

Analysis of enquiries to the LEP Growth Service, 2017/18

1.0 Analysis of business enquiries 2017/18

- 1.1 Performance data is monitored on a weekly, monthly and quarterly basis. The following information presents more detail on the performance of the Service (Gateway and Growth Managers) from 1st April 17 to date. It also provides comparisons to previous years in order to assess progress over time.
- 1.2 The Service is working towards a target of 625 businesses supported per quarter in order to achieve the 2017/18 target of supporting 2500 individual businesses. A total of 809 SMEs (activity line orange below) have been supported since the start of April 2017, averaging 405 businesses per quarter. Those businesses have interacted with the Service 919 times (activity line blue), indicating confidence by many businesses in returning to the Service for additional support.

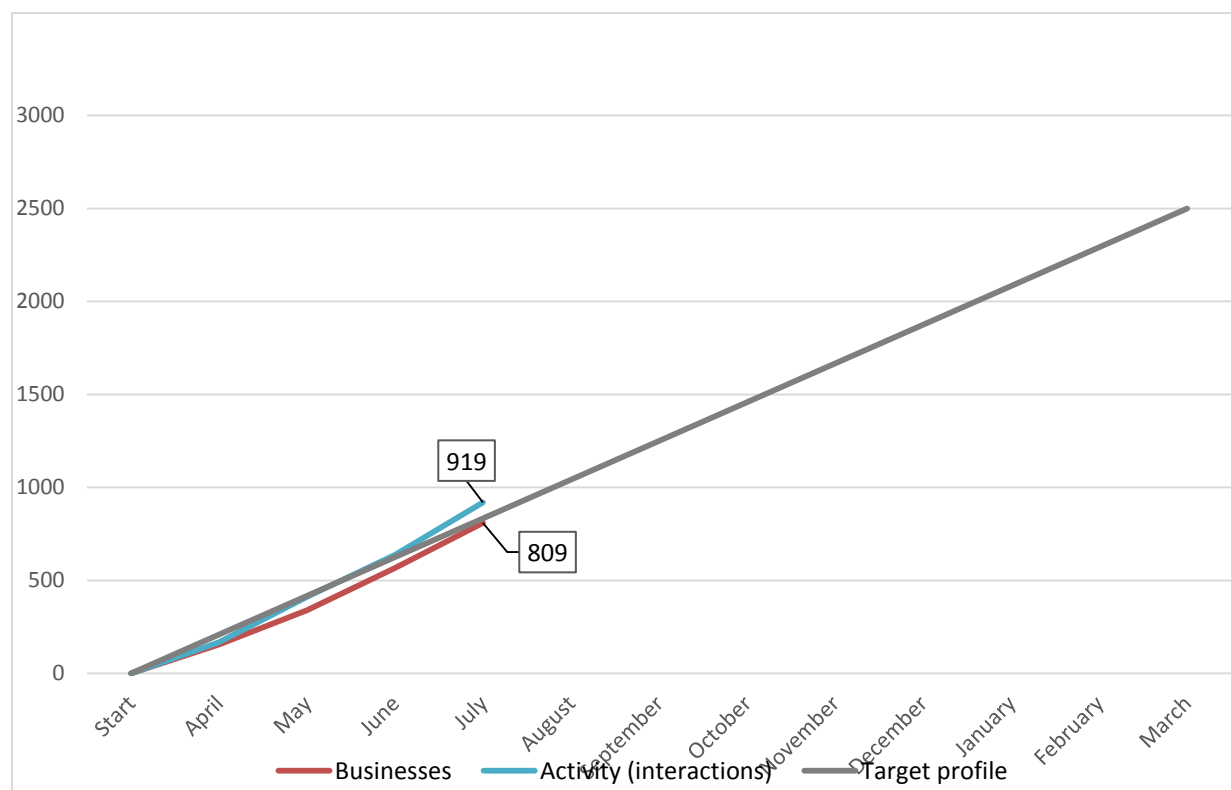


Figure 1: Actual/projected performance against the target of supporting 2500 businesses (Apr 17 – August 17).

