



Social Impact Report

2020 - 2021



Opening thoughts

from our Chief Executive



**Stephen
Deakin**

I am delighted to share our latest social impact report for the 2020 – 2021 financial year.

The past year has been one of the most challenging in recent history as our country grappled to contain Covid-19 and businesses were plunged into survival mode due to the chronic unpredictability of the pandemic and its unprecedented interruption to normal trading conditions.

I am incredibly proud that our commitment to supporting small businesses in their time of need shone through with a record year of lending. BCRS saw its lending increase by 47 per cent year-on-year to £13.3 million, which crucially supported the survival of 130 local businesses and protected a whopping 1,776 jobs.

And yet despite the challenges, by providing SMEs with the funding the need to survive or grow, BCRS also helped to create 294 jobs and generate an extra £71 million of value in the West Midlands economy. This means that for every £1 lent, we generated an additional £5.21 of additional value to the local economy.

The strength and resilience of our local SMEs this year has been truly incredible and has reinforced my long-held belief that they are a force for social good in our local communities and the backbone of our economy, which is why we believe that no viable business should go unsupported.

I hope you enjoy reading this report as much as I did.

A year in which we pledged our unequivocal support to delivering crucial funding to businesses impacted by the Covid-19 pandemic.



Support During Coronavirus

BCRS was proud to be one of the first lenders in the country to go live with the **Coronavirus Business Interruption Loan Scheme (CBILS)** in April 2020 as an accredited delivery partner for the British Business Bank.

Despite being an SME itself and facing the same challenges as the businesses it supports, BCRS stepped up its game and worked tirelessly to support 43 businesses in April 2020 alone.

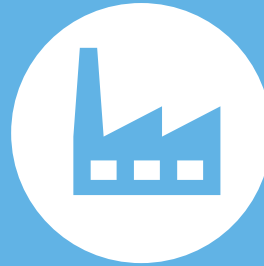
Plus, we rapidly implemented new technology to ensure that all applicants could enjoy a virtual, Covid-safe loan process.

