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# Introduction

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**Following the success of the Creative Scale Up (CSU) pilot, the Department for Culture, Media & Sport (DCMS) has launched the Create Growth Programme. The programme has been designed to support the development of creative industries with high-growth potential across England.**

**The Create Growth Programme – set to be completed in March 2025 – will see a £17.5 million investment in the sector, with up to £7 million provided by Innovate UK. Eligible businesses in Create Growth regions are able to apply to Innovate UK for grants and investor partnerships.**

**The programme aims to drive innovation and investment in the sector, helping creative businesses to explore new innovative projects that will stimulate growth and attract private investment. It also aims to prime and build investor networks, connecting businesses across regions, building new supply chains and creating pathways for future founders.**

## The challenge

Historically, the Creative Industries (CI) have struggled to obtain the necessary level of investment to grow and scale, in part due to investors' limited understanding of the opportunities for investing in CI. Investors generally look for scalability and defensible intellectual property (IP) which can be a challenge for CI businesses.

In addition, founders in CI businesses tend to be specialists in their discipline rather than in business, which leads to a broad lack of business skill and understanding. Finally, many smaller businesses aren't static in terms of size and can have multiple or varied project and IP funding models, such as crowdfunding.

## Delivery

The competition is split into two phases: Grant Funding and Investor Partnerships.

The Grant Funding phase is now complete, offering a grant of £10,000-£30,000 for eligible project costs. The Investor Partnerships phase will launch in the autumn of 2023, and aims to address the 'equity investment gap' by encouraging highly innovative micro, small and medium-sized enterprises (SMEs) to attract investment that is aligned to early-stage research and development grant support. This will enable them to attract the necessary level of follow-on investment as they scale and grow.

Working with each region's combined authorities and LEPs, the programme offers targeted support to eligible businesses to help unlock their growth potential. Each region will deliver bespoke support that responds to the specific needs of their local creative businesses.

Innovate UK KTN are delivering investor focused activities, including networking and pitching events, mapping of current and potential investment in the sector, and resources to support the understanding of investment opportunities. They will also be working with investors at a national and local level to better understand the investment opportunities in the creative industries.

## Impact

The Create Growth Programme will deliver a number of direct outcomes and a lasting impact across the creative sector in England.

The collaboration between Investor Networks and Innovate UK will help to leverage investor partnerships with CI businesses, whilst increased investor understanding of regional CI opportunities will sow the seeds for future investment beyond the programme.

In addition, the programme will see increased regional capital for CI businesses, holding briefing events and expanding the understanding of the sector to facilitate Innovate UK's funding of the wider CI ecosystem.

By tailoring the support programme to meet the needs of the businesses, the programme will also create a stronger, growing and better-equipped creative sector. It will help to build meaningful relationships between founders and investors, driving increased regional investment to boost growth outside of London, and improve regional understanding of the broader CI network.

## A regional approach

Creative Industries businesses outside of London often find it difficult to access startup or scale-up finance. Regional support tends to be sporadic and investor networks outside of London are limited in this sector.

To help tackle this, six regions outside of London have been selected to take part in the Create Growth Programme and deliver bespoke support to creative businesses with high-growth potential. Regions were selected via an open competition run by the DCMS between July and September 2022.

Each region is led by the local council, partnership or combined authority, and comprises several areas, towns and cities. The six chosen regions are:

1. Greater Manchester
2. East Anglia
3. North East England
4. South West<sup>1</sup>
5. South East
6. East Midlands

Delivered by teams in each of the regions, creative businesses with high-growth potential will be able to apply for support to help them prepare for investment and grow their business. Each region has its own distinct approach and bespoke programme, tailored to the businesses in its cohorts. Some regions specialise in certain sub sectors, whereas others pride themselves on a broad range of talent.

Whilst all regions are supporting the main objectives of the Create Growth Programme, it also provides the opportunity to celebrate what their cohorts have to offer. They can cater to each business' individual needs and showcase their region as a key player in the future development of the UK's creative industry.

