

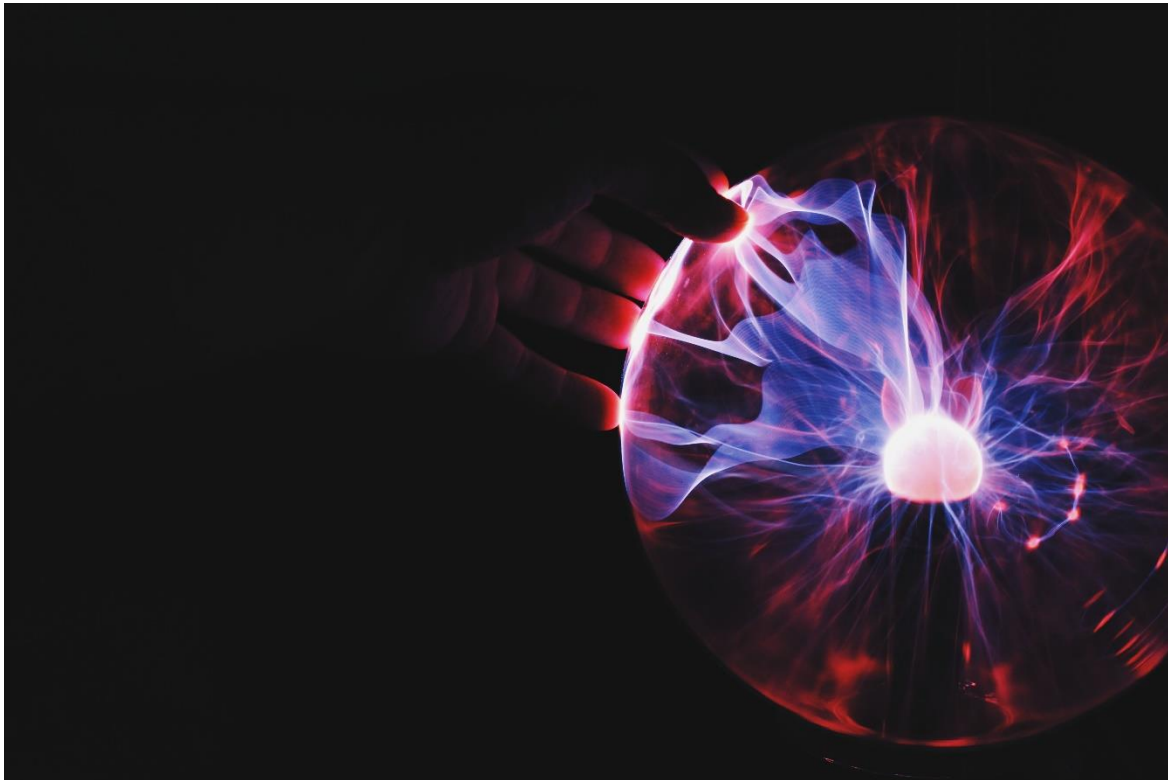
Written by 25 September 2023

Business News Wales

Welcome to our round up of the latest business news for our clients. Please contact us if you want to talk about how these updates affect your business. We are here to support you!

Creating value through innovation

Innovation has generally been recognised as essential for value creation, both for individual companies and for the UK economy as a whole. The development of new ideas, processes, and technologies and their flow across different sectors is a significant driver of economic growth and productivity. Recently, innovation has also been identified as crucial to the transition of the economy away from fossil fuels and carbon-intensive business activities.



There are many factors that affect whether and how businesses innovate, for example the availability of skills and capital and government policy measures such as tax incentives.

However, none are more important than the company's own culture, capabilities and internal systems – all of which are aspects of its governance. Unless companies are governed in a way that is conducive to innovation, they are unlikely to be in a position to take advantage of new opportunities.

Our most innovative clients share some key characteristics:

- They invest in activities with uncertain outcomes for which the likely commercial return is difficult to quantify and the risk of failure is higher than normal;
- They benefit from the availability of company-specific skills, which may be highly specialised;
- They have a culture which encourages flexibility, experimentation, and a high level of individual decision making; and
- They require a longer-term time investment horizon than many other kinds of business activity.