Quick-fire stats



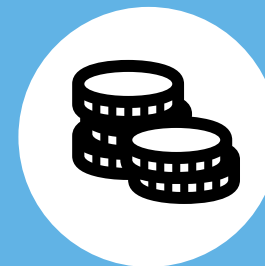
£13.3m

lent



130

businesses supported



£71.1m

value added to the West Midlands economy*



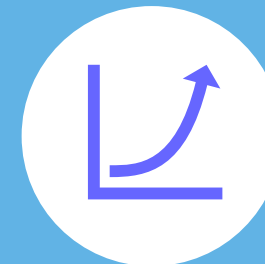
1,776

jobs safeguarded



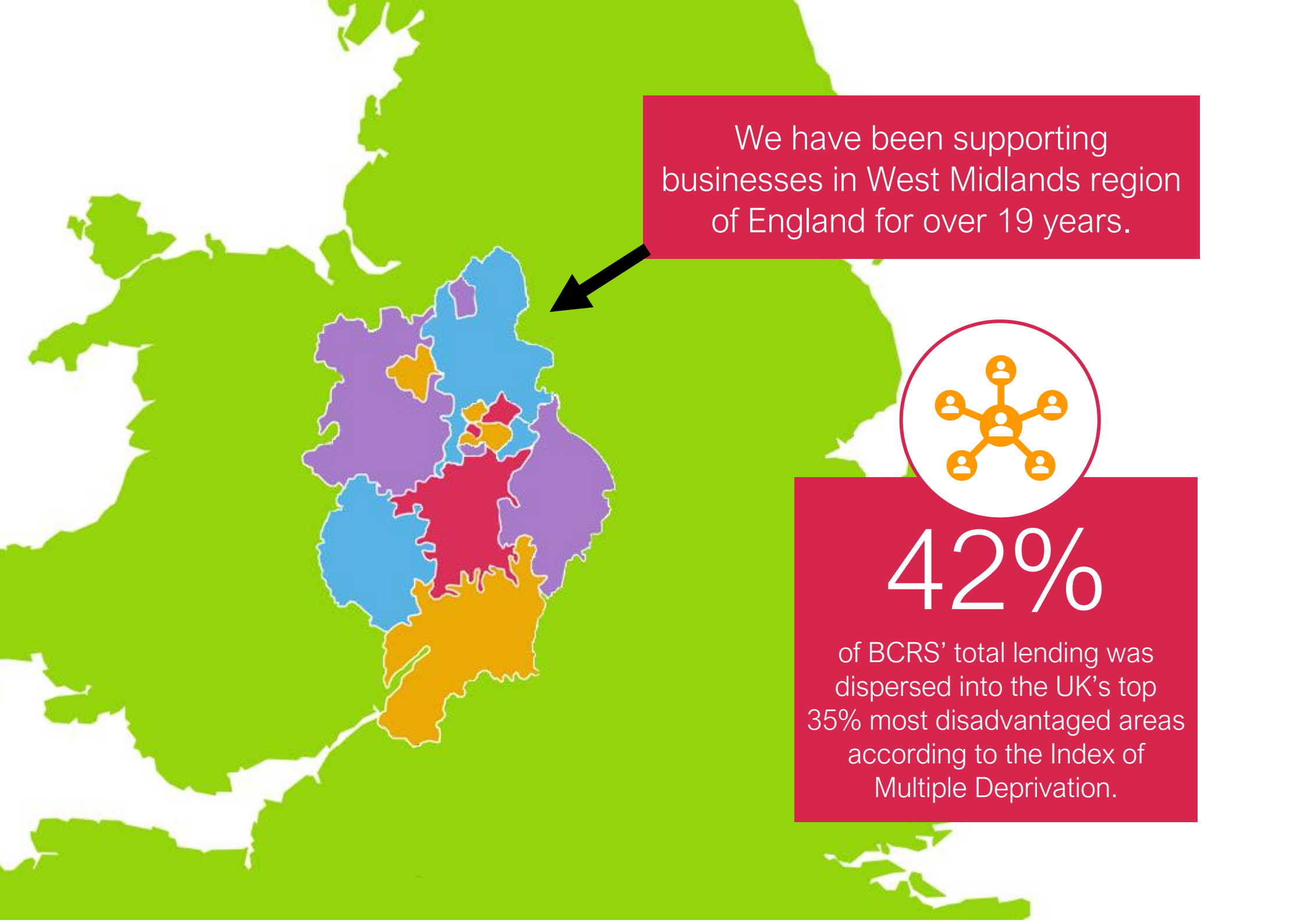
294

jobs created



£5.32

of additional value generated in the West Midlands economy for every £1 lent.



We have been supporting businesses in West Midlands region of England for over 19 years.



42%

of BCRS' total lending was dispersed into the UK's top 35% most disadvantaged areas according to the Index of Multiple Deprivation.

Lending by Area

Area	Number of Loans	Percentage
Birmingham & Solihull	27	19%
Black Country	35	24%
Coventry & Warwickshire	11	8%
Gloucestershire	5	3%
Herefordshire	0	0%
Other	10	7%
Staffordshire	26	18%
Stoke-on-Trent	4	3%
Telford & Shropshire	11	8%
Worcestershire	14	10%
TOTAL	143	100%

Lending Breakdown

£13.3m lent

£6.21m

via Community Investment
Enterprise Facility (CIEF)

£6.56m

via the Midlands Engine
Investment Fund (MEIF)

£576k

via BCERS
Funds

£125k

lent to start-up
businesses



2

start-ups
supported

Sectors Supported

We are proud to support most industry sectors across the West Midlands. The top ten sectors we support by value are as follows:

Sector	Lent, £	% of 2020/21 lending
Manufacturing	£1,520,000	11%
Wholesale & Distribution	£1,288,002	10%
Construction	£1,186,000	9%
Retail	£848,001	6%
Professional Services	£805,001	6%
Food Industry	£755,001	6%
IT	£650,000	5%
Motor Trade	£645,001	5%
Training/ Education	£580,000	4%
Professional Services	£525,000	4%

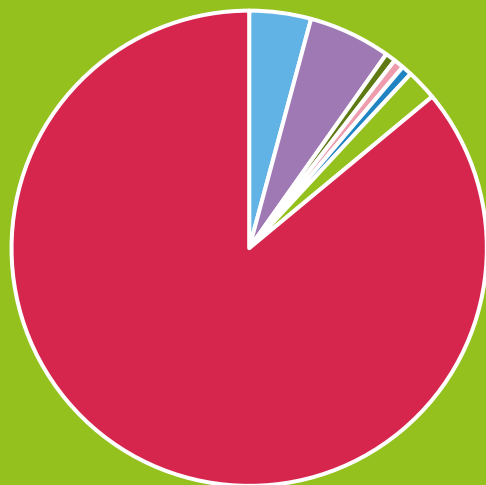


Demographics



■ 25-34 ■ 35-44 ■ 45-54 ■ 55-64 ■ 65+

Age Range	%	No. of Loans	Amount Lent
25-34	13%	19	£1,390,002
35-44	23%	33	£3,133,005
45-54	36%	51	£5,068,001
55-64	20%	29	£2,841,002
65+	8%	11	£917,002



