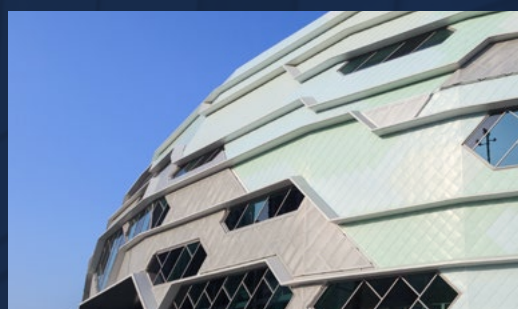




**THE
GLOBAL
CITY**

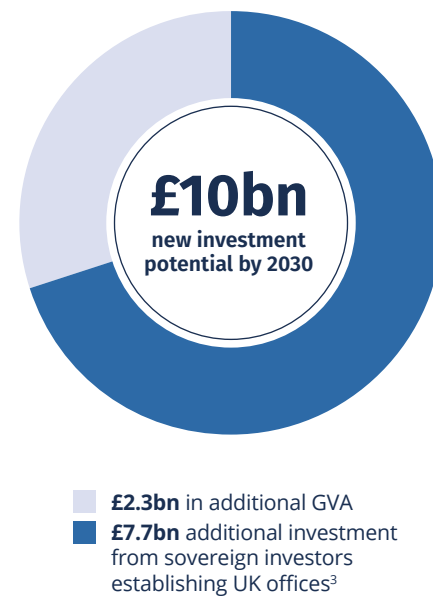
The Future of Financial and Professional Services Investment in the UK

A Strategic Blueprint for a Financial Services Investment Hub and Concierge Service





“We have a generational opportunity to secure £10bn in new investment potential by creating a nationally unified, investor-centric and digitally powered model that ensures prosperity is shared across all nations and regions of the UK.”



Foreword



Chris Hayward
Policy Chairman,
City of London Corporation

The United Kingdom (UK) has long led global finance, offering stability, depth, and innovation.

However, over the last few years, the global macro and competitive landscape has rapidly evolved. The UK has lost market share in financial and professional services (FPS) foreign direct investment (FDI) projects: its share of projects dropped by 4% between 2017 and 2024, while other key financial centres achieved accelerated growth.¹

We must act decisively to renew and enhance our investment offer to the world, to fuel economic growth.

This report provides a blueprint for the next evolution of our financial services (FS) investment attraction strategy. Informed by investor voices, building on the strengths of the UK, and aligned with international best practice, the proposed FS Investment Hub and concierge model presents a generational opportunity.

The FPS sector contributes over £300bn in Gross Value Added (GVA) annually and supports millions of UK jobs,² powering innovation, infrastructure, and national and regional growth. However, global competition for investment is accelerating and to maintain our leadership we must proactively attract the next wave of high-value investment to fuel our growth and ensure prosperity is shared across the country.

The City of London Corporation has led this work with the conviction that we must not only protect the UK's global position as a world-leading financial centre but also actively invest in its next chapter.

This effort has been shaped in close collaboration with HM Treasury, the Office for Investment, regulators, industry, and regional leaders. It builds on the strategic direction set out in our Vision for Economic Growth and the recently announced Modern Industrial Strategy, and reflects the spirit of the Harrington Review, calling for a more investor-facing, responsive and strategically aligned approach.

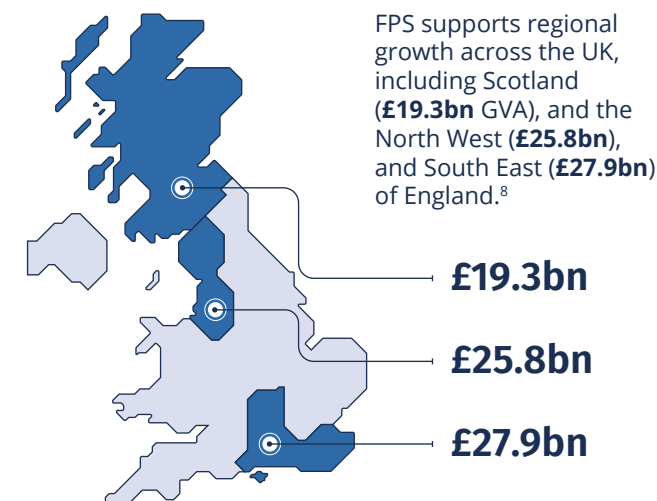
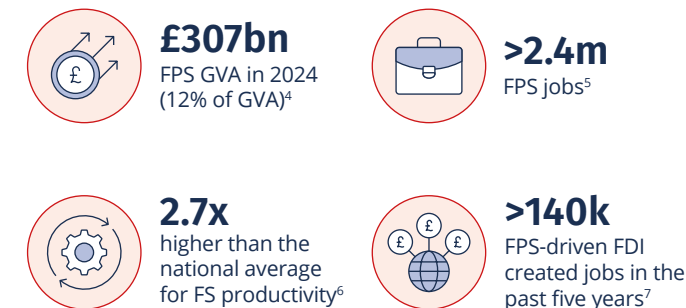
This Hub represents a bold but crucial step forward. We have a generational opportunity to secure £10bn in new investment potential by creating a nationally unified, investor-centric and digitally powered model that ensures prosperity is shared across all nations and regions of the UK.

