



# Inclusive Entrepreneurship Policies: Country Assessment Notes

## United Kingdom, 2018



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## FOREWORD

Inclusive entrepreneurship policies aim to offer all people an equal opportunity to create a sustainable business, whatever their social group. This is an important requirement for achieving the goal of smart, sustainable and inclusive growth set out in the Europe 2020 strategy. It is also a means to respond to new economic challenges, to create jobs and to fight social and financial exclusion. Among the key targets of inclusive entrepreneurship policies and programmes are women, youth, older people, the unemployed, migrants and people with disabilities, who all continue to face challenges in the labour market and are under-represented or disadvantaged in entrepreneurship activities. ‘The Missing Entrepreneurs’ series of publications of the Organisation for Economic Co-operation and Development (OECD) and the European Union discuss how public policies and programmes can support inclusive entrepreneurship. This includes refining regulatory and welfare institutions, facilitating access to finance, building entrepreneurship skills through training, coaching and mentoring, strengthening entrepreneurial culture and networks for target groups, and putting strategies and actions together for inclusive entrepreneurship in a co-ordinated and targeted way. Governments are increasingly recognising the challenge of inclusive entrepreneurship, but there is still much to do to spread good practice.

The proportions of women, youth and older people involved in starting or managing new businesses in the United Kingdom (UK) between 2013 and 2017 were similar to the European Union averages for each population group. However, women, youth and senior entrepreneurs in the UK were less likely to have started their business due to a lack of opportunities in employment. Entrepreneurship and self-employment is encouraged by public policy in the UK. Policy objectives have been defined for many under-represented and disadvantaged groups, notably youth and women, and mainstream and tailored initiatives are in place to support most of these target groups. However, the scale, scope and longevity of the schemes and measures vary, and support for senior and immigrant entrepreneurs is the most under-developed.

This note is the third country assessment note prepared by the OECD in collaboration with the Directorate-General for Employment, Social Affairs and Inclusion of the European Commission on the state of inclusive entrepreneurship policies and programmes in each European Union Member State. Each note provides an overview and assessment of policies and programmes that support people from under-represented and disadvantaged groups in business creation and self-employment and suggests policy actions to address gaps in the support system and to improve the quality of available support offers. The notes cover national-level policies and programmes and, where relevant, sub-national initiatives and actions by the non-governmental sector. The 2018 notes include an additional section on female entrepreneurship support, which provides an overview of the entrepreneurship activity levels, obstacles faced and policy responses.

The notes are part of a wider programme of work by the OECD and the European Commission that includes ‘The Missing Entrepreneurs’ publications, the Better Entrepreneurship Policy Tool ([www.betterentrepreneurship.eu](http://www.betterentrepreneurship.eu)), a series of Policy Briefs on specific target groups, policies and issues, and country reviews of youth entrepreneurship and women entrepreneurship. For more information please refer to: [www.oecd.org/employment/leed/inclusive-entrepreneurship.htm](http://www.oecd.org/employment/leed/inclusive-entrepreneurship.htm).

## **ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS**

This note is part of a series of notes on country-level inclusive entrepreneurship policies and programmes prepared by the Organisation for Economic Co-operation and Development (OECD) for the European Commission. These notes were prepared as part of the programme of work of the OECD Local Economic and Employment Development (LEED) Programme of the Centre for Entrepreneurship, SMEs, Regions and Cities (CFE) led by Lamia Kamal-Chaoui, Director. They provide an overview of current and planned policy actions and identify some actions that could be implemented to address gaps in the current support offering, or improve current offerings.

This note was prepared by Prof. Robert Blackburn, Dr. Hang Do, and Dr. Eva Kasperova. David Halabisky and Cynthia Lavison of the CFE undertook additional drafting and editing of the note under the direction of Dr. Jonathan Potter, also of the CFE. A draft version of this note was discussed with a steering group at a workshop in London on 9 July 2018. The steering group included members of the public, private and non-governmental sectors. Much of the data contained in this note were prepared under the direction of Dr. Jonathan Levie of the Global Entrepreneurship Monitor. This note benefited from feedback and suggestions provided by Guy Lejeune of Directorate-General for Employment, Social Affairs and Inclusion of the European Commission.

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## KEY MESSAGES

- Entrepreneurs and small- and medium-sized enterprises play a key role in the economic prosperity of the United Kingdom (UK) by creating jobs, stimulating innovation, driving competition and improving productivity and wages that can generate inclusive growth. The core enterprise policy objective is to support innovative and high-growth potential firms, rather than increasing the number of start-ups. Policy objectives and targets for inclusive entrepreneurship have been defined for some under-represented and disadvantaged groups, including youth and women, but not all. Mainstream and tailored initiatives exist to support most of the target groups. However, the scale, scope and longevity of the schemes and measures vary. Policy and support for senior and immigrant entrepreneurs continues to be under-developed.
- The number of self-employed in the UK in 2017 was 4.8 million: equivalent to 15.1% of the labour force. Despite annual growth in the proportion of female and youth self-employed by 33% and 37.8%, respectively, overall self-employment has declined by 0.7% compared to the previous year. The rate of self-employment varies by sector, education, gender, skills barriers, fear of failure, export, and growth expectations. While construction is the most favoured sector for males, youth and senior entrepreneurs, females tend to be more active in sectors such as human health and social work. This may be related to their previous occupations and experience. The number of self-employed is positively associated with the levels of education. Motivations for entrepreneurship also vary across different population segments. Seniors are the most likely group to start businesses due to a lack of opportunities in employment.
- To strengthen the inclusive entrepreneurship policy and support system in the UK, the following four recommendations are made: (i) define policy objectives and targets for inclusive entrepreneurship and strengthen policy co-ordination; (ii) remove disincentives for entrepreneurship and self-employment in the social security system; (iii) promote and support inclusive entrepreneurship, particularly for seniors, and immigrants; (iii) promote and support inclusive entrepreneurship, particularly for seniors and immigrants; (iv) strengthen support for “low-growth” potential entrepreneurs; and (v) enhance support for innovation and internationalisation activities in the transition and post-Brexit period.

## 1. INCLUSIVE ENTREPRENEURSHIP OBJECTIVES AND TARGETS

There is no inclusive entrepreneurship strategy for the United Kingdom (UK) that outlines clear policy objectives and targets to promote and support under-represented and disadvantaged groups in entrepreneurship. The Industrial Strategy's (2017) vision to make the UK one of the world's most innovative economies is to be achieved through an increased investment in research and development, and initiatives such as the Challenge Fund programmes to capture the value of innovation. The key policy objective is to create a favourable business environment, with three core actions: (i) creation of "Sector Deals" – partnerships between government and industry aiming to increase sector productivity; (ii) an investment of GBP 20 billion (approximately EUR 56 billion) in innovative and high potential businesses; and (iii) a review of actions that could be most effective in improving the productivity and growth of SMEs (HM Government, 2017). While there is no explicit support for disadvantaged and under-represented groups of entrepreneurs in the Industrial Strategy, a number of government-backed innovation schemes have been launched to support and promote entrepreneurship among diverse groups. For example, the "Ideas mean business" campaign seeks to help 18 to 30 year olds to turn their ideas into a viable business (Innovate UK, 2017). Similarly, the "Women in innovation" campaign that is a female-only funding competition run for the second time in 2018 (Innovate UK, 2018a).

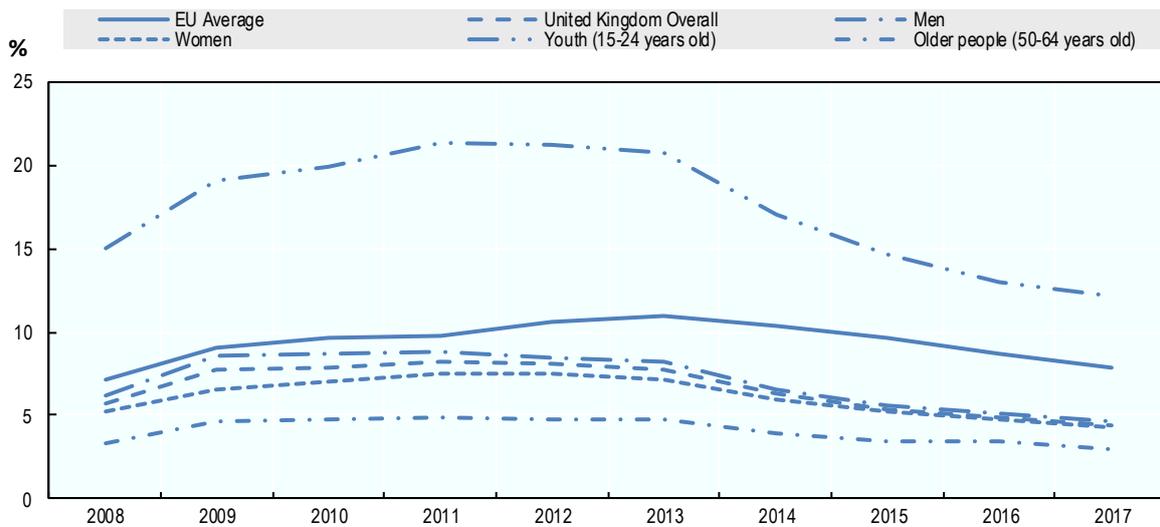
Inclusive entrepreneurship objectives and targets for different profiles of under-represented and disadvantaged groups remain fragmented across the devolved UK administrations. In 2013, the UK Government launched the "Women and the Economy – Government Action Plan", setting out a number of objectives for promoting women entrepreneurship (Government Equalities Office, 2013). The Plan initiated creation of the Women's Business Council (WBC) to get advice on how to maximise women's contribution to the economy. A WBC progress report found that in May to July 2017, 1.6 million women in the UK were self-employed, representing an increase of 65 000 on one year previously and 330 000 in five years (Government Equalities Office, 2017). The report cites mainstream schemes, such as the "Start-Up Loans", "Growth Hubs" and "Business Support Helpline" as key support resources for female entrepreneurs. The Scottish Government is extending its support for women entrepreneurship from GBP 200 000 (approximately EUR 224 000) in 2016-17 to GBP 400 000 (approximately EUR 448 000) in 2017-18. This is delivered through the "Women in Enterprise Action Framework" (The Scottish Government, 2014) and its tailored support projects, including the "Women's Enterprise Ambassadors" and Investing Women's Catalyst Programme (The Scottish Government, 2018). The University of South Wales' Women's Entrepreneurship Hub is conducting a consultation on behalf of the Welsh Government on possible development of Female Entrepreneurship Strategy for Wales (University of South Wales, 2018). Progress has been made in developing inclusive entrepreneurship policy objectives and targets, particularly for women. However, a long-term, sustained entrepreneurship promotion and support for under-represented and disadvantaged groups will require joined-up thinking and co-ordinated efforts from relevant government departments and ministries in partnership with the private sector and civil society. At present, there is no written inclusive entrepreneurship strategy in the devolved nations, or the UK as a whole, for senior and immigrant entrepreneurs, the long-term unemployed and disabled people. Entrepreneurs from under-represented and disadvantaged groups can access support through a range of mainstream programmes, and some specific initiatives tailored to the target groups, for instance the New Enterprise Allowance for the unemployed and the Access to Work for people with disabilities. Many of the support initiatives tailored to specific groups are funded and delivered by the civil society organisations or the private sector. The Welsh Assembly Government continues to be the only devolved administration with a written strategy and action plan for youth entrepreneurship (The Welsh Government, 2010).

## 2. KEY INCLUSIVE ENTREPRENEURSHIP INDICATORS

### 2.1. Labour market context

The unemployment rate has declined gradually over the last decade by 22.8%, from (5.7%) in 2008 to (4.4%) in 2017 (see Figure 1). In 2017, it was below the average unemployment rate for the EU (7.8%). The UK unemployment rate decreased significantly among all demographic groups over the 2008-17 period; by 4.6% for men, 4.3% for women, 12.1% for youths and 3.0% for seniors.

Figure 1. Unemployment rate, 2008-17



Source: Eurostat (2018), Labour Force Survey.

