

Built to scale

The conditions
innovation businesses
need to grow

A man with short brown hair, wearing a white polo shirt and dark blue trousers, is sitting on a brown fabric sofa. He is smiling and looking towards the left. His hands are clasped in his lap. A red and white patterned pillow is behind him. In the foreground, the back of a person's head and shoulders are visible, suggesting a conversation. The background consists of vertical glass panels with green frames, through which bright light is streaming, creating a warm, modern office atmosphere.

Built to scale

bruntwood
SciTech

Contents

07	08	11	17
Foreword	Executive summary	Operating environment	Place
27	37	45	57
Talent	Workspace	Capital	Community and partnerships
67	76	77	78
Sustainable, healthy buildings	Conclusion	Appendix 1: Evidence base	Acknowledgements

Fifty years of creating the conditions for growth

This year marks Bruntwood's 50th anniversary. Over that time, the needs of businesses have changed significantly and so has the role we play in supporting them.

We have evolved from providing office space to creating places where businesses can access the specialist environments, talent, connections and support they need to grow. That evolution has taught us that workspace matters, but it is only one part of a much wider growth infrastructure.

Central to our approach is the triple helix: bringing business, universities and local government together. By connecting their expertise, resources and ambitions, we help create opportunities for businesses to turn research into commercial activity, access talent and contribute to the growth of our cities.

Today, businesses are navigating rapid advances in AI, greater competition for talent, selective investment markets, rising costs and increasing expectations around sustainability. Their ability to respond depends not on any single factor, but on how effectively the right conditions come together around them.

This paper draws on data from across the Bruntwood SciTech network and the experiences of businesses within it. It explores the conditions that help ambitious companies start, scale and adapt, from location and talent to capital, community and flexible, sustainable workspace.

As we reflect on our first 50 years, we are also looking ahead. Our role is to keep evolving alongside the businesses and cities we serve, creating the environments, connections and opportunities that will support the next generation of growth.

Josh Whiteley
Commercial Director
Bruntwood SciTech



Innovation needs infrastructure

This report looks at what innovation businesses need around them to grow well.

It brings together our experience of supporting companies across Manchester, Cheshire, Leeds, Liverpool, Birmingham and Cambridge with customer insight, Beauhurst data, customer growth records, interviews with founders and investors and wider industry research. The aim is to give founders, CEOs and scale-up leaders a clearer view of the conditions that support growth, and the questions they should be asking as their business develops.

We're in a strong position to see those patterns. Our network includes 1,450 businesses, from early-stage ventures and university spinouts to established science, technology and innovation-led companies. Through our Innovation & Growth Services team, we witness firsthand the different growth journeys taken by businesses operating across different sectors. Some are taking their first commercial steps. Others are building teams, entering new markets, raising further investment or moving into larger and more specialist space.

That range gives us a close view of what helps businesses move forward and where practical barriers can slow them down.

It draws on:



Bruntwood SciTech customer data



Beauhurst data



Customer interviews



Third-party research





Operating environment

01

The current growth environment

The opportunity to develop new products, reach new markets and build more productive organisations remains significant, but the route to growth has become less predictable.

Capital is more selective. Skills are becoming harder to secure. Artificial intelligence is changing roles and operating models. Costs remain under pressure while geopolitical and economic instability make long-term planning more difficult. At the same time, businesses are expected to improve productivity and demonstrate credible progress on sustainability.

These challenges are closely connected. A shortage of specialist talent can delay product development. A workspace that cannot adapt can tie up capital or constrain expansion. Weak digital infrastructure can slow AI adoption. Poor access to investors, advisers and partners can make it harder to respond when markets change.

Growth therefore depends on more than the strength of an idea or the ambition of a leadership team. It also depends on the infrastructure around the business and whether that infrastructure can help it navigate uncertainty, build capability and scale.



A more selective capital environment

The UK funding environment remains active, but more selective. Recent finance and venture capital reports point to a market where investors are paying closer attention to resilience, capital allocation and the structural conditions that support growth^{1,2}. For businesses, that means they need evidence of commercial readiness, strong leadership, access to talent, credible infrastructure and a clear route to market.

Cost pressures

At the same time, cost pressure is changing how growth decisions are made. Founders and leadership teams are thinking harder about cash preservation, operational efficiency and risk. Tech Funding News suggests the market is placing greater emphasis on capital efficiency and credible execution, meaning businesses must show discipline as well as ambition³. Workspace decisions now sit within that wider picture, because energy performance, fit-out costs, lease flexibility and the ability to scale without disruption all affect overheads, resilience and growth capacity.

The challenge is not simply to minimise cost. It is to avoid committing capital too early, remove unnecessary friction and invest in infrastructure that can adapt as the organisation changes.

Talent scarcity

Competition for specialist talent continues to intensify, particularly in science, technology, engineering and digital roles. At the same time, the capabilities businesses require are evolving. Organisations increasingly need people who can work across disciplines, combining technical expertise with communication, collaboration, problem-solving and information literacy, alongside the commercial and leadership judgment needed to deliver in complex environments⁴.

This places greater importance on access to universities, training providers, research institutions and established pools of expertise. The quality of the working environment and the wider experience offered to employees also influence whether businesses can attract and retain the people they need.

AI disruption

AI is changing how organisations develop products, serve customers and organise work. It has the potential to accelerate research, automate routine activity and increase the capacity of teams, but adoption is not simply a technology decision.

Businesses need to consider their data, systems, skills, security and governance alongside the outcomes they want AI to achieve. The organisations that gain most from it are likely to be those that treat adoption as part of a wider operating strategy.

Global instability

Geopolitical tension, economic uncertainty and disruption to international markets have made resilience a more prominent business priority. Supply chains, access to materials, regulation, investment flows and overseas recruitment can all be affected by events beyond an organisation’s control.

Businesses cannot remove this uncertainty, but they can strengthen their ability to respond. Diverse networks, adaptable operating models and access to trusted expertise all help organisations make decisions and change direction more quickly.





Sustainability expectations

Sustainability is increasingly connected to commercial performance. Customers, employees, investors and regulators expect businesses to understand their environmental impact and show credible progress in reducing it.

Energy-efficient buildings can help control operating costs as well as carbon emissions. Healthy working environments can also support employee wellbeing and performance. For businesses using laboratories or other energy-intensive facilities, access to efficient specialist infrastructure is particularly important.

The productivity challenge

Running through all these conditions is the UK's longstanding productivity challenge. Growth cannot rely indefinitely on adding more people, space or capital. Businesses need to generate more value from the resources they already have by improving processes, adopting technology effectively and making better use of skills and partnerships.

Productivity is therefore not a separate issue from talent, AI, workspace or sustainability. It is one of the outcomes that stronger growth infrastructure should help businesses achieve.

The growth infrastructure model

Seven conditions for scaling innovation businesses



1. www.bankofengland.co.uk/financial-stability-report/2025/december-2025
 2. www.ukfinance.org.uk/system/files/2025-03/UK%20Public%20and%20Private%20Markets%20report.pdf
 3. techfundingnews.com/why-operational-efficiency-is-the-new-growth-at-all-costs-for-2026-founders
 4. www.cipd.org/globalassets/media/knowledge/knowledge-hub/reports/effective-cross-functional-collaboration-report-2_tcm18-105009.pdf

Manchester
Metropolitan
University

Place

02

Why location affects how easily businesses can scale

Location determines what founders, CEOs and leaders can access: research, talent, partners, customers, investors, specialist facilities and peer networks.

The value of a strong innovation location is that it can reduce friction. Being close to universities, investors and peer businesses creates more opportunities for repeated contact, collaboration and trust-building, making it easier to identify where joint working has real potential¹.



Location is the strongest driver of customer experience

How location shapes customer experience and where high-growth businesses are concentrating.

Customer survey data shows location as a value-driver

2,147

customer survey responses analysed over three years

1,437

mentions of location as a factor shaping overall workspace experience

4.6

out of 5 average score for location

92%

of respondents rated location 4 or 5 out of 5

70%

rated location 5 out of 5



Source: Bruntwood SciTech customer survey and Beauhurst analysis

Bruntwood SciTech locations are also attracting high-growth businesses

47%

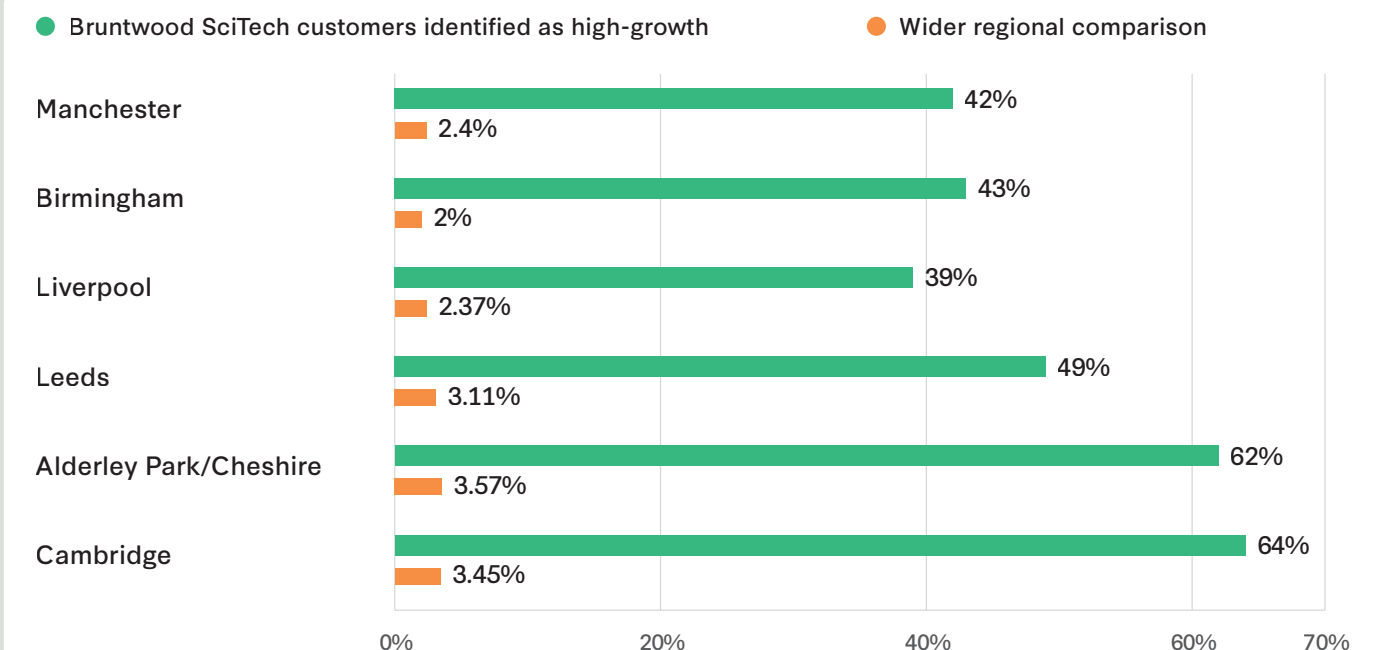
of analysed Bruntwood SciTech customers met Beauhurst's high-growth threshold