Research and Development (R & D) is the process of taking an idea and transforming it into a fully-fledged product or procedure. R & D tax credits are a government incentive designed to encourage innovation across multiple industries. This is an opportunity for you to reduce your corporation tax bill or receive a refund from HMRC based upon the number of working hours and relevant costs your business dedicates to Research & Development. Under the scheme, SME's can claim back up to 33% of the costs associated with R & D.

If you are looking for long term finance to support innovation then you will need to ensure your management accounts are up to date, you make available current detailed lists of debtors and creditors, and you might need up to date projections before an expert will consider your application.

Please talk to us about R & D tax credits and long-term finance, our independent experts have many years of experience and success in advising business across a wide range of sectors.

UK Manufacturing Climbs to 8th in World Rankings

The UK's manufacturing sector has climbed one place to eighth in the world rankings, overtaking France in the process, according to analysis of the latest official data published by Make UK.



The figures are contained in the latest annual 'Manufacturing – The Facts' which contains a wide variety of data about the contribution of manufacturing to the economy, including [exports](#), sectoral breakdown, how the UK compares to other nations and salary levels.

The data shows that in 2021 (the latest year for which global comparisons are available), UK manufacturing output was worth some \$272bn, compared to \$262bn for France, but behind Italy (\$314bn). To put this data in context, China is the largest

manufacturing nation worth \$4.9tn, followed by the United States \$2.5tn and Japan \$995bn. Germany, the fourth highest, remains the largest European manufacturing country at \$803bn.

According to Make UK, while the climb up the rankings is encouraging, it is strongly cautioned that it is only the third time since 2002 that the UK has ranked above France and cannot be attributed to any post Brexit bounce or other specific factor.

Separate data for 2022 from the ONS places UK manufacturing output at £224bn and Make UK believes that, if the Government commits to its call for a manufacturing target of 15% of GDP, (which Make UK estimates would add £142bn to the UK economy) then the sector could aim to match seventh-ranked Italy. With many competitor nations having their own versions of an Industrial Strategy, Make UK has also repeated its calls for a long-term, modern, and robust Strategy which could help turn the 15% ambition into a reality.

The analysis by Make UK also shows that, contrary to popular opinion, manufacturing jobs are better paid than both services and the economy overall. According to official data the average salary in manufacturing in 2022 was £36,488, which compares to £33,402 for the economy overall and £32,676 for services.

The North West remains the biggest manufacturing area of the UK, worth £28.2bn in output and employing 314,000 people. The sector accounts for almost 15% of North West economic output and 8% of regional employment.

See: [UK-Manufacturing-The-Facts-2023 | Make UK](#)

New fire safety legislation

From 1st October 2023 new fire safety legislation comes into effect. This will mean that many businesses and building owners need to check if and how this affects them to ensure they are complying with the regulations. The main changes are:

- All businesses will need to record a fire risk assessment and fire safety arrangements in full – regardless of the number of employees, and size or type of business;
- There are increased requirements for cooperation and coordination between Responsible Persons in multi occupied buildings or those where the occupier and owner are not the same person; and
- In residential buildings with two or more domestic premises, residents must be provided with information on the risks from fire and the fire safety measures provided to keep them safe.

See: [New fire safety guidance comes into force on 1 October 2023 - GOV.UK \(www.gov.uk\)](#)

Start-up loans for new businesses

Start Up Loans are personal loans designed to help new businesses begin trading. They were created to support would-be business owners who have struggled to secure finance from traditional lenders.

To date, over 100,000 small firms have received loans, designed to help scale up activities. Delivered through the state-owned British Business Bank, the Start Up Loan scheme was developed and launched by the government in 2012 to help new and early-stage UK businesses without sufficient personal funds or support from friends and family to access affordable finance and mentoring support.



Through this combined access to finance, more small businesses can develop and reach their potential, delivering economic growth and a boost to local communities.

Start Up Loans differ from small-business bank loans in that they are personal loans for business purposes. They are also unsecured, which means you don't have to use your house or any other asset as security to receive the money.

Start Up Loans are provided by [the Start Up Loans Company](#), which is funded by the UK Government. You can borrow between £500 and £25,000, payable over one to five years, at a fixed interest rate of 6% per annum.

When you apply, you're paired with a dedicated business adviser, who supports you with completing your application form. If your application is successful, your loan comes with the option of 12 months of [free mentoring](#).

To qualify for a Start Up Loan, you must meet the following criteria:

- You are aged 18 or over;
- You live in the UK;
- You are starting a new business, or your business is less than three years old;
- Your business is/will be based in the UK; and
- You have the right to work in the UK.