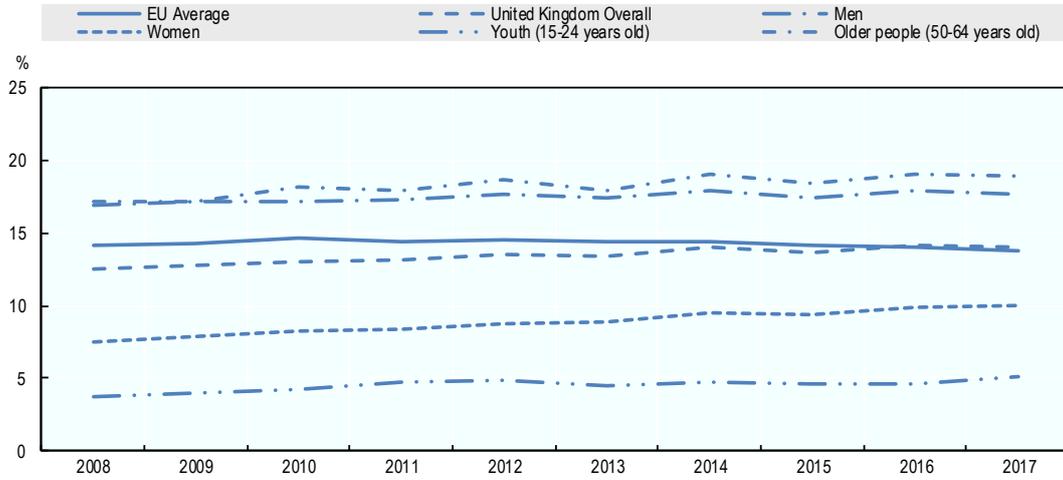
### 2.2. Self-employment and entrepreneurship rates

The decline in unemployment may, in part, be attributed to the growth of self-employment from 12.5% of the employed to 14.0% between 2008 and 2017 (Figure 2a). This growth is reflected in all age groups. The over 50 age group had the highest proportion of self-employed (18.9%) and the youth age group the lowest despite its steady increase over the 2008-17 period (5.1%). Evidence from Eurostat (2018) shows that there has been a substantial rise in the percentage of female and youth entrepreneurs by 33.0% and 37.8% respectively during 2008-17, whereas the percentage of seniors (aged 50-64) and male entrepreneurs increased to a lesser extent – by 10.5% and 4.7% respectively during the same period. However, in 2017, the average self-employment rate dropped by 0.7% in comparison with that of the previous year. One possible explanation for this decline is the vote to leave the EU, which increased the costs and uncertainty among those considering self-employment.<sup>1</sup>

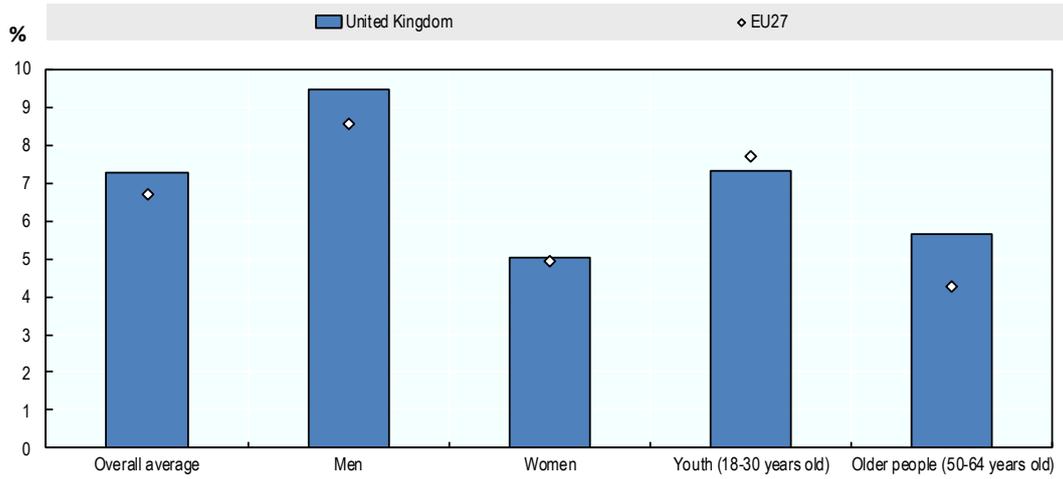
<sup>1</sup> <https://www.politicshome.com/news/uk/foreign-affairs/brexit/opinion/ipse/94626/making-brexit-work-self-employed-ipse>

**Figure 2. Entrepreneurship rates by target group**

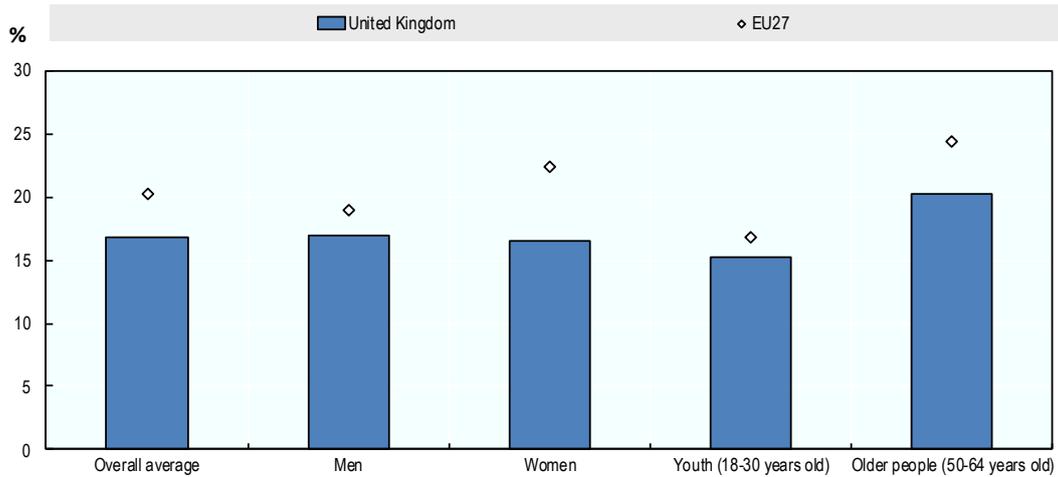
**a. Self-employment rate, 2008-17**



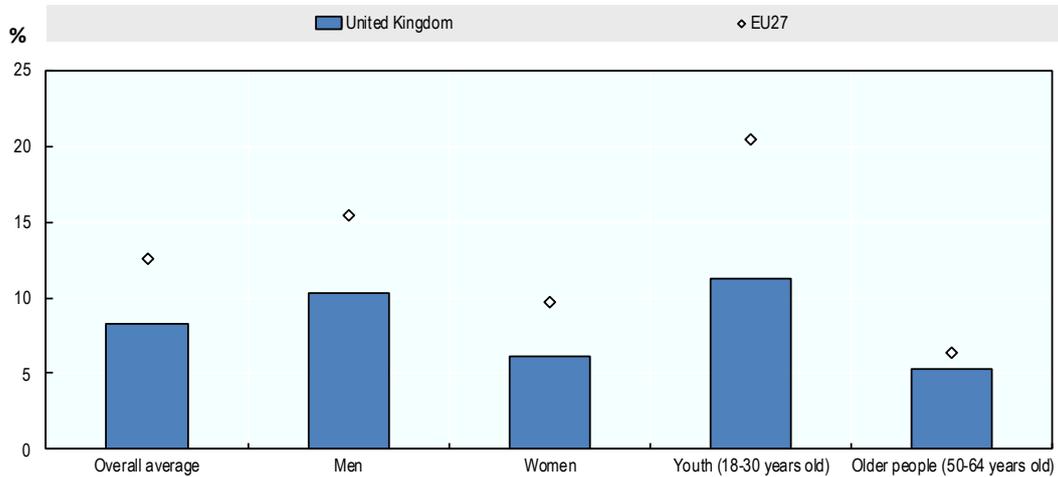
**b. TEA-Rate, 2013-17**



c. Proportion of TEA that is necessity entrepreneurship, 2013-17



d. Proportion who expect to start a business in the next 3 years, 2013-17



Note: The self-employment rate is defined as the proportion of those in employment who are self-employed. The TEA rate is the Total early-stage Entrepreneurial Activity rate, which is defined as the proportion of the population actively involved in pre-start-up activities and those who have started a new business within the last 42 months. The proportion of TEA that is necessity entrepreneurship is the proportion of entrepreneurs involved in setting-up a new business or operating a business that is less than 42 months old, who were motivated to start their business because they had no better options for work. Data for panels b, c, and d were pooled for the period 2013-17, producing an unweighted average. The EU27 average in panels b, c, and d covers all EU Member States except Malta because it is not covered by the GEM survey.

Source: Panel a contains data from Eurostat (2018), Labour Force Survey; Panels b, c, and d contain data from the 2013 to 2017 Global Entrepreneurship Monitor household surveys that were tabulated for the OECD (2018).

Another way to examine entrepreneurship activities is to estimate the number of people involved in business creation. One well-known international measure is the Total early-stage Entrepreneurship Activity (TEA) rate, which is estimated by the Global Entrepreneurship Monitor. This rate measures the proportion of people actively starting a business or operating a new business that is less than 42 months old across more than 80 countries. During the period 2013-17, the overall TEA rate in the UK was 7.3% (Figure 2b). This was above the EU average of 6.7%. While the TEA rate in the UK is relatively high amongst males and seniors, the female rate continues to be the lowest amongst all groups and is approximately half that of males. The UK TEA rate matches (females) or exceeds

(males and seniors) the average EU with the exception of youths who are slightly less likely (5.1%) to engage in entrepreneurship activities than the youths in the EU.

The proportion of new entrepreneurs who started their business due to a lack of opportunities in the labour market was lower in the UK than the EU average over the 2013-17 period (Figure 2c). This has also declined compared with the previous five-year period (i.e. 2012-16). Although necessity entrepreneurship is consistently lower than the EU across all age and gender groups in the UK, male and older people tended to be more likely to be driven by “necessity” than women and youth over the 2013-17 period. Necessity entrepreneurs tend to operate lower quality businesses because they are more likely to have few or lower levels of entrepreneurial skills (Block and Sandner, 2009). However, other studies have found that specific types of necessity-driven entrepreneurs experience discrimination in the labour market (Levie and Hart, 2013). Hence, necessity entrepreneurs are not simply those possessing lower skills who cannot find work. Rather these are people who are unable to secure employment but also have the capabilities and motivation to start businesses (Estrin et al., 2013; Carter et al., 2015; Nikolaev et al., 2018).

Overall, 8.3% of the UK population expect to start a business in the next three years compared with 12.3% across the EU (Figure 2d). This lower rate in the UK might be related to Brexit and the uncertainty in the business environment, which demotivates all groups to create new businesses. The evidence indicates that the proportion of youth (11.2%) and men (10.3%) were approximately twice more likely to start a business within the next three years than seniors (5.3%) and women (6.2%) between 2013 and 2017. This is consistent with the TEA evidence demonstrated in Figure 4a, which suggests male and youth are more entrepreneurially active, as well as reflected in the literature (Meager et al., 2011; ONS, 2013; Lord Young, 2015; Wilde and Leonard, 2018). Furthermore, the UK-EU gap is particularly wide for the youth age cohort: only 11.2% of youth in the UK aspire to start a business in the next three years compared with 20.4% in the EU.

### **2.3. A profile of the self-employed**

Self-employment activity varies in significance across sectors. The top five self-employed sectors include Construction (21.3%), Professional (11.6%), Wholesale (8.4%), Administrative support (7.6%) and other service activities (6.9%) (Figure 3a). In particular, the self-employed rate in the construction sector in the UK was 38% higher than that of the EU average in 2017. The least favoured sectors include mining, electricity, public administration, activities of households and water supply, with less than 1% of the total self-employed. Self-employment also varies according to the age group and gender. For example, more than 30% of male entrepreneurs are active in the construction industry, which is 30% higher than the average UK self-employed. Similarly, construction is the most common self-employed sector for youths and seniors (at 28% and 18.6% respectively). In contrast, less than 3% of female self-employed are in construction. Females tend to be more active in sectors such as human health and social work (15%), which is 80% higher than that of males. The female self-employed are also highly active in other service activities (14%), followed by professional (13.9%) and wholesale (10.2%). The second most favoured sectors of young self-employed are other service activities (14%) and arts and entertainment activities (9.1%); both of which are approximately double that of the UK average.

