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Welcome to STEAMhouse!

STEAMhouse is a centre for innovation, research and creative production. We aim to demonstrate how art, design and creative thinking can intersect with the STEM disciplines (Science, Technology, Engineering, and Maths) to stimulate economic and cultural growth.

At the project's heart is a commitment to curiosity, collaboration and knowledge sharing and STEAMhouse is a space to experiment, test and develop. The Production Space - our well-equipped makerspace - provides facilities and staff to support prototyping in a wide range of digital and physical media and materials. Our customisable challenge spaces and STEAMlab programmes help focus new ideas and create space for open innovation and collaborative product development, and our co-working spaces offer an inspiring, informal working environment.

Created by Birmingham City University in partnership with Eastside Projects and funded by the European Regional Development Fund and Arts Council England, STEAMhouse is open to sole traders and micro, small and medium-sized enterprises with a focus on four growth sectors – Creative & Digital, Advanced Manufacturing, Health & Life Sciences and Low Carbon.

Informed by global trends across culture, society, technology, politics and the economy, STEAMhouse aims to stimulate, surprise, engage and enlighten. We invite you to join us if you are curious about making a change, however small, and look forward to working together.

Where is it?

STEAMhouse Phase One is at 108 Digbeth, Birmingham, B5 6DT, opposite the coach station, a ten minute walk from New Street and Moor Street Stations.

What's on Offer

By being part of a STEAMhouse programme you can benefit from access to our facilities and expertise including:

- **Free access to well-equipped print, digital, metal and wood workshops**, with skilled technicians on hand to provide support and training and help to translate ideas into prototypes and products.

- **Free, tailored business support** - Business Development, Action Planning and Design Thinking workshops; skills development sessions; Masterclasses led by industry experts; Intellectual property advice; and access to markets and finance.
- Regular **opportunities to take part** in innovation labs, collaborative workshops, networking events and masterclasses.
- **Free access to co-working space** which is open five days a week, 10-5pm Monday, Tuesday, Thursday and Friday and 10-8pm on Wednesdays.
- **Research collaborations** with STEAMhouse experts, Academics, and University Researchers.
- **Grants** of up to £2500 to support prototyping and IP advice and access to other **investors**.

STEAMhouse is also an open door to a wide range of other support provided by Birmingham City University, including knowledge exchange programmes, access to graduate talent, and other business support services.

Who is it for

- To be eligible for our programmes you must be a micro, small or medium-sized enterprise (SME) of between 1 to 250 employees.
- You can be a start-up or an established business, and can be a sole-trader, partnership or limited company. You need to provide either a UTR number (for self-employed sole traders) or a Company Registration number.
- STEAMhouse is a place where businesses can develop skills, products and services and gain new perspectives on their ideas. We welcome enterprises with ideas at all stages of development, from research and concept phase onwards.
- Your proposal to STEAMhouse must develop your business in some way, whether by creating a new product or service or acquiring new skills or technical knowledge.
- All enterprises must commit to 12 hours of business support and provide

simple end-of-project reports outlining the product or business development that has taken place with our support.

- We primarily work with businesses who are registered within the GBSLEP region which covers the following locations:
 - Birmingham
 - Bromsgrove
 - Cannock Chase
 - East Staffordshire
 - Lichfield
 - Redditch
 - Solihull
 - Tamworth
 - Wyre Forest

And have a focus on four growth sectors:

- Creative and Digital - includes businesses and sole traders involved with art, theatre, music, dance, graphic design, architecture, gaming, web design, virtual reality, fashion, textile and surface design, craft, art fabrication, product design, industrial design and similar activities.
 - Advanced Manufacturing
 - Health and Life Sciences
 - Low Carbon
- If you work in another sector but think you have a product or service which could benefit from STEAMhouse's support, you are welcome to make an application, or come along to an Open House Tour to find out more.

Costs

- STEAMhouse programmes are free to eligible enterprises as they are generously supported by ERDF, Arts Council England, Birmingham City University and Eastside Projects.

How to get involved

- We strongly recommend you come along to an Open House Tour before applying. Dates and booking information can be found on the Events page on

the STEAMhouse website.