■ Asian ■ Asian British
■ Black ■ Caribbean
■ Other Ethnic Group ■ Prefer not to say

Ethnicity	%	No of Loans	Amount Lent
Asian	4%	6	£573,000
Asian British	6%	8	£695,001
Black	<1%	1	£100,000
Caribbean	<1%	1	£130,000
Other Ethnic Group	<1%	1	£150,000
Prefer not to say	2%	3	£300,000
White	86%	123	£11,401,011



■ Female ■ Male

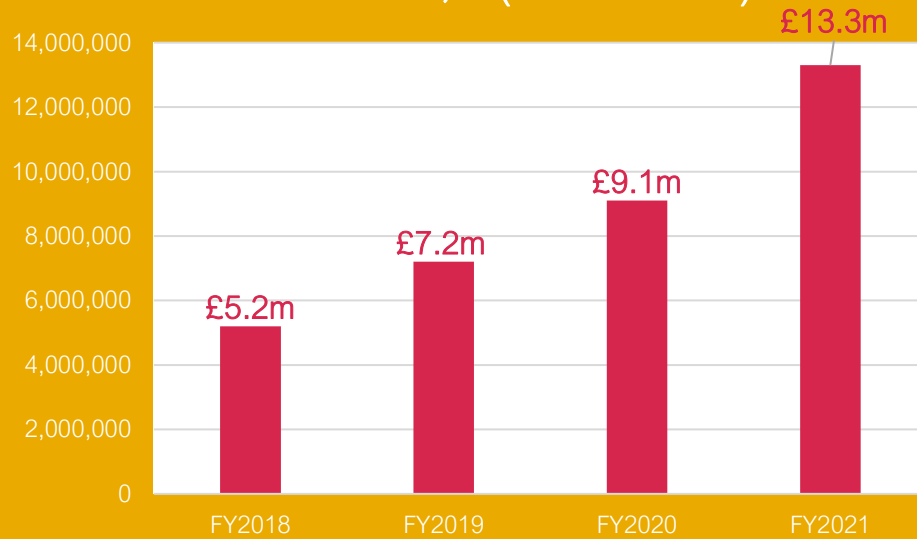
Gender	%	No. of Loans	Amount Lent
Female	17%	25	£2,312,001
Male	83%	118	£11,037,011

Over the Years

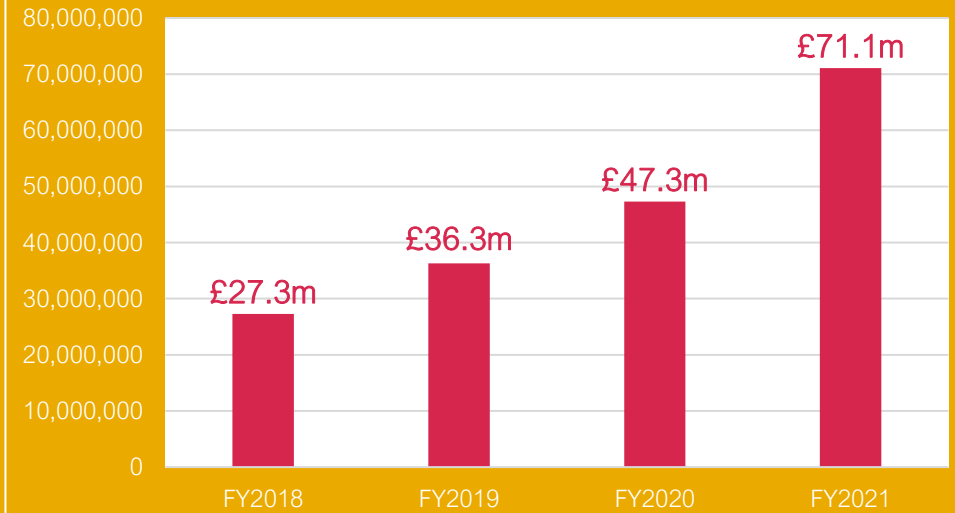
As part of our mission to increase support for SMEs based in the West Midlands that are unable to access finance from traditional lenders, we are proud to have **increased our lending by 156 per cent** since 2018.