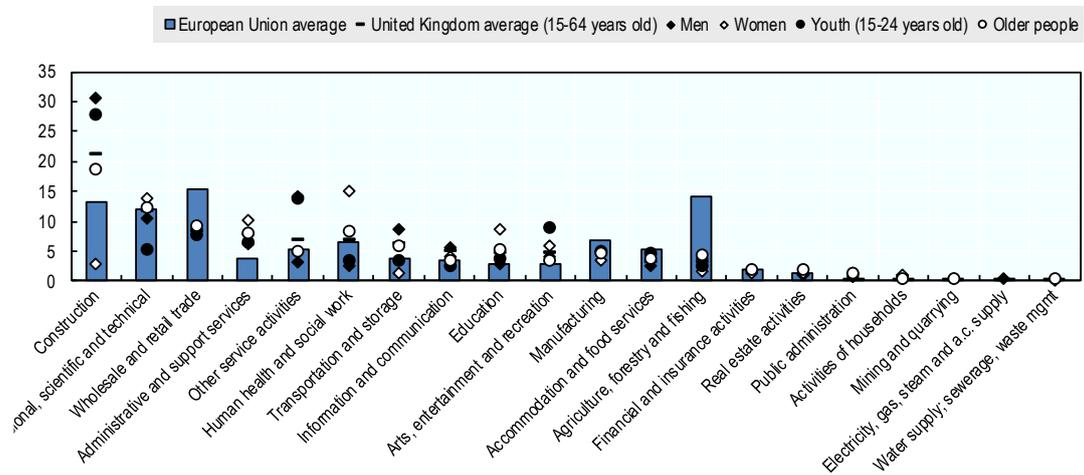
Overall, the level of education of the UK self-employed has risen over the past 15 years (Figure 3b). More specifically, the percentage of self-employed with a degree or equivalent has risen substantially and is triple the percentage of self-employed without any qualifications. As indicated by UK GEM data (2017), the proportion of the self-employed with tertiary education is 17.4% higher than that of the EU; whereas the proportion of those obtaining upper secondary and primary qualifications are 7.4% and 14% less than the average rate in the EU. The levels of education of the self-employed vary by gender and age. More than 60% of the young entrepreneurs aged 16-24 have an upper secondary qualification or non-tertiary degree, which is 33% higher than other self-employed groups. More than half of the female entrepreneurs have tertiary degree, which is 32% higher than male entrepreneurs, and 25% higher than senior self-employed. Male self-employed have a lower

proportion with a degree than females and reflect the EU average as a whole. This may be related to the sectors in which they operate. On the other hand, females appear to have to have achieved higher levels of qualification in order to be self-employed.

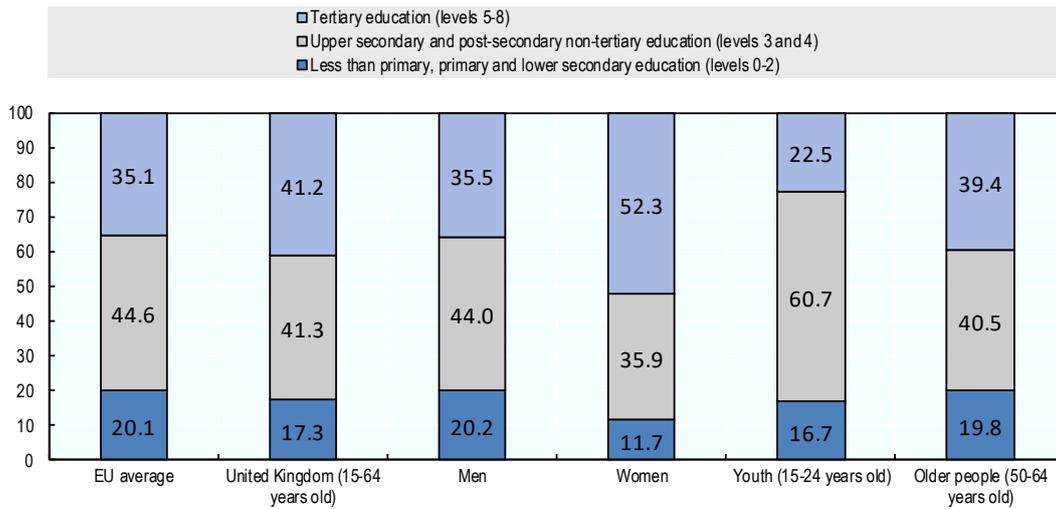
The diversity of the self-employed by occupation is illustrated in Figure 3c. The four most popular occupations of the self-employed in the UK are professionals (23.7%), craft and related trade workers (20.7%), managers (14.7%), and service and sales workers (12.2%). This profile is in line with the occupational distribution of the self-employed in the EU. However, the proportion of the self-employed in the EU working as skilled agriculture, forestry and fishery workers is treble that of the UK. Females have a relatively high proportion of self-employed amongst Professionals and service and sales workers occupations (30% and 24% respectively). On the other hand, Craft and related trade workers are popular amongst male, youth and senior self-employed. The highest percentage of those self-employed who used to work as managers turn out to be senior entrepreneurs (17.5%), followed by male (14.5%) and female entrepreneurs (14.9%).

**Figure 3. Characteristics of self-employed workers by target group**

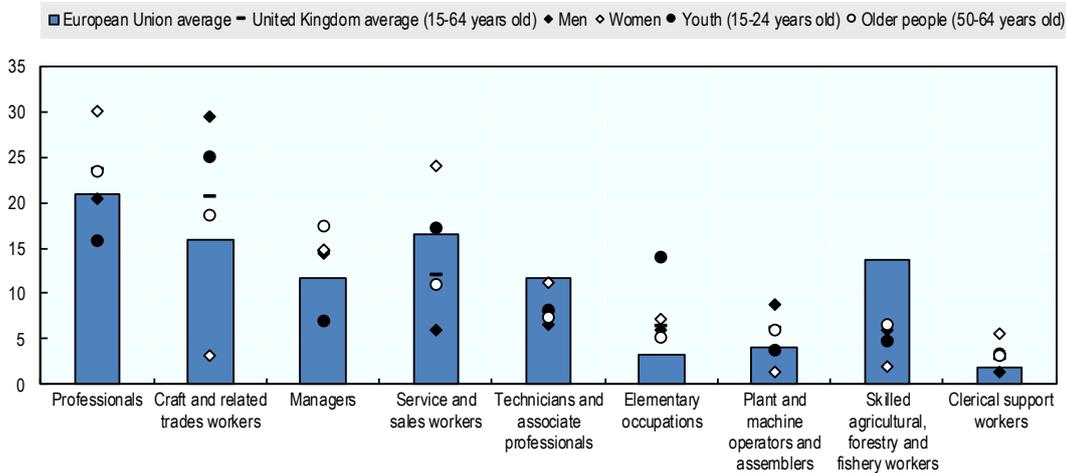
a. Proportion of self-employed by economic activity, 2017



b. Proportion of self-employed by educational attainment, 2017



c. Proportion of self-employed by occupation, 2017



Note: The self-employment rate is defined as the proportion of those in employment who are self-employed.

Source: Eurostat (2018), Labour Force Survey.

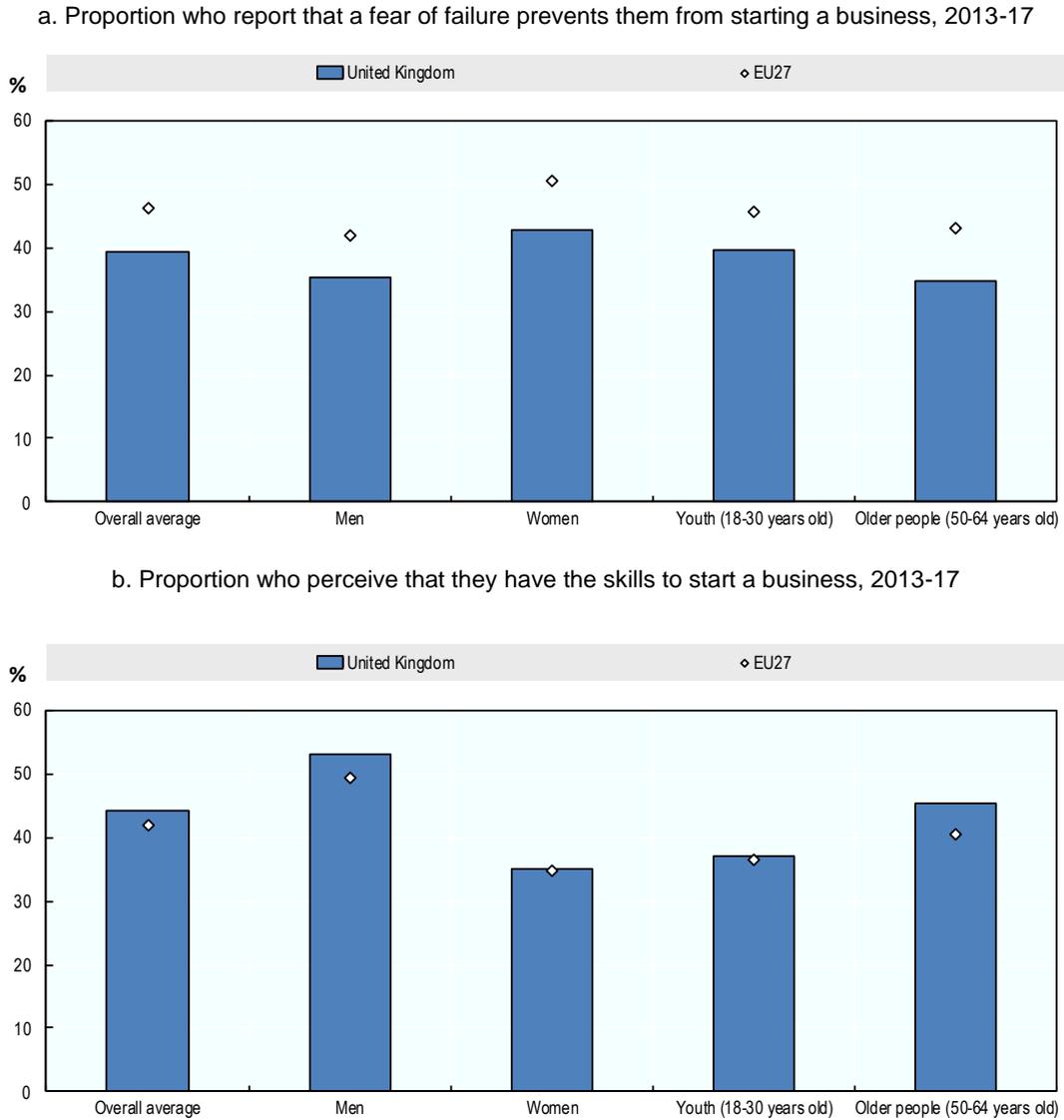
## 2.4. Barriers to business creation

Fear of failure is regarded as one of the greatest constraints to new business creation and as much as any investment-related decisions (Morgan and Sisak, 2016). Overall, the proportion of people reporting this barrier was 39.4% between 2013 and 2017, 14.7% less than the EU average (Figure 4a). Among different population groups, the group that was the most likely to report a fear of failure was women (42.7%), followed by youth (39.5%), men (35.4%) and seniors (34.7%). This is consistent with findings from previous studies which indicate that women demonstrate higher fear of failure than men (Gabaldon et al. 2015).

Research has shown a strong relationship between skill-levels and the development of self-employment and social capital (Meager et al., 2011; Debrulle et al., 2014). Skills are not only related to business knowledge (management, marketing, HR, finance), but also to “soft skills” such as interpersonal, networking, communication, negotiation which are essential in business creation. Evidence from the Global Entrepreneurship Monitor suggests that 44% of people in the UK perceived that they have the appropriate skills and experience to start a business relative to 42% across

the EU (Figure 4b). Skills barriers were found to be particularly high among women and youth compared with men and older people.

**Figure 4. Barriers to entrepreneurship by target group**



Note: Data were pooled for the period 2013-17. Responses were weighted to reflect the population in each year, but no weighting was used when pooling the time series data, i.e. all years have the same weight regardless of the sample size in each year. The EU27 average covers all EU Member States except Malta because it is not covered by the GEM survey.

