



**VENTUREFEST**

**WEST MIDLANDS 2024**

**Programme**

# Sponsor page

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## Partners



# Contents

<b>Chair's Introduction</b>	<b>5</b>
<b>Programme</b>	<b>7</b>
<b>List of Exhibitors</b>	<b>12</b>
<b>Venue Layout</b>	<b>13</b>
<b>Speakers</b>	<b>19</b>
<b>Exhibitors</b>	<b>31</b>
<b>Programme Overview</b>	<b>46</b>



Innovate  
UK

ICURE

Innovate UK's Innovation-to-Commercialisation of University Research (ICURE) programme is pleased to join Venturefest 2024 and be part of Minerva Birmingham Pitchup again.

ICURE is the UK's leading early-stage research accelerator programme, which guides academic researchers through the process of refining and validating the commercial potential of their ideas. Those presenting at Venturefest have passed through this rigorous process and are seeking to commercialise their research.

It's an excellent opportunity to see some exciting research emanating from some of the UK's Universities.

The audience will also be given a chance to vote on the best opportunity and pitch which they feel should join the finalists in the Minerva Birmingham PitchUp final running on the same day.

**21<sup>st</sup> March at 14:00-14:50**

Join us in the Exhibition room to meet those companies pitching and hear their pitches in the Ashstead Suite (Upstairs).



[www.icureprogramme.com](http://www.icureprogramme.com)

**#InnovateUKFunded**

## Chair's Introduction

Welcome to Venturefest West Midlands 2024, an event all about inspiring, supporting and celebrating innovation and entrepreneurship in the region. Our goal is to connect innovators, entrepreneurs, businesses, investors, market opportunities and business support to help our innovative entrepreneurs and businesses to flourish.

As usual we are offering an exciting and varied programme of talks and discussions to give you inspiration, information and guidance, kicking off with Deb Leary talking about starting and scaling her business, Forensic Pathways, and how it has adapted to new demands and customers over its 20 years. Throughout the day we have a substantial exhibition and networking space, which this year includes a zone dedicated to the West Midlands Innovation Accelerator programmes and the businesses they are supporting. Listening to previous feedback from those new to our innovation ecosystem, we have added a desk where we can help you to find the exhibitors most relevant to you, opposite the door you enter from the registration desk.

The last year has been challenging on many fronts for business, but the West Midlands continues to have plenty of innovation and enterprise to celebrate, inspire and invest in. This year the Minerva Pitch Up competition has had the strongest field ever, so come and listen to the finalists pitching in front of investors and support organisations, as well as the ever excellent ICURe Showcase. You may wonder what happens to previous Pitch Up finalists, so this year we are showcasing four panel winners in a session looking at the next stages in their business growth and lessons learnt.

I would like to thank all our great speakers and exhibitors, and the Venturefest WM 2024 Steering Group and colleagues who have worked hard to put together a day that should be inspiring, insightful and informative. I would also like to thank all our partners and sponsors who allow us to deliver a packed day of activity that can be offered for free to encourage wide participation from across the innovation and entrepreneurship community of the West Midlands. But mostly, thank you for attending Venturefest WM 2024, whatever your reasons for joining us.

We wish all our delegates, speakers, sponsors and exhibitors a great day and hope Venturefest WM 2024 has a huge amount to offer you. Please share your feedback on the form accessible via the QR code in reception so we can continue to improve the Venturefest WM offer in 2025 – our 10th Venturefest West Midlands!

### **Dr Pam Waddell OBE**

Executive Chair of Venturefest West Midlands 2024  
Director of Innovation Alliance West Midlands





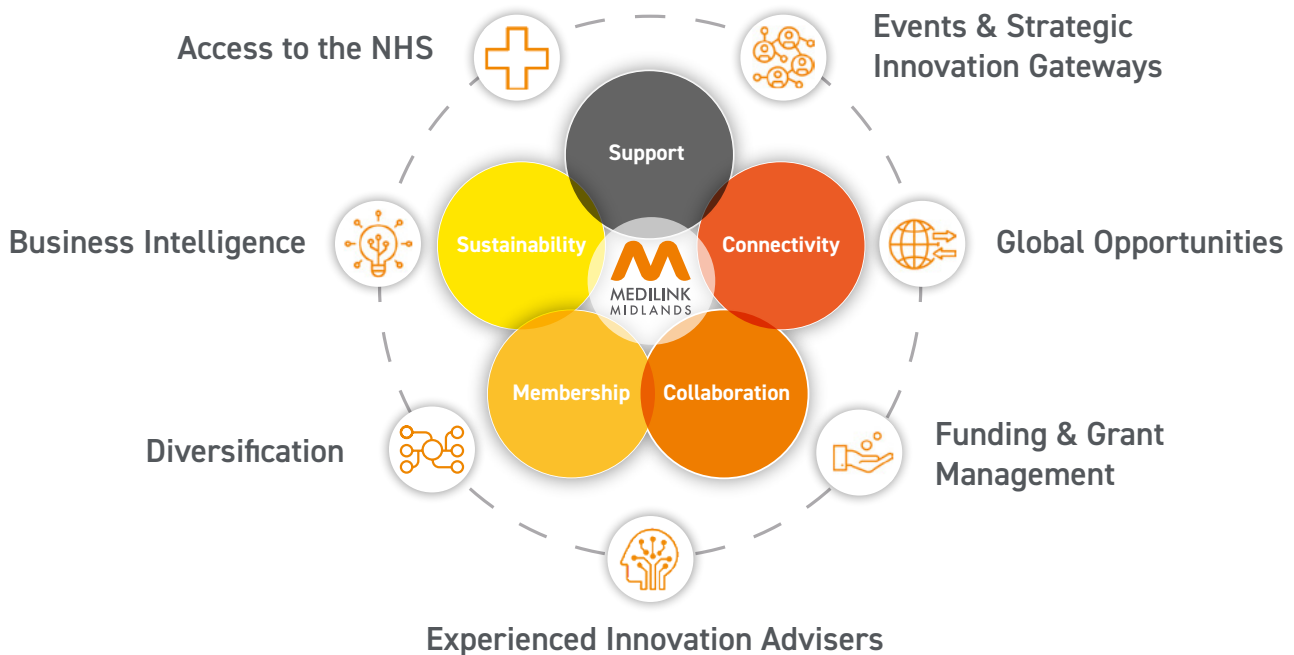
# The Voice of the Life Sciences Industry



Medilink Midlands sits at the heart of academia, business, government and the NHS across the region, with a vision to accelerate innovation and stimulate regional economic growth.

We are a provider of life sciences innovation and business support, developing clusters and ecosystems to help businesses establish, develop and grow.

## HOW WE CAN SUPPORT YOU:



E: [info@medilinkmidlands.com](mailto:info@medilinkmidlands.com) T: 0121 452 5630

[www.medilinkmidlands.com](http://www.medilinkmidlands.com)

[in @Medilink-Midlands](https://www.linkedin.com/company/medilink-midlands) [X @MedilinkMids](https://twitter.com/MedilinkMids)

Get in touch to see how we can help you



# Programme

**08:15 – 09:00**

45 minutes

**Registration and networking  
with light refreshments**

Main Foyer, Belmont Foyer and  
Affinity Suite

**08:15 – 17:00**

8 hours 45 minutes

**Sponsor, partners and other  
exhibitors; Pitch Up; ICURe;  
Innovation Accelerator Zone**

Affinity Suite

**08:15 – 17:00**

8 hours 45 minutes

**Networking and light  
refreshments**

Main Foyer & Belmont Foyer

**09:00 – 09:10**

10 minutes

**Chair's Welcome to  
Venturefest West Midlands  
2024 – Pam Waddell**

Belmont Suite

The chair will give words of welcome and an introduction to plenary speakers and format of the day.

**09:10 – 09:40**

30 minutes

**Keynote – Fireside chat with  
Professor Deb Leary, Founder  
and CEO Forensic Pathways  
& Scale-up Director IUK Edge  
with interviewer Adam Dent**

Belmont Suite

In this session Adam Dent will interview Deb Leary about her experience as Founder and CEO of a successful and sustained West Midlands business, Forensic Pathways, as well exploring how she will bring that experience, and her recent role as Chair of the Birmingham Chamber of Commerce, to her new role in supporting businesses as Scale-Up Director for Innovate UK Edge.

## 09:50 – 10.40

50 minutes

### Session 1A – How the West Midlands is trailblazing the Innovation Revolution (Sponsored by WMCA)

Belmont Suite

Hear from the West Midlands Innovation Board and the region's innovation accelerator projects on how the West Midlands leads the charge at the frontier of the UK's Innovation Revolution, exploiting our advanced engineering capabilities to develop cleantec and meditec clusters. Find out why we were chosen as one of only three regions nationally for a share of £100m funding from central government, and what we're doing to make our innovation ecosystem as inclusive as possible.

#### Chair:

- **Kezia Williamson**, Head of Place at Innovate UK KTN

#### Speakers:

- **Mike Wright**, Chair of WM Innovation Board
- **Tim Luft**, Create Central and WMIP CoLAB project
- **Catherine Hadfield**, Connected Places Catapult and DIATOMIC programme
- **Martin Levermore**, CEO Medical Devices Technology International Ltd

## 09:50 – 10:40

50 minutes

### Minerva Pitch Up Heat 1

Ashtead Suite (1st floor)

## 10:40 – 11:10

30 minutes

### Coffee/tea break and networking

## 11:10 – 12:00

50 minutes

### Session 2A – Four Ps of successful product development – People, Planet, Partnerships and Profit (Sponsored by Medilink Midlands)

Belmont Suite

This session will explore four key factors that can greatly impact the success of a new product - User-centred design (People); sustainability and circularity (Planet); working effectively with your supply chain (Partnership); and routes to maximising commercial success (Profit).

