

## ERC State of Small Business Britain Conference 2018: 'Productivity and Place'

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### **Overview**

The fifth annual ERC State of Small Business Britain Conference will take place this year on Thursday 21<sup>st</sup> June at The Shard in London. The conference is aimed at anyone interested in the success of the SME community in the UK. We will present new research findings from the ERC, the UK's premier research centre on SME growth, productivity and innovation. Expert speakers and panellists will come from the worlds of policy, research and business support, and business leaders themselves will share their own insights and experiences.

This year the theme of the conference is 'Productivity and Place'. The UK is in a period of considerable economic change and uncertainty as the Brexit negotiations unfold. The Government's recently published Industrial Strategy recognises that if we are to continue to have a competitive national economy, it will be vital to build on the strengths of local economies. But it is also the case that there are strong geographical variations in SME productivity.

Through a range of presentations and panel discussions, the conference will focus on the latest data and evidence on SME performance in the UK, and reflect on the opportunities and challenges involved in designing and delivering local industrial strategies to raise productivity. The conference will also see the launch of the findings from the first ever large-scale survey conducted on microbusinesses in the UK.

The ERC is a widely respected research centre that works closely with policy makers. The core of ERC's research team is based at Aston and Warwick University Business Schools. The Centre combines academic rigour with accessibility and policy relevance. An essential part of the ERC mission is to have real world impact on economic and enterprise policy, and SME business support. Over the last five years, the State of Small Business Britain Conference has become a regular calendar event for many people working in the economic policy and business support fields.

## Conference Programme

### 10.00-10.30: Registration and coffee

#### SESSION 1: SETTING THE CONTEXT

10.30: Introduction and Welcome to Conference (Chair - Lucy Armstrong, Chief Executive, The Alchemists, and Chair of the ERC Steering Group)

10.35: Research presentation: *The State of Small Business Britain – the headlines* (Stephen Roper, Director, ERC and Maria Wishart, ERC Research Fellow)

10.55: Keynote speech: *Industrial Strategy and productivity – challenges and opportunities for SMEs* (Rannia Leontaridi OBE, Director, Business Growth, BEIS)

11.15: Business case study: DM Orthotics Ltd (Dan Severn, Operations Director)

11.30: Q&A with session speakers

### 11.45: Networking and refreshment break

#### SESSION 2: THE SPATIAL DIMENSION

12.05: Research presentation: *The UK Local Growth Dashboard 2018: Key Findings* (Mark Hart, Deputy Director, ERC)

12.25: *A new way of doing business support at the local level* (Andy Lee, Regional Enterprise Manager, NatWest, and Tsitsi Mudokwani, CEO, Sisters Care Services Ltd)

12.45: Panel discussion: *Putting SMEs at the heart of Local Economic Growth* (Irene Graham, CEO ScaleUp Institute; Ben Still, Managing Director, West Yorkshire Combined Authority; Andy Lee, Regional Enterprise Manager, NatWest; Tsitsi Mudokwani, CEO Sisters Care Services Ltd)

### 13.15 – 14.00: Lunch and networking

#### SESSION 3: DRIVING CHANGE

14.00: Keynote speech: *Creating a productivity movement in the UK* (Tony Danker, Chief Executive, Be the Business and the Productivity Leadership Group)

14.25: Panel discussion: *SMEs, productivity and Brexit – challenges and opportunities* (Adam Marshall, Director General British Chambers of Commerce; Sonali Parekh, Head of Policy, Federation of Small Business; Matthew Fell, Chief UK Policy Director, Confederation of British Industry; Tim Vorley, Deputy Director ESRC Productivity Insights Network, University of Sheffield)

15.00: Closing speech: *A future agenda for policy focused SME research* (Stephen Roper, Director of the ERC)

**15.10: Conference close**