versus

2.7%

of businesses in the wider UK dataset met the same threshold

High-growth share by location



Place is a value-driver

Our customer survey data from the last three years shows how highly customers value location in their day-to-day experience. Beauhurst analysis complements this picture, revealing a high concentration of growing businesses across our buildings and campuses. Together, these findings strengthen the case for place as part of the infrastructure that supports business growth.

Location alone does not create growth

Businesses scale because of leadership, timing, proposition and market demand. But these figures show that growing businesses are not choosing place at random. They tend to concentrate where specialist infrastructure, networks and support are easier to reach.

What makes a location work

A strong innovation location does more than put businesses near each other. It makes the right things easier to reach. This includes infrastructure: the space, facilities and connectivity a business needs to operate well and adapt as it grows. In the right ecosystem businesses can access critical networks such as a university, hospital or investor community.

The wider environment is also important. Good transport, shared spaces, cafés, green space and amenities all shape whether people want to spend time there. They create the everyday moments where conversations happen and relationships build.

The best locations don't just offer proximity, they make opportunities easier to access.

Building confidence and perception

Location also affects how a business is perceived. A recognised innovation environment can give an early-stage or scaling company credibility, showing that it is connected to relevant expertise and support rather than operating in isolation.

This can build confidence with investors, partners, customers and employees, particularly in specialist sectors where trust and validation matter. The effect comes from the combination of the address, the quality of the environment and the networks around it.



Choosing places that can support grow

Location decisions should reflect what a business may need next as well as what it needs now. Growth rarely follows a straight line. If every change means leaving established relationships or rebuilding access to support, momentum can be harder to maintain.

The strategic test is whether a location reduces friction:

- Can the team reach the expertise and infrastructure it needs?
- Are there people who can help it navigate those resources?
- Does the location build confidence with customers, partners and employees?
- Can it support the next stage of growth rather than only today's space requirement?

The strongest locations give businesses more room to adapt while staying connected. That could mean access to different types of workspace, specialist facilities or a wider national footprint. Whatever form it takes, the advantage lies in making the people, resources and opportunities that support growth easier to reach.

Case study

Precision Health Technologies Accelerator

Birmingham Health Innovation Campus



The Precision Health Technologies Accelerator (PHTA), helps entrepreneurs turn life sciences ideas into working products, from medicines and diagnostics to medical devices and health apps. It combines laboratory and workspace with prototyping facilities, specialist expertise and support with funding and commercialisation.

Connecting businesses with clinical and academic expertise

Birmingham Health Innovation Campus sits close to the University of Birmingham, its Medical School and several major hospitals, including the Queen Elizabeth Hospital and Birmingham Women's Hospital. Businesses can also access multi-disciplinary clinical-academic expertise from across the Birmingham Health Partners ecosystem, as well as benefitting from University station which offers direct rail connections to Birmingham New Street and Birmingham International.

Developing a healthcare product requires companies to understand clinical needs, test their ideas and work with patients and healthcare systems. PHTA helps entrepreneurs navigate the surrounding ecosystem and find relevant expertise. Connections with organisations based at PHTA, including Clinical Immunology Services and Health Innovation West Midlands, can support product development, clinical trials and routes into the NHS.

Making specialist resources more accessible

PHTA also provides access to Containment Level 2 laboratories and a Makerspace where companies can develop and prototype devices. Shared infrastructure means young companies can use specialist equipment and expertise without having to purchase and operate everything themselves.

Impli, an Imperial College London spin-out developing a women's health diagnostic, chose PHTA partly because Birmingham Women's Hospital is within walking distance. Its decision shows how proximity becomes valuable when it connects a company with knowledge directly relevant to its product.



When you bring life sciences businesses closer to clinicians, academics and patients, conversations happen more easily. People exchange ideas, find the right expertise and start working together. That's when being part of a cluster really begins to make a difference.

Professor Gino Martini, Chief Executive, PHTA



Watch video
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Case study

OpalMedica

1 Circle Square, Manchester



OpalMedica is developing technology to support the earlier identification of rare and underdiagnosed conditions. Its GP Clinical Flags platform is being developed to identify patterns in clinical data that may raise suspicion of a rare or underdiagnosed condition and support earlier investigation or referral.

Founder Sara Elgott established the business after 30 years in the pharmaceutical industry, including extensive experience in rare diseases and areas of unmet medical need. The mission is also deeply personal. Sara's mother was diagnosed with Cushing's syndrome, a rare disease, the day before she died.

Creating the conditions for connection

OpalMedica's relationship with Circle Square began when Sara attended a pro.manchester meeting. The Greater Manchester business network works with Bruntwood SciTech to host events that bring businesses together and create opportunities for new connections.

After the meeting, Sara mentioned to Hannah Churchman, part of Bruntwood SciTech's Innovation & Growth services team, how much she liked the building. Their conversation led her to the Female Founders Incubator, which she subsequently joined.



I actually came to 1 Circle Square for a meeting and happened to say to Hannah Churchman from the Bruntwood SciTech team how much I liked the building. That chance conversation led me to the Female Founders Incubator. Since then, it has given OpalMedica much more than a place to work. We have gained valuable connections, support and credibility, and being based in the heart of Manchester's health and innovation community has been incredibly valuable as the business has grown.

Sara Elgott, Founder, Opal Medica

Opal Medica

The programme supports early-stage female entrepreneurs in the technology and digital sectors with workspace, mentoring, investment readiness support and a peer network. Targeted support remains important: Beauhurst data shows that just 17% of our customer companies across knowledge-intensive industries and technology have either an equal gender split or an all or majority female board.

Sara's introduction to the programme also shows how a curated ecosystem can work in practice. What felt like a chance conversation happened in an environment deliberately designed to bring people together and connect them with opportunities that can help their businesses grow.

More than a professional address

Being based at the Tech Hub has since given OpalMedica a professional home that reflects the business Sara is building. For a growing company working with pharmaceutical, clinical, academic and NHS organisations, the quality of the environment provides credibility and gives Sara somewhere she feels confident meeting customers and partners.

Connected to Manchester's health innovation ecosystem

Being based at Circle Square has also placed OpalMedica within Manchester's wider health innovation ecosystem, supporting relationships across clinical, academic and NHS organisations as the company progresses the evaluation of Clinical Flags.

The value of that network became particularly clear when OpalMedica was preparing to launch its patient platform, My Rare Journey, in time for Rare Disease Day. An introduction through the Bruntwood SciTech network connected Sara with a former Female Founders Incubator participant who could help get the platform ready and launched in time.

My Rare Journey has since become an important part of OpalMedica's commercial offering and is now being used in pharmaceutical-sponsored patient insight programmes.

For OpalMedica, place has provided more than an address. The professional environment has strengthened the business's credibility, while proximity to Manchester's health innovation community and access to a curated network have created relationships and opportunities that support its growth.



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Talent

03

The next skills strategy is place-based and AI-aware

Talent is no longer simply something businesses recruit. It is a capability they need to build through their location, partnerships, workplace and approach to continuous learning.

For founders and CEOs, that makes access to talent one of the most important decisions shaping where and how a business grows.

The UK already has depth in science and technology, with the UK Parliament POSTnote on the UK STEM skills pipeline estimating that around 9.4 million people were employed in STEM-related roles in 2023¹. But availability remains uneven, especially in engineering, technology and other innovation-led sectors.

The skills businesses need are changing too. The World Economic Forum Future of Jobs Report 2025 identifies technological change, economic uncertainty and the green transition as major forces reshaping skills by 2030². UK Government research projects that jobs directly involving AI activity could rise from 158,000 in 2024 to 3.9 million by 2035³. Businesses therefore need places that can supply talent today and help develop the capabilities they will need next.

Talent pipelines start with place

Strong innovation locations connect businesses to multiple routes into talent. Universities produce graduates, generate research, create spinouts and support placements, but sit within a wider network of colleges, training providers, apprenticeships, bootcamps, accelerators and specialist networks.

Proximity makes these relationships easier to sustain. It can help businesses recruit graduates, shape training and access academic expertise, while increasing the chance that talent, intellectual property and commercial opportunity remain in the same place for longer.



We're looking for people who are adopters, who embrace change and technology and are comfortable with it, because this is only going to evolve. We're not expecting people to be at the forefront, but we are expecting our talent to have a hunger and a curiosity to learn."

