



Create Growth Programme

Frequently Asked Questions



Department
for Culture,
Media & Sport



Creative UK



Create Growth Programme



What is the Create Growth Programme?

The Create Growth programme has a core focus of growth, helping creative businesses to build sustainably and commercially, ready themselves for investment, as well as shining a light on the value of Creative Industries in the world of business and finance.

Create Growth is a 17.5 million pound project funded by the Department for Culture, Media and Sport (DCMS) with a core objective to facilitate growth and investment within the Creative Industries. Creative UK are delivering this FREE programme in regions across England, including: Devon, Cornwall, West Midlands, West Yorkshire, North East and the South East

The programme is split into Stage 1 and Stage 2

Stage 1

This is a lighter touch programme for early stage/ micro businesses in the creative industry, looking to establish sustainable revenues and gain more business confidence. This includes a series of workshops and a minimum of 2 hours business coaching and networking opportunities.

Stage 2

This is an in depth creative industries specific programme, for mature creative businesses who are looking to scale up. This will involve a series of workshops and a minimum of 17 hours of 1:1 mentoring, matched with one of our many investment mentors. You will also have the opportunity to engage in national events, pitching and networking opportunities.



Create Growth Programme



What does the programme involve?

Both stage 1 and stage 2 provide a combination of in person and online workshops, mentoring and support from the programme team.

The programme is split into 3 developmental sections:

DEFINE:

Workshops that cover creative sector insights into IP, law, investment, developing sales pipelines, business models and commercial health checks. You take this information on and then decide how it can help you define your own business growth plans.

CRAFT:

As we get to know you and your needs, the programme becomes more bespoke with surgeries, arranged expert time and peer learning to craft your plans, proposals, strategies and applications so you can take the first steps in your growth journey.

CONNECT:

In the final phase, we host opportunities for you to connect with investors, new clients, regional collaborators or VIP's you'd like to meet. There will also be sessions to help you prepare your pitch or sponsorship deck, as well as work through the SEIS or EIS process if you're looking for investment.

I'm a Charity/CIC not-for-profit, can I apply?

This will be subject to the investment and growth ambitions of the founder. We know from experience that the legal structure of CICs and charities can exclude them from some types of investment so further discussion with the programme team at interview stage will help us to understand your growth ambitions.



What is mentoring?

At stage 1 and 2 there will be mentors. They are all exceptionally experienced in the creative industries and have brilliant contacts and connections. Many of our mentors are also investors themselves.

You will be matched with sub-sector specific expertise or with expertise that addresses the growth challenges you are planning to overcome.

The mentor will help you identify strategies and next steps which you will then implement.

Mentoring on the Stage 2 programme includes a minimum of 17hrs 1:1 online sessions with one of our national pool of mentors.

Stage 1 programme includes a minimum of 2hrs coaching.

Who is eligible?

To be eligible for the Create Growth programme in Devon, you must meet the following criteria:

- Registered as a business (Ltd, CIC, CIO or LLP) on Companies House
- Trading or registered within Devon
- Operating across one of the following sectors: advertising and marketing; architecture; crafts; design and designer fashion; film, TV, video, radio and photography; IT, software and computer services (including gaming); publishing; museums, galleries and libraries; music, performing and visual arts.



Create Growth Programme



We are really interested in working with:

Businesses and founders who have creativity at their core and a strong ambition to grow.

We are looking for founders who have an open minded and proactive nature and interested in growing their knowledge on funding, financing and investment, to improve their business performance. For example, this can be in the form of advancing a product range, growing a market, diversifying revenues, improving profit margins, becoming sustainable, sourcing finance or developing commercial partnerships.

We have a commitment to Inclusion and Diversity and we support and encourage businesses and founders from all backgrounds to apply for the Create Growth Programme. You can read the Creative UK EDI policy [here](#).

Please email sam.spake@wearecreative.uk if you require any additional support to complete the application or would like to meet with Sam Spake or Suzie West to understand more about the programme.

How do I know if my business is Stage 1 or Stage 2?

Stage 1

We are looking for creatives with a new or emerging (registered) business that want to explore commercial and sustainable models for their business. You will have at least one member of staff with the capacity to engage with the programme. The programme will help you to work out the best business and finance model for your creative services and products.

