



GROWTH HUBS: BRANDING AND COMMUNICATIONS GUIDELINES 2025-2026

This document sets out principles and guidance for Growth Hubs and their parent local authorities on

- Aspects of external communications
- Working with the Department for Business & Trade (DBT) on events, engagement and media
- Use of Government branding (including the Business Growth Service) alongside local brand identities
- Branding and marketing restrictions on Growth Hubs with a separate commercial or fee-charging offer

The aim is to encourage and achieve consistency in these areas to promote Growth Hubs as a coherent national network and support their role as local delivery partners for the Business Growth Service, whilst maintaining individual Growth Hubs' unique position as local organisations with their own identities and branding, who provide impartial business advice and support that is led and delivered locally.

1. Communications

As recipients of Government funding, we expect Growth Hubs to ensure that public-facing communications from or on behalf of the Hubs is politically and socially impartial, and that communications cannot be interpreted as political judgement/commentary, as a criticism of Government policy, or as commercially sensitive. This includes communications on social media channels via official local authority and Growth Hub accounts or individuals' accounts that are used for professional purposes.

We ask that local authorities and Growth Hubs inform the Growth Hubs Team of any of the following, as far in advance as possible:

- Forthcoming landmark events/high profile media opportunities in your area. The Growth Hubs Team will be able to provide further guidance on obtaining further Departmental support.
- Forthcoming invitations to major events that will be sent to Ministers or senior officials in DBT (or in other relevant government departments or their agencies).
- Forthcoming requests for DBT Ministerial speakers for events, or for Ministerial quotes relating to relevant local authority/Growth Hub activities. Please note that we cannot guarantee that such requests will be met.
- Forthcoming relevant Growth Hub/local authority announcements, milestone events or media activity that may raise handling considerations for HM Government.
- Growth Hubs may refer to Government Digital Service social media guidance for best practice advice: <https://gds.blog.gov.uk/2020/09/21/as-social-media-changes-so-does-gdss-playbook/>

On press notices, we ask local authorities and their Growth Hubs to include the text at Annex A within the Notes to Editors.

2. Branding and Logos

To ensure a unified approach across the Growth Hubs network the following should be used alongside your existing branding in electronic or physical communications materials and templates (including e-mail auto signatures).

a) **'Funded by UK Government' logo**

This should be used for all marketing materials. Please refer to the following guide (link below) on how logos should be used consistently to provide effective and efficient communications. The **'Funded by UK Government'** logo has been developed to show where UK Government funding has been used. If you have queries on the use or placement of logos, please contact the Growth Hubs Team.

https://gcs.civilservice.gov.uk/wp-content/uploads/2022/12/Branding_Funded_By_UKG-.pdf

We recommend the inclusion of the relevant logos on tier one marketing material, which may include:

- Pull ups/Posters
- Programme brochures
- Growth Hub Advertising leaflets/collateral (general)
- Growth Hub newsletters (electronic or hard copy)
- Flagship videos/imagery advertising the Growth Hub
- Slide presentations delivered at major/national events

b) **Business Growth Service**

Growth Hubs are the local delivery partners for the new Business Growth Service (BGS) - a national service and brand that draws together the complex business support ecosystem provided by national, devolved, and local government. Promotion of the BGS, and of Growth Hubs' role within it, will be key to its success as it grows and develops.

All Growth hubs are therefore expected to adhere to the separate BGS branding and communications guidelines as set out in the BGS Handbook and the Business Growth Service Launch Toolkit for Growth Hubs (issued July 2025) and follow any revisions to these guidelines issued by DBT during the financial year.

The guidelines include a requirement for Growth Hubs to deploy the BGS word mark (or any subsequently issued mark or logo) **alongside their existing branding** on websites (home pages and/or customer landing pages at minimum) and other primary electronic or physical communications materials and templates (including in e-mail auto signatures). The guidelines also recommend (but do not require) the inclusion of the word mark on other relevant physical and electronic communications and marketing material e.g. slide decks, promotional leaflets and collateral materials, pull-ups, video content etc.

c) **Other HM Government branding**

Growth Hubs work with business support policies and programmes from across central government and its agencies. Individual Departmental logos should not be used in general communications, however where the local authority/Growth Hub considers it relevant to use a Departmental logo (e.g., when referring to specific programmes or activities) they should contact the Growth Hubs team for advice.

3. Marketing restrictions: Growth Hubs with a commercial or fee-charging offer

Some local authorities/Growth Hubs may operate a separately funded commercial and/or fee-charging offer alongside core provision. It is a condition of funding for core Growth Hub provision that this must be a visibly separate offer - services provided by such offers should not be positioned as enhancements to core free-to-

access Growth Hub services or to the Business Growth Service, nor should the offer receive preferential treatment for business signposting or referrals from the Growth Hub. This condition should be borne in mind when deciding how such offers are positioned, marketed and communicated.

Whilst it is reasonable for such offers to be promoted at initial launch in Growth Hub newsletters, social media accounts or as a story on the Growth Hub's homepage, the design and delivery of ongoing marketing, communications and online/social media content **should be mindful** of the need to demonstrate adequate separation between the offers. This might be achieved through distinctive branding, positioning and style of links/banners, separate marketing and communications products, online content hosted on a separate website or discrete microsite. Reference to the commercial/fee paying offer in any core Growth Hub marketing and communications, web content or social media, should be explicit that this is a separate offer, and that other commercial service providers are available.

For any queries on these restrictions, please contact the Growth Hubs team.

4. Monitoring

Grant agreements for Growth Hub core funding include a requirement to follow the current version of the Growth Hubs Branding & Communication Guidelines. This will be assessed by the Growth Hubs team as part of the Annual Report process. The Business Growth Service will separately assess deployment of the BGS brand identity.

Contact information

For queries relating to these guidelines please contact

Growthhubs_localgrowthpolicy@businessandtrade.gov.uk

For invitations, landmark events, national media opportunities etc. please contact copying in

Growthhubs_localgrowthpolicy@businessandtrade.gov.uk

ANNEX A
NOTES TO EDITORS

Growth Hubs and the Growth Hub Network

Core-funded by DBT and led and delivered by local authorities, the network of 41 Growth Hubs across England provide local businesses with access to advice and support for any stage of their business journey, and are the local delivery partners for the Government's Business Growth Service. Growth Hubs bring together national and local offers from Government and the public/private sector and, use triage, diagnostics, signposting, brokerage and in-house delivery to ensure businesses find the right support for their needs.

Further information:

- Growth Hubs are part-funded by the Department for Business & Trade. They also receive financial and in-kind support from public and private sector partners and deliver national and local business support schemes under contract.
- They are the local delivery partners for the new Business Growth Service.
- Growth Hubs have reported that in the 2024/5 financial year they have provided direct support to over 125,000 businesses across England.
- Businesses can find their local Growth Hub via www.business.gov.uk or www.growthhubfinder.co.uk.