- 1.3 Level 1 (light-touch support) and Level 2 (more intensive support) enquiries represent the Service's target client group. As the Figure 2 below shows, the Service has been receiving roughly twice as many enquiries per month this financial year than in the corresponding months of 2016/17, with July 17 being the busiest month so far in 2017/18.

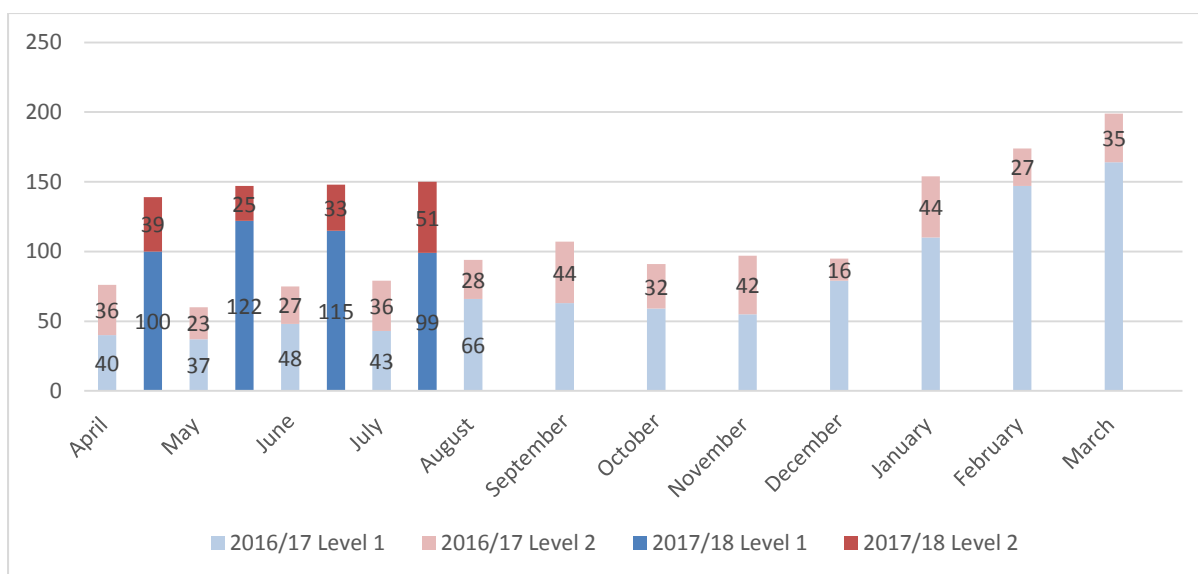


Figure 2: LEP Growth Service enquiries to the Gateway by client group (Apr 16 – August 17)

- 1.4 The table below shows the increase in enquiries to the Gateway from target clients (i.e. those with plans to grow, classified as Levels 1 and 2). It also shows a converse ongoing decrease in enquiries from non-target clients, such as very early pre-start firms and businesses with information requests.

Table 1: Number of enquiries into the Gateway (June 15 – August 17)

Enquiry Type	Total July 15 – Mar 16	Total April 16 – Mar 17	Total April 17 to Aug 17
Level 0 – Non Target Client Group	410	252	51
Level 1 – Light Touch Referral	427	911	438
Level 2 – In depth Referrals	235	390	149
Total Gateway Interactions	1072	1553	638

- 1.5 The surge in enquiries from target businesses may be attributed to the ‘Lets talk real business’ campaign (and the associated smaller campaigns on such issues as apprenticeships and exports), as well as the ‘pop-up’ business cafés, the launch of new business support products and more targeted eMarketing activity.
- 1.6 The routes of enquiry from businesses accessing the Service has remained fairly stable since launch in July 2015, with the most popular route being the telephone helpline (45%). This percentage has declined slightly (-2%) since the end of March 2017, whilst the percentage of website enquiries has slightly increased (+2%). This could be partly attributable to a move to on-line enquiry and application forms for most business support products.