Source: GEM (2018), special tabulations of the Global Entrepreneurship Monitor's household surveys from the 2013 to 2017.

## 2.5. Entrepreneurship performance

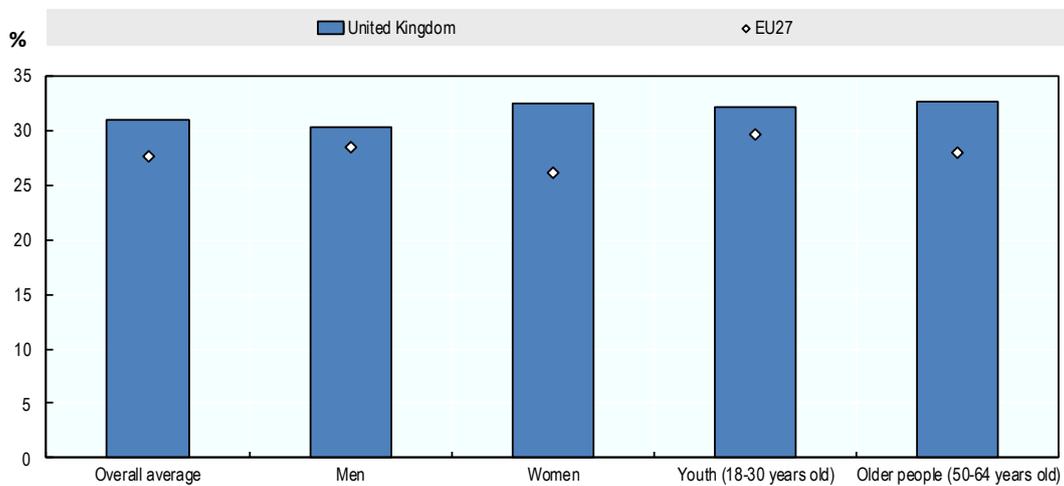
Figure 5a shows the levels of innovation, defined as introducing new product and services among entrepreneurs on average between 2013 and 2017, is relatively higher in the UK (31%) compared with the EU average (27.5%). The proportion of entrepreneurs launching new products and services is equally distributed among women, youth and seniors (approximately 32%), which is marginally higher than that of males (30.3%). The greatest difference between the UK and the EU was among females, which contrasts with the EU average: 32.4% of UK females introduced new products or

services compared with 26.1% in the EU. In the UK females were the second most innovative group (after seniors at 32.7%), while in the EU, women was the least innovative.

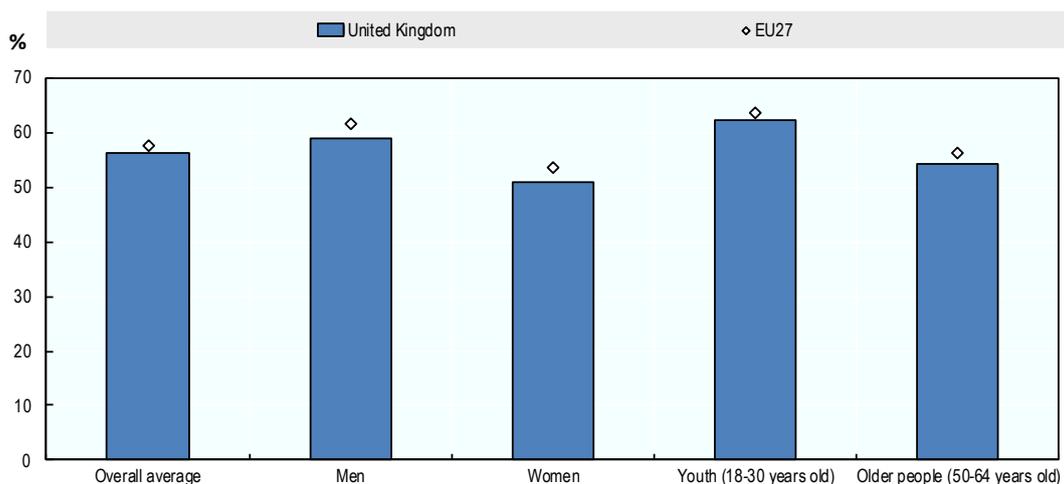
Exporting is regarded as a major driver to firm growth and business expansion. Over a half of all UK businesses export although this is marginally lower than the EU average (Figure 5b). Exporting varied between different population groups. Female businesses appear to have lower levels of exporting compared with all other groups. The relatively high proportion of youth respondents who export compared with other groups is surprising. This suggests that the effects of experience deriving from age perhaps play a less significant role than other factors in exporting, such as having international networks and perceived high-skill levels.

**Figure 5. Self-employment and entrepreneurship activities by target group**

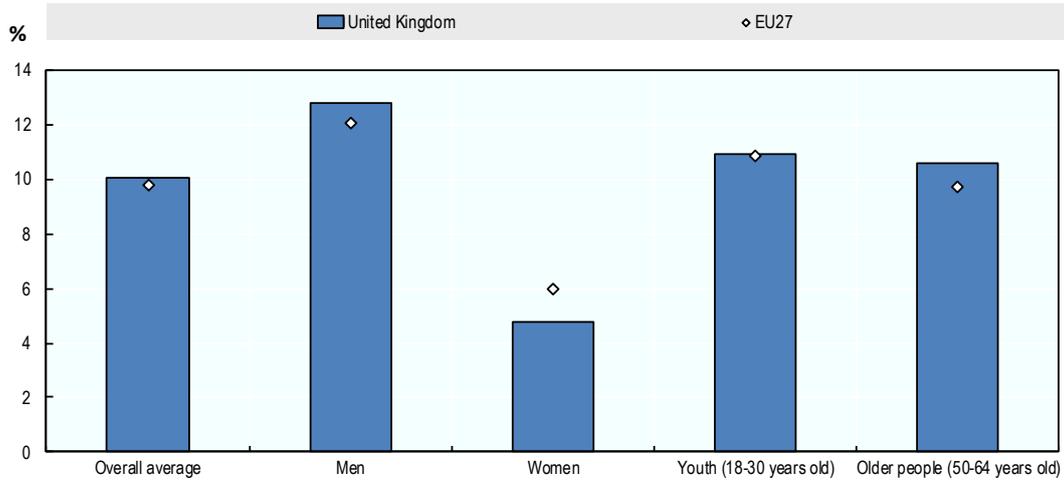
a. Proportion of new entrepreneurs whose products or services are new to all or some customers, 2013-17



b. Proportion who sell to customers in another country, 2013-17



c. Proportion of early-stage entrepreneurs who expect to create more than 19 jobs in 5 years, 2013-17



Note: Data were pooled for the period 2013-17. Responses were weighted to reflect the population in each year, but no weighting was used when pooling the time series data, i.e. all years have the same weight regardless of the sample size in each year. The EU27 average covers all EU Member States except Malta because it is not covered by the GEM survey.

Source: GEM (2018), special tabulations of the Global Entrepreneurship Monitor's household surveys from the 2013 to 2017.

New and smaller enterprises are often held up as the job generators of the economy and there is much evidence underpinning this position. Data from the Global Entrepreneurship Monitor suggests that the growth expectations of entrepreneurs in the UK is marginally higher than the EU as a whole (Figure 5c). Males (12.7%) and youths (10.9%) are more optimistic about the prospects for their firm growth than women (4.7%) and seniors (10.5%). The proportion of women expecting firm growth is approximately half of seniors and youths, and almost a third than that of males. This proportion reflects the similar situation in the EU on average. It is consistent with previous findings in the literature which suggests males and youth tend to be overconfident and more risk-taking than women (Huang and Kisgen, 2013; Invernizzi et al., 2017). However, the proportion of UK female self-employed is even 20% less than its counterpart in the EU, suggesting the higher likelihood of risk-averse attitudes amongst UK women business owners.

### 3. ASSESSMENT OF CURRENT AND PLANNED INCLUSIVE ENTREPRENEURSHIP POLICIES AND PROGRAMMES

#### 3.1. Policy framework

In 2017, the UK Government launched the Industrial Strategy, with the aim of developing an innovative and productive economy, including creating an environment that is the best place to start and grow a business.<sup>2</sup> In the aftermath of the Brexit vote, however, one of the key priorities for the government is to negotiate the best possible trade deal with its European neighbours. The uncertain outcome makes both economic forecasts and policy responses difficult. The Government has, since the referendum, abandoned the policy of additional spending cuts while accepting higher projected borrowing. There are plans to increase capital spending on infrastructure, housing, and research, with a specific aim to address the underlying productivity problems (Johnson and Mitchell, 2017).

Business-driven innovation is at the heart of the Industrial Strategy's objective to boost productivity and living standards in the face of stagnating wages since the global financial recession. Some of the key policies include increased investment in research and development, creation of the Challenge Fund programmes to capture the value of innovation, and an investment of GBP 20 billion (approximately EUR 22.4 billion) in innovative and high potential businesses, for example, by establishing the Investment Fund incubated by the British Business Bank (HM Government, 2017).

While there is little explicit support for the under-represented and disadvantaged groups of entrepreneurs in the Strategy, a new "Inclusive Economy Partnership" was launched in August 2017 to help address major societal challenges facing those on low to middle incomes. The initiative encourages established organisations that address social and economic issues to scale-up by bringing together business, civil society and government.<sup>3</sup> The government is committed to encouraging diversity and inclusion in business innovation by enabling innovators from diverse backgrounds to access resources and advice through its Innovate UK agency.<sup>4</sup>

#### *Women*

One of the recommendations for boosting women entrepreneurship is to follow the lead of the Scottish Government's Framework and Action Plan for Women's Enterprise by developing a UK-wide policy framework.<sup>5</sup> The framework would bring together all departments in promoting and supporting women entrepreneurship (Federation of Small Business, 2016). The Scottish Framework, implemented by the Women's Enterprise Scotland (WES), has generated positive outcomes through initiatives such as the Ambassador Programme that promotes successful women role models with targeted, high-profile media coverage and speaking in schools and events. In 2018, WES will support the Welsh Government as they implement their strategy for women's entrepreneurship (The Scottish Parliament, 2018).

#### *Youth*

The UK policy framework for supporting youth entrepreneurship is fragmented, with the Welsh Government remaining the only devolved administration to have a written strategy (Welsh Government, 2010). The UK-wide entrepreneurship support is delivered mainly by the third sector

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<sup>2</sup> <https://www.gov.uk/government/topical-events/the-uks-industrial-strategy>

<sup>3</sup> Inclusive Economy Partnership: <http://iep.challenges.org/> [Accessed on 24/05/2018]

<sup>4</sup> Innovate UK: <https://www.gov.uk/government/collections/innovate-uk-diversity-and-inclusion> [Accessed on 24/05/2018]

<sup>5</sup> <https://www.wescotland.co.uk/framework>

organisations, including the Young Enterprise<sup>6</sup> and the Prince's Trust.<sup>7</sup> The Enterprise Adviser Network is the key publicly-funded initiative that aims to connect schools and colleges with local employers to prepare young people for the world of work (HM Government, 2017). An evaluation of the first two years of this initiative found that the Network has: (i) helped schools and colleges identify gaps in their provision of career and enterprise provision; (ii) encouraged integration of careers and enterprise in the curriculum; and (iii) broadened career horizons and raised motivations and aspirations of young people (The Careers & Enterprise Company, 2017).

### ***Seniors***

There continues to be a general support for people over 50 years old to remain in work through employment or self-employment. People in this age group can access mainstream information resources and schemes, such as the Business Support Helpline (Department for Work & Pensions, 2016). There is currently no written strategy for promoting and supporting senior entrepreneurship. However, self-employment by older workers is encouraged, for example, in the "Fuller Working Lives: a partnership approach" policy paper (Department for Work & Pensions, 2017a).

### ***Unemployed***

Encouraging self-employment as a route out of unemployment has been a key policy of the consecutive governments for several decades. The New Enterprise Allowance continues to be the main publicly-funded self-employment support initiative for the unemployed on income support. The official statistics suggest there have been 212 000 starts and 115 240 businesses set up through the scheme from 2011 up until the end of 2017. The scheme is available to a wider range of claimants since April 2017, in addition to being adjusted to include the initial "Link Up: Start Up Workshop" that claimants must attend prior to joining the scheme (Department for Work & Pensions, 2017b).

