

Thinking of starting your own business?

BUSINESS LINK OFFERS OPPORTUNITIES FOR WOMEN

Wondering what the next step might be for you in your career? Returning to work after a break? Looking to start a new business, become self-employed or convert your hobby into a business? If so, this can be exciting, but also daunting. A coaching programme for women, offered by Business Link and fully subsidized by Business Link and the European Social Fund (ESF), may be just the opportunity you need to get started!

Over the past 18 months Business Link has offered an intensive, bespoke and flexible business coaching service for women to support them in starting their own businesses or returning to paid employment. The service is key in supporting future business owners to achieve their goals and to move towards a satisfying work-life balance.

The coaching service is extremely popular. Women have reported benefits such as increased confidence, improved focus, satisfaction with their career, with their financial situation, increased business understanding and business growth.

This free service is aimed primarily at those women who do not currently have a paid job or who wish to start a business. It is equally suitable for those who are unclear about direction, as for women who know exactly the kind of work they want to do or the kind of business they want to establish. To qualify for the programme, participants need to be living in Cambridgeshire or Bedfordshire.

As the gap between male and female activity rates is wider in the East of England than in the country as a whole, this service is welcomed. 1 in 10 start-ups in the East of England are by women, compared to the UK average of 3 in 10 (DTi Statistics).

Julie Macken, one of the Business Coaches working with Business Link, has seen many successes as a result of the coaching service. 'We take an holistic approach to our coaching which helps you to clarify where you want to be, and then create the path to get there, with someone accompanying and supporting you along the way.'

In addition to the 3 month coaching programme, Business Link offers coaching workshops for women to help them identify what they want in life and then support them in moving towards their goal. Networking events are also held. 'These provide a valuable opportunity for women to meet and talk to those who have returned to work or set up their own business,' said Julie.

'Returning to work after having children, or a career break, or trying something completely different can be very difficult for many women,' said Sharon McKenna – Women in Business Champion at Business Link 'Business Link has made a real difference through the coaching programme and we hope to support many more women returning to work or setting up a business.'

For further information and to reserve a place, interested participants should call Sharon McKenna at Business Link Bedfordshire on 01582 522308 or Jacki Cornish at Business Link Cambridgeshire on 01480 846462 or visit the website at www.bl4bl.co.uk. Places are limited!