#### Chair:

- **Christian Kumar**, Chief Executive Officer of Medtech Makers Lab Ltd

#### Speakers:

- **Mel Davidson**, CEO Medilink Midlands (Partnerships)
- **David Phasey**, 3P Innovation (People)
- **Marcelle Batson-Warner**, Founder & CEO, One Stop Engineering (Planet)
- **Mark Evans**, Partner, Crowe LLP (Profit)



**11:10 – 12:00**

50 minutes

**Minerva Pitch Up Heat 2**

Ashtead Suite (1st floor)

**12:10 – 13:00**

50 minutes

**Session 3A - Business innovation and skills responses to the demand for a cleaner greener future (Sponsored by ERS Hub)**

Belmont Suite

Businesses are innovating and re-skilling to adapt to increasing public and policy demands for greater sustainability. This session will explore the business opportunities, approaches and funding available to support your business to benefit from this revolution.

**Chair:**

- **Deepak Farmah**, Coventry University

**Speakers:**

- **Pamela Farries**, Midlands Aerospace Alliance (Transport/ mobility)
- **Debbie Ward**, Cirklo Consult (Circular economy)
- **Tony Harper**, Director of Faraday Institute (policy and funding)
- **David Gaughan**, Head of Employer Services, WMCA (skills)

**12:10 – 13:00**

50 minutes

**Session 3B – Pitch Up – Where are they now: take inspiration from those who've done it before**

Ashtead Suite

Learn, reflect and take inspiration from past Pitch Up competitions. This panel session will explore where past winners and finalists are now and what helped and hindered them along the way. Discussions will cover key topics such as did they get investment, (was it what they needed), what is their ultimate piece of advice for those looking for investment, and how connections make all the difference.

**Chair:**

- **Paula Whitehouse**, Aston Centre for Growth

**Speakers:**

- **Kameese Davis**, Nylah's Naturals
- **Mark Platt**, Figura Analytics
- **Neel Thakrar**, tuck.
- **Surlender Pendress**, Love Writing Co.

**13:00 – 14:00**

1 hour

**Lunch and networking**

## 14:00 – 14:50

50 minutes

### **Session 4A - AI in action - opportunities, challenges, and solutions across different business sectors**

(Sponsored by VWV)

Belmont Suite

Artificial Intelligence (AI) is already a reality in innovative businesses in many sectors. This session will illustrate how different types of businesses in the West Midlands are taking up the opportunities and challenges of AI, including legal and commercial issues, as well as highlighting support for AI in business.

#### **Chair:**

- **Claire Hall**, VWV

#### **Speakers:**

- **Chris Meah**, the Chair of the AI and Future Tech Forum
- **Clive Summerfield**, Founder and CEO - FARx Group
- **Trias Gkikopoulos** - Innovate UK UKRI

## 14:00 – 14:50

50 minutes

### **Session 4B – ICURE Showcase**

Ashtead Suite

## 15:00 – 16:10

1 hour 10 minutes

### **Pitch Up – the Final (NatWest Sponsored)**

Belmont Suite

A highlight of every Venturefest is when the best pitches selected by the panels in the morning heats of Pitch Up and ICURE go head-to-head in the final. The overall winner is decided by a live audience vote!

## 16:10 – 16:15

5 minutes

### **Wrap up and looking forward by Pam Waddell**

Belmont Suites

## 16:15 – 17:00

45 minutes

### **Close, networking and refreshments**



## WHY US

Rooted in electrification and underpinned by in-depth specialist knowledge, we offer access to training, job opportunities and a community, making us your primary resource for skills guidance. Through talent enhancement and skill optimisation, ERS Hub connects individuals, employers and training providers into one community, bridging the divide between education and industry.

## OUR FEATURES

### Course Catalogue

Discover an extensive array of electrification courses and CPD from universities and training providers conveniently consolidated in one location.

### Jobs Board

Expand your reach by posting electrification job openings on our platform and connecting with a broader network of potential candidates.

### PEMD Body of Knowledge

A catalogue of specifications that will clarify skills, competencies, requirements, and training essential for electrification and creating a common language for skills and competencies.

### Self-Assessment Tool

The self-assessment tool guides learners and experts in developing electrification capability. Full workforce analysis can be commissioned for in-depth data-driven evaluation.



## SOCIAL MEDIA

- Follow and subscribe to all social accounts:



## PODCAST

- Subscribe to the ERS Hub YouTube channel or preferred Podcast platforms.
- Enjoy our podcast and take part in the E-bike competition.





**PENNINGTONS  
MANCHES  
COOPER**

# HELPING INNOVATORS DELIVER REAL-WORLD OUTCOMES

What our clients say about our spin-out and startup lawyers

**DEEP EXPERIENCE  
IN UNDERSTANDING  
THE REQUIREMENTS OF BOTH  
INVESTORS AND INVESTEES**

LEGAL 500

**VERY EXPERIENCED AND  
KNOWLEDGEABLE ABOUT  
UNIVERSITY SPIN-OUTS**

LEGAL 500

**A LASER-LIKE FOCUS ON  
THE DESIRED OUTCOME  
LEFT ME FEELING LIKE WE GOT  
TREMENDOUS VALUE**

LEGAL 500

**THEY HAVE A KNACK FOR  
UNDERSTANDING THE  
COMMERCIAL CONSIDERATIONS**

LEGAL 500



**TOP TIER  
2023**

LONDON BASINGSTOKE BIRMINGHAM CAMBRIDGE GUILDFORD OXFORD READING  
MADRID PARIS PIRAEUS SINGAPORE

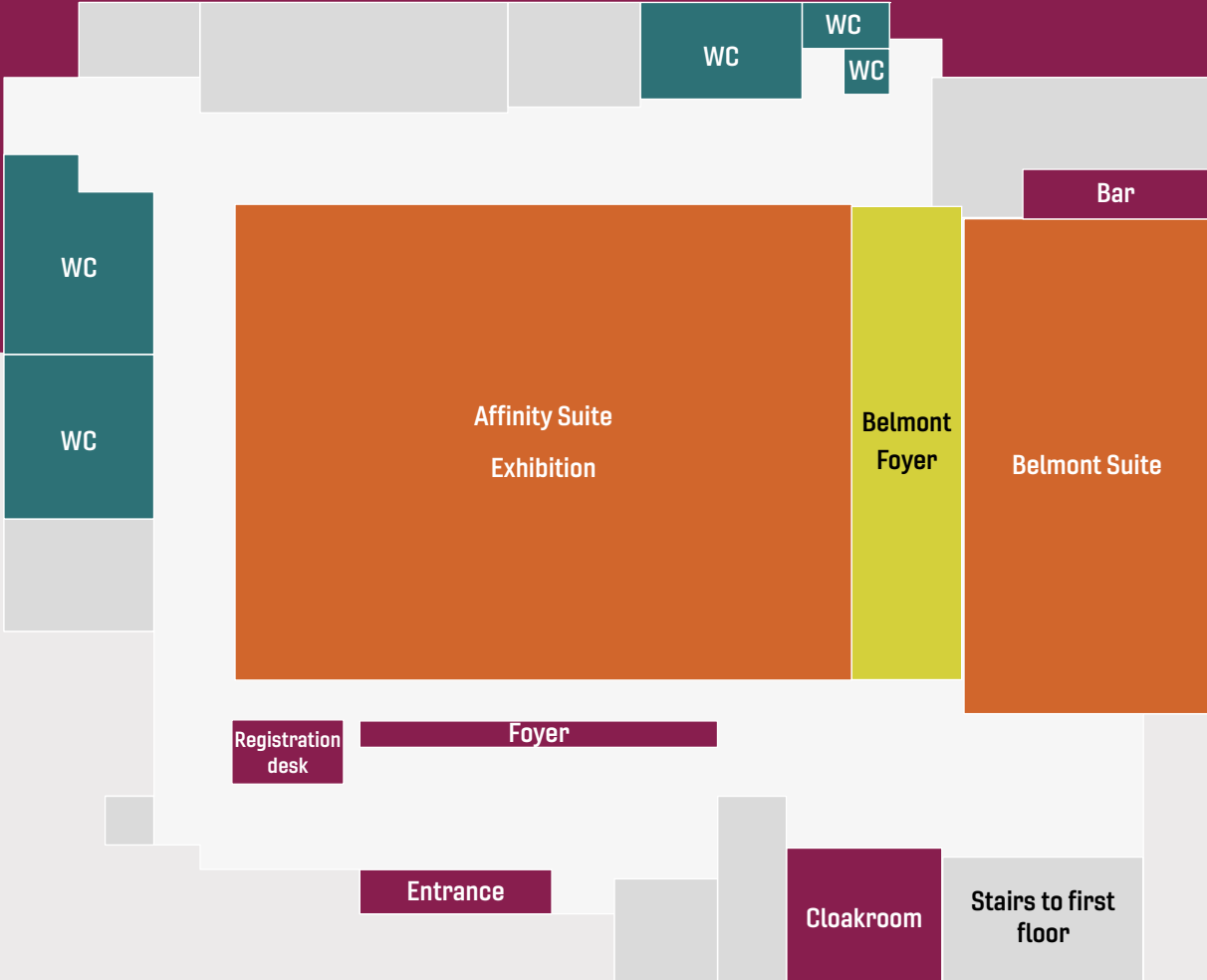
[www.penningtonslaw.com](http://www.penningtonslaw.com)