### ***Immigrants***

Government policy for supporting migrant entrepreneurship continues to focus on how to attract entrepreneurial talent from outside the UK, as opposed to supporting immigrant residents with the potential to create their own business. Entrepreneurs have been encouraged to relocate their headquarters to Britain through the Global Entrepreneur Programme (Department for International Trade, 2017) and the Sirius Programme for Graduate Entrepreneurs (Department for International Trade, 2015). However, there is no explicit policy, nor publicly-funded support, for immigrant entrepreneurs already residing in the country.

### ***People with a disability***

In 2016, the All Party Parliamentary Group on Disability reported that little progress has been made in narrowing the employment gap between those with a disability and those without. Both public and private sector organisations are failing to provide appropriate support for people with a disability to access start-up funds, business advice and business networks (The All Party Parliamentary Group on Disability, 2016). The government is committed to halving the disability employment gap and improving access to labour market opportunities for people with a disability and people with long-term health conditions. One of the key policy objectives is to change perceptions and culture around health, work and disability. Self-employment as a route into work for people with a disability is encouraged through schemes such as Access to Work and New Enterprise Allowance (Department for Work & Pensions and Department of Health, 2016). In 2017, the government announced launching of the "Personal Support Package" involving GBP 330 million (approximately EUR 370 million) of additional employment support over four years for people with a disability of working age (Department for Work & Pensions, 2017c).

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<sup>6</sup> <https://www.young-enterprise.org.uk/>

<sup>7</sup> <https://www.princes-trust.org.uk/>

### 3.2. Government regulations

The regulatory environment is generally supportive of entrepreneurship. In 2018, the UK ranks 7<sup>th</sup> in the world on the ease of doing business and 14<sup>th</sup> on starting a business out of 190 national economies.<sup>8</sup> Simplified information on how to deal with procedures for starting and running a business is accessible through the [www.gov.uk](http://www.gov.uk) platform, a telephone helpline and other resources. Information and advice specific to under-represented and disadvantaged groups is available, however the scale and scope of support varies. Tailored entrepreneurship support and information resources for seniors, immigrants and people with a disability are less developed compared with those targeting women, youth and the unemployed. There are a number of tax changes coming into effect in 2018-19 that will affect the self-employed people. From April 2018, tax-free dividend allowance that enables self-employed people to earn certain amount before paying tax on their profit dividends is being reduced from GBP 5 000 to GBP 2 000 (approximately EUR 5 600 to EUR 2 240). The higher allowance has allowed the self-employed to minimise their income and therefore income tax bill. Hence, the reduced allowance will affect their earnings. On the other hand, the self-employed can benefit from the increased capital gains allowance and the increased personal allowance (Garber, 2018).

In the Spring Budget 2017, it was announced that there would be an increase in the National Insurance contributions (NIC) paid by the self-employed, in line with employees.<sup>9</sup> There is a plan to simplify the NIC system for the self-employed from April 2019 by abolishing Class 2 contributions and reforming Class 4 contributions. These changes should improve access for the self-employed to contributory benefits (HM Revenue & Customs, 2017).

Self-employed people, like employees, are eligible for Tax-Free Childcare (for children under the age of 12), designed to enable more parents to go into work.<sup>10</sup> Moreover, free childcare for working parents of three or four year olds in England has doubled since September 2017 (HM Government, 2017), although the scheme has been criticised for under-funding nurseries (Siddique, 2018). The Government is considering whether there is a case for greater consistency in parental benefits between employees and the self-employed.<sup>11</sup> Self-employed parents are currently not entitled to Statutory Maternity Pay, Statutory Paternity Pay or Statutory Adoption Pay. Self-employed women can however claim the Maternity Allowance if they meet certain criteria.

Self-employed people are much less likely than employees to be saving for retirement (Taylor et al., 2017). From April 2017, the “Lifetime ISA” saving account<sup>12</sup> is available to anyone aged between 18 and 40 to help the self-employed save more flexibly for the long term. Changes in ‘permitted work’ rules for people with a disability have removed the 52-week limit on how long Employment and Support Allowance claimants placed in the Work-Related Activity Group (WRAG) are able to work for. The change is expected to improve work incentives for this group. The claimants are now able to work for less than 16 hours a week, earn up to GBP 120 (approximately EUR 135) each week, and do permitted work for an unlimited number of weeks (Department for Work & Pensions, 2017d). At the same time, those in the WRAG group are worse off by no longer getting the work-related activity component of GBP 29.05 (approximately EUR 32.50) (House of Commons Library, 2017). More generally, there are growing concerns about the level of earnings from employment and self-employment, and the in-work poverty, challenging the long-held belief of successive governments that paid work is a route to social inclusion (Bailey, 2016). Any changes in the regulatory environment to promote inclusive entrepreneurship must take into account the quality and security of self-

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<sup>8</sup> <http://www.doingbusiness.org/rankings>

<sup>9</sup> <https://www.gov.uk/government/news/spring-budget-2017-21-things-you-need-to-know>

<sup>10</sup> <https://www.gov.uk/government/news/spring-budget-2017-21-things-you-need-to-know>

<sup>11</sup> <https://www.gov.uk/government/news/spring-budget-2017-21-things-you-need-to-know>

<sup>12</sup> <https://www.gov.uk/lifetime-isa>

employment. Self-employed people earn less, on average, than other workers, raising further concerns about the potential implications the growth in self-employment numbers may have for tax revenues and welfare bill (UK Parliament, 2015).

### 3.3. Financing entrepreneurship

Supporting business creation and growth through an improved access to capital continues to be a key policy priority. The Government aims to create financial incentives and to encourage creation of networks that help firms access finance (HM Government, 2017). The British Business Bank, a state-owned public limited company, aims to increase the supply of credit to SMEs. The Bank provides financial support through a range of schemes and finance products, including start-up and growth loans. The Enterprise Finance Guarantee was designed specifically for smaller businesses unable to obtain mainstream finance due to having insufficient security to meet the lender's normal requirements.<sup>13</sup>

The Small Business Finance Markets 2017-18 report highlights a continued growth in finance flow to small business outside of traditional bank lending. There has been a significant growth in 2017 in the value of equity investment (up 79%), asset finance (up 12%) and peer-to-peer business lending (up 51%), while net bank lending remained relatively flat. Small businesses are increasingly thought to be using a wider range of finance options (British Business Bank, 2018). According to the OECD, the UK has seen an increase in the volume of online alternative finance market between 2013 and 2016 (OECD, 2018a). "Start-Up Loans" is the main government-backed scheme providing low-interest personal loans to those starting, or wanting to grow, a business. Up until 2017, 39% of its start-up loans have been issued to women (Government Equalities Office, 2017). For every GBP 1 invested in the scheme, GBP 3.30 of value is believed to be delivered back into the UK economy.<sup>14</sup> The "Big Issue Invest" is the first social merchant bank that supports access to finance for social enterprises through loans and investments (GBP 20 000 to GBP 3 million, or approximately EUR 22 400 to EUR 3.4 million).<sup>15</sup> In 2017-18, the bank has invested GBP 10.7 million (approximately EUR 12.0 million) in 68 mission-driven organisations. Innovate UK is a non-departmental public body that funds development of innovative ideas for products and services. Since 2018, consortia of businesses and research organisations can apply for up to GBP 50 million (approximately EUR 56.0 million) for innovative projects that support growth.<sup>16</sup>

At the regional level, several finance schemes exist to support growing businesses, including the "Let's Grow Grant" (from GBP 25 000 to GBP 1 million, or approximately EUR 28 000 to EUR 1.1 million) in Yorkshire.<sup>17</sup> The Finance Wales investment company provides micro loans (GBP 1 000 to GBP 50 000), technology venture investment, business loans or debt investment, equity investment and mezzanine investments (GBP 50 000 to GBP 3 million).<sup>18</sup> The Scottish Government offers grants to businesses that can generate social or economic benefits through job creation, collaborative projects leading to new technology or ideas, and for research and development.<sup>19</sup> The Propel Programme and StartPlanetNI Accelerator (funded by Invest Northern Ireland) provide finance to firms with the potential to export, scale up and create jobs.<sup>20</sup>

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<sup>13</sup> <https://www.british-business-bank.co.uk/ourpartners/supporting-business-loans-enterprise-finance-guarantee/>

<sup>14</sup> <https://www.startuploans.co.uk/>

<sup>15</sup> <https://bigissueinvest.com/about-big-issue-invest/>

<sup>16</sup> <https://www.gov.uk/government/organisations/innovate-uk>

<sup>17</sup> <https://www.gov.uk/business-finance-support/let-s-grow-grant-scheme-york-north-yorkshire-and-east-riding>

<sup>18</sup> <http://www.financewales.co.uk/>

<sup>19</sup> <https://www.mygov.scot/grant-funding/>

<sup>20</sup> <https://www.investni.com/support-for-business/funding-for-start-ups.html>

The current provision of business finance support favours innovative and growing firms with the potential to create jobs. This may be discouraging for entrepreneurs and businesses looking for finance to develop without necessarily scaling-up.

### **Women**

The INFOCUS award, launched in 2016 by Innovate UK (Innovate UK, 2016), was extended in 2018 with the Women in Innovation programme designed to help more women achieve their business ambitions. This women-only competition provided funding of up to GBP 50 000 (approximately EUR 56 000) to 15 female entrepreneurs in 2016. Yet, in 2017, women represented only 14% of all applicants for Innovate UK funding (Government Equalities Office, 2017). The Women's Enterprise Scotland (WES), in partnership with other organisations, run a micro-credit scheme aimed specifically at women who want to start or grow their business.<sup>21</sup> WES is also participating in an EU project that seeks to improve access to business finance for women-led businesses through business angel investment. The objective is to grow the numbers of business angels and business angel syndicates which fund women-led businesses.

### **Youth**

Public and private sources of finance continue to be available for young entrepreneurs through initiatives such as the Start Up Loan scheme (Department for Business, Energy & Industrial Strategy, 2016), the Youth Business Scotland,<sup>22</sup> the Shell LiveWIRE programme,<sup>23</sup> the Prince's Trust grants,<sup>24</sup> and the Young UnLtd programmes.<sup>25</sup> Most recently, Innovate UK has partnered with Prince's Trust to develop the "Young Innovators Programme" for 18-30 year old aspiring entrepreneurs. Successful applicants receive an allowance, coaching and mentoring, and funding for travel, training and workspace costs (Innovate UK, 2018b). Since 1983, Prince's Trust has helped more than 80 000 young people to start their own business.

### **Seniors**

Financial support for business creation among senior entrepreneurs continues to be under-developed in 2018. There are no UK-wide public funding programmes targeting this group specifically. The growth in self-employment over the past decade has been fuelled largely by the over-50s who are thought to have the financial power to start their own business. Since 2015, people of pension age have been given greater control and flexibility over their pension savings, enabling many to access retirement funds that can be used for business creation (Cook, 2017).

### **Unemployed**

The New Enterprise Allowance continues to be the main publicly-funded start-up scheme for the unemployed. The scheme provides a weekly allowance of up to GBP 1 274 (approximately EUR 1 427) over 26 weeks and a loan to help with start-up costs, in addition to support and advice from a business mentor.<sup>26</sup> The Fredericks Foundation offers loans to people who cannot access start-up or growth finance through the mainstream providers, particularly people with poor credit history.<sup>27</sup>

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<sup>21</sup> <https://www.wescotland.co.uk/markets-finance>

<sup>22</sup> <https://www.bgateway.com/business-guides/finance/funding-and-financing/support-from-youth-business-scotland>

<sup>23</sup> <https://www.shell-livewire.org/award/153/young-entrepreneur-of-the-year-award>

<sup>24</sup> <https://www.princes-trust.org.uk/help-for-young-people/support-starting-business>

<sup>25</sup> <http://youngunltd.org.uk/looking-for-support/spaces-4-change/>

<sup>26</sup> <https://www.gov.uk/new-enterprise-allowance>

<sup>27</sup> <http://www.fredericksfoundation.org/>

Its “Women’s Loan Fund” launched recently to ring-fence GDP 2 million (approximately EUR 2.24 million) for women with a viable business plan who have been turned down by conventional lenders.

