



**KENT & MEDWAY
Growth Hub**
Your gateway to business
growth

COVID-19 NON-FINANCIAL BUSINESS SUPPORT RESPONSE

Prepared by Kent & Medway Growth Hub

Background

Kent Invicta Chamber of Commerce (KICC) are the incumbent provider of the Kent and Medway Growth Hub (KMGH). They are also the county's leading business support organisation and have a local, national and international network.

The KMGH delivery contract formally expires on the 31st March and we have agreed with Kent County Council to deliver an "at risk" continuity of service for three months whilst procurement is undertaken.

In the meantime, the nation has been severely impacted by the arrival of Covid-19 and unprecedented measures will be required in order to keep both the local economy and people's livelihoods functioning.

The Government's Business Support Helpline is currently overwhelmed and they have closed their Live Chat service.

Time is of the essence as businesses are experiencing catastrophic reductions in revenue and Government support measures are slowly being brought online.

Support Offer – CV19 Response

In the early stages of this crisis, the key focus will be on three areas:

- To assist businesses to understand and access the Government support measures as soon as they are available
- To provide information, advice and reassurance to businesses struggling to cope
- To gather local intelligence on where further support is needed and signpost to further pro bono support offered by the private sector

The latter stages of the crisis will require a more flexible approach as the economic situation unfolds and new measures are brought to bear.

Businesses will receive:

- A dedicated help line telephone number **03333 602 300** that will be available Monday to Friday 08:30 to 18:30 where they can speak to someone who will,
 - advise them on the type of support they can access
 - signpost to the correct provider of any HMG support measures i.e. Local Authority, HMRC, etc
 - offer a call back from a Business Adviser to talk through the measures they can take and further assist them to access support.
 - Offer reassurance
- Access to a qualified and highly experienced Business Adviser who can offer support and advice through web or telephone-based service. The Adviser will,
 - Assist them to access HMG support
 - Gather intelligence
 - Provide sound guidance and advice around key topics such as crisis management, cash flow and debt management, staff retention strategies, etc.

- Signpost and broker to appropriate private sector expertise such as banks, lawyers, accounts and insurers. We will maximise this signposting channel as more offers of pro-bono support become available.
- Access to a Live Chat service that will be manned by Business Advisers dedicated to providing Covid 19 advice. This will be a re-purposing of the Ask Phil service with additional capacity
- 24hr email updates on new support initiatives and measures that they can access through KMGH or other Partners
- Webinars will be commissioned and created on topics that offer practical guidance and support for those businesses in crisis. We have already identified appropriate content and are evaluating new material as it becomes available

Partners will receive:

- Weekly intelligence on where further support is required in the County
- Resource support through the provision of a dedicated help line to offer businesses to call
- 24hr updates on Government support measures for Business and information sharing
- Referrals from local Businesses that need key Council service support

Operations – CV19 Response

Staff

We will be repurposing current Chamber Staff and engaging contract Business Advisers that we are currently working with us to ensure the service has capacity

This additional Team will be remote working from the outset to ensure continuity and resilience. The Team will consist of:

- 4 x telephone-based inbound call handlers
- 8 x CV19 specific Business Advisers
- 1 x HMG information and communications officer
- 2 x Contract Management
- 1 x Data support officer (p/t)
- 2 x CRM admin
- 2 x CV19 specific Live Chat Operators

Technology & Data

Live Chat which is currently made available to all Local Authorities will be re-purposed as a CV19 Response service and additional Advisers will be assigned to the role by our suppliers MI Ventures using the existing technology. We already collect monthly engagement reports under KMGH however, we will be increasing this frequency to weekly.

Mailchimp is our dedicated email campaign software that we will use to issue CV19 updates. It is fully GDPR compliant and provides analytical data that can be used for reporting. Campaigns can be compiled and sent within an hour which makes the service highly responsive.

Webinars will delivered through the Zoom platform which we have used on several occasions and is a resilient and reliable technology partner. We can collect data analytics that can be used for reporting.

Outputs

Capacity for CV19 Response are:

- 1920 inbound telephone calls (8 x inbound calls per day x 4 Handlers)
- 2880 one to one call backs (6 x 1hr call/video per day x 8 Advisers)

Whilst we have capacity, we are uncertain of demand and therefore it is proposed that no targets be set against this element of the service for the first quarter. After which the situation, need and requirements should be reviewed.

Communication and Information

We will be creating a dedicated HMG Information Officer (HIO) role to collate, analyse, research and disseminate information to the CV19 Team to ensure the information being passed on to Business, is the most relevant, accurate and up to date available. We recognise that misinformation can have a debilitating effect on Businesses and the people that work in them, so we have created this role to address this quality assurance need.

In the initial stages, we will hold a daily conference call with all Team Members to ensure messages are consistent, relevant and accurate.

Due to our role as both KMGH provider and part of the British Chambers of Commerce network, we have real time access to Government information and a wide range of additional relevant source material both private and public sector.

The HIO will be responsible for gathering any other support resources made available from the public or private sector to ensure the Advisers have as many assets at their disposal as possible.

Timescales

Soft launch at 14:00hrs 25th March

Official launch at 16:00hrs 25th March

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