## List of Exhibitors

- Accelerate Associates
- Aston University
- Barclays Eagle Labs
- BEC
- BCCRE
- Biochar Clean Tech Accelerator
- Business Growth WM
- Birmingham City University
- Birmingham Tech Week
- Bruntwood SciTech
- Clean Futures Catalyst
- Create Central
- Decarbonisation Net Zero
- Diatomic
- Edwards Accountants
- ERS Hub
- Forresters
- ICURE
- Innovate UK Edge
- Innovation Alliance for the WM
- Ladders Solicitors
- Medilink Midlands
- Midlands Aerospace Alliance
- National Brownfield Institute
- NatWest
- Navigation Station
- Oxford Innovation Advice
- Penningtons
- Supertech WM
- Sustainability WM
- TBAT Innovation
- Technology Supply Chain
- Tech WM
- Transport for WM (TfWM)
- University of Birmingham
- University of Warwick
- University of Wolverhampton
- VWV
- Warwick Manufacturing Group
- WM Health Tech Innovation Accelerator (WMHTIA)
- WM Health Technology Cluster

# Venue Layout

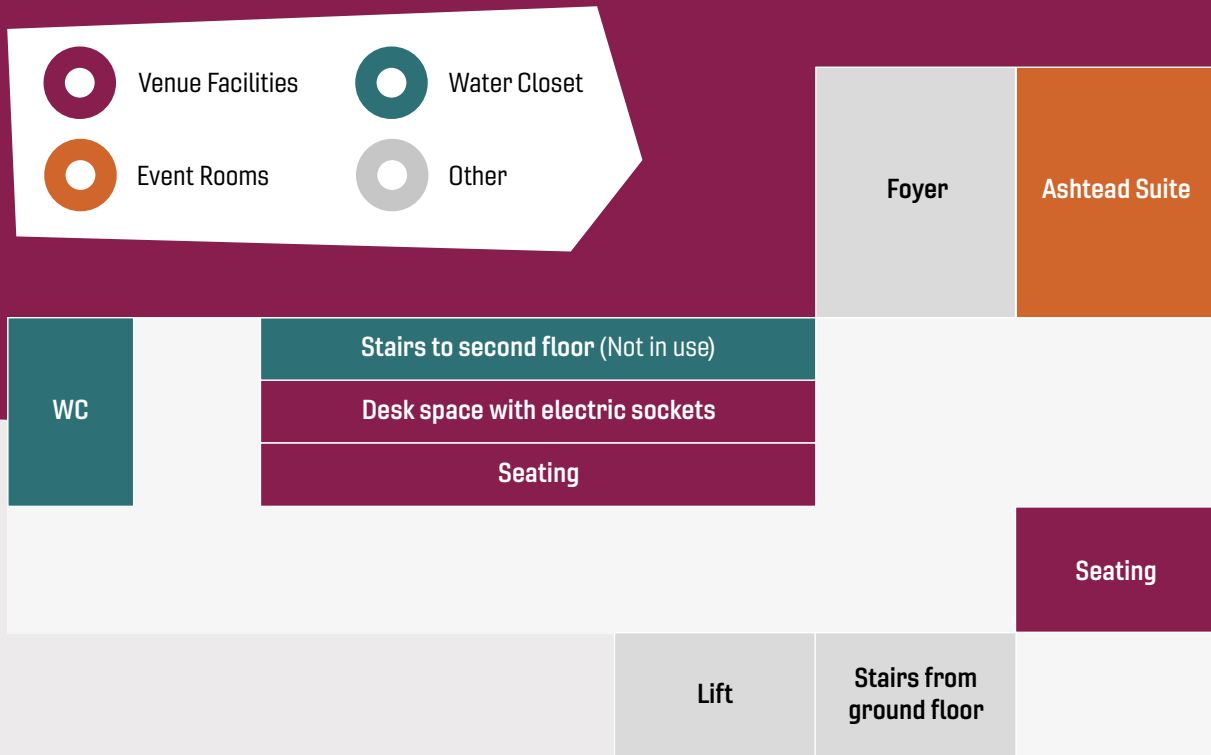
## Ground floor



Legend for Venue Layout:

- Venue Facilities
- Water Closet
- Event Rooms
- Other

## First floor - Ashtead Suite



# MINERVA BUSINESS ANGELS NETWORK

- Over £120m invested
- Most prolific investor in the Midlands\*
- Third most active network in the UK\*
- Top 10 investor in Cleantech in 2022\*
- Angel Investor of the Year 2023\*\*

- E: [enquiries@minerva.uk.net](mailto:enquiries@minerva.uk.net)
- W: [minerva.uk.net](http://minerva.uk.net)
- [minerva-business-angels](https://www.linkedin.com/company/minerva-business-angels)



### In collaboration with



\*Beauhurst, \*\*SME Financial News

# Need Specialist Advice for Your Startup or Scaleup?

Our team of legal experts will give your company the best possible chance of succeeding by:

- using their expertise in technology, life sciences, healthcare, education and advanced engineering
- helping you capitalise on investment and other funding opportunities
- guiding you on the necessary steps to protect and commercialise your IP
- advising on contracts, policies, share option schemes and other employee incentives
- offering fixed and discounted fees and time to pay arrangements



To discuss your startup or scaleup's requirements, please contact  
Nathan Guest at [nquest@vww.co.uk](mailto:nquest@vww.co.uk) or 07795 271 513.

## Affinity Suite



Entrance





Registration desk




Foyer Area



 Pitch Up and ICURE companies

 Innovation Accelerator programmes

 Sponsor, partner and exhibitor stands

Sustainability WM  
Create Central  
Supertech WM

Seating

University of Birmingham  
VWV

Pitch Up

Pitch Up  
NatWest  
Penningtons

Entrance

Lodders Solicitors  
Bruntswood SciTech

Barclays Bank  
University of W'ton

BEC  
Aston University  
Electric Revolution Skills Hub

Pitch Up

Midlands Aerospace Alliance and BCRRE  
Edwards Accountants

Pitch Up  
BCU  
University of Warwick

Seating

Entrance

I-Cure  
Decarbonisation Net Zero  
Business Growth West Midlands

Pitch Up

Entrance

Foyer Area



UNIVERSITY OF BIRMINGHAM

# We forge industry partnerships to create real change



Find out more about how we can work together by visiting: [birmingham.ac.uk/partners](http://birmingham.ac.uk/partners)

We collaborate  
We activate

[birmingham.ac.uk](http://birmingham.ac.uk)



## Lifelong Learning for Entrepreneurs

Aston Centre for Growth creates impact for businesses through a range of specialist and practical programmes and offers other business support opportunities.

### How we can help you:



#### GROW

Build a resilient, productive, sustainable, and profitable business.



#### DEVELOP

Improve your leadership skills and adopt better management practices.



#### ENGAGE

Connect with a network of ambitious business leaders.

Aston University  
BIRMINGHAM UK

Centre for Growth



Aston Centre For Growth  
 @AstonGrowth  
 [centreforgrowth@aston.ac.uk](mailto:centreforgrowth@aston.ac.uk)



Scan to find out more

## Speakers



Chair

**Dr. Pam  
Waddell OBE**

**Innovation Alliance  
for the West Midlands  
and Venturefest West  
Midlands**

Innovation Alliance for the West Midlands and Venturefest West Midlands

Pam is the founding Director of the Innovation Alliance for the West Midlands, a partnership working to stimulate innovation across the West Midlands through building a vibrant innovation ecosystem and catalysing collaborative activity focussed on demand-led innovation.

She is also a founder and Executive Chair of Venturefest West Midlands.

A recognised authority in innovation as a driver for economic growth and improved public services, Pam has designed and delivered the WM Innovation Programme with WMCA and multiple business-facing partners. She was awarded an OBE for 'services to innovation in the West Midlands in 2019.



Keynote Speaker

**Professor Deb  
Leary OBE,  
D.Univ, FRSA**

**Founder & CEO Forensic  
Pathways/Scaleup  
Director, Innovate  
UK EdgeVenturefest  
West Midlands**

Deborah has been at the forefront of business build, innovation, and international trade, since incorporating Forensic Pathways Ltd in 2001. She and her team continually anticipated the varied changing forensic/threat landscape. The company is now a lead in risk and reputation management through its provision of threat intelligence technology and consultancy.

The Innovate UK Edge Scaleup Programme is the flagship business support service for Innovate UK and Deborah's national role is to support companies with a growth potential of 50% per annum, driven by disruptive innovation, with an intention to expand into new or international markets.

Deborah has won several awards for innovation, business and international trade and has been resident of the Greater Birmingham Chamber of Commerce, only the third woman to hold the position since 1813.

She appeared on the Northern Power Women Future List in 2023.



## **Adam Dent**

**Founder, Advent Communications**

Adam was the founder of Advent Communications and a fully qualified journalist with more than 20 years of experience.

He helped build Advent to be one of the most respected in its sector in the region, and it acts for many of the key stakeholder organisations across the Midlands. Adam masterminded the sale of the company to the PLMR Group, a top 50 UK comms firm in the UK, and has been retained as a consultant with the company through his company Cartway Consultants.



