

South Yorkshire Launches New Program to Boost Tech Startup Innovation and Growth

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The South Yorkshire Mayoral Combined Authority (SYMCA) has launched a new initiative to provide critical support for the region’s tech startups. The “TECH SY” project, funded by SYMCA, is offering an innovative incentive program designed to help early-stage companies validate their business ideas and accelerate their path to market.

The new program offers two distinct support pathways: an **Idea Validation Grant** of up to £2,500 in direct financial support or up to £5,000 worth of specialized idea validation services from a dedicated consultancy. This dual-option approach is designed to provide financial assistance and expert mentoring to ensure the feasibility and success potential of business concepts before significant resources are committed to product development. The funding can be utilized for essential activities such as market research and prototyping.

Alternatively, startups can opt for hands-on mentoring through a strategic partnership with **Trove Ventures**. This collaboration provides access to experienced founders who have successfully built, scaled, and exited their own ventures, along with a robust network of industry experts across the region.

Mayor of South Yorkshire, Oliver Coppard, commented on the initiative, stating, “My job is good growth; building not just a bigger economy, but a better economy, with our businesses at the cutting edge of innovation. I’m delighted we can trial the IVG initiative; grants providing an opportunity to give our backing at an early stage to those innovators, innovations and ideas that show real promise. We’re making a down payment on an exciting future, driving innovation and expanding our economy in South Yorkshire, which I couldn’t be more proud to support.”

Tracey Johnson, Project Director of TECH SY, highlighted the program’s origins. “Insights from our recent South Yorkshire Tech Summit report showed that access to finance was a key barrier for our region’s

startups,” she said. “TECH SY is here to utilize a test-and-learn approach to supporting our region’s ecosystem, and this grant and support program is another way to find out what initiatives work best to stimulate more founders to start their ideas. We’re working with Trove to provide mentorship with founders who can provide incredible value to those who choose to take up their support.”

Chris Dalrymple, Co-founder of Trove Ventures, expressed his enthusiasm for the partnership. “We’re honoured to be supporting the next wave of South Yorkshire tech founders through the Idea Validation Grant programme. At Trove, we’ve built, scaled, and exited startups – now we’re excited to use that experience to help others turn good ideas into great businesses. This is a brilliant initiative for the region’s ecosystem, and we’re proud to be part of it.”

The Idea Validation Programme is now accepting applications until December 19, 2025. However, interested parties are encouraged to apply early as the program may close sooner if all available funding is allocated.