



# IMPACT REPORT

## 2024-2025



# FOREWORD

**STEPHEN DEAKIN, CHIEF EXECUTIVE**

**In 2002, BCRS Business Loans was established as a non-profit distributing co-operative lender to support the growth of small and medium sized businesses based in the West Midlands with a dedicated business loan fund. Since 2023, BCRS has also been operating in Wales.**

BCRS is committed to lending to viable businesses making a positive contribution to the social, environmental or economic wellbeing of the West Midlands, surrounding areas and Wales, and that have been unable to secure funding through mainstream lenders. As a Community Development Finance Institution (CDFI) its purpose is to provide access to finance to enable local businesses to grow and prosper.

We provide loans from £10,000 to £250,000 through a number of funds including our own.

In April 2025 we reached the milestone of £100 million lent, since our inception. This is a testament to our unwavering commitment to supporting businesses that struggle to access mainstream finance. This is estimated to have generated an additional value of £518m to the areas we serve.

Behind this figure over 1,500 businesses have grown, creating jobs and prosperity in their communities. This achievement reflects the dedication of our entire team, old and new. As a business with a strong heritage, we are proud to continue expanding our reach, supporting businesses across the Midlands and Wales.

2024/2025 was one of our best years of lending in our history, with almost £10 million lent to businesses across the West Midlands, surrounding areas and Wales, a growth of over 70% in both value and number compared to the previous year.

We were pleased to hear the announcement of two new programmes to support the growth of the CDFI sector in November 2024 - £150 million of funding via the British Business Bank's Community ENABLE Funding programme supported by Department for Business and Trade, and £4 million of support via the JP Morgan Chase's Building Foundations, Accelerating Growth Programme. BCRS plans to play its part in both of these schemes.

With growing support and investment in the CDFI sector, there's lots to be excited about.

I am extremely grateful for the support of the BCRS team, our board, all of our funders, our members and Responsible Finance.

I look forward to the future and what it holds for small and medium-sized businesses, and how the committed team at BCRS can make a difference in supporting many more businesses to grow.

# 2024/2025

## OUR IMPACT

### Living Wage Employer

We are delighted to announce that BCRS Business Loans is now an accredited Living Wage Employer. This means that every member of staff working for us will earn at least the real Living Wage - it's been this way for a very long time, but now it's official.

Nearly 16,000 organisations, including us, voluntarily choose to pay the real Living Wage because we believe that everyone needs a decent standard of living to thrive.

This commitment applies to **not** only directly employed staff but also to our third party contracted staff.

We are really proud of this commitment.

### Fundraising to help build a kids village

We've announced Kids' Village as our chosen charity of the year.

BCRS Business Loans is aiming to raise £3,000 through a series of fundraising activities to help support the UK's first respite holiday village just for children with critical illness.

Kids' Village was uniquely founded by a family who know exactly what the pain and worry feels like when you have a child with a life-threatening illness.

Find out more about [Kids' Village](#) and make [donation](#).

### Additional support for our communities

BCRS are pleased to be in a position to be able to allocate 10% of our 2024/25 surplus funds to support other organisations that share our values, align with the society's objects and will make impact in the communities they serve.

We are committed to making this an annual contribution when surplus funds are available.

**£100M**  
**LENT TO**  
**1,594**  
**BUSINESSES**  
**IN OUR 23 YEAR**  
**HISTORY**

# SUPPORTING GOOD CAUSES

Every 10 minutes, someone hears the words “you have breast cancer”. That's why BCRS chose to support Breast Cancer Now. Last Year, we raised over £6,000 to help support research and support services.

Breast Cancer Now's world-class researchers are working in labs across the UK and Ireland to create a world where the words "breast cancer" aren't met with fear - building a brighter future for everyone affected by breast cancer.

And because over 600,000 people are living with or beyond the disease, Breast Cancer Now are there with support for today, too.

The money raised is enough to fund both the following:

- £3,200 could pay for 2 weeks of research. Research is key to a future where everyone with breast cancer lives, and is supported to live well. Every week in the lab helps get us closer to that future.
- £1,000 could pay for 10 people to go to Living with Secondary Breast Cancer sessions. These group sessions are a space for people with incurable secondary breast cancer. They'll get expert information and meet other people going through the same thing.





