

Appendix 6: Supporting Business

The Business & IP Centre (BIPC), Build A Business programme, and Generator enterprise hubs each play a distinct role in supporting entrepreneurs, working together to guide individuals from their initial idea through to early trading.

Business & IP Centre (BIPC)

The BIPC is the starting point for many entrepreneurs, offering expert resources to help shape and validate business ideas. It provides free access to market research databases, intellectual property advice, and workshops covering business planning, marketing, and finance. Aspiring entrepreneurs can also benefit from 1:1 support and tailored guidance to refine their business concepts. Additionally, the BIPC's focus on protecting intellectual property ensures that innovators safeguard their ideas as they prepare for launch.

Highlights for the Business & IP Centre (BIPC) this year included:

- **Start-Up Day 2024:** our flagship annual event, providing free workshops, expert-led sessions, and networking opportunities for aspiring entrepreneurs.
- **Diversity and Inclusion Initiatives:** The BIPC delivered events tailored to underrepresented groups, including "Women in Business" events for International Women's Day, the launching of a new network aimed at neurodiverse people, and ongoing "Olderpreneurs" events for the over 50s.
- **IP Workshops and Clinics:** we recorded a record number of enquiries about intellectual property in 2024. Our membership of the Patlib UK network strengthened our ability to reach small business owners looking to safeguard their ideas and innovations.

"The support from the BIPC has been invaluable in turning my business idea into a reality."

Build A Business in GM Libraries

The **Build A Business** project has been a standout initiative within the Business and IP Centre, helping budding entrepreneurs across Greater Manchester to navigate the journey from idea to a successful business.

- Takes the expertise & resources out of the Business & IP Centre in Manchester Central Library to all 10 Greater Manchester authorities

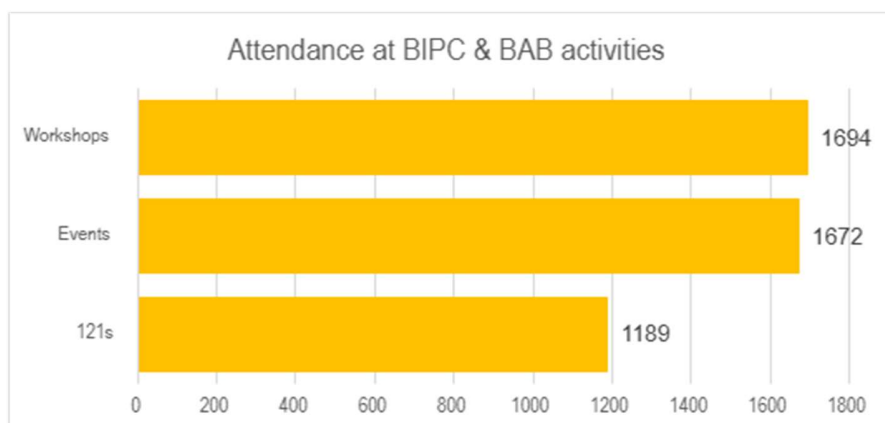
- Core programme includes workshops on market research, IP and marketing delivered by the team across all authorities
- One to one support from a dedicated Enterprise Officer in each authority (project has created 14 FTE jobs)
- Made complex concepts like Intellectual Property accessible, helping small businesses identify and protect their assets.
- Activities in local communities delivered in neighbourhood libraries
- Additional workshops covering podcasting, branding etc resulting in many clients accessing 30+ hours of funded support.

The program is designed not only to develop business skills but also to build the confidence of entrepreneurs in their ability to sustain and grow their businesses.

Through workshops, one to one support and networking opportunities, Build A Business has empowered participants to make informed decisions and move forward with their goals. As a result, many entrepreneurs have seen growth, obtained funding, created jobs, and contributed to the city's economy.

Build A Business is very successful at engaging with audiences: by December 2024, over 950 individuals had been supported (target: 675, March 2025).

“I learnt so much! I came in knowing nothing, I left with confidence and knowledge”



Generator Enterprise Hubs

Another major achievement this year was the opening of two new enterprise hubs in the city centre. These hubs are designed to provide accessible spaces for entrepreneurs to collaborate, network, and access essential resources. Equipped with state-of-the-art facilities, the hubs offer everything from co-working and meeting space to expert-led workshops and one to one support.

The Generators (in the Town Hall Extension and Royal Mills, Ancoats) provide the physical space and community support needed to succeed. Entrepreneurs can attend workshops, connect with peers, and gain practical advice. The hubs are particularly valuable for those in early trading, offering ongoing support to help businesses establish themselves, grow their networks, and build a local presence.

"Having a dedicated space in the heart of the city has been a game-changer for our business. The support and sense of community here are incredible."

Together, the BIPC, Build A Business program, and Generator enterprise hubs create a cohesive ecosystem, providing everything entrepreneurs need to move from an initial idea to running a thriving business.

The services have been highly effective in reaching traditionally underserved groups in business support:

- 64% of customers are women
- 41% BAME
- 12% disabled

Build A Business works hard to be an accessible & approachable service by:

- devising workshops and learning that is easy to understand
- making services welcoming and hospitable
- delivering in local areas
- featuring role models from the community in marketing and events

Working with the Hong Kongers community has brought a new audience, recently partnering with the Dragon Oriental restaurant in Chinatown to host a panel event with entrepreneurs. Over 70 business owners attended on a busy Friday night, now followed by a monthly networking group.

The Generators actively nurture their community, bringing entrepreneurs and business together through events and activities, including monthly networking. Many are existing businesses that were unaware of the support available:

"As someone who has been in business for over 20 years, I have learned numerous new things within the span of just four weeks, thanks to the wealth of knowledge and resources available."

This ecosystem means building a supportive, interconnected network of resources, guidance, and spaces that help entrepreneurs at every stage of their journey and is

much admired by other members of the BIPC National Network.

In practical terms, this means:

- **Access to Knowledge and Expertise:** Entrepreneurs can tap into databases, workshops, and expert advice to validate their ideas and gain crucial skills.
- **Tailored Support at Every Stage:** Whether someone is just starting out (via Build A Business) or looking for hands-on help during early trading (at the Generator hubs) there is stage-specific support available.
- **A Community of Like-Minded Individuals:** The hubs provide spaces to connect with other entrepreneurs, fostering collaboration, inspiration, and peer-to-peer learning.
- **Practical Resources:** Affordable workspaces, meeting rooms, and ongoing mentorship enable entrepreneurs to overcome operational challenges.



