

New Business Starter Pack

A guide to doing business in Southwark

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Southwark – creating a strong local economy

We are committed to supporting business growth, making our borough a great place to do business.

As a council, we recognise that our business community is central to what makes a strong local economy with thriving town centres and high streets.

When our economy is strong, then all our resident's benefit. It brings more opportunities for people in Southwark to find work, get into training and achieve their aspirations.

Local businesses contribute towards services provided by the council by paying business rates and we are continuing to invest in good quality local services like clean streets and safer communities. To make Southwark an even better place to start and grow a business – which is a key priority in the council's Economic Strategy 2023 to 2030 we are:

- Investing in relationships with large and small businesses through key business networks including our established Business Improvements Districts across Southwark.
- Ensure Southwark is a business-friendly council, making it easy for new and existing business to access council services.
- Deliver additional workspace in town centres, including industrial, distribution, hybrid and studio workspace.
- The Southwark Plan sets out our commitment to add 58,000 jobs between 2019 and 2036 and 460,000m² of commercial space.

This brief guide is designed to help you navigate all the key council business services, including how to report problems and get support with growing your business.

We all have a major role to play in making Southwark an attractive and successful business location. I look forward to working with you in realising this objective.

Councillor John Batteson


Cabinet Member for Climate Emergency, Jobs and Business




Key council contacts

Business Rates


To set up your business rates account and for comprehensive information and guidance.

 020 7525 5505

 businessrates@southwark.gov.uk

Business Desk


Support and advice for Southwark Businesses.


 southwarkbusinessdesk@southwark.gov.uk

 www.southwark.gov.uk/business-and-licences

Markets and Street Trading


For street trader registration and information about market pitches.

 020 7525 6000

 streettrading@southwark.gov.uk

Procurement


For information on selling services and goods to the council.


 020 7525 0381

 procurementadviceteam@southwark.gov.uk

Food Safety Team


To register your food business and for advice on hygiene and standards.


 020 7525 2000

 food@southwark.gov.uk

Parking


To buy parking permits.

 0344 800 2736

 parking@southwark.gov.uk

Parking Design


For information about new parking bays, car clubs and parking policy.

 0800 138 9081

 parking@southwark.gov.uk

Commercial Property

To find information on council commercial property for sale or rent.


 To buy: 020 7525 5562 To rent: 020 7525 5487

 To buy: property@southwark.gov.uk
To rent: local.lettings@southwark.gov.uk

Traffic Orders


For information on traffic orders.


 temporarytrafficorders@southwark.gov.uk

 TTMO@southwark.gov.uk

Commercial Waste and Recycling


For information on local commercial waste companies and general advice.

 020 7525 2627

 commercial.waste@southwark.gov.uk

Business Continuity Management


For information on how businesses should plan for coping in an emergency.


 business.continuity@southwark.gov.uk

 emergency.planning@southwark.gov.uk

Trading Standards


Advice on trading standard requirements.


 020 7525 2000

 tradingstandards@southwark.gov.uk

Health and Safety at Work


Advice on how to ensure your place of work is safe for your employees and customers.


 020 7525 2000

 ohs.regen@southwark.gov.uk

Planning – Building Control


Advice on how to ensure your place of work is safe for your employees and customers.


 020 7525 5582

 building.control@southwark.gov.uk

Planning Applications and Enquiries


For enquiries related to planning applications.


 020 7525 5403

 planning.enquiries@southwark.gov.uk

Highway / Street Improvements


For enquiries about highways work and reporting disturbances.


 highways@southwark.gov.uk

 <https://report.southwark.gov.uk/>

Cleaner, Greener, Safer Programme


For information on related projects and grants.

 020 7525 2665

 cgs@southwark.gov.uk

Street furniture

To report damaged street furniture or a faulty street light click [here](#).

 street.furniture@southwark.gov.uk

For all other enquiries, contact the Southwark Council main switchboard on **020 7525 0000**.

Business Support and Advice

If you own a business in Southwark or are thinking about starting a business, and would like to find out more about the business support and advice services available, you can find information on a wide range of services funded by the council and its partners at:

[Business Support and Advice](#)

If you need to speak to someone about any of the business support services on offer, please email:

southwarkbusinessdesk@southwark.gov.uk

Report it

It's easy to report any problems with the streets around your business. Simply visit the 'Report It' section of our website to inform us of issues such as graffiti, noise, anti-social behaviour, potholes, or broken streetlights.

[Report Southwark](#)

Understanding Business Rates

Business rates are charged on most non-domestic properties. They are calculated by multiplying the ratable value of your property (which is based on the annual rental value at a specified date and set by the Valuation Office Agency) by the business rates multiplier, or rate in the pound (set by central government). They are collected by the local authority and help to pay for local services. The amount payable can be reduced in certain circumstances.

Further Information

For further information regarding business rates, including applying for rate relief, notifying the council of a change of circumstances or setting up a direct debit, Please visit:

[Business Rates](#)

Registering a food business

Every local authority keeps a register of all the food businesses in its area. If you're starting a new food business in Southwark, you must register with Southwark Council at least 28 days before opening for business. Registering your business is a simple process and doesn't cost anything.

You must inform us about any business vehicles used at permanent premises like shops or warehouses. You do not have to register each vehicle separately.

If you have one or more vehicles but no permanent premises, you must tell us where they're normally kept.

If you run a food business within Southwark, you must tell Southwark's food team about any premises you use for storing, selling, distributing or preparing food.

Examples of food premises include restaurants, hotels, cafes, shops, supermarkets, staff canteens, kitchens in offices, warehouses, guest houses, home caterers including childminders, delivery vehicles, buffet cars on trains, markets and other stalls including hot dog, ice cream vans, etc.

