Grow London Local Programme Evaluation

UK Shared Prosperity Fund, London & Partners

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Executive Summary

Overview

i. Hatch was appointed to undertake the final evaluation of London & Partners (L&P) UK Shared Prosperity Fund (UKSPF) Grow London Local Programme (GLL). The GLL Programme is funded by UKSPF and therefore is required to submit an evaluation as part of the programme closure procedure.

ii. The GLL programme is a free service which aims to provide a Single Front Door (SFD) to *"London businesses to support their need to thrive"*[1]. It is open to small and micro businesses who need expert support to grow their business. The programme provides a free consultation with a Business Support Manager (BSM), who signposts small businesses to support in areas such as:

- Business Planning;
- Digital;
- Finding marketing support to help boost sales;
- Learning how to access business finance;
- Legal;
- Sales;
- Skills, Training & Upskilling; and
- Sustainability.

iii. In addition to this, the GLL platform houses an online library for events, support programmes and other expert led content, as well as providing a Business Success Check, which is a digital diagnostic tool that creates personalised recommendations to help the business to achieve its growth goals.

iv. To complement the UKSPF support, L&P also received Growth Hub funding from the Department for Business & Trade (DBT) and skills funding from the Mayor of London. Growth Hub funding is used to provide a digital service for London's entrepreneurs to access support to grow their businesses. The Mayor's skills funding helps entrepreneurs to identify skills gaps, access training and navigate the skills landscape, ultimately aiming to boost London's productivity.

v. This evaluation only focuses on the UKSPF elements of GLL (particularly the In-person support activities), referring to other funding and outputs achieved (but not included in UKSPF returns) to provide wider context.

Programme Aim & Objectives

vi. The Programme's objectives align with the following interventions for UKSPF:

[1] https://www.growlondonlocal.london/

- **E23**: Strengthening local entrepreneurial ecosystems and supporting businesses at all stages of their development to start, sustain, grow and innovate, including through local networks.
- **E24**: Funding for new training hubs, and improvements to existing ones; business support offers; and 'incubators' and 'accelerators' for local enterprise which can support entrepreneurs and start-ups through the early stages of development and growth by offering a combination of services including mentorship, training, coaching.

vii. This evaluation works through a thematic framework, to provide a balanced assessment of the UKSPF GLL Programme. Further detail on the research methodology and tools that have been used to conduct the evaluation and provide all assessments are covered under the 'Methodology' section.

Programme Management & Delivery

viii. The GLL programme is funded to provide a better coordinated public sector business support offer in London, and help ensure greater uptake of business support, especially by entrepreneurs that belong to under-represented groups. It provides London businesses with a series of different choices, through a single platform, to easily navigate to the right provision, at the right time and the right place for the business, whether in-person or online.

ix. There are three routes for accessing support from the programme; Digital (self-service), Digital business success check (tailored support following the online check) and In-person (consultation with a BSM followed by referrals to suitable business support or skills provision).

x. The GLA ran the initial pilot for a 'Concierge Service' until April 2023 which covered a limited number of boroughs, with L&P taking on new responsibilities from May 2023, to create a pan-London programme. L&P assumed responsibility for London's Growth Hub at the same time and integrated the in-person and digital offer to create a single service. The GLL service delivery commenced a second pilot phase in November 2023 and was formally launched in its current form in January 2024. The service will be operational in its current form until March 2025. In June 2024 the GLA agreed to revisions to the targets and a greater focus on potential entrepreneurs to become enterprise ready.

xi. Following a Project Change Review (PCR) in June 2024, the outcome focus of the programme was widened to include increasing productivity through uptake of skills provision and encouraging more marginalised groups to have greater access to support to start or help grow their businesses. The PCR was submitted in response to:

- The set up took longer than expected, mainly due to the small amount of time allocated from budget allocation to launch a programme of this size and complexity;
- The In-person support with more marginalised communities required higher levels of resource than had first been anticipated; and
- There was an unanticipated demand, identified through outreach activities, for more support to start a business[2].

[2] An estimated 20% of the demand received through outreach activities was from individuals looking to start their own business which couldn't initially be served by the UKSPF support.

Evaluation Methodology

xii. This independent evaluation, undertaken by Hatch, explores the value-add of the GLL programme and the impacts achieved. Central to this is the assessment of performance delivery against intended UKSPF inputs, activities, outputs, outcomes and impacts. This is complemented with an in-depth review of the delivery and management arrangements (internally and with business beneficiaries, external providers and stakeholders) to assess which delivery approaches 'work' and why, identifying examples of best practice, challenges experienced, and lessons learnt which can be applied in the design and delivery of future interventions. The evaluation looks to answer and provide insights across the themes of: Relevance and Consistency; Progress; Delivery and Management; Cross-cutting Themes; and Conclusions and Lessons Learnt.

xiii. The key points of the GLL evaluation are as follows:

Management & Governance

xiv. The GLL programme was managed by L&P staff working alongside service and skills providers who would deliver the business support services. Key to the in-person service was, the use of experienced BSMs, who would speak to the businesses, learn about their support needs and signpost them to the most appropriate Business Support Provider (BSP) for support.

Programme Spend

xv. UKSPF is used primarily to support the in-person service. The digital service helps entrepreneurs to complete an online diagnostic or to self-serve business support themselves.

xvi. On the basis of the actual spend, through till March 2025, the vast majority of all spending was defrayed in line with funding expectations, as below:

Cost category	Actual (as at Mar 2025)	Final spend
Total	£6,915,660.7	98.8%

xvii. An additional £1.35m was received for skills, all of which was spent by end of March 2025.

Outputs

xviii. Using the end of programme values, all outputs will be achieved or exceeded:

Outputs	Target set	Actual outputs (as at March 2025)
Number of enterprises receiving non-financial support	4,800	5,022 (105%)

Number of potential entrepreneurs assisted to be enterprise ready	1,200	2,312 193%
Number of small businesses supported to access skills content or provision[3]	3,000[4]	5,472 (180%)

xix. A further 14,936 businesses were helped to access support via the digital service and 2,740 entrepreneurs were helped to access skills content or provision via the digital service, which were not supported directly by the UKSPF support. This takes the number of entrepreneurs helped to 22,270.

Outcomes

xx. For the UKSPF GLL funding there was not a defined set of outcome measures in the original bid or the PCR.

xxi. However, looking at the customer satisfaction data provided by L&P, the programme has a Net Promoter Score[5] of 61, indicating an overall satisfaction, loyalty, and enthusiasm by beneficiary businesses toward the services the programme provides. A score of 61 is considered "excellent" by industry standards, highlighting the programme's positive impact and performance.

Equality, Diversity & Inclusion

xxii. In support of the ambition to contribute to London's inclusive growth, the UKSPF In-Person support is set out against the following categories and sees an overperformance related to BAME and Disabled beneficiaries, and a slight underperformance for female beneficiaries compared to the PCR target, which was an increase on the original bid target:

ED&I Targets	Original Bid	PCR target	Actual end of programme
BAME	30%	38%	67%
Women	50%	63%	57%
Disabled	5%	6%	10%

Sustainability

xxiii. Within the original UKSPF bids there were no specific targets or objectives set for GLL, more an alignment with achieving greater levels of sustainability and the promotion of a Net-Zero economy.

[3] This is not a UKSPF output
[4] Target can be achieved via the in-person and digital services
[5] This is a metric that is used to assess customer satisfaction with a service, product, or company. It is calculated by asking customers "On a scale of 0-10, how likely are you to recommend this product/company to a friend or colleague", and ranges from a score of -100 to 100, with a higher score indicating better overall satisfaction

xxiv. At the end of March 2025, of the 375 BSPs registered with GLL, 313 business support offerings included support for entrepreneurs around sustainability.

xxv. Over 4,600 referrals have been made by BSMs, via the in-person route, to provision which includes sustainability support. Of the 4,600 referrals, over 550 were to UKSPF projects with sustainability listed as an area of support.

Wider Impacts

xxvi. In addition to the UKSPF reported outputs and drawing from L&P's six-month survey to entrepreneurs who were supported via the In-person service

- Over 5,000 small businesses were supported to access skills content or provision (of which approximately half were via the in-person service);
- More than half (54%) of the businesses have accessed the support they were referred to;
- About half (49%) of the businesses that accessed support referred to by GLL would either have struggled to find support of the same quality or within the same timeframe. 8% would not have found it at all;
- At least 2/3 (67%) of businesses that accessed support found the support 'relevant' or 'very relevant';
- More than a thousand (20%) of businesses referred to support by GLL have overcome a business challenge as a result and would have struggled to find support of the same quality or within the same timeframe; and
- More than 850 businesses (17%) who have accessed support referred by GLL, have improved their productivity as a result and they would have struggled to find support without GLL.

Evaluation Assessment

xxvii. The following is the thematic summative assessment of the GLL programme, against the core evaluation questions using a Red, Amber and Green rating to define the final assessment:

Relevance and Consistency

Evaluation Question	Overall Assessment	Rating
Is the programme still relevant to the local and national economic and policy context?	The programme was very closely aligned to the objectives of the UKSPF programme and the regional challenges set out in the London Recovery Programme. Since then, the evidence and wider strategic framework (which is more focussed on inclusive growth and being more international in outlook) has become even more relevant.	Green
Has its implementation been consistent with the Logic Model submitted in the application?	The programme's original Logic Model sets out a series of market failures and delivery challenges related to information failures and the high volumes of outputs that were planned. The outcomes of the programme places more of	Amber

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	a forecast on addressing financial household resilience, with delivery changing focus to include pre-starts and young entrepreneurs	
What particular local social and economic challenges was London facing during its implementation?	The programme was originally conceived as part of the response to Covid-19 and was piloted before becoming a regional programme. Through the delivery period there was an increasing emphasis on addressing the cost of living challenges and on targeting under-represented communities.	

Progress

Evaluation Question	Overall Assessment	Rating
What outcomes and impacts was the UKSPF specifically responsible for?	The programme started with an outcome focus on financial household resilience and post PCR had a wider focus on productivity and potential entrepreneurs but in either scenario did not have specific outcome measures. In terms of assessing impact in terms of economy, efficiency and effectiveness it is too early to assess impacts.	
How has the project performed against its contractual targets (outputs) and budgets, and what are the expected lifetime results?	Part way through the delivery of the programme, the outputs were reduced by almost half, with the budget remaining the same. An additional output (related to entrepreneurs being enterprise ready) was added. In line with the revised PCR output levels, GLL has met or exceeded all the UKSPF output targets, and 93% of beneficiary businesses felt that GLL understood the requirements of their business	
What are the reasons for its level of (under) performance?	The project team identified a series of challenges that were impacting on the levels of non-financial support to individual businesses. These included requirements to provide more time for outreach, beneficiary diagnostics & registration and to identify the most appropriate solution provider(s). In addition to this, the delivery team identified target beneficiaries who were not receiving targeted support and came up with new solutions.	
How do these outcomes compare to previous similar interventions? (VfM)	The GLL programme has a lower median unit cost per number of enterprises receiving support in line with expectation, as well as having a lower comparative cost per number of entrepreneurs assisted to be enterprise ready. In terms of Cost per Outcome, both UKSPF targets have been delivered at a lower actual	

	cost than estimated in the original bid, noting that outputs targets were reduced from the original bid targets.	

Delivery and Management

Evaluation Question	Overall Assessment	Rating
What were the experiences of the delivery teams in implementing and managing the project?	The GLL programme has a core delivery team and drew upon wider functional teams across L&P. There were regular team meetings and reviews of progress at the cross L&P level and at individual team level, as well as a clear focus on segmented activities such as marketing and recruitment of beneficiary companies. Where challenges arose, solutions were identified, with the delivery teams being proactive in sourcing and on-boarding new providers.	
Have any lessons for the future emerged from these experiences?	The delivery team and resource requirements were challenged, given the enormous potential of businesses that could be targeted. The GLL programme has given the delivery team better practical experience in understanding how to manage market segmentation, ways in which delivery can be more effective and how much time and resource is more accurately needed per business supported. The ability to pivot delivery towards new priority targets groups and to source additional support augurs well for remaining 'customer focussed' in the future.	

Cross Cutting Themes

Evaluation Question	Overall Assessment	Rating
Equality, diversity and inclusion: How successful has the project been in assessing the level of engagement with target groups?	The original bid had substantive engagement outputs with EDI targets set for BAME, Women and Disabled. Whilst the PCR reduced the overall output volumes, the EDI targets were increased by 8, 13 and 1 percentage points respectively. GLL overperformed against its BAME and Disability targets. GLL underperformed against the gender target that was increased by the PCR, although this was still above the original bid level.	
Sustainability: How has the project contributed to the environmental themes identified in the UKSPF Investment Plan for London?	The original UKSPF bid and subsequent PCR did not include specific targets or objectives set for sustainability. However a significant number of BSP offered support for entrepreneurs around sustainability and received referrals to their provision. Data on	

	actual uptake of sustainability support and the impact on the business is not available.	

Lessons Learnt

xxviii. Drawing from the overall assessment and review of all of the evidence, the following insights have been drawn with regard to the future development and operation of similar programmes:

- **Build on strong foundations**: Key systems have been put into place by the team to manage and deliver the programme with lessons on outreach, engagement and marketing methods being put into practice. Key relationships with councils, the GLA and stakeholders need to continue to be leveraged to enable the programme to provide more support.
- **Start-up? Survival? Or Growth?:** What is the overriding purpose of the programme and by extension how is support shaped and provided to address this? The programme has developed from supporting businesses' financial household resilience to include pre-startup support for potential entrepreneurs. The inclusion of more specific outcomes measures and the subsequent output measures will need to also capture insights via surveys etc. to better understand how the support has impacted on the businesses.
- **Skills:** Whilst not part of the UKSPF programme and this evaluation, L&P has accessed and delivered skills funding and activity that has been aligned to GLL. For future evaluations, more data is needed from BSPs on the take up on skills training, the level and type of support, as well as insights into gaps in skills provision that is not currently being met.
- **Data processing and collection**: From the BSP perspective, whilst there have been improvements in this, there is further to go in the use of Salesforce to process data from BSPs and beneficiaries to reduce the inputting burden. Better information transfers between BSMS and BSPs could allow for more informed referrals and better matching of businesses and service/skills providers (especially as the list grows).
- **Sustainability:** For the GLL programme time and resources appear to have been dedicated to promoting and addressing the net-zero challenge for London, and specialist providers have been on-boarded as part of the service offer to business. How that has translated in terms of outcomes is unclear as data has not been provided that can interrogate what provision has been accessed and how that has changed the operations of supported businesses. Future programmes need specific measurers for understanding and articulating sustainability gains.
- **Continuous improvement**: BSPs, especially skills providers want to know what businesses want support with, so they can tailor their offer on a periodic basis, although L&P do collect insights on this through their survey work. Although the team has taken an unbiased approach to referring businesses to support providers, further collection and analysis of feedback on the support needed and provided will inform the changeable fit between business need and interventions.

1. Introduction

This section provides an overview of the Grow London Local (GLL) programme, the elements of the programme being reviewed, the approach and methodologies drawn upon to provide consistency in the approach and the framework of research questions that underpin the whole evaluation.

Overview

1.1 Hatch was appointed to undertake the evaluation of London & Partners (L&P) UK Shared Prosperity Fund (UKSPF) Grow London Local Programme (GLL). The GLL Programme is funded by UKSPF and therefore is required to submit an evaluation as part of the programme closure procedures.