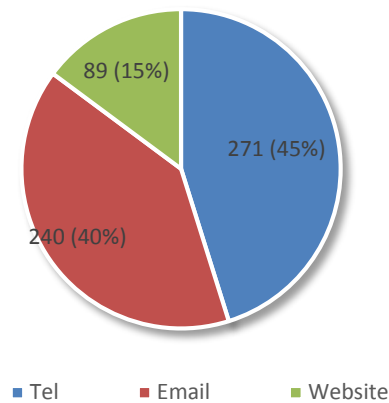


Figure 3: Gateway channels of enquiry (Apr 17 – Aug 17).

- 1.7 All businesses are asked how they have heard about the Service and just over 60% (n=495) have provided this information. The Internet remains the most frequently cited channel, followed by referrals from another LEP product/service and referrals from another business or friend.

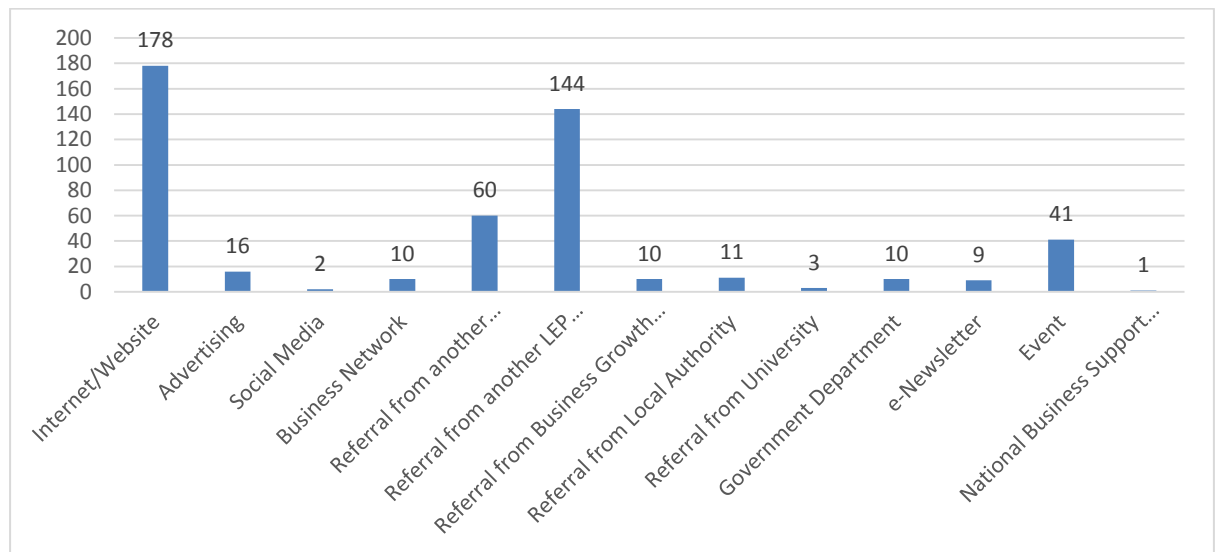


Figure 4: How customers report hearing about the service (Apr 17 – August 17)

- 1.8 The SME Growth Managers have supported 279 businesses so far this financial year, with 194 receiving ongoing intensive support. Table 2 below provides a breakdown of the number of clients supported by the managers in their districts.

Table 2: SME Growth Manager clients by district (Apr 17 – Aug 17)

SME Growth Manager	Total Clients	Intensively Supported
Bradford & Craven (x2 FTE)	38	35
Calderdale (x1 FTE)	43	14

Harrogate (x1 FTE)	41	29
Kirklees (x1.5 FTE)	28	21
Leeds (x2.5 FTE)	68	51
Wakefield (x1 FTE)	27	22
York (x1 FTE)	26	18
Selby (x0.5 FTE)	8	4
Total	279	194

- 1.9 Figure 5 shows the spread of enquiries to the Gateway from across the LCR compared to the percentage of all SMEs by district. Leeds and Bradford continue to generate more enquiries than their proportion of overall LCR stock, whilst the opposite is the case in the North Yorkshire districts.