Sharon Palmer
Director of Group Accounts and
Client Success, IDHL

The rise of adaptive skills

AI will not affect every organisation in the same way. It may change product development, operations, customer insight, data analysis or research workflows. In regulated sectors, it will also raise questions around governance, security and trust. The common thread is that skills will need to evolve while businesses are already growing.

This calls for a more adaptive approach to workforce planning. Leaders need teams that can learn quickly, combine technical and commercial knowledge and respond as tools and customer expectations change, with access to external expertise when capability cannot be built immediately in-house.



Case study

Lokulus, Alderley Park

Alderley Park, Glasshouse



Lokulus develops workflow orchestration technology used by contact centres and service businesses. Its platform coordinates incoming work, from emails and phone calls to activity generated by back and mid-office systems, which are then directed to the right person or AI agent.

Based at Alderley Park, the company combines decades of experience in customer service technology with a practical approach to AI. This is helping Lokulus improve efficiency while creating opportunities for its people to contribute at a higher level.

Moving from AI experimentation to business value

Lokulus has used machine learning within its platform since 2006. That experience has shaped Alister's view that successful AI adoption needs to start with the business problem rather than the technology itself.

As organisations experiment with AI across different teams and tools, the challenge is turning those individual uses into a coherent approach that supports the wider business

That means being clear about where AI can add value, how it fits into existing processes and where human oversight is needed. AI can complete tasks quickly, but productivity gains come from applying it to a defined business need and putting the right processes and controls around it.



AI needs to be treated like any other major technology project. We wouldn't implement any other technology in the way many businesses are deploying AI. You wouldn't put a new CRM in like this. It needs to be treated as a proper project: where do you want to get to, where are you now and what needs to change?

Alister Harris, CEO, Lokulus



The most effective AI adoption starts with a clear organisational need. Businesses can then implement the right tools consistently across teams, rather than allowing adoption to happen through disconnected, ad hoc interventions. This creates a more coordinated approach to AI, focused on solving genuine business problems.

Using AI to enhance people's contribution

Lokulus is applying the same thinking internally. Within its engineering teams, AI is supporting coding, with experienced developers spending more time reviewing and refining the output.

This enables the teams to work more efficiently while placing greater value on technical understanding, critical thinking and accountability. Experienced developers apply their knowledge to assess the quality of the work produced, resolve more complex problems and ensure the technology performs as intended.

AI is not replacing the expertise within the business. It is allowing that expertise to be applied differently, moving people's time towards the decisions and challenges where their judgement adds the most value.

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A stronger talent offer widens the pool

Salary and progression remain important, but people also consider how a workplace supports learning, wellbeing and the working day. Transport links, amenities and spaces for focus, collaboration and connection can all influence whether people join and stay. For employers competing for specialist skills, the working environment is part of the offer.

A stronger talent offer must work for a wider range of people. McKinsey analysis in Diversity Matters Even More shows an association between diverse leadership teams and financial outperformance⁴. Different experiences and technical perspectives can strengthen decision-making and help businesses serve more people.

Inclusion extends into the working environment. Quiet rooms, clear signage, adjustable workstations, accessible routes, private call spaces and varied communal areas can help people work effectively, alongside policies that provide flexibility without disconnecting employees from the team.

The Deloitte 2026 Gen Z and Millennial Survey indicates younger workers are thinking carefully about long-term fit, wellbeing and AI's impact on their careers⁵. Alongside salary and progression, they want opportunities to learn, stability, purpose and an environment in which they can perform without burning out. This reinforces the need to connect development, inclusion and workplace quality.

What leaders should ask before choosing where to grow

The strongest innovation ecosystems connect the places where people learn with the places where companies grow. This can give founders access to graduates, specialist operators, experienced advisors and future skills, while helping employees build careers without having to leave the region.

For leaders questions around the space should be answered beyond rent, fitout and square footage:

- Can we access the technical, commercial and leadership skills we need now and in the future?
- Does this location connect us to universities, colleges, training providers and alternative routes into employment?
- Will the workplace strengthen our employer brand and help us compete for specialist talent?
- Do its transport links, amenities and working environments support a broad and inclusive talent pool?
- Can the surrounding ecosystem help our people learn, adapt and build the judgement needed as AI changes their work?



Case study

SquareOne Training

Cotton Exchange, Liverpool



SquareOne Training provides business-to-business training across finance, manufacturing, oil and gas, technology and professional services. Led by Managing Director Lisa Johnson, the business has grown over nearly 34 years from a home-based learning provider into a global training partner.

From standalone skills to continuous learning

Where clients once came for standalone courses such as Excel, they are now looking for broader solutions that bring together technical capability, data skills, AI and leadership.

SquareOne Training now delivers programmes across Power BI, Microsoft 365 and AI, combining different technologies around a particular business need.

Lisa believes this makes continuous learning increasingly important. As AI takes on more routine work, employees will need to understand how different technologies fit together and how to use the time and capacity they create more effectively.

Building confidence around AI

SquareOne Training is seeing first-hand what can hold businesses back from using AI effectively. Skills, confidence and knowing where to start are common barriers, but Lisa believes governance needs to come first. For data-rich or regulated organisations, SquareOne Training begins with data protection, internal policies and what information can be shared. Prompting, automation and workflow design follow once those boundaries are clear.

Alongside helping clients build the skills and confidence to adapt to AI, SquareOne Training has considered how its own location and workplace support recruitment. Moving from the Wirral to Cotton Exchange gave the business a more accessible location and better working environment, while also making it easier for customers to attend training. Following the move, SquareOne was inundated with applicants for a vacancy, showing how location and workplace can strengthen the wider talent proposition.



Over the next 24 months, people will need to master technologies like AI and understand how they fit together. AI can take on work that frees people to become better leaders, make informed decisions and spend more time on sales, marketing, strategy and business growth. Building a culture of continuous learning is vital if businesses want to keep pace.

Lisa Johnson, Managing Director, SquareOne Training

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1 <https://post.parliament.uk/research-briefings/post-pn-0746>
 2 www.weforum.org/publications/the-future-of-jobs-report-2025
 3 www.gov.uk/government/publications/ai-skills-for-life-and-work-labour-market-and-skills-projections/ai-skills-for-life-and-work-labour-market-and-skills-projections
 4 www.mckinsey.com/featured-insights/diversity-and-inclusion/diversity-matters-even-more-the-case-for-holistic-impact
 5 www.deloitte.com/global/en/issues/work/genz-millennial-survey.html

What our customers tell us about talent

The businesses that scale well will treat talent as part of their growth infrastructure. They will choose locations that give them access to skills, but also help them build capability, culture and resilience over time.



86%

of decision-makers rated workspace location and amenities **4 or 5 out of 5** for attracting and retaining talent

78 of 91 decision-makers

Survey context

2,147

total responses

2,124

answered the workspace experience question

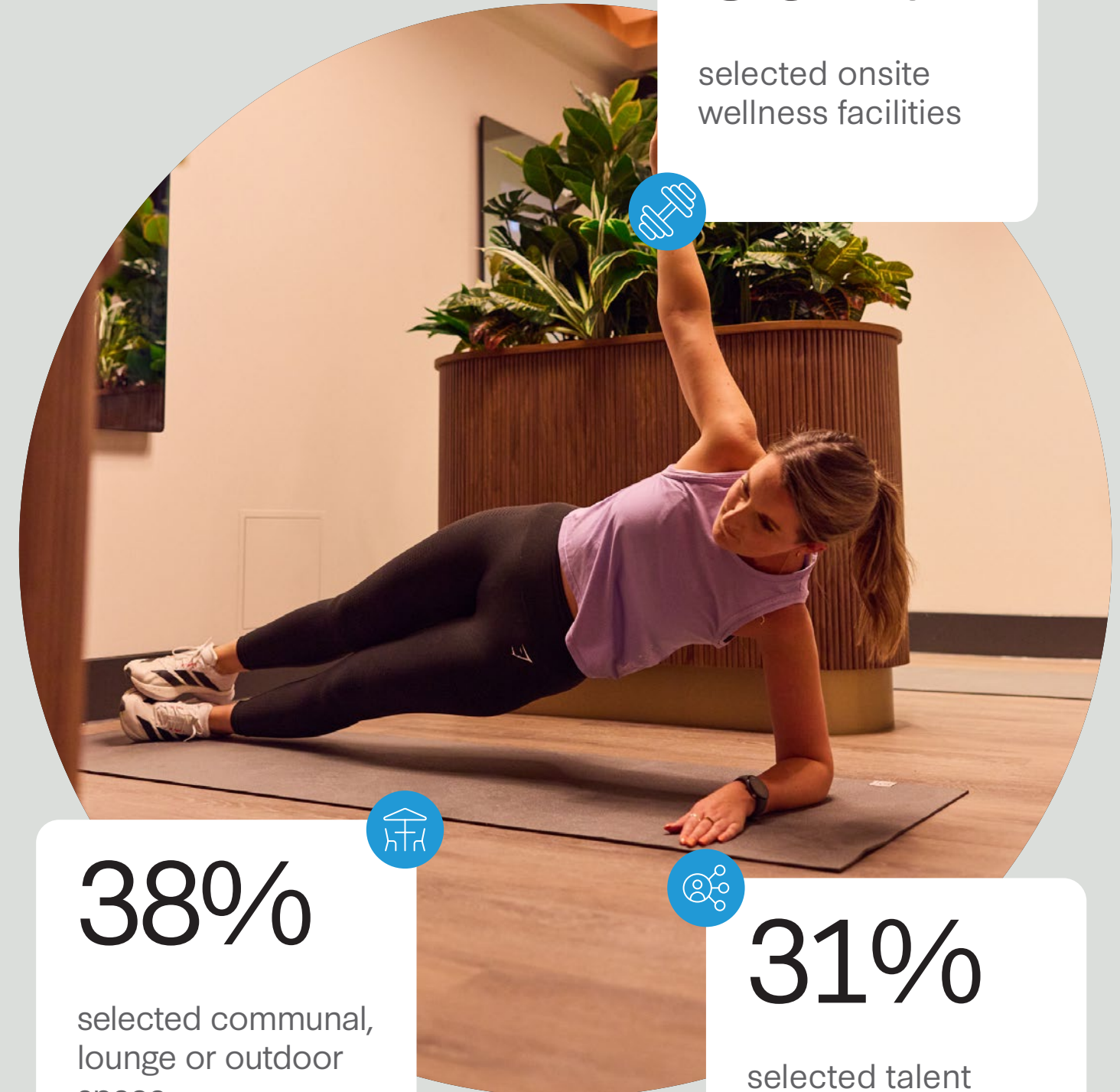
91

decision-makers answered the talent question

What businesses value

39%

selected onsite wellness facilities



38%

selected communal, lounge or outdoor space

31%

selected talent as a top growth driver

Source: Bruntwood SciTech customer survey, last three years



Workspace

04

The case for workspace agility

Growing businesses don't stand still and they need workspace that can adapt and flex alongside their business.