1.2 Pre UKSPF support, the Greater London Authority (GLA) ran a pilot for a 'Concierge Service[6]' in three Local authorities called 'Wayfinder'. The learning from the pilot informed the re-design of the Programme and was incorporated with the London Growth Hub[7], to became the new GLL programme. A further pilot was extended to six Local authorities from November 2023 to January 2024, with the full pan-London business support programme launched at the end of January 2024.

1.3 The GLL Programme[8] is a free digital service, open to all small and micro businesses who need expert business support to grow their business, as well as signposting to targeted support, identified either from an in-person with a Business Support Manager (BSM) or via on-line business success assessment. Businesses can access information on events, support programmes and expert led content in the programme online library covering:

- Business Planning;
- Digital;
- Finding marketing support to help boost sales;
- Learning how to access business finance;
- Legal;
- Sales;
- Skills, Training & Upskilling; and
- Sustainability.

1.4 In addition to this, the GLL platform houses an online library for events, support programmes and other expert led content, as well as providing a Business Success Check, which is a digital diagnostic tool that creates personalised recommendations to help the business to achieve its growth goals.

1.5 At a strategic level the programme aims to provide a better coordinated public sector business support offer for London, and to help ensure a greater uptake of business support and skills, especially by entrepreneurs that belong to under-represented groups.

[6] Under the Wayfinder Pilot the term 'Concierge Service' was used for the Business Manager Supported elements, which has been adapted for the GLL Programme through the self-serve and in-person support elements.
[7] First established in 2016, managed by London Councils
[8] Matching London small businesses to support - Grow London Local(https://www.growlondonlocal.london/)

1.6 The Programme's objectives align with the following interventions for UKSPF:

- **E23**: Strengthening local entrepreneurial ecosystems and supporting businesses at all stages of their development to start, sustain, grow and innovate, including through local networks.
- **E24**: Funding for new training hubs, and improvements to existing ones; business support offers; and 'incubators' and 'accelerators' for local enterprise which can support entrepreneurs and start-ups through the early stages of development and growth by offering a combination of services including mentorship, training, coaching.

1.7 To be eligible for the programme, a business must meet the following criteria:

- Have an address in a London borough;
- Be a Small or Medium-sized Enterprise (SME) i.e. micro businesses with 1-9 employees; small businesses with 10-49 employees; and medium-sized businesses with 50-249 employees registered with Companies House[9]; or
- Be an entrepreneur who has not yet registered their business.

1.8 L&P also received Growth Hub funding from the Department for Business & Trade (DBT) and Skills funding from the Mayor of London. Growth Hub funding is used to provide a digital service for London's entrepreneurs to access support to grow their businesses. Skills funding helps entrepreneurs to identify skills gaps, access training and navigate the skills landscape, ultimately aiming to boost London's productivity.

1.9 This evaluation only focuses on the UKSPF elements of GLL, referring to other funding and outputs throughout to provide wider context.

Evaluation Approaches

1.10 The purpose of conducting this evaluation is to gain an independent understanding of the practical experience of implementing GLL, its value-added and the impacts achieved at both an individual business and programme level. This includes reviewing the programme's performance against intended inputs, activities, outputs, outcomes and impacts, as well as reviewing delivery and management performance to assess which delivery approaches have worked and why. Collectively this review and examples of best practice, challenges experienced, and lessons learnt can then be applied in the design and delivery of future interventions.

1.11 The evaluation adopts an approach which is consistent with the requirements of the UKSPF Evaluation Strategy, published by the Ministry of Housing, Communities and Local Government (MHCLG) in March 2024[10] and includes:

- **Process Evaluation**: to understand how the UKSPF has been implemented in practice, and the aspects of its design that have helped or hindered its implementation.
- **Impact Evaluation**: to understand the extent to which economic, social and environmental outcomes relating to pride in place and life chances have changed as a result of the UKSPF.

[9] Department for Business and Trade (DBT) definition as used for the Longitudinal Small Business Survey (2023)
[10] UKSPF Evaluation Strategy - MHCLG

- **Value for Money (VfM)**: understand, where impact has been evaluated, how the value of the impact achieved compares to its cost according to the Green Book principles of economy, effectiveness, and efficiency.

Research Questions

1.12 To provide consistency across the evaluation and a level of focus into key areas of investigation, a series of thematic key research questions have been applied and underpin all insights and assessments. The following table sets out the research questions by theme:

Theme	Research Question
Relevance and Consistency	1. Is the programme still relevant to the local and national economic and policy context? 2. Has its implementation been consistent with the Logic Model submitted in the application? 3. What particular local social and economic challenges was London facing during its implementation?
Progress	4. What outcomes and impacts was the UKSPF specifically responsible for? 5. What are the reasons for its level of (under)performance? 6. How has the project performed against its contractual targets (outputs) and budgets, and what are its expected lifetime results? 7. How do these outcomes compare to previous similar interventions?
Delivery and Management	8. What were the experiences of the delivery teams in implementing and managing the project? 9. Have any lessons for the future emerged from these experiences?
Cross Cutting	10. Equality, diversity and inclusion - How successful has the project been in assessing the level of engagement with target groups? 11. Sustainability - how has the project contributed to the environmental themes identified in the UKSPF Investment Plan for London?
Conclusions and Lessons Learnt	12. Overall conclusions based on analysis of above themes

Methodology

1.13 To inform the evaluation, information was triangulated from a range of sources, including data and qualitative insights from the programme team, the programme beneficiaries and strategic partners, as well as additional desk-based research. The review and analysis has worked through the following:

- **The Logic Model**: An assessment and update of the original L&P Logic Model, which underpins the programme's interventions and the subsequent revisions to outcomes informed by the changes agreed with the GLA;

- **Review of Economic and Policy Context**: Through the programme's consistency and continued relevance since initial UKSPF Funding;
- **Desk Based Research**: To support the contextual analysis;
- **Project Level Monitoring Data**: A summative analysis of GLL's performance, expenditure position and outputs delivered to date and those expected at programme closure;
- **Data Analysis**: An extraction of data on beneficiaries through liaison with the L&P team from the Salesforce (the internal CRM system) and associated spreadsheet analysis, assessment of progress against targets and value for money against other L&P / UKSPF evaluations, visualisation and reporting of findings;
- **Scoping Consultations**: To understand the programme's objectives, implementation, and context;
- **Delivery Consultations**: To obtain qualitative insights from a diverse range of Business Support Providers (BSP) to understand what worked well or less well;
- **Beneficiary Consultations**: To augment analysis of graduation forms, economic impact and value for money assessment, and obtain qualitative insights from the beneficiaries and self-reported data on business resilience / turnover, job creation, and attribution to estimate the programme's economic impact;
- **Value for Money assessment**: Quantitative impact modelling to estimate the impact of the programme as a whole in terms of jobs and gross value added (GVA) created based on beneficiary graduation forms;
- **Benchmarking**: A review of previous or current business support programme's value for money and primary research into concurrent programme, to benchmark GLL's performance against other programmes with the same scope; and
- **Case Studies**: To provide a more in-depth qualitative assessment of the programme's outcomes and impacts at the beneficiary level, aspects of delivery which beneficiaries found particularly useful and suggestions for improvements for any future delivery of similar types of interventions.

2. Project Background

This section sets out the development and evidential considerations that have led from the initial funding request, through to the initial deployment of resource, the establishment of the GLL delivery plan after the pilot and the refocussing of GLL after the changes agreed with the GLA.

Programme Context

2.1 The UK Shared Prosperity Fund (UKSPF) is a pillar of the UK government's Levelling Up Agenda, involving the provision of £2.6 billion of local investment in places across the UK by March 2025. The UKSPF has the following investment priorities[11]:

- **Communities and Place**: Enabling places to invest in their community spaces and strengthen local pride and community resilience to create the foundations for economic development at the neighbourhood-level.
- **Supporting Local Business**: Enabling local businesses in the area to thrive by providing investment that will aid their growth and performance.
- **People and Skills**: Enabling places to invest into skills training that will secure employment and support previously economically inactive people into work.

2.2 GLL secured £7m of UKSPF funding, with the application focused on supporting activities under Supporting Local Business, in the UKSPF Investment Plan:

- **E23:** Strengthening local entrepreneurial ecosystems and supporting businesses at all stages of their development to start, sustain, grow and innovate, including through local networks.
- **E24**: Funding for new training hubs, and improvements to existing ones; business support offers; and 'incubators' and 'accelerators' for local enterprise (including social enterprise) which can support entrepreneurs and start-ups through the early stages of development and growth by offering a combination of services including account management, advice, resources, training, coaching, mentorship and access to workspace.

Project Development

2.3 The GLA run 'Wayfinder' pilot sought to look at ways in which the existing business support across London could *become 'a client-centric business support system to help entrepreneurs succeed'*[12]. In terms of refocussing the support the notion of the 's*ingle front door'* was to be tested where *'the vast, fragmented system of 850 different programmes, 258 funding organizations and 33 local government authorities (are made more accessible) for many business owners to access and successfully utilize'*[13].

2.4 The GLL programme was the next iteration for creating a Single Front Door (SFD) for London businesses, as per the Mayor of London's 2021 manifesto:

[11] London Investment Plan
[12] https://associates.bloomberg.org/cities/london/supporting-and-strengthening-londons-small-businesses/
[13] Ibid

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> **Building on the new London Business Hub and its network of centres and advisors, I'll work with boroughs and other partners to further transform small business support in London, with a single front door so business owners and aspiring entrepreneurs can easily access the right advice and support.**
>
> **Sadiq for London 2021**

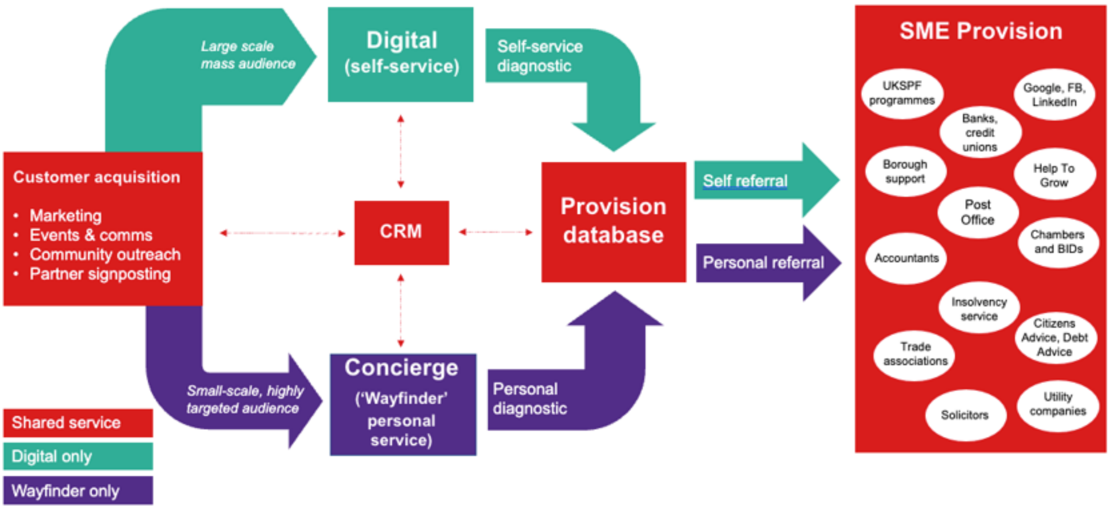
2.5 In order to make the GLL Programme a success, L&P maintained close engagement with all the London local authorities. The local authorities helped identify the 'hardest to reach' in their locality and facilitate introductions between L&P and community leaders, provide references to any existing business support offered locally and details for existing paid or free local support offerings within their area.

2.6 The GLL Programme and the establishment of the SFD to meet the needs of London's SMEs (in terms of increasing access to high quality business support) was expected to lead to a greater uptake of business support, particularly by disadvantaged entrepreneurs, as well as providing increased coordination of London's business support offer.

The Grow London Local Delivery Programme

2.7 The diagram below shows how the interconnected support elements of the GLL Programme were originally envisaged and the description of how the shared services were intended to facilitate access to the programme:

Figure 1.1 Grow London Local



Source: London & Partners UKSPF Application Form

- **Customer Acquisition**: A large-scale customer acquisition campaign that would create a pipeline of demand for the Digital and Concierge Service[14]. The campaign covered: integrated market including the use of social media and PR, partnership marketing with partners who have trusted relationships with the target audience, and community outreach allowing the GLL Programme to meet businesses, where they are.

- **Client Relationship Management (CRM)** - **Salesforce**: The Salesforce platform was seen as critical to the success of the programme, as it enabled data sharing with interested parties such as GLA and the boroughs on a regular basis. Salesforce is used to track the customer journey to understand where they are in 'the journey' at any point in time, manage assessment and feedback processes from the business, manage the BSP directory and create a single view of all the business interactions across all service lines.

- **BSP Directory**: A directory of relevant and trusted providers of business and skills support is the backbone of the GLL Programme. It comprises of: Local authority, pan-London and relevant national BSPs, free of charge and paid for services, and links to other London's UKSPF Programmes.

- **Digital Service**: In parallel to the maintenance and support of the existing London Business Hub, the GLL digital service is a digital platform that incorporates new capabilities. The digital service provides rich content in a variety of formats with broad coverage of topics, diagnostic tools, event listings, digital access to the business support directory and networking opportunities.

- **Community Outreach**: In a similar way to the way that the Concierge Service worked, GLL sought to take engagement and support further into target communities and provide higher levels of engagement at a local level. The BSP looked to use a neutral meeting place (such as a community hub) to discuss with the business their needs and to help support them to

[14] Under GLL the service previously referred to as 'Wayfinder' or 'Concierge' was more commonly referred to as the In-person support

register and identify areas of support they require, as well as signposting them to the most suitable provider(s).

- **Concierge Service**: Building on the lessons learnt from the GLA Wayfinder pilot, the GLL programme has expanded the initial 'Wayfinder' service from the existing six London Local authorities to all 33 London Local authorities and re-branded as In-person support.

- **Data, Insight, and Feedback**: GLL provides a single view of demand, participation, and quality of business support offerings in London. The data and insights are shared to boroughs through individual borough dashboards, quarterly reports shared with the GLA and boroughs, an annual event that is open to all relevant GLA and borough staff where data, insights, and best practice are shared.

3. Programme Need and Rationale

This section considers the need and rationale for the GLL programme, exploring how the programme has been designed to address existing market failures, meet its objectives, and deliver intended outputs and outcomes. The analysis in this section has been primarily informed by a review of the programme's background documents, including the programme's original application form and other internal programme management and delivery documents.

Need and Rationale

3.1 Running a small business can be challenging; London's small businesses have faced a series of compounding challenges due to major macro-economic shocks such as leaving the European Union, COVID-19 and the cost-of-living crisis. Small businesses continue to face a wide range of difficulties such as paying back government loans from the pandemic, the increasing cost of doing business in the capital, dealing with late payments/non-payments, hiring and retaining the right talent, increases in the cost of borrowing, difficulty in raising finance, supply chain delays, customer acquisition, property and tenancy etc. These challenges are consistently noted by the GLA[15] and small business organisations[16, 17], highlighting the increasing need for business support for SMEs to aid in their survival and growth.