## **Andrew Cruxton**

**Head of Enterprise Development and Collaboration, University of Birmingham Enterprise**

Andrew is the Head of Enterprise Development and Collaboration at University of Birmingham Enterprise, the Technology Transfer Office at the University of Birmingham. Andrew and the team work with academic entrepreneurs and businesses from across the region, providing business support, training and mentoring. Andrew has been part of Pitch Up and Venturefest every year since its inception.



## **Alexis (Alex) Toft**

**Head of Minerva Business Angels**

Alex is a dynamic leader at the forefront of the angel investing landscape. With a passion for identifying and nurturing emerging ventures, Alex brings a wealth of experience and insight to his role, driving strategic investment decisions and fostering growth within the entrepreneurial community.

In addition to his professional endeavours, Alex is deeply committed to fostering diversity and inclusion within the startup ecosystem. He actively supports initiatives aimed at levelling the playing field for underrepresented founders and works tirelessly to create opportunities for marginalised communities to thrive.

Alex is a key promoter of lifelong learning throughout your career.

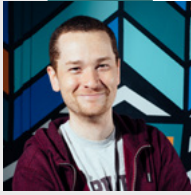


## **Catherine Hadfield**

**Principal Place Development lead at the Connected Places Catapult**

Catherine is an innovation, economic development and public policy professional. She is Principal Place Development lead at the Connected Places Catapult, leading the delivery of the multi-million-pound Diatomic programme, as part of the West Midlands Combined Authority Innovation Accelerator programme.

Catherine's knowledge spans a number of sectors including: curating innovation ecosystems, economic development, public policy, public affairs, infrastructure, master planning and strategic advisory.



## Dr. Chris Meah

Founder and CEO,  
School of Code

Chris started his journey in AI and Computer Science, learning with the University of Birmingham. Recognising the promise of AI, but also the cliff edge of automation that would impact a lot of society, Chris set up the School of Code to make sure people gained the confidence and capability to shape the future, not be left behind by it.

School of Code's is an intensive, free coding bootcamp that pioneered the model in the UK. Its mission is to help people from all backgrounds become skilled technologists, building a unique pool of top tech talent and linking it with the world's best tech companies.

Chris is also Chair of the West Midlands AI and Future Tech Forum.



## Christian Kumar

Chief Executive Office,  
MedTech Makers Lab

Christian is, a seasoned professional, transitioned from a successful career in investment banking to become a trailblazing innovator and lecturer.

In 2019, he established the MedTech Makers Lab, pioneering pathways for global medical technology innovations to thrive in the Midlands. Christian imparts his expertise as an innovation management instructor at six universities spanning five countries and facilitates acceleration labs throughout the EU.

His teachings cover strategic roadmapping and funding strategies, empowering companies to navigate the dynamic landscape of innovation. With a passion for transforming ideas into reality, Christian continues to shape the future of MedTech and innovation worldwide.



## Claire Hall

Legal Director, VWV

Claire is a Legal Director at VWV's Birmingham office specialising in data protection law. Born and raised in the West Midlands, Claire has been a practising solicitor for over a decade. Claire has been praised for combining technical expertise with strategic advice.

She understands the importance by aligning data protection compliance with wider business objectives and does not believe that compliance stands in the way of technical innovation. Claire is interested in helping her clients to harness the benefits of AI but also keen to explore how AI has the potential to transform the legal services sector.



## Clive Summerfield

Founder and CEO,  
FARx Group

FARx is the developer of proprietary fused AI/ML voice-face biometrics recognition technologies. FARx is Clive's 3rd tech start-up.

He previously founded speech recognition and voice biometric companies in Sydney and Canberra which grew from a zero-funded start-up to over A\$80 million with sales in the UK, the US, Australia, and New Zealand. Clive has over 20 patents in chip design and AI/ML voice processing granted in the UK, US, Australia, Canada, and China.



## **David Gaughan**

**Head of Employer Services, West Midlands Combined Authority**

David has been tasked with driving the WM recovery post pandemic and linking residents to good quality jobs. David is also tasked with providing opportunities to upskill residents to better paid sustainable employment through in-work progression and working with industry to shape an employer offer to meet labour demand and upskilling of the current work force.

During his career, David has supported a wide range of blue-chip employers in establishing workforce development solutions through apprenticeship and other bespoke learning provision. This has led to significantly improved current and future organisational performance outcomes.

David has won several awards during his career.



## **David Phasey**

**Business Development Director, 3P Innovation Ltd.**

David Phasey is the Business development director at 3P Innovation Ltd. in Warwick, automation experts helping clients commercialise their products.

After graduating from the University of Bath with a degree in Innovation and Engineering design, he worked for Xerox in product development and as part of the Industrial Design & Human factors team.

Since joining 3P innovation in 2011, David has been supporting client develop their groundbreaking medical devices and consumer products, from concept through to commercial scale automation and is a named inventor on multiple patents for his clients.



## **Debbie Ward**

**Director, Cirklo Consult**

Debbie has over 20 years' experience in the construction industry. Increasing involvement with the circular economy agenda over several years, both through work, studying the Innovation, Enterprise & Circular Economy PGCert and being co-organiser of the local Circular Economy Club chapter, resulted in Debbie establishing Cirklo Consult to focus on circular economy related training and support including Carbon Literacy & Circular Economy courses.

Debbie's keen interest in circular economy in construction led to her becoming a Director of The Rebuild Site CIC which takes surplus materials from construction sites and builders merchants diverting them from landfill to be reused or repurposed. She currently also works part time with The Alliance for Sustainable Building Products as a Reuse & Circular Economy Associate leading on the Reuse Now campaign.



## Deepak Farmah

**Head of Innovation  
Coventry University,  
Director of Electric  
Revolution Skills Hub**

An expert in challenge-led innovation and research at the intersection of industry and academia, with a proven track record of developing, launching and growing high-impact solutions nationally and internationally. History of successfully facilitating and supporting organisations to develop the capabilities and agility needed to reimagine their value-chains, interact with academia and become leaders in their industrial ecosystems.

As the Director of the Electric Revolution Skills Hub, Deepak has used his extensive knowledge in supporting nascent national markets in developing the right skills and talent pools, recently launching the ERS Hub to support UK innovation in line with the current and future skills needs for the Electrification/PEMD community.



## Kameese Davis

**Founder and CEO,  
Nylah's Naturals**

Kam is not only a visionary entrepreneur but also a proud mother of two. She leads a trailblazing vegan haircare brand tailored for Afro-textured and curly hair, Kam has emerged as a formidable force in the beauty and wellness industry.

In 2020, Kam embarked on a mission to revolutionize haircare, resulting in a brilliant hair care product that has garnered acclaim and numerous industry accolades.

Despite the challenges of entrepreneurship, Kam has steered Nylah's Naturals to widespread recognition and, availability in major retailers such as Superdrug and Boots is a testament to her resilience and passion.

Kam's journey is not just a story of business triumph; it is a narrative of empowerment, innovation, and the fulfilment of dreams.



## Kate Angel

**Head of Business Support Operations, Aston Centre for Growth;  
Aston Business School**

Aston Business School offers lifelong learning for Entrepreneurs. Kate has been in the Centre for over nine years and is currently a key member of the senior team. Kate manages the operations and is responsible for leading the successful delivery of Centres activities, ensuring quality, relevance and engagement for beneficiaries and stakeholders. Kate holds substantial programme management experience across a number of high-profile programmes and is a key member of the Pitch Up Steering group an investment readiness competition part of the Venturefest West Midlands annual event.

Previously, as a Business Enterprise Manager for The Peter Jones Enterprise Academy, Kate specialised in sourcing business support for FE business students to support the underpinning of their learning and coordinated the set-up of FE Enterprise Programmes across the region. In this role Kate was awarded the first ever Business Enterprise Manager of the Year award by Peter Jones OBE.



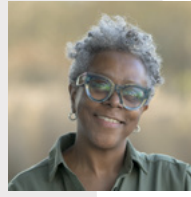
## **Kezia Williamson**

**Head of Place at Innovate UK KTN**

Kezia leads on the development of the Place strategic priority and has worked in innovation commercialisation for 15 years, both within and across sectors.

She has significant experience of developing programmes to enable companies to innovate. Specialising in business innovation and development through access to funding, she has helped companies and consortia across the UK to secure innovation funding, including early-stage equity investment.

Kezia has also run innovation funding programmes, managed large, international, collaborative research projects, established a data-driven insights and policy unit, and pioneered D&I programmes.



## **Marcelle Batson-Warner**

**Founder & CEO, One Stop Engineering**

Marcelle is a Chartered Engineer (MIET) and KTP Associate, delivering a Circular Economy Transformation project with a Midlands based manufacturing company in conjunction with Innovate UK and WMG. Marcelle has over 30 years' experience in the Automotive industry working on a variety of new vehicle programs.

She is currently focused on Manufacturing SMEs and midcap size businesses supporting them adopt circular economy principles in their business operations. She is also studying part-time at Warwick Business School for her DBA doctorate. Her research looks at how knowledge transfers between academia and industry and how this can be applied in the context of how manufacturing SMEs can transition from linear to circular business models.



## **Mark Evans**

**Partner, Crowe UK Ltd**

Mark's 30 years of experience, gained primarily from working with businesses in the £5m to £100m turnover segment, gives him a broad spectrum of expertise to draw upon. His clients range from family-owned businesses to international and AIM listed groups.

