

WHAT IS MADE SMARTER

Made Smarter is a programme to help SMEs **adopt technologies** to improve their **competitive edge**, **efficiencies** or **productivity**; making a real, everyday difference to people from the boardroom to the factory floor.



**SME MAKERS,
MANUFACTURERS IN
THE SOUTH EAST**



Technical Support

For implementation and adoption of new digital technologies



Skills development

Leadership course,
Workforce workshop
Student placement



Grants

Up to £20k, up to 50% new to firm technology



**STUDENTS Y2+,
POSTGRADS OR
RECENT GRADUATES
(WITHIN 1 YEAR)**



Up to 300-hours,
on a full-time,
part-time or
flexible basis



Funded at
£12.60/hour,
up to £3,780



Hands-on
practical
experience,
potential
career path



www.madesmarter.uk

NEWSLETTER CONTENT

February has felt short and sweet - We've been very excited to see a flurry of grant claims in late February early March - which means projects completed and businesses starting to feel the benefits of their digitalisation journeys. It's not the end though and we continue to see how we can support them further.

In this newsletter you can find:



[Our ask of you](#)



[Programme latest numbers](#)



[Regional numbers](#)



[Extra support & courses update](#)



[Marketing update](#)



[Workshop pictures](#)



**£151,897.76
claims**

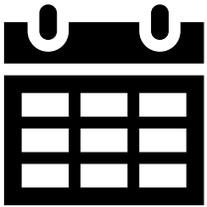
in process or paid

6

**additional claims
expected in**

OUR ASK

2026-2027 MADE SMARTER SOUTH EAST



We look forward to meeting with our partners and talking about the 2026-2027 Made Smarter South East programme. We have most meetings booked in the diary just the last few to confirm

AMPLIFY SOCIAL MEDIA POSTS

Please share our posts to give more visibility to all the things Made Smarter can deliver to our local SMEs.

<https://www.linkedin.com/company/made-smarter-south-east/>

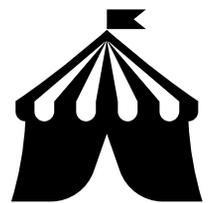
PROMOTE THE PROGRAMME



Please promote the programme in your channels, newsletters... We are testing new channels for leads but we know that people need to have seen it a few times to register.

UPCOMING EVENTS

Please let us know if you have any local events in your calendar for the coming year where you'd welcome Made Smarter to attend. We'd be delighted to present the programme.



INTERNSHIP JOB ROLE PROMOTION

We will be releasing more job roles. Please do promote the roles in your area. This serves to ensure we get a range of potential local student candidates, ensures we have a swift recruitment process. See the live job roles on the Made Smarter job board -

<https://www.madesmarter.uk/get-involved/digital-internship-opportunities/south-east-digital-intern-roles/>

