

ERC State of Small Business Britain Conference 2019 Building Strength in Sectors or Strengthening Sectors

The 6th annual Enterprise Research Centre (ERC) State of Small Business Britain Conference will take place this year on Thursday 27st June at The Shard in London. The conference, which this year is being held in partnership with the Warwick Manufacturing Group (WMG), focuses on how we can strengthen key sectors of the UK economy. At the event we will present new comparative research on UK firms and hear from industry and policy speakers.

‘Strengthening Sectors’ is at the heart of the Industrial Strategy. Both manufacturing and service firms face significant challenges, however, from increasing global competition as well as the digital revolution. Where do UK businesses stand? Do we have the business mindset to compete effectively? Are UK firms taking full advantage of new digital technologies? How effectively is policy supporting sectoral strengths particularly among SMEs?

Over the last six years, the State of Small Business Britain Conference has become a must-attend event for those working in enterprise research, support and policy.

The ERC is an ESRC funded research centre that works closely with SME policy makers in the UK and internationally. 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. The Warwick Manufacturing Group provides pioneering support for innovation in SMEs. It has worked with thousands of SMEs to help them address technology challenges, exploit new opportunities and gain competitive advantage.

Conference Programme

09.15-09.45: Registration and coffee

09.45: Introduction and Welcome (Professor Nola Hewitt-Dundas, Head of School of Management, Queens University Belfast and Enterprise Research Centre)

SESSION 1: UNDERSTANDING SECTORAL GROWTH AND PRODUCTIVITY

9.50: *The State of Small Business Britain – the Headlines* (Professor Stephen Roper, Director, Enterprise Research Centre)

10.05: *Supporting SMEs through the Industrial Strategy* (Grace Carey, Head of Industrial Strategy Sector Deals, BEIS)

10.20: *Unlocking SME growth in the creative sector* (Dr Josh Siepel, Senior Lecturer, Science Policy Research Unit University of Sussex, and Creative Industries Policy and Evidence Centre)

10.40: *From Boom to Brexit: 11 years of running a creative SME* (Kevin Palmer, Director, Kin)

11.00: Networking and refreshment break

SESSION 2: DRIVING SME SUCCESS IN THE AUTOMOTIVE SECTOR

11.20: *The future of SMEs in the automotive sector* (Professor David Bailey, Birmingham Business School)

11.45: *The 'Mittelstand mindset': How firms in the automotive sector in the UK and Germany are responding to digitisation* (Professor Stephen Roper, Director, Enterprise Research Centre)

12.05: Panel discussion: *How can we make innovation happen in SMEs?* (Archie McPherson, Chief Executive, Warwick Manufacturing Group, Clare Porter, Head of Manufacturing, BEIS; Dolores Sanders, Strategic Director, Total Control Pro Limited) Chair: Lee Hopley, Deputy Director, Enterprise Research Centre

12.40 – 13.30: Lunch and networking

SESSION 3: STRENGTHENING SECTORS AT THE LOCAL LEVEL

13.30: Business speaker: *Richer, safer, fairer. Innovation in London's financial services ecosystem* (Ben Brabyn, CEO Level39)

13.55: *The role of Growth Hubs in strengthening and cultivating sectors locally* (Roya Croudace, Director, Enterprise M3 Growth Hub)

14.15: Panel discussion: *Identifying and growing local sectoral strengths* (Roya Croudace, Director, Enterprise M3 Growth Hub; Mark Basnett, Managing Director, Liverpool City Region LEP; Angela Joyce, Group Principal and Chief Executive, Warwickshire College Group; Rebecca McDonald, Analyst, Centre for Cities) Chair: Professor Mark Hart, Deputy Director, Enterprise Research Centre

14.50: Closing remarks: *Stronger sectors across the UK: How can we best support SMEs?* (Professor Stephen Roper, Director, Enterprise Research Centre)

15.00: Conference close