3.2 Small businesses usually have varying needs and priorities, with some focused on growth and investment, and others focused on survival. For businesses in the end of their life cycle, the external challenges mean that the process of exiting the market might cause them more financial harm. Insolvency is a major concern for small businesses, as noted by Begbes Trainer that "*in the three months of 2022, the number of companies in critical financial distress jumped by 36%*"[18] .

3.3 London entrepreneurs are not getting the support they need, particularly London's minority ethnic groups, female, and economically disadvantaged entrepreneurs. This exacerbates inequality and leads to worse outcomes for families, creating a negative ripple effect across the economy. Although there are a range of business support services being offered to London's entrepreneurs, they are usually difficult to navigate, of mixed quality, or inaccessible.

Statistical Evidence of Need

3.4 The programme aims to address some of the growth and survival needs of London's small businesses:

- **Survival:** New businesses in London find it hard to survive. In 2023 92.6% of London businesses that were established in 2022 survived, this is in line with the UK 1-year survival rate in the same time period (92.3%)[19]. In 2018, about 95% of new enterprises that were set up in the previous year survived, indicating that the survival rate of new businesses in London has worsened over the years. Figure 3.1 shows the survival rate of businesses birthed in 2018, across different regions. 39% of London businesses established in 2018 survived for up to 5 years; this is better than the survival rate of businesses in North West (36%) and West

[15] recovery_programme_overview.pdf (london.gov.uk)
[16] Small Business Index, Quarter 4, 2022 | FSB, The Federation of Small Businesses
[17] Enterprise Nation Small Business Barometer Q3 UK.pdf (windows.net)
[18] Begbes categorises a firm in critical financial distress, if it has more than £5,000 in county court judgments or a winding up petition against it.
[19] ONS, Business Demography, 2023

HATCH

Midlands (35%), but worse than the survival rate of businesses in the East, North East and East Midlands (40%), Yorkshire and the Humber and South East(41%), and South West (45%).

Survival rate of businesses birthed in 2018, across regions

Source: ONS Business Demography

- **Growth:** In the past decade, small business growth has slowed significantly due to macro-economic shocks caused by leaving the European Union, the COVID-19 pandemic and geo-political tensions. According to the latest Enterprise Research Centre (ERC) State of Small Businesses report[20], business growth is becoming rarer in the UK. Of the businesses established in 2020 that survived to 2023 (47%), only 2% were able to achieve the milestone of £1m turnover after three years, a proportion that has remained the same over the past decade in the UK. Only a minority of firms are able to grow their employee count whilst also continuing to hire, and of the 2% of businesses that were able to achieve a turnover of £1m, only 7% were able to continue their growth journey and reach a new milestone of £3m+ turnover.
- **Business Support:** Data from the Longitudinal Small Business Survey[21] (LSBS) report shows that there has been a steady increase in the proportion of small and medium enterprises leveraging business support, with an increase from 24.1% in 2020 to 27.3% in 2023. ERC research also shows that business support increases firms' productivity and innovation, with labour productivity increasing by 22.1% for firms that accessed external advice. However, small businesses are facing fewer opportunities for business support on entrepreneurial finance provision and access to finance. According to the latest ERC report, the journey to accessing equity finance is often long and difficult for UK early-stage businesses. This highlights the need for more business support for small businesses ranging across accessing finance, improving innovation, and increasing productivity.

[20] Enterprise Research Centre (ERC), The State of Small Business Britain Report 2024
[21] Department for Business and Trade, Longitudinal Small Business Survey

- **Innovation:** The Innovation State of the Nation Survey[22] (ISNS) highlights that innovation is strongly linked with higher sales growth. In 2024, 56% of businesses reported making product or service changes over the past year, a reduction from the 2023 proportion of 61%. The data also showed that innovation rates fell more in small and micro-businesses than in larger firms. In 2020-22, UK Innovation Survey[23] (UKIS) data found that 50% of large businesses were innovation active, compared to 36% of SMEs. The after-effects of the pandemic as well as the increased cost of doing business were the most cited barriers to innovation. Firms highlighted the need for more innovation-targeted support moving forward.
- **Hiring Talent:** The hiring process is significantly time-intensive and expensive for most small and medium businesses. According to a LinkedIn survey[24], of about 1,000 small business owners with less than 200 employees, almost 9 out of 10 reported being part of the hiring process, from the search to the interview stages. In addition, businesses report having spent about $3,000-$5,000 (USD) to hire the right talent. 84% of small businesses reported finding candidates and building a pipeline of qualified talent as the biggest challenge. The latest Quarterly Recruitment Outlook (QRO)[25] reports an ease in recruitment difficulties faced by businesses. According to the report, fewer firms are facing difficulties hiring, with 66% of businesses in 2024 reporting recruitment difficulties, lower than 76% in Q4 2023. Although the recruitment difficulties seem to be easing, 66% is still a significant proportion and highlights the fact that more support needs to be provided to align businesses with people with the right talent and skills to fill vacancies.
- **Female Entrepreneurship**: The Global Entrepreneurship Monitor (GEM) 2022/23 report[26] highlighted the global trend in female entrepreneurship. The report findings are based on an analysis of women's entrepreneurship across 49 countries; it showed that startup rates for women globally in 2022 was about 10%, which is lower than the global startup rate for men (12.7%), it also highlights that globally, women represent about one in four high growth entrepreneurs and women are highly active in targeting international markets, particularly in regions such as Latin America and Europe where women make up two-fifths of entrepreneurs trading in international markets.
- The Gender Index conducts yearly reports on the status of female entrepreneurship in the UK. According to The Gender Index data[27], in 2024, only one in five active companies was female-led, the same ratio as 2023 and 2022, highlighting the persistence of underrepresentation in female-led companies across the UK. In 2024, only 19.5% of active companies in London were female-led, a decrease from the 2023 and 2022 proportions of 20.6% and 20.5% respectively.

National and Regional Policy

3.5 In light of the effects of the pandemic on economic, social, and health outcomes, a mission based approach was implemented in a bid to rebuild London's economy and society, restore confidence in the city, and minimise the impact on vulnerable communities. The missions align with the aim of improving the business landscape for London's businesses, particularly SMEs. **The London Recovery Mission**[28] consists of 9 agreed mission areas:

[22] Enterprise Research Centre (ERC), 2024 Innovation State of the Nation Survey
[23] Department for Business and Trade, UK Innovation Survey 2023: report
[24] LinkedIn, How Small Businesses Attract and Hire Top Talent
[25] British Chamber of Commerce, Quarterly Recruitment Outlook: Hiring Difficulties Easing but Significant Concerns Persist
[26] GEM 2022/23 Women's Entrepreneurship Report: Challenging Bias and Stereotypes
[27] The Gender Index report
[28] Mayor of London, London Recovery Programme: Overview Paper

- Building strong communities;
- Digital access for all;
- Helping Londoners into good work;
- High streets for all;
- Healthy place, healthy weight;
- Mental health and wellbeing;
- A new deal for young people;
- A green new deal; and
- A robust safety net.

3.6 **The London Growth Plan**[29] highlights the importance of backing London's businesses to hire more talent, raise finance, use new technology, and expand and grow internationally. The Grow London programmes are well aligned with London's growth ambitions and plans. The programmes are mentioned in several aspects of the 10-year Growth Plan spanning themes such as coordinating a pan-London business support offer, scaling businesses in the growth sectors, increasing SME productivity, supporting London's scaleups in growth sectors to expand internationally, and closing the entrepreneurship gap. The GLL programme is highlighted in the 10-year plan as a major avenue to ensure a coordinated pan-London business support offer that consists of a coalition of partners, and a collaborated support offer.

3.7 **Invest 2035: The UK's modern industrial strategy**[30] sets out the UK's 10-year growth plan to ensure a stable environment for businesses to invest and operate in high-growth sectors. The Industrial Strategy will focus on 8 identified high-growth sectors that offer the highest growth opportunity for the UK economy and businesses: advanced manufacturing, clean energy, creative industries, defence, digital and technologies, financial services, life sciences, and professional and business services. The government plans to work with these sectors to increase growth and investment

3.8 The cost of doing business, rising inflation, and labour and skills shortages are having a negative impact on small businesses. In the first quarter of 2022, the **London Chamber of Commerce and Industry's (LCCI) Capital 500 survey**[31] reported that about 61% of London businesses reported an increase in their fuel costs and about 69% saw an increase in energy cost in the same period. Data shows that although these challenges are found across the market, it is more acute for traditionally excluded groups, including women and ethnic minority entrepreneurs.

3.9 Supporting under-represented founders is a key priority for the GLA and London Councils. In 2022, the London Recovery Board published its '**Building a Fairer City**' report[32] which addresses structural inequalities within the city. Many small businesses owned by Black, Asian and Minority Ethnic people, disabled people, and women were hit particularly hard by the COVID-19 pandemic due to structural inequalities faced by these businesses as well as the nature of the sectors in which they tend to operate. They also face challenges in expanding their networks and making key connections as they tend to miss out on tenders for public or voluntary contacts.

[29] Mayor of London, London Growth Plan
[30] Department for Business and Trade, Invest 2035: The UK's modern Industrial Strategy, 2024
[31] Capital 500 Q1 2022 | News and Insights | LCCI - LCCI
[32] The London Recovery Board (2022). 'Building a Fairer City'.

Market and Delivery Failures

3.10 There are market and delivery failures that result in less-than-optimal business support being used:

- **Information failure:** London businesses find it difficult to find the right kind of business support that meets their needs. The business support landscape is complex and difficult to navigate, making it harder for businesses to find and pay for the right support, especially businesses owned by people that are already economically disadvantaged due to their ethnicity, gender, ability, or geography. These information failures include issues related to:
    - **Access to information and advice:** businesses face difficulty finding appropriate support and existing gaps in the provision of the right support.
    - **Benefits and value of assistance:** uncertainty about the benefits and value of business support, difficulty in finding time to use support, and high cost of business support.
    - **Unrecognised need:** some SMEs do not recognise that they can benefit from formal business support.
    - **Relationship issues:** difficulty in trusting external advisers, lack of confidence to approach advisers for support, lack of knowledge of the business by advisers which may lead to a poor working relationship and deter entrepreneurs from seeking future support.

3.11 In addition to the market failures above, there are delivery weaknesses in the way current business support is commissioned, coordinated, and delivered which further reduces intake. Some challenges with the delivery of business support are:

- Lack of coordination, data, and insights;
- Lack of bespoke/specialised support;
- Exclusion of less digitally enabled small businesses; and
- Lack of client-centricity of support delivery.

4. Project Aims, Outputs and Outcomes

The assessments for the evaluation have been based on the programme's original Logic Model, which lays out the intervention logic for GLL and how the outcome focus adapted to become more in line with beneficiary business requirements. Consideration is given to the programme's design and delivery arrangements, along with the selected output measures and their connection to intended outcomes.

Project Aims

4.1 The aim of the GLL Programme is to provide a better coordinated public sector business support offer in London, and to ensure greater uptake of business support, especially by entrepreneurs that belong to under-represented and under-served groups.

4.2 The original UKSPF application focused on supporting activities under the 'Supporting Local Business' in the UKSPF Investment Plan, specifically:

- **E23:** Strengthening local entrepreneurial ecosystems and supporting businesses at all stages of their development to start, sustain, grow and innovate, including through local networks.
- **E24**: Funding for new training hubs, and improvements to existing ones; business support offers; and 'incubators' and 'accelerators' for local enterprise (including social enterprise) which can support entrepreneurs and start-ups through the early stages of development and growth by offering a combination of services including account management, advice, resources, training, coaching, mentorship and access to workspace.

4.3 In terms of outcomes, the programme's achievements were to be achieved through:

- Increased financial resilience of households that rely on small business for their livelihood;
- Increased uptake of business support for previously hard to reach vulnerable enterprises;
- Number of business engaged through the In-person service; and
- Number of businesses referred to a BSP.

4.4 As per the original bid the intended outcomes / strategic impacts were:

- Reducing inequality;
- Reducing poverty;
- Reduced burden on public services supporting families in crisis; and
- Reduced fiscal burden.

Programme Logic Model

4.5 The intervention logic underpinning the need for the GLL is presented in a diagram below. The model traces the programme's rationale to its intended outcomes in a step-by-step manner.

Figure 4.1 Programme Logic Model

Context

The Mayor of London's recovery missions and mayoral priorities (in particular the pillar related to 'Getting London Back on its Feet') place significant importance on economic fairness and broad economic recovery. At the same time new funding is available from the Shared Prosperity Fund to address these issues.
It is necessary to find targeted mechanisms to meet the goals of the UKSPF in the context of London's policy needs. As part of this, it is necessary to develop a mechanism to deliver support to SMEs across London's communities, in partnership with Boroughs, community groups, and business organisations.

Programme Objectives

- **E23:** Strengthening local entrepreneurial ecosystems and supporting businesses at all stages of their development to start, sustain, grow and innovate, including through local networks.
- **E24:** Funding for new training hubs, and improvements to existing ones; business support offers; and 'incubators' and 'accelerators' for local enterprise (including social enterprise) which can support entrepreneurs and start-ups through the early stages of development and growth by offering a combination of services including account management, advice, resources, training, coaching, mentorship and access to workspace.

Market Failures

- Market failures in access and uptake of business support.
- **Information Failure;** The business support landscape is hard to navigate for owners of small businesses i.e. there is an information failure.
- It can be difficult to find and pay for the right support, particularly for households that are already economically disadvantaged due to their ethnicity, gender, ability, or geography.

Rationale

- The project is needed because failure to address the market failure could lead to unnecessary financial risk for households that rely on income form their businesses. This may in turn lead to increased levels of deprivation.
- The project is designed to target businesses who know they need support, but are not accessing it

Inputs

Wayfinder staffing costs	£3,214,204
Wayfinder FRICS	£642,841
Business Travel Subsistence and Accomodation	£43,375
Contractors & Consultants	£1,994,580
Marketing & Publicity	£1,105,000

GROW LOCAL LONDON

Intended Impacts

- Reduced inequality.
- Reduced poverty.
- Reduced burden on public services supporting families in crisis.
- Reduced fiscal burden.

Beneficiary Level Outcomes

Outcome	How will it be measured?
Increased financial resilience of households that rely on a small business for their livelihood	We will measure this by asking beneficiaries the same questions used by FCA in their Financial Lives Survey. We will ask them before the diagnostic and after business support delivery and use the improvement as an outcomes indicator

Outputs

What	Value
Increased uptake of business support for previously hard to reach vulnerable enterprises	Number of businesses engaged through Concierge Service: 20,807
	Number of businesses referred to a service provider: 12,484
	To estimate the increase in uptake, we will ask beneficiaries if they have accessed business support before, thus only counting those who access it for the first time towards the increase

Programme Activities

- Customer acquisition
- Diagnostic and triage
- Referrals to service providers
- Content provision

Source: L&P, updated by Hatch

Programme Alignment Against Market and Delivery Failure

4.6 The GLL Programme addresses many (but not all) of the market and delivery failures set out below:

Information failures and lack of coordination and feedback

4.7 The programme has addressed this by providing;

- A 'single source of truth' database of business support offerings available to London entrepreneurs;
- A bespoke diagnostic tool to help entrepreneurs understand their need and find relevant support offerings; and
- The provision of data feedback to GLA and Local authorities.

Lack of trust in external providers, lack of confidence to contact them, lack of specialised support for underrepresented communities

4.8 Through the provision of drop-in sessions in under-represented communities and outreach through trusted channels including community organisations provision has been taken into the community to enhance engagement.

