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## Help is out there

Help and advice is available in Ashford for businesses in need of support or assistance. For impartial and confidential advice, contact Ashford Borough Council's Economic Development Team on 01233 330310. Alternatively visit the Business section of the council's website [www.ashford.gov.uk](http://www.ashford.gov.uk)

Whether looking to rationalise operations, diversify into different markets or expand and take on new opportunities, there are also a number of government-backed schemes available to help.

## Business Link Kent

Business Link Kent is the first port of call for local businesses looking for assistance. Business Link advises companies and puts them in touch with the help that they require. The service provides practical guidance on winning business, finding cost savings, finance issues, planning for the future, finding alternatives to redundancies, and help in dealing with staff restructuring and major change. For more on Business Link Kent see page 40.

## Kent Invicta Chamber of Commerce

Kent Invicta Chamber's Business Support Team provides a free one-to-

one advisory service for anyone looking to start up a business in Ashford or who already has a small business based in the borough. For more information about the Chamber see page 46.

## Real help for businesses, now

A new government website has been set up to promote the different types of help available to businesses across the country. This includes:

- Seminars and training days
- Support with business finance
- Business diagnostic tools
- Information about investing in the future.

Visit [www.realhelpnow.gov.uk](http://www.realhelpnow.gov.uk)

## Reliefs and Grants

Small or medium size businesses can benefit from business rate relief or additional funding to expand, modernise facilities or carry out research and development work.

For more information on Small Business Rate Relief, call the Ashford and Canterbury Business Rates department on 01227 862326 or email [businessrates@canterbury.gov.uk](mailto:businessrates@canterbury.gov.uk)

For free advice on grants for business investment or research and development, Locate in Kent can help. For more information see page 6.