

Issue one 2010 Connect

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Basingstoke & Business

Local Business Partnership FREEPHONE HELPLINE 0800 136670

Sick notes replaced

Since April 2010 the traditional sick note has been replaced by the Statement of Fitness for Work or fit note. GPs will be able to advise what work an employee may be able to perform given adjustments in their work or workplace surroundings.

This change will affect all organisations in Great Britain. For further guidance on the changes, please visit www.acas.org.uk/fitnote



Online VAT returns

Since 1 April 2010 you have had to submit your VAT returns online and pay any VAT due electronically if you:



- Have an annual VAT-exclusive turnover of at least £100,000 or
- Register for VAT on or after April 1, 2010, regardless of your turn over

If you registered for VAT before 1 April 2010 or you are already registered for VAT and your turnover stays below £100,000 you can continue to submit your VAT return on paper.

To register and submit VAT returns go to www.online.hmrc.gov.uk

Adoption, Maternity and Paternity pay

Since 4 April 2010 the statutory rate has now increased from £123.06 to £124.88.



Standard rate landfill tax increase

Since 1 April 2010 the standard rate of landfill tax increased from £40 to £48 per tonne.

The standard rate will increase by £8 per tonne each subsequent year, so by 1 April 2013 the landfill tax will be £72 per tonne.



Statutory Sick Pay rate unchanged

Statutory Sick Pay, which normally increases on or around 6 April each year will not be increased this April. The weekly rate of statutory sick pay remains as £79.15 per week.



Have your say on regulation

The Government wants to hear the views of business to make a difference where it matters.

If you have ideas that will improve regulation and make life easier for business, consumers and the public as a whole, please submit them Regulation website at page www.betterregulation.gov.uk (Government commits to responding back within 90 days). You can also see examples of how businesses are benefiting from ideas the Government has already put into practice. to the Government's Better



The Health Work and Well-being Challenge Fund

The Health Work and Well-being Challenge Fund is a grant scheme of £4million available over two years from the Department for Work and Pensions. It is a competitive scheme to fund innovative projects that improve employees' health and welfare at work and is aimed at local partnerships and small and medium sized businesses based, and trading in Great Britain.

www.workingforhealth.gov.uk



Create a website for your business in 20 minutes, for FREE

Getting British Business On-line is a joint initiative by Google, Enterprise UK, BT, e-skills UK and many other partners to help small businesses create their first website and help them understand the opportunities offered by the Internet. If you are not too web savvy, then BT are offering a free telephone helpline to take you through the wizard.

Businesses of every type and size need to be found online and this simple online tool will help you to create your first website, with no technical knowledge needed. Update your site from any computer, for free, go to

www.gbbo.co.uk



On-line tool for small and medium sized enterprises (SME) funding

This on-line tool provides a simple means for SMEs to identify the European Commission funding instruments which could help their business. It explains the different programmes, their aims and the types of activity each supports. It also gives links to detailed information and contacts for further information and assistance in each EU Member State. For further information please visit http://ec.europa.eu/enterprise/sme/fund_tools/fund_tools_theme_en.htm



Business elite to be recognised at INSPIRE10

We're pleased to announce the INSPIRE10 business awards to be hosted on the evening of Thursday 18 November 2010.

The business awards will celebrate the success of local businesses in north Hampshire. The awards are open to businesses from across the region and will allow our leading businesses (both large and small) to gain the recognition they deserve for themselves and, most importantly, for the dedication and commitment of their staff.

INSPIRE has been a huge success since 2005 with hundreds of local businesses attending. INSPIRE10 will showcase regional businesses and will centre around an outstanding awards ceremony.

Awards Categories

- Business of the Year
- Exporter of the Year
- Rural Business of the Year
- E-Business of Year
- Lifetime Achievement Award
- New Business of the Year
- Micro-Business of the Year
- Employer of the Year
- Entrepreneur of the Year
- Young Business person of the Year
- Service Excellence Award
- Sustainable Business of the Year

Each entrant must write a sustainability statement and demonstrate how they have embedded environmental and sustainability issues into their business. The best will be awarded Sustainable Business of the Year .

Who should enter?

Nominations for awards can come directly from the companies themselves or from third parties. So if you know of any company you feel deserves an award please take this opportunity to reward their excellence or enter your organisation. The awards are open to any company in the north Hampshire area.

To enter, log on to www.inspirebusinessawards.co.uk
Closing date – Friday 10 September
Finalists will receive two free places at the awards ceremony.