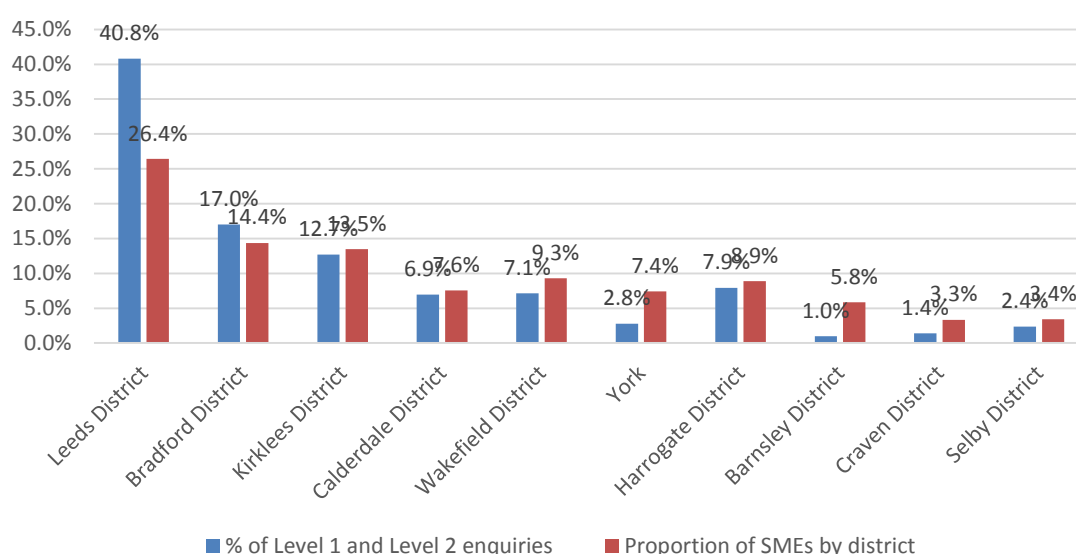


Figure 5: SME enquiries compared to the proportion of SMEs by district (Apr 17 – Aug 17)

- 1.10 Access to Finance continues to be the most popular topic for support for both Gateway enquiries and the clients of the SME Growth Managers. Business Planning and IT/Connectivity are the next common topics for Gateway enquiries, which likely coincides with the recent high interest in the city region's Digital Enterprise programme. In contrast, Skills/Recruitment and Premises are the areas most Growth Manager-clients want support with, followed by access to finance.