4.9 The establishments of a dedicated platform with access to between 350 to 400 providers and access to partnerships with local authorities has improved confidence in the service. The establishment of an expansive BSP directory covering London and links to relevant national BSPs of small business advice and support.

Limited understanding of the business

4.10 Feedback rating from beneficiaries has indicated very high levels of understanding by GLL into the beneficiaries needs. The programme has recruited external advisers with expertise in key sectors and insight into target communities to address this. The provision of outreach and an In-person service allowing for a 1-1 interaction.

Entrepreneurs do not have the time to use business support

4.11 By providing access via a dedicated site, which is self-service and available 24/7, this allows beneficiaries to access support at times that works for them. Having significant levels of online support and insights, allows beneficiaries to receive business support how and when they want, allowing them to access support when their time management allows.

Digital exclusion

4.12 The promoted online support and Outreach service, provides for both an online and in-person diagnostic and referral service. This has helped overcome perceptions and barriers for achieving higher levels of digital inclusion by diagnostics to assess digitally literacy levels and identify additional support where needed.

Lack of "client centricity"

4.13 The service has been designed from previous programmes, focus groups and pilot projects to ensure clear client identification and service design. The focus in the user experience / customer journey is reviewed through surveys, to ensure that the levels of customer focus are maintained or can be improved.

Measurement and Approach to Assessing Impact

4.14 The expected outputs and outcomes for the GLL programme are geared towards addressing challenges related to London's small business resilience and growth, as well as meeting the national UKSPF Objectives. These are measured through the following outputs and outcomes:

Outputs

- Total number of business engaged through the In-person service; (UKSPF Original bid)[33]
- Total number of businesses referred to a BSP; (UKSPF Original bid)[34]
- Potential entrepreneurs receiving support (Additional output); and
- Number of small businesses supported to access skills content or provision (Additional output).

Outcomes

- Increased financial resilience of households that rely on small business for their livelihood; and
- Increased uptake of business support for previously hard to reach vulnerable enterprises[35].

4.15 Section 5 (Project Spend, Outputs and Outcomes) provides a detailed examination of GLL's performance in terms of contracted financial and output targets.

4.16 The remainder of this section looks at how the outputs and outcomes have contributed to meeting GLL's aims and objectives, where there have been challenges and where additional 'measures' should be considered as part of the programme's overall impact assessment.

- **Outputs to activities:** The programme's original aim focussed more on business survival, particularly where the business was the main financial support for household income. GLL was also open to all SME businesses in London that recognised the need for support. A number of business challenges (rent increases, difficulties in accessing supplies, rising labour and product costs) would be outside the direct scope of provision. The inclusion of skills referrals and the impact of the skills activity is not supported by UKSPF funding and is not part of the evaluation.
- **Activities to reporting:** The programme can capture high levels of data and insight, particularly in terms of business need and insight, characteristics of London's SMEs etc. However there have been variable levels of insight from businesses in surveys, in relation to GLL's 'added value'. Some businesses have struggled to connect the support they have received back to L&P. Whilst they recognise the GLL programme brand they identify the support they have received with the BSP and by extension attribute the benefits to the BSP, not the initial engagement with GLL.
- **Capturing all the support provided to each business**: L&P can only count an output in terms of businesses engaged or referred to a BSP once. If a business's wants further support after the initial engagement, this cannot be counted as a new output and is not captured in reportable data.

[33] Relates to In-Person support
[34] Relates to In-person support
[35] This was amended as an outcome through the PCR and thus not measured directly, with a greater focus on productivity.

5. Project Spend, Outputs and Outcomes

This section provides a summary of GLL's performance against UKSPF contracted financial, output targets and expected outcomes. Working from the original bid documentation, revisions in targets agreed with the GLA, performance to date data and considerations of the final delivery period forecasts. The analysis draws on a variety of data sources including performance data and quarterly monitoring reports. The analysis looks at performance data submitted to March 2025.

Performance Against Contractual UKSPF Spend

5.1 The table below shows the spend performance as of March 2025, where the programme experienced a marginal underspend. There are some cost categories where it reached or exceeded its expenditure target, including a very significant overspend in the materials cost, an overspend in business travel, event costs, staff costs, and marketing and publicity. There was an underspend in the contractors and consultants cost category.

Table 5.1 Programme expenditure performance

Cost category	Target expenditure	Actual expenditure (as at Mar 25)	% Final total spend
Staff cost	£4,828,064.5	£5,097,663.5	105.6%
Business travel, subsistence and accommodation	£27,286.8	£39,222.9	143.7%
Contractors and consultants	£1,230,408.2	£739,451.5	60.1%
Materials	£548.2	£62,435.5	11389.2%
Marketing and publicity	£899,292.3	£955,912.0	106.3%
Event costs	£14,400.0	£20,975.2	145.7%
TOTAL	**£7,000,000**	**£6,915,660.7**	**98.8%**

5.2 L&P also received and spent £1.35m additional funding from the Mayor of London by the end of March 2025, to help entrepreneurs to identify skills gaps, access training and navigate the skills landscape, which is not part of this evaluation, as it only focusses on the UKSPF elements.

Performance Against Contractual UKSPF Outputs

5.3 The table below shows the output target for the In-Person support elements of the programme and what had been achieved as of March 2025. The programme has seen a substantial overperformance in the number of potential entrepreneurs assisted to be enterprise ready and slightly over achieved its target for the number of enterprises receiving non-financial support.

5.4 The target data referenced for the output analysis, are the outputs that were agreed with the GLA in June 2024, which saw a reduction in the 'number of enterprises receiving non-financial support' (Bid: 12,484) but now includes an additional target 'number of potential entrepreneurs assisted to be enterprise ready'.

5.5 Whilst not supported directly by the UKSPF support, the programme also had a target (3,000) for small businesses to access skills content and provision, which had a 182% achievement rate across the In-person and digital service (of which 50% was in-person). A further 14,936 businesses were helped to access support via the digital service.

Table 5.2 Outputs Performance		
In-person outputs	**Target set**	**Actual outputs (as at March 2025)**
Number of enterprises receiving non-financial support	4,800	5,022(105%)
Number of potential entrepreneurs assisted to be enterprise ready	1,200	2,312 193%
Number of small businesses supported to access skills content or provision (UKSPF only)	3,000	2,732[36] (91%)

Borough-Level Analysis of UKSPF Outputs

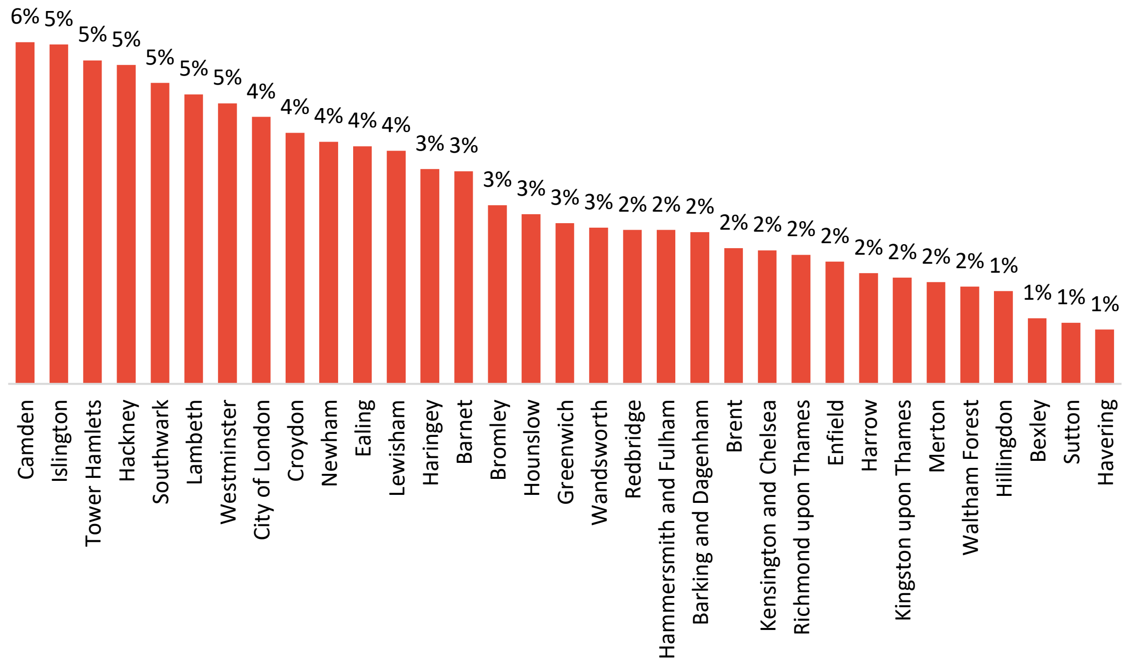
5.6 Hatch has conducted additional analysis of beneficiary data and survey responses provided by L&P to provide more insight on the performance of the programme across the region. We have categorised some variables by the boroughs in which the businesses operate, however, it is worth noting that borough information is limited as there was a partial response rate by beneficiaries for some indicators.

5.7 Figure 3.1 shows the distribution of beneficiary businesses by London borough. The borough where the largest proportion of businesses that received support through the programme was Camden, with 6% of beneficiaries. Islington, Tower Hamlets, Hackney, Southwark, Lambeth, and Westminster each had 5% of beneficiary businesses. The boroughs with the lowest proportion of beneficiary businesses were Havering, Sutton, Bexley, and Hillingdon (1% each).

5.8 The Inner London boroughs averaged a concentration of 4.15% beneficiary businesses, compared with 2.35% beneficiary businesses in Outer London. This broadly reflects the historical legacy of publicly resourced business support in Inner London and also reflects the differences in business densities, which are more concentrated in Inner London.

[36] A further 2,740 entrepreneurs were supported to access skills content or provision via the digital service not included in UKSPF reporting and is the basis for the 182% achievement rate (2,732 In-person + 2,740 digital = 5,472 / 3,000)

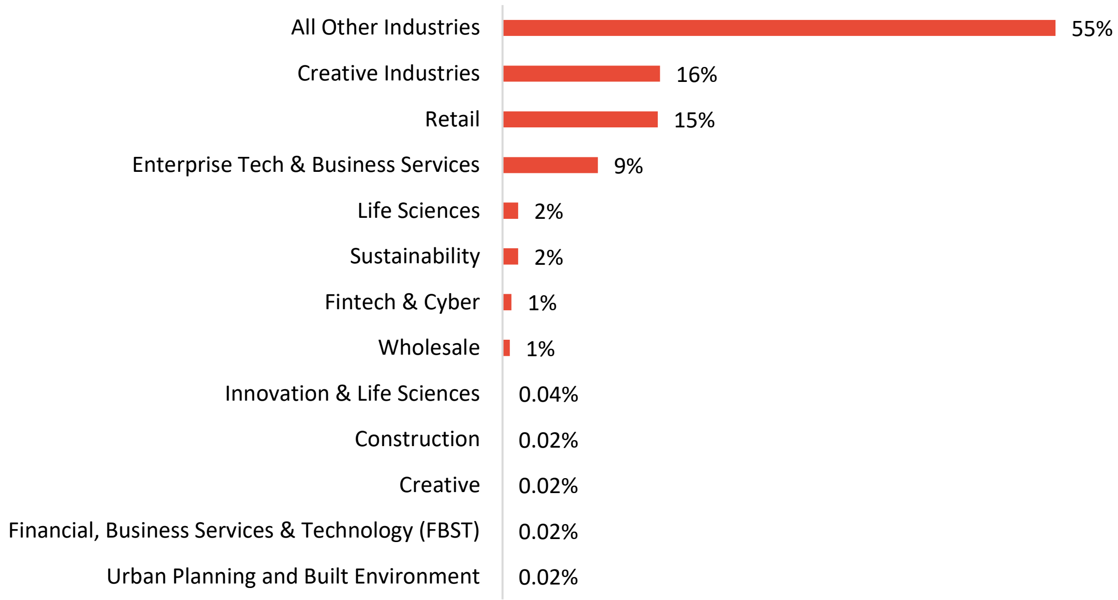
Figure 5.1 Beneficiary Businesses by Borough



Source: Hatch Analysis of Beneficiary Businesses' Data (2023-2024). N=2,735

5.9 When considering the sectors in which beneficiary businesses operate in, Figure 3.2 illustrates that most businesses fall under the 'All other industries' sector (55%), while 16% of beneficiary businesses fall under the creative industries sector, and 15% of beneficiary businesses fall under the retail sector. A relatively small proportion of beneficiary businesses received support through the urban planning sector. Of all the beneficiary businesses that fall under the other industries sector, the boroughs in which the highest proportion of them fall under are Tower Hamlets (6%), Southwark, Islington, and Hackney (5% each).

Figure 5.2 Proportion of Beneficiary Businesses by Sector

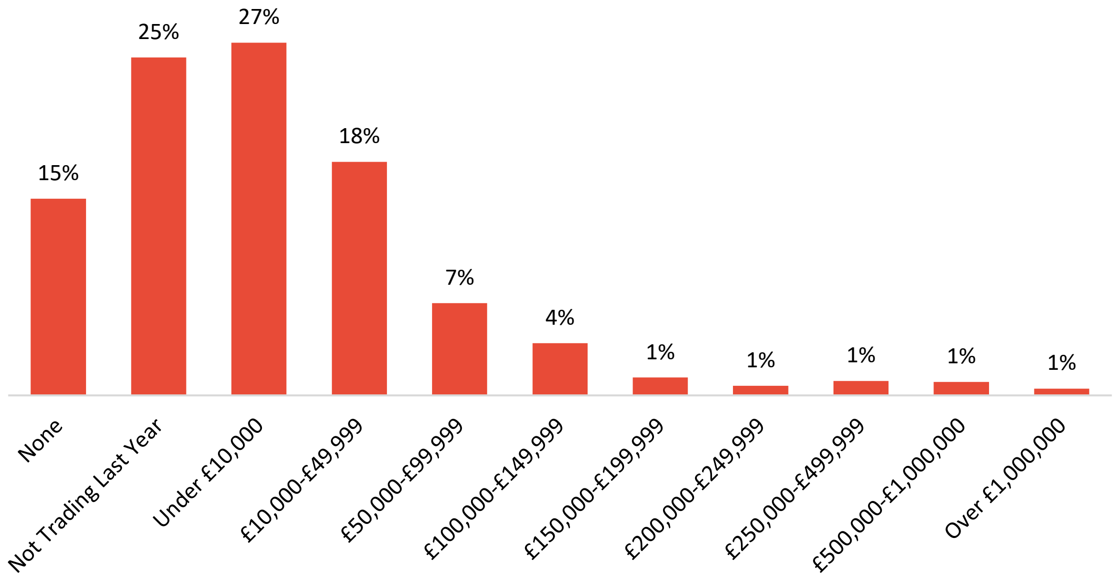


Source: Hatch Analysis of Beneficiary Businesses' Data (2023-2024). N=4,926

5.10 As per Figure 3.3, most of the businesses that received support through the programme have an annual turnover of under £10,000 (27%), while a significant proportion of beneficiary businesses reported having no annual turnover (15%) and not having traded the year before (25%), reflecting the shift in focus to new entrepreneurs.

5.11 Conversely, 4% of beneficiary businesses reported an annual turnover of between £100,000 and £149,999, and 1% of businesses that received support through the programme reported an annual turnover of over £1,000,000. This indicates that the programme supported more of London's small to medium scale enterprises. The borough with the highest proportion of beneficiary businesses located in it with an annual turnover of over £1,000,000 was Havering, with 4% of beneficiary businesses located in Havering having an annual turnover of over £1,000,000.

