Growth Vouchers Programme — the UK's 15,207-Firm RCT of Subsidised Business Advice, With a Short-Lived Turnover Gain

City Innovation Library · Good practice · United Kingdom

Quality score: 67/100

Evidence strength: Moderate

Summary

UK government RCT that randomly offered 15,207 SMEs vouchers paying 50% of business advice (up to £2,000). Firms using them saw turnover rise 8.2%, but only for about a year, only for marketing advice, with no employment effect and possible displacement.

Key dimensions

Dimension	Score
Evidence of impact / measured results	3/3
Transferability / demonstrated replication	2/3
Scalability	2/3
Sustainability / continuity	1/3
Innovation	3/3
Inclusiveness / equity	1/3
Multi-stakeholder collaboration	2/3

Evaluated by C-NAPSE

Data sources

C-NAPSE web research — accessed 2026-11-18

Department for Business, Innovation & Skills (BIS) with the Behavioural Insights Team — accessed 2026-11-18

LSE CEP Discussion Paper 1977 (Nunez-Chaim, Overman & Riom, 2024) — accessed 2026-11-18

What Works Growth — Lessons from a large RCT in the UK (2024) — accessed 2026-11-18

GOV.UK — Growth Vouchers Programme evaluation, cohort 1 at 6 months (BIS, 2016) — accessed 2026-11-18

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