

# Join the county's makers

Kent's manufacturing sector has been at the forefront of producing some of the most groundbreaking and globally recognised products, driving innovation and shaping industries for the needs of tomorrow's world.

Manufacturers located in Kent and Medway generate an estimated £3.2bn GVA to the UK economy a year. World leading businesses such as beauty and skincare brand Coty and defence, security and aerospace manufacturing company BAE Systems are among the makers already here.

In all, over **3,400 manufacturing companies** are based in the Kent and Medway region, **employing over 45,000 people**. Other international brands that have made their home in Kent include, Bose, Jazz Pharmaceuticals, Rolex, Veetee, Sleepyhead, Hornby and Qinetiq. Brompton Bicycles are set to join them in 2028.

Kent is home to a diverse manufacturing base, **from specialised SMEs to leading innovators** in sectors like aerospace, defence, healthcare, and med-tech. The region is also investing in green technologies and renewable energy to support the UK's low-carbon transition.

Kent is **a hub for high-value manufacturing, driven by world-class research and a strong talent pipeline**. Institutions like the University of Kent, Canterbury Christ Church University, the Kent and Medway Engineering, Design, Growth and Enterprise (EDGE) Hub and East Kent Colleges (EKC) Group Green Engineering Centres work closely with industry to foster innovation and develop a **highly skilled workforce**. Specialised training programmes ensure employers can access the talent they need now and in the future.

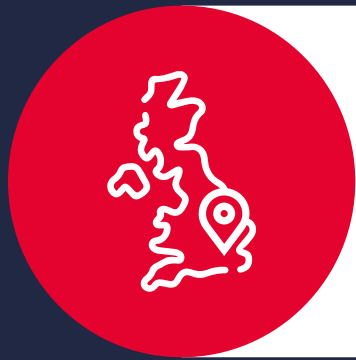
With **excellent transport** links to London and Europe, Kent and Medway are strategically placed for success. Fast access to the UK's motorway network and the Channel Ports ensure manufacturers can quickly get products to customers in both domestic and international markets – reducing costs, increasing efficiency, improving competitiveness.

The South East Manufacturing Forum **features expert-led workshops** covering topics such as environmental management controls, ESG financial reporting, digital supply chains, and waste management from an SME perspective. It's part of a range of **support and specialist** advice that companies based in Kent and Medway can call upon to support their growth.

With its **strategic location**, strong manufacturing heritage and a commitment to sustainable practice and future-facing technologies, Kent and Medway is **taking the lead for UK manufacturing**.







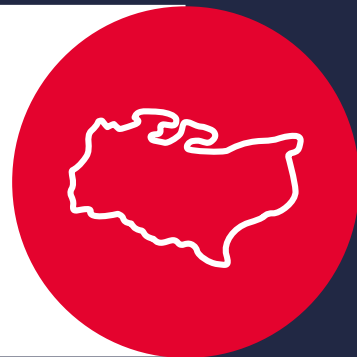
**17,980**

The number of manufacturing companies located in the South East.



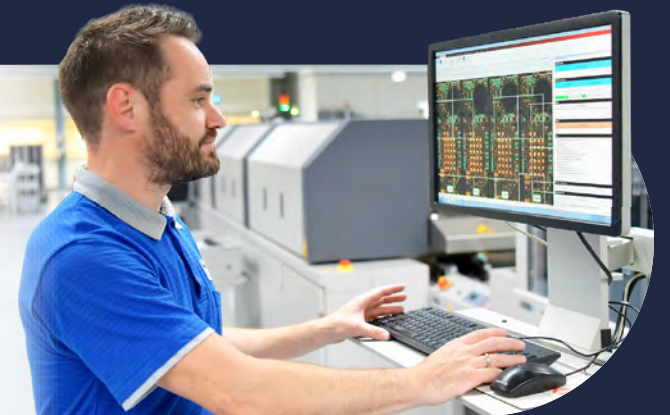
**3,485**

The number of manufacturing enterprises in Kent and Medway.