Figure 5.3 Annual Turnover

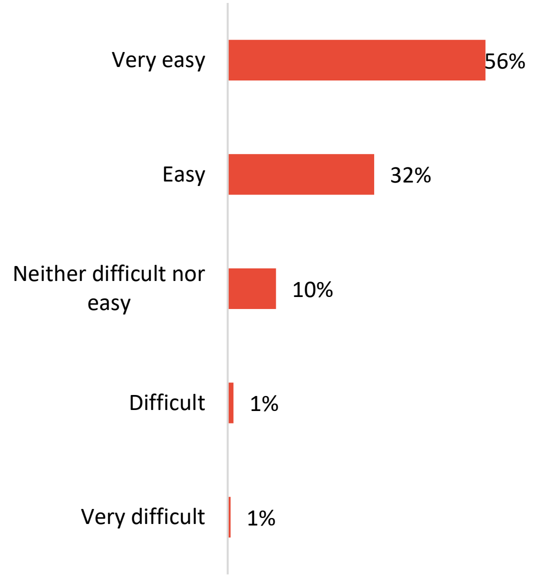


Source: Hatch Analysis of Beneficiary Businesses' Data (2023-2024). N=4,843

5.12 The charts below are based on beneficiaries' responses to the 10-day survey (with a response rate of 630 beneficiary businesses). When asked to rate how they found the GLL appointment booking process, over half of the respondents stated that it was very easy (56%) and 32% responded that it was easy, while only 1% of respondents found the appointment booking process difficult, and 1% found it very difficult.

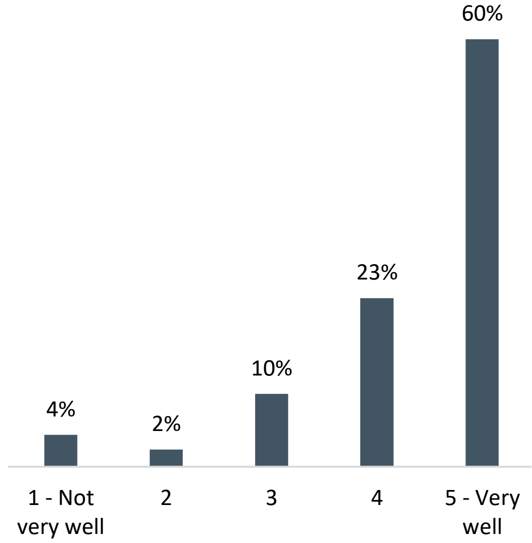
5.13 When asked to rate how well the programme helped to explain the benefits of business support, 60% of beneficiary businesses responded that the benefits of support were explained very well, and only 4% responded that it was not explained well. When asked if GLL understood the requirements of their business, 93% of beneficiary businesses responded that it did. When asked to rate how much the programme helped them to identify that their employees need upskilling, 33% responded that they have identified some upskilling needs, and 30% responded that they have been able to identify several upskilling needs due to the programme.

Figure 5.4 GLL appointment booking process



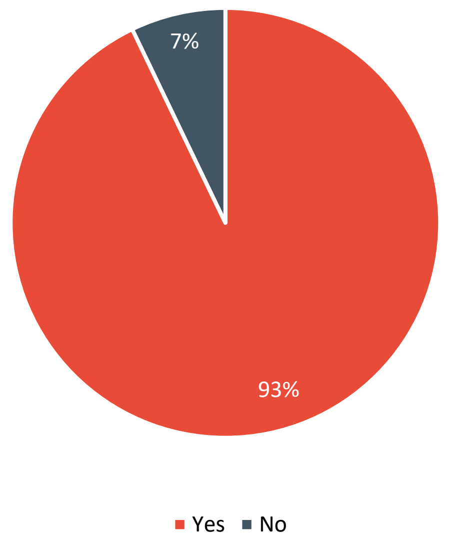
Source: Hatch analysis of 10-day survey data (2023-2025). N=630

Figure 5.5 GLL explained the benefits of business support



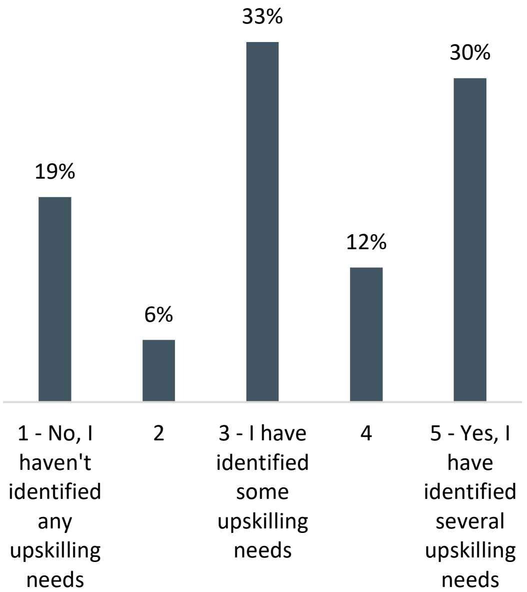
Source: Hatch analysis of 10-day survey data (2023-2025). N=630

Figure 5.6 GLL understood the business requirements



Source: Hatch analysis of 10-day survey data (2023-2025). N=630

Figure 5.7 GLL helped to identify that employees need upskilling



Source: Hatch analysis of 10-day survey data (2023-2025). N=630

Performance Against Contractual UKSPF Outcomes

5.14 For the UKSPF GLL funding there is not a defined set of measures related to the funding and outcomes in the original bid and in the PCR.

5.15 However, the most recent GLL Impact Report[37] shows the impact the programme has had so far. In the one year that GLL has been running, it has helped over 16,000 entrepreneurs in London access support. Through events such as 'Coffee Fridays' it has been able to engage significant volumes of entrepreneurs, with over 1,000 entrepreneurs attending the events.

5.16 The programme has a Net Promoter Score[38] of 61, indicating an overall satisfaction, loyalty, and enthusiasm by beneficiary businesses toward the services the programme provides. A score of 61 is considered "excellent" by industry standards, highlighting the programme's positive impact and performance.

5.17 From October 2023 to December 2024, the programme reached a total of 92,804 small business entrepreneurs: 89,108 digitally and 3,696 In-person. Of the entrepreneurs reached during this time period, GLL helped 4,955 digitally and 1,872 In-person. Of the entrepreneurs supported during the quarter, 46% had businesses in the pre-startup stage and 54% were SMEs.

5.18 Drawing from L&P's six-month survey to entrepreneurs who were supported via the In-person service:

- More than half (54%) of the businesses have accessed the support they were referred to;
- About half (49%) of the businesses that accessed support referred to by GLL would either have struggled to find support of the same quality or within the same timeframe or not have found it at all 8% would not have found it at all;
- At least 2/3 (67%) of businesses that accessed support find the support 'relevant' or 'very relevant';
- More than a thousand (20%) businesses referred to support by GLL have overcome a business challenge as a result and would have struggled to find support of the same quality or within the same timeframe; and
- More than 850 businesses (17%) that have accessed support referred to by GLL have improved their productivity as a result and they would have struggled to find support without GLL[39].

[37] London & Partners, Grow London Local Quarterly Impact Report, January 2025

[38] This is a metric that is used to assess customer satisfaction with a service, product, or company. It is calculated by asking customers "On a scale of 0-10, how likely are you to recommend this product/company to a friend or colleague", and ranges from a score of -100 to 100, with a higher score indicating better overall satisfaction

[39] Figures provided by L&P April 2025

6. Programme Management and Governance

This section provides an overview of the different challenges and solutions that L&P has worked through for GLL, in terms of process and governance arrangements, providing the background context to how the programme was managed by L&P and their engagement with other BSPs and stakeholders. Information and insights have been drawn from process reviews and interviews with L&P programme and project managers, as well as beneficiary companies and the wider business support community.

Marketing and recruitment of beneficiaries

6.1 In November 2023 there was a 'soft launch' of GLL, to test the programme design and assess potential levels of demand. The updated platform, powered by Enterprise Nation, went live during this phase. There was limited marketing of the programme in the beginning, to allow testing time to ensure that it was working as planned. L&P assumed responsibility for London's Growth Hub at the same time and integrated the In-person and digital offer to create a single integrated service

6.2 In January 2024, the programme was officially launched as the full rebranded "Grow London Local" pan London service. This was to tie in with the other UKSPF programmes being delivered by L&P, Grow London Early Stage, Grow London Global and Grow London Talent & Skills. The team conducted market research with a focus group prior to deciding the name, to ensure it resonated with small businesses.

6.3 The GLL team has since used a variety of methods to promote the programme and to engage with potential beneficiaries. Methods used for marketing ('client acquisition') by the GLL programme includes:

- Team outreach;
- Out of home marketing; and
- Digital marketing.

Team outreach

6.4 The Team outreach strategy has at its core the following main activities:

- Attendance at 565 events hosted by third parties like the GLA, Local Councils and Chambers of Commerce;
- Stand presence at events such as the London Muslim Shopping Festival, Black on the Square, job fairs and the Start-Up Show;
- Hosted 203 'Hub Days' to date. These are sessions where we use existing business networks such as co-working spaces, local libraries, Post Offices and Jobcentre Plus to host support sessions;
- Hosted 55 Coffee Fridays and one 'GLL Lates'. These are networking events out in the community run by GLL for entrepreneurs;
- Over 1,400 entrepreneurs attended GLL community events including Coffee Fridays, local hubs and drop-in sessions at the post office. Coffee Fridays are networking events which take place once a month across the boroughs with a bigger emphasis on underserved communities and areas where business networks are not so common. The objective is to

create peer-to-peer support networks as well as generating new leads. The events are held in independent coffee shops in different locations in north, south, east and west London, with the GLL team funding the beverages;

- Launched ‘GLL Lates’ in March 2025, an evening event that functions in the same manner as coffee Fridays for people who want to attend after usual working hours;
- Canvassing;
- Use of merchandise such as coffee cups, water bottles; and
- Leaflets and posters.

Out of home marketing

- Digital billboards; and
- Adverts on transport e.g. taxis, TfL tubes and bus stops.

Digital marketing

- Social media marketing (TikTok, Instagram, LinkedIn and Facebook)
- Email marketing (including monthly newsletters)
- Pay-Per-Click (PPC) promotions.

6.5 There has been a strong focus on reaching and promoting GLL to a diverse group of businesses in London, particularly those from ‘hard to reach’ communities. This is in recognition that some of the business demographic may not be as technologically advanced as other sections of the community.

6.6 In the marketing materials used, there has been an aim to be representative of London’s businesses and demographics, this has included using representative imagery and translating the material into multiple languages to increase outreach, particularly in the case of leaflets and posters. Sharing case studies on social media has been identified as being effective for other businesses to relate to.

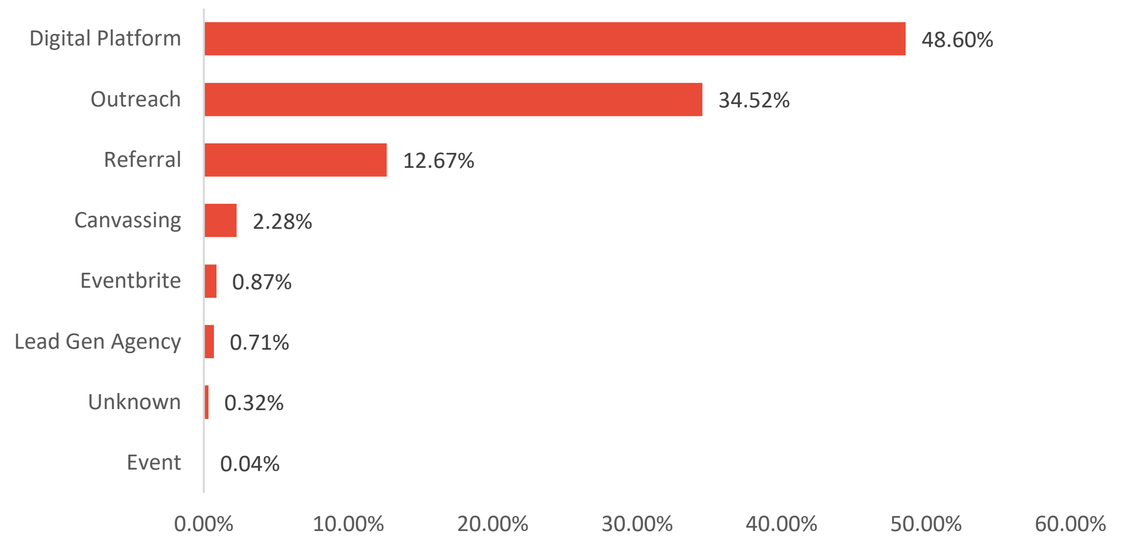
6.7 The GLL delivery team noted that direct canvassing was not always the best use of time, as small businesses may have been busy with customers and deliveries in the day and with limited staff/resources to delegate to made it difficult to speak with them about the support on offer.

6.8 The GLL outreach team also have regular “hubs” in libraries and cultural venues and Jobcentre Plus locations throughout London, where businesses can ‘drop in’ to speak to the team and learn more about the support available. These sessions are seen as particularly beneficial for engaging with those with digital illiteracy. The main sources of these referrals have been through the Department of Business & Trade and Jobcentre Plus.

6.9 However, the use of hubs were not always as effective in terms of volumes due to initial low turnout. The team became more effective in managing attendance by taking pre-bookings and more advanced promotion. Having hubs in the same place and times became more effective as businesses would know where to come to speak to the GLL team. These learnings allowed the delivery team to optimise their time more effectively.

6.10 As shown below, the digital platform has been the most effective method of engagement, followed by outreach and other referrals. The team uses the data collected to focus on the methods which have been working most effectively.

Channels Through Which Beneficiaries Learned About the GLL Programme

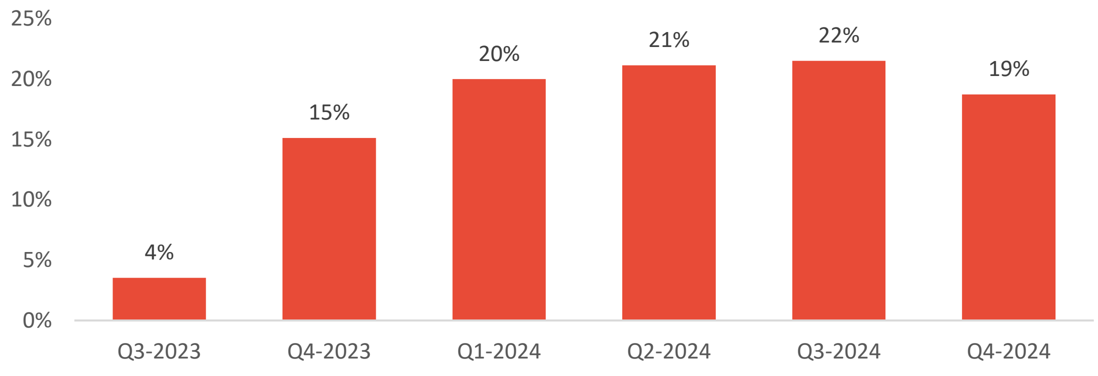


Source: GLL Salesforce Data provided February 2025

6.11 The L&P team identified recruitment to the programme was initially seen as challenging. As a new programme, it was difficult for the GLL team to fully explain and show the benefits of the service to local councils, who did not understand the value add of the service. However, the team reported that with time the councils have begun to see the benefits of the programme and how GLL is amplifying their support and messages to local businesses.