Stage 2

You will have an established business and a good understanding of your current services/ products and customers. The programme will help you to work out the best investment and growth route for your business and give you opportunities to take the next step. If you are already seeking investment, then we can help support with this journey also. The key is that you have the capacity to engage fully with the mentoring and workshops on offer in the programme and the ability to make proactive steps towards growth.



Create Growth Programme



What is the timeframe?

The programme launches in June 2025 and will run until Jan 2026.

Stage 1

The programme will run from June – Nov 2025.

This is a light touch with some set workshop dates across 6 months.

Stage 2

The programme will run from June – Jan 2026.

Will require around 2 days a month of your time which includes workshop dates, mentoring and taking next steps.

Interviews for the programme will be in May.

What is the application process?

- 1. Applications open April 2025. Complete your Expression of Interest (EOI) [here](#)
- 2. We will read your EOI and if you are eligible, we will invite you to submit a full application by Monday 26th May 2025. 5pm.
- 3. There is an online interview for applicants suitable for Stage 2.
- The interviews will happen 5th May –17th May

If you are successful in your application to join the programme, we will be in touch to enrol you into our stage 1 or stage 2 business support programme.

What happens in the interview?

This is a 30 minute chat led by one of our lead mentors and a member of the programme team, to help us understand more about your business, so we can assess suitability for the Stage 2 programme. You do not need to prepare anything in advance. We will talk through your application and ask you more details about the ambitions you have for the business.



Create Growth Programme



How often am I expected to attend in-person events?

Stage 1 – up to 6 workshop events and a minimum of 2 coaching sessions

Stage 2 – up to 9 workshops and a minimum of 17 hours mentoring sessions

The workshop dates and topics will be given to you ahead of time and you can select the sessions most impactful/ relevant to you.

Do I get any funding and do I have to pay to be on the programme?

No, you do not get funding from the programme. However, you will be able to apply for funding from Innovate UK* and any other funding opportunities we will signpost to you.

There is no cost for selected businesses to attend the programme. However, you will not be reimbursed for your own time and you will need to be able to cover your own costs for attending events.

Can more than one person from the team attend?

Yes, more than one person can attend our events, however we strongly recommend that the founder/ director of the business attends both the workshops and mentoring so that strategy can be effectively implemented.

Where does the programme take place?

Create Growth Devon will be a hybrid program with both virtual and in-person engagement across the county. There will be times where you will meet in small local clusters or at a Devon event that will require you to travel. We try to keep locations evenly spread across Devon to keep travelling fair for all the businesses. There will also be some South West events, inviting Cornwall, Devon and West of England businesses to come together for networking and showcases. If you struggle to attend in person, we can make sure you attend online, or personally catch you up with information.



Create Growth Programme



Who is part of the delivery of the Devon Create Growth Programme?

The Create Growth Devon Programme is a collaboration between Devon County Council, Plymouth City Council, Plymouth Culture, Exeter City Council, Torbay Council, University of Plymouth and Real Ideas Organisation, led by Creative UK and supported by West of England Combined Authority.

Creative UK manages the business support programme strand which will be your first part of the programme journey. Innovate UK & KTN will be sourcing investors and managing the investment strand and application process you can engage with. The business support programme will prepare you to apply and pitch for investment, with Innovate UK. KTN will be sourcing creative friendly investors and building relationships with them to breakdown language barriers and risk. Although you will not interact with KTN, they will be working hard behind the scenes to prepare you for investment partnership opportunities.

How are Innovate UK involved in the Create Growth Programme and what is Comp 4? *

Innovate UK are an investment partner in the national Create Growth Programme and are an integral part of activity across all six regions. Within the Create Growth regions, they are running funding competitions to facilitate business growth.

Competition Round 4 IS a business grant fund which was launched in March 2025, closing date 31 May 2025. You do not need to be on our programme to apply.

More information can be found >>> [here](#)

Who is my main point of contact?

The Create Growth Programme Team in Devon:

Programme Manager Sam Spake: sam.spake@wearecreative.uk

Programme Coordinator Lucy Ward: lucy.ward@wearecreative.uk

Lead Programme Manager Suzie West suzie.west@wearecreative.uk