<sup>1</sup> The South West region is divided into two: The West of England, and Cornwall & the Isles of Scilly.



**The UK's creative industries are world-class and represent a critical pillar of our economic success, both now and for the future. At Innovate UK, we seek to support businesses across all sectors through our innovation ecosystem. We are delighted to partner with the Department of Culture, Media and Sport on the Create Growth Programme. This programme accelerates the ambitions of creative businesses across the regions, enabling them to unlock their high-growth potential."**



Esra Kasapoglu, Director of Artificial Intelligence and Data Economy

# Regional team overviews

## 1 Greater Manchester

Led by the team at Greater Manchester Combined Authority (GMCA), the Greater Manchester Area encompasses: Wigan, Bolton, Bury, Rochdale, Salford, Oldham, Trafford, Manchester, Tameside, Stockport

## 2 East Anglia

The East Anglia region is being led by New Anglia Local Enterprise Partnership and encompasses: Norfolk, Suffolk, Cambridgeshire and Peterborough

## 3 North East England

Led by the North of Tyne Combined Authority, this area encompasses: North Tyneside, South Tyneside, Gateshead, Sunderland, Durham, Northumberland, Newcastle

## 4 South West

The South West region is divided into: a) The West of England, which encompasses Bristol, Bath, North Somerset and South Gloucestershire, and b) Cornwall and the Isles of Scilly

## 5 South East

Led by Kent County Council on behalf of the South East Creative Economy Network, the South East area encompasses: Essex, East Sussex, West Sussex, Kent, Medway, Brighton and Hove, Southend on Sea, Thurrock

## 6 East Midlands

Led by Leicester City Council, the East Midlands area encompasses: Leicestershire, Derbyshire, Lincolnshire, Rutland



# Greater Manchester

The Greater Manchester region is being led by the Greater Manchester Combined Authority (GMCA) and encompasses:

- Wigan
- Bolton
- Bury
- Rochdale
- Salford
- Oldham
- Trafford
- Manchester
- Tameside
- Stockport

The home of Media City, a thriving music scene, and the newest city of culture, Stockport, Greater Manchester is a diverse hub of creativity. With four universities and numerous colleges focusing on creative and digital arts, the region's rich creative and cultural history provide the ideal hub for innovation.

The region's creative diversity is reflected in the Create Growth Programme cohort, which has a little bit of everything – from sustainable fashion, graphic design and modelling, to performing arts, magazine editing and music production.

With more than six years' experience running support programmes, including the Creative Scale Up (CSU) pilot, the team are continuing their legacy and applying learnings. This includes the fact that subsectors such as gaming provide a bridge to the creative sector, starting conversations with investors and opening doors to other areas.

Now, the team are excited to deliver the Create Growth Programme and showcase everything the region has to offer, providing more opportunities to creative businesses and creating a legacy that stretches beyond the programme and first cohort.

## Objectives and delivery

The team are excited to give the creative sector more focus, strengthening it to make Greater Manchester the "Hollywood of the UK", developing an international brand that aligns the region with certain attributes.

Their heritage of doing things differently also provides an opportunity. Sarah Novotny, Digital, Creative & Tech Sector Lead at GC Business Growth Hub says, "We don't want to be known for one thing. We want to be known as a diverse community that thinks outside the box."

The GMCA are offering coaching, masterclasses and leadership events, designed to help businesses find contacts, showcase innovation, and support their journey to investment readiness.

They're also shifting mindsets and helping founders understand their value. Becki Coen, Programme Manager for Digital, Creative & Tech at GC Business Growth Hub explains:

"A lot of them have started as a hobby or passion project, so getting them to be a bit more commercially minded is a big part of the programme."

“ We do things differently. We are super diverse, we're super quirky and we want to truly embrace that and make that our strength going forward.”



