

## WORKING TOGETHER TO SUPPORT SOUTH LONDON'S ECONOMIC RECOVERY



*The Universities and Further Education Colleges of South London have a major role to play in supporting the region's economic recovery, supporting South London businesses and communities to grow and thrive and making South London a world class place to live, study, work and invest.*

# About the South London Partnership's Economic Recovery Plan



The South London Partnership (SLP) is a sub-regional collaboration of five London boroughs: Croydon, Kingston upon Thames, Merton, Richmond upon Thames and Sutton, which seeks to build on the many strengths of South London as a place for people to live, work and thrive.

South London forms a significant part of the UK economy: home to 1.5 million residents, generating almost £40 billion in GVA, and supporting a workforce of over 650,000 people.

However, its economy punches below its weight relative to the rest of London and it contributes just 9% of the city's overall GVA and, at £26,500, its GVA per capita is around half the London average (£50,800).

The South London economy is typically less productive than London as a whole: in 2019, each job generated £60,200 of GVA on average, lagging behind both Outer London (£62,900) and London as a whole (£75,400).

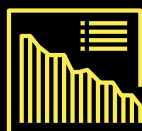
*“Improving business survival and renewing and increasing productivity and stimulating growth in knowledge-based businesses and jobs to create more higher skilled and higher paid work opportunities closer to home for our residents.”*

**South London Partnership, Economic Recovery Action Plan 2021**

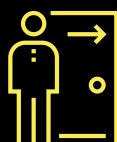
## Before the pandemic the South London economy:

- generated £32 billion GVA for the UK economy in 2019
- supported over half a million jobs – with wholesale and retail, human health and social work, professional services, administrative and support services, and education our biggest sectors
- benefited from extremely high skills levels, with 51% of residents being educated to degree level or above
- had six times as many start-ups as the London average and a business survival rate better than the London average
- was home to major global businesses including Paypal, Ebay, Haymarket, Reed Business Information, Mott MacDonald, Subsea7, Dearman, CIPD, Lidl and Unilever
- had successful town centres in Richmond, Wimbledon, Sutton, Kingston and Croydon

## Economic impact of the pandemic



**12%** economic contraction forecast estimated in 2020 (London 10.4%, UK 11.4%)



**32,000 jobs** lost over 2020 & 2021



**Unemployment at 5.3%** in 2020 and forecasted to **peak at 6.4%** in summer 2021



**94.3% increase** in Universal Credit claimants March 2020 to May 2021



Increased in-work poverty – forecast that **37.9%** of **Universal Credit claimants are in work**

## The Economic Recovery Action Plan for South London

In September 2021, the SLP published the Economic Recovery Action Plan for South London. The plan, which analyses pre and post COVID economic conditions including employment levels, earnings, types of business in the area and GDP, identifies increasing productivity and investing in innovation as key ways for businesses in the sub-region to grow and thrive.

Encouraging the development of more knowledge-based businesses which create better paid jobs, is also part of the strategy to strengthen the South London economy and support its recovery from the impacts of the pandemic.

**The priorities as set out in the Economic Recovery Action Plan are as follows:**

1. Helping residents into good work
2. Supporting innovation
3. Improving infrastructure and connectivity
4. Addressing the climate emergency
5. Revitalising high streets and economic areas

# Introducing BIG South London

**BIG** SOUTH  
LONDON



Launched in January 2021, BIG South London is a new programme of support which brings together the world class knowledge, expertise and facilities of the local universities and colleges for the benefit and economic recovery of South London based businesses and communities.

It's powered by a sub-regional collaboration of five London boroughs; Croydon, Kingston upon Thames, Merton, Richmond upon Thames and Sutton.

The partner universities and colleges already have an impressive array of services on offer to start-up founders, businesses and not for profits including world-class research expertise, student and researcher business placements, professional short courses and access to specialist facilities.

In addition, BIG South London will offer a new set of programmes to boost business growth. The first of which was our **Innovation Voucher**. Eighteen businesses/ organisations were awarded funding which has enabled them to commence work with one of the universities on a defined project – such as developing a new or improving an existing product, tapping into

research or scientific expertise for R&D or feasibility studies such as market research. A new **Innovation Support Programme** which will help businesses take a more innovative approach to developing products and growing their businesses will launch in the October 2021.

A second phase of the programme will see a network of physical hubs and workspaces being developed across South London through which the partnership will deliver further innovation support programmes to the region's business community.

BIG South London welcomes the publication of the South London Partnership's Economic Recovery Plan and looks forward to providing practical solutions to businesses in the region to help them achieve their full potential and transition out of the pandemic with the tools to create opportunity and achieve growth.

# Our Commitment to Supporting South London's Economic Recovery

## Support from across the BIG South London community

*"As a partnership of South London Universities and Colleges, working alongside colleagues in the Borough Councils of South London, we are responsible not only to our students and staff but also to the places around us. As place-based institutions, we are committed to attaching a high-priority to supporting the economic, social, environmental, and cultural life of our local communities. That is why we have come together to endorse the publication of the Economic Recovery Plan for South London and to publicly commit to working in partnership to overcome the challenges facing our local communities resulting from the global pandemic."*



**James Purnell, President and Vice Chancellor, University of the Arts London**

*"The University of the Arts London (UAL) fully supports the publication of the South London Economic Recovery Plan. As the largest specialist arts university in Europe and consistently ranking in the top 2 in the world university rankings for art and design, UAL has a global outlook and reach. We are also an intrinsic part of the creative industries in London, with many of our Colleges having been established in response to the needs of our local and regional economies. We are committed to continuing this tradition as we emerge from the Covid-19 pandemic and working with the South London Partnership to deliver economic prosperity and inclusive growth that will benefit our local communities, students and graduates and the wider creative sector in London."*



