable breakfast.

He is seen here with LCCI chief executive Karim Fatehi OBE.

The hidden costs of unfit technology

Things change, and so must your tech. Clinging to outdated and/or legacy tech can be a significant drain on resources and efficiency and, while the systems may appear to function adequately on the surface, they often conceal a multitude of hidden costs that can hinder an organisation's growth and competitiveness.

A recent government report has revealed that outdated technology is causing the UK public sector to miss out on £45 billion in annual savings—equivalent to funding every primary school in the country for a year. This staggering figure underscores the profound impact that legacy systems can have on efficiency, and that whilst these antiquated systems may appear functional, they often conceal numerous hidden costs that hinder organisational growth and competitiveness.

So where do some of these hidden costs come from?

Maintenance costs

Maintaining legacy systems often entails escalating expenses. These outdated technologies typically require more power, frequent repairs, and specialised support. The scarcity of professionals familiar with obsolete systems can drive up labour costs. Additionally, unplanned downtime due to system failures can lead to productivity losses and increased operational costs.

Maintaining legacy systems can create a 'technical debt', where developers need to spend time patching old code instead of focusing on new features and improvements.

Unnecessary costs

Sometimes it's as simple as you're paying for

obsolete software and maintaining hardware that no longer serves a purpose. Perhaps it's just that you already have a different tool that could prevent you keeping something around for just one use, you just don't know it.

Inefficiencies

Legacy systems can necessitate manual processes and workarounds. Their incompatibility with modern tools can result in operational inefficiencies, leading to missed revenue opportunities and client dissatisfaction. For instance, employees may spend excessive time performing redundant tasks.

Lost opportunities and agility

Legacy systems can hinder innovation and slow down the ability to adapt to changing market needs.

Outdated technology can prevent organisations from adopting new innovations and efficiencies. Legacy systems may lack compatibility with modern applications, hindering integration and scalability.

Compliance risks and security concerns

Reliance on outdated systems can also pose compliance risks, preventing you getting a certification that's critical to a tender or contractual requirement. Losing you business, or meaning you just can't go for it in the first place.



Older systems often lack modern security features, making them more susceptible to cyberattacks and data breaches, leading to significant financial and reputational damage.

So, what should you do?

• **Comprehensive asset review:** Conduct a thorough inventory of existing technological assets to identify outdated or redundant systems.

• **Applications reviews:** Know what you have, and who's using it for what. Maybe you have some redundancy, maybe there's a chance to use what you already have to replace something legacy.

• **Effective asset management:** Implement robust asset management practices to monitor technology lifecycles and plan timely upgrades or replacements.

• **Process evaluation:** Analyse current workflows to detect inefficiencies and determine where modern technology can enhance operations.

• **Strategic planning:** Identify missed opportunities where technology could drive growth, and develop a roadmap for adopting innovative solutions.

By proactively addressing the hidden costs associated with legacy technology, organisations can unlock significant savings, boost productivity, and maintain a competitive edge in their respective industries.

Find out where to start uncovering the tech skeletons in your closet by getting in touch with our advisory services team at info@waterstons.com.



Adam Downie
Associate Director - Technical & Support Services at Waterstons

Dr Malte Heyne of Hamburg Chamber and LCCI's Karim Fatehi signing an MoU with Julia Onslow-Cole, LCCI chair, and UK Ambassador to Germany Andrew Mitchell.

Confidence and co-operation

by Vittoria Zerbini

With business confidence in London at its lowest level since 2022, LCCI has called for resilience, global collaboration and targeted government support to help sustain growth and reinforce the capital's role as a leading global business hub.

Targeted support

Only 28 per cent of businesses expect London's economy to improve in the next 12 months. Only 25 per cent believe that the national economy will improve in the next 12 months. These results of the latest *Capital 500*, London's Quarterly Economic Survey conducted by LCCI, were featured in *London Loves Business*. Business confidence took a deep plunge in the first quarter of 2025 dropping nine points from the previous quarter, the lowest it has been since 2022.

LONDON loves BUSINESS

Small businesses under severe pressure amid rising costs and inflation



The survey showed that the main concerns for businesses currently are linked to rising costs, which range from energy increases to employee spending



and inflation. In this business and economic environment, LCCI chief executive Karim Fatehi OBE underlined the importance of having "real, targeted support" in the upcoming Spending Review.

Resilience

Fatehi spoke with *Entrepreneur United Kingdom* to emphasise the importance of optimism amid the economic uncertainties businesses are facing across the country. Tighter regulations and global economic headwinds have brought 85 per cent of businesses surveyed by LCCI to foresee no growth during this parliamentary term. Still, with better policy support, such as tax relief, growth is possible, insisted Fatehi.



He urged founders to remain pragmatic, engage globally and seize opportunities from trade agreements such as the one recently signed with India. Despite setbacks, the LCCI chief executive remains confident in London's enduring global status and the business community's adaptability.

New alliances

Interviewed by the German newspaper *Die Welt*, LCCI chief executive Karim Fatehi OBE advocated for positivity within the business community. This followed the signing of a Memorandum of Understanding with Dr. Malte Heyne, chief executive of Handelskammer Hamburg, marking a new chapter in London-Hamburg collaboration. This agreement comes during tumultuous economic times highlighting the importance of co-operation to achieve growth and prosperity through open markets.



The MoU represents the creation of deeper and stronger economic ties between the two cities, promoting new and existing business networks including cross-border startups, tech development, and supporting skilled workers. Fatehi stated that trade is always the best way forward and that London remains a vital global hub, open to collaboration and future growth opportunities.

Vittoria Zerbini is media and policy assistant at LCCI

As I see it ...

by Michael Mainelli,
LCCI president



Where angels fear to trade

“**President Donald Trump transfixes global trade. He flies in the face of business and economic norms by appearing to believe that trade is of minimal benefit, tariffs are beautiful, and trade should be strongly managed.**

For decades, international business thinking has been influenced strongly by three traditional ethical liberal values – individual rights, freedom of speech, and protection of property. Those three ethical values imply three practical values – limited government, open markets, and free trade. All six liberal values affect industry, but let's focus on free trade.

President Trump disagrees that trade reaps economic benefits from specialisation and comparative advantage, creates prosperity, distributes success and wealth, and collectively enriches our societies and communities. In London, one of the world's great trading centres, we know the importance of trade for progress. The 2023 value of global trade was equivalent to 59 per cent of global GDP. That's up from 25 per cent back in 1970, but unfortunately, with deglobalisation taking hold, down four points from 63 per cent in 2022.

President Trump ignores that free trade is a force for good and has lifted billions of people out of poverty in the past half century. In 1930, the US Smoot-Hawley Tariff Act significantly raised tariffs on imports, aiming to protect US industries from foreign competition. This protectionist measure triggered retaliatory tariffs

and exacerbated the Great Depression. President Trump seems to want to re-run the 95-year-old Smoot-Hawley experiment.

If we all believe that recent US moves towards tariffs will backfire on the US, then shouldn't we be moving ever more strongly towards free trade? We are not perfect free traders. We can do much more to be clear about zero tariffs, tear down trade barriers, standardise free trade agreements, expand them to services, and simplify trade processes.

In December 2024, the UK made the CPTPP (Comprehensive and Progressive Agreement for Trans-Pacific Partnership) a dozen with Australia, Brunei, Canada, Chile, Japan, Malaysia, Mexico, New Zealand, Peru, Singapore, and Vietnam. In 2017 Trump withdrew from the CPTPP but we can support CPTPP expansion, new members, EU observer status, or Commonwealth observer status.

Sadly, we have the opportunity over the next 3.5 years to re-run that Smoot-Hawley experiment, testing a closed US against an open world. Enough transfixed hand wringing. If we believe our own game, let's double down with some real cards on the free trade lab table. ”

Professor Michael Mainelli served as Lord Mayor of London 2023-24 and remains an international ambassador for the City. He is chair of Z/ Yen, the City of London's leading commercial think-tank, known for its work in economics and finance, and science & technology.

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Phishing for Profits: The Cost of Cyber Crime



Delayed trains, lukewarm tea and forgetting your umbrella - just some of the great traditions of British misfortune. It can now confidently be said that “company-wide cyber attack” should be added to the list. In a world where digitisation continues to be at the forefront of our economy, we leave ourselves more open and at risk of being targeted by cyber criminals.

The recent cyber attack on M&S certainly had Percy Pig sweating. It was a clear example of the impact such an attack can have on a business's operations and ultimately their bottom line. Customer data was stolen, online orders were suspended, and the share price ultimately plummeted. It's predicted that in total, the attack could hit profits by £300m.

Beyond the immediate aftermath, cyber attacks can have lasting effects, eroding customer trust, damaging brand reputation and consequently leading to lost revenue. Customers and partners may take their business elsewhere, fearing further data leaks. In sectors like finance, healthcare, or retail, this loss of confidence can have a cascading effect, undermining future earnings and investor confidence.

Not only can a targeted business be forced to make ransom payments to their attackers, if found to be at fault for any data breaches, regulatory fines can also be imposed by the Information Commissioner's Office. This adds further to the financial impact, especially considering the legal costs for dealing with

fines alongside any individual compensation claims.

The combination of these factors can sadly lead to some businesses being unable to survive and subsequently becoming insolvent.

To mitigate these risks, UK companies need to be prioritising cyber security. Not only should a secure IT infrastructure be in place, it is key that employees are regularly trained and the procedures in place are frequently reviewed. Yes, it might be another expense for businesses to suffer alongside the increasing costs from inflation and National Insurance rises, however it certainly outweighs the costs of any security breach.

In summary, cyber attacks pose not only an IT threat, but a significant risk to the financial stability of UK businesses, especially those that lack the resources for robust cybersecurity defences. A business like M&S has a legacy and, with the goodwill of a large customer base, is forecast to survive the recent digital assault, allowing it the opportunity to revisit its systems and learn from any mistakes. Other businesses however, in particular SMEs, may not be so fortunate.

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MENZIES
BRIGHTER THINKING

Nish Kotecha, Colin Stanbridge, Nick Clegg and Subhash Thakrar

Championing Asian business – three decades on

Thirty years ago this summer, LCCI set up the Asian Business Association (ABA) under the inspirational chairmanship of the late and much-missed Lord Gulam Noon alongside Subhash Thakrar, an equally valued supporter of the Chamber. At the time it was recognised – but not quantified – that the contribution of businesses and businesspeople originating from Asia was a significant one.

Contribution

The ABA – actually a misnomer as the focus is exclusively on the Indian sub-continent – wanted to recognise that contribution as well as providing a voice for the Asian business community to represent their views to the media, local and central government on issues which affect their trade. Moreover it would organise networking and other events to enhance commercial skills and business competitiveness.

It would also facilitate international trade promotion in association with LCCI's foreign trade programme and increase participation of Asian businesses in LCCI activities.

Flagship

Once established, it was clear the ABA proved immediately popular and had clearly filled a gap. Its events programme grew in popularity and size to the extent that the ABA annual dinner became the flagship event of LCCI, with guest speakers virtually queuing up to address the group. From the world of politics, government and the establishment these have included David Cameron, Nick Clegg, Ken Livingstone,

Ken Clarke, Boris Johnson, Sir Sadiq Khan, Lord Stevenson, Sir John Stephens and at least two governors of the Bank of England, namely Sir Eddie George and Sir Mervyn King.

From business and journalism, Dinesh Dhamija, Lord Sugar, Trevor Philips, Mishal Husain, Sir Mark Tully, James Caan, Pinky Liliyani and Gita Patel made lasting impressions on ABA event delegates.

Fantasy list

From sport, culture and the culinary arts, ABA audiences have been entertained by England cricket captain Alec Stewart, Gurcharan Das, Gurinder Chadha, Shekhar Kapur and Atul Kochar while royal interest has been shown by HM King Charles III (when Prince of Wales) and Prince Michael of Kent.

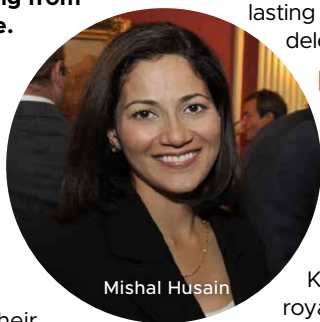
The venues for such occasions read like a fantasy 'best of London' hotel and restaurant list and include the Berkeley, Savoy,

Intercontinental, Royal Lancaster, Park Lane, Taj, and Tower Gateway hotels with gourmet food provided by the Bombay Brasserie, Benares, Chatora, Mango Tree, Porte des Indes and Tamarind.

Seasons and religious festivals have been celebrated and numerous charities supported at ABA events from Chance to Shine to Livability and Oxfam.

Policy and influence

Events play an important part in the work of the ABA in raising awareness of the Asian business community. However, there are other activities that play to the policy and influence of the group. In 2005, the ABA worked with the GLA Economics



Mishal Husain



Lord Gulam Noon with Peter Bishop



Vijay Goel and Subhash Thakrar

in the Mayor of London's office to produce a report on the contribution of Asian-owned businesses to London's economy. This revealed the number of Asian-owned businesses (39,000), the jobs they provided (300,000) and their total turnover (£60 billion). It also looked at the self-employment rates, most common sectors and female business ownership.

This report, with subsequent updates, alongside such activities as regular briefings with the Bank of England's London agent to feed into the Monetary Policy Committee, studies on diversity in the workplace, and the production of a funding guide for entrepreneurs have helped maintain the Asian business community's vibrancy.

Trade

The ABA have also been active in



Chef Atul Kochar with Jenny Crouch and Victoria Jayne

recognising the important role of the Indian sub-continent diaspora in the UK, especially with regard to trade and investment. This has been evident in the trade missions to India and Sri Lanka over the years which have been ABA/LCCI-led or have taken place with their involvement. LCCI and ABA have hosted dozens of inward delegations from the Indian-sub continent including one with the Bombay Merchants Association which culminated in a two-day conference at the Queen Elizabeth II conference centre.

The recent UK-Indian free trade agreement (on which talks have been resumed) should bring trade relations up a number of levels and is keenly anticipated.

Behind the scenes

Behind the scenes doing the thinking and hard work alongside LCCI staff was the committee. Following Lord Noon and Subhash Thakrar, the ABA was privileged to attract such chairs as Tony Sarin, Sunil Ghadia, Nish Kotecha,

Vijay Goel and Tony Matharu.



Tony Sarin

Members of the committee are too numerous to mention – see box below for current members – but special praise must go to Harshad Kothari who

has been a tireless ambassador and recruitment specialist for the group while, to the best of our knowledge, Tarun Ghulati is the only one to have stood as a candidate for London Mayor.

Meanwhile Rajesh Agrawal has the unique distinction of having been an ABA committee member before being appointed deputy mayor for business under London Mayor’ Sir Sadiq Khan.



Sunil Ghadia

Generous

ABA’s current sponsor is the University of Westminster which has provided valuable and highly appropriate support. They follow in the footsteps of a long list of illustrious organisations in that role over the last



Nish Kotecha

three decades including Clydesdale Bank, Hugh Cartwright & Amin, HSBC and Rational FX, with Cobra Beer providing a significant proportion of the liquid refreshment. They have all been most generous and deserve thanks and plaudits.

Integral

Thirty years on the question can be asked – has the ABA achieved its objectives and is it still necessary? Certainly the association has evolved and emphases have changed. The Asian business contribution is indeed recognised, not least by successive Mayors of London, the latest of whom is of Pakistani origin – see box titled High office.

It is also the case that the vast majority of Indian sub-continent firms are now an integral part of the business community in London and indeed across the UK. However, there has also been much negativity on immigration from certain quarters, seemingly without a knowledge or understanding of the fuller picture. For this alone the ABA still has a critical role to play.

High office

When the ABA was set up in 1995, the prospect of people of Indian sub-continent origin holding the great offices of state in the UK was a distant one. Since then, Priti Patel and

Suella Braverman have served as Home Secretaries and Rishi Sunak as Prime Minister. It would be stretching things to argue that the ABA was responsible for these elevations but the

creation of a more effective voice for Asian businesses was certainly an early key objective of the group – and where better to achieve that than through high office?



Today’s ABA committee

Chair



Tony Matharu,
executive chair,
Integrity International Group and
Blue Orchid hotels

Members



Vandana Dass
managing director,
Davenport Solicitors



Tarun Ghulati
chief executive,
Squared Watermelon



Harshad Kothari
principal,
SAS Consultancy



Rahul Mehta
chief executive,
Axon Diagnostic



**Mahanta Bahadur
Shrestha**
chair, Khukuri Beer



Harprit Suri
director, Suri London
Properties

On tour with the King

This summer, visitors to the State Rooms at Buckingham Palace will see a special exhibition, *The King's Tour Artists*, featuring over 70 works of art from His Majesty's own collection

An accompanying publication, *The Art of Royal Travel: Journeys with The King*, will further explore and celebrate this special royal tradition, featuring recollections from the artists and with over 100 illustrations.

Inspired

In 1985, the then Prince of Wales invited John Ward to join a royal visit to Italy as the official tour artist, with the brief to draw or paint whatever inspired him. For the subsequent 40 years, an artist has been personally selected and paid for by The King to accompany the travelling party on a royal overseas tour, with the brief remaining largely unchanged throughout.

Forty-two artists to have undertaken this role, who collectively have visited 95 countries during 69 tours, will be represented in the exhibition and publication.

Glimpses

The initiative has provided an opportunity for both experienced and emerging artists to undertake a unique commission and a concentrated period of work in the country or countries visited. The works on display in the Palace's Ballroom, chosen from a selection made by The King from his personal collection, will provide glimpses of life on a royal tour, capturing the tone, colours and atmosphere in ways that differ from a photographic record.



John Ward. *From the Afterdeck of HMY Britannia*, 1985. © The Estate of the Artist. Photograph: Royal Collection Trust

John Ward had previously made sketches of the Royal Family in Balmoral and had supported the then Prince of Wales's interest in sketching and painting. In 1985, the tour of Italy was at its halfway point when Ward joined, boarding the Royal Yacht, *HMY Britannia*, in the port of Catania before she set sail for Venice.



Susannah Fiennes, *Two Yachtsmen HMY Britannia*, 1997

Handover

Often the backdrop to royal tours, *HMY Britannia* also features in the work by Susannah Fiennes, produced during a visit by the then Prince of Wales to Hong Kong when representing Queen Elizabeth II for the handover to China in 1997.

Fiennes made sketches of life on board, including a watercolour of two Royal Yachtsmen following the daily routine of lowering and raising the flag.

Historic

Paul Reid's approach during the 2004 tour to Italy, Turkey and Jordan was to register everything as he went, absorbing sights, sounds and light, then to work up the canvases later. In Petra, having captured the landscape elsewhere on the tour, Reid was keen to focus on a man he encountered there, dressed in elegant clothing, standing by the portico of Al-Khazneh, a rock-cut tomb in the historic city.



Paul Reid, *Standing Man*, 2004

SPONSORED COLUMN

Managing Toxic Behaviour in the Workplace

Toxic employees in the workplace present a unique threat to businesses. Their behaviour pervades team dynamics, undermines the authority of managers, the efficiency of business operations and the wellbeing of fellow employees.

Three common types of toxic behaviour include:

- **The Complainer:** This employee looks to find fault in almost every situation, spreads their negative energy amongst the team and dampens team morale.
- **The Narcissist:** This employee has an inflated sense of self-importance, they are overconfident, lack empathy and never take accountability or responsibility often deflecting from their own underperformance by pointing out other people's mistakes.
- **The Aggravator:** This type of employee belittles, humiliates and insults others. They have a tendency to spread misinformation, gaslight and manipulate others. They may exclude people from meetings and projects under the guise of professionalism and their behaviour is often targeted towards a specific or small number of individuals.

When managers fail to address such conduct swiftly and visibly, they risk appearing ineffective or inconsistent, further encouraging disruptive behaviour and disempowering those in leadership roles.

Toxic behaviour is also a cultural contaminant as it spreads silently through gossip, cliques, and negativity derailing strategic priorities. Collaboration between individuals and teams suffers and over time, high-performing employees may disengage or exit altogether, leaving a vacuum filled with underperformance.

In every employment relationship, there is an implied duty of 'mutual trust and confidence'. When there is a lack of early management intervention to tackle disruptive behaviour, employees may

feel frustration and resentment resulting in disengagement or even resignation (which may itself, give rise to a claim of constructive dismissal).

A failure to tackle toxic behaviour could also amount to co-workers suffering heightened stress and anxiety leading to persistent or long-term sickness absences which could amount to a breach of the duty to provide a safe working environment.

As uncomfortable as it might be, employers must act swiftly to tackle disruptive behaviour remembering to follow the ACAS code of practice, acting consistently and proportionately in each case.

Where a mental health condition or disability may be a factor in the employee's behaviour, reasonable adjustments must be considered. However, persistent inappropriate behaviour may justify formal warnings or dismissal if it undermines organisational harmony.

Toxic behaviour erodes more than morale - it compromises authority, productivity and the retention of valuable employees. Early management of such behaviour is essential to maintain a happy and productive workforce.



Dipti Shah is Partner and Head of Employment Law at Quastels LLP. She can be reached at dshah@quastels.com or telephone: **+44 (0)20 7908 2595** or <https://www.linkedin.com/in/diptishah-lawyer/>

Visit: <https://quastels.com/>

This information in this article is for general guidance only and should not be construed as specific legal advice.

QUASTELS

LEGAL ADVISERS



Richard Foster, *Their Royal Highnesses on North Seymour Island*, 2009

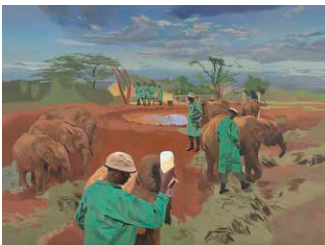
Uninhabited

Richard Foster captured the then Prince of Wales and Duchess of Cornwall during a visit to the uninhabited North Seymour Island in the Galápagos Islands. Foster depicted the royal couple looking out to sea amid the semi-arid shoreline and the lava rock that is home to a colony of land iguanas, contrasting with the deep blue of the sea stretching out to the horizon.

“This fascinating group of works tells the story of forty years of official travel and artistic patronage.

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forty years of official travel and artistic patronage. The freedom given to each

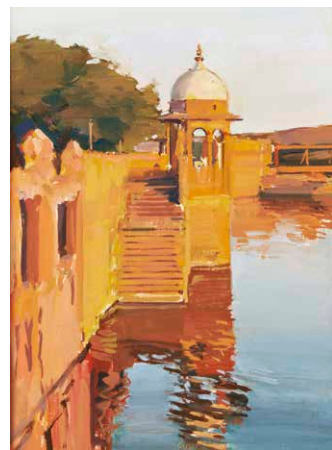


Phillip Butah, *Elephant Sanctuary*, 2023

Memorable

In 2023, Phillip Butah was invited to join The King and Queen on a State Visit to Kenya. As recounted in *The Art of Royal Travel: Journeys with The King*, the most memorable engagement for Butah was a visit to an elephant sanctuary in Nairobi National Park. Having never painted anything like it before, he wanted to recreate the weather, the noises and the elephants behaving like children, playing with each other.

Kate Heard, curator of *The King's Tour Artists* said: “This fascinating group of works tells the story of



© Luke Martineau. Photograph: Royal Collection Trust

artist to capture a personal impression of the countries visited has led to the formation of a rich and varied collection.”

The King's Tour Artists exhibition will be included as part of a visit to the Summer Opening of Buckingham Palace, 10 July – 28 September 2025

www.rct.uk



Global flavours and live music

by Vittoria Zerbini

A new culinary destination has arrived in the City of London, offering professionals and businesses a fresh and vibrant lunch venue, after-work drinks and client meetings. Opened this spring at the restored Edwardian-era Metropolitan Arcade near Liverpool Street Station, **BOXHALL City** is the latest concept from the team behind **BOXPARK** (Shoreditch, Croydon and Wembley).