### ***Immigrants***

Immigrant entrepreneurs tend to rely on informal sources, including friends and family to fund business creation and growth. Moreover, migrant businesses are more likely to seek help with finding investors or securing business loans rather than direct grant assistance (Ram et al., 2011). Currently, there is no specific provision targeting immigrant entrepreneurs within publicly-funded finance schemes. Women from migrant and ethnic minority communities are a key target group of the above mentioned Women’s Loan Fund. More than 40% of its loans are to this group.

### ***People with a disability***

Aspiring entrepreneurs with disabilities can apply for the New Enterprise Allowance for unemployed people on income support<sup>28</sup> and the Access to Work grant which covers the cost of practical support associated with disability. The grant was designed specifically to help people with a disability enter or remain in work, or to become self-employed.<sup>29</sup> The Stelios Award for Disabled Entrepreneurs offers cash prizes of up to GBP 70 000 (approximately EUR 78 450)<sup>30</sup> and the Kaleidoscope Investments offers funding through equity and debt investment (GBP 50 000 to GBP 250 000, or approximately EUR 56 000 to EUR 280 200) and small grants (GBP 1 000 to GBP 5 000, or approximately EUR 1 120 to EUR5 600) targeting entrepreneurs with a disability.<sup>31</sup> Women with a disability are one of the target groups of the Fredericks Foundation’s Women’s Loan Fund. Approximately 11% of its loans are to women with disabilities.

## **3.4. Entrepreneurship skills**

The mainstream support for developing entrepreneurship skills is delivered through a range of public, private and voluntary sector organisations. Most universities provide some form of entrepreneurship education through the formal curriculum. Extra-curricular activities, such as business idea competitions, are also available at the university level.

Entrepreneurship skills support in England can be accessed through a network of 38 Growth Hubs – alliances of businesses and public sector – led by the Local Enterprise Partnerships (LEPs). Each Hub provides an online signposting to local business start-up, management and growth support services. For example, a range of skills workshops, training and business advice services are listed on the London Growth Hub website. Since 2011, LEPs are thought to have supported over 196 000 businesses and helped create over 180 600 jobs.<sup>32</sup>

The Welsh Government has been a leader in developing entrepreneurship skills in schools, colleges and universities through its Youth Entrepreneurship Strategy.<sup>33</sup> Business Wales is the key port of call for free support and advice to people starting, running and growing a business with regional centres offering a mixture of online and face-to-face support, including training workshops

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<sup>28</sup> <https://www.gov.uk/new-enterprise-allowance>

<sup>29</sup> <https://www.gov.uk/access-to-work/overview>

<sup>30</sup> <https://www.leonardcheshire.org/support-and-information/life-and-work-skills-development/employment-programmes/stelios-award-for>

<sup>31</sup> <https://www.kaleidoscopeinvestments.com/>

<sup>32</sup> <https://www.lepnetwork.net/>

<sup>33</sup> <https://businesswales.gov.wales/bigideas/youth-entrepreneurship-strategy>

and individual advice.<sup>34</sup> The Scottish Government has similarly invested in developing entrepreneurship skills at different educational levels through schemes such as the Scottish Programme for Entrepreneurship,<sup>35</sup> the Scottish Entrepreneurship and Enterprise Educators' Programme,<sup>36</sup> and the Social Enterprise in Education Programme.<sup>37</sup> The last mentioned scheme has worked with over 680 schools between 2008 and 2015 to train teachers in developing social enterprise skills in young people (MacMillan, 2015).

The Young Enterprise (YE) charity offers a range of programmes to schools, colleges and universities across the UK to help children and young people develop business and finance skills.<sup>38</sup> Youth supported through the YE programmes were found to acquire important employability competencies, self-esteem, aspirations, career intentions and work readiness skills (Young Enterprise, 2017). More than 250 000 students are reached annually by YE, and over four million have participated in a YE programme over the past 50 years, with an average cost of GBP 31 (approximately EUR 35) per student session.<sup>39</sup> Private sector-led initiatives, such as the Peter Jones Enterprise Academy<sup>40</sup> or the Entrepreneurship Academy Wales<sup>41</sup> offer “learning by doing” courses for young people.

It is estimated that there are 205 incubators, 163 accelerators, 11 pre-accelerators, 7 virtual accelerators and 4 virtual incubators active across the country, in addition to various co-working spaces (Bone et al., 2017). The Entrepreneurial Spark is claimed to be the world's largest free accelerator scheme, led by private sector organisations, including NatWest bank, and funded by private capital, contributions from public sector and corporate sponsorship.<sup>42</sup> Businesses and entrepreneurs can find support through national and local mentoring schemes, such as the mentorsme.co.uk online gateway,<sup>43</sup> the Business Wales Mentoring Programme,<sup>44</sup> and the Scottish Business Mentoring scheme.<sup>45</sup>

The mainstream support for developing entrepreneurship skills is available to diverse groups and the scale of support appears sufficient to meet the demand. Support tailored to specific groups of under-represented and disadvantaged entrepreneurs varies by scale and location. Tailored entrepreneurship schemes for immigrants, seniors and people with a disability are less developed compared with support for women, youth and the unemployed.

## **Women**

Support specific to women is offered by various private and voluntary sector organisations, such as the British Association of Women Entrepreneurs,<sup>46</sup> the Women's Organisation<sup>47</sup> and the

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<sup>34</sup> <https://businesswales.gov.wales/business-wales>

<sup>35</sup> <https://www.abdn.ac.uk/spe/about/>

<sup>36</sup> <https://www.createhighland.com/educators/see-programme.aspx>

<sup>37</sup> <https://www.socialenterprise.academy/scot/social-enterprise-in-education>

<sup>38</sup> <https://www.young-enterprise.org.uk/>

<sup>39</sup> <https://www.young-enterprise.org.uk/about-us/our-impact/>

<sup>40</sup> <http://www.pjea.org.uk/>

<sup>41</sup> <http://www.entrepreneurshipacademywales.co.uk/>

<sup>42</sup> <https://www.entrepreneurial-spark.com/>

<sup>43</sup> <http://www.mentorsme.com/>

<sup>44</sup> <https://businesswales.gov.wales/mentoring/>

<sup>45</sup> <http://www.scottishbusinessmentoring.co.uk/>

<sup>46</sup> <https://www.bawe-uk.org/>

Enterprising Women.<sup>48</sup> There are several business incubator or accelerator initiatives targeting women entrepreneurs specifically, including the “She Can” co-working space<sup>49</sup>, the “Outbox” incubator aimed at women in STEM,<sup>50</sup> the Female Founders Accelerator<sup>51</sup> and the “My OutSpace”.<sup>52</sup> Prowess continues to be one of the main information resources for women in business, providing various online guides for starting and managing a business, and signposting women to female-friendly support and finance opportunities.<sup>53</sup> Business Gateway in Scotland offers women-tailored business support<sup>54</sup> while the Women in Business is the largest and fastest growing business support network in Northern Ireland.<sup>55</sup>

### **Youth**

Young Enterprise and the Prince’s Trust continue to be the two leading charities supporting young people in developing entrepreneurship skills through a range of training and mentoring programmes. For example, the “Young Entrepreneurs Scheme” was designed to increase the awareness of entrepreneurship in postgraduate students and postdoctoral researchers through a business plan competition.<sup>56</sup> The Young UnLtd provides training programmes and peer-to-peer networking opportunities for young social entrepreneurs.<sup>57</sup> The “Launch 22” business incubator specialises in offering affordable space for young entrepreneurs from disadvantaged backgrounds, in addition to mentoring support, talks, workshops and networking opportunities.<sup>58</sup> The Youth Business Scotland provides pre-start training, business planning advice, mentoring for two years, networking opportunities, bookkeeping training and other support.<sup>59</sup>

### **Seniors**

There continues to be a gap in the provision of training, coaching, mentoring and networking opportunities tailored specifically to senior entrepreneurs, although a few small scale initiatives seek to address this shortage. The Banana Enterprise Network is launching a new “Prime Time for Enterprise” project in July 2018 for over-50 year-olds in Salford and Bolton areas.<sup>60</sup> Prowess has a dedicated blog with success stories and advice for women over 50 years old who are in business or aspire to create a new venture.<sup>61</sup>

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<sup>47</sup> <http://www.thewomensorganisation.org.uk/businesstraining>

<sup>48</sup> <http://www.enterprising-women.org/business-support/growth-programme>

<sup>49</sup> <https://shecanuk.com/>

<sup>50</sup> <http://outboxjourney.com/incubator/>

<sup>51</sup> <https://femalefounders.hatchenterprise.org/>

<sup>52</sup> <http://www.myoutspace.co.uk/>

<sup>53</sup> <http://www.prowess.org.uk/>

<sup>54</sup> <https://www.bgateway.com/business-guides/first-steps/business-support-and-advice/women-in-business>

<sup>55</sup> <https://www.womeninbusinessni.com/Home.aspx>

<sup>56</sup> <http://www.yescompetitions.co.uk/index.aspx>

<sup>57</sup> <http://youngunltd.org.uk/>

<sup>58</sup> <https://www.catch-22.org.uk/collaborate/current-collaboration/launch22/>

<sup>59</sup> <https://www.bgateway.com/business-guides/finance/funding-and-financing/support-from-youth-business-scotland>

<sup>60</sup> <http://www.bananaenterprisenetwork.co.uk/free-training.html>

<sup>61</sup> <https://www.prowess.org.uk/category/50>

## ***Unemployed***

The New Enterprise Allowance offers mentoring support for up to 52 weeks after start-up to unemployed people aspiring to create their own business.<sup>62</sup> Young unemployed people can get help in developing skills needed to succeed in business through the Prince's Trust Enterprise Programme.<sup>63</sup> Local organisations, such as the Banana Enterprise Network, provide free training, workshops and networking opportunities for the unemployed and those aged over 50, single parents and people on low income.<sup>64</sup>

## ***Immigrants***

Support for migrant entrepreneurship in the UK is limited to small-scale initiatives. "The Sirius Programme for Graduate Entrepreneurs" is a government-backed scheme aimed at potential entrepreneurs from outside the UK. It offers 30 days of dedicated training and mentoring and a package of investment support.<sup>65</sup> Publicly-funded schemes specific to immigrant entrepreneurs who already reside in the country are currently unavailable. The "First Steps in Social Enterprise", delivered by Olmec, offers a free 10-12 week business planning programme for social entrepreneurs from ethnic minority and migrant backgrounds.<sup>66</sup> Olmec is a London-based social enterprise seeking to empower minority communities through economic and social justice.

## ***People with a disability***

The New Enterprise Allowance (NEA) is aimed specifically at the unemployed, including people with disabilities in receipt of the Employment Support Allowance. The scheme offers mentoring for up to 52 weeks since start-up.<sup>67</sup> Besides NEA, several small-scale, non-governmental schemes are available to entrepreneurs with a disability. The Association of Disabled Professionals provides tailored business support.<sup>68</sup> The Kaleidoscope Investments offers a package of support, including mentoring.<sup>69</sup> Online business training videos, in British Sign Language, are available through the Deaf Business Academy.<sup>70</sup> The Disabled Entrepreneurs Network provides business advice and mentoring support.<sup>71</sup> In Scotland, "Iwork4me" is a self-employment support initiative for people with autism<sup>72</sup> and "Work4Me" supports self-employed people with long-term health conditions through peer-to-peer support and mentoring.<sup>73</sup>

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<sup>62</sup> <https://www.gov.uk/new-enterprise-allowance>

<sup>63</sup> <https://www.princes-trust.org.uk/help-for-young-people/support-starting-business>

<sup>64</sup> <http://www.bananaenterprisenetwork.co.uk/>

<sup>65</sup> <https://www.gov.uk/government/collections/sirius-programme-for-graduate-entrepreneurs>

<sup>66</sup> <http://www.olmec-ec.org.uk/social-enterprise/first-steps-in-social-enterprise-for-bme-women-2017/>

<sup>67</sup> <https://www.gov.uk/new-enterprise-allowance>

<sup>68</sup> <https://www.adp.org.uk/business.php>

<sup>69</sup> <https://www.kaleidoscopeinvestments.com/>

<sup>70</sup> <http://www.deafbusinessacademy.co.uk/online-business-training/>

<sup>71</sup> <http://www.disabledentrepreneurs.co.uk/>

<sup>72</sup> <http://www.iwork4me.org.uk/>

<sup>73</sup> <http://www.work4me.co.uk/>

### 3.5. Entrepreneurial culture and social capital

Entrepreneurship is widely encouraged as a solution to low productivity and growth.<sup>74</sup> The Start UP Britain campaign has been promoting entrepreneurship since 2011 by highlighting the support that is available through its online resources and free business advice bus initiative.<sup>75</sup> The Global Entrepreneurship Week (GEW) is annually celebrated through competitions, networking and other events.<sup>76</sup> About 86% of participants in the 2015 GEW campaign felt more confident about starting a business or making their business a success. 74% said they are more likely to start a business while 63% had gained a new business idea, or been inspired. The economic and social value of entrepreneurship is further promoted through national and local awards, including the Enterprising Britain Awards,<sup>77</sup> the Great British Entrepreneur Awards<sup>78</sup> and the UK Social Enterprise Awards.<sup>79</sup> Several initiatives specific to under-represented and disadvantaged groups exist to promote and celebrate entrepreneurship.

