



Better Business for All Awards 2016 Shortlisted Entries



The entries were judged by: Duncan Johnson, Deputy Director, BRDO, Ellie Greenwood, Local Government Association and Martin Traynor, Regulatory Policy Committee.

Partnership Award

Cornwall

Cornwall has achieved “genuine collaboration” between the local authority, LEP and business community, recognising that having constant business input keeps the focus on simple, meaningful messages about how BBfA can help businesses to save time and money, and ultimately to grow. The partnership has seen approaches from businesses to Cornwall Council's Trading Standards, Environmental Health and Licensing up 45% in 2015 compared to 2014.

The judges were impressed with the input and support Cornwall is receiving from the LEP and the local business community and how this is being utilised to shape the services being provided so that they have a positive impact for local businesses. There is genuine partnership working across the Council, LEP and private sector which has resulted in benefits for all partners. The example of how Cornwall Council has helped businesses with imports and exports and cost savings makes Cornwall strong contenders for the partnership award.

Hertfordshire

Hertfordshire has achieved great success despite being relatively new to the programme, establishing a strong partnership and producing tangible products and positive outcomes. The strength of the partnership is evidenced by the broad range of projects being driven forward within the Regulators' Forum and the diverse membership the group has attracted. The partnership funds a dedicated Project Officer through local authority partners contributing financially to this work.

The whole of Hertfordshire's dedication and commitment makes them one of the strongest partnerships and are an example of what can be achieved. Hertfordshire has also been praised by Kent and Medway for helping them get underway.

Stoke-on-Trent and Staffordshire

Stoke-on-Trent & Staffordshire LEP was an early adopter of the BBfA programme and has brought a wide range of partners around the table. Business representation is a key part of the partnership; the LEP has supported the programme and brought other business members into the group. The partnership has created the Enterprise Round Table, where business support organisations, including regulators, can share information and build their knowledge and confidence. Regulators attend Growth Hub Advisor training sessions and calls are handled by the Business Helpline. One partner, Lichfield DC, created 'Talk to Reg' – an online directory used by BBfA groups nationally.

The judges were particularly impressed by Stoke-on-Trent & Staffordshire's commitment to ensuring that regulation is included in the package of support offered by the Growth Hub to businesses. In addition, the use of the 'Talk to Reg' resource by other partnerships proves the impact of this programme nationally. This is a partnership that continues to go from strength to strength.

Leicester and Leicestershire

Leicester and Leicestershire was the original pathfinder project. The partnership has been consistently strong since the start and continues to make significant contributions to the development of the programme nationally. Business perception surveys undertaken at the start of the programme and since have shown there has been a positive increase in businesses' perceptions of regulators in Leicester and Leicestershire – where 71% of employers feel confident in seeking advice and assistance from regulators on regulatory matters.

The judges were particularly impressed by the progress made by this pathfinder partnership which has been instrumental to the success of other partnerships. Leicester & Leicestershire has used innovation in developing awareness training and has shown the significant impact the programme has had on businesses and the culture change of regulators through case studies and business survey results. Business representation within the programme remains strong.

Individual Ambassador Award

Jane Heeley, Kent and Medway

The Kent and Medway BBfA partnership has gone from strength to strength due to the persistence of Jane, who has constantly been supportive and encouraging in light of challenging circumstances. Jane has been praised as being a key team member among her peers in Kent.

Jane has been recognised as a strong leader who has driven the partnership in Kent and Medway, leading her team to overcome barriers and come up with innovative solutions, such as setting up bbfa.biz as a response to there being no Growth Hub. The judges regarded Jane's enthusiasm and drive to be continuously improving the programme as making her a top contender.

Tim Milsom, Devon and Somerset

Even before the Devon and Somerset BBfA partnership began, Tim was endorsing the concept and principles of BBfA to colleagues, at inspections and with business stakeholders. Tim has been the driving force behind the programme. As Chair of the Steering Group, his enthusiasm and positivity has led to focused and productive meetings. As Chair of the Business Focus Panel, Tim has overcome challenges to ensure regular attendance from business members and has involved the LEP. Given the success of the BBfA alliance the partnership has put in a bid to run the Heart of the South West Growth Hub. Tim has been praised for how engaged he is with the business community and how his passion has been inspiring.