Emerging
Occupying

17,000 square feet of bricks-and-mortar space – distinct from **BOXPARK**'s signature shipping container aesthetic – **BOXHALL City** has 14 kitchens featuring global cuisine, and three bars. The venue includes 13 permanent food vendors and a rotating chef-led pop-up kitchen, spotlighting emerging culinary talent with new dishes each month.

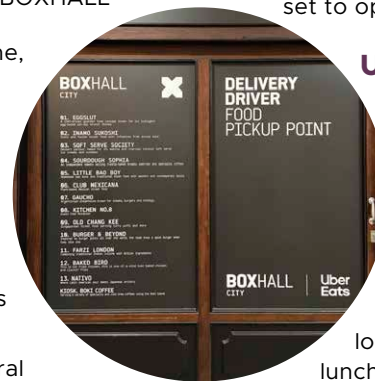
Entertainment is central to **BOXHALL City**'s appeal. Live music, featuring genres like funk, soul, R&B, hip hop and jazz, runs on Wednesday and Thursday from 7pm. Fridays feature DJ sets, while

Saturdays shift to a day-to-night disco, funk and house music experience. A 3,000-square-foot rooftop terrace is set to open later this year.

Unwind

With its diverse food offering, flexible booking options and an atmosphere designed to balance business and leisure, **BOXHALL City** is poised to become a go-to spot for city workers looking to elevate their lunch hour or unwind after hours – all within walking distance of the office and the station.

Vittoria Zerbini is media and policy assistant at LCCI



On the list

Friends and partners of LCCI were among those recognised in the King's birthday honours list in June.

Howard Dawber, deputy mayor of London for business and growth, London assembly and chair, London & Partners was awarded an OBE for services to local government and to the community in east London. Alderman Prem Goyal, former chair of the Chamber's City



of London Association and Shevaun Haviland, director-general of the British Chambers of Commerce were honoured with CBEs for public service and services to business respectively. Congratulations to all.

SPONSORED COLUMN

Cyber security- why even bother?

Well, for the masochists out there...maybe don't.

There is a common mindset which is only changed by mandates from someone who matters (government or a larger business partner). This gets dressed up as 'why would anyone target me' or 'we don't transact funds'. OK, but if you don't yet know about ransomware or the nature and pattern of cyber security breaches and how they are leveraged- find out.

You don't consult with your dentist every week, but you do every six months. Hopefully. We brush and floss, but we know that won't cut it- the regret and pain of root canal treatment should be advertised more clearly. It's the same with cybersecurity. No one really wants to think about it. CEOs would rather talk about product launches. CFOs want to see savings. CTOs are busy with uptime. Cybersecurity is also not glamorous. It's insurance. It's discipline. It's doing the digital equivalent of sitting in a reclining chair while someone pokes your gums and tells you your habits are bad. But if you don't do it, the result is far worse than the inconvenience.

There is so much noise and 'one size fits all' selling within cyber security that finding an independent security partner is key. Why? A partner organisation may well be 'small' but has the knowledge base and freedom to understand the context for your business and advise effectively. The focus, customer service and agility of such partners can outweigh the perceived safety of choosing the brand vendor and their menu of modules.

Based on how we see cyber security incidents originate and evolve- get a dentist to find your cavities and fix them. Regularly. A malware attack might exploit a known vulnerability. And many do. While all ransomware attacks have negative outcomes, those that start by exploiting unpatched vulnerabilities are particularly brutal.

Malicious actors continue to exploit older vulnerabilities because why change what works? A study by the Ponemon Institute noted that 60% of data breach victims cite an unpatched vulnerability. Another study from 2023 noted that 76% of ransomware attacks exploited known vulnerabilities announced between 2010 and 2019.

See your cyber dentist, get a health check, plug those holes. Prevention is better than cure! For SMEs, the consequences can be catastrophic, with 60% of small businesses shutting their doors within six months of an attack.

To discuss more, email me at Darren.anderson@osec.com



Sporting chances

The London Sports Festival was launched in May in Guildhall Yard with a sample of a diverse range of activities including archery to pickleball, bucket ball, table tennis, and dance and fitness classes.

An initiative of the Central London Alliance, the festival will run until October and bring sport to some of London's most iconic locations, as well as hidden streets and leafy backwaters. For example, padel will be played near the Tower of London, pickleball in St James' Park and table tennis in Paternoster Square – as well as continued use of Guildhall Yard.

Relationships

The aim is to create spaces where workers, residents and visitors can enjoy the



capital and build lasting relationships through sport throughout the summer and beyond. The festival offers a diverse range of sports ensuring there is something for everyone to enjoy. There will also be a number of attempts on Guinness World Records – watch this space.

www.londonsportsfestival.com



Sir Jack Petchey CBE – achieving and helping others achieve

Businessman and philanthropist Sir Jack Petchey CBE was born in Plaistow, East London on 19 July 1925. Born into a working-class family, he left school at 13 with no qualifications and began working for the local greengrocer, delivering fruit and vegetables to customers' houses

At the start of World War II in 1939, Sir Jack enrolled as a police messenger in East Ham. In 1943, he volunteered for service in the Royal Navy, reaching the rank of chief petty officer.

Rejected

After the war, Petchey worked as a clerk at a firm of solicitors where he applied for management training. He was rejected and told he would never become a businessman.

Undaunted, he used his £60.00 savings to buy a second-hand car and set up a taxi business before moving into vehicle sales. He cut his first property deal in 1948 when he bought his mother's house from her landlord for £800.00 and immediately sold it for £1,200.00. With the additional money, the family were able to move to a better area in Manor Park.



Boom

Petchey used the profits from his



vehicle companies to invest in property and timeshares.

He made his fortune in the Portuguese resort of Albufeira, becoming known as the industry's 'grandfather'. The timeshares were marketed both in the UK and abroad.

This timeshare boom lasted until the late 2000s when all the leisure businesses were sold.

Aided by external investors, Petchey became the driving force behind Clube Praia da Oura, a hugely popular mixed-use leisure development in Albufeira. In the late 1960s, he was also involved in UK property development. By 2007, his business empire was worth over half a billion pounds. Petchey often featured in lists of the UK's most successful business people and demonstrated his work ethic by still going into the office every day aged 93.

Petchey ventured into football in 1978 when he was appointed a director of West Ham United. In 1987, he bought Watford Football Club from Sir Elton John, selling it back to him seven years later.

Outstanding

Despite his vast business success, Sir Jack's life was not limited to commerce. Acutely aware of his lack of opportunities as a young boy, he set up the Jack Petchey Foundation charity in 1999. The Jack Petchey Achievement Award Scheme is its flagship programme which recognises 12,000 outstanding young people aged 11 to 25 across London and Essex annually. Groups involved in the scheme celebrate the achievements of young people and apply for a package of grants, worth up to £6,400 per year, to support their activities.

Pioneering

To date, the foundation has invested over £180 million in grants for youth projects across London and Essex. The money is used to deliver a range of pioneering schemes for young people including public speaking, dance, sport and music. The foundation's purpose is to reward young people's achievements and encourage them to be proud about what they have done.

In 2004, Petchey was awarded an OBE by HM the Queen; a CBE followed in 2011. In 2016, he was knighted in recognition of his charity work.

He was married twice, first to Diane Harrison in 1949 with whom he had four children. In 2016, at the age of 90, he married Frances Segelman, a sculptor 24 years his junior. Sir Jack Petchey died at his home in Wapping, East London at the age of 98 in 2024.



Petchey often featured in lists of the UK's most successful business people and demonstrated his work ethic by still going into the office every day aged 93.

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100 years ago in London is researched and written by Alexa Michael

London's lost treasures – rediscovered!

Next year, the London Museum will open on its new site in Smithfield in what promises to be a major event for the culture of the capital. In the meantime, *LBM* readers are urged to check out the museum's Docklands branch at West India Dock. Here a fascinating exhibition – *Secrets of the Thames* – explores finds from the Thames foreshore, an internationally important archaeological site that holds thousands of years of London's history uncovered by 'mudlarks'.

Dangerous

Early records of mudlarking date back to the early 1800s when London's poorest communities would search the foreshore for bits of metal, rope and coal to make their living. Subject to dangerous tides, it was a job often undertaken by children and women who would brave cold waters, broken glass and other hazards to find items that they could sell to feed their families.

Today it is the preserve of licensed mudlarks who search the foreshore to find historical treasures revealed at low tide. The wet and clay

environment of the river preserve objects that would usually deteriorate elsewhere.

Discoveries

Rare new discoveries on display include a Tudor headdress, a Medieval gold ring, an elaborately decorated Viking era dagger and a pair of false teeth from the 18th century. Of less significance perhaps but equally of interest – certainly to Peter Fleming – was the discovery of the American tennis player's Wimbledon doubles medals (he

partnered John McEnroe) which had been stolen from him.

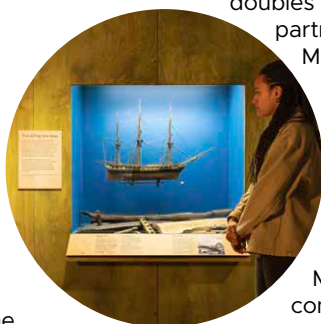
Community

Kate Sumnall, curator at London Museum, commented that London was lucky

to have a tidal river that has preserved so much of the past. "Thanks to the dedication and expertise of today's mudlarks, we are constantly uncovering new objects that inform our understanding of history.

"*Secrets of the Thames* showcases some of these fascinating objects and their journey from discovery to joining the museum. Above all, it is an exploration of love and desire, faith and loss, migration, community and culture. The stories of generations of people who have visited the city or called it home."

Secrets of the Thames: Mudlarking London's lost treasures runs until April 2026 at London Museum Docklands
<https://www.londonmuseum.org.uk/whats-on/secrets-thames>



Government publishes immigration white paper – what businesses need to know

By Francesca Sciberras at Laura Devine Immigration



English language requirements

English language requirements will be raised across several immigration routes. Skilled Workers and others currently required to meet the B1 (intermediate) level will need to meet B2 (upper intermediate). Dependants of Skilled Workers will now also need to meet an English language requirement (A1 beginner level).

Settlement

The Government proposes to double the residence period required for settlement (also known as indefinite leave to remain) from five to ten years, with a shorter pathway available for certain applicants who make significant contributions to the UK. It remains unclear whether this will apply only to new applicants or also retrospectively. The five-year pathway will remain for family members of British citizens.

What's next?

Some changes will be introduced quickly, while others will be phased in over time. The MAC will be commissioned to report on the on the new Temporary Shortage List this summer, and consultation on settlement reforms is expected before the end of 2025.

If you have questions about how these proposals may impact you or your business, please contact our Enquiries team at enquiries@lauradevine.com.

Francesca Sciberras is a Partner at Laura Devine Immigration, a transatlantic boutique immigration firm with offices in London and New York.

www.lauradevine.com

LAURA DEVINE
IMMIGRATION

The Government has published its immigration white paper, setting out plans to reform migration policy with a focus on reducing net migration. Although still in the proposal stage, the planned changes are likely to have significant implications for employers and sponsored workers.

Work routes

The minimum skill threshold for the Skilled Worker route will rise to degree level (RQF Level 6) from the current A-level (RQF 3) threshold. Sponsorship for lower-skilled roles will be limited to occupations facing long-term shortages, as advised by the Migration Advisory Committee (MAC) and underpinned by a comprehensive workforce strategy. Time limits and potential caps may also apply. Employers will be expected to prioritise domestic recruitment.

The Immigration Skills Charge will rise by 32%, and employers who fail to invest in local training may face restrictions on sponsoring overseas workers. The social care route will close to new overseas applicants, although transitional measures will remain until 2028 for those already in the UK.

These changes reflect a return to pre-Brexit rules when sponsorship was primarily limited to degree-level roles. Alongside higher fees and greater employer obligations, the white paper signals a tightening of the UK's economic migration rules.



London and Edinburgh call for a united growth agenda

by Vittoria Zerbini

Recognising the common ground their cities share, LCCI and the Edinburgh Chamber of Commerce (ECC) have presented a bold, joint proposal to the UK government.

This proposal outlines five strategic policy priorities designed to spur economic growth, attract investment and cement both cities' status as critical drivers of the UK economy.

Powerhouses

"London and Edinburgh are economic powerhouses with global influence," said Karim Fatehi OBE, LCCI chief executive.

"We're calling on the government to invest in our most innovative and productive cities – not just for our benefit, but for the prosperity of the entire UK. Enhancing connectivity, empowering SMEs and removing trade barriers are national priorities, not just local ones."

Hubs

Together, London and Edinburgh generate over £617 billion in GDP, underscoring their role as two of the UK's most dynamic economic hubs. Their collective strength stems from their diversity, world-class finance sectors, cutting-edge innovation, globally renowned universities and vibrant creative industries.

The cities also face shared challenges: rising costs; skills shortages; and a

growing need for smarter, future-proof infrastructure. Despite these pressures, London and Edinburgh stand uniquely positioned to lead a new chapter of national renewal – powered by investment, trade and entrepreneurial ambition.

Ambition

"The UK government's Industrial Strategy white paper set out an ambition to take advantage of the UK's unique strengths and to tackle barriers to growth in the highest potential growth-driving places," commented Joanne Davidson, ECC director of policy.

"As two of the UK's largest capital cities, with a key role to play in driving the Scottish and English economies, and a unique position on the world stage, Edinburgh and London stand ready to drive forward this ambition."

Five priorities for growth

1. Enhancing trade agreements

There is an urgent need for trade policies that better reflect the ambitions and capabilities of firms based in London and Edinburgh. Streamlining market access and supporting export activity will be essential for long-term growth.

2. Expanding access to finance for SMEs

Small and medium-sized enterprises form the backbone of both capital cities. Yet many still face barriers to securing the funding they need to grow. The chambers are urging the government to reduce red tape and create more inclusive financial pathways.

3. Supporting the creative industries

Home to world-renowned festivals, production studios, fashion houses and tech start-ups, both cities host a thriving creative sector. The report calls for targeted investment and supportive regulation to help this sector scale sustainably.

4. Reintroducing VAT-free shopping for international visitors

This is seen as a policy with the potential to boost tourism, retail and hospitality. According to Oxford Economics, restoring this scheme could generate £2.8 billion in tourist spending annually and attract over 1.6 million extra visitors.

5. Investing in connectivity

Connectivity improvements on the East Coast Main Line will unlock further opportunities for deeper collaboration between London and Edinburgh, deepening their relationship. Investment here will also help to drive economic resilience across their wider regions.

www.londonchamber.co.uk

www.edinburghchamber.co.uk



The Knowledge

LBM's test of what readers know about London

- 1 What sport is played by the London Mavericks?
- 2 Which French impressionist painted Road at Hampton Court in the 1870s?
- 3 Which gallery is located in St Martin's Place, adjoining the National Gallery?
- 4 How many London boroughs straddle the Thames?
- 5 What sport was introduced to England at Blackheath Common by James I?
- 6 A former butcher's boy, which peer of the realm is founder and editor-in-chief of Big Issue?
- 7 Traitors Gate is a water entrance to which fortress?
- 8 Which London place of worship is known as "the actors' church"?
- 9 One of Henry VIII's six wives was born in Blackheath. Which one?
- 10 Which London hotel has a certified tea master, reputedly the only hotel in the UK that has one?



Find the answers on page 65

SPONSORED COLUMN

Building Culture Before You Build Headcount



Reyhana Jano

When businesses prepare to scale, the focus often lands on funding, hiring and delivering results. But one of the most strategic early investments you can make isn't a new role, it's your culture.

Culture is frequently treated as a "nice to have" or something that will evolve naturally. In reality, every business has a culture whether it's shaped with intention or not. Left unchecked, culture can drift in unhelpful directions, especially during rapid growth.

What many founders don't realise is that culture underpins performance. It shapes how people collaborate, how they lead, how they deal with setbacks and how they engage with clients. A clearly defined and well-embedded culture fosters alignment, trust and accountability across teams, particularly when your founding team can no longer be in every room.

Defining culture early doesn't require elaborate initiatives. It begins with clarity: what are your core values? What behaviours are encouraged, and what won't be tolerated? Start with honest internal conversations and weave these principles into your day-to-day operations, i.e. how you give feedback, make decisions, recognise effort and resolve conflict.

As your business grows, these values should guide how you hire, how you on-board and how you develop leaders. Too often, culture is left to chance until the first signs of friction appear; conflicting working styles, poor management practices or high turnover. By then, repairing culture becomes far harder than establishing it early.

Strong culture doesn't mean everyone is the same. In fact, it's about building an environment where different voices and perspectives are heard, valued and aligned around a shared mission. This sense of purpose can become a competitive edge, especially when the pressure of delivery ramps up.

Consider embedding culture into the tangible systems and processes you design - from your recruitment strategy to your performance reviews. Make it visible in how your team communicates, celebrates wins and navigates setbacks. The earlier culture is woven into the fabric of your business, the more resilient it becomes.

Scaling businesses that actively cultivate culture benefit from stronger engagement, lower people risk and a far clearer sense of identity. These are critical advantages in competitive markets where attracting and retaining talent can make or break growth.

So before you focus on building a headcount, focus on building clarity. The strongest teams don't just work hard, they work with shared purpose. And that starts with culture, by design.


CONSTANTIA CONSULTING
 Performance through people

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Airport expansion – catalyst for growth

Airport expansion, supply chains and economic growth were the main themes at LCCI's latest aviation panel, with insights from McGlone from Luton Rising.

In a session chaired by Liz Giles, LCCI's director of policy and communications, the audience learned of new opportunities and how business can become part of the procurement process that supports infrastructure growth, job creation, local community engagement and sustainability.

Opportunities

In a recent LCCI survey, 59 per cent of London businesses said airport expansion will enhance economic prospects for both London and the UK. Twenty-four per cent believe that expansion will unlock new commercial opportunities, rising to 48 per cent for larger firms, indicating that scaling airport capacity could spur growth for mid-sized and larger enterprises.



(l-r) Liz Giles, Fiona McGlone, and Liz Hardy

These findings demonstrate that London's business community views airport expansion as a catalyst for growth.

LCCI's Green Skies Aviation programme explores London's aviation landscape and how it can

become better prepared to meet the challenges of today for the needs of tomorrow. It showcases why it is vital that aviation becomes sustainable, given its importance to the UK economy.

www.londonchamber.co.uk

Exploring opportunities in Vietnam

LCCI shined a spotlight on Vietnam's Vinh Phuc province at a recent event in West London held in collaboration with Vietnam Chamber of Commerce and Industry.

Investment

The high-level delegation from the northern economic province was in London to promote investment opportunities in a country showing strong economic growth – seven per cent last year. It is an exciting proposition.

Location

After a welcome from LCCI chief executive Karim Fatehi OBE, delegates heard from HE Mr Do Minh Hung, Ambassador of Vietnam to UK, HE Mr Dang Xuan Phong, Secretary of the Vinh Phuc Provincial Party Committee and senior colleagues from Vinh Phuc Investment Promotion and Enterprise Support Centre. Information was



shared on the modern infrastructure, highly-skilled workforce and strategic location awaiting investors.

Insights

Valuable insights for investors were also provided by Julia Onslow-Cole, partner, Fragomen and LCCI chair. She spoke of Vietnam's strong geopolitical position and the government's strategy to align policies to make it easy for inward investors. Delegates also heard from Olivia Herford, Department for Business and Trade, on the benefits that the Comprehensive and Progressive Agreement for Trans-Pacific Partnership brings to UK businesses.



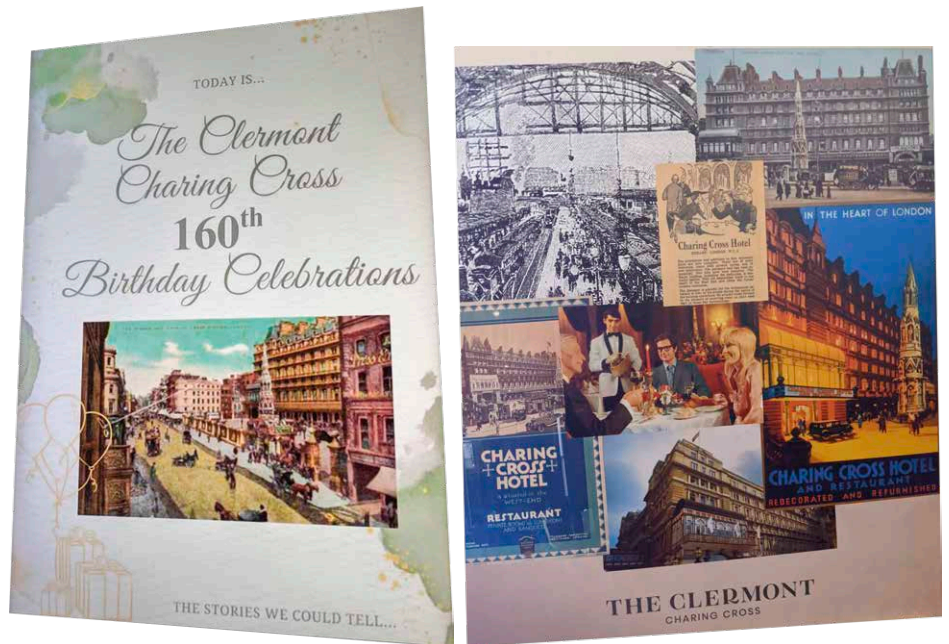
Heart of the city

To The Clermont, Charing Cross to celebrate the hotel's rich history 160 years after its establishment, coincidentally, on the 200th anniversary of the modern railway.

Entourage

Charing Cross railway station itself opened in 1864, taking its name from the Charing Cross road junction – the original heart of London. The junction marked the centre of the city, from which distances in London are still measured.

The hotel first opened shortly afterwards on 15 May 1865 with grand public rooms, the most popular of all, with balconies overlooking the main station concourse. At the turn of the last century, guests would often arrive with a large entourage, with servants accommodated at the very reasonable price of 2p a night!



Impressive

The hotel features an impressive grand staircase that runs through the centre of the hotel. Each step appears wider than a modern staircase because each step is evenly spaced so that guests of the 1860s – think of those Victorian dresses – wouldn't have to watch their footing as they descended.

The hotel survived bombing in the Blitz and has had numerous and appropriate refurbishments and additions in the modern age. It retains its allure and should be on any visitor's list for business and pleasure alike in the heart of the city.

www.theclermont.co.uk

THE CLERMONT
CHARING CROSS

Please join us for a special 160th celebration blending elegance, history, entertainment, and a special raffle.

	Date	Time
1865	15 th May 2025	5.30pm - 8.00pm
	Location	
1 st	The Clermont Charing Cross, Strand, London WC2N 5HX	

Please RSVP by 9th May to confirm your attendance.



SPONSORED COLUMN

Culture isn't a "nice to have" - it's your competitive edge



Running a business in London is not for the faint-hearted. In one of the world's most dynamic cities, success demands more than great products or services. It demands resilient authentic leadership and a thriving workplace culture.

Today's workforce has shifted. Millennials and Gen Z now make up nearly 60% of employees, and their expectations are clear: they want to work for companies that align with their values and purpose, support wellbeing, and offer inclusive, authentic leadership. Deloitte reports that nearly 50% of Millennials will reject a job offer if they feel a misalignment. Furthermore, Gallup reveals globally employee engagement fell to its lowest at 21% in 2024, with managers experiencing the biggest drop. That's an estimated £257bn annual loss in UK productivity.

