

A woman with her arms crossed, smiling slightly, in a blue-tinted office setting. She is wearing a light-colored blazer. Other people are visible in the background, also in a blue-tinted office environment.

The best UK cities  
to start a business







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Using our research and some calculations based on stats around the UK's largest cities, we've been able to identify which five cities are set to shake up the British business landscape by offering the right mix of available talent, affordable costs and convenience.

We've also established which cities offer the least potential for a start-up when it comes to survival rates and other factors.

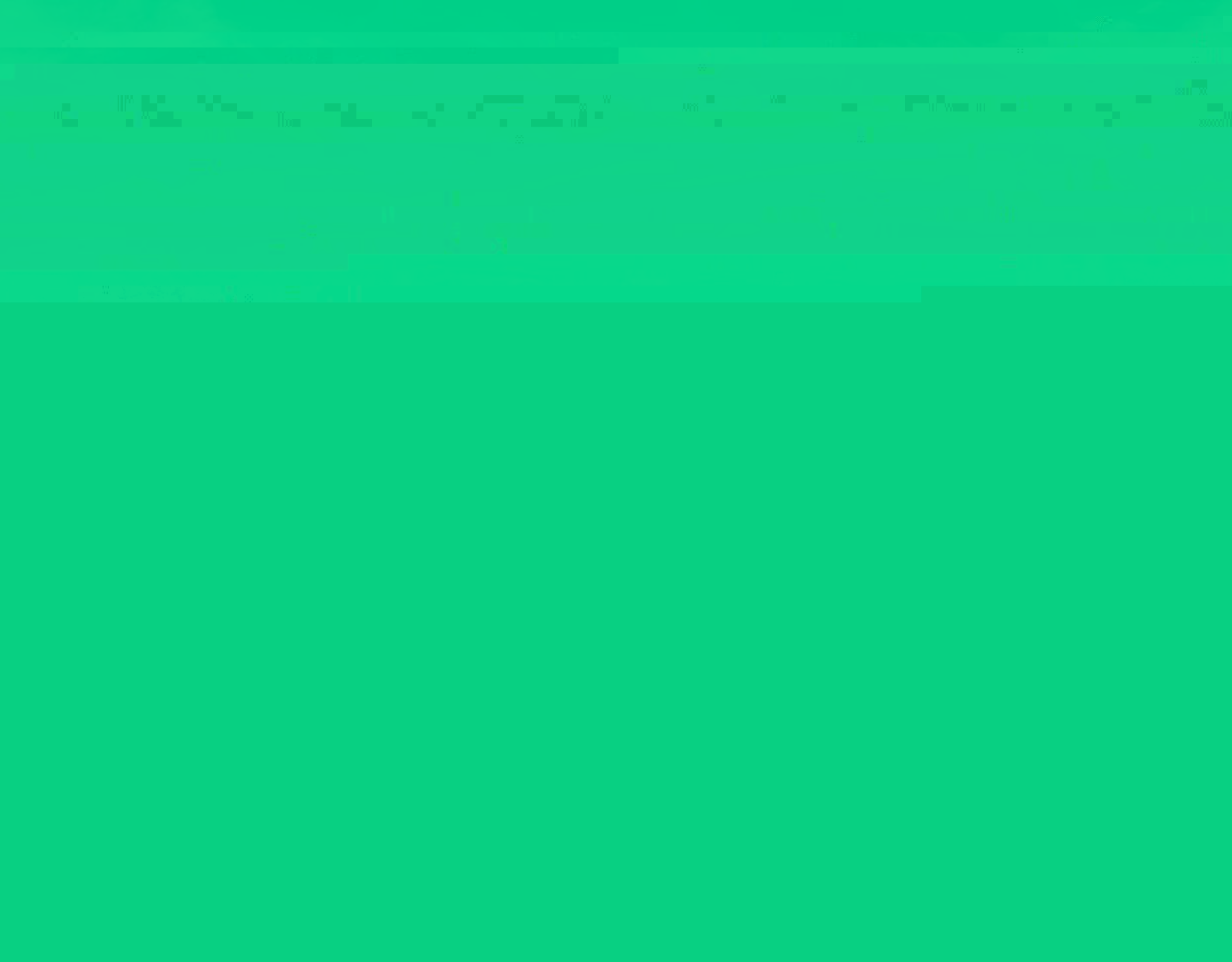
 **Cities with the least potential for start-ups**