Through strong partnership across government, regulators, industry, nations and regions, we must act with pace and purpose to deliver this ambition and secure the global competitiveness of the UK and economic growth for our nation.

I invite you all to join us in delivering this, together.

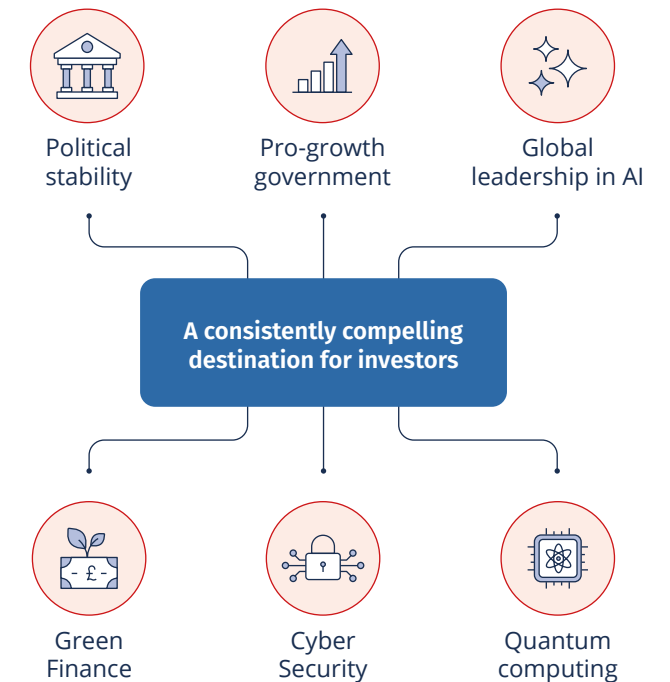
Strategic Importance of Financial and Professional Services Investment to the UK Economy

Financial and professional services are key pillars of the UK economy:

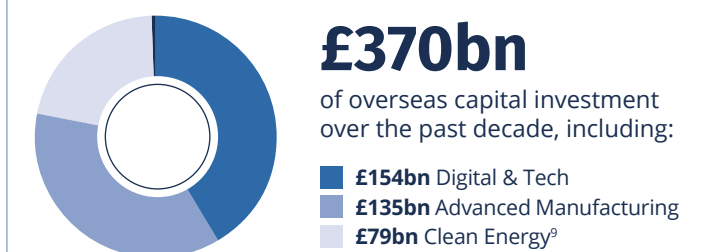


Together, FPS-led FDI and capital investment form a powerful growth engine, supporting jobs, scaling industries, and securing UK leadership in a competitive global economy.

The UK offers a strong foundation for FPS investment:



FPS enables growth in other priority sectors:



Investors now seek certainty, speed, reduced friction, and long-term alignment.

Investors have identified that the UK has a unique opportunity to enhance its offering by taking targeted action to improve regulatory clarity, streamline service delivery, and increase speed of outcomes – with the potential to unlock significant gains.

This builds on the findings of the Harrington Review, which called for a shift to a more investor-centric model that offers clearer, better integrated pathways for investment attraction, and step change in how we attract, convert, and retain high-value investors.

Further, it acknowledges the enhanced offers of other financial centres, which include:

- integrated end-to-end support ('one-stop-shop' models);
- fast-track regulatory approvals and visa incentives;
- digital onboarding and account management;
- visible senior political engagement.

