

ERC State of Small Business Britain Conference 2025
Small business support: inclusion and growth
#SSBBConf25
2nd December 2025
WBS London, 17th floor, The Shard

The 10th annual Enterprise Research Centre (ERC) State of Small Business Britain Conference will take place on 2nd December at The Shard in London, and online.

The focus of the conference this year is on **small business support: inclusion and growth**.

The past few years have thrown an increasing number of challenges in the way of small business leaders and entrepreneurs. Earlier this year, the government published a new small business strategy that set out a long-term direction for small business support in the UK, with a focus on maximising growth and productivity potential.

The strategy aspires to create a system that supports businesses in every community and high street. But how should this more inclusive approach work in practice? How can we ensure that it truly meets the needs of the diverse entrepreneurial community, and creates growth?

The day will include a mix of insights from ERC and wider research, and stimulating dialogue with a range of academic, business and policy speakers.

The ERC is the leading centre of excellence in the UK for research into the growth, innovation and productivity of SMEs and has become the reference point for anyone looking for robust, trusted data and insights on SME performance. We work closely with SME policymakers, combining academic rigour with accessibility and policy relevance.

The State of Small Business Britain Conference has become a 'must-attend' event for those interested in enterprise research, support and policy. The conference is free of charge to attend, and spaces are limited, so please register early to secure your place.

ERC State of Small Business Britain Conference 2025

Small business support: inclusion and growth

Conference Programme

SESSION 1:

09.15-09.45: Registration and coffee

09.45-09.50: Chair's introduction and welcome: Jane Galsworthy, Oxford Innovation Advice

09.50-10.10: Opening presentation: *Growth for all: A positive policy agenda*, Professor Stephen Roper and Professor Mark Hart, Enterprise Research Centre

10.10-10.40: Research presentation: *Why we should back the everyday economy*, Professor Monder Ram, Aston University

10.40-11.15: Practitioner presentation: *Reimagining entrepreneurship: How might we build a more inclusive startup ecosystem where the school you went to, or how much money your family has, are not the main predictors of entrepreneurial success?* Kelly Bowers, City Ventures

11.15 - 11.35: Coffee break

11.35-12.00: In conversation: *A small business strategy that works for the long term*, Professor Mark Hart, Enterprise Research Centre, in conversation with Angelina Cannizzaro, Department for Business and Trade

12.00-12.30: Research presentation: *Supporting innovation and growth in female-led businesses*, Dr Lorna Treanor, University of Nottingham

12.30 -13.15: Lunch and networking

SESSION 2:

13.15-13.50: Business panel discussion: *Priorities for small business support in uncertain times*, Emily Whitehead, Simply Great Britain; Lisa Pogson, Airmaster; Darren Joint, Viking Signs; Damini Sharma, OM Group. Chair: Liz Barclay, Institute of Directors

13.50-14.20: Research presentation: *Navigating the security landscape: Challenges for SMEs*, Professor Steven Furnell, University of Nottingham

14.20-14.30: Comfort break

14.30-15.00: In conversation: *Building a strong local entrepreneurial ecosystem*, Greg Clark, Warwick Innovation District in conversation with Steve Rigby, Rigby Group

15.00-15.20: Practitioner presentation: *Who supports the supporters?* Alex Till, National Enterprise Network

15.20-15.50: Closing presentation: *The resilient entrepreneur: From crisis to enlightenment* Dr Rachel Doern, Goldsmiths, University of London

15.50-16.00: Closing remarks – Jane Galsworthy and Stephen Roper

16.00-16.30: Conference close – followed by networking and drinks reception