How to register your food business

You can register your food business online by completing an online form [here](#).

Further information on registering a food business can be found at:

[Registering or Approving Food Businesses](#)

Further guidance

Further guidance on the type of food activity before applying can be found [here](#).

Alcohol and hot food after 11pm:

If you wish to sell alcohol, or sell hot food after 11pm, you will need to apply for a license under the Licensing Act 2003.

For more information please visit:

[Alcohol and Late Night & Entertainment Licensing](#)

If you require any further information or would like to speak with someone in the Food Safety team, please contact:

020 7525 2000
food@southwark.gov.uk

Health and safety at work

Health and safety enforcement is either the responsibility of the Health and Safety Executive (HSE) or the council, depending on the work activity. The council has a legal duty to enforce legislation around Health and Safety. The regulatory Health and Safety Team aims to ensure that work premises are safe for employees and visitors and that accidents and injuries are prevented wherever possible.

The team is responsible for enforcing health and safety in specific types of commercial properties. Further information can be found at:

[Business Health and Safety](#)

As an employer or owner/occupier of a business premises, you have certain legal responsibilities with regards to safety policy and risk assessments. Further information can be found at:

[HSE Health and Safety](#)

Health and safety poster

Employers have a legal duty to display a safety poster in a prominent position in each workplace.

For more information or to order your poster please visit the HSE website at:

[HSE Health and Safety](#)

What happens when a health and safety inspector calls?

The purpose of an inspection visit is to check that you are complying with health and safety law. Inspectors have the right to enter any workplace without giving notice, though notice may be given on some occasions. The inspection visit will involve looking at the workplace and the work activities, the inspector may also wish to talk to employees and take photographs and samples.

Further information on what to expect can be found:

[When a health and safety inspector calls](#)

Advice and Training

The HSE website is a comprehensive source of information which is regularly updated. You can use it to keep in touch with current campaigns and events, subscribe to free email news, updates, RSS feeds and podcasts by selecting the 'news' tab on the HSE home page. The website also provides free basic advice on health and safety:

[Health and safety basics for your business](#)

The Southwark Council health and safety team provides free advice and guidance to businesses and individuals on their duties and are happy to answer any questions you may have.

Health and Safety Enforcement Team:
ohs.regen@southwark.gov.uk

Parking

Business parking permit

You can apply for a parking permit in the controlled parking zones where your business is located if your vehicle is being used for business purposes.

Full procedures can be found here:

[Parking Permits](#)

Parking for suppliers to the business

Delivery vehicles are permitted to load or unload in our various parking bays and on yellow lines (where loading is not restricted)

on all Southwark Highways. This rule applies to all vehicles delivering within London.

Finding parking

Our interactive map can be used to map the controlled parking zone that covers the area around your business, find pay and display or shared use parking spaces for customer use, or to find cycle parking sites.

Simply use the menu on the right to choose the layers that are relevant to your search. For more information visit:

[Parking Map](#)

Planning and building control

Planning and building control primarily cover the following areas:

- Processing of applications for planning permission, advertisement consent and listed building consent
- Processing of building control applications
- Preparation of planning policy documents for the council
- Investigating contraventions of Planning and Building Control regulations
- Processing searches in connection with sales of land and property
- Providing information on the lawful use of land and buildings

Key links for planning:

- To report building structural issues please contact building.control@southwark.gov.uk
- Information and contact details for businesses to check planning permission before signing a new lease can be found at: [Planning Permission Guidance](#)
- Searching a premises planning history can be found here: [Simple Search](#)
- Planning permission details can be found at: [Planning checklists | Southwark Council](#)

Apprenticeships and recruitment

Apprenticeships

To find out more about apprenticeships and how they can work for your business, please visit:

[Employ an Apprentice](#)

For one-to-one support in everything from deciding whether an apprenticeship is right for you through to planning for the first few weeks, please email:

SouthwarkBusinessDesk@southwark.gov.uk

Recruitment support

Southwark Works offer recruitment support for Southwark businesses. They have a range of local candidates that are ready for work. Advisors will use information about past work experience and future employment expectations to find the right person for your job. If their clients do not have the specific skills needed for the opportunities you have on offer, they will provide additional training to make sure your job requirements are met.

Contact Southwark Works at:
376 Walworth Road
London, SE17 2NG

0800 052 0540
info@southwarkworks.org.uk and ask for
the Employer Engagement Team.

Southwark Business Networks

Organisation	Contact Details
Better Bankside BID	 www.betterbankside.co.uk  020 7928 3998  info@betterbankside.co.uk
Camberwell Business Network (SE5 Forum for Camberwell)	 www.se5forum.org.uk  cbn@se5forum.org.uk
Federation of Small Businesses	 www.fsb.org.uk  0808 20 20 888  customerservices@fsb.org.uk
Latin Elephant	 http://latinelephant.org  info@latinelephant.org
Peckham Business Forum	 https://peckhambusinessforum.co.uk/  020 3948 3020  info@peckhambusinessforum.co.uk
South Bank BID	 www.southbankbid.co.uk  020 7202 6900  BID@southbanklondon.com
Southwark Chamber of Commerce	 https://southwarkcommerce.com/  07477 581 977  admin@southwarkcommerce.com
Team London Bridge BID	 www.teamlondonbridge.co.uk  020 7407 4701  info@teamlondonbridge.co.uk
The Blue Bermondsey BID	 www.thebluebermondsey.com  info@thebluebermondsey.co.uk
Elephant and Castle Business Forum	 https://urbanelephant.co.uk/business-forum-1
WeAreWaterloo BID	 http://wearewaterloo.co.uk  020 7620 1201  info@wearewaterloo.co.uk
Education Business Alliance	 www.southwarkeba.org.uk/  020 7525 2895  eba@southwark.gov.uk