The UK is uniquely positioned to meet this demand by evolving and delivering a modernised, next-generation investment model that increases FS investor outcomes and UK-wide economic growth.

What Investors Value and Global Best Practices

Insights from 200+ stakeholder consultations with investors, industry associations, national and regional investment agencies, and key regulators, identified strong consensus on what the UK can prioritise to enhance its FS investment offering:

Clarity and Predictability

Greater consistency in policy application and proactive regulatory guidance can increase investor trust and confidence.

Seamless Navigation

Clearer points of contact and better UK-wide coordination can reduce friction across the investor journey.

Speed and Responsiveness

Faster query and issue resolution and speed to outcomes.

Proactive Support

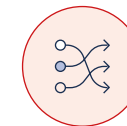
Tailored proactive support not only at market entry but also across the investor journey, including operational, growth and reinvestment, and transition support, can foster stronger investor relationships and better long-term outcomes.

There is significant opportunity to strengthen the UK's offering across the Invest, Operate, Grow, and Transition steps – turning interest into long-term investment.

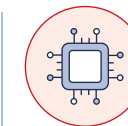
Further, analysis of the investment model features offered by other key international financial centres reinforced that a more investor-friendly environment can be created

by focusing on increased simplicity, responsiveness, and tailored engagement.

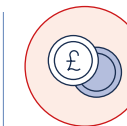
These features are not only more efficient in attracting investment but also enabling these markets to rapidly win market share and include:



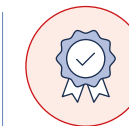
Simplified investor journeys with clear points of contact and proactive market entry and regulatory guidance, and support.



Digital tools that enable easier and faster investment opportunity discovery, and matchmaking.



Upfront co-investment to de-risk market entry and investment.



Building talent pipelines with academia and industry to help investors build high-skilled teams now, and in the future.

Other key financial centres **directly improve** the investor experience, **reduce barriers** to entry, and **increase the likelihood** of reinvestment.

The UK must match – and **ideally exceed** – these standards to meet evolving investor expectations and remain **globally competitive**.

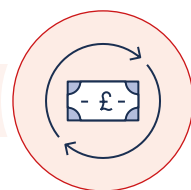
The consultations informed the definition of the investor journey across key steps, comprising:



01

Discover

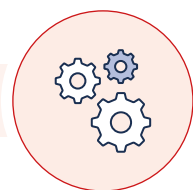
Formulate strategy, identify markets and consider potential investments.



02

Invest

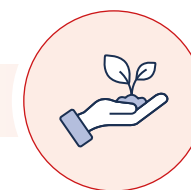
Navigate set up and regulatory requirements and execute on investments.



03

Operate

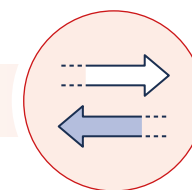
Integrate operations, enable growth and maintain compliance.



04

Grow

Expand, reinvest, shape policy and enhance compliance.



05

Transition

List, sell, transition assets and manage compliance.