For more information on INSPIRE10 see www.inspirebusinessawards.co.uk , or contact Kathryn Price on 01256 461167



Managing your way out of the recession



Business confidence is reported to be growing, but there is still a long way to go for recovery. Now is the time to ensure your business is ready and can manage the expected upcoming growth. Business Link has the following advice for businesses to consider:

Ensure your cash is flowing

- Your overdraft – how long is it for, what are the interest rate and charges? Evaluate if this is the best way to finance your cash flow. Banks will look to cut overdrafts where they can.
- Don't let other businesses put your cash flow in jeopardy. Watch out for unusual buying patterns as they may be having problems with suppliers elsewhere.
- Reduce your customer payment terms to 10 days.
- Margins – focus on profit not just your turnover.
- Review your energy bills and look to switch suppliers to save money.
- Highlight where savings can be made with your suppliers.

Is your business plan fit for purpose?

- Focus on what you want to achieve in the next 12 months.
- Keep an eye on invitations to tender. The public sector and, increasingly the private sector, demand companies demonstrate commitment to quality, equality, health and safety and the environment, so prepare policies in these areas prior to a bid.
- Set measurable goals for the coming month.

Having an organised marketing plan will help focus your business into recovery and growth

- Communicate, communicate, communicate to your existing and lapsed customers.
- Define your unique selling point - communicate key benefits and features.
- Tell your existing customers about new products and services.
- Cost effective marketing – in tough times, it's tempting to cut your marketing activity, however, it's proven that those who invest in marketing during hard times emerge the strongest when good times return, so use your creativity to implement low cost marketing techniques.
- Your online profile – ensure your website is working for you and it is easy for your customers to do business with you.
- Upload new content regularly, give customers a reason to return to your site
- Media coverage – ensure your local media contacts are aware of your successes
- Branding - your brand creates an identity and personality for your business. Be consistent and ensure your key messages and contact information are all communications.
- Network - attend events, seminars and trade shows. Take business cards and make sure you follow up useful contacts with an email, letter or phone call and add them to your database.

Economic instability can affect employee morale. Effective management is essential to promote a positive outlook and steer a business through difficult times.

- Ask employees for their ideas on cost-cutting in their department.
- Praise employees for a task well done.
- Contact Train to Gain to see how you can develop your staff and increase confidence. Companies that don't train staff are 2.5 times more likely to fail.

Finally, be ecologically-friendly. This can strengthen your brand and credentials as more and more customers want to deal with businesses that are environmentally responsible.

Contact Business Link to arrange a FREE business review on 0845 600 9 006 or email info@businesslinkhampshireiow.co.uk

Looking for tendering opportunities?

More small and medium-sized enterprises (SMEs) should consider selling to the UK public sector to place their business at the heart of a market that spends around £220 billion a year on works, goods and services.



Traditionally, SMEs have had difficulty locating smaller contract opportunities which could potentially be more suitable for them, and so believe opportunities to sell to the public sector to be few and far between.

The opposite, however, is true. Hundreds of lower-

value contracts are published every month by public bodies throughout the UK, which have wide-ranging requirements spanning all sectors of industry.

With current requirements including website design and consultancy services to market research and fire risk assessments, SMEs have reason to become more competitive by demonstrating value for money and quality of service to win business and gain their slice of this huge market. Lower-value contracts with the public sector are an excellent way to boost reputation and credibility, as well as allowing SMEs to build on existing references.

The South East business portal has information on tendering opportunities on 74 councils and nine fire & rescue services of the south east region. The organisations listed collectively spend between £4bn and £4.5bn each year on bought in goods and services.

You are free to browse and use the information without registering or logging-in to the portal. www.businessportal.southeastiep.gov.uk

www.supply2.gov.uk is an online government resource, used now by over 190,000 UK-based SMEs to identify potential opportunities to sell to the public sector. The portal focuses on advertising opportunities which fall below the EU procurement thresholds –for example those not eligible to be advertised in the Official Journal of the European Union (OJEU) due to their lower values (typically below £100,000). However, contracts of all values can be found on the website.

By registering as a supplier on either site, SMEs can access the latest contract information online and free of charge. Suppliers can also benefit from a daily contract alert service, notifying them of the latest contracts advertised which match their alert profile.

This year will see the public sector focusing more on minimizing cost to the public purse in these difficult economic times. Existing services will come under review and procurers will be encouraged to split larger contracts into smaller lots – creating a prime opportunity for SMEs to take advantage of potential subcontracting opportunities.

Olympic Tendering Opportunities 2012


The 2012 Olympic Games and Paralympic Games will be the biggest peace-time event staged in the United Kingdom. With the Games comes a raft of tendering opportunities, both large and small, for businesses.

Details on opportunities with The London 2012 Organising Committee of the Olympic Games and Paralympic Games (LOCOG) and the Olympic Delivery Authority (ODA) can be found on their website including details on:

- tender opportunities
- latest information
- events
- help for your business

These opportunities are regularly updated and it is recommended that you visit the website as often as is convenient for the latest information on the 2012 project. For more information or to view the current opportunities please visit <https://etenders.london2012.com>

Make fire safety in your business.....your business



The costs of a serious fire can be high and afterwards many businesses do not reopen.