If you have any questions, please contact us at msasoutheast@surreycc.gov.uk

MADE SMARTER SE JOURNEY IN NUMBERS TO DATE

481
Registrations to date

273
confirmed eligible

223
Business assessments completed

15
Diagnostic workshops scheduled

137
Diagnostic workshops done

37
Roadmaps in progress

93
Roadmaps presented

3.64
Av. Digital Readiness
(pre-engagement)

Skills Improvement

18
Leadership
course
graduates

23
Digital Champions
graduates

6
Internships
projects
approved

Grants

19 Approved £287,572.25

3 Defrayed £25,980.13

OTHER MADE SMARTER SE HIGHLIGHTS

2
Business receiving
10+ hours of
additional support

**Leadership
course KPI
(26)**
on target to be
achieved

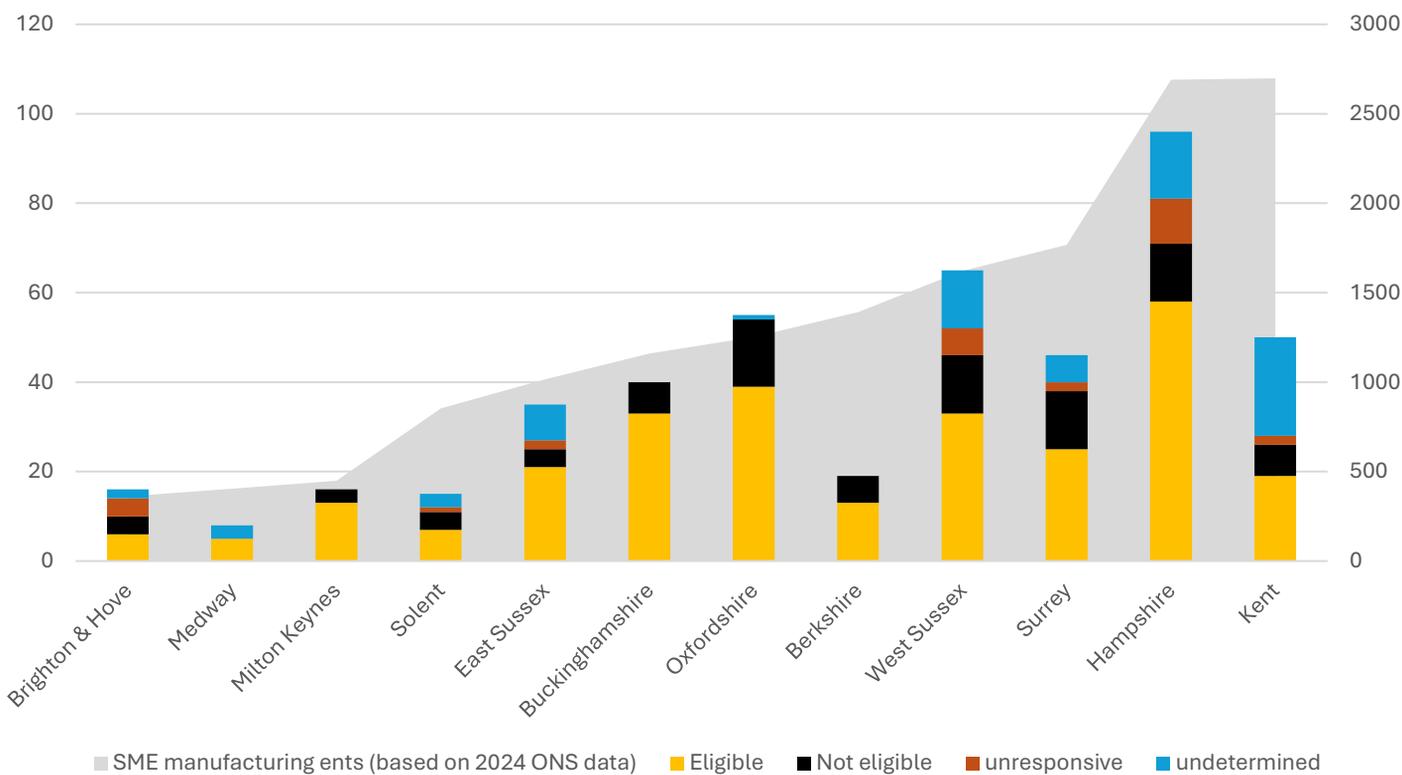
82%
of eligible
businesses who
have had a business
assessment

8
Digital Champions
registered for
cohort 3

PROGRAMME REGIONAL NUMBERS

REGISTRATIONS TO DATE

Made Smarter South East registrations by eligibility status w/ ONS 2024 total manufacturing SMEs overlay