Sarah Novotny, Digital, Creative and Tech Sector Lead, GC Business Growth Hub

## Impact and response

Drawing on their learnings from previous support programmes, the GMCA have a finely-tuned but diverse first cohort of 20 businesses. This curated approach allows them to foster a truly collaborative environment, led by peer-to-peer support and underpinned by advisor relationships.

The team has excellent links to investor networks as well as the university ecosystem, providing multiple channels for businesses to access funding, and supporting the community element that underpins much of their work.

So far, the response has been very positive from both the businesses and investors. The broad range of support means Greater Manchester doesn't have to turn anyone away – no matter what stage the businesses are at, no one has to go it alone.

The team are proud of the collaborative approach that the programme offers, and are excited by the regional networking and knowledge sharing opportunities.

[Connect with the Greater Manchester programme](#)



**NEWANGLIA**

Local Enterprise Partnership  
for Norfolk and Suffolk

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## East Anglia

**The East Anglia region is being led by New Anglia Local Enterprise Partnership and encompasses:**

- Cambridgeshire
- Peterborough
- Norfolk
- Suffolk

They're working with several consortium partners who are helping to deliver the Create Growth Programme, branded a Creative East. These include: the University of East Anglia (UAE); Norwich University of the Arts; Anglia Ruskin University, University of Suffolk; Cambridgeshire and Peterborough Combined Authority, and Norfolk and Suffolk County Councils.

Having worked with startups and SMEs in the past, running similar programmes in other sectors, the team in East Anglia know the value of providing bespoke support for businesses, particularly in the Creative Industries. Generic support simply isn't suitable and in some cases, creative

businesses have been put off altogether – thinking that private investment or investment readiness support isn't for them.

The introduction of the Create Growth Programme has been welcomed by the East Anglia team, along with regional investors and creative businesses looking for support. The team are excited to deliver a programme that's been designed specifically to champion creative businesses and respond to their needs, deeming it a unique opportunity for the four participating cohorts and the creative industries as a whole.

The East Anglia cohorts present a broad mix of creative businesses, from production companies working across film and television, to computer games, podcasting and app development. Some are fairly advanced and have grown organically, whilst others are more early stage.

Most are at a bit of a crossroads, looking for the support to expand their business and move into other markets. Being part of the programme gives them access to expertise and networks they wouldn't otherwise, helping them to shape how their business moves forward.

### Objectives and delivery

The team is delivering tailored support from sector specialists, alongside academic partners, private investors and public sector funding. They offer one-to-one advice from industry experts, plus masterclasses and cohort-specific seminars.

They also provide carefully-matched mentors to ensure businesses receive the most relevant support. Saffron Myhill, Innovation Funding Manager at Creative East says:

"These mentors are working in the industry and can share firsthand experience. The participants would never get access to them otherwise, so it's a unique opportunity."

The programme is highly collaborative, with businesses supporting each other and meeting local investors like the Anglia Capital Group. Businesses can also develop and practise their pitch, receiving feedback from mentors, peers and real-life investors.

Having worked on the Low Carbon Investment Fund, East Anglia is also prioritising sustainability. By encouraging businesses to do the same, they hope to add value and attract sustainably-minded investors.

**“This is a golden opportunity to strengthen links with the creative industry sector in the region, which is really exciting.”**



James Allen, Innovation and Sectors Manager at New Anglia Local Enterprise Partnership

### Impact and response

With positive feedback so far, the team hope the programme will create a hub of opportunity for local investors and encourage the development of a co-investment fund.

The in-person elements of the programme have also been successful, with conversation and collaboration a top priority. Sam Burton, Senior Investment Advisor at Creative East says, "When you're in a room with people, that's how you form relationships. That's been so valuable, particularly as they're all like-minded creative people but with different areas of expertise. They're all so generous with their thoughts and opinions."

The programme provides a friendly yet professional environment for companies to feel more confident and empowered, and helps to broaden their horizons. Penny Wright, Programme Communications Co-ordinator at Creative East, says, "It's a chance for companies to reflect and think differently about their opportunities, where they might previously have thought that private investment wasn't for them."

