

The Middle Speaks: Scotland

Growing Together



Narrowing the mid-market conversion gap through technology, talent, and trade

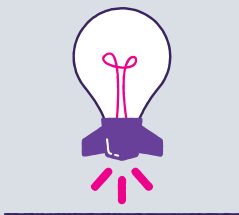
Why now?

Mid-market businesses contribute approximately **£1.2 trillion in turnover and employ 7.3 million people across the UK**, making them a critical driver of growth.

Yet many feel underrepresented in policy discussions and underserved by support designed for SMEs or large corporates.

Drawing on insights from **more than 200 mid-market customers**, this report identifies a conversion gap: firms have proven commercial potential, but often lack the specialist capabilities and resources available to larger corporates. This prevents them from fully converting ambition into growth across **technology, talent and trade**.

Closing this gap requires a joined-up approach from government, industry and business leaders. Coordinated action will help the mid-market unlock growth and strengthen UK productivity, regional economies and international competitiveness.



Tech

Scottish mid-market firms increasingly recognise the need to adopt AI and digital technologies to remain competitive, improve productivity and support better decision-making. However, many remain cautious about implementation, with concerns around security, governance, ethics and where investment should be prioritised: **“We are at the start of the journey with AI”**.



Talent

Despite Scotland’s strong base of higher-level qualifications, firms reported significant shortages across technical, vocational and experienced leadership roles, with employers outside the major cities facing particular difficulties attracting and retaining talent. Businesses called for a more responsive, employer-led skills system, with greater emphasis on vocational training and flexible pathways into work.



Trade

Scottish mid-market firms see access to markets, exports and procurement as major growth opportunities, but complex application processes, supply-chain uncertainty and geopolitical instability continue to constrain them: **“This is probably the biggest storm I have witnessed for many years.”** Mid-market firms also felt overlooked by support focused on Scottish start-ups and scale-ups, and wanted greater awareness of and help accessing existing opportunities.

Key recommendations



Create a distinct growth offer for Scotland’s mid-market through clearer support pathways, better coordination and stronger recognition in policymaking.



Strengthen the capability of Scotland’s business networks to support the mid-market by accelerating AI adoption, leadership development and peer-to-peer learning.

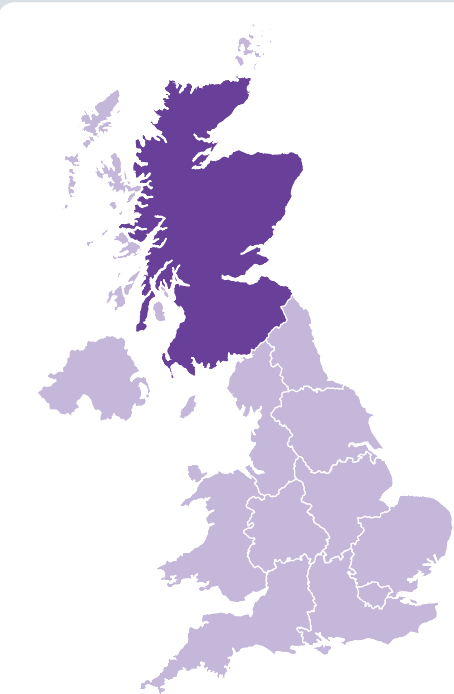


Build a more responsive, employer-led skills system in Scotland that aligns training, apprenticeships and technical education with business needs.



Make it easier for Scottish mid-market firms to access markets by reducing bureaucracy and improving access to procurement, export support and growth finance.

Scotland’s mid-market



With more than **4,400** businesses, **644,000** employees and **£122 billion** in turnover, Scotland’s mid-market is a significant contributor to the Scottish economy¹



Scan the QR code to read report in full.

Growing Together: As the UK’s number one bank for mid-market companies, NatWest Group is championing the businesses that power economic growth across every nation and region of the UK.

Note: (1) Scale Up Institute Survey (2025) of 970 mid-market firms. It uses the Mid-Market Growth Council’s definition of all businesses that have (1) 50 to 499 employees or (2) turnover between £10 million to £100 million.