

Press Release – June 2021

Business and Technical Support for The West of England Food and Drink Sector

Foodie entrepreneurs from Bath and North East Somerset, Bristol, North Somerset, and South Gloucestershire, who are setting up and running a food and drink business, are set to benefit from extra support.

The Food WorksSW is teaming up with the West of England Combined Authority, led by Metro Mayor Dan Norris, to launch the Food Enterprise Support Scheme to offer free business and technical support to local businesses.

Metro Mayor Dan Norris said: "We have some amazing producers growing wonderful Somerset and Gloucestershire food which is then cooked up into tasty treats. But food and drink is a heavily regulated sector and that's why I'm delighted that alongside The Food Works we can offer extra training courses on food safety, how long food products can stay on the shelves and on the financial side of running a local business."

The Food Enterprise Support Scheme is a West of England Combined Authority initiative, delivered in partnership with The Food & Drink Forum as operators of The Food WorksSW to support businesses across the region. Pre and start-up individuals and businesses can receive 4 hours of support; whilst established businesses can receive 5 hours of support through the scheme.

The support is being delivered by The Food WorksSW's Technical Team, who provide hands-on food technical support to businesses of all sizes across the South West. Businesses and individuals can access support through the scheme to help in areas such as; legal labelling, HACCP, food safety and hygiene, recipe nutritional analysis, SALSA/BRC support, internal audit, product development and innovation, shelf life extension, environmental health support, product costing and shelf life extension.

Rachel Goff, Senior Technical and Site Manager at The Food WorksSW said: "we can't wait to start delivering support through the FESS scheme. Many individuals enter the food and drink sector with little-to-no technical knowledge which means it can be a really daunting sector to enter, but through the scheme we will be able to share our knowledge and experience to allow pre and start-up businesses to confidently, and safely, launch.

We also see established businesses really struggling to take that next step and expand as they wish to due to the daily pressures of just running the business. Through the FESS scheme, our Technical Managers can help to alleviate this by offering support in any area of food technical. We can be really flexible delivering the support onsite or remotely, and can work around staff shift patterns if required.

The FESS scheme is now live and so pre-start and established food and drink businesses of the West of England can get in touch now to access the support."

To check your eligibility and to access the support please visit: <https://www.foodworks-sw.co.uk/fess-project/> or call The Food WorksSW team on 01934 315381

Ends

Notes for editors

West of England Combined Authority

The FESS scheme is a West of England Combined Authority initiative, delivered in partnership with The Food and Drink Forum as operators of Food WorksSW to support businesses across the region'. Please include this in notes to editors:

The West of England Combined Authority (WECA) is leading a targeted food business support programme, delivered in partnership with The Food and Drink Forum as operators of The Food Works^{SW}.

Please visit <https://www.westofengland-ca.gov.uk/> for more information.

The [West of England Growth Hub](#) is WECA's support hub for SMEs in the region, offering advice, support and information for local businesses.'

The Food and Drink Forum

The Food Works^{SW} is operated by The Food and Drink Forum. Based at Southglade Food Park, Nottingham, and Leicester Food Park, The Food and Drink Forum has members across the UK including manufacturers, food service operators, consultants and businesses providing services to the food and drink sector.

Its aims include championing the food and drink sector in the UK, developing strategic influencing partnerships, and acting as a centre for information and knowledge on all subjects relating to the food and drink sector.

www.foodanddrinkforum.co.uk

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The Food Works^{SW}

The Food Works^{SW} is a vibrant centre of excellence for nurturing local food and drink businesses. It offers state-of-the-art facilities, specialist technical and business support, and expert advice. It makes connections with and between local producers to collaborate, innovate, identify new markets and create jobs within the sector.

The Food Works^{SW} was commissioned by North Somerset Council and opened in April 2020. This dynamic food and drink innovation centre offers food-grade business units, product development kitchens and a business engagement centre with meeting and conference facilities.

The Food Works^{SW} site is funded by the West of England Local Enterprise Partnership through the Local Growth Fund, administered by the West of England Combined Authority.

See website: www.foodworks-sw.co.uk