[Connect with the East Anglia programme](#)

## North East England

The North East England region is being led by the North of Tyne Combined Authority and delivered in partnership with Creative UK. It encompasses:

- North Tyneside
- Durham
- South Tyneside
- Northumberland
- Gateshead
- Newcastle
- Sunderland

Prior to the launch of the Create Growth Programme, research showed that creative awareness and investment was low in the north of England. However, it also indicated potential growth sectors due to strategic interventions – in particular, design, fashion, film and television computer software, gaming and publishing.

The team has invested heavily in the culture, creative and tourism sectors, running multiple programmes across different areas. Now in the diagnostic phase of the programme, they're already seeing a fantastic cross-section of sectors, businesses and growth stages. There is a slight skew towards tech and software, but also representation across the industries, from film to publishing.

The programme's key focus on investment readiness is a real opportunity to use the strengths of existing regional partnerships, as the team explain:

"In the North of Tyne, there's infrastructure to help [businesses] prepare for investment but there's also the funds there to help them secure it. So it's a real opportunity to change the landscape for creatives at this time."

The North of Tyne team see this as a real opportunity to play to the strengths of existing regional partnerships and infrastructure to better support creative businesses in the region. The creative sector is relatively small in the North East, so the team are excited to see how each sub sector grows with the support of the programme.

“There are strategic opportunities in relation to the investor network, helping them to see the value of investing in the creative sector.”



Carol Bell, Associate Regional Director at Creative UK

### Objectives and delivery

Better support for the creative sector will cover a bigger area and provide a more clear and joined-up offer. "It's got huge potential in relation to a springboard for further coherent work which ties in with other activities," says Carol Bell, Associate Regional Director at Creative UK.

Long term, the team hopes to add more value with many sector-specific cohorts. For now, 100 businesses go through intensive development and a further 100 will move through an open-access model, providing 'light-touch' support.

With such a mix of businesses, it's important to the team that delivery is bespoke. They're taking the time to understand each business, their market and how they operate, to provide the right support and help them navigate towards investment.

Support is tailored to business needs, designing individual pathways and interventions to help them test their commercial model and identify growth opportunities. It includes group sessions and peer-to-peer support, with businesses encouraged to engage in self-reflection and analysis, as well as cross-regional collaboration and knowledge sharing.

### Impact and response

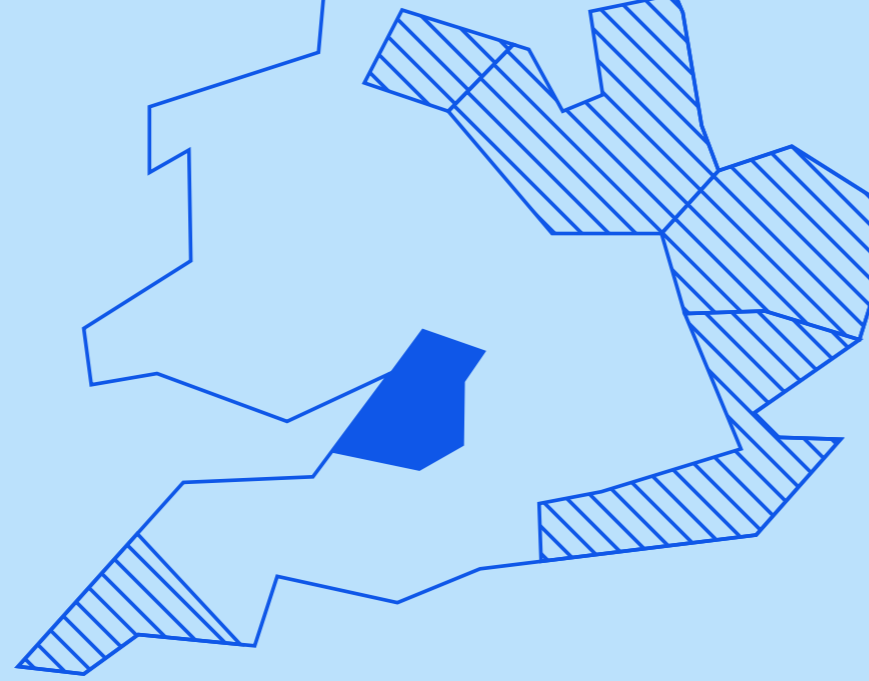
The North of Tyne region is already seeing a positive response and early impact. Three businesses have already been approached by investors, highlighting the programme's projected success and the support offered by the region's complementary existing "wraparound workshops".