6.12 The chart below shows that the percentage of people accessing business support through GLL has increased with time, showing that the recruitment methods by the team are working. The values for Quarter 4 may be lower due to the holiday period.

Figure 6.1 Percentage of Beneficiaries Accessing GLL Services by Financial Quarter



Source: GLL Salesforce Data

Management and Delivery

6.13 The GLL delivery and management team consists of:

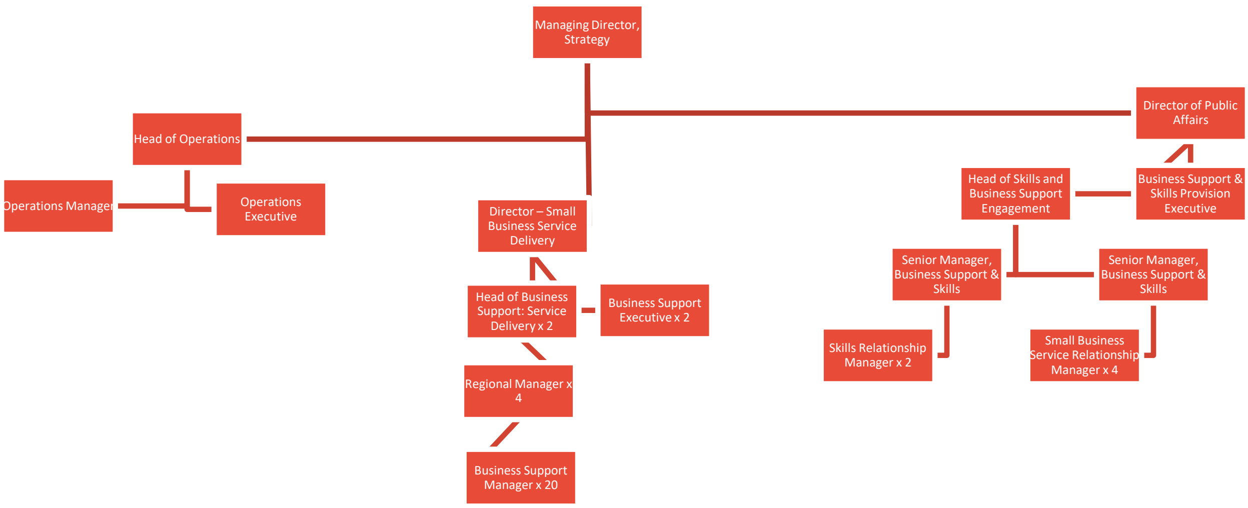
- Operations team;
- Provider Engagement Business engagement team; and

- Business support service delivery team (including outreach).

6.14 The operational teams listed work closely with the L&P dedicated Marketing and Insights teams as well as with Digital Services, Compliance, CRM and Impact teams.

6.15 Figure 6.1 shows the wider Directorate that the Grow London Local programme operates within, setting out the role and function of each team below:

Figure 6.1 Organisational Chart for Grow London Local



Source: London & Partners

Operations Team

6.16 The Operations team are responsible for various areas including budget management and business planning. The team meet weekly and work across other GLL teams as well as link with L&P teams that sit outside of the immediate GLL team. The 'GLL operational team' consists of the Senior Leadership Team members of the Operations, Skills and Business Support Engagement and Service Delivery teams. This operational team initially met weekly, when the programme had just started in November 2023, but this changed to fortnightly after the full launch of the programme. The support services (partnerships, marketing, Salesforce and PR) are invited to attend these meetings to discuss the priorities and any decisions that have been made for the programme. In response to this, once a month there is an additional meeting where the support services feedback on how they are responding to the priorities and changes.

Small Business Support Team

6.17 The Small Business Support Team meet weekly to discuss outreach, opportunities and challenges. The two heads of service split their responsibilities based on outreach activities and management once a company is onboarded.

6.18 There are quarterly team meetings with BSMs to provide them with updates to the programme and gather insight to make changes or improvements to the programme and delivery. The team also attend weekly "Meet the Business Support Provider" sessions, where they get to find out more about newly onboarded BSPs. They also meet monthly with the Skills & BSP Engagement team to exchange knowledge and insights.

6.19 The amount of business support available can be overwhelming for a small business. Additionally, they may be unsure of which organisations to trust, if the service will be relevant to them, if there is a cost associated with the service will it provide the right level of benefit etc. When it is difficult for a business to navigate through the support available, they may see this as a barrier and do not access support. The GLL programme helps to eradicate these challenges, by providing a BSM to speak to first, who can understand their requirements and find of the best solutions as a free service.

6.20 When the programme first began, the team had thought the initial conversation with the beneficiary business would only last 30 minutes to an hour (either on the phone or In-person). The BSM would then use Salesforce to see what BSP would best match the needs of the business. However, the team learned that this was not the case, as small businesses have multiple challenges, which can be very niche depending on the type and stage of the business.

6.21 Salesforce plays an important role in making sure that BSMs signpost businesses to the right BSPs. The data captured on Salesforce is constantly being improved in terms of what is captured and how it is presented back to BSMs to be able to quickly identify the right support, particularly around eligibility of the business to get support from that BSP.

6.22 With between 350 - 400 BSPs on the Salesforce system, it can take some time to identify which organisation would be the best match. The BSM can take up to a day to find the right information and get back to the beneficiary business. If there are any gaps these are fed back to the team to find a BSP who can help fit the gap, which can take longer to go back to the beneficiary company.

6.23 Many of the BSMs have coaching backgrounds and are able to gain a good understanding of challenges faced by small businesses. Their function is not to provide business advice, but to sign-post small businesses. The BSMs are not specialised in every support category, as businesses often have multiple needs, it is therefore important that they have a general understanding of all support available and are able to navigate through Salesforce effectively. When matching SMEs to BSPs, the BSMs give priority to no and low cost support offerings, and BSPs who are geographically local to the SME.

6.24 For pre-starts businesses who speak to a BSM, the BSM would ask specific questions and help them to create an action plan as the main outcome of the initial support provided. If the pre-start then decides to register as a business, they would be able to access support through a consultation and referral to a BSP.

6.25 For companies that request a consultation via the GLL platform, they are pre-qualified by a GLL team member. This team member will explain the support services being provided by GLL in more detail so that the company understands how the process works, gets core information from them, tell them what to expect before handing over to the BSM. This is to improve and maximise the benefits of the conversation with the BSM to make them more efficient and productive. The information provided by the GLL team member would help to ensure that the beneficiaries get to the right support faster.

Business Support & Skills Provider Engagement Team

6.26 The Business Support & Skills Provider Engagement team consists of 10 people, they manage the relationships with the skills and BSPs. The Skills team members are a dedicated sub-team which are funded by the GLA to understand what SMEs are needing to upskill and grow. The GLA funding includes targets around referring entrepreneurs to skills BSPs, which is separate to the UKSPF support.

Breakfast and Learn

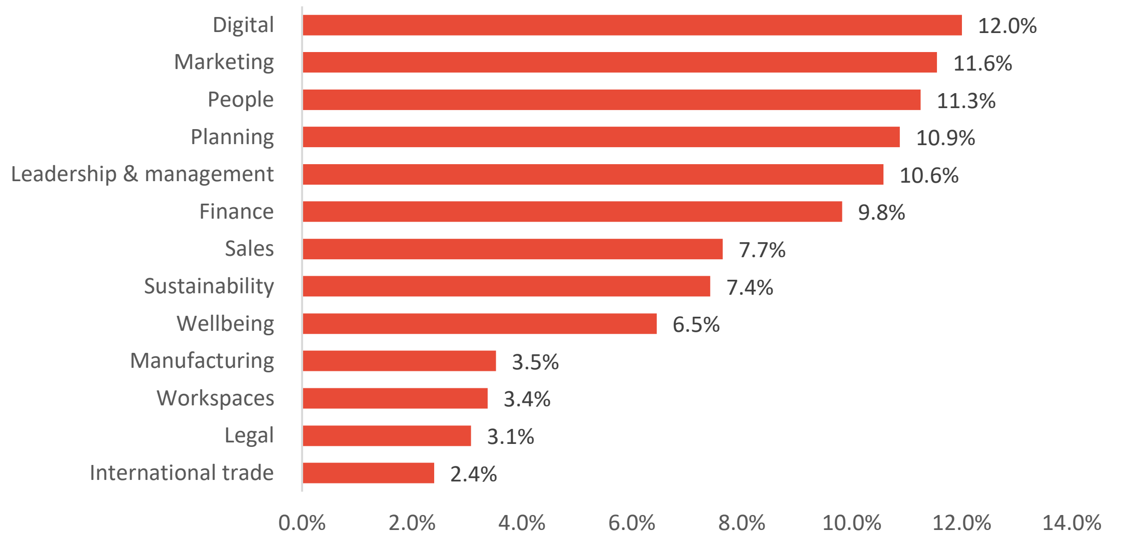
6.27 There is also a 'Breakfast and Learn' event which takes place once a month with BSMs and provider engagement teams for knowledge sharing. The provider engagement BSP team provide information on the new BSPs that have been onboarded and an overview of the support they provide. This helps the delivery team to have a better understanding of the service/skills providers to be able to describe their services to beneficiaries.

Business Support Providers

6.28 In February 2025 there were 396 BSPs registered with GLL[40]. Their offerings are available for all businesses as 'self-serve' via the GLL website. Alternatively BSMs can share links directly from Salesforce.

6.29 Of the BSP's, 369 (93%), of the active registered providers are core GLL providers. The remaining BSP (27 or 7%) are specialist skills providers. The categories of business support provided are broken down in the table below.

Categories of Support Provided by BSPs



Source: GLL Salesforce Data

6.30 The top categories of business support requested from BSPs as of March 2025(in order of most requested) are:

- Marketing;
- Finance; and
- Business Planning.

[40] Given the dynamic needs of the programme the number of BSP is not fixed and will fluctuate. When registering with GLL, BSPs can select up to two categories they believe best reflects their area of expertise. Further to this, each time they register a new Business Support offering, they can select up to three support categories to align with each specific provision.

6.31 As well as providing support directly via the BSM, the service and skills providers can also provide content for the GLL website, such as webinars etc. This has helped connect with a wider audience and help drive demand to that particular provider / service provision.

6.32 BSPs are split into three categories: public, private and skills. Where BSPs are private, the GLL team discuss if they can provide any of their services for free to begin with e.g. a free consultation. This is to extend the reach of support being offered and to make it more inclusive.

6.33 L&P collect both the BSPs funding type and the funding type of the provision they offer (which may differ from the provider's funding type). BSPs declare their funding type when they register their account in Salesforce, which typically links to their legal structure e.g. a Limited Company will register their account as 'Fee Payable' and is likely to register a Fee payable service business support service. Our skills providers and government funded providers all offer free-to-access services.

6.34 Looking at the breakdown in more detail, as in February 2025[41], the current split of BSPs is:

- Private Entity 76%; and
- Public Entity 24%.

6.35 From data provided by L&P on BSP by funding type:

- 178 (45%) BSPs have listed their funding type as free to access (both government and privately funded);
- 97 (25%) BSPs have listed their funding type as fee payable;
- 37 (9%) providers have listed their funding type as partly funded, partly fee payable; and
- There is a discrepancy of 84 (21%) providers who have not listed their funding type.

6.36 From data provided by L&P on BSP by provision of funding type in March 2025:

- 73% is free to access provisions
- 15% fee payable provisions
- 12% partly funded provision. This includes provisions with free consultations then paid for services, membership types, subsidised cost.

6.37 The Business Support and Skills Provider Engagement team utilises the data on Salesforce to identify the areas of highest demand for businesses and where that is being met by supply of BSPs. This helps to identify any gaps in providers and where outreach is needed to bring that category of business support through a service/skills provider.

6.38 To keep the provider base relevant, the Provider Engagement BSP team works with the marketing team to be more targeted in the support services needed by SMEs. There are two newsletters, one for skills providers (colleges, universities, independent training providers) and the other for BSPs. In these newsletters, the team can include a call to action for the type of service that needs adding to the GLL directory, as a response to what businesses have identified what they need.

6.39 In January 2025, the team launched a self-serve portal for providers to both, register with GLL and also to upload their support offerings. This portal interfaces directly into Salesforce, with an onwards Application Programming Interface (API) onto the GLL website. This improved process

[41] See previous footnote on the changeability of the BSP provider base. The base for these numbers was n=396 of Providers by type and n=426 on Provision by funding type.

enables potential BSPs to express an interest and then register, if business demand can be validated by the GLL team. This includes information on any eligibility, costs and location.

6.40 All BSP are invited to the 'Meet the provider' sessions managed by L&P which are weekly online sessions for BSMs to meet and ask questions to BSPs. From discussions with the service/skills providers have found these to be an effective and efficient way to show what is on offer to businesses, allowing the BSMs to understand their offer and better match businesses with them. This has allowed the BSMs to ask more questions where the BSP offer is more complex.

6.41 If there is a complaint about a BSP, GLL has a disclaimer that they do not get involved in the outcome, however complaints are logged and reviewed for monitoring purposes. Terms and conditions have been developed, which include information about complaints and support providers are required to sign this when registering with GLL.

6.42 Consultations with BSPs has shown that they feel not enough information about the business they are speaking about is sent prior to their initial conversation. They would like more data on business size, turnover, the website of the business etc. to enable the conversations to be more efficient and fruitful.

Key Barriers to Achievement

6.43 A PCR was requested to reduce the number of businesses supported, accounting for the knowledge transfer and insight building on the inherited service design at handover from the original delivery team. This was due to the time from engagement to completion of the face-to-face service being longer than expected driven by:

- **Outreach**: The targeting pan-London and at under-served communities means that many of the businesses are not part of an existing business support network or they haven't received free support previously, so more time has been needed to build trust and understanding.
- **The face-to-face diagnostics are taking longer than expected**: The current average time is 45 mins -1 hour. This allows BSMs to have an in-depth conversation with the businesses to talk through all their challenges and ambitions and to identify all their needs to secure the most suitable referrals. Client satisfaction is high with high level of Net Promoter Score (NPS) but is time intensive.
- **Referral process**: The BSM search on the L&P database for the best support and in making the introductions to the BSPs has taken more time and resource than planned. Additionally it is taking longer than expected to make referrals, due to the growing number of BSPs in Salesforce. Whilst this allows BSMs to refer businesses to more than one provider to ensure that their specific needs are met, the total cycle from lead generation to completion is currently 2 weeks.

6.44 The programme had evolved by March 2024 to include pre-start up businesses, as there was a significant interest for more support from people wanting to start a business. As the platform required a business to be registered on Companies House to be able to access support, this interest from pre-start businesses would have originally been missed, but did require system change.

7. Cross-Cutting Themes

This section provides further insights into the two UKSPF cross cutting themes: Equality, Diversity and Inclusion (i.e. the programme's success in engaging under-represented and under-served communities) and Sustainability (e.g. the programme's contribution to the environmental themes identified in the UKSPF Investment Plan for London). Information has been taken from registration and graduation data, revisions through the PCR process, as well as from qualitative discussions with programme staff and beneficiary businesses.

