

# Islington Business Resilience Programme Information Pack



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# What is it?

**Islington Council has partnered with Action for Race Equality (ARE) to deliver a programme that supports 40 micro and small businesses who are trading in the borough.**

It will run from September 2024 – February 2025 and will involve a bespoke learning programme, featuring a mix of:

- **1:1 consultancy support** where you can go in depth on any challenges you are facing with a specialist business consultant and develop clear plans for sustainability and growth.
- **Targeted workshops** with other participants on the programme.
- **Peer-to-peer learning activities** so businesses can learn from each other and work together to tackle specific challenges faced.
- **Networking events** to meet businesses around the borough.

*At the end of the programme, there will also be the chance to apply for a grant up to £2,000.*

The programme is open to all small businesses in Islington, and we strongly encourage business leaders from underrepresented groups, including those from Black, Asian and Minority Ethnic backgrounds, women, and those with disabilities. These groups often face disproportionate and significant barriers to success, including difficulty securing finance from banks and finding it harder to access business support.

# Eligibility Criteria

We want to keep the application process as simple as possible and for you only to apply if you are eligible for support.

## **Eligibility criteria:**

- Trading for a minimum of 1 year and no more than 5 years.
- Must be a small or micro-business, i.e. employ 0-49 people.
- Have a physical trading address in Islington (i.e., an operating or trading address in Islington from which the bulk of business activities take place), or a licensed pitch if a permanent market trader, and pay a regular (monthly) business mortgage, rent, or license fees.
- Be registered on Companies House or the Charity Register, or have a Unique Tax Reference (UTR).
- Be the ratepayer, licensee, and/or have a legal agreement to occupy the property where applicable.
- If a food business, be licensed by Islington Council and have a food hygiene rating of 3 or above.
- Have no unresolved enforcement action taken by Islington Council in the last 12 months.
- Be an independent business – national and international chains and Public Limited Companies (PLCs) are excluded (including subsidiaries, franchises and businesses owned by hedge funds).
- Cannot be an employee of the council.
- Business has the potential to demonstrate social impact and willingness to grow.
- Will commit to attending workshops and consultancy support and sharing learning with other programme participants.

## **In addition to the eligibility criteria, we strongly encourage applications from the following:**

- Business leaders from Black, Asian or Minority Ethnic backgrounds.
- Female business leaders.
- Business leaders with a disability.
- Businesses from hospitality, arts, creative, retail, service and manufacturing sectors.

# How to Apply

To apply for the programme, please complete the [application form](#) with the eligibility checklist and email it to Tara Shah at [Tara@actionforraceequality.org.uk](mailto:Tara@actionforraceequality.org.uk).

Applications are assessed according to the criteria and quality of applications on a rolling first-come-first-served basis until all 40 spaces on the programme are filled.

We will be closing applications on Friday the 23rd August 2024, so we encourage you to submit your application as early as possible to avoid disappointment.

We will try respond to you within a month of receiving your form. Our first meeting is taking place on Wednesday 11th September, so you will receive a response from by September 6th at the latest, if you apply before the deadline.



# Completing the Application Form

Please ensure you answer all questions on the application form fully and keep to the word count, otherwise your application may not be considered.

## **Section 1: Your Contact Details**

- This section asks for basic information about you and your business. Please ensure these are accurate as we will be using them to complete our due diligence checks further along in the process. Do include your website and any social media accounts for your business, if you have them.

## **Section 2: Business Sector**

- Please select which option is closest to your business. If you are unsure or none of the options seem applicable, please add it to the 'other' category.

## **Section 3: Business Idea/ Impact**

- We want to get a good understanding of both you and your business in the section, so please explain clearly what your business is and the products or services you sell, as well as why you want to own and develop a business.
- For the business and marketing plan questions, don't worry if this is something you don't yet have as you can develop them with the consultancy support. We just want to get an idea of the stage your business is at.
- For the last 2 questions of this section, we want to see that you understand your target market, and the internal and external challenges that your business and others in your sector are facing.

## **Section 4: Business Investment**

- In this section we want to see your understanding of various ways to obtain funding and income, whether you have yet accessed them or not. Also, give us an idea of how accessing these methods of funding would help your business to grow.