**46,000**

The number of manufacturing jobs in Kent and Medway.



**380**

Maidstone district has the highest number in the region (380). Swale, has the highest proportion with 6.8% (350 enterprises).



**47.3%**

The percentage of all manufacturing enterprises in Kent and Medway that are advanced engineering specialists.



**930**

The number of all engineering and manufacturing technologies apprenticeships starts in Kent that were advanced apprenticeships.





# Case studies

**NIM'S FRUIT CRISPS**

Manufacturing healthy snacks from a state-of-the-art British factory in the heart of Kent Nim's Fruit Crisps set up a production facility in Sittingbourne, Kent, and chose the area because of its access to Kent fruit farmers and the transport links to London and Europe. Nimisha uses local products as much as possible and values being able to visit Kent farms to look at produce to ensure it is as fresh as possible. The company's aim is to become the leading healthy snack manufacturer in the UK for both the domestic and export market.

*"The team at Locate in Kent spent a good few months searching for the right premises for us, making sure they met all of our requirements. They also helped us secure funding that we didn't realise we were entitled to."*

**NIMISHA RAJA**  
FOUNDER OF NIM'S FRUIT CRISPS

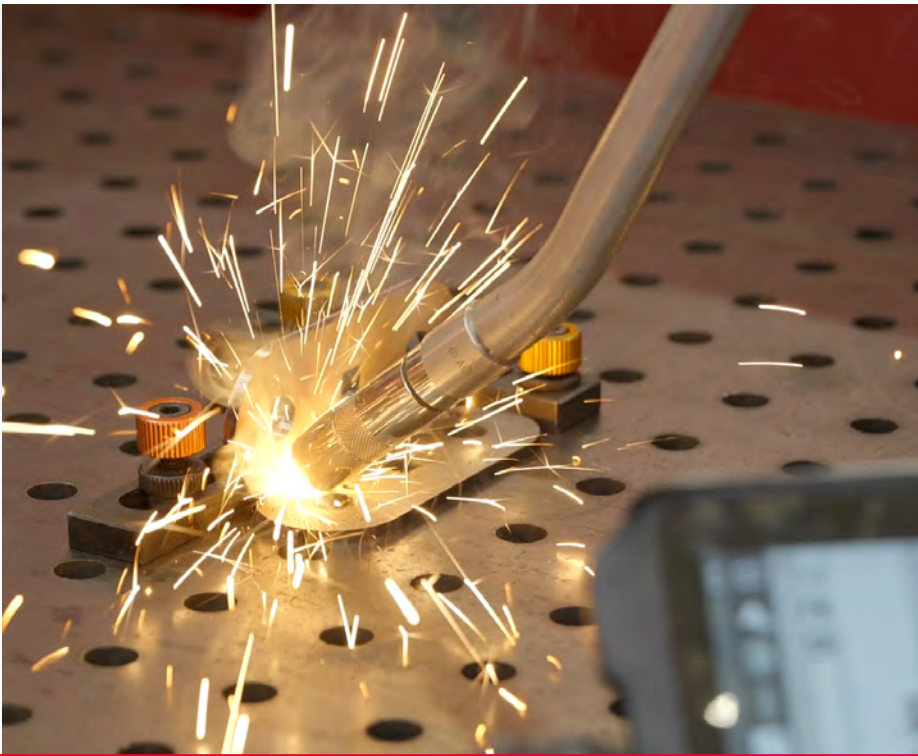


**CONTRACTS ENGINEERING**

Contracts Engineering Ltd (CEL) is a national contract manufacturer that focuses exclusively on manufacturing for clients who are OEM's and TIER I's with a UK factory footprint. They are one of the largest contract manufacturers in the Southeast with plans to be one of the largest in the UK by 2028.