Disengagement and misalignment are costing London businesses talent, productivity, and reputation. It's no surprise McKinsey report a 23% difference in the profitability of businesses with employee engagement scores in the top percentile, compared with the bottom. Culture isn't a "nice to have" - it's your competitive edge.

Leadership is no longer about authority, it's about authenticity, agility and the ability to inspire across differences. Companies that thrive invest in their most valuable asset, their people. They invest in culture not just performance, so people feel valued and connected to their work. They support their leaders to develop the skills, awareness and confidence to

lead differently, and they make wellbeing a priority in how they work and operate.

At Maaha People, we partner with forward thinking Business Owners and Leaders to turn these changing expectations into a competitive edge. We help you build a happy, healthy, high-performing workplace culture through a powerful blend of experiential leadership development, systemic Executive Coaching, and culture transformation.

We don't deliver off the shelf solutions. We co-create transformational experiences that shift behaviour and mindset. Our methods draw on neuroscience, systems thinking, and identity-led coaching to deliver deep, measurable results.

Our clients typically see:

- Over 119% increase in their leaders feeling more confident and authentic
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The benefits of employee volunteering

Following a recent YOU London conference, The Lady Mayoress of the City of London, Florence King, has called for companies to encourage employees to volunteer with uniformed youth groups, and to better support those already doing so. These groups, which provide mentorship, life skills and safe spaces for young people to grow and develop, all have waiting lists in London due to a shortage of adult volunteers.

Social cohesion

Corporate-supported volunteering can have a meaningful impact on uniformed youth groups, particularly those dependent on committed individuals to provide safe, structured activities, challenge, training, discipline, education and enjoyment. By encouraging employees to give time and skills to these organisations, a business can directly contribute to shaping future leaders and strengthening social cohesion.

Sense of purpose

Freeing employees to volunteer not only strengthens local communities but also fosters a sense of purpose and engagement within the workplace. There is evidence that businesses which encourage volunteering gain from increased employee satisfaction, well-being and productivity, greater team collaboration and positive brand reputation. One in three job seekers say they would prefer to apply for roles that offer volunteer leave.

Reactive

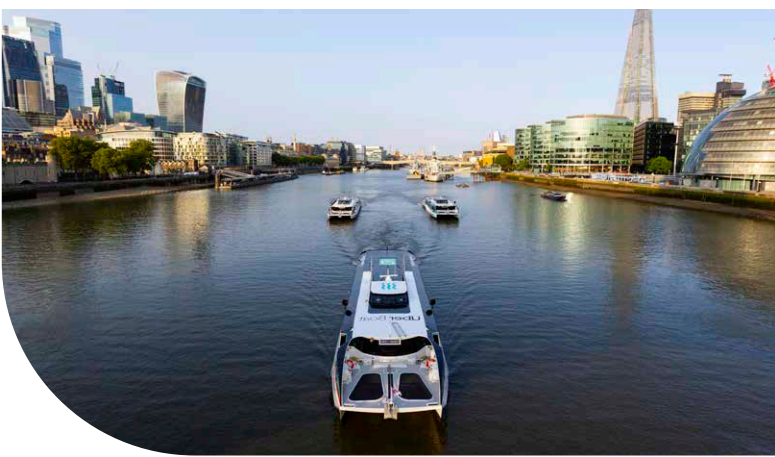
Research from *Benevity* and *Works4U* shows that employee volunteering in London, which has recently risen above pre-pandemic levels, is reactive, ad-hoc and not reflective of community priorities. The London Vision for Volunteering taskforce found that:

- 100 per cent of stakeholders engaged in the consultation recommended that employee volunteering should be promoted more.
- 95 per cent recommended that employers should do more to promote volunteering opportunities to their employees.
- 98.4 per cent of employees who had volunteered wished to do so again.
- 25 per cent of employees do not know how much time their employer offers for volunteering.

Opportunities

In addition to delivering face-to-face activities, volunteers are needed for administrative support to aid planning and act as trustees and treasurers; roles which can often be done in their own time or as part of a company employee volunteering scheme. There are a variety of opportunities for volunteers to be involved, dependent on their skill set and time available.

To learn more about uniformed youth groups in London and how to support them visit www.youlondon.org.uk



A river runs through it

London river bus service provider Uber Boats by Thames Clippers has secured a £59 million funding package from NatWest and Santander to support ongoing investment for its fleet and drydocking facilities.

Upgrade

The funding will support the business' investment plans over the next few years. They include plans for new vessels, an upgrade to the pier infrastructure and improvements to drydocking facilities. It is hoped the investment will support the wider transport network in London.

The facility will also help the business to expand services and increase the number of clean vessels that they employ on the Thames. Clean vessels are

water ferries which are powered by electricity.

High-speed

Thames Clippers was founded in 1999 with just one boat in operation. Since then, the water transport provider now operates 20 high-speed Thames river boats, with two further vessels in build, as well as an all-electric cross-river ferry, offering services from all major London piers.

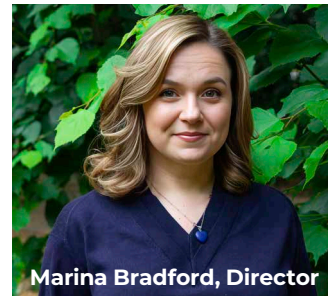
Growth

Passenger rates have been steadily climbing following the Covid pandemic. In 2022, rates were seven per cent higher than pre-Covid levels. In 2023, passenger rates grew by an additional 10 per cent. Last year more than four million people travelled with Thames Clipper and continued growth is expected.



SPONSORED COLUMN

Sustainability Isn't Just Carbon: Why Nature Loss Is Your Next Business Risk



Marina Bradford, Director

For many businesses, "sustainability" has become synonymous with carbon emissions. Reducing them remains critical, but it's only one piece of a much larger puzzle. Nature loss - the rapid decline of biodiversity and ecosystems - is another major impact, and an urgent risk that most businesses aren't prepared for.

From supply chain disruptions to rising insurance costs, nature-related risks are already showing up on balance sheets. Over half the world's economic output is moderately or highly dependent on nature, according to the World Economic Forum.

When you next pick up a sandwich, consider how many ecosystems and natural resources helped get it to your plate. All of these need to remain healthy if we are to continue enjoying these meals - but it is not just food. Industries such as construction, retail, cosmetics, tourism and hospitality and even finance rely on water systems, healthy soil, forests and pollinators.

Local nature matters too. Green space access, urban heat resilience, clean rivers and canals, and air quality are all foundational to our health and long-term economic viability.

The shift is underway. Nature is now treated as a financially material issue by investors and regulators. In the UK and beyond, businesses face increasing pressure to measure and disclose nature-related risks and impacts. For example, England's Biodiversity Net Gain, the UK's Sustainability Disclosure Requirements (SDR), the EU's Corporate Sustainability Reporting Directive (CSRD) and the global Taskforce on Nature-

related Financial Disclosures (TNFD), are reshaping expectations.

So where to start?

- **Map nature interfaces and dependencies:** What natural resources do your products, operations, or people rely on here and abroad? Remember, even data centres need water.
- **Understand impacts:** Do your operations or supply chains contribute to deforestation, water stress, or pollution? Could your products end up as waste?
- **Assess priorities:** Of these dependencies and impacts, which may pose risks to your business now, or in the near future? These might not just be physical risks: being unprepared to provide necessary data or other information to your customers, partners or lenders may result in financial costs.
- **Develop a plan:** Prepare to mitigate your priority risks and impacts to protect your business, and determine what you can do to become part of the solution.

At Bemari, we help businesses see the full picture and build practical strategies that align sustainability goals with long-term value. Nature action is not just about planting trees and supporting conservation work. It's about building business resilience and becoming a future-fit organisation.

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Overseas business opportunities

A selection of business co-operation offers made by companies wishing to work with UK firms taken from the Enterprise Europe Network Partnership Opportunities Database. To find out more about these and similar opportunities contact Innovate UK Business Growth at <https://iuk-business-connect.org.uk/business-growth-contact/> or call on 0300 123 3066



Hungary

University offers a novel, non-invasive bioimpedance-based technology for breast cancer detection. Validated in animal models with 97% measurement accuracy, this solution improves diagnostic precision without tissue damage. The organisation seeks partners for research or commercial agreements with technical assistance.

REF: TOHU20250606012



Greece

An innovative SME, located in Patras, produces sustainable personal care products (natural cosmetics) derived from coffee by-products. The SME is currently seeking partnerships with distributors operating in the retail, pharmaceutical and cosmetics sectors, across Europe and beyond.

REF: BOGR20250507013



Finland

An SME develops and manufactures LED equipped luminaires for outdoor industrial areas. The products can be tailored for client's needs. The company is searching for distributors and agents which has contacts to ports, industrial companies with outdoor areas, and building contractors.

REF: BOFI20250429022



Romania

The company, specialized in architectural design, consulting, and mobile LiDAR scanning, is offering its services to international partners under commercial and subcontracting agreements. The business is open to collaboration on infrastructure, construction and urban development projects.

REF: BORO20250529015



Sweden

A technology company has developed a platform that helps food producers, logistics providers, and retailers reduce food waste in the cold chain. The solution offers real-time shelf-life insights, a surplus marketplace, and donation tools. The company seeks partners under commercial, outsourcing, and license agreements.

REF: BOSE20250603003



Croatia

A research and consulting company with a focus on climate change seeks partners in Europe and beyond. The SME is interested in collaborating with like-minded entities from the private and public sectors under subcontracting agreements to jointly deliver impactful

projects and initiatives.

REF: BOHR20250502002



Poland

Documentation holder of a range of certified medical devices and cosmetic products seeks qualified distribution partners interested in producing and marketing these products under their own brand name.

REF: BOPL20250605010



Spain

A technological centre dedicated to promoting sustainable and competitive marine and maritime sectors is actively seeking collaboration opportunities under the HORIZON-CL6-2025-01-BIODIV-05 call. The centre brings extensive experience in connectivity analysis, habitat modelling, and restoration assessment, and is eager to partner with organisations pursuing innovative solutions in these areas.

REF: TOES20250606011



The Netherlands

The patented technology developed by this business delivers up to 60% less peak pressure on the knees compared to standard foam protectors, providing significant health benefits for

craftsmen who frequently work in a kneeling position. The technology is also applicable to other products where pressure distribution helps to relieve strain on various parts of the body.

REF: BONL20250603002



Germany

A company offers its services in the field of mapping, surveying, documentation and investigation by means of airborne laser scanning, thermography and multi-spectral data acquisition using airplanes and helicopters. The company has over 25 years of experience in the survey process with a full workflow. This includes acquisition, post-processing for classification and final evaluation.

REF: TODE20250606009



Italy

An agricultural company operating under challenging agro-climatic conditions, with a strong focus on environmentally conscious practices and proven experience in sustainable water use, soil fertility management, and diversified cropping systems is seeking to join a consortium as a demonstration partner for the PRIMA 2025 call.

REF: TOIT20250604010

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India, the UK and the world

The recent free trade agreement (FTA) between the UK and India has been termed 'historic'. It has certainly been a long time coming, with negotiations involving four British Prime Ministers but just one Indian one! Discussions on the deal featured in India Week in May, organised by Pratik Dattani's economic consultancy firm. The week is described – accurately – as “an annual get-together of change-makers, policy and business leaders for high-level discussions on pertinent topics.”

Cultural note

It began on a cultural note with a celebration of the burgeoning success of Indian-origin film makers in the world beyond Bollywood, hugely successful as it is. Gurinder Chadha OBE and her captivating film *Bend it like Beckham* is a prime example in the UK. Canada can boast Richie Metha, film director and writer, whose *Siddharth* and *Delhi Crime* have won multiple awards and received rave reviews.

The elegant library at One Birdcage Walk (home of the Institution of Mechanical Engineers) was the venue for a joint reception with LCCI's Asian Business Association (ABA), appropriately just round the corner from



Bend It Like Beckham (UK Film Poster). © 2002 Kintop Pictures / FilmFour / Redbus Film Distribution. Used under fair use for illustrative purposes.

Gandhi's statue (below right) in Parliament Square. ABA chair Tony Matharu and Pratik Dattani hosted the event (see page 54) which included a speech from the engaging Pradyot Bikram Manikya, erstwhile head of the Royal Family in the northeastern Indian state of Tripura.

Mobbed

KT Rama Rao, a member of the legislative assembly and former minister in the perhaps better-known state of Telangana (Hyderabad is its capital) was a speaker at the Ideas for India conference which, with the obligatory black-tie dinner, closed the week. KTR (as he is universally known) is president of the BRS party and is clearly popular. He was mobbed, film-star style, at the Royal Lancaster Hotel by delegates keen to get a selfie with him.

Significant

The FTA was a key talking point throughout the week. It's the UK's largest since Brexit and India's most significant for many years also. Across trade in goods, trade in services and investment flows, the FTA promises much. But India's GDP per capita is still only around \$2,500, significantly behind China's. And India is not a market of

1.5 billion for most British businesses – instead it's many smaller markets in one.



Pratik Dattani

Informative

In the session titled 'India in a multipolar world', the country's ambition to become a more influential player, a world power (or Vishwaguru) was examined by an impressive panel that included Lord Simon

McDonald, former head of the diplomatic service, and Raghav Chadha, a member of the Indian Parliament. Other topics covered in a day of fascinating and informative sessions included doing business with India, regional security and the future of ESG.

www.economicpolicygroup.com





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Docksiders

Thirty exporters joined LCCI's recent *Behind-the-Scenes* tour to DP World London Gateway and were treated to a briefing from commercial manager Mark Viner on how the company is optimising port operations, integrating cutting-edge technologies and enhancing efficiencies to meet the evolving needs of modern supply chains.



Impact

Viner also explained the environmental impact of their operations and the future of sustainable logistics, especially how DP World is making a valuable contribution to sustainability through its new Carbon Inset Programme.

The tour included a coach trip around the port with its facilities described by Lexi Laybourn, the company's product development manager.

www.dpworld.com



Academic

Enterprise Europe Network Internationalisation Academy – Izmir 2025

Angelina Markousi, LCCI's Innovate UK Business Growth project manager, was recently invited to Izmir to present the opportunities in UK-EU collaboration for businesses looking to grow and scale their

innovations in the respective markets.

The event included participants from across the Enterprise Europe Network ecosystem spanning 54 countries, including the UK which is an 'international network partner'.

<https://een.ec.europa.eu>



The future of BPO in Africa

| by Osita Oparaugo



Osita Oparaugo is founder and chief executive of Doballi, a Dubai-based recruitment solution powered by Afrovision Technology

www.doballi.com

In an era of rapid digital transformation and shifting business priorities, the global business process outsourcing (BPO) industry is evolving at an unprecedented pace. Once dominated by traditional outsourcing powerhouses like India and the Philippines, the spotlight is turning toward a new and promising frontier – Africa.

Momentum

Driven by digital transformation, automation, and the rise of remote work, companies seek agile, cost-effective, and scalable outsourcing solutions. This shift isn't just about cost-cutting but also about access to diverse talent pools, time zone advantages, and tech-savvy workforces.

Africa is gaining momentum. It offers a young, educated, and digitally native workforce. Governments and private players across the continent are investing in infrastructure, training, and policy frameworks to attract global BPO contracts.

Inclusive

As the world decentralises operations and embraces distributed talent, the BPO landscape is evolving. It is more global, digital, and inclusive than ever before.

Valued at \$285.76 billion in 2024 and projected to reach over \$544 billion by 2032, the global BPO market is being redefined by:

- Cost optimisation through strategic outsourcing
- Breakthrough technologies like AI, automation, and cloud computing
- A global, remote-ready workforce
- The need for business agility and scalable service models.

While opportunities abound, challenges like data privacy, rising costs in traditional hubs, and the demand for service consistency have created a compelling case for diversifying outsourcing footprints.

Rising star

The global BPO industry is dramatically shifting. While India and the Philippines remain essential players, the spotlight turns toward Africa, a continent brimming with untapped potential, digital transformation, and a rising pool of skilled, young talent.

Talent

Companies are looking beyond conventional outsourcing destinations because of technological advancements, cost pressures, and the rise of remote work. They seek flexibility, scalability, and talent diversity. Africa is meeting this demand with its growing digital infrastructure, competitive labour costs, and multilingual workforce.

Africa is confidently stepping into this gap. With over 60 per cent of its population under 25, the continent boasts a young, educated, multilingual, and tech-savvy workforce. Countries like Nigeria, Kenya, Rwanda, Ghana, and South Africa are home to thriving tech hubs and startup ecosystems supporting a BPO-ready environment.

The advantages are clear:

- Highly skilled talent pools at competitive costs
- Cultural adaptability and language diversity
- Strong government backing for digital transformation
- Growing investment in power and internet infrastructure

Africa is no longer just a consumer of global services—it's becoming a provider.

Win-win for businesses and Africa

For global enterprises, partnering with African BPO professionals means:

- Access to affordable, scalable, high-quality services
- Enhanced diversity and innovation
- Round-the-clock service coverage.

For African youth, it's a chance to participate in the global digital economy – earning, growing, and contributing to their communities.

Africa is ready

The future of BPO is not just about outsourcing – it's about innovative sourcing, tapping into new talent ecosystems, driving inclusive growth, and unlocking new levels of agility in a fast-changing world.

Africa is poised to become a key player in the next chapter of global outsourcing. Let's stop thinking of Africa as a future opportunity. Africa is now.

Uber cool Leipzig – Germany's tech hotspot



by Bindiya Verma

What's in a nickname? Well, if you're a city competing for investment, quite a lot.

The City of Music. City of Books. Creative City. City of Culture. City of Freedom. Media City. The City of the Peaceful Revolution. These are all epithets associated with Germany's fastest-growing city ... Leipzig.

Deep foundations

Just an hour south of the German capital, Leipzig has also been described as being 'cooler than Berlin and more hip than Munich' by Lonely Planet; and 'Cool kid town' by The New York Times. These aren't marketing slogans dreamed up by economic developers though. They each have deep foundations in the make-up of the city and are the reason why it's such a hotspot for tech and creative businesses.

Leipzig's creative roots range from classical composers and conductors such as Bach, Wagner, Schumann, Mendelssohn and Mahler. At perhaps the other end of the scale, Wave-Gotik-Treffen is the biggest gathering of gothic music bands and fans in the world!

Repurposed

Tech companies from Shoreditch to Soho will feel at home in Leipzig. Stunning workplaces in refurbished iconic buildings; repurposed industrial warehouses and a genuine creative community. This vibrant cluster in the Leipzig Region includes 4,500 media and creative companies employing 44,000 people.

Diverse

The collaboration in the creative ecosystem in Leipzig is exemplified by Spinlab, one of Europe's top ranking tech accelerator programmes which partners

with HHL Leipzig Graduate School of Management, and a diverse partner portfolio of over 25 corporations and research institutions.

An abundance of creative talent is what is driving companies to move to Leipzig. A major university city that attracts students from across Germany and beyond, Leipzig's average age is markedly lower than other major German cities. Leipzig has been called 'one of the best cities in Germany for expats'.

Trading

The region is famed for its cosmopolitan and friendly nature. Leipzig has been an important trading city since at least the 12th century. An international mindset and open-mindedness are part of the city's character. More than one in ten people here have an international background and there are over 1,200 Brits and 1,500 Americans in Leipzig. With Lancaster University being the first British university to open a campus in Germany, there's no shortage of young English-speaking talent.

Creative cluster

Leipzig's media and creative industries cluster has seven areas of focus:

- digital technologies
- printing and publishing
- broadcasting and film
- arts and music
- advertising and PR
- architecture and design
- trade shows and services.

Media City Leipzig is a major attraction for companies in this sector and is the largest production complex for film, TV, radio and stage in Central Germany and home to more than 90 media-related companies.

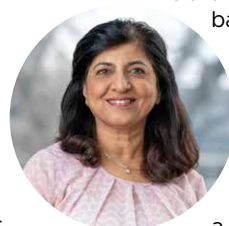


The Leipzig Region is also home to a thriving art scene with its colourful gallery and studio landscape located around the old Leipzig cotton mill, the Spinnerei, a 10 hectare large former cotton factory of over one hundred artist studios.

Major player

With a focus on digital art, Kunstkraftwerk Leipzig is the first permanent museum in Germany entirely dedicated to digital and multimedia arts. With immersive exhibitions, digital installations and events – including a Banksy Exhibition in 2022 – it is the hotspot for creatives and art lovers based in a former power station dating back to 1900.

The region's sporting credentials are on the rise thanks to the city's famous RB Leipzig football team but success is not limited to grass. Thanks to eSports, Leipzig is a major player in gaming too.



Bindiya Verma is UK representative of Invest Region Leipzig

www.invest-region-leipzig.com

UK-EU summit marks new beginning

The deal agreed at the UK-EU Leaders' Summit in May has been widely approved by the British Chambers of Commerce (BCC). The organisation's director general Shevaun Haviland said that the agreement marked a turning point in UK/EU relations which put the trade relationship at the forefront of the partnership

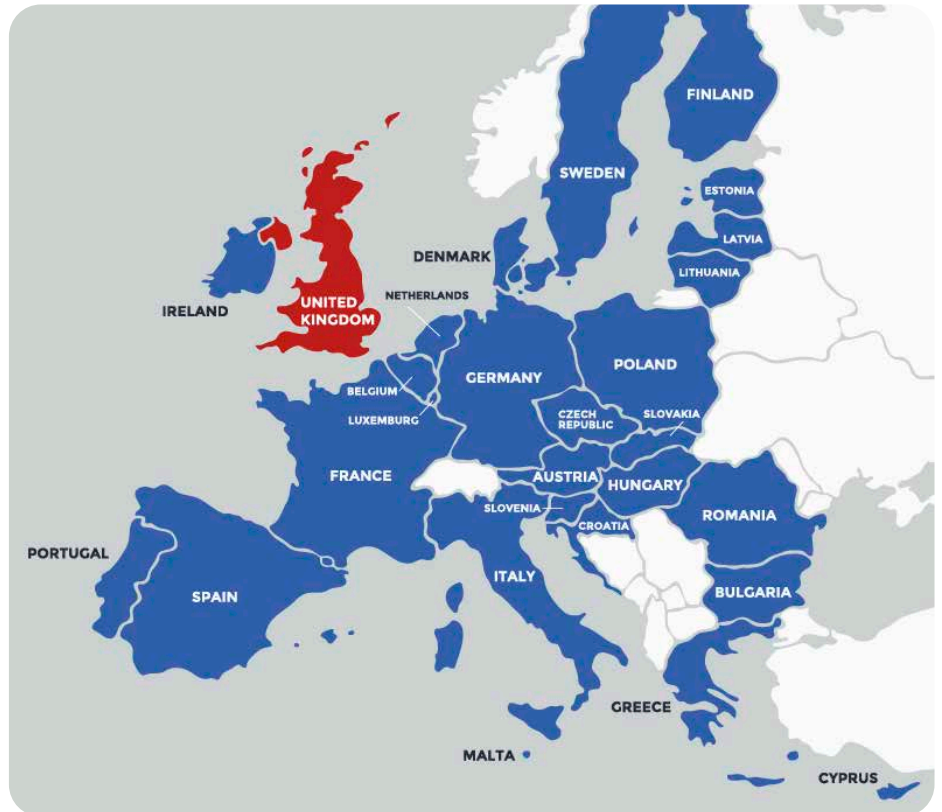
"For four years, businesses have fought hard to sustain sales to the EU in the face of a rising tide of costs and paperwork which has severely dented their competitiveness. A permanent deal to remove unnecessary checks on food and drink exports in both directions is a huge boost; it will cut costs, reduce waste and increase sales.