As a business lender dedicated to intentional social and economic impact, our economic impact has **increased by 160 per cent** since 2018, while the number of jobs safeguarded has **risen by a massive 264 per cent**. There has been an understandable fall in the number of jobs created this year due to the impact of the Coronavirus pandemic.

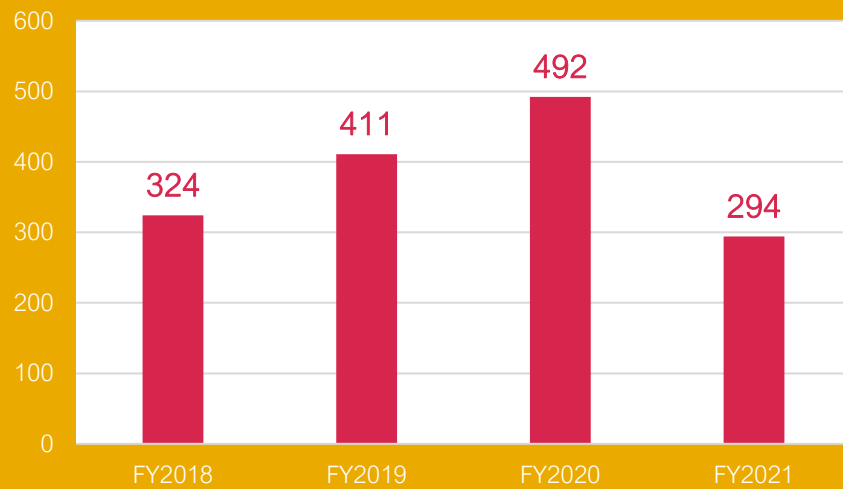
Amount Lent, £ (2018 - 2021)



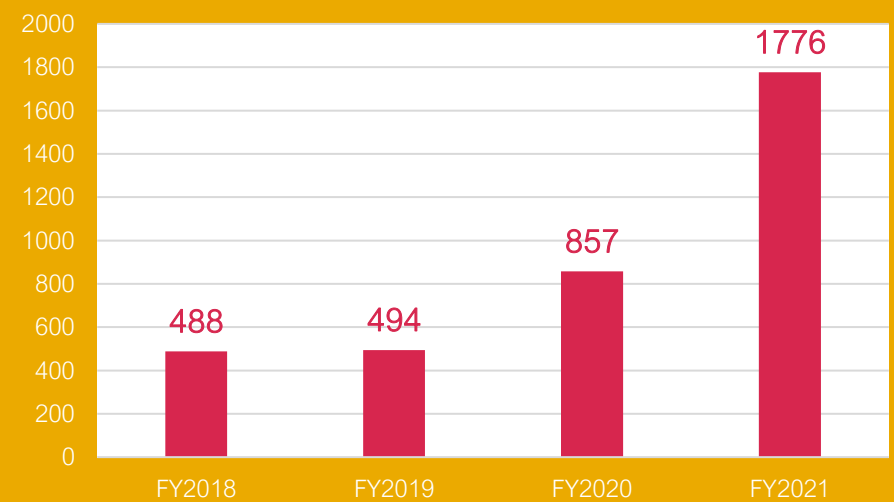
Economic Impact (2018 - 2021)



Jobs Created (2018 - 2021)



Jobs Safeguarded (2018 - 2021)



We Are a 5 ★ Lender

Over the past year, we are pleased to have built a strong collection of outstanding Trustpilot reviews. We see this as one of the best methods of assessing the success of BCRS Business Loans – by having a positive impact on our customers' lives, demonstrating the belief we have in them and helping them achieve their dreams and ambitions.

We have a Trust Score of 4.9 out of 5.

★ Trustpilot



We are delighted to work with BCRS

Their team are very helpful, they understand business and SME needs, especially when businesses require capital to grow and employ additional staff.

★ Trustpilot



Can't recommend BCRS enough

During a tough time for my business, they managed to approve and pay a loan request extraordinarily quickly. It's a pleasure to work with them.

★ Trustpilot

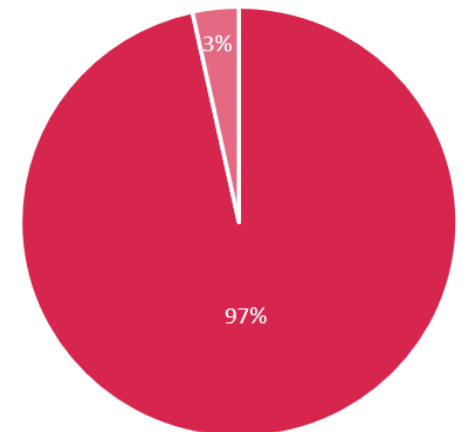


Great service and advice

Great support during what has been a difficult time for our business due to Covid-19. BCRS was professional and easy to deal with, taking us through the process with relative ease.