*"Kent has really allowed us to triple the size of our business. From being a hub for manufacturing, it makes it very easy for us to get materials, recruit skilled staff to join the team, and grow our business."*

**CATHERINE BARRATT**, MANAGING DIRECTOR, CONTRACTS ENGINEERING



**BULGARO**

Kent has provided the perfect springboard to catapult Bulgaro's growth into one of the south-east's most successful design and manufacturing interiors companies, counting some of the UK's biggest blue-chip companies among its clients. In 2010, this prestigious luxury brand chose Sittingbourne as the place to locate its first manufacturing facility, with a single 7,000 sq. ft. unit. Thanks to the support of Locate in Kent and Kent County Council, Bulgaro has grown the business to over 30,000 sq. ft. of space.

*"Locate in Kent helped us greatly in our quest with our management staff by introducing a two-month programme which went through all the steps for a manager to become a better one."*

**DEAN RIZOV**  
MANAGING DIRECTOR, BULGARO



**CHAPEL DOWN WINES**

Chapel Down Wines is England's leading wine producer. Today, they are achieving global recognition and part of a UK wine industry worth over £10bn in 2022. In July 2013, the Tenterden-based producer raised £4.35 million through an equity issue, boosting wine and beer production, upgrading systems, and enhancing marketing efforts. The next year, Chapel Down became the first UK company to use crowdfunding, securing over €5 million. This funding supported new vineyards, a winery, a brewery, a visitor attraction, and extended hospitality facilities. Over the past decade, Chapel Down has earned critical acclaim, including producing one of the 50 best wines from around the world for 2024 at the Decanter World Wine Awards. It is a giant in the sector, leasing and sourcing from 1,023 acres of vineyards in the south east of England, making it the largest UK producer with 1.41 million bottles sold in 2022.

*"As the global reputation of England as a wine-making region grows, especially in the sparkling wine category, we have a rare opportunity to establish Chapel Down as a celebrated wine brand of international acclaim."*

**JAMES PENNEFATHER**  
CEO, CHAPEL DOWN





**NIM'S FRUIT CRISPS**  
Sittingbourne  
[www.nimsfruitcrisps.com](http://www.nimsfruitcrisps.com)



**CHAPEL DOWN**  
Tenterden  
[www.chapeldown.com](http://www.chapeldown.com)



**SHICKEN**  
**LONDON**  
**DARTFORD**  
**TOOLBANK**  
**GRAVESHAM**  
**MEDWAY**  
**MAIDSTONE**  
**SEVENOAKS**  
**TUNBRIDGE WELLS**  
**TONBRIDGE & MALLING**  
**ASHFORD**  
**FOLKESTONE**  
**DOVER**  
**THANET**  
**PARIS**

**Swantex**  
**Jardox**  
**W.E. ROBERTS**  
**Leading Edge**  
**HOBARTS**  
**hovat**  
**ATOM GROUP**  
**Insafe**  
**BLACKWOODS CHEESE COMPANY**  
**rhokett**  
**Castacrete**  
**BAE SYSTEMS**  
**UNIVERSITY of GREENWICH**  
**VeeTee**  
**VivoSight**  
**puratos**  
**COOK**  
**ROLEX**  
**QINETIQ**  
**HARBEX**  
**FloPlast**  
**AbBaltis**  
**CROWN IMPERIAL**  
**University of Kent**  
**Canterbury Christ Church University**  
**Jacksons Fencing**  
**NUSTEEL**  
**Wooding**  
**WANTSUM**  
**Cummins**  
**ofp**  
**TOOLMASTERS**  
**KENT CRISPS**  
**PUSTERLA**

**Ebbsfleet International**  
**Sandwich Train Station**  
**Thanet Parkway**  
**Ashford International**  
**Channel Tunnel**

**M25**  
**M26**  
**M2**  
**M20**





## Join us in Kent for the right quality of life

Located on the doorstep to London and the closest part of the UK to mainland Europe, **Kent and Medway** has all the benefits of the capital but with more room to breathe, think and inspire. Easily accessible, competitive on cost, forward looking and full of opportunity. From vibrant seaside towns and stunning countryside to culturally rich urban living, the county is one of the most visited, filmed and photographed locations.

People choose to live in this region for good reason. Access to high quality jobs, extensive transport connections and more space for your money compared to London and other parts of the southeast. With thousands of new homes on the way hand in hand with new job opportunities, demand is being met like never before.