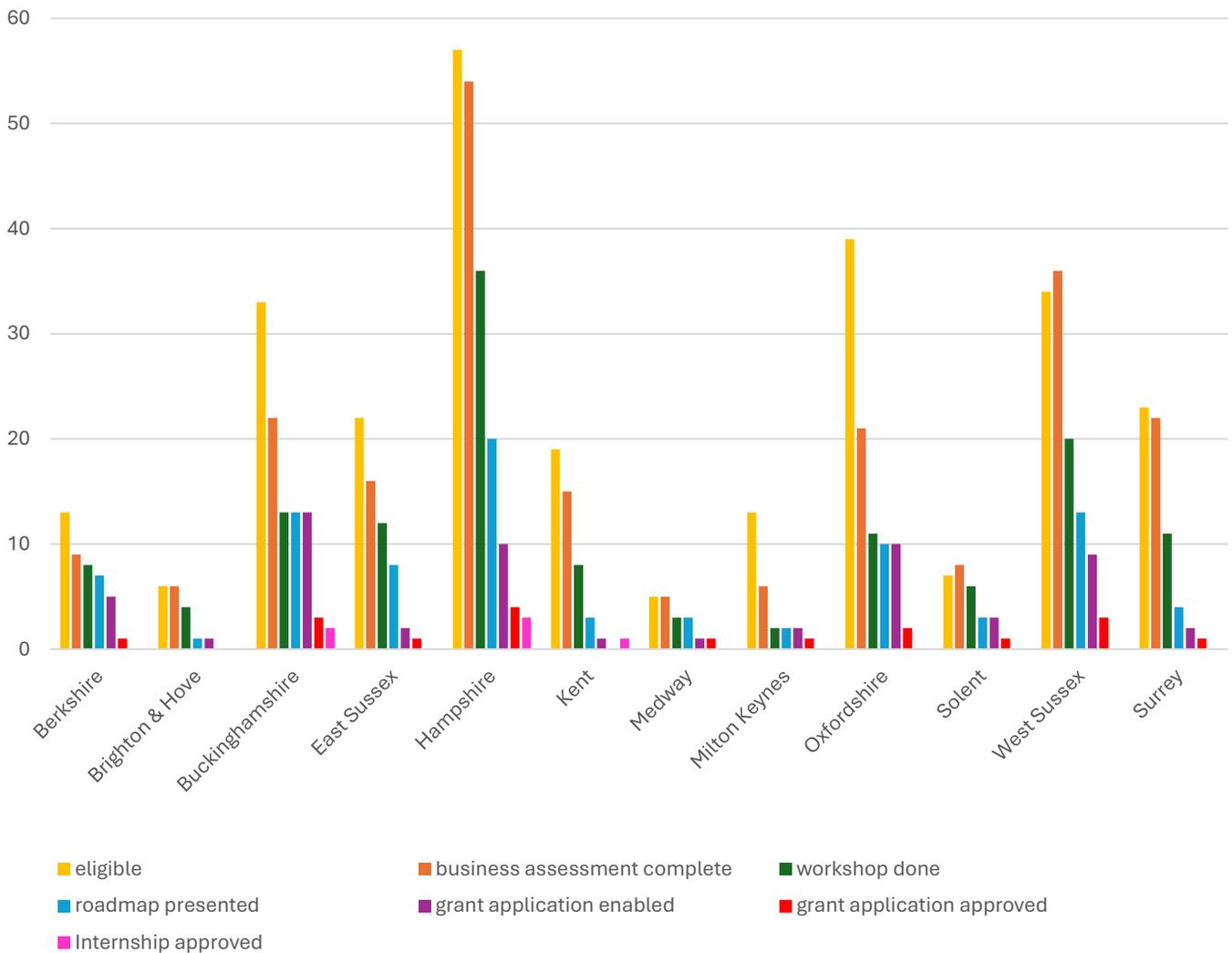
Leads are being followed up within 48 hours of registration, with two emails sent as standard to keep engagement high. The team is actively driving grant and internship applications while continuing to deliver workshops and roadmaps. To maintain pace and reduce delays, we're checking eligibility as soon as a business books its assessment, so we can move them forward without bottlenecks.

The graph shows total registrations in columns, on left hand side scale, and within each column the business counts split into eligible (gold), non eligible (black), undetermined (blue) and unresponsive (rust). Set against the grey backdrop of total SE manufacturing SMEs (based on ONS data, 2024) on the right-hand side scale (grey).