When teams expand, funding shifts or a new project comes online, the right space becomes an enabler to growth rather than an additional complexity.

What that looks like will vary. It may mean coworking, serviced or managed space, a longer-term office, a private lab or room to grow within a campus. The strongest strategies provide options, allowing workspace to mature alongside the business.



Workspace agility snapshot

How current customers have changed footprint or location within the portfolio over the last five years.

239

customers changed footprint or location within the portfolio

16.5%

of the current active customer base

1,450 active customers

Movement breakdown



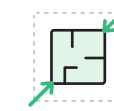
93

customers expanded



87

maintained or renewed their footprint



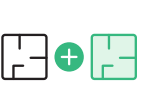
59

downsized



49

relocated within the portfolio



15

added an additional location

175



stayed within the same property while changing or maintaining their space

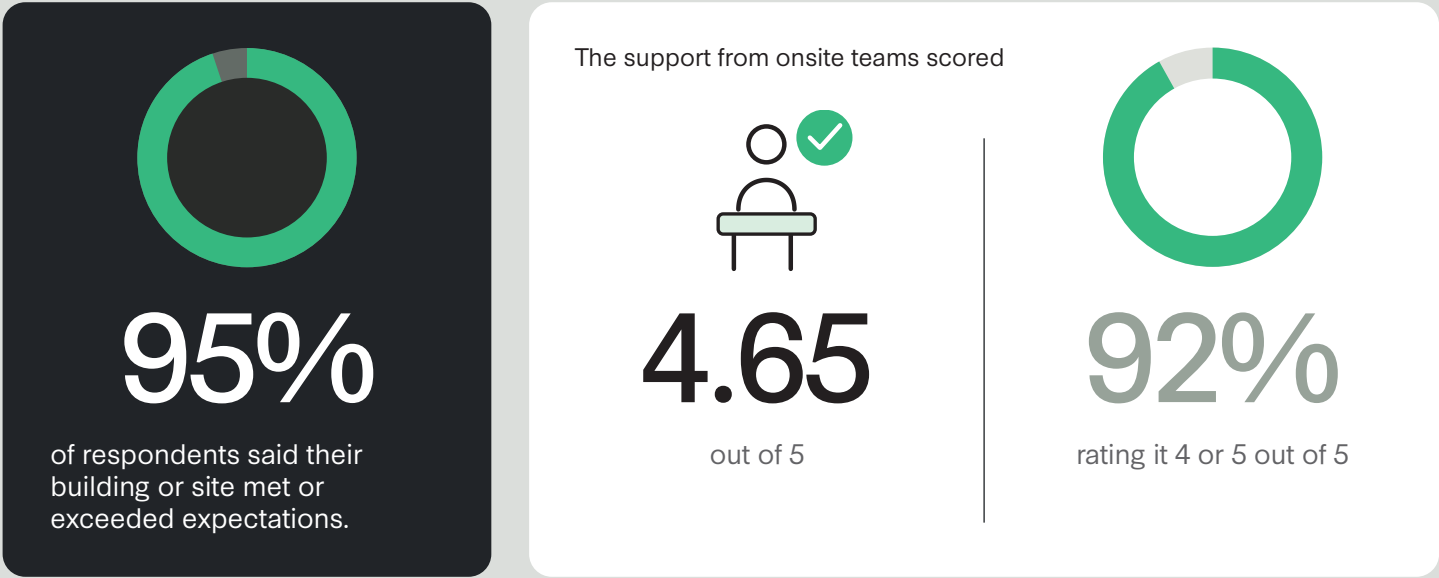
Customers that expanded added a combined

472,966 sq ft

to their footprint

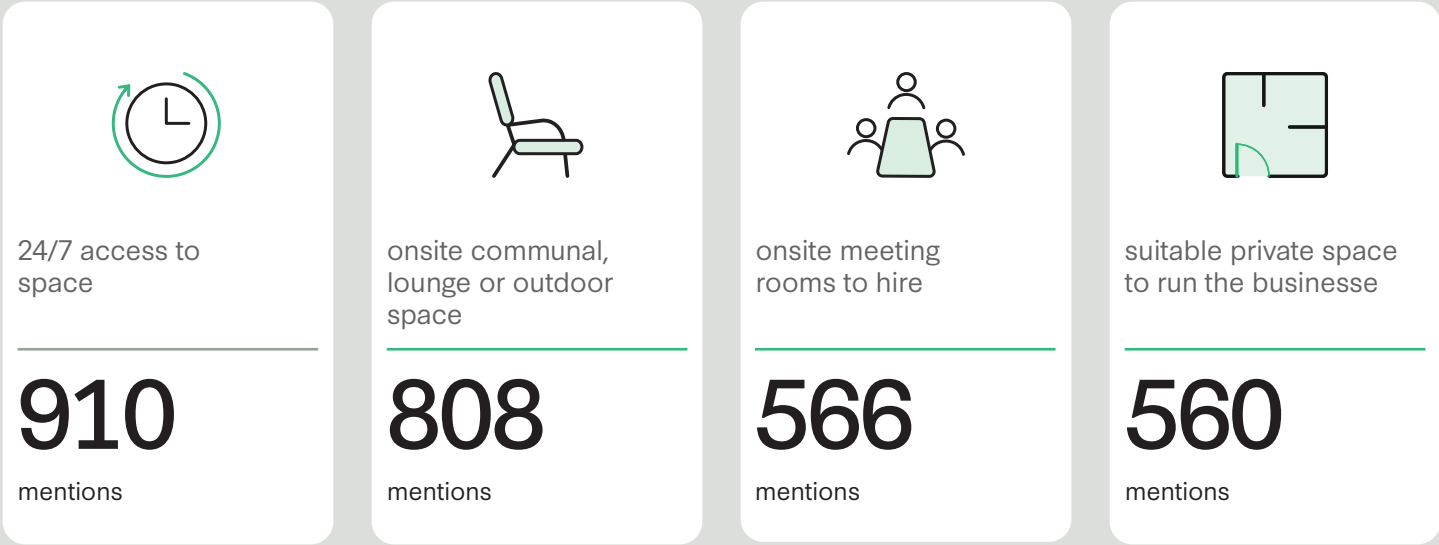
Workspace experience snapshot

Across 2,147 customer responses over the last three years



Practical flexibility features mentioned

Customers also selected practical flexibility features as important to their overall experience, including



Source: Bruntwood SciTech customer survey data

AI adds a layer of workspace uncertainty

AI is changing what businesses need from space. As it takes on more routine activity, workplaces may need to support a different mix of focused work, collaboration, secure data environments and specialist project space.

The impact will vary by sector and stage of adoption. As AI reshapes roles, workflows and expectations around productivity, businesses will need space that can adapt with them, and office environments that give people a clear reason to come together¹.

Hybrid working has raised the bar

Hybrid working has not removed the need for workspace. It has raised expectations of what the workplace should provide.

Between January and March 2025, 28% of working adults in Great Britain hybrid worked, according to the Office for National Statistics². CIPD research also found that 74% of organisations had hybrid working in place. Employers reported benefits for talent attraction, access to a wider recruitment pool and employee wellbeing, alongside challenges around management, culture and organisational connection³.

The office now has to earn the commute by supporting the work that benefits most from being together: problem-solving, customer meetings, onboarding, mentoring and collaboration.



Meaningful work, career development, flexibility and a strong culture all matter when attracting and retaining people, and an attractive workplace can amplify them.

Sharon Palmer
Director of Group Accounts and Client Success

Protecting capital and reducing risk

Workspace decisions have a direct impact on cash flow. Fit-out, furniture, connectivity and long-term commitments can absorb capital that might otherwise support recruitment, product development, sales or research.

Flexible and managed workspace can reduce that pressure by combining fitted private space, shared amenities and property costs within a predictable monthly fee. This lowers upfront capital requirements and gives businesses greater flexibility as their needs change.

These models are moving into mainstream portfolio strategy. CBRE expects flexible solutions to account for 29% of UK portfolios by 2029, up from 21% in 2025⁴. JLL also reports that 75% of its clients taking managed spaces in the previous 18 months had graduated from serviced offices⁵ showing its relevance beyond the start-up stage.

The grow-on pathway

A strong workspace ecosystem gives businesses pathways rather than fixed points. A company might move from coworking into a private or managed office and then dedicated leased space. In science and research environments, the equivalent journey may run from shared lab benches to private laboratories and grow-on space.

The value lies in being able to change space without losing the advantages of place, including staff routines, customer access, networks, amenities and investor relationships. This reduces disruption and allows the business to adapt without rebuilding its operating environment.

Flexibility does not lessen the importance of quality. Savills found that 80% of flexible office operator take-up across the wider UK market was in Grade A buildings by the end of Q3 2025⁶. Businesses still need well-located, amenity-rich space that helps them attract people, host customers and build credibility.