He works with broad range of clients with a string emphasis on the manufacturing sector. His work with clients ranges from technical audit matters, accounting advice and support to business strategy and succession planning. Mark has a significant number of UK subsidiaries with parents in Europe and USA





**Mark Platt**  
CTO, Figura Analytics

Mark was a Reader of Nanotechnology at Loughborough University. He has developed the area of aptamer sensors and resistive pulse sensors and grew the research and impact to become a global leader in the field, working with collaborators in a range of industries and disciplines. The research developed novel IP and Mark and Rhush Maugi launched a spinout company called "Figura Analytics" in 2021.

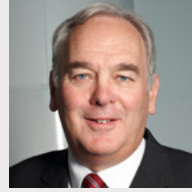
Figura Analytics aims to revolutionize the speed and accuracy of liquid analysis and has secured >£900K of Venture Capital and Angel Investment. Working with Coca-Cola, Tennents and many others to validate the technology. Figura are growing sales in the UK and Europe, and more recently have been exploring the fit in medical, life sciences and pharmaceutical markets.



**Martin Levermore**  
Founder and CEO, Medical Devices Technology International Ltd.

Professor Martin Levermore MBE has over 25 years of experience in the Life Science Sector. He chairs Medilink Midlands, the region's largest network of Life Science companies.

Martin is an adviser to Cancer Research UK, NED on the Royal Wolverhampton NHS Trust board, a Senior Associate with the Royal Society of Medicine, a Chartered Member of the Chartered Institute of Securities and Investment, and a Fellow of the Royal Society of Arts.



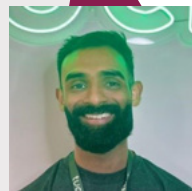
**Mike Wright**  
Chair, West Midlands Innovation Board

Following Mike's extensive automotive career has held Board roles in FTSE and NA listed businesses, and in leading UK Education, Sports, and Arts organisations focused on the West Midlands.

Has held a variety of NED roles including Pendragon plc, Uni-Select Inc, Aston University, Baker Dearing Education Trust, Warwickshire County Cricket Club and the Royal Shakespeare Company.

Has contributed to government policy with leadership roles in the Automotive Investment Organisation, West Midlands CBI Council and EEF (now Make UK).

Mike has been the independent Chair of the West Midlands Innovation Board since 2019.



**Neel Thakrar**  
Co-founder, tuck.

Neel is one of the co-founders of tuck.

tuck. is a mobile marketplace that connects users with the best hospitality businesses nationwide. Say goodbye to loyalty cards, discount codes and vouchers. We provide users with personalised cashback incentives within 24-72 hours, powered by Open Banking.

For businesses, our automated data and marketing platform provides the tools required to acquire, engage and retain customers. We aim to drive incremental revenue and provide a greater ROI on marketing spend.



## Melanie Davidson

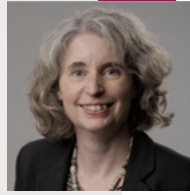
CEO, Medilink Midlands

Medilink Midlands (MM), is the life sciences industry association that helps life sciences companies to establish, develop, and grow, through business support, connectivity, and collaboration.

Melanie has been with MM for 13 years and has a strong background in industrial research, business and economic development, and international investment, having held previous roles at (emda), bioKneX, and West Pharmaceutical Services.

With a BSc (Hons) in Animal Science Melanie also broadens MM's bioscience reach.

Melanie has overseen the transition of Medilink West Midlands and Medilink East Midlands to one, unified organisation and has managed the funding applications that will help sustain MM well into the future.



## Pamela Farries

Technology Manager,  
Midlands Aerospace  
Alliance

Pamela has been working with aerospace supply chain companies to uncover the potential of innovative ideas within their organisations and to improve products and manufacturing processes for almost 10 years at Midlands Aerospace Alliance.

The MAA has developed a trusted approach which allows companies to get rapid access to funding, be mentored through the process and to distil the essential advice needed on novel topics such as additive manufacturing.

Pamela has a background in defence materials and structures R&D, and of managing high integrity verification projects in academia. Experience across many technology areas and in developing interdisciplinary proposals was good preparation for the breadth of work at MAA.



## Pam Sheemar

Regional Director Enterprise, Midlands and East of England, NatWest

Pam leads the entrepreneurship delivery team for NatWest. Pam has over 10 years' experience in banking and finance sector. Previous roles have included Director for Commercial Banking leading a team of Relationship Directors and Managers who portfolio managed 100's of business customers from £2m turnover to £45 million turnover.

Pam has extensive experience in entrepreneurship leading the longest standing NatWest Accelerator, whilst also coaching and mentoring start-ups and scale ups.

Pam is Founding Director for Birmingham Tech since 2019 and its recent rebrand to TechWM positively impacting the Tech Start-Up and Scale-Up ecosystem.

Pam is passionate about ED&I and leads change across her industry as Global chair of the Multicultural network for NatWest. Pam is also a Magistrate sitting on Crime bench and extends this work to Diversity Community Relations Magistrate.



## Paula Whitehouse

**Deputy Dean Enterprise and Engagement, Aston University College of Business and Social Sciences; Director, Aston Centre for Growth**

Paula has developed a portfolio of growth programmes and business support initiatives for entrepreneurs and small business leaders. Paula was awarded the Chancellor's Medal by Aston University in 2021.

Working with the Chartered Association of Business Schools, Paula is Curriculum Director for the UK Government's Help to Grow: Management Course delivered throughout the UK by Small Business Charter accredited business schools. She was also Curriculum Director for the government's Small Business Leadership Programme which helped 2,800 business leaders build resilience and recovery during the Covid-19 pandemic. Paula chairs accreditation panels for the Small Business Charter and in 2018 gave evidence on behalf of the Small Business Charter to the House of Commons BEIS Committee Small Business and Productivity Inquiry.

As Section Lead and speaker for the Goldman Sachs 10,000 Small Businesses UK programme Paula has supported hundreds of entrepreneurs through its intensive leadership and management education since 2011. She has also worked with the Goldman Sachs 10,000 Women programme in India supporting their curriculum development.



## Surlender Pendress

**Co-founder, Love Writing Co.**

Surlender Pendress is versatile entrepreneur of children's resources focused on the early learning resources and publishing sector.

As Co-founder of "Love Writing Co" Surlender seamlessly combines a passion for creating educational products with her e-commerce expertise. She has transformed her venture into a go-to platform for parents and educators seeking innovative writing tools.

Having the ability to understand the early learning sector needs and translate them into visually striking designs and innovative resources sets her apart.

Love Writing Co. has attracted substantial investment to support global expansion and the acquisition of two prestigious global licenses will help support Love Writing Co's mission to innovate children's early learning.

Surlender is not just an entrepreneur, but a visionary dedicated to making learning a joyous adventure for every child, while actively contributing to the growth and success of fellow female founders.



## Tim Luft

**Entrepreneur and Create Central Innovation Lead**

Tim is a Digital Media Entrepreneur focused on virtual reality (VR) building on expertise in the UK Video game industry.

He has run Regional Innovation programmes for the UK Government and supported in the establishment of University Institutes researching 3D environment for teaching and learning. Recently he established a VR development studio in the West Midlands (exited in 2020).

Tim is the Innovation lead for Create Central supporting an ecosystem which encourages cross sector collaboration with the regional digital creative sector. He also mentors entrepreneurs developing new technology solutions, sits on the Telford Business Board and is an advisor for the DiT Global Entrepreneur Programme.



## Tony Harper

**Industrial Strategy Challenge Director, Faraday Battery Challenge**

Tony Harper is the Challenge Director for UKRI's Faraday Battery Challenge, delivered by Innovate UK. In this capacity, he is responsible for the UK Government's £610m investment delivering a mission-led, research and innovation program that covers "Lab to Factory" development, cutting-edge research, national scale-up infrastructure and skills development.

Tony was previously Director of Engineering Research for Jaguar Land Rover; responsible for the identification, development and de-risking of new technology into JLR products for over 10 years.

Tony is a Fellow of The Royal Academy of Engineering, Chartered Engineer, fellow of the IMechE.



## Trias Gkikopolous

**Innovation Lead, InnovateUK Bridge AI Programme**

Trias is an Innovation Lead in Artificial Intelligence and Machine Learning, working in the delivery of the Bridge AI programme, a £100 million Innovate UK-led investment that aims to increase business productivity in sectors of the UK economy by stimulating adoption of AI & ML.

His experience spans Aerospace Engineering (Drones) and Life Sciences with expertise in Bioinformatics and Gene Regulation, and extensive experience in researching emerging technologies and assessing commercialisation pathways in particular in the engineering and digital domain.

I am currently interested in the development of public policies to boost ROI in industrial R&D programs backed by public funds.

 **TECH** W/M presents



**BIRMINGHAM  
TECH WEEK**

21st - 25th October 2024

**The UK's largest regional tech festival**

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[www.birminghamtechweek.com](http://www.birminghamtechweek.com)

For Sponsorship Enquiries: [events@birmingham.tech](mailto:events@birmingham.tech)

# **CLEAN FUTURES**

The Clean Futures programme is led by Connected Places Catapult, the Black Country Innovative Manufacturing Organisation and Coventry University. It is part of the wider West Midlands Innovation Accelerator and is designed to support the region's transport sector to be at the heart of the Green Industrial Revolution.