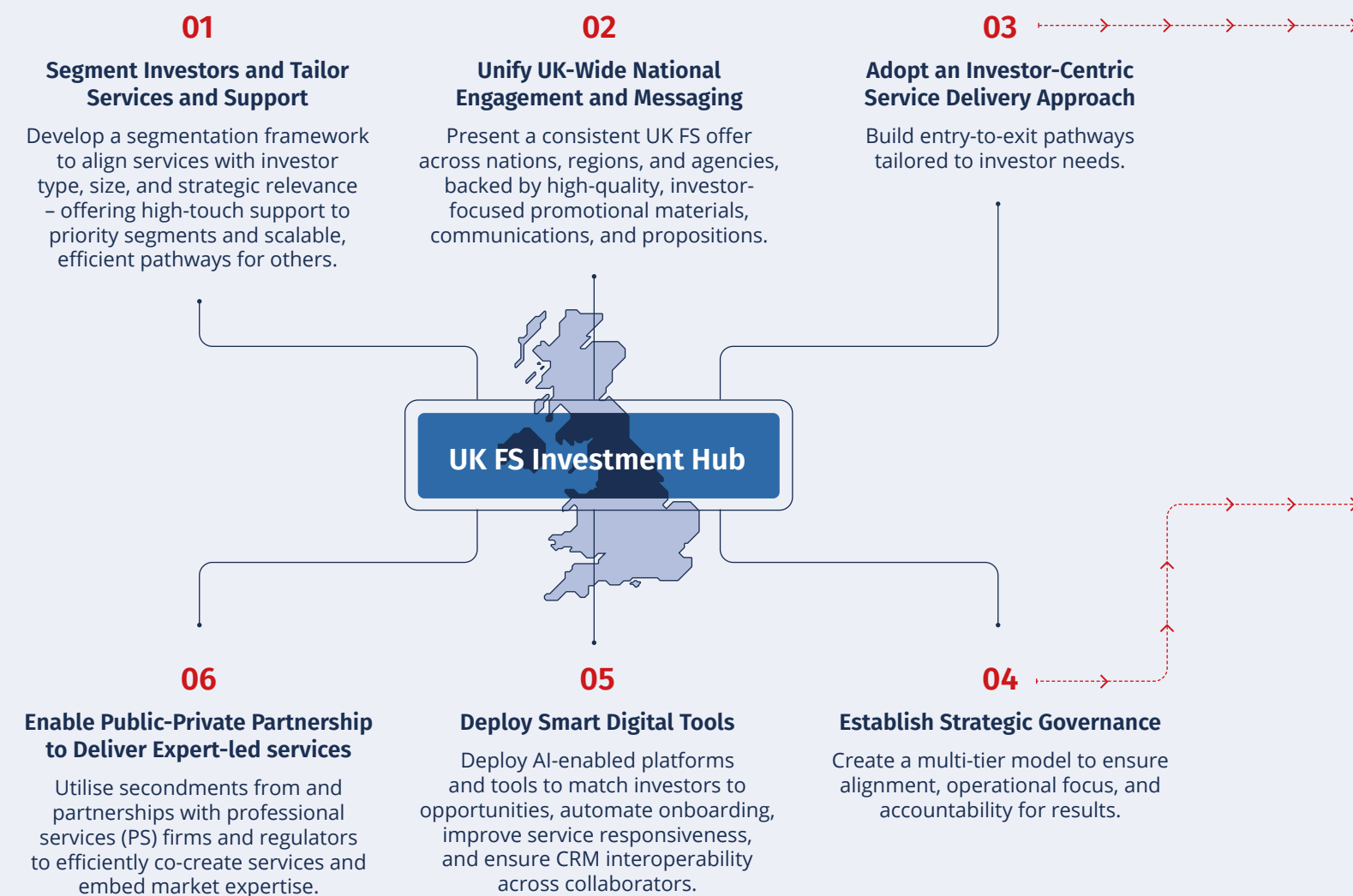
The UK currently focuses **60%** of its investment attraction efforts on **Discover**



“There is significant opportunity to strengthen the UK's offering across the **Invest, Operate, Grow, and Transition** steps – turning interest into long-term investment.”

Recommendations: A UK FS Investment Hub

The City of London Corporation recommends a **transformative next-generation model**: the FS Investment Hub – delivered via public-private partnership and built on six strategic pillars:



- **Refocus service delivery to align with the investor journey.** Transition to an approach that tailors services to investor needs (investor-centric) rather than existing structures (service-centric).
- **Create accessible and clear UK-wide access points.** Offer proactive and consistent relationship management and clear pathways for accessing and navigating services to enhance the investor experience and eliminate fragmentation across nations, regions, and agencies.
- **Create a UK-wide shared narrative.** Develop a UK-wide shared narrative and standards to ensure consistent and seamless engagement across all interactions.
- **Curate, package, and promote investible opportunities.** Define and develop a pipeline of the investible opportunities that can be packaged and presented to investors in line with investor needs – including stage, regulatory considerations, and funding routes – to reduce risk and increase investor confidence.
- **Expand access to growth finance and late-stage capital.** Provide clearer pathways to late-stage capital, including partnerships with growth funds, institutional investors, and IPO readiness support to help scale FS businesses.
- **Establish a dedicated regulatory guidance and support function.** Proactively offer early and clearer guidance and support engaging with the regulatory process, to improve speed, predictability and investor confidence.
- **Expand investment enablement services.** Offer wraparound services such as visa facilitation, compliance assistance, tax support, and business set-up guidance to streamline entry and reduce investor friction.
- **Build talent pipelines to ensure UK-wide skills availability.** Partner with universities and firms to support talent pipelines, graduate placement, and investor access to innovation ecosystems.