Workspace agility protects choice

Workspace decisions should start with the business plan, not the floorplate. Founders and CEOs should be asking:

- Can our space expand, contract or change use without major disruption?
- Does the workspace model suit our funding stage and growth horizon?
- Are we committing capital before the long-term requirement is clear?
- Does the space support the way our teams need to work?
- Can it help us attract people, customers, investors and partners?

Workspace agility is not simply about taking more or less space. It is about creating an operating environment that can keep pace with the business, giving it room to grow, pause or change direction without the workplace becoming a constraint.

Case study

iDHL

Blackfriars House, Manchester



iDHL brings together more than 500 specialists across performance marketing, web and commerce, data, creative and applied AI. Through iDHL Labs and a £1.5 million investment in proprietary tools, the business is using AI for tasks including research, reporting, analysis and content adaptation. This allows its specialists to focus more of their time on diagnosing client challenges, shaping strategy and developing creative ideas.

A workplace with purpose

As AI changes how work is delivered, it is also sharpening the purpose of iDHL's workplace. The business operates a hybrid model, using its office at Blackfriars House as a centre point for the

interactions that benefit most from being face to face. These include collaborative workshops, client sessions, mentoring and bringing different disciplines together around the same problem.

The space provides a mix of quiet areas, collaborative settings, meeting rooms and private booths, allowing people to choose an environment suited to the work they are doing.

iDHL's experience shows how workspace strategy is evolving alongside AI. As AI takes on more routine and repeatable activity, the question isn't simply how often people should come into an office. It's what bringing them together enables them to do better.

“

Being digital-first doesn't mean being place-less. Remote working is excellent for flexibility, but there are certain high-value moments that are simply better face to face: solving a difficult problem, shaping an idea, mentoring someone or bringing several disciplines around the same client challenge.

Sharon Palmer, Director of Group Accounts and Client Success

iDHL

Watch video
Click or scan here ➤



- 1 www.cbre.co.uk/insights/articles/the-future-of-ai-and-the-impact-on-demand-for-workspace
- 2 www.ons.gov.uk/employmentandlabourmarket/peopleinwork/employmentandemployeetypes/articles/whohasaccesstohybridworkinggreatbritain/2025-06-11
- 3 www.cipd.org/en/knowledge/reports/flexible-hybrid-working
- 4 www.cbre.co.uk/property-search/office-space/coworking/guides/managed-office-space-expert-guidance-for-growing-businesses
- 5 www.jll.com/en-uk/insights/london-offices-the-rise-of-managed-solutions
- 6 www.savills.co.uk/research_articles/229130/383260-0





Capital

05

Building the confidence for investment

Capital allows a business to hire, test, build and scale. But securing investment depends on more than the strength of the idea or pitch. Investors need confidence that the business behind it is ready for growth.

That confidence comes from evidence of demand, a credible team, access to talent, the right infrastructure and a clear route to market. It also depends on less visible foundations, including governance, intellectual property, contracts, data and cyber security.

These foundations matter even more in a selective funding environment. The British Business Bank's Small Business Equity Tracker 2025 shows capital concentrating into fewer, larger deals, with AI deals around 40% bigger than the rest of the market¹. Businesses therefore need to understand not only where investment might come from, but what they must put in place to secure it.

“

One of the challenges is finding advisers that you've got chemistry with and that already understand you before the explosion hits and you need things to happen.”

David Hall
Partner, HCR Law

Getting investment ready starts early

The value of an ecosystem extends beyond investor introductions. It includes the preparation that happens beforehand: refining the proposition, testing the commercial model, learning from founders who have raised before and understanding what different funders expect.

Through its Innovation and Growth team, funding clinics, investor insight days and programmes such as Ask the Experts, Bruntwood SciTech helps businesses identify routes suited to their stage, from grants and seed funding to venture capital, strategic investment and blended public-private finance.



Finding the right funding

The right type of capital depends on where a business is in its growth journey and what it needs to achieve next. Early funding might help turn an idea into a viable proposition, while later rounds can support expansion into new markets, build capacity or accelerate commercial growth.

As businesses progress, both their funding needs and what investors expect to see will change. Understanding those differences can help founders identify the right route and prepare for the next stage.

What a business needs after investment

This support becomes particularly important as a company moves from proving its technology to building a commercial business. The skills and networks needed at one stage won't necessarily be the ones it needs at the next. Having access to people who have been through that process before can help a growing company identify those gaps earlier and build the capability it needs for its next stage.

Investment doesn't happen in isolation

Our customer data shows investment sits in a much wider picture.

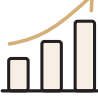
Signal	What the data shows	What it means
Capital concentration	Customers have raised more than £2.56bn in equity investment over the last 10 years	Capital is already active in these ecosystems, creating stronger visibility, peer learning and investor awareness
Funding progression	60% of funded customers secured follow-on investment, against 54% nationally	The strongest businesses are building the track record needed to raise again
Sector confidence	47% of life sciences customers have raised external funding, against 10% across the wider UK life sciences sector	Specialist environments can strengthen investor confidence by giving companies access to the labs, talent and support they need
Specialist cluster depth	Twenty-six life sciences businesses at Alderley Park have raised £433m and support 963 jobs	Capital, infrastructure and employment are reinforcing each other in a mature sector cluster
Software-led momentum	42% of fundraisings across our customer base over the last 10 years have been in application software	Investors are backing scalable software alongside specialist science, especially where there is clear demand and a route to revenue

The data suggests businesses in ecosystems are often building the credibility and evidence needed to raise, grow and raise again. Securing one round is an important milestone, but follow-on investment requires businesses to demonstrate how they have turned early promise into commercial progress.

Source: Beauhurst and Bruntwood SciTech customer data

Funding stages at a glance

Different stages of growth need different types of capital

Funding stage	What it usually supports	What investors or funders want to see
 Grants and non-dilutive funding	Early research, product development, technical validation or innovation projects without giving away equity	A clear innovation challenge, credible delivery plan and evidence that funding will move the business closer to market
 Pre-seed	Testing the idea, building an MVP, protecting intellectual property or validating early customer demand	A strong founder, clear problem, early market insight and a credible route to proof of concept
 Seed	Building the first team, developing the product, securing pilots or proving commercial demand	Early traction, customer interest, a defined market and a plan for how the business will reach the next milestone
 Series A	Scaling the product, growing revenue, hiring key people and building commercial operations	Evidence of product-market fit, repeatable demand, a strong leadership team and a clear growth model
 Growth capital	Expanding into new markets, increasing delivery capacity, making acquisitions or scaling infrastructure	Proven performance, strong revenue potential, operational resilience and a clear plan for sustainable scale
 Strategic investment	Accessing sector expertise, customers, supply chains or routes to market as well as capital	Strategic fit, commercial alignment and evidence that the partnership can accelerate growth
 Debt or venture debt	Extending runway, funding working capital or supporting growth without further dilution	Predictable revenue, strong financial controls and confidence that the business can service the debt

Five things growing businesses should get right early

David Hall is a Partner in HCR Law’s Technology and Innovation team, based at the firm’s Birmingham office at Cornerblock. He shares five areas founders and leadership teams should think about early to build credibility with investors, customers and partners.

1

Know what you own

Intellectual property can represent a significant part of a business’s value and includes more than patents. Understand what IP exists, who owns it and how it is protected, including through contracts. You don’t need to be an expert in every area, but you should know when specialist help is required.

2

Get the foundations in place before somebody asks to see them

Investment readiness also depends on how the business is run. As your business grows, investors, larger customers and commercial partners will increasingly want reassurance around areas such as governance, contracts, data, cyber security and intellectual property. Understanding where your gaps are and having a credible plan for dealing with them is key. Putting the right systems, processes and documentation in place shows that the business is being built on solid foundations.

3

Think ahead about ownership

Your capital table might look straightforward when you're starting out, but it can become more complicated as you bring in investment or use equity to reward employees and advisers. Founders need to understand who owns what today, what new investment could mean for their shareholding and how future equity plans might change that picture. If you're putting a valuation in front of an investor, you need to be able to explain why it's justified.

4

Build a management team that's ready for growth

Governance can sound like something for much bigger companies, but the fundamentals matter early. Think about whether you've got the right skills around the table, whether people understand their responsibilities and whether there's clear accountability for decisions. Investors want confidence that the people leading the business can take it through its next stage of growth.

5

Build relationships with advisers before you urgently need them

Getting advice early doesn't have to mean commissioning a large piece of work every time you have a question. Find advisers who understand your business and who you trust enough to pick up the phone to. When something significant does happen, they'll already understand the business and will be better placed to help.

hcr|law

David Hall,
Partner, HCR Law



Backing businesses through the early stages

For more innovative businesses to reach scale, the funding ecosystem needs investors willing to back them at different points in their development. Later-stage capital is important, but businesses first need the opportunity to build evidence, develop their proposition and reach the milestones that make larger rounds possible.

Tiffany Thorn, Founder and CEO of BiVictriX Therapeutics at Alderley Park, believes maintaining that appetite for earlier-stage investment is critical. She has seen investors increasingly favour larger rounds where other funders are already committed, making the role of those prepared to invest earlier even more important. Her experience reflects a wider challenge for the innovation economy: creating a strong pipeline of businesses means backing potential before every risk has been removed.

A healthy funding pipeline needs capital at every stage. Backing businesses earlier gives them the opportunity to build momentum and become stronger candidates for further investment. The benefits extend beyond the individual business too, supporting jobs, suppliers and expertise across the wider innovation economy.



“

We need investors who are willing to back innovative businesses at the earlier stages and help them build towards those bigger rounds. If we can maintain that appetite for early-stage risk, we give more businesses the opportunity to prove their potential, grow and attract further investment.”