Breakdown of Reviews

- Excellent - 5 star reviews
- Very good - 4 star reviews



UN Sustainability Goals

As a Community Benefit Society, BCRS Business Loans understands that small businesses play a crucial role in supporting inclusive and sustainable growth and are a force for social good in the communities they serve.

The United Nation Sustainable Development Goals act as a blueprint to achieve a bright future for us all. Whilst BCRS is unable to fulfil all goals due to retaining a deliberate focus purely on finance, here are some of the ways we are proud to support the sustainable development goals:



End poverty in all its forms everywhere.

BCRS is committed to lending into the most deprived areas of the UK, which accounted for 42% of our lending last financial year. Providing funding to support the growth of SMEs enables BCRS to facilitate job creation and improve job security, which is essential in reducing poverty.



Achieve gender equality and empower all women and children.

We believe in championing female-led business and empowering women to be successful business leaders. We do this by providing the finance they need to succeed, raising awareness by running social media campaigns such as #ChoosetoChallenge and practicing what we preach in our own team. We are proud that our Operations & Marketing Director Sarah Moorhouse is Chair of the Black Country Women in Leadership group.



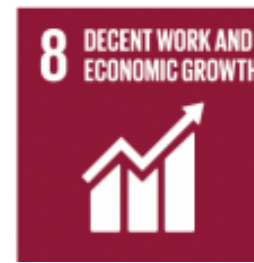
Access to affordable, reliable, sustainable and modern energy for all.

As a Co-operative ourselves, BCRS is passionate about supporting co-operative sustainable energy projects. Offering a scheme whereby BCRS invests £1,000 of withdrawable share capital in such organisations, we have recently invested in Ludlow Hydro and Community Energy Birmingham.



Build resilient infrastructure, promote inclusive and sustainable industrialisation, consumption and production, and foster innovation.

By delivering affordable business loans, BCRS is proud to be enable small businesses to invest in long term strategies that foster innovation and embed more efficient consumption and production techniques. Funding from BCRS gives the people with the ideas the means to innovate and grow.



Promote sustained, inclusive and sustainable economic growth, full and productive employment and decent work for all.

Financial exclusion continues to create significant barriers to growth and long-term prosperity in communities across the UK. Funding from BCRS is a key enabler of sustainable economic development, recognising how important SMEs are in supporting economic prosperity and meaningful employment,



Reduce inequality within and among countries.

BCRS is a fund manager for regional funds such as the Midlands Engine Investment Fund (MEIF) and Community Investment Enterprise Facility (CIEF), which have been established to address the regional access to finance imbalances in the UK and achieve the government's Levelling Up agenda.



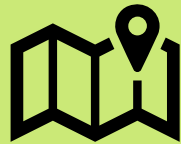
BCRS actively encourages volunteering within its team to achieve goals that aren't necessarily accomplished through our normal lending activity. For example, Tony Wood, our head of credit, is currently volunteering at The Canal & River Trust and dedicates an afternoon per month to helping the charity complete maintenance work.

Becoming More Sustainable

Introducing long-term hybrid working patterns will enable us to reduce emissions traditionally released by commuting into the office five day per week.



We are proud that in financial year 20/21, 80% of our suppliers were located within 50 miles of our head office in Wolverhampton.



We launched online document signing software Docusign which has reduced our paper consumption and eliminated emissions released when travelling to sign-up meetings.



The staff team are encouraged to recycle using the provided paper and plastic recycling bins in our office to reduce the amount of waste that ends up in landfill.



We will reduce the use of plastics for marketing or promotional purposes; aiming to purchase environmentally friendly alternatives instead.



Due to our new hybrid working patterns, we have already reduced our office size by half to cut unnecessary energy consumption.

Lending In Action



Trades and Labourers

Trades and Labourers, a multi-disciplinary construction company, secured a £150,000 loan to kickstart growth plans, safeguard four jobs and create an additional ten jobs during the term of the loan after having to scale back its operations during the first Coronavirus lockdown.

Lynn Sanders, Managing Director of the firm, said:

“With new funding in place, the company intends to continue fulfilling existing contracts that were previously on hold, whilst also having the working capital required to secure new contracts in the coming months.”