- HMT-chaired strategic board, with a reporting line under Minister for Investment as a joint DBT / HMT / No. 10 unit for shared accountability.
- An Advisory Committee, chaired by the City of London Corporation and comprising key public and private stakeholders, to share insights on opportunities and challenges for the Board to consider and address, and drive coordinated action to increase investment.
- An independent Investment Hub Delivery Office, formed through secondments, public-private partnership and better connecting existing services to build and operate the Investment Hub.

These recommendations build on the momentum achieved through existing measures to bolster economic growth.

An enhanced Office for Investment (OfI), working in close collaboration with HM Treasury, UK regulators and the City of London Corporation, has laid the foundations for a more strategic and investor-oriented approach.

The proposed FS Investment Hub should act as the orchestrator of existing functions and services performed

by ecosystem stakeholders, addressing service delivery gaps, improving connectivity, and ensuring investor-centricity, collaboration, and responsiveness across the investor journey.

Many of the services and capabilities required to deliver on our recommendations already exist – they must now be better integrated, consistently promoted, digitised, and scaled through secondments and public-private partnership, bringing the best of the UK to the world.

Implementation Considerations

Delivering the proposed UK FS Investment Hub will require a phased, adaptive approach underpinned by strong public-private partnership.

Secondments from regulators and PS firms will be essential to ensure services reflect real-world investor needs and align across institutional boundaries.

Implementation should follow four structured phases:

PHASE 01

Establish:

Launch core investor-facing services, including account management and regulatory guidance.

PHASE 02

Transform:

Strengthen digital platforms and ecosystem integration to streamline investor and opportunity engagement.

PHASE 03

Differentiate:

Scale full enablement services to cover business setup, compliance, growth finance, and talent support.

PHASE 04

Innovate:

Embed continuous improvement and deepen ecosystem coordination.

Performance tracking and impact measurement, with regular reporting, must be embedded from the outset – measuring FS investment outcomes, investor satisfaction, regional impact, regulatory turnaround, and service efficiency – to drive continuous improvement and long-term success.

Methodology Summary

This report's recommendations were informed by a comprehensive methodology combining qualitative and quantitative analysis, including:

- Stakeholder Interviews: more than 200 engagements with investors, industry associations, national and regional partners, and key regulators.
- Investor Segment Definition and Prioritisation: Classification and prioritisation of investor types by strategic value, risk appetite, and sector alignment.
- Investor Journey and Service Audit and Mapping: Development of an investor-centric journey and diagnostic review of current offerings across the end-to-end journey.
- International Benchmarking: Comparative analysis of investor services by key investor journey steps from top global markets.
- Co-Design Workshops: Collaborative sessions with public and private stakeholders to co-create and validate our recommendations.
- Investment Analysis: FDI and capital investment trends analysis and estimates of gains from proposed changes to investment attraction approach.

The analysis and design was supported by and performed in collaboration with our knowledge partners Global Growth Partners and OCO Global.

References

1. Knowledge partner analysis based on fDi Markets data.
2. City of London Factsheet, May 2025 www.theglobalcity.uk/insights/col/city-statistics-briefing
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4. ONS, GDP output approach - low level aggregates 2024 data (2025 release) in City of London Factsheet, May 2025 <https://www.theglobalcity.uk/insights/col/city-statistics-briefing>
5. ONS, Business Register and Employment Survey 2023 data (2024 release) in City of London Factsheet, May 2025 <https://www.theglobalcity.uk/insights/col/city-statistics-briefing>
6. ONS, Annual Output per hour worked by section-level industry aggregations, Current price (CP) in GBP, 2023 data (2025 release).
7. Knowledge partner analysis based on fDi Markets data and ONS employment multipliers 2019 (2024 release). Takes into account direct and indirect jobs.
8. ONS, Regional gross value added by industry 2023 data (2025 release).
9. Knowledge partner analysis based on Pitchbook: Overseas Family Office, Sovereign Wealth Fund, PE & VC Investments into the UK by Industry (2014 – 2024).

Contact us at:
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Front cover shows: (L-R, top-bottom)

The City of London skyline, Birmingham
- City Council Office Town Hall, Belfast -
Lagan Weir Pedestrian and Cycle Bridge,
A busy city street in the UK, Manchester
- Millennium Bridge at Salford Quays,
Leeds Arena, Cardiff Central Library,
Edinburgh - Princes Street

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