Tiffany Thorn
Founder and CEO, BiVictriX Therapeutics



Read more from Tiffany Thorn
Click or scan here ➤



Patient capital matters for long-horizon innovation

Some innovation businesses do not fit a short investment cycle. Life sciences, advanced materials, clean tech, quantum and semiconductors may take years to navigate research, validation, regulation and commercialisation.

The UK has a strong pipeline of these businesses. Spinouts secured £2.60 billion in equity investment in 2024, even as investment into high-growth companies declined more widely⁴. Realising that potential requires patient capital connected to commercial leadership, specialist facilities, university expertise, customers and networks.

Before the round

Investment readiness begins long before the pitch deck. Businesses build confidence through evidence of demand, a credible team and the commercial relationships, systems, expertise and infrastructure needed to turn investment into growth.





“

For investors and major customers, credibility comes from seeing that a growing business has the right foundations in place. That means the systems, processes and documentation to support its growth, as well as a clear plan for addressing any gaps.

David Hall,
Partner, HCR Law

Case study

Northern Gritstone

1 Circle Square, Manchester



The North of England produces world-class research and technical talent, but historically it has lacked the capital and commercial infrastructure to turn that knowledge into global businesses. In 2019, only 2% of all UK University spinout venture capital was invested into universities in the North of England², Northern Gritstone was created to close that gap.

The business invests in deep tech and life sciences companies with the potential to scale globally. It has partnership agreements with the 'Northern Arc' universities of Leeds, Liverpool, Manchester and Sheffield, and also invests in companies across the North that are not university spinouts. It invests from seed through to Series A and beyond, helping ambitious teams take their science and technology to market.

Talent and ambition: The gap between great science and a great business

Kate Spencer, Head of Communications and Marketing at Northern Gritstone, describes world-class research as the starting point, but it is never the whole picture.

“

Talent is the scarcest resource. You need excellent academics and technical specialists, but you also need experienced entrepreneurs and commercial leaders with international expertise to turn science and technology into something that can scale.

Kate Spencer, Head of Communications and Marketing, Northern Gritstone



Read the full article
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Case study

Optalysys

Platform, Leeds



Optalysys is a deep tech company developing photonic computing technology that uses light, rather than electricity, to perform complex mathematical functions for AI processes, with the potential to deliver significantly greater speed and efficiency than conventional electronic computing.

Founded in 2013 by Nick New, the company grew out of research undertaken during his PhD at the University of Cambridge. Today, its main operations are in Leeds, with a base in Bristol and international expansion underway as it moves towards commercial scale-up.

Finding the right investor

Like many deep tech businesses, Optalysys has faced the challenge of securing investment for technology that requires significant development before reaching commercial maturity. Success depends not only on access to capital, but on finding investors who understand complex technologies, their different risk profile and the longer journey to commercialisation.

Finding the right investors has been just as important to Optalysys as securing funding itself. Northern Gritstone participated in an earlier Optalysys investment round and subsequently led its A2 round. Its combination of patient capital and deep-tech expertise is particularly important for businesses where significant investment may be required before the full commercial opportunity can be realised.



Scaling a deep tech business is a long journey. You can have technology with huge potential, but it takes significant investment and time to move from research and development towards commercialisation. That means it isn't simply about raising capital. You need investors who understand complex technology, recognise the different risk profile and are prepared to back the long-term opportunity.

Nick New, Founder and Chief Product Officer, Optalysys



More than access to funding

But capital is only part of the picture. Developing Optalysys' technology has required specialist expertise in photonics, optics, manufacturing, mathematics and cryptography, alongside university resources and investment.

That influenced the decision to build the company's main operations in Leeds. Nick wanted to demonstrate that globally significant technology could be developed in the North and found many of the capabilities Optalysys needed within the region, including links with the University of Leeds, specialist manufacturers and technical talent.

Platform has provided a base within that wider technology ecosystem, helping Optalysys connect with investors and other organisations supporting its growth. Nick particularly values the role Bruntwood SciTech can play in bringing technology businesses and the investment community together.

Watch video
Click or scan here ↘



1 www.british-business-bank.co.uk/about/research-and-publications/small-business-equity-tracker-2025

2 Source: Beauhurst

3 www.mckinsey.com/capabilities/people-and-organization/our-insights/achieving-hypergrowth-its-all-about-the-people

4 <https://www.beauhurst.com/research/spotlight-on-spinouts-2025>





Community and partnerships

06

Turning connections into growth

Many places can offer workspace. Fewer can create the relationships and partnerships that help businesses grow.

These relationships help founders, CEOs and leadership teams access knowledge, partners, customers, investors, mentors and peer support. The right ecosystem reduces isolation, improves decision-making and creates opportunities that would be difficult to access alone.

Location and infrastructure create the conditions for innovation, but relationships bring those conditions to life. Research supports this. Massachusetts Institute of Technology (MIT) analysis of collaboration on its campus found that researchers in the same workspace were more than twice as likely to collaborate as those 400m apart, showing that proximity still matters for knowledge exchange¹. But the real value comes when physical closeness is supported by the right networks, shared spaces and reasons to connect.



Built to scale: The conditions innovation businesses need to grow

From proximity to partnership

Putting businesses in the same building or district doesn't automatically create collaboration. Proximity creates the possibility of connection, but ecosystems need active curation, shared purpose and trust.

The most valuable communities are not simply social networks. They create partnerships that help businesses access expertise, funding, customers, research and talent faster than they could alone. The right ecosystem helps reduce friction by connecting businesses to people who can support their next stage of growth, whether that's an investor, university partner, NHS or clinical contact, corporate customer, peer founder, specialist adviser or mentor.

“

Capital alone isn't enough either. You need access to specialist expertise, partners and the right investment networks. Being at Platform has helped us build those relationships and connections as we've moved towards the next stage of growth.”

Nick New,
Founder and Chief Product Officer, Optalysys

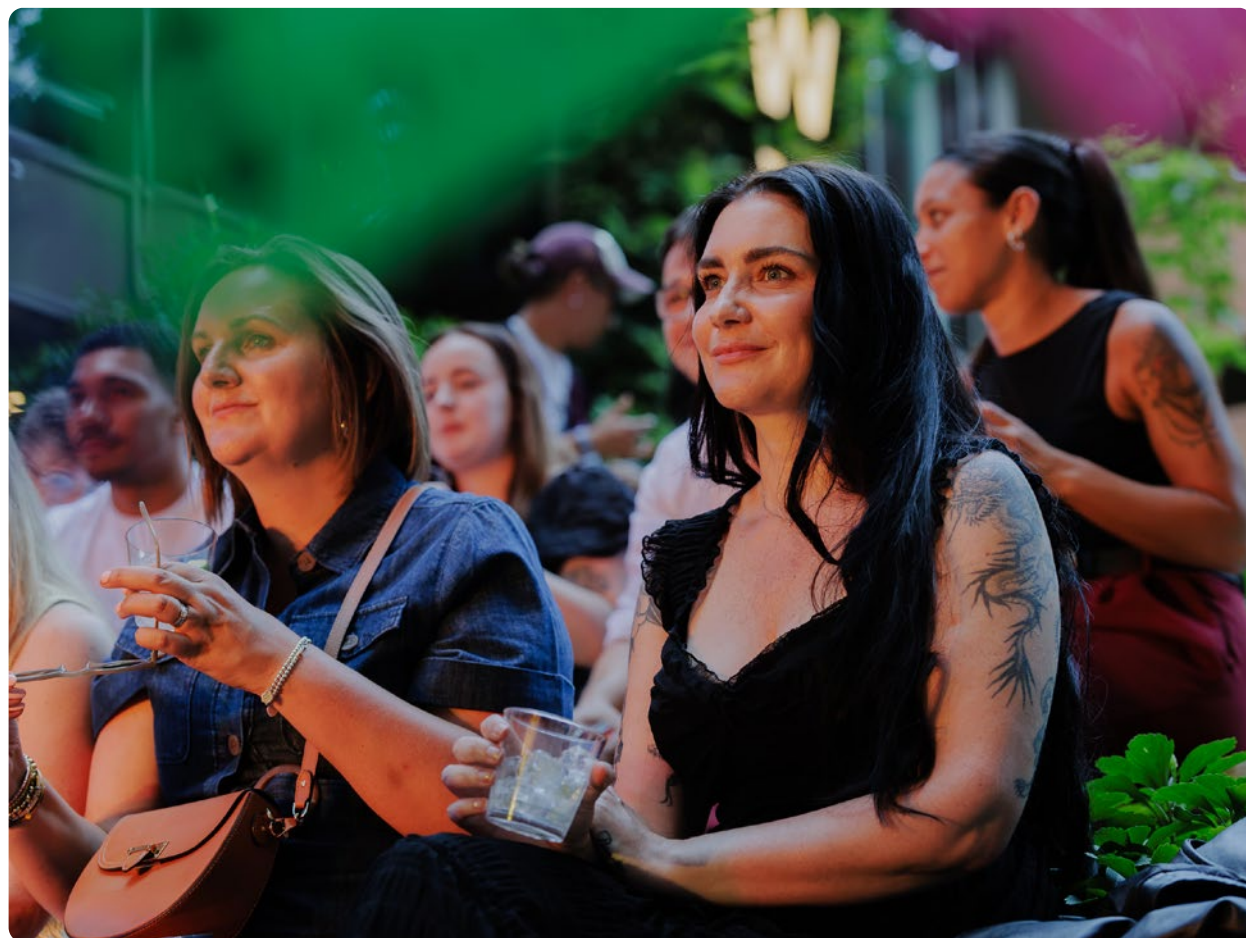
The OECD has highlighted the importance of formal and informal knowledge exchange between universities and industry, including joint research, academic start-ups and the role of geographical proximity in local innovation².