Clean Futures will drive forward plans for growth by accelerating innovation within SME's and businesses, so they can produce cleaner technologies for new transport systems.



Locally-led Innovation Accelerators delivered in partnership with DSIT, Innovate UK and City Regions



Want to uncover new business opportunities?



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BIRMINGHAM CITY  
University

# We MAKE innovation happen

Skill up, build and grow your business at our collaborative innovation centre in the heart of Birmingham.



Discover more about the amazing short courses, innovation services and collaborative co-working opportunities at STEAMhouse!



[steamhouse.org.uk](http://steamhouse.org.uk)



bruntwood  
SciTech

## INNOVATION BIRMINGHAM

More than just a work space.

Innovation Birmingham is the region's leading tech campus where digital businesses thrive. As the home of the largest digital community, it's a vibrant place to work with tech savvy entrepreneurs and companies.

- Office space
- Cafe
- Car parking
- Connectivity
- Business support
- Access to talent
- Access to funding and finance
- Networking



### FLEXIBLE SPACE

Office space at Innovation Birmingham offers maximum flexibility with multiple options to fit your business needs. Access to dedicated business support, community events, meeting rooms, event space, car parking, cycle storage and showers is included.

### HOT DESKING

Access shared desks in a coworking space for digital & tech startups and small businesses. Providing everything you need to get started straight away. From £145 pcm.

### LEASED OFFICE

Flexible leased office space is available from 500 -120,000 sq ft for tech and digital businesses. Choose whether to fit your own space or let us handle it for you with a fully furnished suite. Rents start from £24 per sq ft..

### SERVICED OFFICE

Newly refurbished serviced office space suitable for 2-12 people with business lounge and modern kitchen. From £250 per desk per month.

INNOVATION BIRMINGHAM, HOLT STREET, BIRMINGHAM, B7 4BB

## Exhibitors



### Accelerate Associates

Accelerate Associates is a business-to-business marketing and market research consultancy specialising in technical markets such as medical devices, laboratory products and scientific innovations.

We provide flexible marketing communications support to engage your market. Our bespoke market research services generate unique insight to support new product development and business development.

**Web** - [accelerate-associates.co.uk](https://accelerate-associates.co.uk)

**Email** - [info@accelerate-associates.co.uk](mailto:info@accelerate-associates.co.uk)



Centre  
for Growth

### Aston University

Aston University's Centre for Growth offers industry-leading business services to help you start and grow a company, employ skilled students and graduates, train a workforce and collaborate with the University's most innovative thinkers. The team at the Centre for Growth has supported thousands of SMEs through their high-profile growth programmes and investment ready pitching competitions.

**Web** - [aston.ac.uk/acg](https://aston.ac.uk/acg)

**Email** - [centreforgrowth@aston.ac.uk](mailto:centreforgrowth@aston.ac.uk)



### Barclays Eagle Labs

At Barclays Eagle Labs, our mission is to connect the UK's entrepreneurial ecosystem through a network of business incubators, expertise and support. We have created a community of top innovators,

industry experts and mentors designed to support ambitious entrepreneurs and start-ups looking to scale as well as helping transform organisations and empower future skills.

**Web** - [labs.uk.barclays/what-we-offer](https://labs.uk.barclays/what-we-offer)

**Email** - [sam.allen-ralph2@barclays.com](mailto:sam.allen-ralph2@barclays.com)



## Birmingham Enterprise Community (BEC)

BEC is an award-winning business support organisation and Department for Business & Trade approved Local Enterprise Agency. BEC delivers a number of business support services in the form of business creation & growth programmes that support organisations during starting out, transition or high-growth phases of the entrepreneurial journey.

**Web** - [becleaps.co.uk](http://becleaps.co.uk)

**Email** - [hello@becleaps.co.uk](mailto:hello@becleaps.co.uk)

UNIVERSITY OF  
BIRMINGHAM

BCRRE

## The Birmingham Centre for Railway Research and Education (BCRRE)

BCRRE is Europe's largest academic-based group that provides world-class research, education, and innovation to the global rail industry. Enterprise and innovation at BCRRE provides commercial and professional services support to our research and education activities, underpinning the engagement with the global rail industry to foster collaborations.

We welcome interest from any business or individual interested in railway research, education or innovation.

We are the lead partner in the £92m [UK Rail Research and Innovation Network \(UKRRIN\)](#).

**Web** - [birmingham.ac.uk/research/railway/index.aspx](http://birmingham.ac.uk/research/railway/index.aspx)

**Email** - [r.e.m.eadembefrsa@bham.ac.uk](mailto:r.e.m.eadembefrsa@bham.ac.uk)



## The Biochar Clean Tech Accelerator, led by Aston University

Building on research facilities at Aston University the project aims to develop growth potential targeting export contracts worth over £200 million of low carbon products.

It aims to commercialise knowledge and facilities for the benefit of the environment and regional economy, continuing the development of a high-capacity low carbon engineering cluster by opening up new markets and providing a development pathway to launch new technology-based opportunities.

**Web** - [bioenergy-for-business.org](http://bioenergy-for-business.org)

**Email** - [biochar@aston.ac.uk](mailto:biochar@aston.ac.uk)





**BIRMINGHAM CITY**  
University

## Birmingham City University

Birmingham City University is a large and diverse learning, research and innovation community. We put students at the heart of everything we do, giving them the best opportunities for future success. The University has an enviable reputation for providing quality, student-focused education in a professional and friendly environment. We are passionate about providing our learners with a transformational journey, enabled by an exceptional and supportive academic community.

**Web** - [bcu.ac.uk](https://bcu.ac.uk)

**Email** - [bcuadvantage@bcu.ac.uk](mailto:bcuadvantage@bcu.ac.uk)



**BIRMINGHAM**  
**TECH WEEK**

## Birmingham Tech Week

Birmingham Tech Week is the UK's largest regional tech festival and conference with over **7,500 people attending events** across the entire West Midlands covering a variety of important and innovative topics. Birmingham Tech Week is run by TechWM, a not-for-profit organisation (community interest company limited by guarantee), ensuring all money raised through sponsorship goes towards helping build and promote the West Midlands tech ecosystem.

**Web** - [Birmingham Tech Week 2024](https://www.birminghamtechweek.com)

**Email** - [emma@birminghamtechweek.com](mailto:emma@birminghamtechweek.com)



**Business Growth**  
**West Midlands**

## Business Growth West Midlands

Business Growth West Midlands is enabling regional businesses to grow and succeed.

Funded by Government and delivered by expert local authority Business Advisers; BGWM provides free tailored, one to one support, guidance, and signposting to assist SMEs across all industries to grow and succeed, making our region a prosperous place to live and work.

**Web** - [businessgrowthwestmidlands.org.uk](https://businessgrowthwestmidlands.org.uk)

**Email** - Please use the relevant "contact us" links on the website above

## bruntwood SciTech

### Bruntwood SciTech: Innovation Birmingham

Innovation Birmingham is part of Bruntwood SciTech, the UK's leading provider of office, lab and scientific services for the science and technology sector. Our network of innovation districts connects the UK's most ambitious cities, regions and science and technology communities through collaboration and a unique public, private, academic, clinical partner network.

**Web** - [bruntwood.co.uk/our-locations/birmingham/innovation-birmingham/](http://bruntwood.co.uk/our-locations/birmingham/innovation-birmingham/)

**Email** - [Cliff.Dennett@bruntwood.co.uk](mailto:Cliff.Dennett@bruntwood.co.uk)

## CLEAN FUTURES

### Clean Futures Catalyst

Delivered from specialist hubs in Dudley and Coventry, Clean Futures is supporting the West Midlands' transport sector to be at the heart of the Green Industrial Revolution. The programme also aims to drive economic growth in the region by accelerating the route to market for SMEs in the sector.

**Web** - [cp.catapult.org.uk/programme/innovation-in-the-west-midlands/](http://cp.catapult.org.uk/programme/innovation-in-the-west-midlands/)

**Email** - [rebecca.goulding@cp.catapult.org.uk](mailto:rebecca.goulding@cp.catapult.org.uk)

### Create Central & Creative UK

Create Central, in partnership with WMCA and Creative UK, is delivering the West Midlands Create Growth Programme which will help creative businesses to scale, with access to major new investment opportunities. Come and talk to us about this and other opportunities to grow your business.

**Web** - [createcentraluk.com](http://createcentraluk.com)

**Email** - [hello@createcentraluk.com](mailto:hello@createcentraluk.com)



### Decarbonisation Net Zero Programme in affiliation with Business Energy Advice Service

In partnership with



## Decarbonisation Net Zero (in affiliation with BEAS)

Make savings for your business.

Get a free business energy assessment with Decarbonisation Net Zero Programme in affiliation with Business Energy Advice Service.

We are offering over 4,000 free energy assessments to businesses in the West Midlands. Get a tailored recommendation on how your business can reduce energy usage and save money.

To find out if you are eligible for a grant between £1,000 and £100,000 to implement energy efficiency improvements scan then visit [wmca.org.uk/decarb](https://wmca.org.uk/decarb)

**Web** - [wmca.org.uk/decarb](https://wmca.org.uk/decarb)

**Email** - [decarb@aston.ac.uk](mailto:decarb@aston.ac.uk)

Funded by  
UK Government

Business Growth  
West Midlands

## DECARBONISATION

NET ZERO



## Decarbonisation Net Zero (Coventry City Council)

The Decarbonisation Net Zero Programme aims to provide information and expert advice and support to businesses enabling them to make significant decarbonisation and money-saving changes to their business. This programme is part of the wider West Midlands Business Support activity funded through the UK Shared Prosperity Fund (UKSPF).