# SUPPORTING LOCAL COMMUNITIES

## Backing young Welsh Surfing star

Josie Hawke is making her mark on the worldwide surfing scene and we're proud to be supporting her.

14-year-old Josie Hawke, from Newgale in Pembrokeshire, has been an avid surfer since she first dipped her toes into the sport at age ten. Having competed in competitions across the UK and Europe, she now has her sights set on a place in the GB Progression Squad.

We're also sponsoring the Welsh Surfing Federation (WSF), supporting a number of events and initiatives, including the main event in the Welsh watersport calendar – Welsh National Surfing Championships.

## Supporting Wales' Rygbi Gogledd Cymru (RGC)

We are proud to support north Wales' Rygbi Gogledd Cymru (RGC) as the club seeks to further harness and grow rugby talent within the region.

RGC is the regional representative team for the North Wales Rugby Development Region. It runs an established emerging player pathway, which has successfully developed the likes of Sam Wainwright and Sean Lonsdale and looks to develop many more players for the national team, and professional game, in the years to come.

## Cardiff City FC Foundation

Established in 2009, Cardiff City FC Community Foundation is the community arm and official charity of Cardiff City FC. The Foundation uses the inspiration of Cardiff City FC to change lives and transform communities.

We were proud to sponsor their initiative to work with local schools whose students will collaborate in teams to design a new sponsored football kit for Cardiff City Football Club.

In addition to the design process, the students were able to navigate key financial considerations to ensure a profitable and sustainable product.



# STATISTICS SNAPSHOT

£9.9m 

**Lent**

124 

**Businesses Supported**

£5.17 

**of additional value  
generated in areas we  
operate for every £1 lent**

317 

**Jobs  
Created**

£51.2m 

**Value added to the  
communities we serve\***

889 

**Jobs  
safeguarded**

\*Our economic impact statistics are calculated using the Responsible Finance Economic Impact Calculator. The calculator was originally prepared by the Centre for Business in Society (CBIS), Coventry University with assistance from James Medhurst, ICF International, with the support of Citi. It was updated in 2019 following a review by Marc Cowling, Brighton Business School, Richard Roberts, Aston University and Steve Walker, Aston Reinvestment Trust (ART).

# SUPPORTING UNDERSERVED COMMUNITIES



35%

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



20%

of BCRS's total lending was disbursed to female led businesses. *\*In 2023, 15% of SME employers were women-led.*