MADE SMARTER SE FUNNEL IN NUMBERS TO DATE BY PARTNER

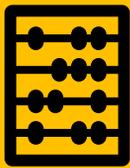
The graph shows by partner, the numbers of eligible businesses (gold), then businesses who have had their business assessment call (orange), then their in-person diagnostic workshop (green), roadmap presented back to the business with their technology solutions and priorities (turquoise) and finally the numbers with their grant applications enabled – when they can start completing their application to apply for a grant (purple). And internships approved (fuchsia).

MSA funnel by partner



EXTRA SUPPORT

Our TAS and OWDAs have been delivering extra support for some of the South East businesses, as well as sourcing very specialist support. So far, the key themes we see are:



- Mastering financial control
- Using excel capabilities



- Cybersecurity



- Net Zero



- Skills audit
- Apprenticeship
- Succession planning



- Sales
- Digital Marketing



Suzie at Impact Trading working through SWOT and PESTLE analysis to help businesses better understand their internal strengths and the external landscape shaping their digital journey.

COURSES

DIGITAL CHAMPIONS

Registration for our 3rd cohort of digital champions is open. This is a 2 day course for staff who want to better understand how technology can help and make a positive impact to a business and its people and how to drive and manage change.

LEADERSHIP COURSE

We also look forward to the Showcase event on 24 March for our 2nd cohort of the Leadership course

If you have any questions, please contact us at msasoutheast@surreycc.gov.uk



MARKETING UPDATE

Facebook Ads

In February we have been testing Facebook ads and we have seen a step change in the volume of leads generated.

Facebook is delivering more volume, we are seeing conversion with follow up discussions on the programme and support on offer being booked with our TAS. It would seem maybe smaller SMEs / micros are more active on this channel.

Events

A few pictures from the events we've attended in February and early March – from the National Manufacturing Conference with Make UK to local university career fairs. Even the local Police wanted to learn more about Made Smarter and we were happy to oblige. Joking aside, local career fairs have seen student registrations soar, ready for more internships in 2026-2027.



Upcoming events

Please let us know if you have a local event aimed at manufacturers that you'd like us to attend to present Made Smarter.

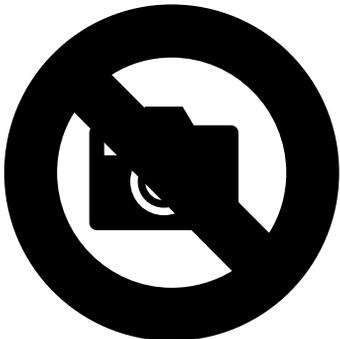
LinkedIn Posts

We will continue to post testimonials and photos from our workshops and events we attend. Please do repost to help spread the word.

Don't forget to follow us on [LinkedIn](#) & share our posts please!

A FEW PICTURES FROM SOME OF THE DIAGNOSTIC WORKSHOPS

The team has been visiting businesses across the region – from makers of beauty products, to manufacturers of flow control systems, 3D printers, aerospace product machining... Plenty of variety in sectors, size and some very interesting discussions, workshops and challenges being addressed. And we're not always allowed to take a pic...



No pictures allowed
Top Secret manufacturing



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DEFINITIONS

Eligibility Criteria

M A N U F A C T U R I N G S M E		Less than 250 employees		Annual turnover of less than £44m
		Received State aid of less than £315k in last 3 years		Annual balance sheet under £39m
		Fit criteria including ALL linked companies		Not Private Equity funded
		Manufacturing, making, creating tangible products		Manufacturing in South East

Business assessment – a 30-minute call to get to know the business and their challenges.

Diagnostic workshop – a 2 hour on site session with up to 5 client representatives to really get into a deep understanding of the business.

Roadmap – live document capturing the business' vision and challenges, prioritising potential technology solutions based on impact, cost,... and preparing their business case.

Grant applications – funding application from businesses who have had their roadmap for a grant of up to £20k and up to 50% of eligible project costs. Defrayed are amounts claimed post project completion.

Internship projects – application for funding of up to 300 hours for an intern to work on a digital technology project.

Additional Support – 10+ hours of additional support in relation to the Made Smarter Programme elements – for example HR, apprenticeship, and technology adoption.