**Caireen Mitchell, Principal & CEO, Croydon College Group**

*"We are delighted that we are able to collaborate with the universities and colleges within the partnership group to expand the opportunities for our students and staff through research, development and innovation and also to serve the financial growth/regeneration of our local businesses within the Croydon area and beyond. It is really great to see higher education institutions of this calibre working together for the benefit of the community."*



**Professor Jane Harrington,  
Vice-Chancellor, University of Greenwich**

*"The University of Greenwich welcomes the publication of the South London Economic Recovery Plan. The five priorities that have been set out in the Plan represent the key challenges we all face, which have only been exaggerated by the pandemic. As a key educational institution rooted in South London, we are committed to working in partnership with local organisations in order to upskill existing workforce, develop new talent through our graduates, and support with contributions to knowledge through our experienced staff. We look forward to working with the South London Partnership to deliver the Plan and create opportunities to all the boroughs in South London and the communities who live within them."*



**Professor Helen Laville, Provost,  
Kingston University**

*"Kingston University welcomes the publication of the South London Partnership Economic Recovery Plan and fully supports the programme of sustainable recovery it sets out. As an anchor institution in South London, we are proud of our South London home, and are deeply committed to delivering the skills needed for innovation, developing graduates equipped to make a difference, and mobilising our knowledge and expertise to improve the lives of those around us. This programme provides us with an inspiring collaborative framework of regeneration for the whole region. We look forward to working closely with partners across South London to create opportunities and help South London thrive again."*



**Professor David Phoenix, Vice-Chancellor,  
London South Bank University**

*"London South Bank University is proud to support the Economic Recovery Plan for South London with the aim of working together to overcome the challenges faced by our local communities throughout the pandemic. This initiative will support the area's economic and wider recovery, and LSBU is committed to ensuring that it continues to grow and thrive. The University is committed to transform lives, communities, businesses and society through applied education. We strive to take a collaborative approach through working with governmental and grass-roots organisations to deliver a profound economic and social. That is why, for example we are working with BIG South London to deliver its new innovation support programme across five South London Boroughs."*



**James Jones, Acting Principal & CEO,  
Richmond upon Thames College**

*"Richmond upon Thames College (RuTC) is proud to be playing a part in the South London Partnership Economic Recovery Action Plan. As a rapidly-growing provider of post-16 education and training, we take very seriously our role in supporting the economic recovery of both the local borough and the UK's capital as a whole. RuTC's long-term curriculum strategy is fully aligned to the SLP's sub-regional priorities and we are excited about the opportunities ahead of us. As RuTC continues to develop our strategic partnerships with a wide range of HEIs and businesses of varying sizes over the coming months and years, we look forward to maximising the opportunities to work together to achieve the goals set out in the South London Partnership Economic Recovery Action Plan and we endorse the Plan in full."*



**Professor Jean-Noël Ezingeard,  
Vice-Chancellor, University of Roehampton**

*“At the University of Roehampton, we have a proud heritage of supporting our local community and wider society. At a time when our region’s economy is facing global challenges, we remain firmly committed to our ethos of collaboration, inclusivity, and equality, and will work alongside our partners, academic colleagues and talented graduates to support the South London Economic Recovery Plan.”*



**Peter Mayhew-Smith, Group Principal and  
CEO, South Thames Colleges Group**

*“South London is opening up again and we aim to be right at the heart of its recovery, working with our wonderful communities and great partners like BIG South London to make sure we all thrive together.”*



**Rev Professor Philip McCormack,  
Principal, Spurgeon’s College**

*“We are delighted to be able to support the South London Economic Recovery Plan, as our communities work to rebuild from the devastating impact of the COVID-19 outbreak. Higher education plays a vital role in local economies – both through supporting local businesses and by providing highly skilled graduates for the local workforce. It is now more important than ever that our institutions work together – and in concert with the wider community and Boroughs – to meet the challenges created by the pandemic, and the Economic Recovery*

*Plan is an essential step in this direction. As a deeply embedded member of the Croydon community, we are proud to be working closely with local businesses to support the economic recovery from COVID and we are committed to accelerating the social, cultural and economic development of our local area. The Economic Recovery Plan marks an important collective call to action which we at Spurgeon’s College are excited to be a part of.”*



**Professor Anthony McClaran,  
Vice-Chancellor, St Mary’s University**

*“St Mary’s supports the aims of the South London Economic Recovery Plan to help our communities recover and rebuild from the impact of COVID-19. St Mary’s has a fundamental role to play in Twickenham in the local area, and we look forward to using our research and facilities to support local businesses and organisations. Working in partnership with our local councils and colleagues in other further and higher education providers, St Mary’s will play our full part in the Economic Recovery Plan.”*



**Nigel Lambe, CEO, Sussex Innovation**

*“As a business support network and partner of BIG South London, Sussex Innovation wholeheartedly supports the South London Economic Recovery Plan. We have been supporting local businesses to start and scale since the opening of our Croydon Centre in 2015 and are committed to working collaboratively to support the region’s recovery over the coming years.”*

**BIG** SOUTH  
LONDON



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/INNOVATION.  
/GROWTH.**

To find out about the fully funded support that is on offer for businesses, social enterprises & third sector organisations, visit:

**[BIG-knowledge.co.uk](http://BIG-knowledge.co.uk)**



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