- To apply you need to complete a registration form. In section 5 you will be asked to write a short proposal (maximum one side of A4) which explains what you want to do at STEAMhouse and how it will enable you to develop your business.
- Our selection panel meets regularly to assess the applications. We take into account the strength of your idea and its creative, artistic or innovation potential; the extent to which your proposal contributes to our ERDF targets; how effectively our programmes and facilities can support your proposal; and how you are likely to contribute to the STEAMhouse community.

The Routes

The STEAMhouse programmes are built around **three routes** which have been designed to support a range of sole traders and enterprises. In all cases you are able to build a bespoke programme of support from the suite of workshops, 1-2-1 and group support on offer.

The Business Support modules are common to all routes and consist of a menu of bite-size workshops with information on financial planning, business planning, and funding and investment. 1-2-1 sessions are also available to help you develop and launch your new product or service to market.

1. **Product Route** – for businesses who want to prototype and develop new products or services. This route splits into three pathways:
 - i. **Production Space Pathway** – for those who want to produce a physical prototype or product, or develop new skills using the Production Space workshops, this pathway offers a mix of practical workshop time, 1-2-1 technical advice and business support sessions.
 - ii. **Business Pathway** – This is a flexible, bespoke support programme for businesses that already have an early or defined idea and are looking to take a product or service to market but who do not need to use the Production Space facilities.
 - iii. **Games@ Pathway** - for games businesses, or non-specialist businesses who want to engage with games or gamification.

Drawing on decades of game industry experience, we run game jams to help games businesses identify ideas and opportunities, offer workshops and assistance on design, production, business and

enterprise, and provide short-term incubation support to help you take your game on to the next stage of its development.

We can work with non-game enterprises: to incorporate games and game industry processes and practices into your work. This might mean making a game to engage new customers, offering a gamified experience to existing service users, or testing out game industry business models for your digital products.

2. **Open Route** – for artists, designer makers and other cultural producers who want to develop their business by producing new creative work or services using the Production Space. Open Route members receive a mix of practical workshop time, 1-2-1 technical advice and access to a programme of business support sessions. This route is led by Eastside Projects.
3. **Challenge Route** - delivered through our STEAMlab programme of intensive, industry or policy themed hack events and workshops, held in a supportive, experimental learning environment and designed to stimulate innovation and collaboration.

STEAMlabs are designed to connect businesses, professionals, academics and others from different sectors. After the STEAMlab, if appropriate, ideas for new products or services can be developed and prototyped in STEAMhouse across 12 months during which time you will become a Co-working or Production Space member.

The Production Space

The Production Space is our in-house makerspace where you can prototype, make and fabricate. Production Space members can access both equipment and expert technical staff to assist in taking ideas forward, including:

- A fully equipped wood workshop with table saw, planer-thicknesser, bandsaw, pillar drill, sanders and a range of power and hand tools.
- Facilities for digital production including a 2.5 axis CNC router, 3D scanner, vinyl cutter, digital modelling mill, laser cutter, VR headset and 3D printers as well as access to industry-standard software.
- A metal workshop with fabrication equipment for rolling, folding, cutting, sanding, polishing and joining metals including MIG and TIG welding and plasma cutting.

- A print room with silkscreen beds, exposure unit and washout booth to allow printing onto paper, textiles and other materials. A sublimation printer and two heat presses, industrial sewing machines and overlockers, a bullet steamer and facilities for textile processes including dyeing, devore and discharge.
- Plastics forming equipment including a vac former and line bender.
- Space for prototyping, fabrication and assembly

Businesses who are Production Space members have free access to the facilities for 12 months to develop their project or product idea. The Production Space opens Monday, Tuesday, Thursday and Friday, 10am-1pm and 2-5pm, and Wednesday 2-5pm and 5.30-8pm.

Additional Support

STEAMhouse also offers a range of other activity that you can get involved in, from talks with industry professionals, to advice sessions and workshops. This programme includes:

- Masterclasses and talks
- Game Jams – Video Games Creation
- Industry specific presentations such as legal, IP, and investment
- Networking sessions
- Technical demonstrations
- Further Business Support

Businesses on all routes also have the opportunity to use STEAMhouse to develop research collaborations with academics - primarily within Birmingham City University, but it is also possible to work with researchers from other institutions.

STEAMhouse can also connect you with BCU's wider support available through: www.bcuadvantage.co.uk

Grants

Businesses on all routes can apply for grants worth £2500. These support prototyping costs, including buying materials and include specialist IP and commercialisation support.