Safeguard

"It was also essential that a defence and security pact was agreed to involve UK defence companies in wider projects to safeguard our democracies. It is vital now that work starts on agreeing access to joint procurement funding.

Haviland continued: "Making quick progress on the use of E-gates at passport control will make life easier for businesspeople who cross EU borders on a regular basis and also boost UK tourism.

"This summit also saw encouraging movement on other issues that have long been a thorn in the side of many firms. A commitment to focus on securing a youth mobility scheme and linking our emission trading schemes will make life simpler and less costly for many businesses.



Key asks

Haviland said that the BCC had seven key asks of government going into the negotiations which were based on four years of research and analysis involving thousands of firms. She said that the deal was good news on five of them. "But we must not stop here; this agreement must be the foundation on which we aspire to build a much stronger business relationship going forward. That can only be of benefit to all our economies."

Youth mobility

LCCI chief executive Karim Fatehi OBE had previously urged both parties to reach an agreement on youth mobility to support the growth and competitiveness of our economic communities.

He said: "Enabling young people to work and travel across borders would provide a vital talent pipeline for London's businesses, particularly in sectors facing labour and skills shortages. With businesses having to weather such challenging conditions, a mobility scheme would bolster resilience and support economic growth in London and beyond."

"Such a deal would also strengthen cultural ties and foster long-term collaboration between the UK and Europe, building the base for future reciprocal deals. This is the time for the government to adopt a pragmatic solution that benefits young people, employers and the wider economy."

The BCC's TCA Four Years On report sets out 26 recommendations to improve UK-EU trade

www.britishchambers.org.uk



Magical mystery tour

London Business Matters readers deserve the occasional and, I suggest, regular chance to put matters of business to one side and lose themselves in a work of fiction. That is not to say that *The Midnight Carousel* does not feature entrepreneurship, balance sheets and business plans and indeed the author is very comfortable with such subjects. This is not surprising as, having read history at Oxford, Fiza Saeed McLynn entered the world of finance and trained as an accountant before changing career.

Switchback

For this we should be thankful as this debut novel is a gem. It takes the reader on an incredible switchback ride between Paris in 1900 and Chicago in the 1920s, via Canvey Island in 1910. We witness the intertwined lives of an ever-resourceful heroine – Maisie – and Detective Laurent Bisset as they observe the bizarre disappearance of fairgoers who have

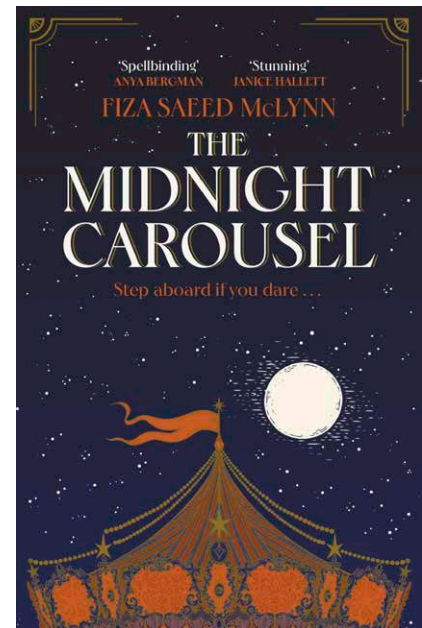
ridden the eponymous – and startlingly well-crafted – fairground carousel.

Intricate

The book is an intricate puzzle – a mystery to be solved. It is also a love story and an historical novel which features grief, loss, revenge, success and new beginnings with actions whose consequences ripple back and forth across the Atlantic. Its *dramatis personae* include Dickensian-style orphans who are ‘looked after’ on Canvey Island, the fairground community (‘Lucky Nate’ and ‘Madame Rose’ amongst others) and the crowd who frequent the Chicago jazz clubs in the 1920s.

Dénouement

Maisie’s personal mystery around her origins is gradually revealed in tandem with the mystery of the carousel in a surprising and effective dénouement. Readers will not be disappointed and may be reluctant to turn back to their own balance sheets and business plans!



The Midnight Carousel by Fiza Saeed McLynn
Published by Penguin Michael Joseph
www.penguin.co.uk

New leaders required

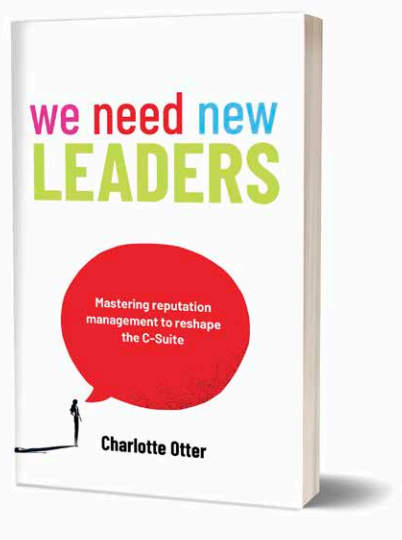
Despite the growing demand for diversity in the C-suite, leaders from diverse backgrounds remain dramatically under-represented. Those who break through often have shorter tenures than their peers.

In her timely new book, *We Need New Leaders*, executive communications expert Charlotte Otter argues that a key factor often overlooked is the importance of reputation management and strategic communication; how these aspiring leaders are seen, heard and trusted.

Roadmap

Combining extensive, original research with over 20 years of professional experience, including leading a global executive communications team, Otter offers an empowering roadmap for diverse talent to navigate systemic barriers to excel and succeed at the top.

We Need New Leaders is more than a leadership manual, however. It’s a call to action for a new generation of diverse, authentic leaders to rise and thrive in



the C-suite, on their own terms. Rather than forcing diverse talent to conform to outdated leadership norms, the author encourages them to embrace their identities, own their narratives and build strong, authentic reputations.

Insights

The book provides practical tools for aspiring leaders to master their public presence, shape how they’re perceived, and bridge the gap between potential and influence. Otter makes the case that authentic, inclusive leadership is not just possible – it’s urgently needed.

We Need New Leaders is both a guidebook and manifesto for those ready to be seen and heard as the leaders they truly are. In an era where organisations are under pressure to deliver real inclusion and impact, it delivers essential insights for HR leaders, boards and executives alongside powerful tools for the leaders of tomorrow.

We Need New Leaders: mastering reputation management to reshape the C-suite by Charlotte Otter

Published by Practical Inspiration Publishing

www.practicalinspiration.com

Cleankill staff put their best feet forward for charity



Cleankill's Josh Bates and friend



Cleankill's Stephanie Douch and family

Big-hearted Cleankill Pest Control staff have been walking to raise money for worthy causes.

A stellar group of individuals got together to raise money for a much-loved Cleankill Pest Control employee Tony Williams who sadly passed away this year.

Tony's wife Sarah got together a team of his friends and family (nicking themselves Tony's Supergirls) to take part in the

13-mile, midnight walk on the 7th June to raise money for St Catherine's Hospice.

St Catherine's Hospice in West Sussex provides expert care and support for patients and their families living with a life-limiting condition. They cared for Tony in his final stages of his fight against cancer. His friends and family have said the care and love the hospice gave to Tony and his family was "unbelievable and fantastically lovely".

Tony was a loving husband, brother, uncle, amazing friend and incredible father to three boys. He worked for Cleankill for over 10 years and was a much-loved employee and friend. His work colleague Martin recalls: "I met Tony three years ago and knew very quickly that we would be firm friends, which we were, inside and outside of work. Anybody who met him loved him - he was a funny, lovable guy with a cheeky smile. He made every day a great day to be at work and was a very experienced employee of Cleankill. Away from work he loved nothing more than spending time with Sarah and the boys." Tony was diagnosed with cancer and sadly passed away on the 15th February 2025.

In the meantime, two Cleankill colleagues have been raising money for the Royal Marsden. Administrator Stephanie Douch and Surveyor Josh

Bates both walked the 15 miles between The Royal Marsden in Chelsea and the Royal Marsden in Sutton.

Josh explains: "In an attempt to give back and help those who have it a lot worse, myself and my best friend James Sanger-Brown completed the walk to thank the staff who have looked after me over the past year." Josh and James raised their target amount of £650.

Stephanie walked with her brother-in-law and sister-in-law to raise money for her father-in-law who is being treated at the Marsden for prostate cancer. She said: "It's the first time I've done anything like that and it was quite a challenge, especially as it was the hottest day of the year so far!" The team raised an incredible £1,350.

For further information go to www.cleankill.co.uk or call 0800 056 5477.



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The AI revolution

| David Banaghan looks at which sectors will be disrupted the most

The impact of AI – artificial intelligence – is likely to vary from industry to industry. According to a report by Goldman Sachs, administration, legal professions, architecture, and engineering are among the sectors likely to be worst affected, with up to 46 per cent of tasks in administrative sectors potentially replaced by AI.

In contrast, more practical sectors involving manual labour, such as construction and cleaning are predicted to be less impacted.

Retraining

As AI continues to evolve, a significant portion of the UK workforce will need to adapt. The Office for National Statistics estimates that up to 1.5 million jobs in England alone are at high risk of automation. This staggering figure underscores the urgent need for a nationwide retraining initiative.

The next decade will see a massive shift in the skills required by

employers. We're looking at potentially millions of workers needing to retrain or upskill to remain competitive in the job market. It's a challenge, but also an opportunity for those willing to embrace change.

Salary shakeups

The integration of AI into the workplace is likely to have a polarising effect on salaries.

On one hand, workers with AI-complementary skills could see their value – and wages – soar. According to a study from researchers at the Oxford Internet Institute and the Center for Social Data Science, University of Copenhagen, workers with artificial intelligence skills command salaries 21 per cent higher than average, and potentially up to 40 per cent higher.

On the other hand, those in easily automated roles may face downward pressure on wages. A report by PwC suggests that AI could contribute up

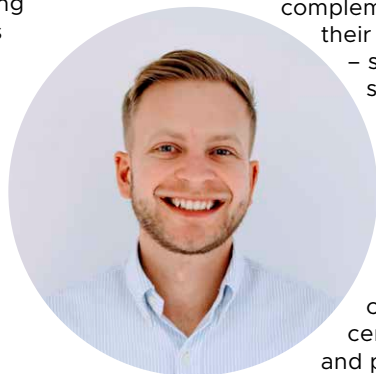
“We're looking at potentially millions of workers needing to retrain or upskill to remain competitive in the job market. It's a challenge, but also an opportunity for those willing to embrace change.”

to £232 billion to the UK economy by 2030, but the distribution of this wealth will largely depend on how well businesses and workers adapt to the new paradigm.

Skills for the AI age

As traditional roles evolve or disappear, certain skillsets will become increasingly valuable. The jobs of the future will likely prioritise:

- Emotional intelligence and interpersonal skills
- Creative problem-solving and innovation



SPONSORED COLUMN

Associated companies can now be made liable for Defective Premises Act claims

We are starting to see new cases resulting from changes to the law which allowed for associated companies to be made liable for claims under the Defective Premises Act 1972 (DPA) if the original development company has been wound up, and extended the retrospective time limit for DPA claims from six to 30 years.

The Building Safety Act 2022 (BSA) gave the courts powers to issue a Building Liability Order (BLO), which can extend specific liabilities for one company to other associated companies.

This was introduced because of the practice of setting up subsidiary companies to own and manage individual developments, which could be wound up once the construction was completed, with the consequence that it left the developer group with no long-term civil liability.

If an application for a BLO is successful, an associated company can now be required to meet the original developer's obligations as if they were its own.

The DPA (s1) imposes on those involved in constructing a dwelling a duty of care to ensure work is done in a workmanlike or professional manner, and with proper materials, so the dwelling is fit for habitation when it is completed and for a reasonable period after.

If it is not, a claim for compensation can be brought by the person who originally commissioned the dwelling, or others with a legal or financial interest in it including the owner, a homeowner or a leaseholder.

Claims were previously time limited to six years, but the BSA extended this to 15

years for claims arising after June 28, 2022, and 30 years where the date someone was entitled to bring an action occurred before that.

The BSA also substantially expanded the type of work subject to DPA claims in the future to include refurbishment and other work to existing dwellings.

Bishopsgate Law can advise and represent builders, developers and other construction professionals facing DPA claims brought under the new regime, as part of the wide range of legal services we provide for our construction sector clients.

We work with housebuilders, materials suppliers, contractors, specialist sub-contractors, ground works, piling contractors, roofing contractors, and construction professionals such as project managers, architects, quantity surveyors, and engineers, to try and settle disputes, and we can provide a mediation service as an alternative of going to court or arbitration.

Christopher Cox, senior solicitor specialising in construction and commercial property disputes at Bishopsgate Law.
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E-mail: **enquiries@bishopsgatelaw.com**.
www.bishopsgatelaw.com.



BishopsgateLaw

- Data literacy and analysis
- AI management and ethical oversight
- Adaptability and continuous learning

The most valuable employees of tomorrow will be those who can work alongside AI, leveraging its capabilities while providing human insights. Demand is growing for 'AI trainers' and 'AI-human collaboration specialists' – roles that didn't exist just a few years ago.

The human touch

As AI reshapes the job market, it's crucial to consider the impact on employee wellbeing and job satisfaction. While some fear a dystopian future of human obsolescence, others see AI as a tool to enhance job quality by eliminating mundane tasks and allowing workers to focus on more fulfilling aspects of their roles.

A survey by Accenture found that 61 per cent of workers believe AI will have a positive impact on their work. However, this optimism comes with a caveat: the transition must be managed carefully to avoid exacerbating inequality and job insecurity.

PwC's 2023 *Hopes & Fears* survey shows that many workers believe AI will have a positive impact on their work and career with 31 per cent foreseeing that AI will increase their productivity/efficiency and 21 per cent anticipating the creation of new job opportunities.

Powerful

The AI revolution is not a future prospect – it's happening now. For the UK to thrive in this new landscape, a concerted effort from government, businesses, and educational institutions is crucial. We need robust retraining programmes, forward-thinking policies, and a shift in our educational focus to equip the next generation with AI-ready skills.

The future of work in the UK will be defined by our ability to adapt and innovate. AI is not the enemy; it's a powerful tool that, if utilised properly, has the potential to increase productivity, new job creation, and enhanced job satisfaction.

David Banaghan is co-founder of recruitment software specialists Occupop

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Too hot to handle?

I Terri Bloore on London's initiatives to gear up for climate action this summer



Terri Bloore is managing partner at Finn Partners

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The summer is a busy time for businesses committed to net zero plans and climate change initiatives. For example, London has *London Climate Action Week*, *Innovation Zero World*, and LCCI's *City Week*, to name just a few. These events will bring together businesses, academics, media and policy makers to drive climate action forward. Businesses of all sizes are wondering how to communicate their sustainability strategies and the realities of meeting climate goals.

Need for action

Meeting net zero goals is no mean feat. London has ambitious climate goals, aiming for net-zero carbon emissions by 2030. The city is also working towards a zero-emission transport system by 2050. Despite these goals, research has shown that the world is not on track to meet the climate targets outlined in the Paris Agreement, highlighting an urgent need for action.

London businesses must celebrate achievements so far, as well as call for more industry support to tackle climate change. So how do you ensure communication is tailored to your customers and stakeholders, which is both honest and modest in its approach?

Communicate urgency

Studies have shown that explaining the human causes of climate change increases public support for urgent action. Businesses must therefore explain – simply and clearly – what customers and wider stakeholders must do to effect change. Make sure you let people know what needs to happen right now in order to solve the climate crisis – and emphasise that this action can't wait.

Collaborative efforts

Collaboration is needed at every level of society to meet the climate crisis. It is crucial that businesses highlight partnerships and wider stakeholder engagement. This adds credibility and encourages others to work more closely. Climate action requires strong and long-lasting partnerships, assertive leadership, investment in people, mutual trust, and reliability. All this takes time and cannot be

done alone. The climate crisis is not just a problem for governments and the international community, and so it is important that you communicate the role of business and customers – bring them along with you.

Be transparent

Sustainable communications need to be modest and honest. Communicating about the climate involves acknowledging uncertainties, transparency about actions and setbacks. The modest approach will present information in a way that is relatable, local, and personal, rather than focusing on abstract, global issues. This approach fosters engagement and encourages individual and community-level action. It is crucial to acknowledge that more needs to be done by identifying the roadblocks in the way and communicating an action orientated strategy. Even if the plan produced is flawed, this approach builds trust and allows space to learn from mistakes.

Painting pictures

They say a picture paints a thousand words. Using infographics, videos and creative case studies, you can get your story across effectively. Successful climate communication involves presenting data in accessible ways, combining it with compelling narratives, and connecting with audiences on a personal level. Use action-oriented data to empower individuals to take meaningful steps. Data gives the stories credibility; stories give the data meaning.

Call to action

Be clear on what you want your audience to do. What are you asking of them and how can they do it? Keep it simple – don't overcomplicate but be forceful.

It is important that any business that decides to participate in the climate debate does so thoughtfully. Greenwashing or badly timed stories can end up with fines, boycotts and public distrust. The message, tone and channels must be right. Throughout the course of this year, there are plenty of platforms for businesses to tell their ESG story, but it must be considered and thoughtful.



Diamond days

These are promising times for Crystal Palace. In May the local football team beat hot favourites Manchester City in the FA Cup Final – their first major trophy for 31 years

Soon afterwards, Mayor Sadiq Khan revealed a £130 million plan to redevelop the National Sports Centre. *LBM* covered the decline of the centre in its September 2023 edition and reported on Khan's calls for "innovative business plans for the viability of the project".

Go-to

Now the Mayor is talking of bringing Diamond League athletics and other big events to the venue which, for a period after its opening in 1964, was London's 'go-to' facility for such occasions.

Transformative

Christofi Christou, president of the South East London Chamber of

56 The Big Read
The Big Read 57

National Sports Centre – broken-down palace?

Paul Bartholomew looks into the history of south-east London's once celebrated sporting venue, charts its decline, and gives hope for a better future

When a national sports centre opened in Crystal Palace Park in 1964, it heralded the advent of a bright, new world of sport. Its radically modernist design reflected Prime Minister Harold Wilson's ambitions to promote the 'visible hand of technology'. With an Olympic-size swimming pool, a 400-metre 8-lane running track and a 10,000-capacity, the National Sports Centre (NSC) in Crystal Palace hosted both national and international events. The building itself is listed as a Grade 2 national heritage building, described by Historic Britain as 'exceptional in the breadth of its vision'.

Promises
The passage of time has not been kind to this beacon of athletic promise on the hills of south-east London. The athletics stadium has fallen into disrepair and had to be temporarily closed.

Lack of investment
Maintaining and operating a large sports facility is expensive, and lack of financial support, and financial constraints meant that necessary upgrades to the NSC were not carried out. By the time of the 2012 London Olympics, lack of investment both

In November 2022 when it was discovered that the concrete pillars that held up the floodlights were unsafe, they have either been removed, with local athletes who now use the stadium only able to train during daylight hours. In the sports centre itself the swimming pool has been closed, the running track is in a state of disrepair.

What went wrong with this former national treasure? And is the decline terminal?

The Crystal Palace Park in which the NSC is situated has a long history of hosting national sports events including Olympic competitions, the 1968 European athletics championships, the London Grand Prix, and women's football finals.

Crystal Palace football club was based in the park from their formation in 1906 until 1913 when the football pitch was requisitioned for the war effort. The club submitted plans to demolish the athletics stadium and build a new Premier League standard football stadium in its place, proposing to move their home ground from Selhurst Park to the Crystal Palace Park. The Mayor's management withdrew the plans in 2017 and developed Selhurst Park instead.

Developing usage and attendance put further financial strain on the local authorities and spectators who could no longer rely on big ticket events for income. Unlike the Crystal Palace Park, which once hosted musical acts such as Pink Floyd and Bob Marley before falling into disrepair but has successfully re-emerged first as a festival event and the Crystal Palace Park Concert Platform, the NSC has not been able to secure the



Welcome to Crystal Palace National Sports Centre
Open to the Community

BETTER
number of London

The facilities and the local transport infrastructure had removed its competitive edge, sending it to crumble as a leading sports destination. The focus was on the London Stadium in Stratford which offered better amenities for the 2012 London Olympics, the only Olympic event held at Crystal Palace was the women's handball.

Calling this a once-in-a-generation development which will secure its future for decades to come, Khan is nonetheless insistent that a larger scale refurbishment is needed, and this depends on a viable working business plan for its success.

Significantly higher funds needed to restore the building and stadium to its former stature as an athletics destination.

Viable
Up to this summer, that is, when Mayor of London Sadiq Khan announced a £10 million fund to rebuild the swimming pool and diving centre, and refurbish the athletics stadium. Calling this a once-in-a-generation development which will secure its future for decades to come, Khan is nonetheless insistent that a larger scale refurbishment is needed, and this depends on a viable working business plan for its success.

Helen Nicholson, vice-president of the South East London Chamber of Commerce has commented: "This is excellent news as the centre approaches its sixtieth anniversary. It missed out on the Olympics due to insufficient transport links, but now the Overground is in place, there is connectivity across the TL network."

Inward flow
What has changed now to guarantee the funds will not be sunk into a long-making historical relic? For a start, transport links to Crystal Palace, once degraded by the thick city of the South London suburbs, have dramatically improved in the last decade with the advent of the Overground line, with rapid links to Docklands, the Elizabeth line and the London Underground network.

The wider suburban area from the Crystal Palace Triangle to Sydenham and Perge that went into a period of decline after the burning down of Joseph Khan's Crystal Palace exhibition is now attracting an influx of young, vibrant and aspirational professionals with their families.

New London venue?
The troubled London Stadium has its own issues as an athletics destination. Currently leased to West Ham FC, the costs of converting the stadium from a football arena to an athletics venue are so high as £3 million per event. By investing in a dedicated stadium in Crystal Palace, improvements in infrastructure are directed at upgrading facilities and reducing operating costs. And UK athletics may be looking for a new London venue if the West Ham ownership plans full control of the London Stadium and rebranding it as a state-of-the-art modern Premier League football ground.

However, some are asking, when Mayor Khan calls for innovative business plans for the viability of the project, does he mean a sell-off of the venue? Previous attempts to commercialise ownership of the park were thwarted by fierce opposition from the local, Democratic Socialist Party. The wider sports community are welcoming Khan's announcement, many would be surprised that there is a hidden catch.

Paul Bartholomew is director of Culture Direct
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Commerce, sees this as a transformative moment for the local community which will "elevate the borough's profile on the national stage and inject renewed energy into our

local economy. From increased footfall for high-street businesses to new opportunities in hospitality, retail and tourism, this is a win for everyone in south east London."

Smoothing the path to M&A

| by Kris Venkatesh



Kris Venkatesh is managing director at Rayyar Global

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“ **The process of a merger and/or acquisition can be complicated yet delicate. It is said that a business might only complete one M&A transaction in its entire lifetime, adding a great deal of pressure for all parties involved.**

An M&A advisor not only helps to source the deal but also makes sure that the transaction runs smoothly. They can either advise the buy-side and help raise capital for the acquisition alongside completing the due diligence or advise the sell-side and help prepare the business for sale and in maximise its value. Here are some key benefits of using an M&A advisor.

Strategic fit

One of the key areas where an advisor adds value is by making sure that the acquisition is a strategic fit for both parties and that there is long term alignment in the merger or acquisition. Academic research estimated that the failure rates in M&A deals ranged between 50 per cent and 80 per cent and that ‘strategic fit’ was of great relevance to the success of a deal.

Completing a deal can be complex and time is of the essence. Using an advisor helps the existing management team carry out the day-to-day operations of the business and not having to take time out to focus on the deal. They can be rest assured that the advisor will focus on getting the best possible outcome by creating a win-win situation for both companies.