See: [Start Up Loans - British Business Bank \(british-business-bank.co.uk\)](https://www.british-business-bank.co.uk/start-up-loans)

Small Business Saturday – “The Tour 2023”

The iconic Small Business Saturday UK Tour is back again this November.

The countdown to Small Business Saturday is officially on, as ‘The Tour’ returns to spotlight and supports small businesses all over the country.



Once again supported by [BT Skills for Tomorrow](#), 'The Tour' will call at twenty three different towns and cities across the UK throughout November, visiting small businesses and shining a light on their contribution to the UK economy and local communities.

It will also offer a jam-packed free daily programme of online events - including workshops, webinars, mentoring and inspiring entrepreneurial stories - open to all small businesses.

Kicking off on Monday 30th October, The Tour will travel across the UK for five weeks and make use of electric vehicles – including a state-of-the-art eco-friendly electric bike from Stirling Eco – to limit emissions and reflect the sustainable switches many small business owners are making as part of their vital role in the race to net zero.

See: [Small Business Saturday UK | Another year making a Big Difference!](#)

AI solutions to improve productivity in key sectors

Innovate UK, part of UK Research and Innovation, will invest up to £32 million in innovation projects to support the development and adoption of artificial intelligence (AI) and machine learning (ML) solutions in the priority sectors of:

- Transport,
- Construction,
- Agriculture, and
- creative industries.

Your project can focus on one or more of the following:

- data driven decision making,
- automation of administrative tasks,
- project management optimization,
- supply chain optimisation and forecast models,
- waste management,
- intellectual property (IP) management, and
- design.

The competition is split into two strands, offering support to:

- single entities, and
- collaborative R&D projects.

For both strands, Innovate UK will fund industrial research projects and experimental development projects, as defined in the guidance on categories of research.

In terms of project sizes, the total grant funding request for single entities must be up to £100,000. If you're applying for collaborative R&D funding, your project's total grant funding request must be between £700,000 and £1.2 million.

This competition opens on Wednesday 27 September. The deadline for applications to both strands is 11am on Wednesday 8 November 2023.

Potential applicants can join Innovate UK's briefing event on Friday 29 September 2023 to find out more about eligibility, the application process, and securing funding for impactful AI initiatives.

See: [BridgeAI Briefing Event: Collaborative AI Solutions to improve productivity in key sectors - Innovate UK KTN \(ktn-uk.org\)](#)

Latest HMRC Employer webinars



Listed below are a number of live HMRC webinars that will help employers with payroll. The webinars are free and last around an hour.

[Expenses and benefits for your employees - trivial benefits](#)

Tue 31 Oct at 1:45pm

[Salaried hours work and the National Minimum Wage](#)

Tue 26 Sep at 1:00pm

[Expenses and benefits for your employees - company cars, vans, and fuel](#)

Tue 10 Oct at 11:45am

[Expenses and benefits for your employees - if your employees have more than one workplace](#)

Thu 12 Oct at 9:45am

[Taxing employees' benefits and expenses through your payroll](#)

Mon 16 Oct at 11:45am

[Employer filing obligations](#)

Tue 17 Oct at 9:45am

[Expenses and benefits for your employees - social functions and parties](#)

Mon 23 Oct at 11:45am

Wed 1 Nov at 11:45am

[Expenses and benefits for your employees - travel](#)

Thu 2 Nov at 11:45am

[Expenses and benefits for your employees – phones, internet, and homeworking](#)

Wed 8 Nov at 1:45pm

[Getting payroll information right](#)

Mon 27 Nov at 9:45am

Plans for New North Wales Holiday Park Development

Multi-million-pound plans have been submitted for the development of a state-of-the-art leisure complex at a popular holiday park.

SF Parks submitted proposals for a six-lane bowling alley, rooftop bar, extended amusement arcade and relocated reception and offices at its Golden Gate Holiday Centre in Towyn, in North Wales.

The revamped facilities will complement a new swimming pool and recently renovated clubhouse on-site and come as the business seeks to increase the current 7 ½ month season to 10 ½ months in a bid to further boost the local economy and create more full-time jobs.

Doing so would also mean these high-quality attractions could be used by caravan owners and the public throughout the year.