Loan amount	Sector	Area	Jobs safeguarded	Jobs created	Economic Impact	UN Sust. Goals
£150,000	Construction	Staffordshire	4 jobs	10 jobs	£810,000	

Rapid Retail

Rapid Retail, Europe's leading supplier of bespoke modular retail units secured £98,000 business funding to help fulfil pre-existing orders and protect jobs during the Coronavirus pandemic.

Nick Daffern, Managing Director of Rapid Retail, said:

“We are fortunate to have entered this pandemic with a very strong order pipeline and a loyal customer base. Although the lockdown period has inevitably affected our business, funding means we can put Covid-safe measures in place, so our team can fulfill pre-existing orders and continue to focus on the growth of our business in the third and fourth quarter of this financial year.”

Loan amount	Sector	Area	Jobs safeguarded	Jobs created	Economic Impact	UN Sust. Goals
£98,000	Installations	Worcestershire	14 jobs	1 job	£529,200	



LearnPlay Foundation

LearnPlay Foundation is a creative digital media and training company. Securing £100,000 allowed the company to safeguard 57 jobs and implement alternative ways of delivering interrupted contracts during the pandemic.

Managing Director Ro Hands said

“As well as being committed to making a difference to people’s lives, LearnPlay now houses a successful media, programming and promotional task force, working with the likes of Tesco, the Highways Agency and local shops.

“Traditionally being a face-to-face service, we will now focus on growing our remote offering by developing training sessions and assessments that can be conducted virtually.”



Loan amount	Sector	Area	Jobs safeguarded	Jobs created	Economic Impact	UN Sust. Goals
£100,000	Training/ Education	Wolverhampton	56 jobs	31 jobs	£540,000	<div>4 QUALITY EDUCATION</div> <div>5 GENDER EQUALITY</div> <div>10 REDUCED INEQUALITIES</div>

BCRS in the Community

As a Community Benefit Society ourselves, we like to support local projects and initiatives that are going to benefit the areas we cover. These range from raising money for charity, offering volunteering opportunity during work time and investing in local community-led co-operatives. Here's a snapshot of what we've supported in the past year.



We are proud to support three grassroots football teams in our local communities. Wyrley Panthers is an 11-a-side girls football team based in Great Wyrley, plus Worcester City FC's Under-18s and reserves youth football teams.



We extend our support to local charities being hit hard by the pandemic, whose services have been so vital during this time. We held three virtual charity quiz' raising over £1800 for local charities in response to their covid-19 appeal.



BCRS actively encourages volunteering within its team to support the local community. Tony Wood, our head of credit, currently dedicates an afternoon per month to help The Canal & River Trust complete important maintenance work.

Final Thoughts

from our Chief Executive

As a Community Benefit Society that was founded in 2002 upon co-operative principles, I think this report highlights that social and economic impact is at the heart of everything we do at BCRS Business Loans. Not only this but we are committed to supporting businesses in their time of need, actioning the levelling up agenda and directing our lending towards under-served communities, geographies and areas.

At the time of writing this report, BCRS became one of the first alternative lenders to be accredited as a delivery partner for the Recovery Loan Scheme (RLS), as we continue to support the growth and recovery of small businesses as our economy uncoils.

We would like to take this opportunity to thank the British Business Bank, Big Society Capital, Triodos Bank UK, Social Investment Scotland, Unity Trust Bank and The Co-operative Bank for their unwavering support. Thanks to the successful relationships BCRS has with these funding partners, we are able to support businesses across the West Midlands with the Midlands Engine Investment Fund (MEIF) and the Community Investment Enterprise Facility (CIEF).

I would also like to say a special thank you to the small but incredibly mighty team at BCRS for working around the clock to support as many businesses as we possibly could in such challenging circumstances, when we were all adapting to working from home and rapidly implementing new technology to deliver our updated Covid-safe virtual loan process. I also need to say a special thank you to our supportive and constructive Board, who went above and beyond to share valuable advice and feedback during such an unprecedented time.

As a proud member of Responsible Finance, I would also like to thank them for their ongoing support for our sector, which has been incredibly welcome this year.

Finally, we would like to take this opportunity to thank our customers and introducers. You all contribute to the success of BCRS and we greatly appreciate your continued support.



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@B_C_R_S



BCRS Business Loans



Supported by the
Regional Growth Fund



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The Midlands Engine Investment Fund project is supported financially by the European Union using funding from the European Regional Development Fund (ERDF) as part of the European Structural and Investment Funds Growth Programme 2014-2020 and the European Investment Bank