An advisor also helps with deal structuring and working with other service providers such as lawyers. This help to ensure that the deal is compliant and consistent communication is maintained with all parties.

Maximise value

The valuation of a business varies

based on several factors including sector and market prices, potential income generated from future revenues and assets within the business. An advisor is well positioned to advise on how the company is best positioned and structure the deal to be able to get the best outreach.

A company that is valued incorrectly will not only fail to attract the right buyer but will also have post-merger issues with integration if key details are left out.

Irrespective of whether an advisor is acting on the buy-side or sell-side, their experience and understanding of the market helps in evaluating the company, the market it operates in and in how the merger / acquisition will add value to the overall long-term goal of the buyer.

Post-deal integration

Once a transaction is complete, there is a process of business integration and organisational restructuring that most companies face challenges with. There are studies showing that 85 per cent of mergers do not realise value and in almost 60 per cent of the cases synergies fail to achieve, leaving up to 75 per cent of the executives leaving the company by year three.

This is very important in corporate M&A scenarios and an advisor can help with business integration and change management within the company post-merger. They can ensure that the business purpose, processes and people all align with long-term goals.

An M&A advisor is crucial with any transaction and the difference in not having one can make or break your deal. ”

RAYYAR

UK's evolving immigration landscape

| by Yasmeen Joshi



Yasmeen Joshi is a trainee solicitor at Barar & Associates

www.bararassociates.com

“**The latest Immigration White Paper *Restoring Control over the Immigration System* has been published with the Prime Minister’s promise to “restore control to our borders” being the central focus. The document emphasises that net migration is too high, and that further restrictions must be placed on popular immigration routes in an attempt to reduce this figure.**

The White Paper looks at the skilled worker route and seeks to further tighten the requirements and increase certain fees. As a result, it will be UK businesses as well as individuals who will suffer.

Skilled worker route

In 2020, the skill threshold for skilled workers was lowered to RQF 3 (A-level equivalent), which widened the number of eligible SoC codes under the skilled worker route to fill some of the skills shortages which opened up due to Brexit. Unfortunately, for many industries, this government is now seeking the reintroduction of the previous threshold; RQF 6 (degree level) for eligible occupations in the future and the consequential salary threshold increases which will come with it. Migrants already in the UK before these changes come into effect will be subject to the current rules and lower RQF levels.

Occupations with skills RQF 3 to 5 where there have been long-term shortages in these industries will be included on a new temporary shortage list. The Migration Advisory Committee will assess and make recommendations to the Home Office which roles will be eligible to be placed on the list and there are likely to be caps on the number of visas issued as well as restrictions on bringing dependents.

The immigration skills charge will increase by 32 per cent, in line with inflation.

The thought process is to develop the settled workforce, yet these changes are likely to bring about bigger skills shortages amongst vital occupations and sectors in the UK.

Adult social care route

Migrants on the adult social care route are filling a huge labour shortage and work in a challenging sector. However, this industry and visa route have been

subject to widespread criticism over worker’s pay and conditions. To combat these issues, the government has decided to close this route for all initial applicants, with transitional arrangements for extension applications and in-country switching to be put in place until 2028. Whilst workers in the adult social care sector should absolutely be paid a fair wage, closing this route entirely to new applicants will be likely to do more damage and those who rely on social care will be the ones to suffer even more.

English language requirement

English language proficiency is measured using the Common European Framework of Reference for Languages (CEFR) scale. Depending on the visa route, applicants are required to demonstrate different levels of proficiency.

Currently, skilled workers are required to pass a Secure English Language Test (SELT) at minimum CEFR level B1 in four components. However, this will raise to a minimum level of B2. Additionally, skilled worker dependents are not currently required to provide evidence of their English language proficiency although they will soon be required to pass a SELT at CEFR level A1 (basic user) in the future, to align with partner routes.

Additionally, the minimum English proficiency level for Indefinite Leave to Remain will raise from CEFR level B1 to B2.

Settlement criteria

The qualifying period for settlement is five years for many visa routes. However, in a further tightening of the skilled worker route, the standard residence criteria will increase from five to 10 years.

This means that employers would have to pay at least £8,725 more per applicant for the CoS assignation fees and current ISC rate. This is a further burden on small businesses who require a migrant work force.

Good news for spouses and partners of British citizens is that for the time being their five-year qualifying period will remain the same.

The UK’s immigration landscape continues to evolve, and it is important now more than ever that businesses and migrants are aware of the forthcoming changes and impact. ”



(L-r) Paul Eisey, Barclays, Scott Willis, Ferrock Ltd, Leo Castellanos, Innovate UK, and David Woods, British Business Bank with panel chair Patrick Angell of LCCI

Unlocking SME growth

| by Vittoria Zerbini

Entrepreneurs, banks and business advisors came together at a recent event designed to demystify the funding landscape for small and medium-sized enterprises. Comprising two panel discussions, a live pitching session, and a masterclass, it was also a networking opportunity and a platform for a conversation about how SMEs can thrive with strategic funding models.

Expectations

Many businesses don't fail because they lack potential but because they miss the chance to align their vision with investor expectations. Panelists from leading organisations emphasised the importance of being ambitious but also demonstrating a clear understanding of the business landscape. Investors want to see passion and preparation, as well as an ability to anticipate challenges and present a plan that can evolve.

It's not just about spreadsheets and slide decks. Leo Castellanos from Innovate UK challenged SMEs to think more broadly. "Support is more than funding. It's innovation, advice, and community. Entrepreneurs often underestimate just how much is available beyond money."

Build networks

For founders unsure of where to begin, the advice was unanimous; ask questions early, build networks and



be ready to pivot. Whether it's seeking help from local chambers of commerce, tapping into accelerator networks, or learning from others who've been through the journey, the consensus was that no founder should do it alone.

The conversation also turned toward under-represented entrepreneurs. Just 2p in every pound of venture capital goes to women-led businesses. Instead of waiting for structural change, many minority founders are now building their own ecosystems, support networks and funding pathways. Corporate and government players, including the British Business Bank and FSE Group, are responding with targeted programmes, but speakers acknowledged the change is still too slow.

Keep it tight

In the live pitch session, two entrepreneurs had three minutes to make their case. Judges offered immediate feedback: be direct, state your request, show traction, and explain where the money will go. Arinna Osiyan from Accelerate Funding said that the first 10 seconds are essential to make a good impression. "Say what you do, if you're making revenue, and how much you need. Keep it tight", she advised.

David Horne from Add Then Multiply gave a masterclass and flipped the script on how to think about equity.

"You're not giving it away," he said. "You're selling it in exchange for something of equal or greater value. It's a partnership." He urged founders to research investors thoroughly, build trust before pitching, and focus on relationships, not transactions.

At a time where access to finance is often perceived as a barrier, the event reminded the business community that there is also opportunity. With preparation, the right advice, and a strong network, SMEs can realise their full potential.

Vittoria Zerbini is media and policy assistant at LCCI

Access to Finance: accelerate your SME success was an event led by LCCI, hosted by the University of Westminster, and sponsored by Barclays



Directors' duties: protecting you as well as your company

| by Abigail Williams



Abigail Williams, is a solicitor at TV Edwards LLP

www.tvedwards.com

Whilst directors are responsible for the general day-to-day management of a company's affairs and are authorised to exercise powers on the behalf of the company, the extent of that authority is likely to be constrained by the Companies Act 2006, as well as the articles of association of the company.

Responsible

Directors must therefore be conscious of the fact that they will be personally subjected to these statutory duties. In addition to this, the company itself is also subject to statutory controls and the directors are the persons responsible for ensuring that the company complies with those statutory requirements.

The Companies Act 2006 has codified certain common law and equitable duties for directors and sets out the general duties of directors:

1. To act within powers in accordance with the company's constitution and to use those powers only for the purposes for which they were conferred
2. To promote the success of the company for the benefit of its members (i.e. shareholders)
3. To exercise independent judgement
4. To exercise reasonable care, skill and diligence
5. To avoid conflicts of interest
6. Not to accept benefits from third parties
7. To declare any interest in any proposed transaction or arrangement.

These statutory duties should not be considered mutually exclusive. Directors, for example, when considering whether a certain action is likely to promote the success of the company, will need to act with reasonable care, skill and diligence. Directors must also ensure that they are acting in accordance with the company's memorandum and articles of association, even where a contrary course of action could be deemed to be promoting the success of the company.

Remedies

Ordinarily, the company itself will need to take enforcement action against a

director if there has been any breach of a duty (a decision to be determined by the board). A breach of a director's duty typically gives the company a number of potential remedies including an injunction, damages or compensation.

In certain circumstances, an individual shareholder (or group of shareholders) can also bring a claim against a director for breach of duty on the behalf of the company in what is known as a derivative claim.

Accountable

A company director can be held personally liable in circumstances where losses incurred by the company are proven to be as the result of a poor board decision or a failure to act properly. Directors can also be held criminally accountable for acts, or lack thereof, of the company.

In certain circumstances where a director has acted in a way which has breached a statutory duty, it may be possible that the breach can be ratified by resolution of the company's shareholders. It may also be possible to seek a grant of relief from a court in circumstances where a director has acted honestly and reasonably.

Assistance

If it is not possible to remediate the breach in the aforementioned way, the company may be able to offer assistance to the director by indemnifying them against any costs incurred in successfully defending a claim for breach of duties owed to the company (but this would be a decision for the board of directors, bearing in mind their own ongoing duties to the company). It may also be that the company has arranged insurance for the benefit of its directors' (for example, directors liability insurance).

The aforementioned statutory duties must also not be considered by directors in isolation as, in addition to these, directors are subjected to a wide range of regulatory and statutory measures including the Company Directors' Disqualification Act 1986, the Health and Safety at Work etc Act 1974 and the Corporate Manslaughter and Corporate Homicide Act 2007. Directors should also bear in mind their obligations under the Insolvency Act 1986.

Pension funds and inheritance tax

Did you know your pensions could be subject to tax at 67 per cent or more?

asks *Conor McManus*



Conor McManus is a senior manager at Menzies

www.menzies.co.uk

Last autumn's Budget proposed significant inheritance tax changes which are set to come into force over the next couple of years.

Amongst the key reforms of abolishing the non-dom regime and changes to Agricultural Property Relief and Business Property Relief, was the significant announcement that from 6 April 2027, undrawn pension funds will now be subject to inheritance tax.

The Budget changes, coupled with frozen tax-free allowances (unchanged since 2009) and increasing inflation, are accelerating the number of taxable estates.

The Office for Budget Responsibility predicts that the number of estates that will be subject to inheritance tax is set to double from around one in 20 estates (2023) to one in 10 (2030).

Inheritance tax is no longer a tax solely for the wealthy, and with a headline rate of 40 per cent, it is becoming difficult to ignore.

This article focuses on the specific changes with regard to pensions.

67 per cent effective tax rate

The effective tax rate on an individual's pension is made up by a combination of the funds being subjected to both inheritance tax and income tax.

From 6 April 2027, the value of the undrawn pension will be inside the individual's estate for inheritance tax purposes, such that it may be taxable up to a maximum of 40 per cent. If the individual passes away aged over 75, the beneficiaries of the pension scheme will then also be subject to income tax on any further drawdowns.

Example

If we have an individual who has an undrawn pension fund totalling £1 million as at the date of their death, and we assume the estate is left to their children, with all other allowances utilised against the remainder of their estate assets, the pension funds will be taxable at 40 per cent. This leaves £600,000 net.

On passing, the pension funds remain within the pension scheme, and the beneficiaries now have the ability to draw down the pension personally.

If the beneficiaries are additional rate taxpayers, such that their income is subject to tax at 45 per cent, and they choose to encash the pension, a further £270,000 of tax will be payable. This will leave the beneficiary holding just £330,000 of the original £1 million pension.

£1 million @ 40 per cent = £400,000

£600,000 @ 45 per cent = £270,000

£1 million less £400,000, less £270,000 = £330,000.

Note, if the beneficiary is a higher rate taxpayer, when drawing down the pension, the effective tax rate is 64 per cent. If the beneficiary is a basic rate taxpayer, the effective tax rate is 52 per cent.

Effective rate greater than 67 per cent

In particular circumstances, where an individual's estate is worth £2 million, and they hold an undrawn pension worth £350,000, the effective tax rate can be greater than 89 per cent! While this is an extreme example, it highlights the detrimental impact of this forthcoming proposed tax change.

Mitigating your liability

While the forthcoming changes are leading to increased inheritance tax liabilities, there thankfully remain a number of tax planning strategies to mitigate your tax exposure. These range from simple outright gifts to more complex corporate and trust structures.

Note that advice on your pension should come from a regulated independent financial advisor.

MENZIES
BRIGHTER THINKING



Business with culture

The National Gallery has launched a series of curated meetings and events packages designed to drive business success through the power of inspiration and mindfulness found in art

A recent survey conducted by the gallery found that 43 per cent of respondents believe mindfulness enhances return on investment by improving focus and retention, while a study by the charity Create revealed that 93 per cent of Brits view creativity as vital to their wellbeing.

Mindfulness

These findings were echoed during a roundtable hosted by the gallery, where industry experts explored the role of mindfulness and inspiration in business events. The discussion revealed that mindfulness is most impactful when seamlessly integrated into the event experience, not treated as an add-on but brought to life through thoughtful design, natural pauses, and human-focused environments.

“Event agendas are rooted in four key pillars: creativity, mindfulness, enrichment, and connection.”

Tailor-made

Event agendas are rooted in four key pillars: creativity; mindfulness; enrichment; and connection. Each package includes a tailor-made guided tour by an art historian, taking delegates through works of art which directly resonate with the chosen theme.

For example, the creativity package, aimed at inspiring innovation and out-of-the-box thinking is perfect for brainstorming, strategy meetings, launch events and workshops. It takes delegates on an out-of-hours tour highlighting works from such renowned artists as Van Gogh and Turner.

Inspired

Clare Arouche, head of hospitality and events at the National Gallery said: “We’re so often directed to be ‘inspired’ by every event and venue that we visit, but at the National Gallery we’re dissecting exactly what it means to be truly inspired through both art and events and how that could facilitate business success.”

www.nationalgallery.org.uk/venue-hire



Dealmaking post-disruption

| Victoria Ansell on the new rules of M&A five years on

In the five years since the first UK lockdown, the merger and acquisition (M&A) landscape across the UK has been transformed. As a hub of M&A activity, London and the South East region have driven many of those changes. As the capital and the surrounding economic powerhouse regions emerge from the twin storms of Brexit and Covid-19, one thing is clear: dealmaking hasn't stopped – but it has certainly evolved.

Across the region, from Oxford to Brighton and Southampton to Cambridge, we've seen how founders and entrepreneurs are rethinking succession, scaling smarter, and turning disruption into opportunity.

Resilience, not recovery

The businesses thriving today aren't just recovering from the pandemic – they have redefined what resilience looks like. Sectors like technology, healthcare, business services, and specialist manufacturing have continued to flourish (among others), all demonstrating the entrepreneurial agility characteristic of this region.

What we're seeing now is a more solutions-driven dealmaking environment. Valuations that soared during the pandemic have returned to more sustainable levels. Buyers, particularly those in London's competitive mid-market, are asking sharper questions, scrutinising post-Covid performance, and prioritising sustainable growth over short-term spikes.

For sellers, this means preparation is everything. Historical success alone isn't enough – buyers want proof of adaptability, a clear growth strategy, and operational resilience.

Aftershocks

Unlike the sudden hit of Covid, Brexit's impact has played out gradually but its effects are still shaping how deals are approached. Today, it's often buyers who are taking the lead, shaping timelines and driving extended due diligence to manage regulatory risk better and ensure deal certainty.

In a region where international connections are the norm and cross-border trade is business as usual, Brexit has introduced additional complexity. However, this doesn't mean that it has slowed dealmaking. If anything, it has encouraged more considered, commercially-driven decisions. We're seeing buyers come to the table with clearer expectations, a stronger sense of what success looks like after completion, and a greater focus on long-term strategic alignment. This shift is changing not just how deals are structured but how they're thought about from the outset.

New norms

Today, structuring deals creatively is no longer optional. Earn-outs, deferred consideration, and performance-based pricing are commonplace once more in the M&A landscape. Buyers want downside protection. Sellers want upside potential. Well-structured deals can offer a middle ground – and the smartest entrepreneurs are embracing them as a path to mutual value.

Cultural alignment

Misaligned cultures are one of the most under-estimated dealbreakers we encounter. This region is rich

with businesses led by values-driven founders – people who care deeply about legacy, staff well-being and community impact.

Whether it's a management buyout of a tech scale-up in London or a multi-generation family business operating across the Home Counties transitioning to new ownership, deals can fall apart at the eleventh hour over mismatched expectations. The most successful transitions happen when both sides value not just the numbers, but the people behind them, and those conversations need to happen up front.

Events drive deals

While tax changes or regulatory shifts can spark short-term activity, they rarely alter long-term trends. Entrepreneurs in our region know that planning for the future isn't about timing the market – it's about timing their lives.

The counter to this is that buyers may well be able to benefit from less than 'perfect' market conditions – the ability to tap into the reasons why sellers are coming to the market can create prospects for rapid value creation and growth.

Five years after lockdown, the game has changed but M&A in London and the South East is thriving. For those who understand the new rules, the opportunities are bigger than ever.

Victoria Ansell is managing partner at Marktlink

www.marktlink.com



Resolving disputes with an eye on the bottom line

Jonathan Wood and Luke Hard on arbitration as a cost-effective way of resolving commercial disputes

Many commercial parties will be familiar with arbitration, a non-court-based way of resolving disputes where a neutral third party - an arbitrator - acts as a 'private judge' and issues a decision which binds the parties to the dispute.

Neutral process

Arbitration has historically found favour with commercial parties by providing cost-effective and speedy rulings which are readily enforceable in countries around the world in the event the losing side does not voluntarily comply. For parties engaging in cross-border trade, arbitration provides a neutral process for resolving disputes. Businesses engaging in international commerce need not resort to the national courts of one of the parties to the contract.

In recent years, arbitration has come under fire for straying from its cost-effective roots. The fees of many institutions administering arbitration cases, alongside rising hourly rates for arbitrators' time spent working on the case, have effectively priced out many businesses from using these institutions. Even larger businesses have been priced out of using this type of arbitration to resolve their smaller disputes.

Cost-effective

Fortunately, the tide is turning. Dispute resolution institutions, such as the London Chamber of Arbitration and Mediation (LCAM), the LCCI's dispute resolution body, and one of the oldest such institutions, are providing businesses with cost-effective arbitration offerings without sacrificing quality. They also emphasise arbitration's other much-valued characteristics including speed, procedural flexibility and confidentiality. Their offerings are also often more competitively priced than litigation in national courts. The key considerations for businesses seeking to leverage

the benefits of arbitration include the choice of institution administering their disputes and the appropriate type of arbitration for the disputes that they are likely to face.

Shopping around

Many businesses reach for the same dispute resolution clause that they have used before and don't consider the costs of using one arbitral institution over another when putting together their contracts. The choice of institution, however, is a key driver of legal spend.

A recent study by one such institution, the London

Court of International Arbitration (LCIA), revealed that their median "administrative charges" (how much the LCIA charges for administering the case from commencement through to final decision, but not including how much the arbitrators charge for resolving the dispute or the costs of the parties' legal advisers) is US\$22,000 for a dispute in the region of US\$1million-\$10 million. The International Chamber of Commerce indicates their administration fees for a similarly sized dispute would be in the region of US\$45,000. Under its standard arbitration offering, LCAM charges a fixed administrative fee of £5,000 + VAT per party to administer a dispute over £1,000,000 but under £10 million.

Arbitration v litigation

While many arbitration offerings are often considered more expensive than litigation because parties are required to pay registration fees for bringing claims, as well as administrative fees and tribunal fees, LCAM's arbitration offering is priced competitively with traditional litigation. A claimant seeking to bring a claim over £200,000 in the English courts faces a fee of £10,000

just to bring their claim. By contrast, under LCAM's arbitration offering, the registration fee (the cost of starting proceedings, a key strategic consideration) is £1,500 + VAT. LCAM's overall administration fee for a similarly sized dispute (a dispute of more than £200,000 but under £1 million) costs £3,000 + VAT per party (of which the registration fee forms part if the case proceeds). Arbitrator hourly rates for this fee band are £300 + VAT per hour, per arbitrator, with the LCAM rules providing for a sole arbitrator by default.

More importantly, however, the lower cost of commencing arbitral proceedings compared with traditional litigation for many disputes poses a key strategic and costs advantage for parties. A large number of disputes are settled within a short

period of commencing legal proceedings. The lower costs of commencing arbitration proceedings (particularly through LCAM at the cost of just £1,500 + VAT regardless of the size of the claim) can be considerably lower than the registration fees

involved in commencing litigation. Only if the dispute proceeds will parties incur LCAM's administrative charges and arbitrator hourly fees.

The takeaways for commercial parties are clear. Arbitration need not be expensive and can even be more price-competitive than litigation, provided parties choose wisely. Arbitration's lower registration fees to commence claims can provide key strategic and costs advantage in the event that the dispute does not proceed after filing the claim.

Jonathan Wood FCI Arb is chair of LCAM. Luke Hard leads the organisation's secretariat

www.lcam.org.uk



How to avoid accounting pitfalls

Accounting can be a challenge for small businesses and awareness of the most common accounting pitfalls in 2025 has never been more important for SMEs. Experts at Archimedia Accountants have analysed the most common accounting mistakes and give guidance on how to avoid them

1. Lack of backup systems for financial data

One of the most critical accounting mistakes small businesses make is the lack of reliable backup. Whether a business is using a spreadsheet, traditional desktop software, or a full-scale ERP solution, failure to have a backup strategy when there is a cyber attack, for example, can make recovering financial data costly or even impossible. This can then potentially lead to compliance issues, delayed reporting or lost revenue.

It is therefore recommended to follow the 3-2-1 backup rule, whereby businesses are able to store two copies on different devices and one copy is kept offsite. This will help with the ability to recover data if faced with unexpected events.

2. Incomplete accounting methods

Many small businesses typically rely on cash basis accounting or single-entry bookkeeping systems because they are simple. Although simple, they can create dangerous gaps in financial reporting. One issue is that a method that saves you time today may lead to problems tomorrow; examples include inaccurate profit margins, inaccurate forecasts, and compliance issues.

As you grow, you should improve your accounting systems by establishing accrual accounting using double-entry

bookkeeping, which records every transaction accurately, so that each transaction is a debit and a credit. Essentially, double-entry bookkeeping provides a reliable, comprehensive financial picture of your company. While balancing the books is essential, developing an accurate understanding to help you make better decisions to support sustainable growth is more important.

3. Mixing personal and business finances

Mixing personal and business expenses is a trap that many small business owners fall into. Losing separation of expenses can derail your business in terms of growth and credibility, from messy bookkeeping to inaccurate cash flow. By the time audit season occurs, everything has become so grey it's hard for anyone to have faith in your financial stance.

You don't need to change your entire process. Simply open a business bank account, get a business credit card and establish some separate processes. Making a few adjustments can really bolster compliance, improve financial transparency and help to build a strong foundation for your business that will make it sustainable.

4. Lack of budgeting and forecasting

Effective budgeting and forecasting are critical for businesses of every size.

Therefore, having a clear financial plan in place helps organisations to understand their financial situation and plan for their future. By implementing a budget and cash flow forecast, businesses can allocate their resources more strategically, stay in control of spending, and ensure they're financially prepared to support day-to-day operations and future growth.