 **Cities with the most potential for start-ups**

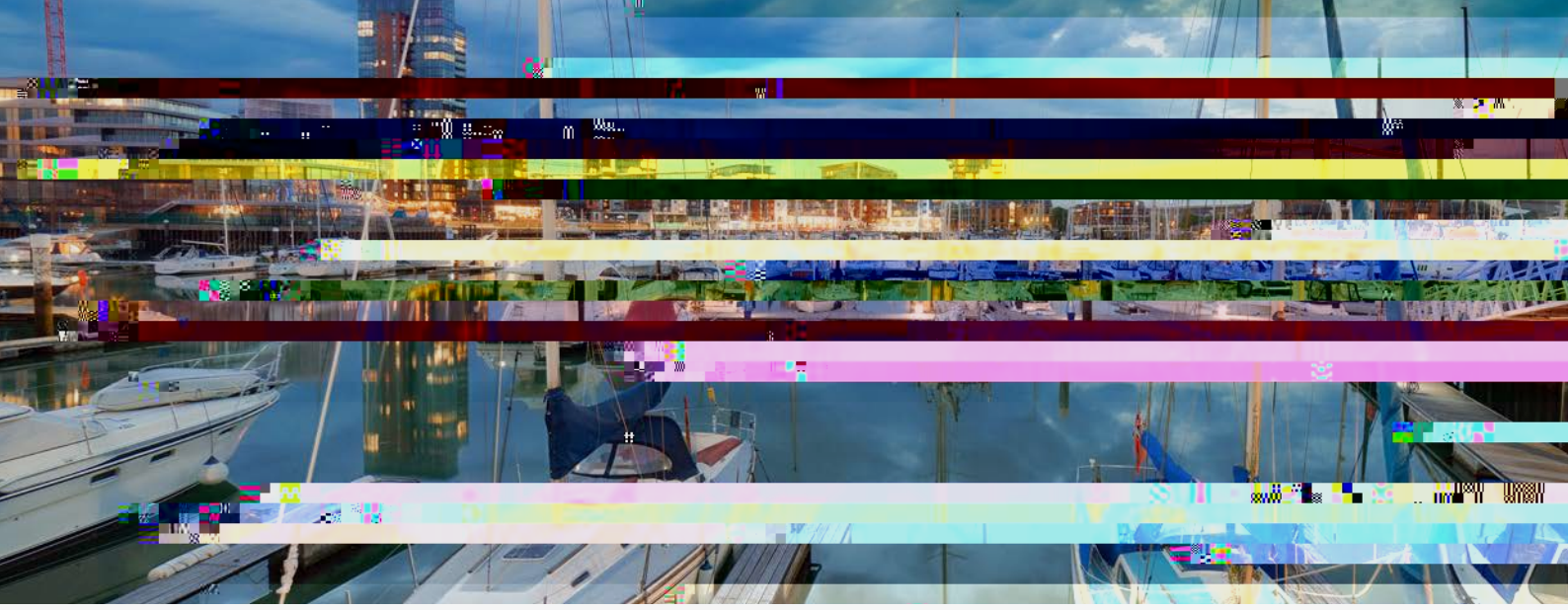


# 02

To start a business







# Southampton

4th

2,700

14th

Start-up growth (2015-16)