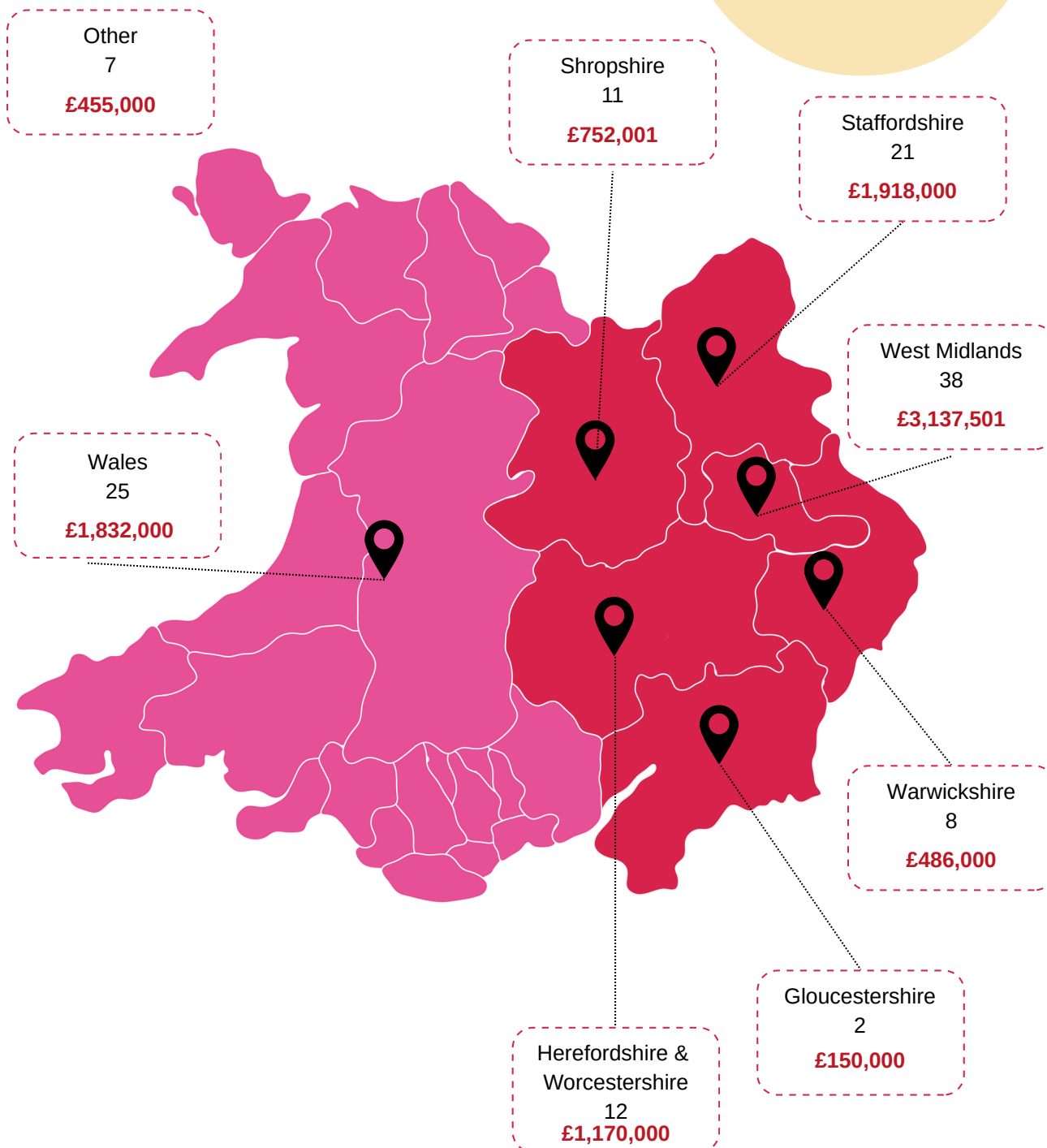


21%

of BCRS' total lending was disbursed to ethnic minority led businesses. *\*In 2023, 7% of SME employers were ethnic minority group led.*

\*Longitudinal Small Business Survey: SME Employers (businesses with 1 to 249 employees) – UK, 2023

# LENDING BY... REGION



# LENDING BY... SECTOR

BCRS Business Loans support a wide range of industries.

Sector	Total Loaned
Manufacturing	£1,445,000
Construction	£945,000
Retail	£942,000
Food	£670,000
Estates & Letting	£575,000
Servicing	£539,000
Training & Education	£435,000
Professional Services	£432,000
Care	£360,000
Motor	£345,000
IT	£325,000
Distribution	£312,500
Engineering	£290,000
Wholesale & Distribution	£285,002
Entertainment	£250,000

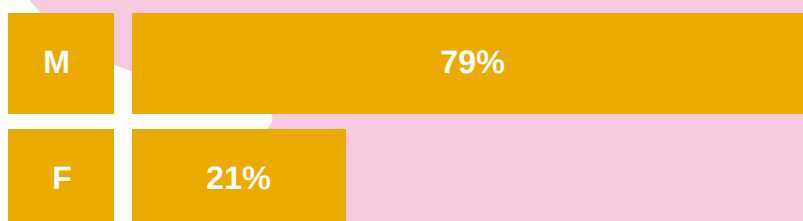
Sector	Total Loaned
Travel & Leisure	£250,000
Recruitment	£215,000
Utilities	£215,000
Installation	£180,000
Health & Beauty	£165,000
Waste Management	£155,000
Haulage & Warehouse	£100,000
Medical	£100,000
Media	£80,000
Transportation	£70,000
Consultants	£65,000
Financial Services	£55,000
Marketing & Advertising	£40,000
Security	£35,000
Computer Science	£25,000