5. Failure to set aside money for tax obligations

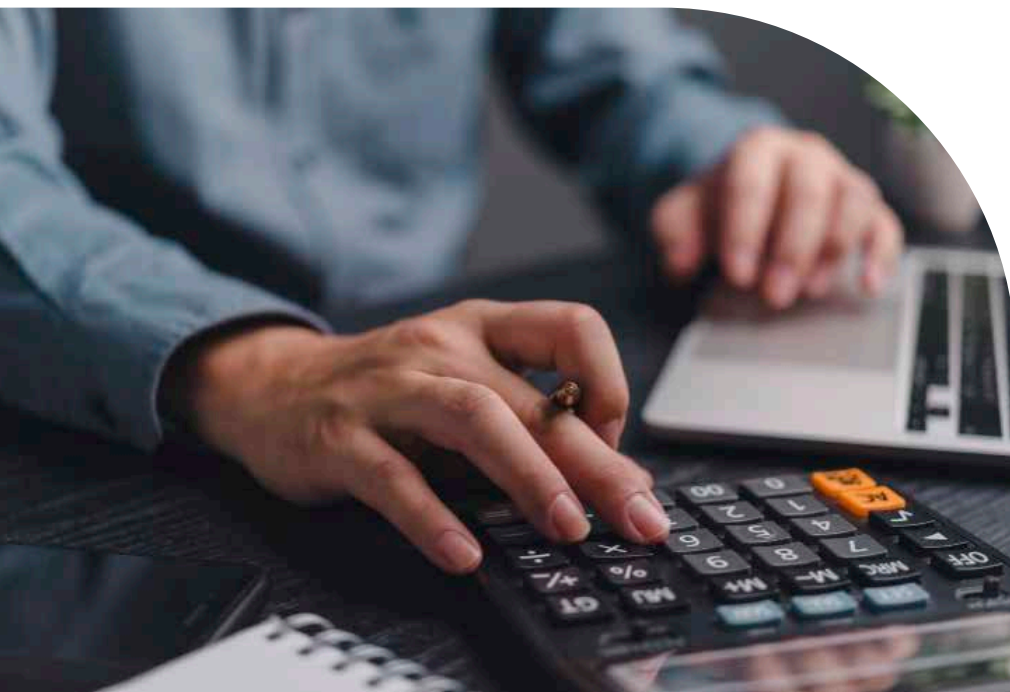
Tax compliance isn't just something to tick off a to-do list. It is a commitment for your business that can impact its financial performance. There are various taxes that your business must pay, including VAT and corporation tax. Knowing the different taxes your business is liable to pay and understanding the HMRC guidelines is essential.

This includes keeping accurate records, and ensuring payments and returns are filed on time. Regularly save a portion of your income, preferably in a separate savings account, to prevent last-minute surprises. To deal with further peace of mind, you may consider working with an accountant who can help you with estimating your tax liabilities throughout the year to relieve the stress, when the deadline comes around.

6. Delayed or incorrect invoicing

Despite solid arguments for legal compliance, errors in invoicing can have longer-term impacts; damage to client trust and inaccurate financial forecasting. To keep your records in check, businesses should definitely process invoices consistently, use accounting or bookkeeping software that can automate and track invoices, and check important details such as due dates or billing contacts before submitting invoices by email. It keeps organisations compliant, professional and financially sound.

www.archimediaaccounts.co.uk



Deaf awareness in the office

by Mark Malcomson

“ I have two questions.

Do you know whether you have a Deaf colleague? Do you know whether you have a hard-of-hearing colleague?

The answer to the first question is something you will invariably know; and unfortunately, the answer is probably “No”. According to the Royal National Institute for Deaf People, those who report British Sign Language (BSL) as their main language are more than half as likely to be employed than people who are not disabled.

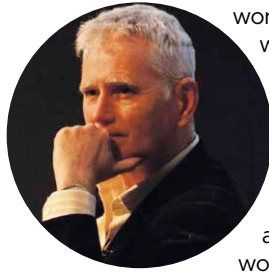
Negative

A more disappointing statistic is that a quarter of deaf people said they have experienced negative attitudes and behaviours from work colleagues in the last 12 months. So, the limited number of employers who do employ Deaf staff aren't necessarily ensuring a positive and supportive work environment.

The second question is more nuanced. The statistics tell us that you will almost certainly have at least one, if not many, colleagues who have some form of hearing difficulty.

In fact, one in three adults in the UK are deaf, have hearing loss or tinnitus. Over half the population aged 55 or more have hearing loss. But this not just an issue for older people; increasingly younger members of the workforce are also reporting some form of hearing difficulty.

Yet the problem is, we don't often know it. It's worrying to find out that over half of people with hearing loss do not disclose it to their employer, primarily fuelled by the



worry of being disadvantaged in the workplace.

Why employers should care

Members of staff who are losing their hearing are more likely to be isolated from colleagues and gradually withdraw from the workplace. Many retire early, when they could easily have continued to work and contribute to the organisation if given the right support. Ultimately, this depletes the workforce at a time when the country is suffering a productivity crisis.

The shortage of talent has many employers in the UK worried. So, not being open and welcoming to qualified Deaf and hard-of-hearing candidates is a potential act of self-sabotage. A 2018 Accenture report also showed that companies that champion disability inclusion report 30 per cent higher profit margins compared to their peers.

Priority

For organisations who have staff who are front facing – dealing with customers who may be Deaf or hard-of-hearing themselves – knowing about the intricacies of hearing loss should be even more of a priority. This ensures an excellent quality of service and full support for your service users. City Lit works with organisations like the Metropolitan Police, Royal Opera and Ballet and Transport for London, who give their staff Deaf awareness training and teach them BSL.

As with all inclusion efforts, the initial costs and work might seem a significant

investment. However, the benefits that play out are huge. Any organisation who believes in a diverse workforce will benefit many times over from giving the right type of support.

Immeasurably better

I joined City Lit 14 years ago as chief executive. I am sad to say that I had never thought about any of these issues prior to coming to the college. My understanding came from the fact that the college has been working with Deaf and hard-of-hearing communities since we were founded in 1919. We have many Deaf staff and the Head of our Centre for Deaf Education, a Deaf colleague, reports directly to me.

Our organisation is immeasurably better as a whole because of the diversity of our workforce and our student base. We support over 700 Deaf Londoners and many thousands of people who are their friends, family and colleagues. Being an ally of the Deaf community, has made my work experience immeasurably better over the time I've been at City Lit.

So, my final question is: Wouldn't your colleagues, your organisation, and your customers benefit from being more proactive in this area? ”

Mark Malcomson CBE is principal of City Lit

www.citylit.ac.uk

CITYLIT

Top tips

- 1. As an employer, educate and train your staff** – regular training sessions on deaf awareness, lipreading and sign language can help employees understand the daily challenges faced by deaf and hard-of-hearing colleagues.
- 2. As a colleague, be aware and inclusive** – there are lots of small adjustments you can make personally, such as not covering your mouth when you speak and look directly at who you're speaking to.
- 3. Provide specialist frontline training** - if you are an outward facing organisation, make sure your staff are trained to be able support your full consumer base or service users.
- 4. Promote inclusive communication** – ensure that meetings, presentations and events are accessible to everyone. Provide written materials, hire sign language interpreters or captioning services.
- 5. Listen to colleagues and customers** – you are never going to get everything right when implementing new measures. Listen to your Deaf and hard-of-hearing colleagues and customers to see what works and what needs improving.



Diversity is alive and well in London's business community

Following recent events in America and the UK, it's tempting to think that efforts to increase social mobility and diversity in business are in retreat. However, as *Vincent Burke* discovered, this is far from the case

Many London-based firms remain fully committed to increasing opportunities for people from disadvantaged groups. They also point to the rise of revolutionary technology such as AI and the need to reskill workers from lower socio-economic groups so they can take the resulting opportunities.



our interests to ensure businesses are able to fill this skills gap and both recruit and promote talent from all socio-economic backgrounds."

Business advantage

Sophie Hulm, chief executive of Progress Together, which is made up of financial services companies committed to a diverse workforce, believes that the UK has an opportunity and a responsibility to demonstrate that inclusion isn't a political risk. "It's a business advantage. When we remove barriers to opportunity, we unlock new perspectives, broader talent pools and stronger teams.

That translates into better decision-making, increased innovation and stronger performance, and a clearer understanding of a broad range of consumers."

"Lack of social mobility costs the UK £19

billion a year and remains a missed opportunity.

According to McKinsey research, social mobility could unlock €1.3 trillion in GDP across Europe. If talent from lower socio-economic backgrounds had equal access to high-skilled jobs,

13 million new skilled workers would be ready to lead Europe's future."

Equality

Heather Smith, chief executive of AXA Health is also firmly committed to diversity. She said: "AXA has changed how they attract a diverse range of applicants to the business, to help best represent its customers."

"As a female leader, recruiting, retaining and supporting women is something I am passionate about and at AXA we strive to achieve equality in the workplace."

"Mentorship is something I would encourage other women to pursue and it's also something I've tried to give back

to others as I've had brilliant advice that's helped me on my path."

Smith continued: "We want to encourage people from all backgrounds to consider a career in the industry and have measures in place to support those from lower social economic backgrounds. Age shouldn't be a barrier to work and we're proud to have been the first insurance company to achieve the Age-Aware accredited employer status."

Accessible

For some firms, social inclusion is about improving infrastructure rather than changing recruitment policies or career development support to help under-represented groups overcome barriers. Avanti West Coast have enhanced their fleet to achieve this.

Their new Evero trains have improved wheelchair spaces, better accessible toilets and braille, plus large print labels on seats. They also partnered with software developer, GoodMaps, on an accessible wayfinding tool that enables visually impaired people to navigate stations independently.

They were recognised at the *Breaking Down Barriers Awards 2025* for this work to promote opportunity, diversity and social inclusion and their commitment to enable independent travel for all.

Vincent Burke is a communications consultant, podcaster and film-maker

www.linkedin.com/in/vincent-burke-7b98968

Disparities

A report from Accenture – *RISE with AI* – outlines its challenges and opportunities.

While AI threatens to widen disparities in career mobility, it could also help ease socio-economic inequalities if properly implemented.

At the report's launch Paul Stanley, senior managing director, UK financial services at Accenture, said: "AI integration isn't just a technological upgrade—it's a profound organisational shift that requires an equally bold rethinking of workforce strategy. Leaders must ensure AI adoption is inclusive, engaging, and meaningful for all employees—not just a select few.



Mobility

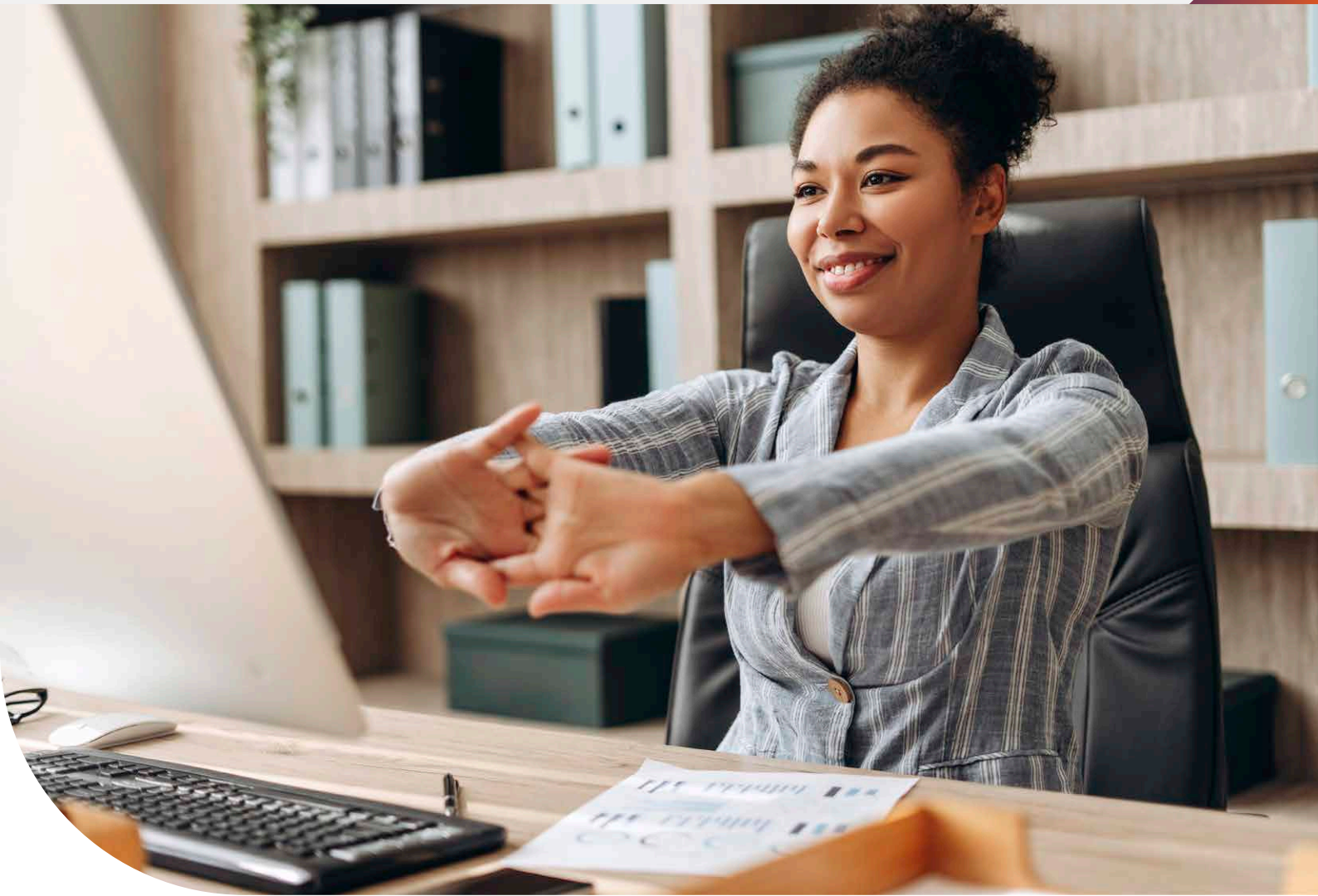
To coincide with the new report, Lord Mayor of London Alastair King launched *Social Mobility in the City* which aims to bring people across the Square Mile together to share knowledge, offer support and forge new connections.

King, who plans to launch 15 such networks during his Mayoralty, said: "Social mobility is key to our success not only as a City but as a country, too.

"Ultimately, if we are to create an AI-powered future in which every individual has a fair and equal opportunity to succeed, businesses, policymakers, academics, and government need to collaborate and find a way forward."

"With some 260,000 highly-skilled people expected to leave the financial sector over the coming decade, it is in all





Women entrepreneurship on the rise

***The State of Women's Entrepreneurship 2025* – a study by money.co.uk – puts London as the top region for female entrepreneurship, with the highest proportion of self-employed women of any UK region**

Findings

The research analysed Office of National Statistics data and came up with the following headline findings.

- London is the UK region with the most self-employed women, totalling 13.2 per cent of all women working there. This is an increase of 0.8 per cent since the last report, which saw London placed second in the rankings. Some of the most common roles of self-employment in London are construction, tutoring, personal training, and writing.
- The South West placed second, with 12.5 per cent of women in work being self-employed. This is a 0.1 per

cent decrease since the 2024 report, causing the region to drop from first place to second. Some of the key industries in the region include renewable energy, agriculture and food production, tourism, creative arts, and aerospace.

- Despite remaining in third place for the second year in a row, the percentage of self-employed women in the South East has increased by 0.3 per cent, moving from 11.3 to 11.6 per cent. The region has a diverse range of industries, including finance, life sciences, construction, and technology.

Insights

Further study insights reveal:

- Kensington and Chelsea to be the local authority with the most self-employed women in the UK, at over a third. This is an increase of 10.2 per cent since last year's report
- In 2014, an average of 1.44 million women were self-employed in the UK. By 2024, this figure had grown to 1.56 million - an eight per cent rise.
- Health, well-being and social care remains the sector with the most female-led companies, with almost two-fifths of all firms being female-led.

www.money.co.uk

Navigating tariffs: how SMEs can manage rising costs and stay resilient



With the US imposing increased tariffs on UK-US trade, business finance experts at *Funding Circle* investigate the impact that this could have on UK SMEs

A large proportion of small UK exporters sell into the US market. While these tariffs are expected to raise the cost of imported goods and materials from the US, there are a variety of ways in which UK-based SMEs could be impacted by US tariffs.

Increased costs: tariffs on imported goods and materials can significantly increase costs for SMEs, particularly those dependent on overseas suppliers. Without the buying power of larger chains, SMEs have less ability to negotiate better terms, leaving them more exposed to price hikes. For retailers importing products like clothing, electronics or home goods, tariffs raise inventory costs, forcing a difficult choice: either increase retail prices and risk losing price-sensitive customers or absorb the costs and shrink already tight profit margins. In a competitive market, where loyalty is often driven by price, SMEs are at greater risk of losing customers to bigger brands or discount retailers.

Supply chain disruption: SMEs typically operate with less diversified supply chains compared to large corporations, making them more vulnerable to disruption. Tariffs can force SMEs to have to urgently find

alternative suppliers, leading to delays, higher buying costs, and operational uncertainty. Retailers reliant on overseas sourcing may face stock shortages as suppliers adjust to new regulations or reroute supply chains to avoid tariff impacts. These risks are especially damaging during critical trading periods like Black Friday or Christmas. Tariffs on US imports, in particular, can further inflate supply chain costs and disrupt existing supply relationships, leaving SMEs with little choice but to source alternatives, often at a premium.

Reduced competitiveness: higher production costs driven by tariffs can make SME products less competitive, particularly against rivals sourcing domestically or from un-tariffed markets. While some retailers may pivot to local or tariff-free suppliers, doing so often means facing higher base prices or lengthy delays in finding suitable alternatives.

For exporters, increased US tariffs on UK goods make British-made products more expensive for American consumers; this will negatively impact the demand for these products and threaten SMEs' growth ambitions in the US market. Even well-established UK businesses could struggle to compete if suppliers from tariff-exempt countries

“SMEs often operate under tighter financial margins and smaller cash reserves, making them more vulnerable to unexpected cost increases.”

”

are able to offer lower prices to US buyers.

Cash flow pressure: SMEs often operate under tighter financial margins and smaller cash reserves, making them more vulnerable to unexpected cost increases. Tariffs on US-made components or machinery, critical for many UK manufacturers, can simultaneously drive up expenses and suppress sales volumes. For SMEs already balancing slim margins, this dual pressure can strain cash flow, restrict investment in growth, disrupt day-to-day operations, and ultimately threaten long-term business sustainability. Many businesses can expect these pressures to continue and will need to seek additional support to help mitigate cash flow issues.



How UK SMEs can stay resilient

Market diversification

Expand into tariff-free or lower-tariff markets (e.g. EU, Canada, Asia-Pacific) to reduce over-reliance on the US and spread risk across regions.

Supply chain resilience

Audit and diversify supply chains to find alternative suppliers or components from tariff-free regions, reducing exposure to cost hikes. Review where your goods are from and see if you can source materials from alternative countries with more favourable trade deals. Perhaps look at local suppliers to avoid tariff impacts completely.

Local partnerships or distribution

Explore partnerships with US-based distributors or manufacturers to shift part of the production process closer to the target market and potentially sidestep tariffs.

Flexible pricing models

With ongoing changes in product costs as businesses try to absorb the impact of the tariffs globally, it's worth considering an introduction of dynamic pricing strategies or product bundling in the US to protect perceived value and absorb tariff costs creatively. You might also explore adding contract clauses that allow for shared cost adjustments if tariffs drive prices up.

Customer communication

It's important that you are clear and

transparent with customers about tariff-driven price changes. By communicating these changes, you help reinforce brand value. It's important that while communicating these changes, you look at other important product benefits such as ethical sourcing or product quality to maintain loyalty.

Strengthen financial security

While the tariffs are expected to lead to higher prices and put pressure on cashflows, it's essential that SMEs strengthen their financial safety net. Having a business credit card can give SMEs the support they need if unexpected costs or higher expenses arise. Business credit cards can help smooth out irregular income and expenses. That often means you get a buffer when waiting on customer payments.

“While the tariffs are expected to lead to higher prices and put pressure on cashflows, it's essential that SMEs strengthen their financial safety net.”

”

Response

Joseph Sopher, director of Joe & Seph's Popcorn has seen the impact of the US tariffs firsthand and comments on how they have responded to the changes:

“The mere spectre of tariffs had already been affecting our business. In 2024, we made £8 million in sales, of which two to three per cent came from the US, so it is not huge, but the US is the biggest popcorn market in the world, so we had planned that a lot of our growth would come from there. As a consequence, we are now planning to focus on growing its exports to the Middle East and Asia.

“However, the 10 per cent tariff was not as bad as we were expecting, and US importers already have to pay a 5.8 per cent tariff on Joe & Seph's goods when they reach American ports. So essentially what's happened is we're going to go from 5.8 per cent to 10 per cent as opposed to zero from 10 per cent. It is also lower than the new US tariffs levied on other countries, such as the 20 per cent tax on the European Union. Ironically, it could be a good thing. These retailers who would have sourced from Europe might now say; ‘Actually, we'll buy more from the UK’.”

www.fundingcircle.com





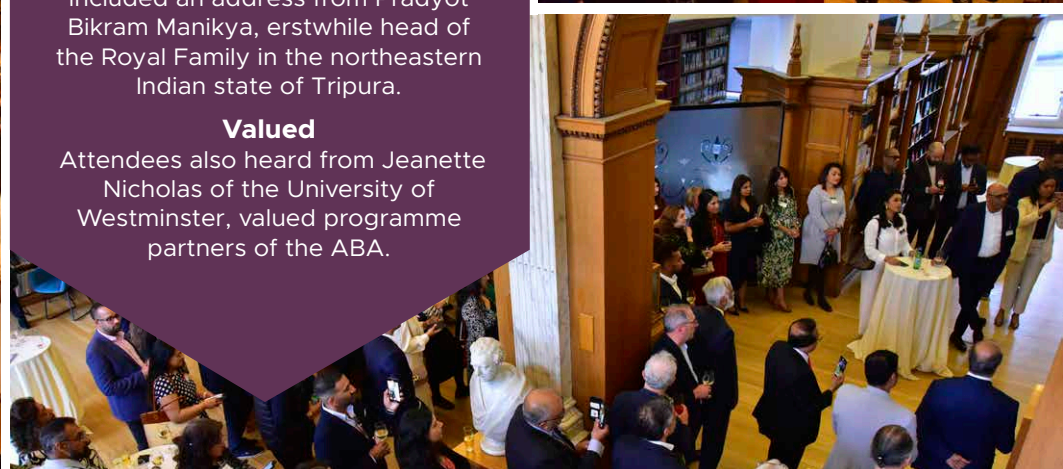
Working in the library

The library at One Birdcage Walk was the venue for the Asian Business Association (ABA) Spring Reception, held jointly with the EPG consulting group during Indian Week.

ABA chair Tony Matharu and EPG's Pratik Dattani hosted the event which included an address from Pradyot Bikram Manikya, erstwhile head of the Royal Family in the northeastern Indian state of Tripura.

Valued

Attendees also heard from Jeanette Nicholas of the University of Westminster, valued programme partners of the ABA.





LCCI Member News



London City East

Hyatt Place London City East

We're proud to announce that our hotel has been awarded the SHe Travel Club GOLD Label – a prestigious recognition designed by women and travel professionals to enhance the travel experience for women around the world.