12%

2nd

£16.00

10th

£579.20

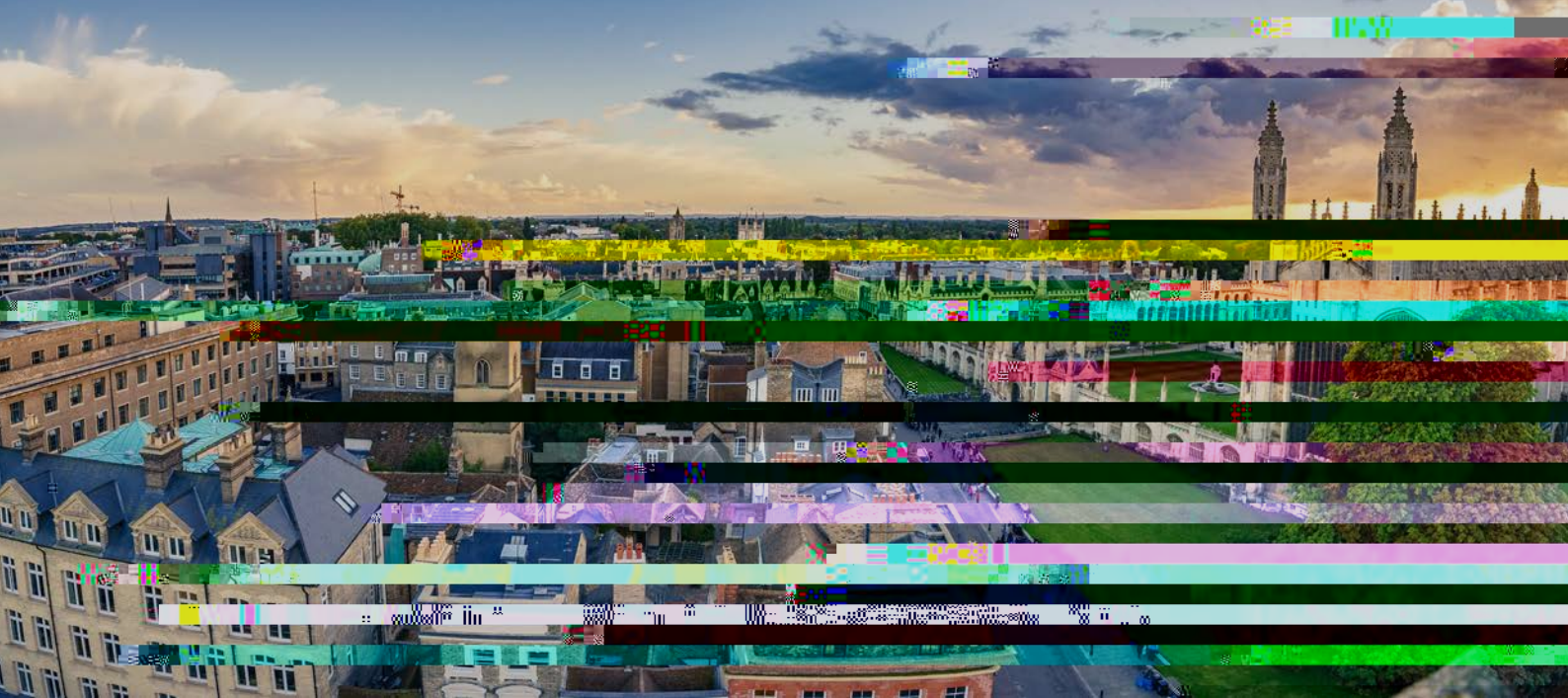
9th

The explosion of start-ups in Southampton may have come about as a result of the jobs created by the growth at ABP Southampton, which as of 2015 was the UK's fourth-busiest shipping port.

A more general view is that the number of businesses in Southampton grew by 18% since 2010, with more than a quarter of new companies in professional, scientific and technical fields.

City centre redevelopment is thought to be the main driver of growth, and with commercial rent

under £20 per square foot, it's a good prospect particularly on the south coast. Given strong transport links of shore and on the roads to other major cities in the south, Southampton's sudden boom in businesses suggests a number of gaps in the market that an influx of new talent could help to plug.



Minimal business closures

Students as % age of population

With an even larger pool of prospects from university in the local area, and some of the best take-home pay in the UK, it appears that Cambridge is one of the most promising locations for workers looking to set up shop.

However, Cambridge averaged only 55 start-ups per 10,000 people according to 2016 figures – less than half that of London. Despite this, the region is home to a large cluster of tech businesses which gives it the name Silicon Fen, a la California's Silicon Valley.

A healthy five-year survival rate for start-ups of 43% means that Cambridge is one of the UK's highlights of the start-up scene – and well worth considering if your business idea has a tech slant.





# Leicester

2nd

3,115

10th

Start-up growth (2015-16)

7%

4th

£13.50

6th

44%

7th

Leicester's share of start-ups skyrocketed in 2015-16, joining Cambridge (3rd) among the top cities for start-up growth. In doing so, the Midlands has been catapulted into a new business boom.

Given the high regard in which the Premier League is held around the world, perhaps it proved to be the case on an even larger scale for Leicester's cof ers.

The city's sporting success may have played a large role in that growth. Since Leicester City lifted the Premier League title in 2016, experts predicted that similar achievements did wonders for local economies. The Bournemouth boom of 2011, where registered businesses increased by 15% against the UK average of 9%, mirrored the rise in fortunes of their football club.





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London, Birmingham and Manchester all feature here – England's three largest cities might be proof that having access to a developed infrastructure isn't necessarily the main goal.