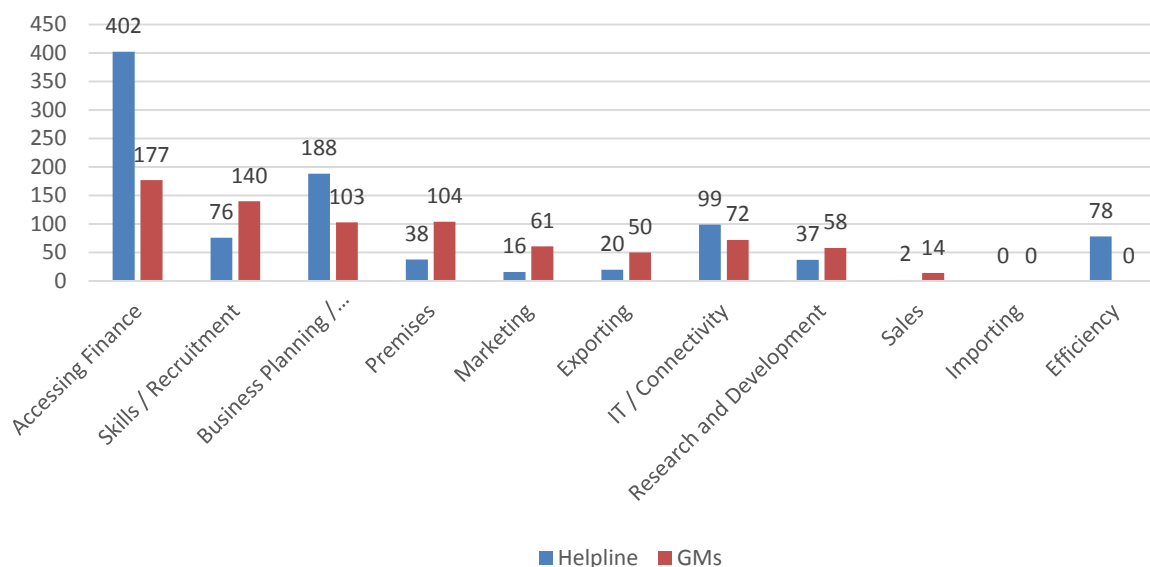


Figure 6: Topics for business support (Apr 17 – Aug 17)

- 1.10 Since the launch of the Service in July 2015, businesses from the Manufacturing Sector have always provided the highest number of enquiries into the Gateway. Similarly, it remains that Growth Manager-clients are more likely to be in the LEP's priority sectors, particularly Manufacturing and Digital, than those firms that come directly through the Gateway. This is attributable to the nature of the current support offer which lends itself to these two sectors, and the prominence of SMEs in the priority sectors across our largest districts.