This certification highlights our commitment to offering a welcoming and secure environment where women can feel truly at ease. From thoughtful in-room amenities to enhanced safety measures and a welcoming atmosphere, the SHe Travel Club GOLD Label reflects our dedication to creating a more inclusive, comfortable, and reassuring experience for women travellers.

Whether you're travelling for business or leisure, solo or with others, you can trust that your comfort, well-being and peace of mind are at the heart of what we do. This recognition is not just a label – it's a promise to deliver a stay that meets the expectations of modern women travellers and raises the standard of hospitality for everyone.

Book your stay at <https://hyattplacelondoncityeast.com/> or call 020 8159 1234.



Constructionline
Gold Member

OilMaxx Ltd

Approved member of Constructionline

OilMaxx, Part of Oilfast Group, has achieved Gold status Constructionline accreditation, providing customer assurance that we are verified and dependable. Constructionline is an accreditation scheme used solely by the construction industry in the UK. It is an online prequalification database regularly used by over 2500 members. These members include large organisations, such as local councils, the government and main contractors.

With the Constructionline accreditation scheme, members can easily be matched with buyers while also helping the buyers find reputable companies that they can trust and rely on. This simplifies the supply chain process, making it a win-win situation for everyone.

Gold membership has become the industry standard and has been adopted by some of the largest buyers in the UK. Brands such as VINCI, the Wates Group, BAM Construction, Kier and Balfour Beatty demand that suppliers meet this membership level.

For further information regarding OilMaxx and the services provided, please call 01708 953015 or email londonsales@oilmaxx.co.uk.



Quantum Group

Upskilling the next workforce is our mission. We've developed renewable training facilities in further education colleges and are proud to announce that our Level 2 Award and Certificate in Fundamental Principles of Renewable Technologies and Sustainable Energy are now Ofqual regulated. These qualifications work hand-in-hand with our training facilities and reflect our commitment to bridging the green skills gap and supporting the UK's low-carbon transition.

As the UK works towards Net Zero, the need for skilled professionals in renewable energy has never been greater. This Level 2 course offers a clear pathway for young learners entering the industry.

Developed with Daikin UK and regulated by NOCN Group, it combines practical training with theory in air source heat pumps, solar PV, solar thermal, EV charging, and battery storage.

Learners gain hands-on experience through custom-built training bays, preparing them for real-world success.

Course enquiries:

Laura Randall –
Laura.Randall@nocn.org.uk

Quantum Training –
sales@thequantumgroup.uk.com



AJ Products (UK) Ltd

AJ Products Strengthens Circular Sustainability Strategy

As it marks 50 years in business, Swedish-owned AJ Products Group is implementing a new sustainability strategy centred on circularity across its 14,000-product range. The company aims to reduce environmental impact by designing products for durability, reparability and resource efficiency.

AJ Products is integrating recycled and renewable materials, minimising material use and introducing disassembly instructions for over 3,700 products. In 2024, it added 700 spare parts to its offering - bringing the total to nearly 4,000 - enabling customers to repair rather than replace. In addition products come with a 7-year warranty.

The company's HURRAY office chair, launched last year, features a recycled, replaceable cover and easily serviceable parts. Shelving ranges like TOUGH have been redesigned to use 20% less material without compromising on quality or durability.

Sustainability Manager Anita Falkenek highlights that material choices, not just transport or waste, are key to lowering carbon emissions. These changes to reduce environmental impact reflect AJ Products' broader commitment to a more responsible, considered way of working.



Harod Associates

Harod receives King's Award for Enterprise in International Trade

Harod were delighted to have received the King's Award for Enterprise in International Trade, marking a significant achievement for the company and its global business presence. Based in London, and a Chamber member for over 10 years, Harod has established itself as a trusted leader in investigation consultancy and technology integration, operating in over 100 different countries. This prestigious award recognises the firm's commitment to innovation, integrity and excellence. Working to secure supply chains, counter fraud, corruption, internal threats, trace assets and assist the private sector in dealing with crime issues, Harod also maintains a thriving business globally.

For members of the Chamber, Harod's success is a powerful example of how British SMEs can compete on the global stage. As the UK forges new international partnerships, businesses like Harod demonstrate the value of combining technical expertise with strategic vision. Their recognition underscores the importance of investing in high-impact sectors and re-affirms London's role as a centre for global trade.

For any questions regarding Harod, please contact Ian Weatherhead on 07850 366086.



University of the West of Scotland, London Campus

To address the ever present skills shortage in new technologies, UWS London has developed and is introducing two new IT based courses with the BEng (Hons) Cyber Security and the BSc (Hons) Data Science and Artificial Intelligence.

The programmes are accredited by CISSP, the world's leading cyber security organisation and can lead to further studies at Masters and PhD level. These programmes will be led by Dr Manesh Thankappan and Dr Ashraf Mahmud, who are leading experts in their respective fields.

We look forward to welcoming our first group of students from September 2025 and full details are available on our website: <https://www.uwslondon.ac.uk/courses>.

Looking for directions shouldn't mean looking over your shoulder



Crimestoppers Crimestoppers in London

Crimestoppers are an independent charity that empowers people to speak up and stop crime, 100% anonymously.

Available 24/7, 365 days a year, you can contact us by phone on 0800 555 111 or online at crimestoppers-uk.org.

Campaigns in London share advice on how to protect people and businesses with a focus in the last two years on serious organised crime, knife crime and modern slavery.

Our latest campaign highlights how robbery, shoplifting, phone snatching and burglary harms communities and has a long-lasting impact on people. Victims are often left traumatised, communities feel less safe, and the economic toll is felt by families, businesses, and public services alike.

Volunteers on the Crimestoppers London Strategic Advisory Board bring extensive experience in intelligence, policing, and crime prevention. Their expertise supports our campaigns across London, ensuring a yearly increase in information reports sent to the Metropolitan and City of London Police forces.

To find out more about our campaign and how you can support us visit www.crimestoppers-uk.org

Coming up...



JULY

- **Exploring Business Opportunities in Germany: Leipzig a Hidden Gem – Online**
Tuesday 1 July, 10.00am – 11.00am

- **LCCI Property and Construction Club Networking and Briefing with guest speaker Steve Eccles, Director, Socius at LCCI**
Tuesday 1 July, 12.00pm – 2.00pm
Programme Partners: Essential Land LLP, Forth Ports and Menzies

MENZIES
BRIGHTER THINKING



- **Go Connect! Lunchtime Networking at Novotel London West**
Wednesday 2 July, 12.00pm – 2.00pm

- **GPSR – Filling in the Gap - Online**
Tuesday 8 July, 10.00am - 11.00am

- **Capital 500 with Vicky Pryce, Chief Economic Advisor and Board Member, Cebr, James Rentoul, Director at Savanta ComRes and Ian Daniels, Property Partner at HaysMac**
Wednesday 9 July, 10.00am – 12.00pm
Programme Partner: HaysMac

- **LCCN Open Afternoon at LCCI**
Wednesday 9 July, 3.00pm – 5.00pm

- **Maximise your Membership at LCCI**
Thursday 10 July, 3.00pm – 5.00pm

- **LCCI Women in Business Summer Networking Reception at Balls Brothers, Minster Court**
Tuesday 15 July, 12.00pm – 2.00pm
Programme Partner: Landmark

LANDMARK
flexible workspace



LCCI Annual Summer Party

Thursday 17 July, 6.30pm – 8.30pm
College Garden, Westminster Abbey

Join up to 150 members and guests at Westminster Abbey Gardens for the annual Summer Party. This prestigious event brings together key industry leaders, MPs and members for an evening of networking in this stunning venue boasting views of Westminster Abbey and the Houses of Parliament. Tickets start at £126 inc. VAT for Patron and Premier Plus members.



Sponsored by
BMW Park Lane



- **Understanding Why Customers Do (or Don't) Buy From You - Getting Started With Market Research**
Monday 21 July, 1.00pm – 2.00pm

- **LCCI SME London Business Awards Masterclass - Online**
Wednesday 23 July, 12.00pm – 1.00pm

- **LCCI Asian Business Association: South Asian Heritage Month Networking Reception at LCCI**
Thursday 24 July, 5.00pm – 7.00pm
Programme Partner: University of Westminster

UNIVERSITY OF WESTMINSTER



AUGUST

Go Connect! Lunchtime Networking at Electric Shuffle Kings Cross

Tuesday 5 August, 12.00pm – 2.00pm
Electric Shuffle Kings Cross

Get in the competitive spirit with up to 60 LCCI Members at our next Go Connect event kindly hosted by Electric Shuffle Kings Cross. Network whilst playing shuffleboard and enjoy complimentary drinks and nibbles. Open to Patron and Premier Plus members only.

LCCI Cricket Day: Surrey v Hampshire in the One Day Cup at the Kia Oval

Monday 18 August, 10.30am – 6.00pm
Kia Oval

Join the LCCI team and up to 80 members and guests for a day of cricket at one of the world's oldest and most historic stadiums, the Kia Oval. This fun, informal day offers a cost-effective way to entertain clients, reward colleagues and increase your business network whilst watching cricket – a fantastic day out! Open to LCCI members only. Tickets are £96 inclusive of VAT per person.



SEPTEMBER

▪ **LCCI SME London Business Awards Masterclass at LCCI**
Tuesday 9 September, 2.00pm – 4.00pm

▪ **Go Connect! Lunchtime Networking at Genesis Studio Battersea**
Wednesday 10 September, 12.00pm – 2.00pm

▪ **Maximise your Membership at LCCI**
Thursday 11 September, 3.00pm – 5.00pm

▪ **LCCI Black Business Association Networking Reception at Papa L's Kitchen**
Tuesday 16 September, 5.00pm – 7.00pm
Programme Partner: University of Westminster

UNIVERSITY OF
WESTMINSTER

Business Owners Club Autumn Reception

Wednesday 17 September, 4.00pm – 6.00pm
The River Restaurant by Gordon Ramsay

Join like-minded business owners for an exclusive evening of high-impact networking, conversation and connection. Set in the stunning surroundings of the River Restaurant by Gordon Ramsay which showcases the very best of British seafood, this event is designed to help you build valuable relationships, share ideas and grow your business in a relaxed, elegant setting. Open to LCCI Premier Plus members only at £27 inclusive of VAT per person.

Programme Partner: IHG Business Edge

IHG® Business
Edge

▪ **Using Intellectual Property to Drive Your Business Growth – Online**
Thursday 18 September, 12.00pm – 1.00pm

LCCI Beach Clean 2025

Wednesday 24 September, 10.00am – 1.00pm
Queenhithe Beach, Millenium Bridge

Don your trainers and join us for our beach clean at Queenhithe beach and help contribute to a healthier planet. After the beach clean, we invite you to the Chamber HQ for some casual networking over drinks and nibbles. This event is free to attend for Patron and Premier Plus Members only.



Two minute interview

Dr. Christopher Levy of Artensia Medical Services



What do you do?

I am an occupational health doctor and founder of Artensia Medical Services. I assess employees who are off work due to illness or injury, and help employers make evidence-based decisions that support both health and business continuity. I also conduct industry-specific, fitness-for-duty medicals – ranging from oil and gas, corporate law and finance, construction, motorsport, and transport industries to executive health screening.

What is your connection with the London Chamber of Commerce?

I joined as a member earlier this year. It's a great platform for networking, especially for small and growing businesses like mine that value strong professional relationships.

What was your first job in London?

I worked as a neurosurgery doctor in the National Hospital for Neurology and Neurosurgery (next to Great Ormond Street Hospital). It was one of the most intense but rewarding roles of my career – an

experience that still shapes my clinical practice today.

Which one business achievement over the last 12 months are you most proud of, and why?

Taking the leap to expand Artensia Medical. I've moved from offering services locally to exploring national and international partnerships. Building a business that's agile, personal and medically robust has been a proud achievement – and it's only the beginning.

If you were advising a young entrepreneur which business person would you suggest as a model?

Zig Ziglar and Jim Rohn – though not traditional business moguls – offered timeless insights about character, integrity, and mindset. Their philosophies are useful reminders that business success begins with the right values.

How do you think the transport system in London can be improved?

In striving for sustainability, we must balance progress with fairness. Commuters shouldn't be priced out, while small businesses need reasonable access – especially with regard

to parking and deliveries, which affect local economies.

Which piece of red tape causes most problems for your company, and why?

Tax-related administration remains a challenge. The complexity and time it consumes takes focus away from patient care and business development.

What is your favourite and least favourite thing about London?

Least favourite: the rising cost of living and operating a business.

Favourite: London's diversity. From global businesses to grassroots startups, the cultural and professional richness here creates endless opportunities to collaborate and grow.

If you were Mayor of London for the day which one thing would

you change?

I'd scrap hospital parking charges. No one should worry about affording to visit a loved one – or getting medical care – because of parking fees.

Who would you consider an appropriate person to play you in a movie of your life?

To be honest I'd like to have a go and do it myself! I've always thought that something is lost when a person's life is portrayed through the eyes of another.

What is your favourite quotation?

"Sow a thought, reap an act. Sow an act, reap a habit. Sow a habit, reap a character. Sow a character, reap a destiny."

It reminds me that the smallest daily decisions shape who we become – professionally and personally.

www.artensiamedical.com





LCCI Member Offers



London City East

■ HYATT PLACE LONDON CITY EAST

Located in the heart of East London, Hyatt Place London City East blends contemporary comfort with vibrant city charm. With stylish interiors, skyline views from our rooftop bar, and versatile event spaces, it's the perfect setting for your festive celebration. Whether you're planning a corporate gathering or a social soir e, our team is here to make it seamless and memorable.

Contact

events@hyatt.com
<https://hyattplacelondoncityeast.com/>

OFFER

Our Christmas party package starts from £110 per person and includes private hire, food, drinks, and a live DJ. Book before 1st September to enjoy a bespoke winter cocktail on arrival.

Minimum booking:
50 guests.



■ GIFTCARDS GROUP LTD

We would love for fellow LCCI members to receive a sample of our Giftbox Gifting Solution to discover our products! Reach out for your free sample today!

Contact

business@giftcard.co.uk

OFFER

FREE Giftbox + 10
Personalised Gift Cards



■ UNIVERSITY OF THE WEST OF SCOTLAND, LONDON CAMPUS

The University of the West of Scotland (UWS) is a leading young university operating in London. LCCI Members are invited to tap into the cutting-edge knowledge of UWS London's renowned Cyber Security team. Our experts are at the forefront of cyber, information, and network security—and now, your organisation can benefit directly through exclusive taster workshops and tailored consultancy services.

Discover how our insights can empower your team and strengthen your digital defences.

Contact

teamlondon@uws.ac.uk
<https://www.uwslondon.ac.uk/>

OFFER

Free taster cyber
security workshops



■ BAT & BALL – COVENT GARDEN

Bat & Ball brings competitive socialising to the heart of Covent Garden. Enjoy ping pong, shuffleboard, interactive darts, pool, karaoke, live sport, DJs and delicious food & drinks in a vibrant venue perfect for group nights, team socials, and celebrations.

Contact

em.janczarek@thebatandball.com
<https://www.thebatandball.com/locations/covent-garden>

OFFER

20% off games, food
& drinks for LCCI
members

Use code: **LCCI2025** when booking online or email Em to receive the QR code for discount.

Offer valid Monday to Sunday until 20th November 2025. Subject to availability. Pre-booking required.

If you are a member of LCCI with an offer for other members, contact membersoffers@londonchamber.co.uk

Two minute interview

Ghiwa Dandach, University of the West of Scotland



Who are you?

I am a business school lecturer with a background in auditing and consultancy.

What was your first job in London?

Front-of-house staff. This hands-on experience in customer service was a transformative growth opportunity that my office job as senior auditor didn't provide.

Which one business achievement over the last 12 months are you most proud of, and why?

I'm proud of the various achievements accumulated over the last 12 months. However, if I were to highlight one, I'm particularly proud of being nominated for the Best Lecturer Award; the culmination of my dedication to teaching and student development.

If you were advising a young entrepreneur which business person would you suggest as a model?

I believe young entrepreneurs should not limit themselves to 'big names' in business. As an educator, I encourage students to recognise that success is multifaceted. Just as we wouldn't expect every student to achieve an A+ in assessments, we shouldn't place our expectations on a single model or figure for business success. There are countless unknown entrepreneurs around the world with great stories who can provide valuable lessons about success and resilience.

How do you think the

transport system in London can be improved?

London's transport holds several areas for improvement but let's limit the discussion to London buses. They suffer from disrupted schedules and emit the highest levels of CO₂ per passenger kilometre compared to other TfL services in the last few years. A potential reduction in number of stops on a single route and a higher average speed level would support the path to more sustainable, cost-efficient practices and timely schedules, enhancing customer service and social responsibility.

Which piece of red tape causes most problems for your company, and why?

A key challenge for businesses has been navigating the frequent changes to Skilled Worker routes. The evolving salary thresholds, eligibility criteria, and sponsorship requirements make it difficult for small businesses to plan and recruit international talent with confidence. Each change means revisiting processes, training staff, and sometimes losing access to qualified candidates which disrupts growth and hiring.

What is your favourite and least favourite thing about London?

My favourite thing in London is the city's potential! The multicultural aspect of London is one of its most remarkable traits that offers a wealth of business opportunities and

represents an irreplaceable hub for growth, learning and development. My least favourite aspect about London is its noise; sounds of engines, tired breaths, unresolved misunderstandings, and never-ending rushing pace!

If you were Mayor of London for the day, which one thing would you change?

One day would not be enough for significant changes for businesses/communities but if I could, I'd prioritise creating a streamlined, city-wide support system for micro and small businesses. This would include access to affordable workspaces, simplified compliance guidance – especially for migrant and minority-owned businesses – and targeted digital upskilling programmes.

On another whimsical level, I'd introduce a compulsory monthly day for 'kindness and happiness' where penalties and fines are issued to people spotted frowning, shouting, rushing, or arguing.

Who would you consider an appropriate person to play you in a movie of your life?

Anyone and no one. It's hard

to imagine that someone might be able to epitomise the spectrum of emotional chapters of one's life, yet we all go through similar life phases. Although the level of painful or joyful moments might be discrepant, at one point or another, we must have witnessed a comparable taste of joy and sorrow. If I had to choose, I'd suggest a cloned version of myself – after all, who could be more fitting to embody my journey than me?

What is your favourite quotation?

"Everybody is a genius. But if you judge a fish by its ability to climb a tree, it will live its whole life believing that it is stupid." Albert Einstein.

Comparing our success to others or setting others' criteria or success measures as our own, might make us drown rather than climb. Ambition should not be about achieving what others have achieved but rather about achieving what we haven't achieved yet, while acknowledging our different strengths, and focusing on our unique potential.

www.uwslondon.ac.uk





Dynamic Hillingdon

Brunel University in Uxbridge hosted June's Hillingdon Business Expo, celebrating its eleventh anniversary. The event has grown over the years to bring together a comprehensive and dynamic cross-section of local businesses, innovators, and community leaders to showcase the strength and diversity of Hillingdon's economic landscape.

The event featured:

- 130 exhibitions from local businesses across various sectors
- Keynote sessions and panel discussions
- Networking opportunities, prize draws and an evening drinks reception.

www.hillingdonchamber.co.uk



Linking into the Chamber

LCCI has launched a new LinkedIn group, the London Chamber of Commerce and Industry Business Network, which is open to all Members and Community Network participants.

Vibrant

It is designed to be a vibrant hub for networking, sharing business updates and staying informed about what's happening across

the community, all with easy access and wide reach.

www.linkedin.com/groups/13198942



SPONSORED COLUMN

An understanding of the Landlord and Tenant Act 1954 is crucial when you own or lease commercial property

The Landlord and Tenant Act 1954 is a piece of legislation designed to protect business tenants.

One of its most significant provisions is the right of many commercial tenants to renew their leases at the end of the contractual term, provided certain criteria are met.

Understanding these rights and procedures is crucial for both landlords and tenants involved in commercial property. When in doubt, professional advice is recommended to navigate the complexities of the Act.

The Act primarily applies to tenancies of premises occupied by the tenant for the purposes of a business.

Not all leases are "protected tenancies", and some leases can be "contracted out" of the Act if both parties have agreed to this before the lease was signed, following a prescribed procedure.

If the lease is protected, at the end of the term the tenant will have the right to remain in occupation and to request a new lease. The landlord, however, can only oppose the grant of a new tenancy on specific statutory grounds.

Either the landlord or tenant can begin the renewal process by serving the appropriate notice, setting out the desired terms for a new lease, or a landlord can serve notice declining to allow the grant of a new lease, based on one of the statutory grounds.

Once a notice is served, both parties are encouraged to negotiate the terms of the new lease, often with legal or professional advice, which our team can assist with.

If terms can't be agreed, either party may apply to the court for a new tenancy. The court

will then determine the terms (including rent) and decide whether the landlord's grounds of opposition are valid.

There are proposed changes to the Act, which has provided business tenants with security of tenure for over 70 years, with the UK government and the Law Commission recognising that it may no longer fully reflect the modern needs of the commercial property sector.

In March 2023, the Law Commission announced a formal review of the Act to consider reforms. Consultations and reports since then have highlighted several potential changes, such as:

- Simplifying and modernising the lease renewal process.
- Making the law clearer and more accessible for commercial landlords and tenants.
- Potentially altering how security of tenure works to better suit today's flexible leasing arrangements.

These proposed changes are still currently at the consultation stage.

Sherrie Munroe, Director of Property Disputes at Bishopsgate Law.
Telephone: **01707 246100**.
E-mail: enquiries@bishopsgatelaw.com.
www.bishopsgatelaw.com.



BishopsgateLaw



New Members

Who has joined the London Chamber of Commerce and Industry in the last two months?