Add in some of the UK's best public and state schools, vibrant cultural scene, restaurants, rich heritage and top visitor attractions it's easy to see why Kent and Medway remains a popular destination that not only provides businesses with the best prospects for success but reflects who they are.



# Access to leading talent

Manufacturers can find qualified employees at a fraction of the London cost when relocating in Kent with three vocational Further Education Colleges, including the only Ofsted Outstanding facility in the country and two green engineering centres with a focus on mechatronics and automation

4

Kent has four universities: **Canterbury Christ Church University**, the **University of Greenwich**, the **University for the Creative Arts** and the **University of Kent**, which is ranked in the top 25 of all universities in the UK.

## THE UNIVERSITY OF KENT

The University of Kent's School of Engineering and the University of Greenwich Faculty of Engineering and Science deliver courses in science, technology, engineering and mathematics at the Medway Campus in Chatham, Kent. Training the engineers of the future right on your doorstep.

Freedman  
Science  
Student  
Hub

## CANTERBURY CHRIST CHURCH UNIVERSITY

According to the 2023 Graduate Outcomes Survey, Canterbury Christ Church is the best university in the UK for graduates in employment. The university has developed the Kent and Medway Engineering, Design, Growth and Enterprise Hub, has added an additional 1,000 graduates into the labour market.

150

There are over **150 state-run secondary schools** in Kent and Medway – offering a range of provision from **selective grammar** and **university technical schools** to **industry sponsored academies**.



# Grants and Funding



**GROWING KENT & MEDWAY**

Growing Kent & Medway offers grants and funding to support innovation and growth in the region's food production, horticulture, and agri-tech sectors. These funds are designed to help businesses develop new technologies, enhance sustainability, and drive economic success. By investing in research and collaboration, Growing Kent & Medway aims to strengthen the local economy and position the region as a leader in sustainable food systems.

[VISIT WEBSITE](#)



**KENT AND MEDWAY BUSINESS FUND**

With a focus on stimulating innovation, job creation, and investment, the Kent and Medway Business Fund offers a range of financing options tailored to meet the diverse needs of local enterprises. Whether it's providing loans for start-ups, assisting with expansion projects, or facilitating access to working capital, the Kent and Medway Business Fund plays a crucial role in empowering businesses to thrive and succeed. By offering accessible and flexible funding solutions, the fund contributes to the resilience and competitiveness of Kent and Medway's business community.

[VISIT WEBSITE](#)



**KENT AND MEDWAY GROWTH HUB**

The Kent and Medway Growth Hub is a vital resource for regional businesses, providing expert advice, support, and networking opportunities to foster economic growth. Situated in the heart of Kent and Medway, the Growth Hub offers tailored guidance to help businesses navigate the complex funding landscape, identify suitable grants, and develop compelling funding applications. Whether it's accessing grants for innovation, expansion, or skills development, the Growth Hub acts as a trusted advisor, connecting businesses with the resources and support they need to secure vital funding and drive success in Kent and Medway's vibrant business community.

[VISIT WEBSITE](#)



**BRITISH BUSINESS BANK**

The British Business Bank plays a pivotal role in supporting the growth and development of businesses across the UK through its diverse range of grant and funding programs. As a government-owned economic development bank, it provides crucial financial support to businesses at various stages of their journey, from start-ups to established enterprises.

[VISIT WEBSITE](#)



# Kent and Medway the right location

**72%**

cheaper  
commercial  
property\*  
*\*compared  
to London*

**1.8 million**  
potential customers

**68**

infrastructure  
& commercial  
development sites



4 universities



Gateway to  
London and  
Europe

**47%**

lower house  
prices\*  
*\*compared  
to London*



17 minutes from  
the capital by train

**70,000 +**

companies already here



350 miles  
of coastline

**Join us in Kent**  
Get in touch today:

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**www** [www.locateinkent.com](http://www.locateinkent.com)

 **Locate  
in Kent**