The programme allows the team to identify those businesses with growth potential. But those who aren't ready for investment can be referred back to the Creative UK CCIC for alternative support. This ensures businesses receive the support they need, and remain invested in the programme to drive longevity for the next cohort.

The team are also seeing the impact on businesses who are traditionally grant reliant or wouldn't previously have considered private investment. Carol says, "They're starting to think about commercialisation of aspects of their activity and can see the value in it."

The team sees this programme as a great opportunity for the North East.. "It's already a massive achievement that the region has been able to bring that collaboration together, especially for the creative sector," they said.

[Connect with the North East Programme](#)



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## South West – West of England

Part of the South West region, the West of England is being led by the West of England Combined Authority. It encompasses:

- Bristol
- Bath
- North Somerset
- South Gloucestershire

Part of the South West region, the West of England is led by the West of England Combined Authority and comprises four areas: Bristol, Bath, North Somerset and South Gloucestershire.

The team are looking for creative businesses who are exploring growth opportunities, such as reaching new customers, developing or taking a product or service to market, and expanding to new markets.

Having taken part in the Creative Scale-Up Pilot, the team received lots of great feedback and are applying their learnings to the new cohort. One priority is to make the programme less Bristol-centric – which is a well-networked city – and encourage more applications from other areas.

Diversity is another priority for the West of England, aiming for a ratio of 40% diversity-led businesses. This requires at least 50% of a company’s founders or directors to be female, disabled or from minority ethnic backgrounds.

With no particular subsectors, the team have purposely selected a wide spread of businesses, covering everything from advertising and marketing to arts and crafts, design and fashion, gaming, music and television.

To create a strategic plan for each company, businesses were required to explain their ambition and share which growth opportunities they wanted to focus on in their applications.

Emma Cox, Creative Project Officer for the Business and Skills Directorate said, “we understand that each business is very different and that growth isn’t exclusive to investment. It can look different for everyone.”

“Having access to people from the industry who have owned creative businesses is really beneficial.”



Emma Cox, Creative Project Officer for the Business and Skills Directorate

### Objectives and delivery

As well as supporting investment readiness, the West of England team are helping founders build relationships with fellow business owners, programme alumni and investors.

Businesses can access mentors using a grant of £2,500, with a focus on finding the right mentor who can address their specific challenges. Emma says, “Businesses aren’t just looking for any kind of investment. Values are really important, so it’s crucial to find an investor who has values which align with the business’s.”

The programme is being delivered in partnership with Watershed, who are facilitating online training sessions with industry experts, exploring a different topic each month. This is followed by deep-dive, peer-to-peer sessions where founders can share their challenges and explore solutions.

Following the pilot, West of England alumni will also share their experiences and share learnings. Emma says, “We’re fortunate that we’ve got businesses who we’ve been working with since 2020 and are able to have those conversations. Being able to support these businesses after the programme ends is really vital.”

### Impact and response

After the success of the pilot and subsequent learnings, the programme is already garnering a great response. Investor feedback has been really positive, many of whom have become mentors to support businesses on the programme.

The team are already seeing important relationships and collaborations across the region, thanks to peer networking and regular events to bring past and present cohorts together. The programme launch event was held at a venue run by programme alumni, showcasing the impact and success of the programme.