4Tradesmen LTD

www.4Tradesmenltd.co.uk

Building and maintenance services

Aldrock

guy@aldrock.co.uk

www.aldrock.co.uk

Architecture, surveying, energy

Asuene Europe Limited

T: 07788 443856

euroeuropa-bd@asuene.com

www.corp.asuene.com/en

Climate tech startup

Bemari

hello@bemari.co.uk

www.bemari.co.uk

B-Corp certified impact consultancy

Bishopsgate Law Ltd

T: 020 3206 1360

nimra@bishopsgatelaw.com

www.bishopsgatelaw.com

Legal services

Blackfort Group

T: 020 3951 9090

mgmt@blackfortgroup.co.uk

www.blackfortgroup.co.uk

Investment and financial advisory

Britwind

Sarah.Allen@Britwind.co.uk

Wind turbines & battery storage systems

Castle Frontier

T: 020 4509 1143

emoor@castlefrontier.com

www.castlefrontier.com

Solution consultancy

Ecovis Wingrave Yeats UK Ltd

T: 07775 245123

alexandra.pasareanu@ecovis.co.uk

www.ecovis.co.uk

Accounting

Elevate Ltd

kevin@poweredbyelevate.net

www.poweredbyelevate.net

Digital consultancy

Fjord Qudra Ltd

T: 07535 897436

clint@fjordqudra.com

www.fjordqudra.com

Helping businesses succeed with AI

Global Trade Expo Ltd

rahul@globaltradeexpo.co.uk

Exhibition company

Inspired Ergonomics Ltd

www.inspiredergonomics.com

Ergonomic workplace services

IPS Overseas Ltd

T: 020 7258 3771

hall@intpro.com

www.intpro.com

Electronic countermeasures

JSSPro

T: 07768 876367

pradeep.banerji@jsspro.com

www.jsspro.com

IT and knowledge processing services

Komunidad Global

dafne.yeltekin@komunidad.co

Climate risk & ESG solutions platform

Leak Safe

www.leaksafe.com

Leak detection

Light IQ Ltd

T: 020 3535 5750

pradeep.banerji@jsspro.com

www.lightiq.com

Lighting design and supply

Lighter Business Solutions

(t/a LighterHR)

T: 020 3535 5750

contact@lighterhr.co.uk

www.lighterhr.co.uk

HR consultancy

London Marriott Hotel County Hall

T: 020 7928 5200

www.marriottcountyhall.com

Hotel and venue

Multibrands International Ltd

T: 01274 307310

info@multibrands.eu.com

www.multibrands.eu.com

Manufacturer of goods and lighting



Nabil Fawzy International for Trading Investment and Development

N.fawzy@nfcotid.com

www.nfcotid.com

International trade import export

Needle And Thread Design Holdings Ltd

www.needleandthread.com

Ultra-feminine contemporary womenswear

Next Step Influence

T: 07393 334501

hannahsplg@protonmail.com

www.nextstepinfluence.com

Media training

Nile UK Service Company Limited

T: 07498 798060

crichards@telecom-ip.com

www.telecom-ip.co.uk

Telecom Infrastructure Partners (TIP)

Onka UK Electrical Ltd

www.onka.uk

Wholesale of electrical components

PH7 Global Services Ltd

www.ph7globalservices.com

Business consulting and operations

Podpads Ltd

www.podpads.com

Glamping village supplier

Red Engine - Flight Club Darts

T: 07943 941883

becky.short@red-engine.com

www.flightclubdarts.com

Flight club darts & electric shuffle

RMC Accountants Ltd

T: 07894 167410

support@rmcaccountants.co.uk

www.rmccountants.co.uk

Virtual finance department

RS Equine Partners Ltd

info@robinspaak.co.uk

Global equine logistical solutions

Samera Global

www.iwandw.com

Chartered accountants

Sparsh Digital Ltd

T: 07886 680127

vikram@sparsh.co.uk

www.sparsh.co.uk

AQ sensors & BLE devices

Suburban Services

clove@suburbanserv.co.uk

www.suburbanserv.co.uk

Professional facility management

Tamimi Consulting

T: 07873 233329

bkerimoglu@tamimiconsulting.com

www.tamimiconsulting.com

Leading cross-border advisory firm

The River Restaurant by Gordon Ramsay

T: 020 7499 0122

richardroper@gordonramsay.com

www.gordonramsayrestaurants.com/river-restaurant

Restaurant in The Savoy, London

Thurgoods Limited

www.totaloffice.co.uk

Office Supplies

Tishman Speyer Properties UK Ltd

T: 07903 916492

ghatzman@tishmanspeyer.com

www.tishmanspeyer.com

Property Development

University of Staffordshire London - Careers Team

T: 07341 016566

nelson.dean@staffs.ac.uk

University

LCCI Partners and Patrons Noticeboard



HaysMac

As Patrons, HaysMac, host, sponsor and help arrange the Quarterly Economic Survey (Capital 500) Report in partnership with LCCI.

On Wednesday 9th July, join LCCI and HaysMac as we launch the latest Quarterly Economic Survey (Capital 500) Report for Q2 2025.

The Capital 500 is a quarterly survey of over 500 business leaders in London, conducted by the London Chamber of Commerce and Industry for more than 20 years. It is part of the British Chambers of Commerce's UK-wide Quarterly Economic Survey, focusing specifically on London's business landscape. The report provides a regular snapshot of business sentiment, performance, and expectations across firms of all sizes and sectors.

The findings aid in business planning and deliver timely insights into trends impacting London's economy, such as sales, investment, skills, recruitment, and cost pressures. Additionally, the data contributes to broader policy discussions, with results shared with key stakeholders. It informs business planning and provides timely insights into trends affecting London's economy, including sales, investment, skills, recruitment, and cost pressures. The data also contributes to wider policy discussions, with results shared with the key stakeholders.

We'll be joined by Cebr's Chief Economic Adviser Vicky Pryce, Savanta's Senior Director James Rentoul, and HaysMac's Property Partner Ian Daniels, if you'd like to book please click here. [https://www.londonchamber.co.uk/events/events/events-calendar/lcci-quarterly-economic-survey-\(capital-500\)-report-launch-q2/](https://www.londonchamber.co.uk/events/events/events-calendar/lcci-quarterly-economic-survey-(capital-500)-report-launch-q2/)



Landmark

Landmark embarks on FlexGrade rollout

Landmark, one of the UK's most established flexible workspace providers, has become the first operator in the country to submit its entire portfolio for independent quality benchmarking through FlexGrade.

Designed as the first independent, data-driven quality benchmark for flexible workspaces, FlexGrade offers an unbiased, credible third-party standardisation for flex operators. While already live in the US, Australia, Singapore, and EMEA, Landmark's move to partner with FlexGrade in the UK marks the start of an exciting partnership.

By rolling out FlexGrade across its full national portfolio, Landmark is demonstrating a clear commitment to transparency, accountability, and continuous improvement. This decision is not only a statement of confidence in the quality of its offering, but underscores the company's long-term investment in building trust, credibility, and delivering exceptional workplace experiences for its clients.



Tilbury3

The Thames-based port and industrial complex submits an outline planning application to Thurrock Council to redevelop a 100-acre brownfield site located immediately adjacent to Tilbury2 (T2) to support London's major markets.

If approved, the Port of Tilbury will submit a detailed planning application that will provide the layout, scale and appearance in further detail, as well as building on the current EIA submitted with the outline consent application, considering the specific environmental aspects of the area. This will build on the Port's success in delivering biodiversity net gain through its previous developments.

Stuart Wallace, CEO of Forth Ports Group (owner of the Port of Tilbury), said: *"This is an exciting time for the Port of Tilbury as we submit our plans for Tilbury3 which form part of our growth investment strategy to expand our operations in support of our customer's growth markets in renewable power, recycling and logistics."*

The proposed delivery of T3 would be phased, with works starting in 2026 with a target of being fully operational by 2030.

T3 is located within the Tilbury Tax Site of the Thames Freeport, meaning future tenants could benefit from a suite investment incentives.



Capital City College

Announcement – Capital City College Shortlisted for Prestigious Award

We are proud to announce that apprentices from the Apprenticeships+ team at Capital City College have been shortlisted for the **Multicultural Apprenticeship Awards 2025** in the **Learning Provider of the Year** category. This prestigious recognition celebrates our unwavering commitment to inclusive and high-quality apprenticeship delivery.

Apprenticeships+ team entered the awards to highlight its dedication to equity and inclusion in apprenticeship education. With a significant number of apprentices from multicultural backgrounds, we are passionate about offering tailored support, inclusive outreach, and strong progression pathways. Our goal is to ensure that every learner—regardless of background—has the opportunity to succeed and thrive.

Being shortlisted is a testament to the hard work of our staff and the achievements of our apprentices.



Port of Tilbury

Answers to The Knowledge

On page 21

1 Netball. They play in the Superleague with home matches, often at the Wembley Arena.

2 Alfred Sisley. He spent more time in England in the 1890s but returned to France where he died in poverty, unrecognised as an artist.

3 The National Portrait Gallery. It moved there in 1896.

4 Just the one. Richmond upon Thames.

5 Golf. Previously James VI of Scotland, he set up the first tee in south east London in 1608.

6 John Bird, Baron Bird MBE. He launched Big Issue in 1991 with Gordon Roddick, co-founder of The Body Shop.

7 The Tower of London. The gate was built in the time of King Edward I (1239 – 1307).

8 St Paul's in Covent Garden. The long list of theatrical stars who have had their memorial services conducted there include Charlie Chaplin, Ivor Novello and Diana Rigg.

9 Katherine Parr, the king's last wife, in 1512. She outlived Henry by almost two years.

10 The Ritz at 150 Piccadilly. The tea master is Giandomenico Scanu.



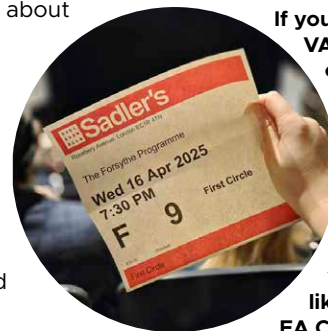
The first six months of 2025 for the LCCI EA Club have been a whirlwind writes Katie Hulbert

The year started with a 'churrasco experience' dinner at Fazenda, followed by a sing-a-long at Lucky Voice. Sporting skills were tested at Sixes Social Cricket in March while in April a select few were able to see the English National Ballet performing at Sadler's Wells.



Cocktails

Coffee and pastries were on the menu for brunch in the penthouse suite at Marriott Hotel London County Hall at the next EA event. The weather just about held up for the group's summer party in the rooftop bar at Hyatt Place London City East with cocktails and canapés.



Huge thanks are due to member venue

hosts for pulling out all the stops for the LCCI EA Club. There is also an exciting programme of events for the rest of the year.

Katie Hulbert is an executive in the LCCI events team

If you are an EA, PA, VA, office manager or event booker you can apply to join the LCCI EA Club by emailing lcclieclub@londonchamber.co.uk or if you're an LCCI member venue and would like to host an LCCI EA Club event, contact lcclieclub@londonchamber.co.uk



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CAPITAL MATTERS

JULY/AUGUST 2025



A special advertising features and listings supplement produced by Crosby Associates Media Limited, the official publishers of London Business Matters

COVER STORY

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Rank	Employer	Sector
1	IBM	Information services
2	West Midlands	Construction
3	LA Group	Professional services
4	Law Money Solutions	Construction
5	Residential Mortgages	Finance
6	Traveller Software	Professional services
7	Business Support Solutions	Finance
8	PHUJO	Professional services
9	International Children's Services	Finance
10	Crane & Taylor	Construction
11	Ammanford	Food & Drink
12	Customer Satisfaction	Software
13	Delta Play Systems	Animal care
14	James T. General Services	Professional services
15	Law Firm Legal Services	Professional services
16	Altracore	Manufacturing services
17	Education Property Trust	Education
18	The National Academy	Education
19	London Technical Institute	Education
20	Global Talent	Education
21	James T. General Services	Professional services
22	Adaptive	Education
23	Compassionality Solutions	Construction
24	Integrations	Professional services
25	Integrations	Professional services
26	HR Accountants	Professional services
27	Spence & Bennett	Construction
28	Compassionality Solutions	Education
29	Integrations	Engineering & Industrial
30	Integrations	Health & Social Care
31	Integrations	Health & Social Care
32	Woodside Outdoor Nursery School	Education
33	Trade Systems in Motion	Engineering & Industrial
34	Industry Collaborative Day Resources	Education
35	Integrations	Education
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Department for Education

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Is Your Business Ready for the New Era of Visibility and PR?

Marketing in 2025 cannot be compared to marketing in 2020 – or even 2023. The rules have changed.

So, finding a PR and communications partner you can trust has become increasingly challenging. You need an agency that's supportive, current with marketing trends, delivers results – and is genuinely nice to work with. But many small-to-medium businesses struggle with agencies that promise much but fail to understand their evolving needs.



Jo Caruana and members of the Finesse Group team.

The Finesse Group have been quietly solving this problem for nearly 20 years. This boutique, female-led international agency specialises in human-to-human (H2H) marketing that creates authentic connections and drives real conversions.

At the helm is Jo Caruana, one of the UK's few coaches certified in StoryBrand – the leading American storytelling and communications framework. She's regularly invited to speak on the future of marketing and PR, particularly how AI is transforming the way we find and convert customers. Her team works across luxury travel and hospitality, theatre and the arts, celebrities, authors, thought leaders, education, NGOs, and B2B enterprises.

What makes the Finesse Group particularly valuable for ambitious businesses is their expertise in internationalisation. They've successfully guided companies from home markets to thriving

operations across Europe, the US, and beyond. Add to this their comprehensive service suite – from PR and content to mystery shopping, business etiquette training, communications workshops, and complete magazine and podcast production – and you have a partner equipped for every aspect of modern marketing.

By staying ahead of crucial shifts in SEO, AI search, and digital platforms, they ensure clients receive strategies built for today's landscape, not yesterday's playbook. It's why hundreds of satisfied clients – many loyal since day one – continue to trust them with their growth and visibility.

This is the first time that the Finesse Group is appearing in the London Chamber of Commerce magazine and, to celebrate, they would like to offer readers an exclusive 10% discount. Please mention it when you reach out.

Ready to transform your visibility? Book a free Communications Audit chat with Jo at jo@byfinessegroup.com or visit www.byfinessegroup.com.

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Q&A on how hiring apprenticeships and T Level students can help move the construction industry forward with Milton Walcott at Complete Fixing Solutions

Complete Fixing Solutions (CFS) was founded in 2011 and specialises in the installation of high-quality joinery, architectural metalwork and partitioning. CFS works with bespoke manufacturers, fabricators, and principal contractors across the country.



Milton Walcott

WHY DID COMPLETE FIXING SOLUTIONS DECIDE TO INVEST IN TRAINING AND EMPLOYMENT SCHEMES?

We started our apprenticeship programme in 2020. It reflects our commitment to future-proofing the company, cultivating a diverse workforce and upholding our social values.

We firmly believe that investing in apprenticeships, T Levels and Higher Technical Qualifications (HTQs) students is not only beneficial to us as a business, but also to our local community and broader society. By offering apprenticeships, we actively support social mobility providing people of all ages and backgrounds with an entry route to steady employment. This helps cultivate a more diverse workforce, which, in turn, brings unique perspectives, enhances creativity and promotes innovation. By providing apprenticeships, we aim to create a more inclusive environment and contribute to equal opportunities within our industry.

Currently, we have four apprentices undertaking Level 4 qualifications in Construction Supervision and Project Management, which underlines our focus on developing leadership and

technical expertise within our workforce. Recently, one of our apprentices that completed a Level 6 qualification in Occupational Health & Safety has become a full-time member of staff, working as a Regional Health & Safety Advisor. This demonstrates the quality of our training and our commitment to retaining skilled professionals by supporting their career progression within the business.

Our T Level students have made significant progress during their placements, strengthening our talent pipeline and reinforcing our long-term investment in the future of the construction industry.

HOW DO SUCH TRAINING SCHEMES ADD VALUE TO THE BUSINESS?

There are so many ways training schemes, such as apprenticeships and T Level placements, add value to the business. Each apprentice and T Level student brings with them new ideas, new energy, and new ways of thinking that boost productivity and enhance our results as a business and as a team.

By investing in these schemes, we're also proactively plugging skills gaps within the business, building up highly trained workers with the skills we need to thrive. Earlier this year, Skills for Life released its latest **Skills Horizon Barometer report** which shows that nine in 10 SMEs (90%) are facing some kind of skills gap within their business, with the biggest at entry level (32%). It's a worrying statistic, but by upskilling your workforce and embracing technical training schemes, like apprenticeships and T Levels, you can make a positive difference and help to bridge specific skills gaps.

Our commitment to apprenticeships not only fulfills our organisational needs, but it also creates real meaningful

employment opportunities for people in our local community. By providing opportunities for apprentices from a wide range of backgrounds, we create a workforce that's not only inclusive but truly reflects the diversity of the community.

Last year, we ranked 23rd in the Top 50 SME Apprenticeship Employers 2024 which highlights our dedication to providing valuable career opportunities. Our programme offers access to industry and high-level opportunities to both young people and career changers, with many of these apprentices transitioning to full-time roles within the company.

Our clients really value the high calibre of our apprentices, often collaborating with our teams and their own apprentices on team-building and skills development. These collaborations enhance our working relationships, drive improvement and highlight the positive impact apprentices have on the business and our working culture more broadly. They also motivate us to continue creating meaningful opportunities that benefit both our workforce and clients alike.

HOW DO THOSE ON THE TRAINING BENEFIT?

CFS offer one-to-one mentorship that delivers a unique and personalised approach to mentorship. Each apprentice is assigned a dedicated mentor who provides individualised guidance and support. This ensures each apprentice receives tailored assistance, allowing them to thrive and develop their skills and knowledge more effectively.

We understand that T Level and HTQ students and apprentices may face financial challenges when acquiring tools and equipment for their training which is why we offer a zero-interest tool hire/purchase programme. This enables our T Level and HTQ students

and apprentices to access the necessary tools and equipment without incurring high upfront costs. This programme demonstrates our commitment to support apprentices and providing them with resources they need to succeed.

We believe in celebrating our trainees' achievements and each month, which is why we run a monthly award for "Apprentice of the Month", where our outstanding apprentices are honoured with a medal, certificate and £100 bonus. We also share a post on our company website and newsletter acknowledging their efforts and their award. This helps foster a culture of continuous learning, motivating our apprentices to excel and showcase their accomplishments to the wider organisation.



Employing T Level and HTQ students at CFS brings lasting benefits by building a skilled, future-ready workforce. It also shows our commitment to diversity, inclusion, and community engagement by creating career paths that reflect our values and those of the communities we serve.

Our dedication has led to wider recognition, including features in The Independent as part of the Department for Education's Skills for Life campaign, and invitations to high-profile events at the House of Commons celebrating apprenticeships.

These honours highlight CFS's role as a leader in championing young talent.

WHAT ADVICE WOULD YOU GIVE TO OTHER EMPLOYERS?

For other employers looking for ways to upskill their staff and implement new training and employment schemes, I would recommend visiting Skills for Life website as a first port-of-call. **Skills for Life** is a campaign by the Department for Education that seeks to help SMEs understand all the schemes available to them and help them make the right training choices for their business which ultimately, could help them plug vital skills gaps in the year ahead. Whether you're intrigued by T Levels, want to know more about HTQs or apprenticeships, the Skills for Life website has all the information you need.

To get the most out of your apprenticeship schemes, it's important to put solid support structures in place. That means having clear training plans, regular check-ins to track progress, and documented outcomes when apprentices complete the programme.

Creating a supportive company culture is just as important. It's not only about teaching technical skills; it's also about offering mentorship, guidance, and encouragement, making those on the training scheme valued from day one.

Ensure there's a clear path forward. Let your apprentices, T Level and HTQ students know what their career progression could look like, from entry-level roles through to more advanced positions. They'll feel more motivated and engaged and are more likely stay with a company that invests in their training, so



it's a win-win for everyone.

By taking the above approaches, you're not just developing skills, you're building a committed team and setting your business up for long-term success.

Looking to future-proof your workforce? Visit the Skills for Life website to find out more about the training and employment schemes available to your business, as well as support on how to implement these.

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When it rains in London, people in Hamburg open their umbrellas

Or so the saying goes. And indeed, hardly any other city on the European mainland is as closely connected to the UK as Hamburg – both culturally and economically. With a trading history of over 800 years and some 3,000 British nationals living in the city, Hamburg maintains a thriving exchange of people, ideas and investments. For UK companies seeking an innovative, sustainable location to expand in, the city offers a familiar environment rich in opportunities.

Hamburg: Northern Germany's economic powerhouse

Hamburg is committed to strengthening its economic resilience, competitiveness and quality of life in a sustainable manner.

In 2024, despite challenging global conditions, the city was named Germany's most innovative region by the EU's Regional Innovation Scoreboard, featuring the strongest GDP growth in the country. This accomplishment is also owing to Hamburg's diversified economic base spanning industry, trade, services, logistics

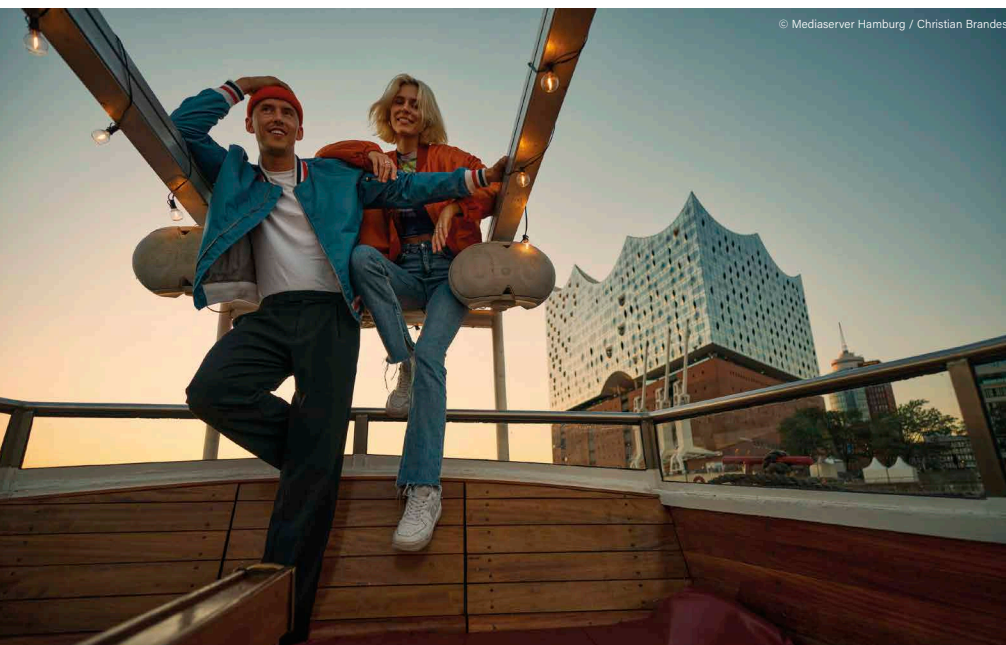
and technology. From its international port to specialised innovation clusters, Hamburg is a solid location with excellent prospects.

Building bridges across the channel

The signing of a Memorandum of Understanding between the London Chamber of Commerce and the Hamburg Chamber of Commerce and Industry marks a new chapter in UK-German business relations. The agreement aims to promote business cooperation, counteract protectionism and initiate joint projects in the areas of innovation, trade and sustainability. Hamburg's message is clear: Europe remains open to British business.

Green transformation, tangible and scalable

Hamburg is a driver of Europe's green industrial policy. A core element in this is the Green Hydrogen Hub in the port of Hamburg, one of the world's largest planned electrolyzers for the production of green hydrogen. From 2027 onwards, it will provide decarbonised energy for industry, logistics and power generation. Together with partners such as BP and Aurubis, a scalable model for emission-free value creation is being developed here – embedded in a growing pipeline network along the North Sea coast and backed by considerable funding by the EU and the Federal Government.





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A gateway to the world, with sustainable infrastructure

Featuring Europe's third-largest seaport, an international airport, high-capacity rail links and one of the world's highest density of consulates, Hamburg offers excellent connectivity – within the EU, with the Scandinavian countries, and with global markets. What is more, the port of Hamburg is being gradually transformed into a zero-emission zone, including hydrogen fuelling stations and climate-friendly shipping.



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Innovative strength meets location quality

Hamburg is home to a dynamic startup ecosystem that is supported by public funding, tech labs and international accelerators. Key sectors here include FinTech, maritime technologies, aviation, medical engineering and AI. Close collaboration between

business, academia and research institutions provides an ideal setting for innovation, development and growth.

Investor-focused services, tailored to your needs

Hamburg Invest offers international investors confidential, free-of-charge support in English, ranging from site selection and regulatory guidance to networking and advice on funding opportunities. Whether you are expanding or starting anew: Hamburg facilitates you in easily accessing the German market.

Very British, very Hamburg

Whether it's afternoon tea at Eaton Place, a polo match in the Klein Flottbek neighbourhood, or live performances of British theatre classics: Hamburg truly embraces its anglophile spirit. And the Beatles, who launched their world career in the St Pauli quarter, are but the most famous example of the traditional ties between Hamburg and the UK – rich in history and full of future potential.

Would you like to learn more?

Please don't hesitate to get in touch with us. Our dedicated team at Hamburg Invest will be happy to support you throughout your journey – from your first idea to launching your business in Hamburg.

Katharina Lamers
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International Investments
Hamburg Invest

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