According to our calculations, Manchester experienced the largest growth in start-up businesses between 2015 and 2016. But it also suffered the most business closures outside London in 2016. Between them, these cities charge the most on business rent in the UK.

Birmingham also features because, like other cities in the lower reaches of our ranking, the gap

between income and expenses is uncomfortably narrow for new business owners trying to spread their wings.



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Starting a new business can be a daunting decision, no matter where you are. For self-starters to get their footing in the local entrepreneurial scene.



### City Councils

Most city councils offer support to businesses through access to resources online, as well as support from health and safety professionals when it comes to things like food preparation.

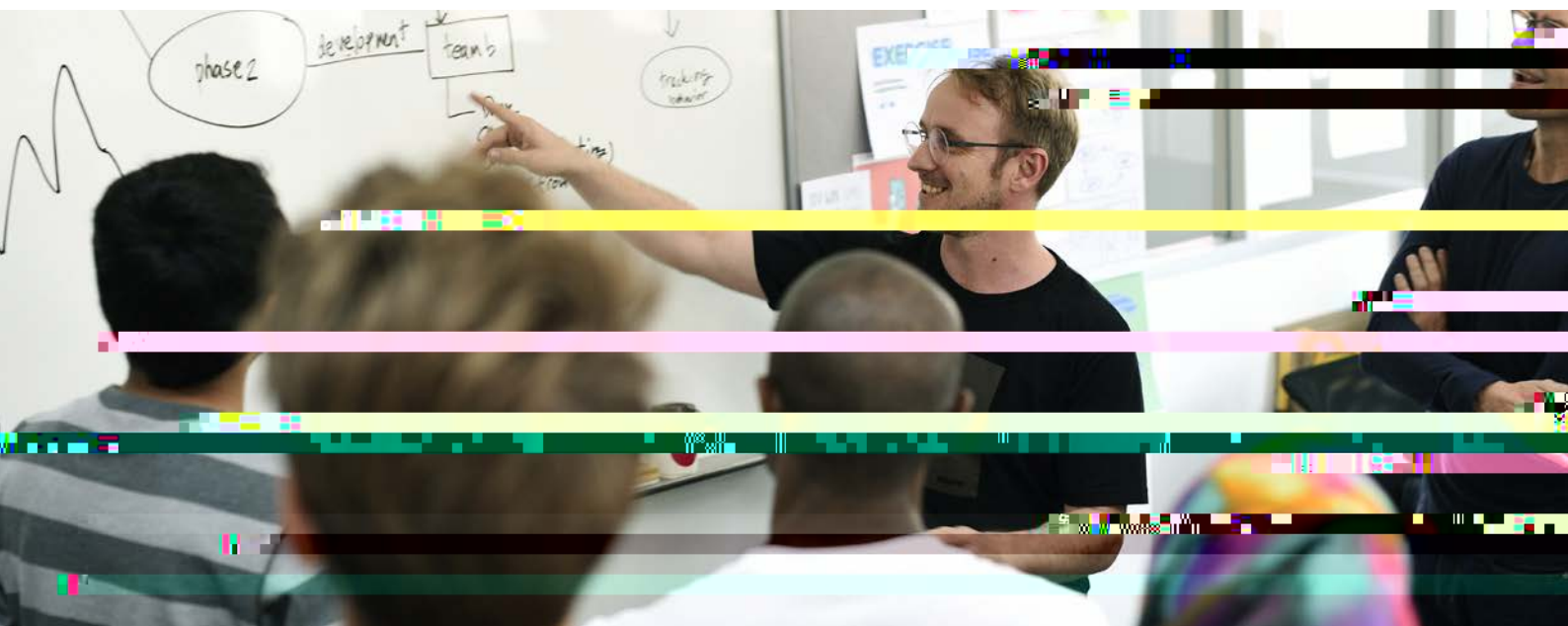
### British Chamber of Commerce

A non-profit membership organisation that provides support and advice through regular meetups and workshops. They're organised by region, so you can get the help you need at a local level.

### Growth Hubs

Local Enterprise Partnerships across the UK offer business loans and grants to help companies get started and grow. They're also available for advice, networking and mentoring sessions.

If you have the skills to start a new business, you don't need huge investment behind you, or even your own business premises at first. Many entrepreneurs look to keep costs down by running an efficient operation from home. With a laptop and a mobile phone, you're already well on your way to setting up the network you need to make an impact on your local community.



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### **Check local listings**

Your next customer could be closer than you think.

Check local forums, social media hashtags and