See: [Multi-Million Pound Plans for New North Wales Holiday Park Development \(businessnewswales.com\)](#)

Wales Tech Week Presents ‘Celebrating Welsh Women in Tech’ with Global Cybersecurity and Observability Leader Splunk as Partner

[Wales Tech Week](#), the international tech summit taking place this October, has announced a partnership with Splunk, a leader in cybersecurity and observability, for the highly anticipated ‘[Celebrating Welsh Women in Tech](#)’ event.

This lunch reception, scheduled as a highlight of [Wales Tech Week](#), promises to be a momentous occasion celebrating diversity, innovation, and the boundless potential of individuals in the tech industry.

Splunk’s commitment to innovation and building a safer and more resilient digital world aligns seamlessly with the objectives of [Wales Tech Week](#), which aims to help businesses and organisations utilise transformative technologies. This partnership

will not only bolster the event's global presence but also contribute to celebrating the individuals who make a vibrant tech ecosystem that drives progress, collaboration, and business opportunities.

Set to take place on [Tuesday, 17 October 2023, at the ICC Wales in Newport](#), 'Celebrating Welsh Women in Tech' is an event dedicated to recognising the achievements of Welsh women in the tech sector. The event will feature enlightening discussions led by influential speakers, offering invaluable insights into their journeys and experiences within the tech world. It will also provide a unique opportunity for networking, fostering a sense of community and empowerment within the tech sector.

See: [Wales Tech Week Presents 'Celebrating Welsh Women in Tech' with Global Cybersecurity and Observability Leader Splunk as Partner \(businessnewswales.com\)](#)

North Wales Science Discovery Centre Secures Shared Prosperity Funding

Xplore! Science Discovery Centre is delighted to announce that it has been successful in a bid as part of the UK Government's Shared Prosperity Fund.

This transformational fund will allow Xplore! to build for the future and become more sustainable.

Xplore! will be carrying out redevelopment work on its city centre building with the aim of improving energy efficiency and reducing Xplore!'s carbon footprint with the installation of solar panels and improvements to the roof.

See: [North Wales Science Discovery Centre Secures Shared Prosperity Funding \(businessnewswales.com\)](#)

US investment for Wales' film and TV sector

The Welsh Government has announced it has sold Seren Stiwdios in Cardiff to major media infrastructure company Great Point Studios who have leased the studio since 2020.

The purchase is a show of confidence for Wales' film and TV industry and in addition to the sale of the site, the Welsh Government and Cardiff Capital Region have agreed a funding package of £18 million to further develop the studios and facilities in Wentloog. £12 million debt finance has been secured through the CCR's £50 million Strategic Premises Fund, with £6 million in grant funding through Creative Wales.

The investment will see Great Point Studios further upgrading the studio to create a self-sustaining, world-class studio facility that will not only support increased production demand but also deliver jobs, wealth and growth for the wider supply chain and region. The addition of a collaborative training facility will also help to build

the supply of local skills and talent and embed the studio as an innovation hub for virtual production.

The project will deliver 257,000 sq. ft of production space, with four state of the art studios and a comprehensive support infrastructure being built over two phases. In addition, the project will also support up to 750 freelance crew per year, up from the current 250 and the studio in Wales will become the headquarters for Great Point Studios.

See: [US investment boost for Wales' thriving film and TV sector | GOV.WALES](#)

Welsh museums in the spotlight

The [Museum Spotlight Survey: 2022](#) which was published recently monitors and assesses the ongoing health of the museum sector in Wales and has been running since 2006.

Latest figures show that in 2022 there were over 3 million visits to the museums in Wales that completed the survey. This compares to 4.3 million visits in 2019. Museum visitor levels overall have recovered to 69 per cent of pre Covid-19 levels.

Museums make an important contribution to the Welsh economy as well as to the museum's local economy. They attract both local people and tourists and drive visitor spend. This spend benefits other business, particularly in the hospitality industry and accommodation providers.

A key role of our museums is to empower learning and inspire. While in 2022, 320,000 learning participants were welcomed to museums in Wales, both formal and informal learning sessions are yet to recover to pre-pandemic numbers.

Volunteer levels are also yet to fully recover to pre-pandemic levels. In 2022, there were 1,893 volunteers contributing 180,137 hours of volunteer support which is 32 per cent fewer volunteers in the workforce than in 2019.

See: [Welsh museums in the spotlight | GOV.WALES](#)