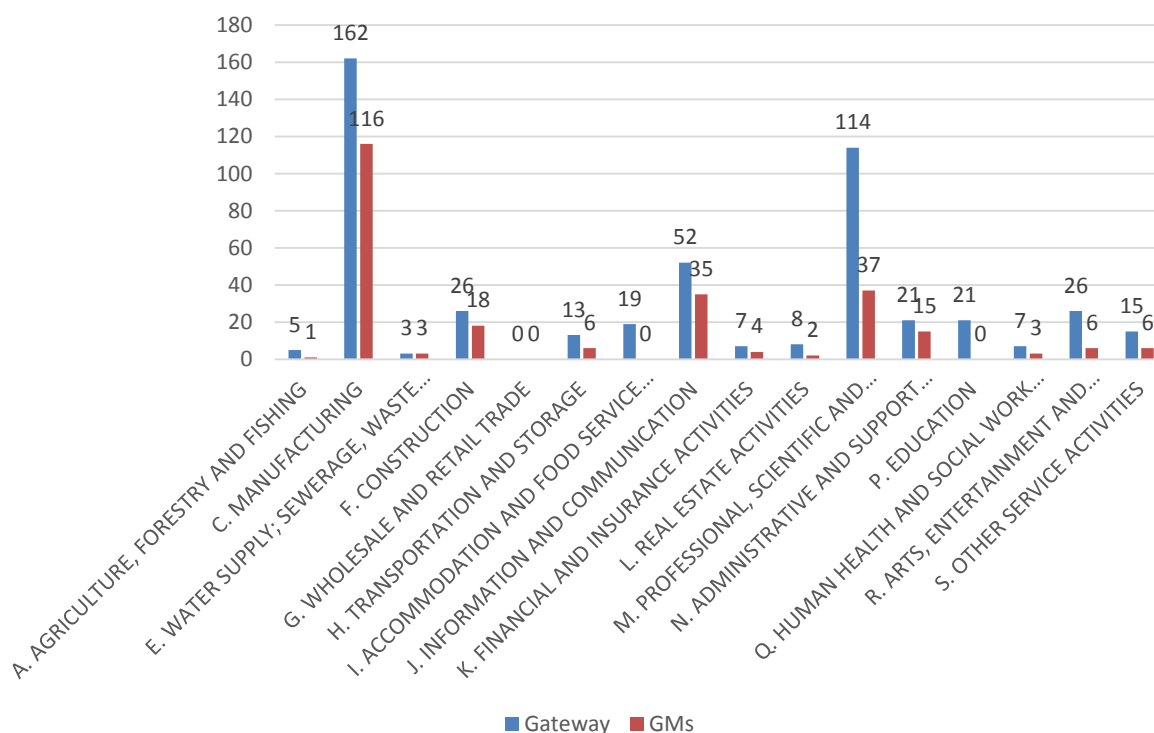


Figure 7: Percentage of Growth Service clients (Gateway and Growth Manager) by sector (Apr 17 – Aug 17)

- 1.11 Figure 8 below illustrates the breadth of referrals to business support products and organisations from both the Gateway and Growth Managers. The highest number of referrals are to LEP products (particularly the Capital Grants and Resource Efficiency Fund), and to the National Business Support Helpline, which caters more effectively for pre-start firms and livelihood businesses. Encouragingly there has been a recent increase in export-related referrals to the Department for International Trade, and to Higher Education providers, particularly Leeds Beckett University.

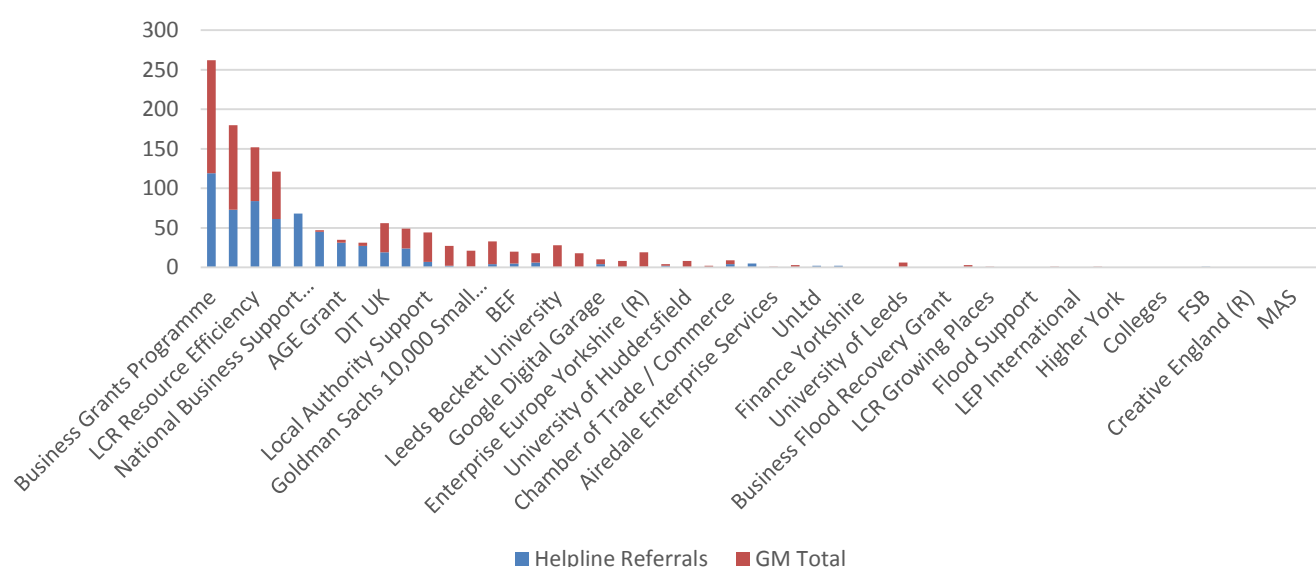


Figure 8: Number of business support referrals (Apr 17 – Aug 17)

- 1.12 The Growth Managers are working towards a target of collectively account managing 693 Business, with 25% of those being new clients for 2017/18. Business networks continue to be a good source of clients for Growth Managers in York, Bradford and Harrogate, whilst Wakefield and Calderdale are working closely with regulators and planning departments.

