No. 025.20 12 January 2020

**N E W S R E L E A S E**

**Bucks Skills Hub first stop shop for workplace skills and redundancy support**

COVID-19 has brought unprecedented times to the Buckinghamshire job market this year. Help is at hand for those that need it from the [Bucks Skills Hub](https://bbf.uk.com/business-support/category/skills-hub), which acts as a first stop shop providing support for workforce development, career pathways and recruitment training plans, and crucially at this time, redundancy support.

Heather Dean, Head of Skills and Business Support at Buckinghamshire Business First, said: “We do our best to support local businesses and never has this been more important than during these difficult times. Feedback from businesses and employees during the pandemic has highlighted a number of key areas where support is most required. This includes how best to deal with issues like redundancy, figures for which have skyrocketed during the pandemic. In response, we have been expanding our resources and growing our team, including the appointment of a new Workforce Skills Manager to support businesses and employees affected by redundancies.”

Heather added: “With the appointment of John Browning as Workforce Skills Manager, we are in a great position to help businesses find the right support for them.”

John Browning brings a strong background acquired through working with several large international corporations as well as small businesses through his own consultancy. Working closely with sector skills councils he gained experience in various aspects of the UK skills system, from apprenticeship reform to the review of funding for vocational education.

**more…**

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Working alongside Buckinghamshire Business First Advisers, one of John’s immediate priorities is the response to COVID-19 and in particular supporting businesses who may unfortunately have to make redundancies. Guidance is also available to support individuals who have been made redundant or who are facing the threat of redundancy. John’s wider remit will see him support businesses with their skills needs, helping them to find suitable training solutions such as funded apprenticeship and traineeship programmes, and supporting them with recruitment and specialised training needs.

A new redundancy support section has been developed on the [Buckinghamshire Business First website](http://www.bbf.uk.com/business-support/category/redundancy-support) with information on what support and services are available in Buckinghamshire for businesses and individuals affected by redundancy. This includes:

For employers:

* Where to get guidance on the redundancy process
* Where to go for legal advice and HR support
* Offers of support from Buckinghamshire Business First members (several members offer outplacement services)
* Services to support the health and wellbeing of staff.

For individuals:

* Advice and guidance including careers advice, CV and interview preparation, training courses, where to look for job opportunities, support for apprentices and starting your own business - most of this is free.

The webpage is a great place to start for those in the difficult position of having to make redundancies or for those being made redundant. Visit the page here: [www.bbf.uk.com/business-support/category/redundancy-support](http://www.bbf.uk.com/business-support/category/redundancy-support)

**more…**

**Bucks Skills Hub first stop shop for workplace skills: 3**

For more information on how the Bucks Skills Hub is addressing the skills issues regularly identified by Buckinghamshire businesses, such as better preparing young people for work and improving digital skills for everyone, visit the new Skills Hub section of the Buckinghamshire Business First website at [www.bbf.uk.com/business-support/category/skills-hub](http://www.bbf.uk.com/business-support/category/skills-hub).

Contact John Browning directly at [john.browning@bucksskillshub.org](mailto:john.browning@bucksskillshub.org) with any workforce training-related enquiries.

**Ends**

**Photo caption:***The**Bucks Skills Hub provides support to help people navigate the many paths available to them from higher and further education to training, apprenticeships and employment.*

**Note to editors**

The [Buckinghamshire Skills Hub](https://bucksskillshub.org/) promotes and optimises links between the business community and education/training providers to enable young people and adults to gain valuable insight into career opportunities, and helps them develop the skills and qualifications they need to progress in the workplace at whatever stage of their career they are in.

The Bucks Skills Hub is managed by Buckinghamshire Business First and supported by Buckinghamshire Local Enterprise Partnership, Buckinghamshire Council and the Careers Enterprise Company.

The [Buckinghamshire Local Enterprise Partnership](http://buckstvlep.co.uk/) (Bucks LEP) is a business-led ‘partnership of equals’ between local government and the private sector, building the conditions for sustainable economic growth in the County. Formed in January 2012, the partnership balances a uniquely strong collective business voice with a cohesive elected local leadership. Coming together to engineer the conditions needed to drive forward business prosperity in the county and beyond, Bucks LEP recognises that an important part of this is to support education and skills providers and employers to ensure our young people have the right skills to meet the needs of the economy, including the growth sectors such as life-sciences, space, creative industries and advanced engineering.

[Buckinghamshire Business First](http://www.bbf.uk.com/) (BBF) is the Growth Hub for Buckinghamshire and is backed by Buckinghamshire-based entrepreneurs, thousands of SMEs and Buckinghamshire Council. BBF provides the link between public policy and the business community in Buckinghamshire and works with partners to create a dynamic business environment in the Entrepreneurial Heart of Britain.

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