

Support available for cooperatives

There's a wealth of support available for small business owners and entrepreneurs looking to set up a cooperative or existing coops looking to grow, including personalised guidance and resources from the Hertfordshire Growth Hub.

Explore the range of national, regional and local business support services open to coops, from one-to-one consultations, training and events to networking opportunities, community shares and grants.

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Distinctive support needs of cooperatives

As of 2025, there are 7,391 cooperatives in the UK, generating an **annual income of £42.7bn**. The cooperative model can work for many businesses, spanning sectors from housing and farming to retail, media and energy.

That said, coops face a range of specific challenges:

- **Good governance:** An effective board is essential to maintain a thriving coop. Strong checks and balances are required to ensure processes and decision-making are aligned with purpose.
- **Accessing finance:** Just like any other business, finance is the lifeblood of a cooperative. Securing financing (grants, loans, credit) is crucial for stimulating growth.
- **Member engagement:** Keeping members engaged can be tough as your business grows. A robust membership strategy recruits, engages and retains members.

Whether you are an aspiring entrepreneur looking to set up a new cooperative, a business owner thinking of transitioning to a coop model or you already run one, discover all the support available to help you thrive and grow.

Support for new coops

Hertfordshire Growth Hub

If the benefits of a cooperative model appeal and you think the model might work for your business, personalised guidance and expert support from Hertfordshire Growth Hub can help you reach your goal.

You can also tap into the well of strategic and tailored support available from other authorities such as **Co-operatives UK**. Business support services, training, resources and networking opportunities are all at your fingertips.

Online support

Co-operatives UK provides a comprehensive **step-by-step guide to starting a new coop**, covering topics such as **how to choose the right legal structure**, **setting out your cooperative's governance** and **registration**.

Support for new and existing coops

Business services and one-to-one support

Contact Hertfordshire Growth Hub for personalised guidance and wider business support across HR, finance, marketing and membership strategy.

Unlock further governance advice, specialised HR knowledge, finance guidance, marketing tools, membership strategy and cooperative development support through **Co-operatives UK**, which also provides up to four days of paid **one-to-one support** with a coop expert and half a day of peer support with an existing coop.

Training, networking and events

Hertfordshire Growth Hub can give you access to unrivalled events and workshops, business growth programmes, training and invaluable networking opportunities to help you connect with the right people, from top corporates to industry peers, so your business can thrive and grow.

Co-operatives UK runs regular conferences, training and networking events for members. Search its **events calendar** to book your place at a local event.

The Employee Ownership Association (EOA) organises face-to-face and online **employee ownership events** designed to engage and inspire employee-owned businesses and those considering employee ownership.

Grants and support for community shares

Access funding and support for community share issues via the **Community Shares Booster Fund** or apply for a loan from **Co-operative & Community Finance**, which manages a range of loan funds throughout the UK and can advise on suitable forms of finance for your business.

Find out more about sustainable ways to source funding with **My Community's** online hub and contact your local

Support for existing coops

Hertfordshire Growth Hub and Co-operatives UK provide tailored support across governance, HR, finance, marketing and membership strategy, which empowers existing coops to unlock growth.

Co-operatives UK provides discounted rates to its members for additional services including:

- **Bespoke support from leading advisers** on coop governance, health and safety, finance, HR and membership.
- **Regular reviews of your governing document** to ensure it remains compliant with the latest legislation and best practice.
- **HR policy and contract reviews and guidance** to make sure you're in line with employment law and HR best practice.



Taking the next step

If you are considering the many benefits a coop model could give your business or want to elevate your existing coop, expert business support from the Hertfordshire Growth Hub will get you on the right track.

Wondering if a cooperative is right for you?

For more information speak to our Business Information Adviser: 01707 952777 (Mon–Fri, 9am–5pm) or email enquiries@hertsgrowthhub.com.