Cross-regional collaboration has also been valuable; building relationships with other regions has been extremely rewarding. Emma explains that the “knowledge exchange sessions in person are really valuable”, supporting better communication, understanding and standard of delivery across the regions.

[Connect with the West of England programme](#)



## South West – Cornwall

Part of the South West region, Cornwall also includes the Isles of Scilly. Here, the Create Growth Programme is being led by Creative UK, in partnership with Screen Cornwall and Falmouth University, as well as Cornwall and Isles of Scilly LEP.

As a small region, Cornwall can provide a very bespoke offer and get to know businesses personally. This has allowed them to build great connections with other regional programmes, and offer a very well-coordinated ecosystem of support.

Cornwall already has lots of open access activity for creative businesses, and the team are looking forward to offering more networking opportunities via the programme. Working closely with the West of England,

South East and North East, they'll be able to deliver some of their sessions collectively, sharing contacts and ideas.

Cornwall's first cohort contains a rich variety of businesses, something the team are very excited about. They've got everything from the screen industry through to marketing, software development, fashion and product design, as well as specialists in the creative technology scene and creative venues.

Suzie West, Cornwall Programme Manager for Creative UK says, "One of the joys of this programme is that it's not restricted to particular subsectors, so we've really enjoyed meeting a wide range of businesses."

There's growing visibility of the creative industries and Creative UK in Cornwall, which enables the team to deliver more value and support. Suzie says that existing relationships have been vital in giving them a head start:

"We've been really lucky in Cornwall that we've got great relationships with so many other service providers, agencies and organisations. We're standing on the backs of giants and we've got an advantage of having such a good legacy of great creative support."

“These businesses are doing such brilliant work, but they don't give themselves time to step back and refine plans or consider their options. The programme is about giving them some time and space to do that.”



Suzie West, Cornwall Programme Manager for Creative UK

### Objectives and delivery

The team in Cornwall are taking a very bespoke approach, and are focused on finding the right growth journey for each individual business.

One of the region's top priorities is helping businesses to develop partnerships, finding other businesses or innovative people to build ideas or solve problems with. The team encourage dialogue and connection amongst the cohort and with other creative professionals and investors, helping businesses to build a support network that extends beyond the completion of the programme.

Most businesses are also keen to develop as sustainably as possible, with a passion for developing B-Corp companies and finding innovative ways to tell stories and enhance people's lives.

They also want to close the language gap between investors and the creative industries, tackling misconceptions and demystifying what growth and business looks like. This includes helping creatives to better understand the world of investment, as well as sharing creative business language with investors.

### Impact and response

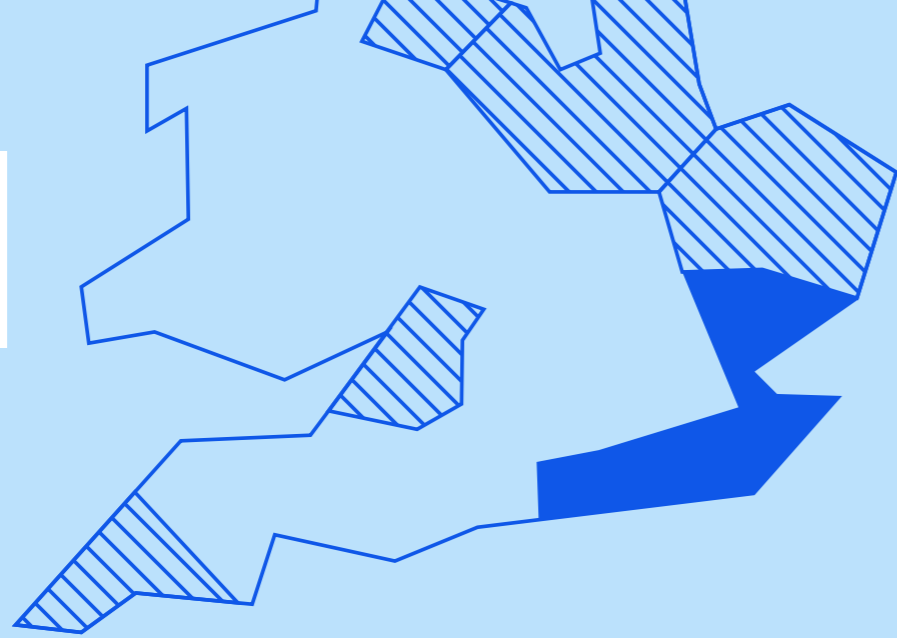
The region has 15 businesses who will take part in the first cohort of the Create Growth Programme. But for those businesses who weren't eligible, the team plan to develop an additional smaller programme to support them. They're already making an impact with their open access activity, reaching about 80 businesses.