This is important when a business is moving from one stage to the next. Preparing for investment, entering a regulated market, building a senior team or testing a new route to market all bring questions that are difficult to answer in isolation.

Community builds confidence

Building a business can be isolating. Peer networks, mentors and experienced operators give founders space to test assumptions, ask better questions and learn from people who have faced similar decisions.

That support is more useful when it reflects the sector a business operates in. Timelines, regulation, customer expectations and routes to market all vary. Generic networking doesn't account for that. The right community gives businesses access to people and partnerships that understand where they are likely to get stuck and where the right introduction can make a difference.



“

Community only creates value when it's intentional. Our role is to understand what a business is trying to achieve, then help connect them to the people, insight and opportunities that can move them forward. Sometimes that's an investor introduction or a university connection. Sometimes it's a peer who has already faced the same challenge. For growing businesses, those relationships can save time, build confidence and open doors that would be much harder to find alone.”

Hannah Churchman,
Head of Innovation & Growth (Manchester),
Bruntwood SciTech

Community is part of how businesses connect, learn and grow

Events survey responses

1,363

Events NPS

+87.1

Average event recommendation score

9.58

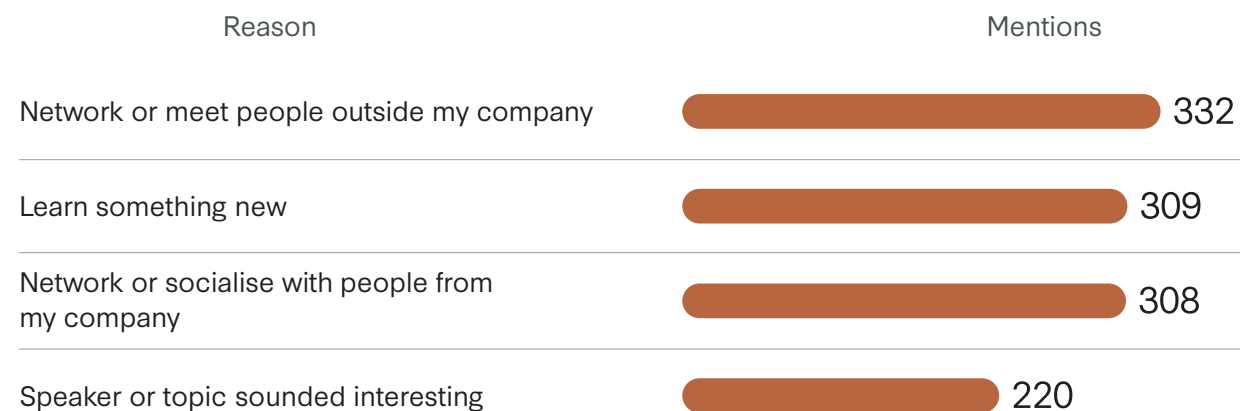
out of 10

Average event recommendation score

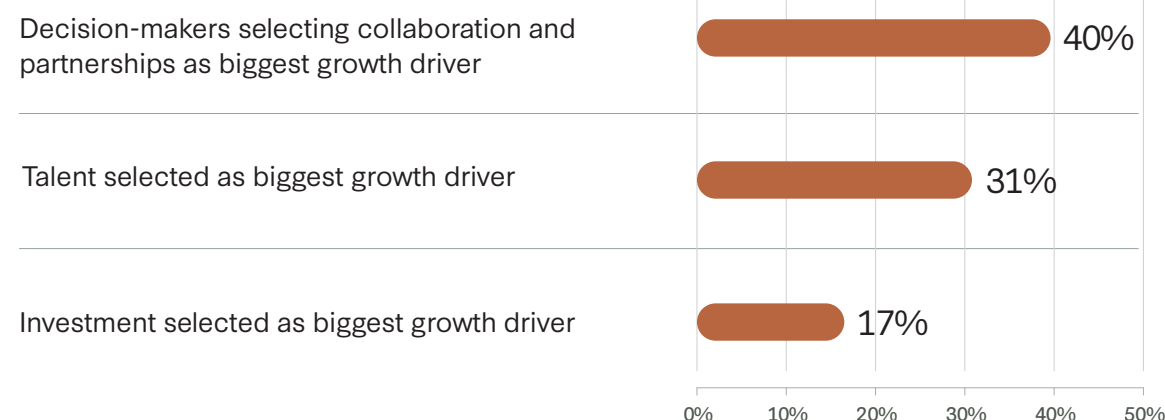
4.81

out of 5

Most common reasons for attending events



What decision-makers see as the biggest growth drivers



Source: Bruntwood SciTech customer and events survey data, last three years

Community outcomes



96.8%

Events rated four or five



67%

Events exceeding expectations



99.5%

Likely or very likely to attend future events



54%

Attended a community event in the last six months

How many customers are collaborating



50%

of those who answered

Wider customer survey respondents giving evidence of collaboration



53%

of those who answered

Decision-maker respondents giving evidence of collaboration

Case study

EdenFiftyOne

Cotton Exchange, Liverpool



EdenFiftyOne is a literacy skills technology platform based at Cotton Exchange in Liverpool. Founded by former English teacher Tom Reynolds, it helps schools and colleges take a more structured and equitable approach to teaching, learning and assessing literacy.

Building momentum through networks

For Tom, one of the biggest advantages of growing the business in Liverpool has been access to a supportive and connected network. He describes the city as globally recognised but small enough for introductions to happen quickly, making it easier for founders to access advice, expertise and opportunities.

As the business evolved from an early-stage idea into a commercial proposition, support came from different parts of the city's innovation ecosystem. EdenFiftyOne participated in Baltic Ventures' accelerator programme. Tom believes this type of support has become significantly stronger in Liverpool in recent years, creating more opportunities for founders to access both advice and early-stage funding.

Alongside a core team of three employees, EdenFiftyOne has built a much wider network of advisers and supporters who continue to play an important role as the business grows.

Connections that create opportunities

Cotton Exchange has become another part of that network. Tom first encountered the building while hot-desking with another business and saw the value of being surrounded by other growing companies.

“

A lot of the people I now work with, or see as advisers to the business, have come through conversations in the shared spaces. That wouldn't happen if you walked into your office, got a coffee in your office and left. It's not just renting an office space, it's being part of a business community where you can learn and build relationships.

Tom Reynolds, Founder, EdenFiftyOne



Since moving into the building, informal conversations and introductions have helped expand his network and connect him with people who can support the business. Shared spaces are particularly important because they create opportunities for people from different businesses to meet as part of their working day.

Alongside these informal connections, the events programme provides more structured opportunities to learn and build relationships. Community events bring businesses together, while specialist sessions give smaller companies access to expertise they may not have internally.

Extending the capability of a small team

For a small business preparing to scale, these relationships effectively extend the capability around the core team. EdenFiftyOne can draw on advisers, peers and specialist support without needing to build all of that expertise internally.

The experience also shows that networks are most valuable when businesses engage with them with purpose. Tom sees networking as not simply about attending events. It's about understanding what the business needs and finding the people who can provide the right expertise, perspective or introduction.

Read the full article
Click or scan here



1 <https://news.mit.edu/2017/proximity-boosts-collaboration-mit-campus-0710>
2 https://www.oecd.org/en/publications/university-industry-collaboration_e9c1e648-en.html





Sustainable, healthy buildings

07

The business case for better buildings

A healthy building can give businesses a stronger platform to operate from. It can lower avoidable cost, supporting people to do better work and making sustainability easier to evidence.

There is a clear link between workspace quality and business performance. The World Green Building Council has found “overwhelming evidence” that office design affects health, wellbeing and productivity, with factors such as air quality, lighting, views of nature and layout all influencing satisfaction and job performance¹.

Sustainability also shapes how companies are judged. Deloitte’s 2024 Gen Z and Millennial Survey found that around half of Gen Zs and millennials say they and their colleagues are putting pressure on employers to take climate action, while around one in five have already changed jobs or sector because of environmental concerns².

The same logic applies to customers, investors and partners. McKinsey research on companies that outperform on growth, profitability and ESG shows that sustainability can support commercial value when it is embedded into how a business operates, rather than treated as a separate reporting exercise³.



Why healthy buildings support business growth

Sustainable, healthy buildings support businesses in four practical ways.

1

They help control operational risk

Energy-efficient buildings can reduce exposure to volatile energy costs and make overheads more predictable. This is an important factor for scale-ups managing cash carefully.

2

They help attract and retain people

Talented teams increasingly expect workplaces that support wellbeing, inclusion, flexibility and purpose. A high-quality environment can strengthen the employee proposition without relying only on salary.

3

They improve the value of office time

Hybrid working has made office attendance more intentional. People need a reason to come in. That reason is rarely a desk alone. A high quality environment can boost productivity, the ability to collaborate, focus, access amenities and feel part of a working community.

4

They strengthen credibility

Certification, energy performance and visible investment in healthier space give companies evidence they can use with employees, customers, investors and supply chains.

Sustainability is not only about doing less harm. It is about creating buildings that help businesses perform better.

Healthy, sustainable workplaces

What our customer data tells us

Customers value more than desk space. Wellness facilities, inclusive design and high-quality shared environments all shape how people experience a workplace. Health and wellbeing are not add-ons, they are part of the infrastructure people increasingly expect around work.



87%

rated inclusive and accessible access 4 or 5 out of 5

4.42 out of 5

average score for inclusive and accessible access

2,147

Customer survey responses analysed over three years

4.36

out of 5
average score for atmosphere and community feel

Health and wellbeing is an important factor in the workplace experience

808

times communal, lounge or outdoor space was selected as important to overall workspace experience

829

times onsite wellness facilities were selected as important to overall workspace experience

775

times health and wellbeing was selected as a desired future event topic in the customer survey

943

times health and wellbeing was selected as a desired future event topic in the events survey

Source: Bruntwood SciTech customer survey, last three years

Pall Mall

Reducing carbon while improving the customer experience

Pall Mall in Manchester city centre shows the value of the retrofit. It not only reduces embodied carbon by retaining and upgrading an existing building. The deep retrofit of a listed building has created a more efficient, more usable and more attractive workspace for the businesses inside it.