# Meet the Team

**ARE Deputy Chief Executive - Indra Nauth**  
**ARE Programme and Finance Coordinator - Tara Shah**

## Consultants:

**Tutu Adebisi** - a specialist in business development across the private/not-for-profit sectors specifically in the education, employment and training. Her work spans strategising, finance, workforce strategy, partnerships, bid writing, and in the past 4 years her work has focussed on Black, Asian and Minority Ethnic Businesses. Tutu is also the programme lead for the Islington Business Resilience Programme.

**Alex Louis** - her area of specialism is in marketing with a crossover into business development. She will look at social media, website development and the relationship between marketing and sales to help bring your ideas to life online and made visible to customers.



# What the Programme Entails

## 1-to-1 consultancy support

The first step for this is an Organisation Strengths Review, which aims to uncover which areas of your business the focussed support will be most beneficial. You will then schedule regular consultancy sessions at times that work for both you and the consultant. This support will be delivered by Tutu and Alex.

## Workshops

There will be 6 themed workshops on topics that we have found to be most useful to businesses based on feedback from previous programmes. Please see page 10 for the dates these will take place on.

## Networking Event

There will be 2 networking events throughout the programme where you will be able to meet other businesses on the programme and around the borough. These will take place in October 2024 and February 2025, but exact dates have not yet been set.

## Small funding grant

Towards the end of the programme, there will be the opportunity to apply for a small grant up to £2,000. Being successful with this will be based on how engaged you are with the other activities on the programme and an ability to demonstrate the impact a grant will have. More details will be shared about this closer to the time.





## Action Learning Sets

These were developed by a scientist and university professor in the 1940s to establish new ways for managers to learn and develop together. They create a safe space for you to meet to solve business challenges by being reflective and practical about learning and sharing knowledge. They work by identifying a presenter who presents their challenge to the members of the set, such as how to improve marketing to increase business growth. Members then ask the presenter clarification questions, to probe and make the presenter think through the problem themselves and take away realistic actions. Members also reflect on how it applies to their business.

We have been running these on previous programmes with Black, Asian and Minority Ethnic businesses in Islington with great success. Topics have included 'how to make your business/ products stand out from other brands' and 'how to convert referrals to opportunities,' and business have found them invaluable in identifying practical ways to make changes for the betterment of their business.

**"My first time attending an ALS.**

**I came to this meeting not knowing how it was going to work, it's very interesting to learn from others, especially from other industries."**



# Programme Activity Timeline

If you choose to apply to the programme, please save all the dates below to your calendar so you don't get double booked if successful.

Inception meeting	Tutu Adebisi	Wednesday 11th September	4:30-6pm
Workshop 1: Business planning	Tutu Adebisi	Wednesday 18th September	4:30-6pm
Workshop 2: Marketing and comms	Alex Louis	Wednesday 25th September	4:30-6pm
Workshop 3: Finance - project costings	Tutu Adebisi	Wednesday 2nd October	4:30-6pm
Workshop 4: Financial management	Tutu Adebisi	Wednesday 9th October	4:30-6pm
Workshop 5: Data power	Tutu Adebisi	Wednesday 16th October	4:30-6pm
Workshop 6: Accessing funding	Tutu Adebisi	Wednesday 23rd October	4:30-6pm

# Next Steps:

Please email your application form to Tara Shah at [Tara@actionforraceequality.org.uk](mailto:Tara@actionforraceequality.org.uk) by **Wednesday 4th September 2024**.

If successful, we will invite you to meet with one of our consultants to carry out the Organisational Strengths Review at a time convenient for both you and the consultant.

1-to-1 consultancy support can then begin, and other programme activities will be scheduled as mentioned on page 10.

**If you have any queries, please do not hesitate to get in touch with Tara.**



Action for Race Equality



@aretweets\_



[www.actionforraceequality.org.uk](http://www.actionforraceequality.org.uk)

**ARE champions fairness, challenges discrimination and pioneers innovative solutions to empower young people through education, employment and enterprise.**

2nd Floor, 200a Pentonville Road, London N1 9JP  
Registered Charity No 1056043  
Company registration No 03203812  
[www.actionforraceequality.org.uk](http://www.actionforraceequality.org.uk)

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