The initial response from investors and mentors has been encouraging, as Suzie explains:

"They're really fascinated by the ideas and the innovation that's happening in the creative industry. That's great, because if they're excited and optimistic about it, then they'll signpost other people."

Cross-regional collaboration and knowledge sharing has helped the team to find more contacts, enabling founders to spend time with experts who have worked elsewhere in the UK or abroad, bringing an entirely new range of experiences.

[Connect with the Cornwall programme](#)



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## South East

The South East region is being led by Kent County Council on behalf of the South East Creative Economy Network and encompasses:

- Essex
- East Sussex
- West Sussex
- Kent
- Medway
- Brighton and Hove
- Southend on Sea
- Thurrock

Creative business owners benefit from a special programme of support, helping them prepare for investment and grow their business. The region has an appetite for creative growth and more investment in a historically-underfunded sector, with a strong partnership behind the programme.

For Create South East, it's critical that the programme is sector-led. With partners at Creative UK, Screen South, Wired Sussex and Angels@Essex, the team are all from the sector and understand the specific needs of growing creative businesses.

Dan Chilcott, Strategic Lead at Create South East says, "There's a huge amount of talent across the region, and I'm really excited about how those businesses we work with can grow."

The team are interested in any creative business with an aspiration to grow, but prior research into what's growing across the region has highlighted specific subsectors. There's a screen-based area of interest around film and digital tech, but also design including fashion.

The team see these as regional growth strengths, but are generally looking to find businesses who have an ambition to scale and a chance to unlock growth potential.

There are already amazing clusters of activity in different areas across the region.

By tapping into areas with a track record, the team hope to underpin and strengthen that demand.

Dan says, "An investment readiness programme can really add value to the way those founders are thinking about where their business might grow."



People are ambitious and knowledgeable, they know their sectors, and they're doing really amazing stuff. There's a huge talent across the creative sector in the southeast."



Dan Chilcott, Strategic Lead, Create South East

### Objectives and delivery

The South East programme includes 1-2-1 mentoring, tailored workshops and peer-to-peer support to help businesses in the cohorts explore what investment means to them.

One of their core aims is to ensure that businesses within all the cohorts are well-networked, to combat some of the loneliness that founders might feel. Dan says, "It's about connecting [them] with people who are facing similar challenges and opportunities. All the businesses have a slightly different offer but everyone brings their own creative approach."

The programme provides quality advice and support from those who have grown their own creative businesses or are looking to invest. Grace Hart, Create South East Programme Officer, says:

"We want to make sure that there's a meaningful relationship that comes out of the mentor pairing. This isn't a programme where people get stuck with somebody who isn't aware of the stage they're at or the industry they're in."

Creating an environment that fosters growth and is beneficial to founders, they hope the first cohort will become champions for the programme and help drive long-term creative growth.

### Impact and response

The programme has been very well received, with businesses, partners, mentors and investors all on board with its mission. Dan says, "There's no complacency about the programme and it's really exciting to see everyone working together toward its aims."

Collaboration has been a key success story, particularly between the different regions, who all share knowledge and experiences of delivering the programme. Grace says:

"The opportunity for collaboration is there and we really want to use it to the businesses' advantage. We want to create a support network that goes beyond the programme."