For our customers, that means lower-carbon space without losing the benefits of a central, connected location. Upgraded glazing, insulation and building systems improve performance. All-electric heating and cooling, air-source heat pumps and renewable electricity help reduce reliance on fossil fuels.

Active travel facilities, gym, showers, bike storage, EV charging and outdoor space make sustainable behaviour easier in everyday working life. The building offers flexible workspace for teams of 2-120, meaning businesses at every stage of growth can access high-quality, sustainable workspace.

A retrofit like Pall Mall helps companies make progress on ESG without needing to build that infrastructure themselves. It gives them a workplace that supports their own commitments, while also creating a better environment for employees and visitors.

Scan to find out more about sustainability at Pall Mall ↗



bruntwood.co.uk/our-locations/manchester/pall-mall



Alderley Park

Making specialist space more sustainable

The challenge is different for life sciences businesses. Labs are essential to innovation but they are energy intensive. Ventilation, equipment, safety requirements and temperature control all increase demand.

That is why sustainability in lab environments has to be designed around operational reality. The Alderley Park Open Access Lab has achieved the 'Gold' standard from My Green Lab. It shows how specialist infrastructure can support responsible growth without compromising scientific work. My Green Lab Certification provides a recognised framework for improving sustainable lab practices, including energy-smart equipment use, waste reduction and more efficient ways of working.

It means research-led businesses can access specialist facilities that support technical work, while also improving the environmental performance of day-to-day operations. That helps companies respond to customer and investor expectations without slowing down the science. The wider campus setting also offers access to outdoor space, biodiversity and informal places to connect which supports the human side of research-led growth.

Scan to find out more about sustainability at Alderley Park ↗



mygreenlab.org alderleypark.co.uk



111 Piccadilly

Wellbeing as measurable infrastructure

111 Piccadilly demonstrates the value of making wellbeing measurable. Designed to the WELL standard which is an evidence-based standard focused on how buildings support health and wellbeing through areas such as air, light, movement, comfort and materials.

This gives a clearer way to assess workplace quality. It goes beyond whether a space looks good, towards whether it has been designed and operated around the people using it.

Workplace experience now plays a more active role in attracting people back into the office. Good air quality, natural light, active travel facilities, biophilic design and comfortable shared areas all help make office time feel worthwhile. They support focus, collaboration and recovery during the working day.

A healthier workplace can support employee engagement and strengthen culture. In a competitive talent market, those details can influence talent attraction, retention and productivity.

Scan to find out more about
111 Piccadilly ↘



bruntwood.co.uk/our-locations/manchester/111-piccadilly

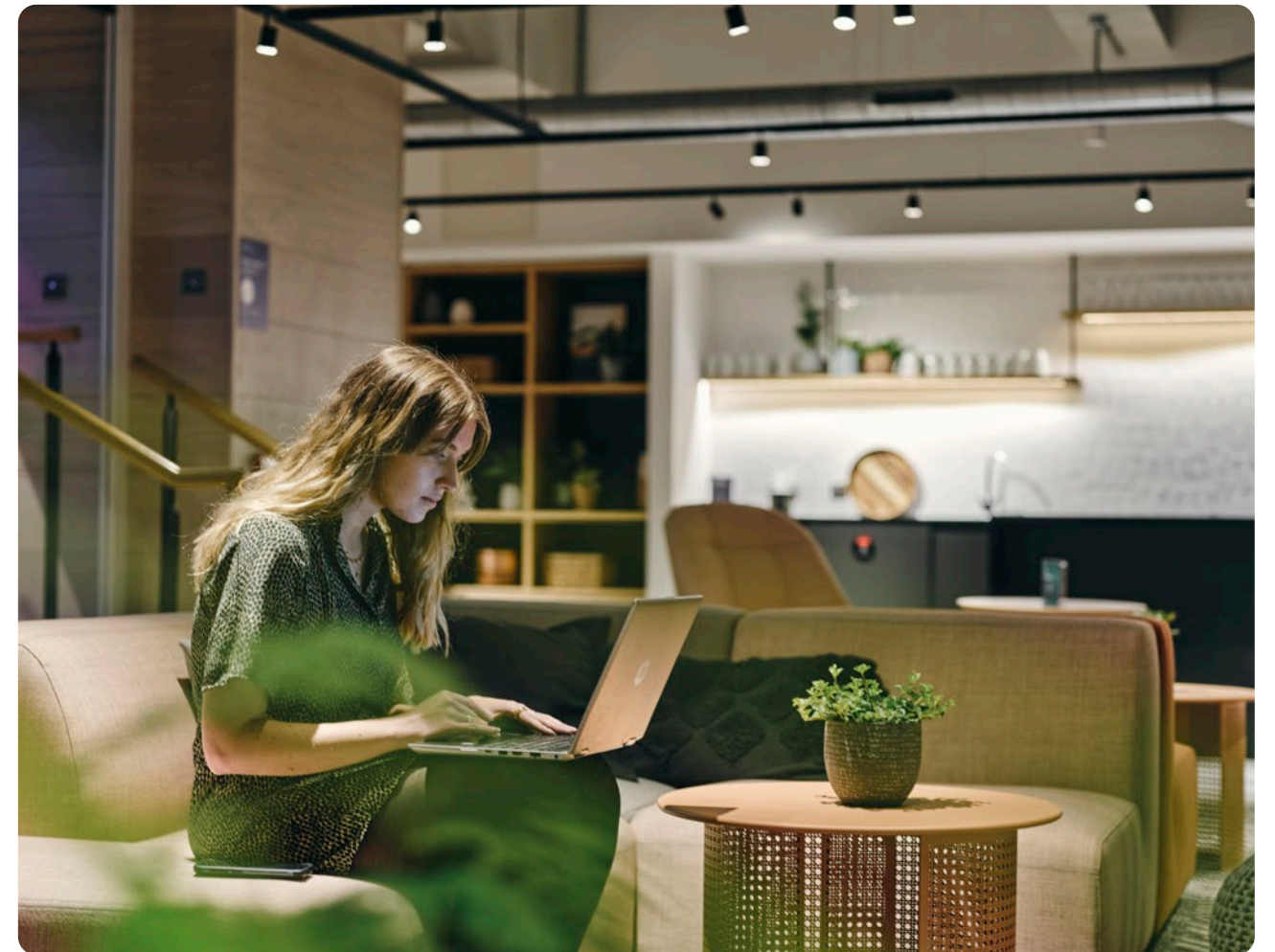


What this means for growth businesses

A sustainable workspace has to work commercially as well as environmentally. It should help control running costs, support employee wellbeing and give businesses credible evidence of their ESG progress. When those things come together, sustainability becomes part of business performance rather than a separate property or compliance issue.

It also matters as a business grows. Taking space in a building where energy efficiency, comfort and environmental performance are already built in gives leadership teams a stronger starting point.

It can make it easier to respond to questions from investors, customers and prospective employees, while reducing the time and resources needed to gather evidence. These benefits extend beyond the day-to-day running of the workspace, supporting the business's ability to win work, attract talent and prepare for its next stage of growth



- <https://worldgb.org/article/new-report-links-office-design-with-staff-health-and-productivity>
- <https://www.deloitte.com/cn/en/about/press-room/deloitte-2024-gen-z-and-millennial-survey.html>
- <https://www.mckinsey.com/capabilities/strategy-and-corporate-finance/our-insights/the-triple-play-growth-profit-and-sustainability>

Conclusion

There's no single route to growth, and what a business needs will change as it develops.

The Growth Infrastructure Model brings those needs together. Place, talent, workspace, capital, collaboration, sustainable performance and digital readiness all shape how well a business can scale.

How they impact each company will be different. For some, the immediate pressure will be talent whilst for others it will be access to capital, specialist space or the right partners. Strong leadership and a good proposition still come first. But they're easier to build on when the right conditions are already in place.

A workspace needs to do more than meet the needs of the business today. It should continue to support the business as it grows and changes.

At Bruntwood SciTech, we see our role as creating that environment. Not just through offices, labs and specialist facilities, but through the connections, flexibility and support that help businesses keep moving forward.



About the evidence base

The report combines Bruntwood SciTech's first-party customer insight with independent company data, qualitative interviews and wider market research.

Customer insight and surveys

Analysis includes Bruntwood SciTech's network of 1,450 active businesses across Manchester, Cheshire, Leeds, Liverpool, Birmingham and Cambridge. It draws on 2,147 customer survey responses and 1,363 events survey responses collected over three years. A smaller sample of around 90 business decision-makers provides additional directional insight into the factors influencing growth.

Customer and workspace data

Five years of customer movement data has been used to understand how businesses change their space as they grow, including expansion, renewal, downsizing, relocation and the addition of new locations.

Independent business analysis

Beaurest data provides insight into customer growth, equity investment, funding progression, sectors and leadership characteristics. Where possible, Bruntwood SciTech customers have been compared with wider UK and regional datasets.

Interviews and case studies

Interviews with customers, founders, investors, advisers and partners add context to the quantitative findings and explore how businesses experience the infrastructure around them.

Third-party research

Government, industry and academic sources place the findings within wider trends affecting innovation businesses, including talent, AI, hybrid working, investment, collaboration, sustainability and workplace wellbeing.

Sample sizes, time periods and individual sources are stated alongside the relevant statistics. Findings from smaller survey samples should be treated as directional.

Acknowledgements

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Editor
Emma Cartledge

Design
Richard Shallaker,
Bruntwood SciTech



Bruntwood SciTech
Union, 2-10 Albert Square
Manchester, M2 6LW