Hampshire Fire and Rescue Service is dedicated to providing local businesses with relevant, useful and up to date information to allow businesses to operate safely, within the law and protect themselves from the potential devastation of fire.

The Regulatory Reform (Fire Safety) Order 2005 applies to all non-domestic premises, including the common parts of blocks of flats and houses in multiple occupation. The law applies to you if you are:

- responsible for business premises
- an employer or self-employed with business premises
- responsible for a part of a dwelling where that part is solely used for business purposes
- a charity or voluntary organisation
- a contractor with a degree of control over any premises
- providing accommodation for paying guests

The duty is placed on the 'responsible person' who is required to carry out a fire risk assessment and take specific action to minimise the risk of fire. 'Responsible person' means "the person who has control of the premises in connection with the carrying on of a trade, business or other undertaking".

The Risk Assessment process can be broken down into five steps:

1. Identify fire hazards
2. Identify people at risk of those hazards
3. Evaluate, remove or reduce risk and protect against remaining risk
4. Record, plan and inform or train
5. Review

The fire service usually carries out inspections of premises in their area according to the risk they pose. The fire service will want to know that you have done a risk assessment and that the fire safety arrangements you have put in place are good enough. In addition, inspections will be conducted after information about dangerous fire safety conditions are reported. This may come via complaints or post incident.

If the fire service doesn't consider the measures you have taken or plan to take good enough to adequately protect people, they may serve a notice on you that means you must put in place better fire safety measures. Ultimately, they could take legal action against you and your business may be closed down.

The fire service will enforce fire safety standards in accordance with the Fire Safety Order, having regard to relevant documents published by the Government which are available on at www.communities.gov.uk/firesafety

FREE Fire workshops to help businesses comply with current fire safety law.

Our Business Education Team is committed to assisting the 'responsible person' to fulfil their legal and moral obligations in the workplace by providing free Fire Safety workshops.

The workshops are run at a wide range of venues across Hampshire on a 'first come first served' basis. To reserve your place for a two hour session please contact the Business Education Team on **023 8062 6890** or email **business.education@hantsfire.gov.uk**

Alternatively, you can check availability and book online for workshops
www.hantsfire.gov.uk/forbusiness.htm

Make fire safety in your business...

your business!



Arson reduction

Reducing risk in business premises



Business continuity planning

Protecting your business



Sprinkler systems

Advice and practical demonstrations



Automatic fire alarms

False call reduction



Fire legislation

Risk assessment and enforcement

**Hampshire Fire and Rescue Service
Business Education Unit
023 8062 6890 www.hantsfire.gov.uk**



**HAMPSHIRE
FIRE AND
RESCUE
SERVICE**

We make life safer

Useful Contacts

Local Business Partnership

Andrew Dowling 01256 845359
LBP Freephone 0800 136670

Basingstoke and Deane Borough Council

Business Relationships and Enterprise

Natalie Wigman 01256 845692
Eduardo Hernandez 01256 845525
Andrew Dowling 01256 845359

Planning (Development Control and Advice)

Giorgio Framalico 01256 845440

Building Control

David Sadler 01256 845565

Environmental Health

Darren Chant 01256 845486

Business Rates

Lesley Relf 01256 845543

Hampshire County Council

Trading Standards

Theresa Havell 01962 833620

Economic Development

John Rees Evans 01962 846628

Hampshire Fire and Rescue Service

Simon Purnell 01256 818881

Basingstoke Police

Inspector John Halfacre 01256 406466

Business Support Agencies

North Hampshire Chamber of Commerce

John Harrocks 01256 352275

Business Link 08456 009 006

Federation of Small Business

Regional Office 01425 280080

Health and Safety Executive

Workplace Contact Officer 01256 404000

ACAS

Mervyn Poore Senior Adviser 01252 360707

Ruth Lambe Senior Adviser 01425 627991

Manufacturing Advisory Service – South East

Roger Dyer 0845 6092121

Hampshire and Isle of Wight Sustainable Business Partnership

Stephen Duncan 01962 845243

Enterprise First

John Mitchell 01252 319272

Business Community

LBP Chair Charles Brooks, Pennington's 01256 407100

LBP V.Chair James Clay, London Clancy 01256 462222

Further Information

Please fill in the form below, deleting as appropriate, and return using the freepost address below and return to:

Andrew Dowling Basingstoke and Deane Borough Council, FREEPOST BZ97/2, BASINGSTOKE. RG21 4GA

Do you think that receiving regular issues of Connect provides you with useful information for your business?

Yes No

Would you like to know more about your Local Business Partnership?

Yes No

Business Partnership meetings?

Yes No

Do you have suggestions for future topics for Connect and/or agenda items for the Local Business Partnership meetings?

Any further comments

Name:

Company:

Address:

Postcode:

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