#### *Women*

The annual “Celebrating women in business conference” facilitates business networking specifically for women entrepreneurs.<sup>80</sup> The Women’s Business Council holds an annual award for successful women in business.<sup>81</sup> Private sector-led initiatives are also available, including the “Women in business awards”<sup>82</sup>, the “Forward Ladies National Awards”<sup>83</sup>, the “Ignition” event<sup>84</sup>, the “NatWest Everywoman Awards”<sup>85</sup> and the “Enterprising Women Hub”.<sup>86</sup> In 2018, the Telegraph newspaper launched the “Women Mean Business” campaign – an open letter signed by 200 business leaders, entrepreneurs, Members of Parliament and academics – calling on the Government to boost female entrepreneurship in Britain.<sup>87</sup>

#### *Youth*

The National Association of College and University Entrepreneurs engages and supports 32 000 students and young people every year in pursuing entrepreneurship through events such as the “Student Enterprise Conference” and the “Varsity Pitch Competition”.<sup>88</sup> Successes of young entrepreneurs are celebrated through various initiatives, including the “Young Guns” award,<sup>89</sup> the

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<sup>74</sup> HM Government (2017)

<sup>75</sup> <http://startupbritain.org/>

<sup>76</sup> <http://uk.gew.co/united-kingdom/about-global-entrepreneurship-week-united-kingdom>

<sup>77</sup> <http://www.enterprisingbritainawards.co.uk/>

<sup>78</sup> <https://www.greatbritishentrepreneurawards.com/>

<sup>79</sup> <https://www.socialenterprise.org.uk/uk-social-enterprise-awards-2017>

<sup>80</sup> <http://www.greatbusiness.gov.uk/celebrating-women-in-business-conference/>

<sup>81</sup> <http://www.womensbusinesscouncil.co.uk/awards/>

<sup>82</sup> <http://womeninbusiness.biz/>

<sup>83</sup> <http://forwardladies.com/national-awards/>

<sup>84</sup> <https://www.virginstartup.org/news/presenting-virgin-startup-ignition-event-celebrating-female-entrepreneurs>

<sup>85</sup> <https://www.everywoman.com/events-awards/2018-natwest-everywoman-awards>

<sup>86</sup> <https://www.iod.com/news-campaigns/enterprising-women>

<sup>87</sup> <https://www.telegraph.co.uk/women/business/200-business-leaders-mps-sign-telegraph-letter-urging-government/>

<sup>88</sup> <http://www.nacue.com/>

<sup>89</sup> <http://startups.co.uk/why-you-should-enter-the-young-guns-class-of-2017/>

“NatWest Enterprise Award”<sup>90</sup> and the “Young Entrepreneur of the Year” award.<sup>91</sup> “Tycoon in Schools” is a free national enterprise competition encouraging entrepreneurship by giving students a start-up loan of between GBP 50 and GBP 1 000 (approximately EUR 56 to EUR 1 120) while at school or college.<sup>92</sup> The “Santander Universities Entrepreneurship Awards” is an annual business pitching competition for student and graduate business ventures.<sup>93</sup> Since its launch, Santander has given away more than GBP 340 000 (approximately EUR 381 110) to young entrepreneurs.

### *Seniors*

Publicly-funded schemes that promote senior entrepreneurship and help build entrepreneurial networks for those aged 50+ are limited. Age UK, the largest national charity dedicated to helping people in later life, provides online information and advice on “Being your own boss”.<sup>94</sup> The PRIME Cymru in Wales offers self-employment support to people aged 50+ through mentoring and its annual “Prime Cymru Awards”.<sup>95</sup> Promotion of entrepreneurship continues to be under-developed for seniors despite a notable increase in self-employment among older workers (Office for National Statistics, 2016).

### *Unemployed*

The Jobcentre Plus is the first port of call for unemployed people looking to set up a business. However, there are no specific promotional initiatives to encourage the unemployed to start a business. Since the cessation of “Enterprise Clubs” in 2015, networking opportunities for entrepreneurs who have entered self-employment from unemployment are limited. Entrepreneurship has been encouraged by consecutive governments as a solution to unemployment, particularly since the 2008 financial crisis. Yet, there is little institutional interest in understanding how these “necessity entrepreneurs” can succeed in managing their new ventures (Garcia-Lorenzo, 2018).

### *Immigrants*

Although the government aims to attract talented entrepreneurs from outside to relocate to the UK, public policy actions to promote immigrant entrepreneurship are limited. A number of small-scale initiatives exist, including the Enterprise and Diversity Alliance (EDA) that facilitates networking between diverse SMEs and large institutions, such as banks.<sup>96</sup> The Migrant Women Conference is an inspirational event that celebrates and awards successful migrant women, including entrepreneurs and community leaders.<sup>97</sup> The Centre for Entrepreneurs has recently published research that highlights the contribution of migrant and refugee entrepreneurs, building the case for supporting migrant entrepreneurship as a way of reducing public spending and strengthening social integration.<sup>98</sup>

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<sup>90</sup> <https://www.princes-trust.org.uk/about-the-trust/initiatives/celebrate-success/national-celebrate-success-2017/enterprise-award-2017>

<sup>91</sup> <https://www.greatbritishentrepreneurawards.com/>

<sup>92</sup> <https://www.tycooninschools.com/about>

<sup>93</sup> <https://www.santander.co.uk/uk/santander-universities/entrepreneurship-business>

<sup>94</sup> <https://www.ageuk.org.uk/information-advice/work-learning/looking-for-work/be-your-own-boss/>

<sup>95</sup> <http://www.primecymru.co.uk/awards-2017-new/>

<sup>96</sup> <http://www.birmingham.ac.uk/schools/business/research/creme/enterprise-diversity-alliance/index.aspx>

<sup>97</sup> <http://www.migrantwomantalks.com/>

<sup>98</sup> <https://centreforentrepreneurs.org/>

### *People with a disability*

There are no publicly-funded initiatives to encourage and celebrate entrepreneurship among people with a disability. A small number of voluntary and private-led initiatives facilitate business networking opportunities, including the annual Stelios Award for Disabled Entrepreneurs,<sup>99</sup> the Disabled Entrepreneurs' Network<sup>100</sup> and the Deaf Entrepreneur Awards.<sup>101</sup> In February 2018, the Parliament debated for the first time the role of people with a disability as contributors to the economy, calling on Government to act on its commitment to get one million more people with a disability into employment by 2027 (House of Commons Library, 2018b).

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<sup>99</sup> <https://www.leonardcheshire.org/support-and-information/life-and-work-skills-development/employment-programmes/stelios-award-for-0>

<sup>100</sup> <http://www.adp.org.uk/business.php>

<sup>101</sup> <http://www.deafbusinessacademy.co.uk>

## 4. OVERVIEW OF WOMEN ENTREPRENEURSHIP

### State of female entrepreneurship activities

Recent evidence suggests that women-owned businesses contribute approximately GBP 75 billion (approximately EUR 84 billion) to overall economic output. The increasing participation of women in entrepreneurship by just 4% is anticipated to raise their economic contribution to more than GBP 180 billion (approximately EUR 202 billion) by 2025 (Deloitte, 2016). There has been a continuous growth of women self-employed and employees during the last 15 years.

While the proportion of female full-time and part-time employment increased by 21.1% and 5.82% respectively between December 2001 and December 2016, the number of female full and part-time self-employed grew by 82% during the same period (Official National Statistics, 2018). This shows a significant growing trend of female self-employed integration to the labour force. The evidence is consistent with the literature that suggests women tend to fit flexible self-employment around family commitments (Carter et al., 2015). Additionally, prior investigation also indicates that numerous women consider self-employed as a temporary career path while looking for a long term option. Therefore, in many cases, they are likely to exit their business for personal reasons rather than business failure (Marlow et al., 2012). According to the House of Commons (2018a), women-led businesses accounted for 20% of SME employers, compared with 15% of medium-sized businesses. 22% of SMEs without employees are also led by women. Women entrepreneurs are dominant in human health and education sectors, accounting for 56% and 45% of the total SME employers.

### Barriers faced by women in business creation

Women face a number of constraints in business creation including the lack of external finance (Carter et al., 2015), lack of managerial skills (Zolin et al., 2013), lack of business skills, self-belief, and limited access to business mentors and networks (Deloitte, 2016), concerns with how to balance work and childcare commitments, and lack of business support (Federation of Small Businesses, 2016; Tooth, 2018).

- *Access to external finance:* Gaining money through external parties, such as banks, to build a business is a major obstacle for women. One in four women entrepreneurs finds access to external finance challenging. This is often because women entrepreneurs tend to be more risk-averse, lack awareness about external finance options, and prefer to rely on personal sources of finance. In addition, they are more likely to face gender discrimination in financial markets. Recent evidence highlights that only 14% of business angel investors are female (Rogan, 2017). For women entrepreneurs seeking funding, this is disappointing since the UKBAA's study indicates that women business angels are much more likely than men to invest into female-led businesses (Tooth, 2018). A recent report by the Federation of Small Businesses (2016) reveals that an additional 1.2 million women-led businesses could be created by improving women's awareness and access to available external finance.<sup>102</sup>
- *Skills barriers:* The lack of skills is a key barrier to women entrepreneurship (Deloitte, 2016). The UKCES Employer Skills Survey highlights that there is a significant skills-gap amongst women entrepreneurs (FSB, 2016). For example, 37% entrepreneur participants reported that they started a firm in the areas that they are most confident. However, about 25% of female entrepreneurs revealed a lack of online and digital skills, and a further 18% cited their lack of management and business skills, which are regarded as essential to business creation and growth.