**Web** - [businessgrowthwestmidlands.org.uk/business-support/decarbonisation-net-zero-programme/](https://businessgrowthwestmidlands.org.uk/business-support/decarbonisation-net-zero-programme/)

**Email** - [decarb@aston.ac.uk](mailto:decarb@aston.ac.uk)



## Diatomic

DIATOMIC is harnessing the West Midlands' digital expertise to spark inclusive growth and accelerate global investment. The programme is supporting local SMEs to respond to challenges set by Birmingham City Council and establishing the UK's first inclusive innovation hub. It is also promoting the use of data to enable better place-based decision making and supporting global business initiatives.

**Web** - [cp.catapult.org.uk/programme/innovation-in-the-west-midlands/](https://cp.catapult.org.uk/programme/innovation-in-the-west-midlands/)

**Email** - [catherine.hadfield@cp.catapult.org.uk](mailto:catherine.hadfield@cp.catapult.org.uk)



## Edwards Accountants

Widely recognised and respected throughout the Midlands, Edwards Accountants are an independent accountancy practice with many years specialist professional experience acting for a wide variety of science and technology companies. This includes R&D tax credits, EIS compliance, EMI option schemes, and grant assurance reports in addition to the traditional services.

**Web** - [edwardsaccountants.co.uk](http://edwardsaccountants.co.uk)

**Email** - [neiltaylor@edwardsaccountants.co.uk](mailto:neiltaylor@edwardsaccountants.co.uk) or [andrewpalmer@edwardsaccountants.co.uk](mailto:andrewpalmer@edwardsaccountants.co.uk)



Electric  
Revolution  
Skills Hub

## ERS Hub

The Electric Revolution Skills Hub (ERS Hub) is empowering careers in electrification, offering access to essential skills, development pathways, job opportunities and industry collaboration. The Hub is keen to engage with the breadth of the electrification community to work towards the common goal of closing the skills gap in sectors such as manufacturing, transport, and energy.

**Web** - [ershub.co.uk](http://ershub.co.uk)

**Email** - [info@ershub.co.uk](mailto:info@ershub.co.uk)



## Forresters

Forresters is a firm of patent and trademark attorneys with offices in Birmingham, Liverpool, London and Munich. As well as protecting your Intellectual property (IP), we offer IP audits, training and consultation to explore how you can harness your existing IP and use it to gain maximum benefit.

**Web** - [forresters-ip.com](http://forresters-ip.com)

**Email** - [marketing@forresters-ip.com](mailto:marketing@forresters-ip.com)



## ICURE

Innovate ICURE Explore delivered by Midlands Innovation is a 12-week customer discovery programme designed using lean start-up methodology and funded by Innovate UK to help commercialise early career researchers' technology. Joining us at Venturefest are some of these exciting technologies seeking to commercialise themselves.

**Web** - [icureprogramme.com](http://icureprogramme.com)

**Email** - [icure@warwick.ac.uk](mailto:icure@warwick.ac.uk)



## Innovate UK Edge

Innovate UK EDGE is a key part of the UK innovation agency's deep investment in the pioneering businesses that drive economic growth. It is a publicly funded, bespoke service available to all Innovation-led and high-growth potential businesses.

Our Innovation & Growth Specialists help businesses with developing their innovation growth potential, this tailored support includes managing and exploiting business innovation, accessing funding & finance and entering new international markets.

**Web** - [innovateukedge.ukri.org](http://innovateukedge.ukri.org)

**Email** - [Sunny.Claire@innovateukedge.ukri.org](mailto:Sunny.Claire@innovateukedge.ukri.org)



## Innovation Alliance for the West Midlands

Innovation Alliance for the West Midlands brings together an alliance of public, private, academic and third sector organisations to find opportunities for regional economic growth through a series of networks.

Whether you're interested in AI, Future Tech, Health, Zero Carbon, Advanced Manufacturing, Cyber Security, Transport or Policy, we've got something for you.

**Web** - [innovationwm.co.uk](http://innovationwm.co.uk)

**Email** - [hello@innovationwm.co.uk](mailto:hello@innovationwm.co.uk)



## LODDERS

### Lodders Solicitors

We help clients to grow businesses, sell a family one, resolve disputes, complete their deal on land or property, and address changes in personal or family life.

**Web** - [lodders.co.uk](http://lodders.co.uk)

**Email** - [lawyers@lodders.co.uk](mailto:lawyers@lodders.co.uk)



MEDILINK  
MIDLANDS

### Medilink Midlands

Medilink Midlands has a longstanding reputation for being the region's specialist, not-for-profit provider of life sciences innovation and business support, developing clusters and ecosystems to help businesses establish, develop, and grow.

Medilink Midlands helps stimulate additional and value-added growth of the Midlands as a prosperous community for Life Sciences working in collaboration with key strategic alliances.

**Web** - [medilinkmidlands.com](http://medilinkmidlands.com)

**Email** - [info@medilinkmidlands.com](mailto:info@medilinkmidlands.com)



midlands aerospace alliance

### Midlands Aerospace Alliance

The MMA is the cluster organisation for aerospace in the Midlands. We offer innovation/R&D grant funding and expert support aerospace companies and companies wanting to diversify into or out of aerospace and aviation from the West Midlands PIVOT programme and the Aerospace UP programme with the University of Nottingham.

**Web** - [midlandsaerospace.org.uk](http://midlandsaerospace.org.uk)

**Email** - [info@midlandsaerospace.org.uk](mailto:info@midlandsaerospace.org.uk)



## Minerva Business Angels

Minerva Business Angels, part of the University of Warwick Science Park, is the UK's third most active angel network, second most active in the Green Scale Up economy and most prolific investor in the Midlands on a deal basis. Minerva's Angels have invested over £100mn invested in over 100 companies since 2011 and are one of the oldest networks in the UK. Minerva Business Angels are the principal angel network of the Midlands. Tech agnostic and support business from all over the UK.

**Web** - [Minerva.uk.net](https://minerva.uk.net)

**Email** - [enquiries@minerva.uk.net](mailto:enquiries@minerva.uk.net)



**NatWest**

## NatWest

NatWest, Royal Bank of Scotland and Ulster Bank serve customers across the country, supporting them with their personal, private, and business banking needs. NatWest helps customers at all stages in their lives, from opening student accounts, to buying their first home, setting up a business, and saving for retirement. Alongside a wide range of banking services, the bank also offers businesses specialist sector knowledge in areas such as sustainable energy, commercial property, and technology, as well as access to specialist entrepreneurial support.

**Web** - [natwest.com/business](https://natwest.com/business)

**Email** - [Harinder.kunor@natwest.com](mailto:Harinder.kunor@natwest.com)



## National Brownfield Institute (NBI) and the School of Architecture & Built Environment

The NBI provides fully funded support for site development and brownfield remediation support, with access to state-of-the-art surveying, data visualisation technologies and analytical laboratories.

The University of Wolverhampton's School of Architecture and Built Environment, offers fully funded support nationally to help develop business ideas and innovative products for the built environment. We can also support you in areas such as building information modelling and modern methods of construction.

**Web** - [National Brownfield Institute - University of Wolverhampton \(wlv.ac.uk\)](https://nationalbrownfieldinstitute.com)

**Email** - [nbi@wlv.ac.uk](mailto:nbi@wlv.ac.uk)



## Oxford Innovation Advice

Oxford Innovation Advice are the UK's outstanding provider of business support for SMEs, providing specialist expertise and advice to help businesses to accelerate their growth and fulfil their potential. Designing and delivering business support programmes that nurture a culture of innovation to generate sustainable growth and economic prosperity for customers.

**Web** - [oxfordinnovationadvice.co.uk](https://oxfordinnovationadvice.co.uk)

**Email** - [Enquiries@oxin.co.uk](mailto:Enquiries@oxin.co.uk)



## Penningtons Manches Cooper

We are a leading UK and international law firm providing high quality legal advice, tailored to innovative businesses like yours. Our lawyers have supported hundreds of innovators through every stage of their growth – working with us you'll get the benefits of our pragmatic advice, expertise, sector experience with cost certainty.

**Web** - [penningtonslaw.com](https://penningtonslaw.com)

**Email** - [lisa.page@penningtonslaw.com](mailto:lisa.page@penningtonslaw.com)



## SuperTech WM

The UK's only Tech supercluster, supporting the vivid community built surrounding our thriving West Midlands region. Our mission is to accelerate the development of our cluster by raising its profile and establishing the West Midlands as a major player on the global stage for professional services technology, in ProfTech which includes FinTech, PropTech, LawTech and InsurTech.

**Web** - [supertechwm.com](https://supertechwm.com)

**Email** - [hello@supertechwm.com](mailto:hello@supertechwm.com)





## Sustainability West Midlands

Sustainability West Midlands is an independent not-for-profit company and is the sustainability adviser for organisations in the West Midlands.

Our vision is that the West Midlands is leading in contributing to the national target of Net Zero greenhouse gas emissions by 2050 whilst addressing health inequality and driving inclusive growth.

