

# Education broadband supplier raises £1m from regional fund

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**A company which provides broadband and cloud services to UK schools has secured £1m from NPIF II - Mercia Debt Finance, which is managed by Mercia and part of the Northern Powerhouse Investment Fund II (NPIF II), and Mercia's SME Loans fund.**

It will provide Talk Straight with additional working capital to support its growth following a buy-out of the business.

The buy-out has given control of the firm to David Tindall, while enabling Timothy Sedgwick - who retired five years ago - to realise his investment.

The company, which is based in Ilkley and employs 70 staff, supplies over 2,500 schools and academies using its own cloud-based services which enables it to maintain strict controls over the flow of traffic and content.

It was founded in 2005 by Tindall and Sedgwick and initially provided internet phone services to businesses.

However following changes to the rules on school broadband, the pair saw the opportunity to offer a specialist service and schools now make up over 90% of its client base.

Talk Straight has been growing steadily in recent years, with turnover increasing by 15% to almost £11m in the year to May 2024.

The NPIF II funding will enable it to bolster its team with the creation of around six new jobs and expand its sales and marketing activities.

Tindall, CEO, said: “Traditionally school broadband was provided by local authorities but increasingly they are pulling out of the market and schools can now shop around for the best deal.

“Talk Straight has already built a reputation as a leading supplier to the education sector. This funding will enable us to continue our growth and pursue our aim to become the largest provider of broadband to schools in the UK.”

Andy Heaton, of Mercia Debt, said: “Talk Straight has been expanding steadily in recent years.

“As more schools turn to independent suppliers, the market is growing and as the company currently supplies 10% of schools, there is huge potential. We are pleased to be able to support David and the team to help them take advantage of the opportunities ahead.”

Lizzy Upton, senior manager at British Business Bank, added: “The move from local authority supplied school broadband to independent suppliers has driven a period of high growth in the industry.

“The NPIF II investment will help Talk Straight to create new employment opportunities and boost its marketing capabilities, demonstrating how NPIF II can unlock business potential and create jobs in the local area.”

***Source: [www.thebusinessdesk.com](http://www.thebusinessdesk.com)***

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