Equality, Diversity and Inclusion[42]

Programme Performance

7.1 Hatch has undertaken an analysis of the businesses supported from the data provided by L&P to identify the programme's performance against targets. This has been baselined against the original bid forecast and the revised numbers in the Proposed Change Request (PCR), noting that the post PCR data increases the EDI lifetime percentages.

E23 Planned Outputs	Total	EDI Lifetime					
		BAME		Women		Disabled	
Number of enterprises receiving non-financial support (Bid)	12,484	3,745	30%	6,242	50%	625	5%
Number of enterprises receiving non-financial support (PCR)	4,800	1,800	38%	3,000	63%	300	6%
Number of potential entrepreneurs assisted to be enterprise ready (PCR)	1,200	450	38%	750	63%	75	6%

E23 Actuals[43]	Total	BAME		Female		Disabled	
Number of enterprises receiving non-financial support	5,022	3,252	65%	2803	56%	467	9%
Number of potential entrepreneurs assisted to be enterprise ready	2,312	1690	73%	1350	58%	241	10%

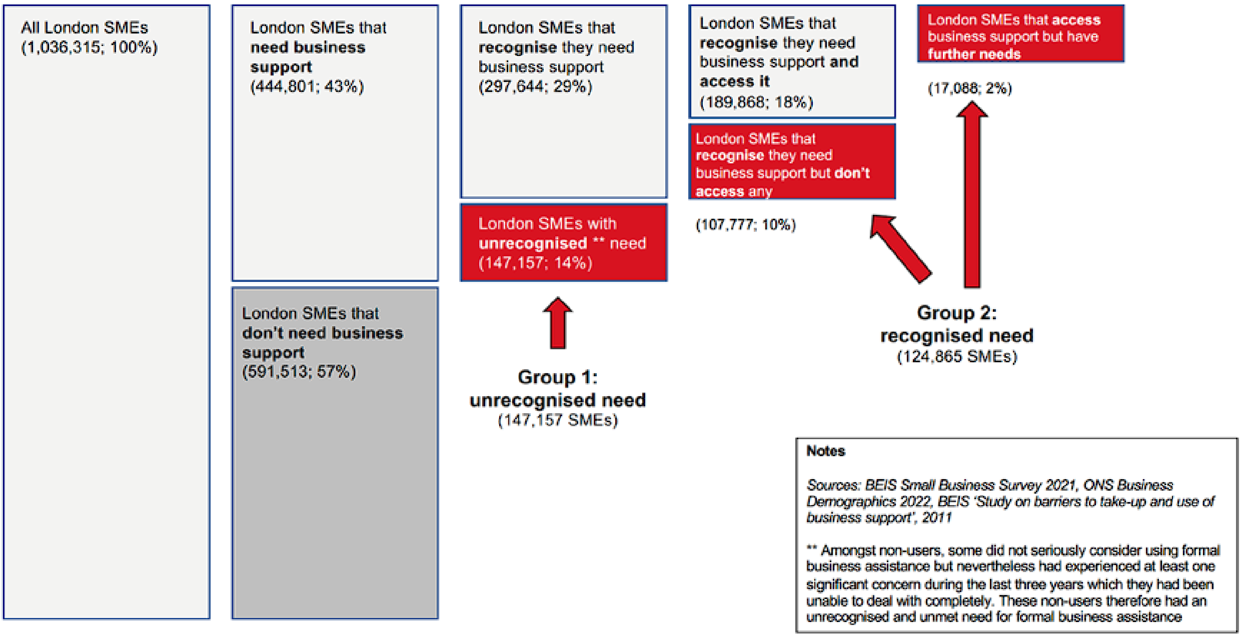
[42] For consistency with UKSPF definition, the original bid and the PCR, the terms BAME, Women and Disabled are primarily used whereas L&P use the terms Diverse, Female and Disabled Founders.
[43] This data was received in April 2025, following final data submission to the GLA

7.2 Drawing from additional detail provided in the original bid, the targeting of support (e.g. the 'customer acquisition') was to be focussed on:

- **Group 1**: London SMEs that recognise that they need business support;
- **Group 2**: London SMEs that recognise that they need business support and access it; and
- **Group 2**: London SMEs that access business support but have further needs.

7.3 The following table sets out the segmentation, volumes and definitions for the customer acquisition:

SME Business Support: understanding the audience



7.4 Within the Group 2 audience, the following characteristics[44] are also more dominant:

- Female led;
- BAME owned;
- Located in areas of high deprivation;
- Has an annual income of £30,000 or less;
- Younger entrepreneurs; and
- Trading for approx. 3 years, so therefore proportionately more vulnerable to business closure.

7.5 The following detailed analysis is based on the initial data available at the end of March 2025:

Ethnicity

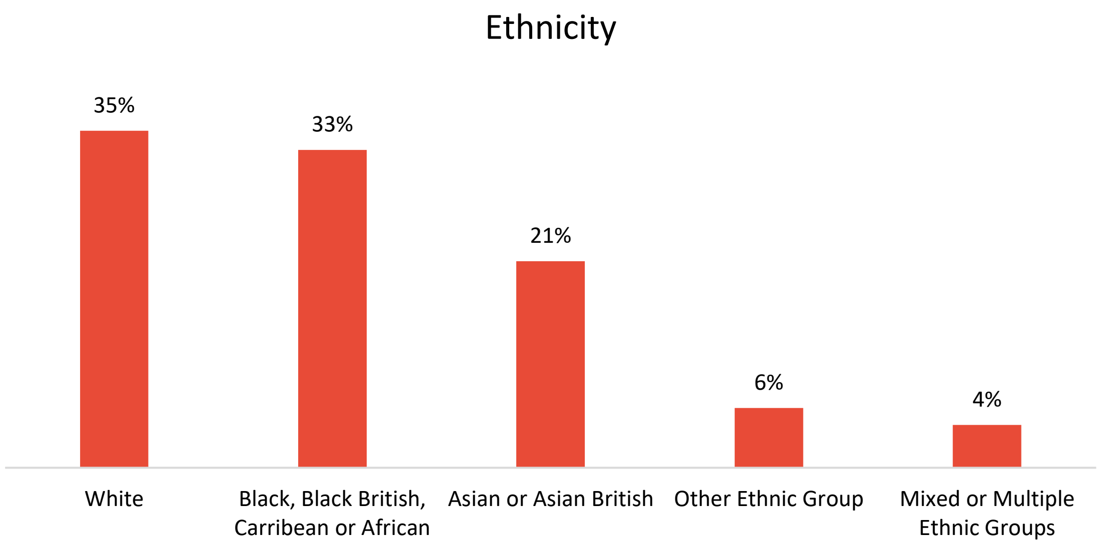
7.6 The programme significantly outperforms both the lifetime baseline of 30% and the PCR value of 38%. 33% of businesses that received support through the programme are owned by a founder of Black, Black British, Caribbean or African ethnicity, 21% are owned by a founder of Asian or Asian

[44] Additional characteristics for the Group 2 audience include operating models that include Freelancer; Self-employed; and Sole Directors and have businesses in the following sectors: Retail & distribution; Public; Social; Community and personal services; Creative industry and Trades industry.

HATCH

British ethnicity, 6% are owned by a founder than belongs to another ethnic group, and 4% are owned by a founder of mixed or multiple ethnicity. This means that about 64% of businesses that received support through the programme are owned by a founder of non-white ethnicity, significantly higher than the baseline of 30% or PCR of 38%.

Figure 7.1 Ethnicity

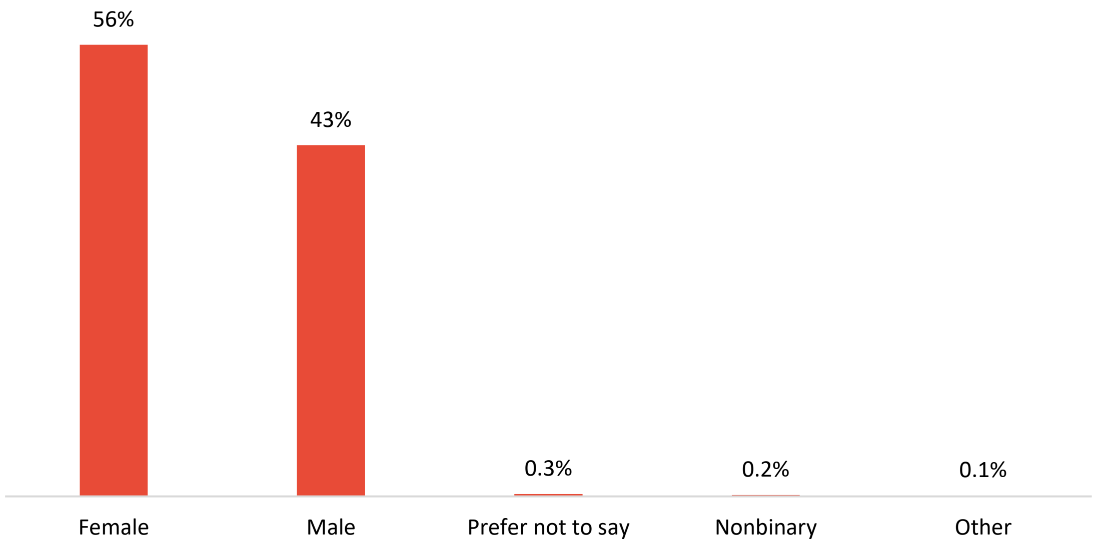


Source: Hatch analysis of beneficiary businesses' data (2023-2024). N=4,936

Female founder / Gender

7.7 Figure 7.2 indicates the proportion of beneficiary businesses owned by a female. 56% of businesses that received support through the programme were owned by a female founder, this is higher than the original baseline set but is below the revised PCR (63%) target. In comparisons with similar programmes, GLL has performed well against the gender target.

Figure 7.2 Gender

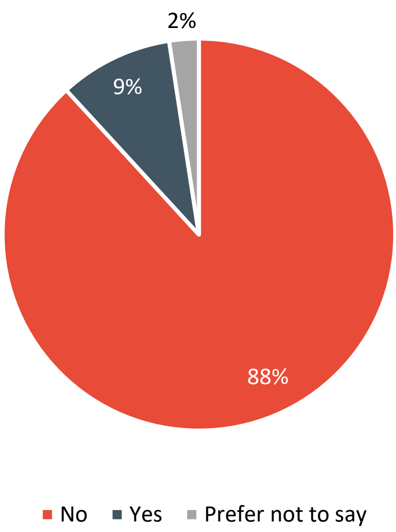


Source: Hatch analysis of beneficiary businesses' data (2023-2024). N=4,936

Disability

7.8 The chart 7.3 below shows the proportion of businesses supported through the programme with a founder that has a disability. Against both the programme's lifetime baseline of 5% and the PCR of 6%, the programme performs better with 9% of beneficiary businesses having a founder with a disability. It is worth noting that 2% of all respondents preferred not to say, which is common surveys and registration processes seeking to identify levels of disability, due to concerns around privacy, fear of discrimination, unclear definitions, avoiding special treatment, past negative experience, cultural / social stigma etc[45].

Figure 7.3 Disability



Source: Hatch analysis of beneficiary businesses' data (2023-2024). N=4,936

Age

7.9 Whilst not a measurable target of the programme, within the Group 2 audience 'younger entrepreneurs'[46] are identified as a key component of the overall target group. However, without an age range provided for how this could be assessed, there are variable interpretations.

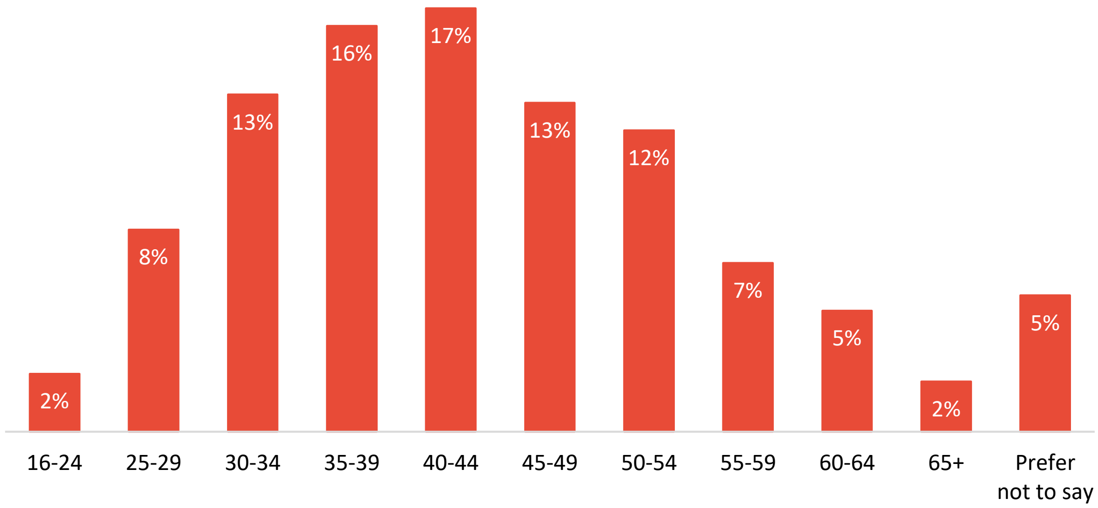
7.10 Figure 7.4 shows the age distribution of business owners that received support through the GLL programme. Taking the wider GEM definition, the combined total of those aged 18 to 34 years of age, nearly a quarter (23%) of business owners can be classed as young entrepreneurs, noting that the age range that GLL collected data on includes those aged 16 - 18 years of age as well. Using the Prince's Trust definition and the number drops to a lower 10%. For those aged 16-24 only 2% of business owners received support through the programme.

[45] www.celebratingdisability.co.uk and www.hrmagazine.co.uk/content/news

[46] The Global Entrepreneurship Monitor (GEM) defines it as 18 – 34 years of age, whereas the Princes Trust defines it more narrowly at 18 to 30 years of age.

7.11 The biggest single age cohort of business owners who received support through the programme were those aged 40-44 (17%) and those between the ages of 35 and 39 (16%). Only 2% of business owners that received support through the programme were aged 65 and over.

Figure 7.4 Age



Source: Hatch analysis of beneficiary businesses' data (2023-2024). N=4,936

Sustainability

7.12 Within the original UKSPF bids there were no specific targets or objectives set for GLL, more an alignment with achieving greater levels of sustainability and the promotion of a Net-Zero economy.

7.13 At the end of March 2025, of the 375 BSPs registered with GLL, 313 business support offerings included support for entrepreneurs around sustainability.

7.14 Over 4,600 referrals have been made by BSM, via the in-person route, to provision which includes sustainability support. Of the 4,600 referrals, over 550 were to the UKSPF support that was identified as including 'sustainability support'.

8. Assessment of Wider Impact and Value for Money

This section provides an overview of the programme's wider impact and achievements, areas of innovation and an assessment of its Value for Money in terms of its economy, efficiency and effectiveness.

Key Opportunities and Added Value

8.1 Through the GLL Programme, L&P is building a new SFD to meet the needs of London's SMEs e.g. establishing a support offering that was previously missing. The expected result is a greater uptake of business support, particularly from disadvantaged entrepreneurs, as well as increasing the coordination of London's business support offer to address gaps, target support, minimise duplication of provision and improve 'customer service'.

8.2 GLL also focuses on London entrepreneurs who recognise that they need business support but are not accessing it, or those that access business support but have further needs.

