



Weekly Brief

from the London Press and Public Affairs Office

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Government to let office space

Read comments in [City AM](#) on Government plans to rent out Government building space to small firms for low rents. The FSB cautiously welcomed the plans but said small businesses needed certainty.

Employment debated in the Commons

During an opposition day [debate](#), Stephen Timms MP called on the Government to adopt the FSB's suggestion of extending the National Insurance Contributions (NICs) holiday to existing firms. Richard Fuller MP also mentioned the FSB in highlighting the importance of ensuring that small firms are able to take on apprentices. And, during a [debate](#) on self-employment, Mark Garnier MP cited FSB figures on late payment, and Shadow Small Business Minister Toby Perkins MP expressed his party's support for the FSB's call to cut VAT on home improvements to five per cent.

Treasury Questions

[Adrian Bailey MP](#) asked the Government to support the FSB's call to extend the NICs holiday to existing businesses. [David Hanson MP](#) urged the Government to consider a cut to VAT on construction, mentioning the FSB as supporters of the policy. Further in a debate on micro businesses [Anne Marie Morris MP](#) mentioned the work that the FSB is doing on alternative sources of finance.

Sign up to share your views

The FSB is expanding its quarterly survey from February to better represent your views. If you want to have your say on the issues of the day then [sign up](#) to take part in this and the regular survey panels.

Business in You

The FSB is supporting the Department for Business, Innovation and Skills' '[Business in You](#)' campaign, which launched earlier this week. The FSB is a key supporter of this campaign, which is similar to our own '[Real-Life Entrepreneurs](#)' campaign in its aim to encourage and inspire people to set up and grow small businesses.

Employment tribunal reforms

The latest steps in reforms to the employment tribunal system were unveiled by Employment Relations Minister Edward Davey MP this week with the [announcement](#) of a pilot scheme for two regional mediation networks in Cambridge and Manchester for small firms. An open tender to provide mediation can be found on the [Contracts Finder](#) website.

Become a mentor

The FSB has joined forces with [Get Mentoring](#) to encourage more business people to become mentor and to contribute to the wealth creation in your area. The Small Business Survey 2010 showed that small enterprises were more likely to have increased their turnover in the past year (32% compared to 24%) and were showing signs of increasing in the next year (47% as opposed to 36%) with mentoring. Visit the [website](#) to find out how to become a mentor and to help more new businesses flourish.

Franchise conference events

FSB members have been offered free tickets to the National Franchise Exhibition in Birmingham on 24 - 25 February and The British and International Franchise Exhibition in London on 16 - 17 March. Both of these events also incorporate the Growing Your Own Business conference, which includes keynote speeches from successful entrepreneurs, advice on growing a small businesses and a number of exhibitors offering business services. Use code FSNL at www.franchiseinfo.co.uk

Calling All Entrepreneurs!

TwoFour Broadcast is looking for budding entrepreneurs to take part in a brand new, primetime television show. They want people with great business ideas who have the personality and skills to become a future tycoon and want to win investment for their idea. To find out more please contact them on 020 7438 1960 or [email](#).

Red Tape Challenge

The Government's [Red Tape Challenge](#) is now looking to hear from businesses affected by regulation in the housing and construction sector.

Follow the FSB on Facebook

You can follow the activities of the FSB by joining our official fanpage on Facebook. [Become a fan](#) to view regularly updated events, photo galleries, lobbying information and have the opportunity to add your own photos and discuss current small business issues.

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