



**Enterprise
Nation**

Small Business Manifesto for 2019 General Election

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We polled our community to find out what policies they think would make the most difference to their business. The Enterprise Nation community is made up of small businesses (0-10 employees) from all parts of the United Kingdom and operating in the creative, product, and business services sector. Many are sole founders and work from a home office or co-working space environment.

Based on their feedback and views, we put forward the following 10 recommendations and look forward to working with civil servants, Ministers and MPs selected post-election, to build a positive and progressive business case for Britain.

If you are a small business owner, please share this manifesto with your local candidates and sitting MP.

1 Put an end to Brexit uncertainty and promote UK business overseas

No one can deny that business broadly has suffered, and small businesses have probably been hit most by the indecision and apathy. This stagnation cannot be allowed to continue and we must build on Britain's reputation as a great place to do business far and wide.

2 Provide an environment which champions the role of small businesses

- ▶ Government needs to recognise the positive and powerful role played by small firms in local communities and ensure Ministerial commitment with the continued position of Small Business Minister, with a mandate to be informed by all major business groups, including those that represent the smallest and start-up firms.
- ▶ Make early stage grants more accessible and relevant. Onerous application processes can mean public funds only go to businesses who know how to 'work the system.'
- ▶ Consider allowing unpaid sabbaticals for those looking to enter entrepreneurship to send a firm message that Britain is serious about backing small business.

3 Provide a taxation system supportive of all businesses, large and small

- ▶ Commit to a simplified tax system that encourages business investment and growth and allows founders to focus on the business, not complicated tax arrangements, to include simplifying VAT and business rates.
- ▶ Consider cutting NI tax on firms with fewer than 10 staff so salaries can be increased.
- ▶ Remove health insurance as a benefit from the P11D. As offering such packages to employees becomes the norm, this should not be a taxable benefit.

4 Make up-skilling and self-improvement financially viable

- ▶ Provide tax breaks or voucher programmes for training and advice. All evidence suggests those that take on board advice or improve relevant enterprising skills build stronger, more sustainable businesses.
- ▶ Activate the £20m commitment outlined in Philip Hammond's Budget of 2019 to build 'regional peer networks' and offer this in the form of grants for local groups to bid for and set up local meet-ups across the UK to address one of the key issues for small business owners – loneliness and isolation. Leverage the national network of flexible office space providers to host these meet-ups.

5 Make using more environmentally-friendly processes and materials pay so small UK business can lead the field in this area

- ▶ Consider reducing VAT on products that are better for the environment.
- ▶ Increase grants and R&D credits to firms looking to innovate in this area.

6 Build a workforce that's equipped for enterprise

- ▶ Introduce entrepreneurship and enterprise into the school curriculum.
- ▶ Tackle the anomaly of the apprenticeship levy to make it affordable for the smallest firms.

7 Prompt payment

Continue work to ensure large firms are compelled to pay small firms within reasonable payment terms and observance of the public reporting payment regulations.

8 Data led business support

As EU funding for business support comes to an end, leverage data of what's working in business support to offer a more relevant and personalised service to small firms that makes the most of the thousands of advisers in the private sector willing and able to offer advice, as well as technologies such as Open Banking, to identify when firms need help the most.

9 The High Street

Consider new models for the High Street that reduce the friction for small businesses looking to test physical retail. Enterprise Nation has been running its own campaign, Clicks and Mortar, backed by major corporates Amazon, Square and Direct Line for Business, in what has been a nationwide test of a model that enables online sellers to become omni-sellers and rejuvenate the High Street in the process.

10 Infrastructure

Enough has been promised when it comes to availability of broadband but what about road and rail? Small business owners are under pressure to be more productive. This means making the most of the time available to them, including when traveling. Let's build a road and rail system that gets people to their destination quickly and, depending on mode of travel, with fast wi-fi throughout.