Assessment of wider impact and opportunities

8.3 The main purpose of GLL, as described above, is centred around practical actions to enable the efficient linking of businesses with support needs to providers that already exist to provide that support. In so doing, the approach to delivering GLL was to explore a range of communication channels and outreach methods that meant a far wider group of businesses could be directed to the support they needed, expanding the value of the existing business support ecosystem in London.

8.4 A consequence of this wider outreach, as reported by a number of consultees, there was a networking benefit that came from different approaches to engaging with target businesses. The networking opportunity, particularly at the coffee mornings, was well regarded, as was the newsletters which were credited with helping businesses to discover things that they may find valuable but weren't aware that they needed.

8.5 These events are spread across London and organisers have seen communities of business owners returning month on month for informal sessions aimed at sharing experience and resolving business problems. This enables peer support to sit alongside the more formal support activities that were the primary focus of the GLL scheme when it was initially designed. The demand for these events is further evidenced through requests to shift the timings e.g. offering similar events in the evening to enable other business owners to attend without interfering with their normal business hours.

8.6 In a similar vein, although the In-person service is more light touch than the business support that beneficiaries could be referred on to. Business consultees believed that a service where small businesses could talk issues through with someone as opposed to a purely an online service , added a personal touch and was deemed more effective. This was especially the case for those with digital literacy issues which are believed to be more prevalent among some of the harder to reach demographics.

8.7 The outcomes that are expected to follow from this are improvements in business productivity and owners' wellbeing.

- With respect to productivity, peer learning is helping businesses solve common problems in an informal setting with low barriers to entry. While there is no conclusive quantitative evidence to support this finding, consultation evidence suggests this is a potential benefit of the networking that L&P's outreach has supported. Meanwhile the GLL In-person offer can reduce the search costs for businesses actively seeking formal support freeing up time for other activity.
- Wellbeing improvement is expected to arise because of these events as well as the more formal GLL concierge offering by relieving what was described in one consultation as *"the loneliness of owning a business"*. The implication being that the pressure and stress on very small business owners, who don't have teams of staff to delegate to or discuss issues with, can be reduced through this sort of interaction, improving the personal wellbeing of those business owners. This can be considered a benefit in itself but should in turn make a small business more likely to survive if its owner is not weighed down by stress.

Value for Money

8.8 The relatively light touch nature of the GLL programme, signposting beneficiaries to existing services without directly providing detailed support, means L&P do not directly capture data related to longer term outcomes from a beneficiary business. While this might be feasible through data sharing agreements with suppliers and CRM tracking, this is likely to be disproportionate cost / arrangement.

8.9 Consequently, the measurement of impact in the future will be reliant on surveys. However, due to the change in focus with respect to potential outcomes from GLL[47], the beneficiary surveys have also been adapted and as such have not yet gathered large volumes of data on impact.

8.10 The interval between a business initially contacting GLL and any subsequent changes in their outcomes would likely be several months from first contact. There will be a lag before any significant outcomes to the businesses are realised, meaning it is too soon for this evaluation to quantify any notable impacts measures. As such the following conclusions are largely confined to qualitative discussion of the programme's economy, efficiency and effectiveness:

- **Economy**: ***Obtaining the appropriate quantity and quality of resources (inputs) at the lowest cost:*** The initial cost per business supported by GLL stood at approximately £1,440 and £5,763, when the planned outputs are used e.g. 4,800 'enterprises receiving non-financial support' and 1,200 'potential entrepreneurs assisted to be enterprise ready' from the total £7.0m budget. While this is relatively costly for each recorded output, these headline values do not account for wider benefits related to the level of website engagement, which had been visited by approximately 150,000 users between January and September 2024[48].

  The level of outreach to 'hard to reach' elements of the business community should also not be underestimated in evaluating the cost of GLL. A range of innovative methods e.g. coffee

[47] The original focus was on financial resilience was later broadened to include productivity and wellbeing outcomes.
[48] Insights taken from latest update at: (https://www.london.gov.uk/More%20than%20a%20quarter%20of%20a%20million%20local%20businesses%20benefit%20from%20Mayor%20of%20London%E2%80%99s%20new%20support%20service) and http://tracking.news.london.gov.uk/tracking/click?d=xeFNPqzim3OVb-5GRlsG-QgXP2PGsr8R7nFUGix5fB4EGeapMMOgbEavDVgexiVbQ3PVc-HUfYfCSjzbDJTs3QK9lcNyz5RR3b7BWixEZopjiPReLJCa7_XLBi_aO5LudutApCpsz_z63N9w7cz1-rsH8SX7zCyqK2yFe3-xnNsIuF0HuX7Pxd1Demp5pMkRc9Uz7TuMeWe6vlroahwUyXUVTZU4kaLs_8YcwmqGo55rSIO6o7PTvPyuZughvGL024F38ggLRZBdGbujKDmx2GgjhaEFfEbykqcnDdPhw5zt0 accessed March 2025)

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mornings will have increased these unit costs but reflects previous experience that shows standard communication channels do not always reach certain targets demographics.

- **Efficiency: *Optimising the process by which inputs are turned into outputs.*** Overall, the objective of the GLL is to support the efficiency of London's business support ecosystem. By providing tailored referrals to the most appropriate support the programme sought to ensure that the resources available to businesses are being used widely. A benchmarking study of past ERDF[49] funding showed that the median cost per enterprise receiving support under ERDF between 2014 and 2020 was £7,714 in London. To count towards this indicator, enterprises were required to have received at least 2 days (12 hours) of active consultancy support.

  This is significantly more support to be accessed than GLL provided directly, given there are between 350 - 400 BSPs on the L&P Salesforce platform. Further quantification is outside this evaluation which is limited only to assessing the UKSPF elements.

- **Effectiveness**: ***The relationship between the programme's intended and actual results:*** As described above there is insufficient survey data to establish the level of impact related to wellbeing and productivity at present. The primary evidence of GLL's effectiveness is the extent to which business owners from different ethnicities, and/or female or disabled business owners have been engaged by the programme. The ability to support the broader success of these businesses was a particular focus of the original UKSPF application and by innovating in how these business owners were reached the likelihood of these businesses finding appropriate support is increased.

8.11 Overall impact assessment remains inconclusive on the basis of insufficient data, so it is recommended that any planned surveys are continued and further monitoring used to revisit the VfM of the programme is the wider sense i.e. including all funding sources.

8.12 Using comparative data to assess benchmarks for VfM, national evaluation of previous ERDF[50] programmes were identified as the closest proxy for this programme. Using a range of data points the GLL programme has a lower median unit cost per number of enterprises receiving support. This is in line with what is expected as the ERDF definition constitutes of enterprises that had at least 12 hours of support. Given the nature of the GLL programme and the fact that the role of the programme was to refer entrepreneurs to appropriate service providers, a lower median cost per output is expected.

8.13 The GLL programme has a lower cost per number of entrepreneurs assisted to be enterprise ready. Again, this is due to the nature of the GLL support as against the ERDF indicator requirement of at least 12 hours of support received.

Comparator Gross Return on Public Investment GLL vs. ERDF				
	Minimum	**Median**	**GLL**	**Upper Quartile**
Cost per Number of enterprises receiving support	£1,858	£9,447	£1,377	£17,635
Cost per Number of potential entrepreneurs assisted to be enterprise ready	£371	£3,507	£2,991	£5,503

[49] National Evaluation of English ERDF Programme 2014-20, Unit Cost Analysis Paper, March 2023
[50] European Regional Development Fund 2014-2020 - unit cost analysis

8.14 Turning to internal comparisons of gross unit cost values – the actual cost at the end of the programme was used to calculate the cost per actual outcome, and the target spend and outputs were used to calculate the target spend per output. Looking at the original planning expectations and the final out-turns, the following can be concluded.

Comparator Gross Return on Public Investment: Original vs Actual cost per outcome		
Planned Spend (from PCR Target)	£7,000,000	**Cost per Outcome**
Number of enterprises receiving non-financial support	4800	£1,440.76
Number of potential entrepreneurs assisted to be enterprise ready	1200	£5,763.05
Number of small businesses supported to access skills content or provision (All)	3000	£2,333.33
Actual Spend	£6,915,661	
Number of enterprises receiving non-financial support	5022	£1,377
Number of potential entrepreneurs assisted to be enterprise ready	2312	£2,991
Number of small businesses supported to access skills content or provision (in-person only)	2732	£2,531.35
Number of small businesses supported to access skills content or provision (All)	5472	£1,263.83
Planned vs. Actual Cost per Output		
Number of enterprises receiving non-financial support	Overperformed	
Number of potential entrepreneurs assisted to be enterprise ready	Overperformed	
Number of small businesses supported to access skills content or provision (UKSPF only)	3,000 across whole service	
Number of small businesses supported to access skills content or provision (All)	Overperformed	

9. Key Conclusions and Lessons Learnt

This final section pulls together all of the insights and assessments from the GLL data, process assessments and qualitative discussions, to provide overall conclusions allied to the evaluation themes and questions. Included within this section are the lessons learnt which could be applied to similar programmes in future or the next iteration of GLL and wider business support across London.

Overview

9.1 The evaluation of the GLL programme, and by extension the assessments and insights for the future, are set out below. For simplicity, the thematic strands and underpinning questions are set out in tabular form, rated Red (Not met), Amber (Partially met) and Green (Met) with a brief summative assessment providing background to the ratings.

Relevance and Consistency

Evaluation Question	Overall Assessment	Rating
Is the programme still relevant to the local and national economic and policy context?	The programme was very closely aligned to the objectives of the UKSPF programme and the regional challenges set out in the London Recovery Programme. Since then, the evidence and wider strategic framework (which is more focussed on inclusive growth and being more international in outlook) has become even more relevant.	
Has its implementation been consistent with the Logic Model submitted in the application?	The programme's original Logic Model sets out a series of market failures and delivery challenges related to information failures and the high volumes of outputs that were planned. The outcomes of the programme places more of a forecast on addressing financial household resilience, with delivery changing focus to include pre-starts and young entrepreneurs	
What particular local social and economic challenges was London facing during its implementation?	The programme was originally conceived as part of the response to Covid-19 and was piloted before becoming a regional programme. Through the delivery period there was an increasing emphasis on addressing the cost of living challenges and on targeting under-represented communities.	

Progress

Evaluation Question	Overall Assessment	Rating
What outcomes and impacts was the UKSPF specifically responsible for?	The programme started with an outcome focus on financial household resilience and post PCR had a wider focus on productivity and potential	

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	entrepreneurs but in either scenario did not have specific outcome measures. In terms of assessing impact in terms of economy, efficiency and effectiveness it is too early to assess impacts.	
How has the project performed against its contractual targets (outputs) and budgets, and what are the expected lifetime results?	Part way through the delivery of the programme, the outputs were reduced by almost half, with the budget remaining the same. An additional output (related to entrepreneurs being enterprise ready) was added. In line with the revised PCR output levels, GLL has met or exceeded all the UKSPF output targets.	
What are the reasons for its level of (under)performance?	The project team identified a series of challenges that were impacting on the levels of non-financial support to individual businesses. These included requirements to provide more time for outreach, beneficiary diagnostics & registration and to identify the most appropriate solution provider(s). In addition to this, the delivery team identified target beneficiaries who were not receiving targeted support and came up with new solutions.	
How do these outcomes compare to previous similar interventions? (VfM)	The GLL programme has a lower median unit cost per number of enterprises receiving support in line with expectation, as well as having a lower comparative cost per number of entrepreneurs assisted to be enterprise ready. In terms of Cost per Outcome, both UKSPF targets have been delivered at a lower actual cost than estimated in the original bid, noting that outputs targets were reduced from the original bid targets.	

Delivery and Management

Evaluation Question	Overall Assessment	Rating
What were the experiences of the delivery teams in implementing and managing the project?	The GLL programme has a core delivery team and drew upon wider functional teams across L&P. There were regular team meetings and reviews of progress at the cross L&P level and at individual team level, as well as a clear focus on segmented activities such as marketing and recruitment of beneficiary companies. Where challenges arose, solutions were identified , with the delivery teams being proactive in sourcing and on-boarding new providers.	
Have any lessons for the future emerged from these experiences?	The delivery team and resource requirements were challenged, given the enormous potential of businesses that could be targeted. The GLL	

	programme has given the delivery team better practical experience in understanding how to manage market segmentation, ways in which delivery can be more effective and how much time and resource is more accurately needed per business supported. The ability to pivot delivery towards new priority targets groups and to source additional support augurs well for remaining 'customer focussed' in the future and 93% of beneficiary businesses felt that GLL understood the requirements of their business	

Cross Cutting Themes

Evaluation Question	Overall Assessment	Rating
Equality, diversity and inclusion: How successful has the project been in assessing the level of engagement with target groups?	The original bid had substantive engagement outputs with EDI targets set for BAME, Women and Disabled. Whilst the PCR reduced the overall output volumes, the EDI targets were increased by 8, 13 and 1 percentage points respectively. GLL overperformed against its BAME and Disability targets. GLL underperformed against the gender target that was increased by the PCR, although this was still above the original bid level.	
Sustainability: How has the project contributed to the environmental themes identified in the UKSPF Investment Plan for London?	The original UKSPF bid and subsequent PCR did not include specific targets or objectives set for sustainability. However a significant number of BSP offered support for entrepreneurs around sustainability and received referrals to their provision. Data on actual uptake of sustainability support and the impact on the business is not available.	

Lesson learnt and insights for the future

9.2 Drawing from the overall assessment and review of all of the evidence, the following insights have been drawn with regard to the future development and operation of similar programmes:

- **Build on strong foundations:** Key systems have been put into place by the team to manage and deliver the programme with lessons on outreach, engagement and marketing methods being put into practice. Key relationships with councils, the GLA and stakeholders need to continue to be leveraged to enable the programme to provide more support.
- **Start-up? Survival? Or Growth?:** What is the overriding purpose of the programme and by extension how is support shaped and provided to address this? The programme has developed from supporting businesses' financial household resilience to include pre-startup support for potential entrepreneurs. The inclusion of more specific outcomes measures and the subsequent output measures will need to also capture insights via surveys etc. to better understand how the support has impacted on the businesses.

- **Skills:** Whilst not part of the UKSPF programme and this evaluation, L&P has accessed and delivered skills funding and activity that has been aligned to GLL. For future evaluations, more data is needed from BSPs on the take up on skills training, the level and type of support, as well as insights into gaps in skills provision that is not currently being met.
- **Data processing and collection:** From the BSP perspective, whilst there have been improvements in this, there is further to go in the use of Salesforce to process data from BSPs and beneficiaries to reduce the inputting burden. Better information transfers between BSMS and BSPs could allow for more informed referrals and better matching of businesses and service/skills providers (especially as the list grows).
- **Sustainability:** For the GLL programme time and resources appear to have been dedicated to promoting and addressing the net-zero challenge for London, and specialist providers have been on-boarded as part of the service offer to business. How that has translated in terms of outcomes is unclear as data has not been provided that can interrogate what provision has been accessed and how that has changed the operations of supported businesses. Future programmes need specific measurers for understanding and articulating sustainability gains.
- Continuous improvement: BSPs, especially skills providers want to know what businesses want support with, so they can tailor their offer on a periodic basis, although L&P do collect insights on this through their survey work. Although the team has taken an unbiased approach to referring businesses to support providers, further collection and analysis of feedback on the support needed and provided will inform the changeable fit between business need and interventions.

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