Tim's strong drive to benefit the businesses in Devon and Somerset and ability to involve organisations in the BBfA partnership really stands out. The judges were impressed with Tim's enthusiasm and energy and the "Knit and Stitch" approach he champions which aims to improve relationships between business facing services, and has been recognised by other BBfA partnerships.

Innovation Award

Hertfordshire

Hertfordshire's Business Awareness Training programme has been at the heart of efforts to change cultures and behaviours. The training has been attended by nearly 300 regulators and has increased officers' understanding of the needs of businesses, the importance of building relationships built on trust and understanding to improve compliance, as well as improved officer awareness of the range of regulatory activity and how to access support. The training DVD Hertfordshire produced is now a national resource. Significant progress has been made leading to the achievement of the two primary objectives of the training: making regulators more confident to signpost businesses to other regulators and understanding business challenges better.

The increased business satisfaction scores and success in achieving the primary objectives demonstrate the success of Hertfordshire's approach to this training and the high attendance rates are particularly impressive. The judges were impressed that Hertfordshire had taken the initiative to develop training based on their needs rather waiting for others. As a result other programmes are now attending Hertfordshire's training to experience good practice in order to replicate in their own programmes.

Kent and Medway

Kent and Medway had a 'chicken and egg' scenario where there was no Growth Hub. The partnership was proactive in setting up a website (www.bbfa.biz) so that a single point of contact could be established. The website includes presentations for the training events, business case studies, details on the development of BBfA across Kent & Medway and work towards merging with the Growth Hub.

The judges were impressed by the website and saw it as a great way to collect and distribute information in an accessible way.

Worcestershire Regulatory Services

WRS has devised an innovative, collaborative approach to engage specialist high street food sector businesses through its Asian Seminar Programme, formed through a joint partnership between WRS and Worcester Islamic Association. Initially, there were obstacles to a constructive relationship but now partnership working has evolved through positive support and practical advice provided through a seminar programme. 150 people from over 60 businesses have benefited so far and more events are planned, as well as expansion to other sectors. This work has led to two Primary Authority partnerships being put in place which will help 30,000 business members nationally.

The ability to identify and challenge an issue that results in businesses and regulators working well together fully embraces the principles of BBfA. The judges were impressed by this example of taking those principles and making real positive differences to businesses across the country.

Special Contribution Award

Surrey

Surrey achieved a great response to its business survey and has set up a number of dedicated focus groups and engaged in qualitative survey work in specific areas including hospitality, manufacturing and the care of the elderly. Surrey's strong reputation in undertaking surveys is highlighted by its success in attracting other areas in the south, with a survey spanning the south of England from Devon to Kent and Essex, which received over 1000 responses in total.

Surrey is a programme in its early stages and has made significant headway, particularly in terms of gaining feedback from businesses in the form of surveys to drive change, ensuring that the business voice is the motivation behind this change. The judges welcomed the approach Surrey has taken in ensuring they have the evidence on which to build their local BBfA activity.

Kent & Medway

Kent and Medway has gone from strength to strength in the last 12 months including delivering training to 300 regulators, developing a BBfA-specific website, creating a single point of contact for both businesses and regulators and attending business-to-business events.

The judges were astounded by the progress Kent has made in the 12 months since it started, particularly with delivering the training to regulators and taking the initiative of creating a BBfA-specific website which has been used beyond their area.

Maxine Aldred (Development Manager at Federation of Small Businesses)

Maxine Aldred has been a major part of the BBfA pathfinder partnership within Leicestershire, and was fundamental to starting the programme there. Maxine recognised that there were issues of trust and concern from her business colleagues and that working with regulators could address these issues and help develop better working relationships to support growth and business development. Maxine is a BBfA national champion and has assisted greatly in the development of BBfA across the country including speaking at national conferences about the programme. Maxine's work has resulted in a shift in the perception of both businesses and regulators.

The judges recognised that Maxine's enthusiasm and determination has helped to make BBfA the programme it is today. Maxine has not only been a driving force in Leicester and Leicestershire but has also actively supported Northamptonshire and the national roll out. Her enthusiasm is infectious and her experience invaluable.