



Exclusive: Skilled Education to develop UK government's upskilling programme

Skilled Education has been appointed to design and develop 'Help to grow management', the UK government's central post-pandemic upskilling initiative

The scheme, described as "adult bootcamps" by the chancellor of the exchequer Rishi Sunak was part of a 42% increase in skills spending announced in the autumn Budget last week. The package also included significant rises in funding for further education colleges, numeracy skills and apprenticeships.

The three-year partnership will see Skilled Education working with senior civil servants at HM Treasury and the Department for Business, Energy and Industrial Strategy to upskill more than 30,000 business leaders. The ed tech company will work with the Chartered Association of Business Schools and over 50 UK universities which will be responsible for delivering the face-to-face aspect of the programme.

Sunak said: "Small and medium-sized businesses are the backbone of our economy, creating jobs and prosperity across the United Kingdom. That's why we're introducing Help to grow, a scheme that will give them the tools they need to innovate, grow and help drive our recovery from coronavirus. Our Help to grow management programme will give 30,000 SMEs access to world-class business expertise on everything from financial management to marketing. Dozens of leading business schools across the country will provide tuition with one-to-one support from a business mentor. Help to grow will fuel our plan for jobs and boost productivity in all corners of the UK and turbocharge our economic recovery."

More than 30 university business schools are working with Skilled Education on the delivery of the programme to business leaders in their region, including the University of Cardiff, Lancaster University, Newcastle University, Loughbrough University, University of Nottingham, Aston University, Coventry University, the University of Leeds and the London Business School.

Comprising 12 core modules, mentoring and peer-to-peer learning the Help to grow programme guides participants in developing a growth plan for their business. More than 130 student cohorts have already started on the programme, and by 2024 this will scale to directly upskill over 30,000 small businesses.



Rajay Naik, Skilled Education

Skilled Education's chief executive Rajay Naik said: "Skilled is passionate about lifelong learning and boosting employability so we are delighted to have been appointed to design and develop this flagship programme. We have greatly enjoyed working with exceptional university partners, the chartered association, employers and government stakeholders and are looking forward to ensuring significant impact in the months and years ahead. Covid-19 has accelerated long-term changes which were already underway including digitisation, globalisation and greater flexibility in the way we live and work. British businesses have always responded swiftly to change – we are pleased to play a small part in supporting over 30,000 companies to ensure they have the skills required to thrive in the years ahead."

A high-profile advisory council has been appointed to guide the design and development of the programme including the Confederation of British Industry's president Lord Bilimoria, Natwest's chief executive Alison Rose and the managing director of Goldman Sachs Charlotte Keenan. ■



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