**Web** - [sustainabilitywestmidlands.org.uk](https://sustainabilitywestmidlands.org.uk)

**Email** - [enquiries@swm.org.uk](mailto:enquiries@swm.org.uk)



| Innovation

## TBAT Innovation

TBAT is a forward-thinking, value-driven, independent consultancy with over 20 years' experience working with technology & research and development organisations all over the UK to fund their innovation. Their innovation support services include Grant Funding, R&D Tax Credits, Video Game Tax Relief, Capital Allowances, SEIS/EIS, Patent Box and more.

**Web** - [tbat.co.uk](https://tbat.co.uk)

**Email** - [info@tbat.co.uk](mailto:info@tbat.co.uk)



THE TECHNOLOGY  
SUPPLY CHAIN  
SUPPORTING UK BUSINESS

## Technology Supply Chain

The Technology Supply Chain is a no-cost membership for manufacturing, engineering and tech companies. We connect you to the right grants, fully funded support and new opportunities for your business. The TSC has over 2,500 members and organises the annual Innovation Awards. Book your 30-minute discovery call.

**Web** - [technologysupplychain.co.uk](https://technologysupplychain.co.uk)

**Email** - [richard@tehcnologysupplychain.co.uk](mailto:richard@tehcnologysupplychain.co.uk)



## Tech West Midlands

TechWM is an independent not-for-profit organisation that sits at the beating heart of the West Midlands' tech ecosystem. It is the voice of the sector and supports businesses to scale-up, through key initiatives like Birmingham Tech Week, the UK's largest regional tech festival, and Tech Connect, a new smart platform & program that helps people navigate the ecosystem more effectively.

**Web** - [Discover the West Midlands' premier tech hub. \(techwm.com\)](https://techwm.com)

**Email** - [naomi@techwm.com](mailto:naomi@techwm.com)



Transport for  
West Midlands

## Transport for West Midlands

Transport for West Midlands is part of the West Midlands Combined Authority. We work with bus and train operators to ensure that public transport is safe, reliable, affordable and accessible. We will be showcasing some of our innovation projects and sharing how you can work with the Transport Innovation Team.

**Web** - [tfwm.org.uk](https://tfwm.org.uk)

**Email** - [transportinnovationteam@tfwm.org.uk](mailto:transportinnovationteam@tfwm.org.uk)



UNIVERSITY OF  
BIRMINGHAM

## University of Birmingham

The University of Birmingham collaborates with organisations of all sizes, across different sectors and places to create research that matters. We provide tailored solutions and support for businesses based on their needs, translating research from our expert academics into stand-out products, services and solutions to global challenges.

**Web** - [birmingham.ac.uk/partners](https://birmingham.ac.uk/partners)

**Email** - [businessteam@contacts.bham.ac.uk](mailto:businessteam@contacts.bham.ac.uk)



## University of Warwick Science Park

The University of Warwick Science Park offers a unique package of property and business support services to provide an environment in which innovative and knowledge-based companies can grow. Warwick Science Park's business support comprises Business Ready, a technical marketing service, access to finance support, a start-up incubator and the region's only business angel network Minerva.

**Web** - [warwicksciencepark.co.uk](http://warwicksciencepark.co.uk)

**Email** - [more-info@uwsp.co.uk](mailto:more-info@uwsp.co.uk)



## University of Wolverhampton

At the University of Wolverhampton, we aim to develop lasting relationships with businesses, playing an important role in enabling them to grow and prosper. Offering a wide range of tailored support options, we can help organisations identify potential problems and, with our expertise, develop appropriate real-world solutions with impact.

**Web** - [wlv.ac.uk/business-services](http://wlv.ac.uk/business-services)

**Email** - [engage@wlv.ac.uk](mailto:engage@wlv.ac.uk)



## Veale Wasbrough Vizards LLP

Innovative national law firm with offices in Birmingham, Bristol, London and Watford. VWV's core strategy remains the provision of excellent legal advice to clients within its local markets for each of its key sectors.

**Web** - [vwv.co.uk](http://vwv.co.uk)

**Email** - [nquest@vwv.co.uk](mailto:nquest@vwv.co.uk)



## WMG – The University of Warwick

WMG is a world leading research and education group, transforming organisations and driving innovation through a unique combination of collaborative research and development, and pioneering education programmes. As an international role model for successful partnerships between academia and the private and public sectors, WMG develops advancements nationally and globally, in applied science, technology and engineering, to deliver real impact to economic growth, society and the environment.

**Web** - [warwick.ac.uk/fac/sci/wmg/business/innovationexperience/ktp/](http://warwick.ac.uk/fac/sci/wmg/business/innovationexperience/ktp/)

**Email** - [WMGSME@warwick.ac.uk](mailto:WMGSME@warwick.ac.uk)



## wmhtc

### Wmhtc

The West Midlands Health Tech Cluster (WMHTC) is a business-led membership organisation which aims to support, showcase and maximise the potential of the #healthtech community in the region.

A small but passionate team supporting (pre) start-ups, existing businesses and attracting inward investment. WMHTC prioritises a collaborative approach and provides access to professional services, Universities and the NHS.

**Web** - [wmhtc.co.uk](http://wmhtc.co.uk)

**Email** - [info@wmhtc.co.uk](mailto:info@wmhtc.co.uk)



## West Midlands Health Tech Innovation Accelerator (WMHTIA)

The £16m West Midlands Health Tech Innovation Accelerator is focused on driving companies towards market success. Uniting a world-class consortium of 20 academic, public and private sector specialists under one collaborative programme, the WMHTIA enables innovators to benefit from unprecedented access to expert infrastructure and product development support.

**Web** - [wmhtia.com](http://wmhtia.com)

**Email** - [wmhtia@contacts.bham.ac.uk](mailto:wmhtia@contacts.bham.ac.uk)



## The West Midlands Innovation Programme, led by West Midlands Combined Authority

The project unites a team of sector innovation experts under the banner of the Innovation Alliance for the West Midlands, bringing a strong private sector voice and capacity to identify and address business innovation barriers and enablers. The team facilitates a series of inclusive cluster specific networks and events, acting as gateways for networking, connections and partnerships.

Across 2024 the project will launch a portfolio of novel support interventions that overcome barriers to and exploit opportunities for demand-led innovation.

**Web** - [innovationwm.co.uk/wmip](https://innovationwm.co.uk/wmip)

**Email** - [hello@innovationwm.co.uk](mailto:hello@innovationwm.co.uk)



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visit: [wlv.ac.uk/business-services](https://wlv.ac.uk/business-services)

Email: [engage@wlv.ac.uk](mailto:engage@wlv.ac.uk)

[in](#) University of Wolverhampton

[X](#) @wlv\_uni



# Programme Overview

08:15 – 09:00	Networking and refreshments in <b>Affinity areas</b> and <b>Belmont foyer</b>	
08:15 – 17:00	Sponsors, partners and other exhibitors; Pitch Up; ICURe; Innovation Accelerator Zone (plus soft seating areas) in Affinity Suite	
	Belmont Suite	Ashtead Suite (Upstairs)
09:00 – 09:10	<b>Chair's Welcome</b> to Venturefest West Midlands 2024 – Pam Waddell	
09:10 – 09.40	<b>Keynote</b> – Fireside chat with Prof. Deb Leary with interviewer Adam Dent	
09.40-09.50	Time to move between rooms	
09.50 - 10.40	<b>Session 1A</b> – How the WM is trailblazing the Innovation Revolution	<b>Minerva Pitch Up</b> - Heat 1
10.40-11.10	Coffee/tea break and networking – Affinity and Belmont foyers	
11.10 - 12.00	<b>Session 2A</b> – Four Ps of successful product development	<b>Minerva Pitch Up</b> - Heat 2
12.00-12.10	Time to move between rooms	
12.10-13.00	<b>Session 3A</b> – Business innovation and skills responses to the demand for a cleaner greener future	<b>Session 3B</b> – Pitch Up – Where are they now: take inspiration from those who've done it before
13:00-14:00	Lunch and networking – Affinity area and Belmont foyer	
14.00-14.50	<b>Session 4A</b> – AI in action – opportunities, challenges, and solutions across different business sectors	<b>Session 4B</b> – ICURe Showcase
14.50-15.00	Time to move between rooms	
15.00-16.10	<b>Pitch Up</b> - The Final	
16.10-16.15	<b>Wrap up</b> and looking forward – Pam Waddell	
16:15-17:00	Close, tea and networking	



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[www.warwicksciencepark.co.uk](http://www.warwicksciencepark.co.uk)



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[more-info@uwsp.co.uk](mailto:more-info@uwsp.co.uk)

The Venture Centre, Sir William Lyons Road, Coventry, CV4 7EZ

Venturefest West Midlands is delivered in partnership with the West Midlands Innovation Accelerator, which will bolster the region's innovation and R&D capability and capacity to spark commercial growth and investment.

First announced in the Government's 2022 Levelling up White Paper, the West Midlands Innovation Accelerator commenced in May 2023, funded through a share of a £100m fund from Innovate UK, divided by three regional Innovation Accelerators over the next two years.

Aims of the Innovation Accelerator include accelerating the region's engineering research & development, boosting inward investment, and reinforcing the West Midlands' position at the frontier of the UK innovation revolution by enabling businesses to develop new products, processes and services.

To find out more on the Innovation Accelerator projects visit - [West Midlands Innovation \(wmca.org.uk\)](https://www.wmca.org.uk)

**Locally-led Innovation Accelerators delivered in partnership with DSIT, Innovate UK and City Regions**



[www.venturefestwm.co.uk](https://www.venturefestwm.co.uk)