Bringing businesses together with their peers and mentors has been really positive, offering new challenges, accountability and leadership opportunities. The team also hope that encouraging partnerships and networking will identify opportunities for the community to invest and add value.

[Connect with the South East programme](#)

## East Midlands

### The East Midlands region is being led by Leicester City Council and encompasses:

- Leicestershire
- Lincolnshire
- Derbyshire
- Rutland

The East Midlands Creative Consortium, EMC<sup>2</sup>, is supported by the University of Lincoln and De Montfort University, as well as Derby City Council, and leaders from Derbyshire and Leicestershire.

Historically, the region has not been recognised for its creativity and innovation, instead being known for textile manufacture. However, the team behind the Create Growth Programme in the East Midlands are keen to change perceptions:

“For us it’s about raising the profile of the sector and making it known that we do have a creative cohort in our area,” says Elizabeth Botmeh, Head of Delivery & Governance, Leicester & Leicestershire Enterprise Partnership.

The team had a good idea of the types of businesses in the region prior to the launch of the programme, but are pleasantly surprised by the range and variety of companies who have applied.

There are plenty of marketing and communications businesses, but also social media, traditional print media, interior design and architecture. They’ve also got tech businesses such as app developers and computer programmers.

When running their generic growth hub programmes in the past, Elizabeth and the team haven’t seen many creative businesses apply for funding or support. As such, they weren’t sure what kind of response they would get.

However, the number of expressions of interest has demonstrated an untapped need in the region, which the team are excited to explore.

### Objectives and delivery

The team hope to change perceptions and raise the sector profile in the East Midlands, creating a legacy of creative support. Elizabeth says: “Historically, the businesses we’re seeing on this programme haven’t come anywhere near our generic business support. We’re trying to identify what we can do to support them legacy wise.”

The team also want to establish a more formal support programme that provides more structure and drives longevity. Elizabeth says, “We are working with some of the organisations that support the creative sector to try to establish how we can develop this programme long-term.”

To help them deliver, they’ve brought in creative expertise from Manchester, who will work with 20 to 25 businesses in the first cohort.

The process begins with in-depth diagnostics to understand individual needs, strengths and weaknesses, and devise a bespoke support package. The programme includes coaching and mentoring sessions with industry experts and investors, as well as networking opportunities, investment-readiness coaching and pitching practice sessions.

“I think lots of people are dismissive of the creative sector, so for us it’s being able to shout about it with confidence. We believe in the creative sector!”



Elizabeth Botmeh, Head of Delivery & Governance, Leicester & Leicestershire Enterprise Partnership

### Impact and response

The initial response to the launch of the Create Growth Programme has been extremely positive, from businesses and within the local authority and supporting organisations.

Elizabeth says, “It’s been a fantastic news story for us, obviously for the business but also for the LEP. The programme coming along and securing funding has really energised the team.”

The team have been blown away by the response and are excited to put East Midlands creatives on the map. They’re thrilled that the state is investing in the programme and recognising the importance of growth in the creative sector.

In terms of the programme itself, the overall experience has been one of collaboration, including between regions. Elizabeth says, “I could approach any of the regions and they would answer my queries. It’s not like some things where everyone shuts the gates – they are all really supportive.”

[Connect with the East Midlands programme](#)

# Conclusion

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The Creative Industries are an exciting opportunity for entrepreneurs and investors alike, with a broad range of talent and subsectors displayed across the six regions. The Create Growth Programme provides the chance for regions to showcase the innovative businesses they are supporting and develop a framework for the future of the programme.

The success of the first cohort is already clear to see, and is testament to the importance and potential of creative businesses in the UK. Businesses or investors wishing to find out more about getting involved in the Create Growth Programme can visit the programme website or connect on social media.



[🌐 iuk.ktn-uk.org/programme/creative-growth/](https://iuk.ktn-uk.org/programme/creative-growth/)

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