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<sup>102</sup> <https://www.businessleader.co.uk/women-entrepreneurs-encouraged-close-finance-gap/40682/>

- *Lack of self-confidence*: Research on inclusive support for women entrepreneurship in the UK suggests that one of the biggest constraints to women’s business creation is related to their lack of self-confidence (Burt Report, 2015; Hinks et al. 2015). This does not appear to be declining. A recent survey in 2018 also confirms that female-led enterprises were two and a half times more likely than male-owned business owners to perceive a lack of confidence as one their greatest challenges to be self-employed.<sup>103</sup>
- *Gender discrimination*: Previous studies of women’s experiences identify that gaining entry and acceptance to the entrepreneurial community involves negotiating multiple social barriers in the form of gendered attitudes and practices. For women this is particularly critical in sectors that are stereotypically male-led (Eurostat, 2018). For example, in the construction sector, 30.7% of self-employment is male-led, in comparison with only 2.8% of female-led businesses. Additionally, some studies indicate that gender discrimination has restricted women’s ability to access external finance (Kwong et al., 2012).
- *Childcare and work-life balance*: Balancing of work and childcare remains a major concern for women entrepreneurs in the UK (Federation of Small Businesses, 2016). Women are relatively reluctant to pursue business growth (Bird and Brush, 2002; Cliff, 1998; Rosa et al., 1996; Watson and Robinson, 2003; Carter *et al.*, 2015). Hence female-led businesses are often seen to operate on a smaller scale and are more likely to be part-time and to operate from a home-base than male-led businesses (Hughes et al., 2012; OECD, 2017). This may also correspond with the evidence that women are driven to self-employment to combine childcare and income generation as a temporary solution at specific points in their life while looking for better opportunities for their careers (Jayawarna et al. 2011).
- *Uncertain business environment*: The Brexit vote has increased uncertainty for start-ups, especially for women aspiring to become self-employed. The unanticipated political and economic changes linked to Brexit have increased the investment risks. For example, women entrepreneurs who are engaged in the health and social work sectors are likely to be affected by the potential loss of EU staff and suffer from the increased input costs (WBG report, 2018). Other sectors such as textile and clothing which is heavily dependent on the EU will also cause lots of pressures for women entrepreneurs when Brexit happens.<sup>104</sup>

## Overview of policies and programmes used to support women entrepreneurs

Despite numerous business support services available in the UK, tailor-made programmes aimed at women’s specific needs in starting a business are limited (Deloitte, 2016). The majority of support services focus on networking, mentoring, and advice. While there is no UK-wide framework for promoting women entrepreneurs, Scotland has introduced the “Scottish Government’s Framework and Action Plan for Women’s Enterprise”<sup>105</sup> in 2014. Following the Scottish Framework, Women’s Enterprise Scotland (WES) has launched the “Ambassador Programme” that promotes entrepreneurship through successful women role models, and it aims to support the Welsh Government to replicate their strategy to enhance women entrepreneurship in 2018.<sup>106</sup>

One of the most recent national schemes supporting women entrepreneurs’ access to finance is “INFOCUS award”, initiated by the Innovate UK. Following its first successful launch in 2016, the scheme was extended in 2018 by introducing the “Women in Innovation” programme. The INFOCUS

<sup>103</sup> <https://metro.co.uk/2018/01/07/lack-of-self-confidence-is-killing-female-entrepreneurship-7207282/> [Accessed on 13/06/2018]

<sup>104</sup> [https://www.huffingtonpost.co.uk/entry/brexit-women\\_uk\\_5ab9ef3ce4b008c9e5fabefa?guccounter=1](https://www.huffingtonpost.co.uk/entry/brexit-women_uk_5ab9ef3ce4b008c9e5fabefa?guccounter=1)

<sup>105</sup> <https://www.wescotland.co.uk/framework>

<sup>106</sup> [http://www.parliament.scot/S5\\_EconomyJobsFairWork/Inquiries/20171130-Womens\\_Enterprise\\_Scotland.pdf](http://www.parliament.scot/S5_EconomyJobsFairWork/Inquiries/20171130-Womens_Enterprise_Scotland.pdf)

award has provided GBP 50 000 (approximately EUR 56 050) funding each for 15 female-led businesses plus mentoring and resulted in a 10% increase in female registrations for Innovate UK support. In Scotland, the “Women’s Enterprise Scotland (WES)”, in partnership with other organisations, run a micro-credit scheme aimed specifically at women who face constraints in accessing external finance to start or grow their business.<sup>107</sup> Women can also seek financial support from charity and private organisations such as the “Fredericks Foundation.”<sup>108</sup>

Entrepreneurial skills and networking are continued to be largely supported via a number of public and not-for profit organisations such as the “British Association of Women Entrepreneurs”,<sup>109</sup> the “Women’s Organisation”<sup>110</sup>, “Women in Business”<sup>111</sup> (Northern Ireland) and the “Enterprising Women”<sup>112</sup>, “Prowess”<sup>113</sup>, “WIRE”.<sup>114</sup> These organisations provide various online guides, advice, mentoring and networking opportunities for women across the country.

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<sup>107</sup> <https://www.wescotland.co.uk/markets-finance>

<sup>108</sup> <http://www.fredericksfoundation.org/the-womens-fund/>

<sup>109</sup> <https://www.bawe-uk.org/>

<sup>110</sup> <http://www.thewomensorganisation.org.uk/businessstraining>

<sup>111</sup> <https://www.womeninbusinessni.com/About-Us.aspx>

<sup>112</sup> <http://www.enterprising-women.org/business-support/growth-programme>

<sup>113</sup> <https://www.prowess.org.uk/>

<sup>114</sup> <http://www.wireuk.org/>

## 5. POLICY RECOMMENDATIONS

Mainstream policies and programmes for promoting and supporting entrepreneurship and small business have, over the past decade, placed much greater emphasis on growth or scaling-up of start-ups and established firms, rather than simply creating a larger number of enterprises. Scale-up firms are viewed as a key to boosting productivity and competitiveness that can reduce income gaps and help achieve inclusive growth (OECD, 2018b). Support for innovation is a crucial element of growth policies. However, despite the flurry of initiatives and programmes for entrepreneurship, our analysis suggests that policy objectives and targets for inclusive growth are less defined or developed in the policy discourse. The following recommendations are offered to strengthen inclusive entrepreneurship policies and programmes:

1. *Define policy objectives and targets for inclusive entrepreneurship and strengthen policy co-ordination.* Progress has been made in developing inclusive entrepreneurship policies and strategies for some under-represented groups of entrepreneurs, particularly women and youth. There is a written policy and/or action plan for women entrepreneurs in Scotland and England, with plans in Wales to develop a similar policy, and a Welsh-only policy targeting youth entrepreneurs. Unemployed people are encouraged and supported to enter self-employment but there is no explicit strategy for helping this group succeed in their entrepreneurial efforts. Nor is there clearly defined policy for supporting and promoting entrepreneurship among seniors, immigrants, people with a disability and those with long-term health conditions. Particularly important will be to develop a policy for immigrant entrepreneurship once the UK changes its immigration rules as part of the Brexit transition period. Creating a UK-wide body that co-ordinates inclusive entrepreneurship policies and facilitates inter-ministerial communication on this issue would strengthen the impact of inclusive entrepreneurship policies on diverse groups.
2. *Remove disincentives for entrepreneurship and self-employment in the social security system.* Business creation and self-employment may be enabled or constrained, encouraged or discouraged by the social security system, and the wider regulatory environment. Some groups of the self-employed may be particularly disadvantaged by the existing systems and structures. Self-employed parents are still not entitled to statutory maternity, paternity and adoption pay. Consideration should be given to making such parental benefits available to the growing number of the self-employed. Self-employed people with a disability have seen their benefits reduced by austerity measures over the past decade. The failure to account for the additional costs associated with disability is placing them at a particular disadvantage compared with other self-employed people. Policy makers must recognise that the desire and the capacity to work, whether through employment or self-employment, should not be used to justify the removal of social security supports. Continued and sustainable social security is crucial for many vulnerable and disadvantaged groups, particularly workers with unpredictable, severe and fluctuating health conditions who rely on such support when their physical well-being deteriorates.
3. *Promote and support inclusive entrepreneurship, particularly for seniors, and immigrants.* While there is a general support for entrepreneurship and a range of mainstream programmes can be accessed by diverse groups of under-represented and disadvantaged entrepreneurs, there is a lack of tailored support, particularly for seniors and immigrants. There are no targeted schemes designed to celebrate entrepreneurs from these backgrounds, to help finance their business creation and growth, or to develop their entrepreneurship skills. Increasing pressures on public services associated with population ageing and a growing number of people aged 50+ who are in work and self-employment calls for a stronger public support in creating and managing a business in

later life. Moreover, the government must consider the implications of Brexit and any changes to the UK's immigration rules, not only on SMEs who rely on EEA workers and trade with EU but also on the potential effects of these changes on immigrant entrepreneurship and its contribution to the UK economy.

4. *Strengthen support for “low-growth” potential entrepreneurs.* Current policy actions for supporting innovative, ambitious and high-growth potential firms play a key role in the Government's objective to increase productivity, competitiveness, wages and, in so doing, deliver “inclusive growth”. Investment in supporting innovative and high-growth potential entrepreneurs from diverse backgrounds, including women and youth, is welcomed and can help transform structural inequalities that exclude disadvantaged groups from realising their potential. However, current policy focus on scaling up start-ups and established firms could leave behind those who aspire and can create a successful business but are not able, or motivated, to achieve high-level growth because of other commitments, such as care responsibilities or concerns with physical well-being. Policy makers must ensure that these groups can access appropriate entrepreneurship support to start and run successful businesses regardless of their growth potential.
  
5. *Enhance support for innovation and internationalisation activities in the transition and post-Brexit period.* The uncertainty associated with Brexit has raised concerns amongst entrepreneurs, especially those who internationalise or are seeking to internationalise. This has resulted in the lower TEA rate and the reduction of the proportion of self-employment in the UK. Exports are also lower than the EU average. So in order to realise the government's ambition and boost entrepreneurship, priority should be placed on enhancing support for export and innovation activities. The role of under-represented groups should be an integral part of this strategy. In addition, it is essential for the government to provide a formal guidance that helps entrepreneurs to prepare for the effects of Brexit and help them plan for their strategic development in the long term. In particular, more tailored-made support should be made available to different groups, to enable them to prepare for the new post-Brexit era and thus raise their contribution to the economy and society.

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## ANNEX: METHODOLOGY

Each note was prepared by a national expert in co-operation with the OECD Secretariat. Information was collected through desk research and interviews (i.e. telephone, face-to-face, email) with key stakeholders and government representatives. The information was then verified by government partners, programme managers and other inclusive entrepreneurship stakeholder groups through email exchanges and one-day seminars in selected countries.

The notes are based on an assessment framework that was developed by the OECD Secretariat. The assessment framework provided a common analytical framework and report structure for the 28 notes that are in this series.

The framework contains five pillars:

### **1. Policy framework**

- Is there an entrepreneurship strategy or action plan that explicitly covers the promotion and support of entrepreneurship for people in under-represented and disadvantaged groups?
- Is there a mechanism for co-ordinating inclusive entrepreneurship policy actions across relevant national ministries, and with regional and local governments and civil society organisations?
- Is there a systematic monitoring and evaluation process for the policies, programmes and schemes that promote and support entrepreneurship for people in under-represented and disadvantaged groups?

### **2. Government regulations**

- To what extent are entrepreneurs from under-represented and disadvantaged groups treated equally with employees by social security schemes?
- Do measures exist that temporarily cover the loss of state income supports (e.g. unemployment benefits, disability allowances) for entrepreneurs amongst under-represented and disadvantaged groups when they start a business?
- Do measures exist to support under-represented and disadvantaged entrepreneurs in dealing with administrative procedures for entrepreneurship amongst under-represented and disadvantaged groups (e.g. information provision, support with administrative requirements)?
- Are there any entrepreneurship policy initiatives or schemes to address group-specific institutional challenges related to dependents (e.g. childcare, eldercare)?

### **3. Financing entrepreneurship**

- Are there grants for business creation offered to support entrepreneurs from under-represented and disadvantaged groups?
- Is microcredit for business creation available to support entrepreneurs from under-represented and disadvantaged groups?
- Are there loan guarantee schemes for business creation to support entrepreneurs from under-represented and disadvantaged groups?
- Are there self-financing groups for business creation to support entrepreneurs from under-represented and disadvantaged groups?
- Are there public policy schemes that encourage and support business angel networks to support entrepreneurs from under-represented and disadvantaged groups?
- Are there schemes that encourage and support crowdfunding and peer-to-peer lending to support entrepreneurs from under-represented and disadvantaged groups?

- Is financial literacy training offered to support entrepreneurs from under-represented and disadvantaged groups?

#### **4. Entrepreneurship skills**

- Are there entrepreneurship training initiatives for entrepreneurs from under-represented and disadvantaged groups?
- Do high potential entrepreneurs from under-represented and disadvantaged groups have access to one-to-one or group coaching and mentoring?
- Are there public initiatives that provide information on available support programmes or on business start-up procedures for entrepreneurs from under-represented and disadvantaged groups?
- Are there business consultancy and advisory services for entrepreneurs from under-represented and disadvantaged groups?
- Are there business incubators for entrepreneurs from under-represented and disadvantaged groups?

#### **5. Entrepreneurial culture and social capital**

- Is entrepreneurship actively promoted as an employment opportunity amongst under-represented and disadvantaged groups through the education system, media, role models, etc.?
- Are there public policy actions that attempt to build specific business networks for entrepreneurs amongst under-represented and disadvantaged groups?

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