**Total: £9,900,502**

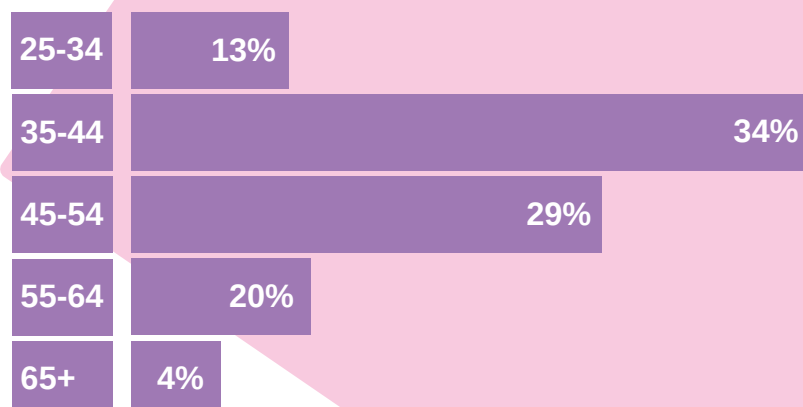
# LENDING BY... DEMOGRAPHICS

It is important for BCRS Business Loans to understand who we are investing in.

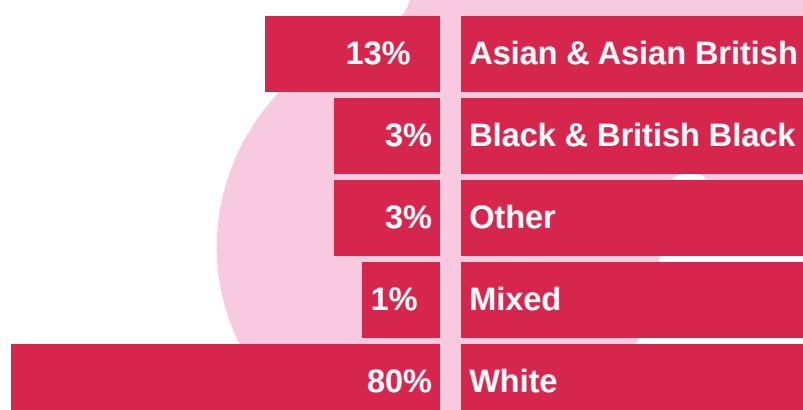
## Borrower by gender



## Borrower by age



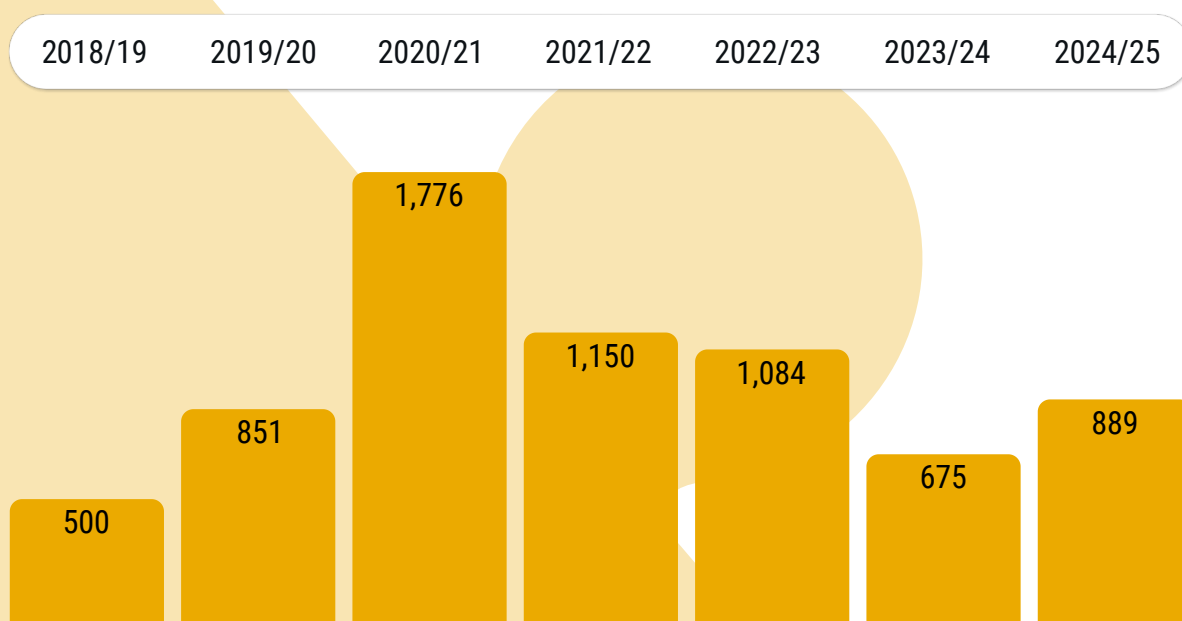
## Borrower by ethnicity



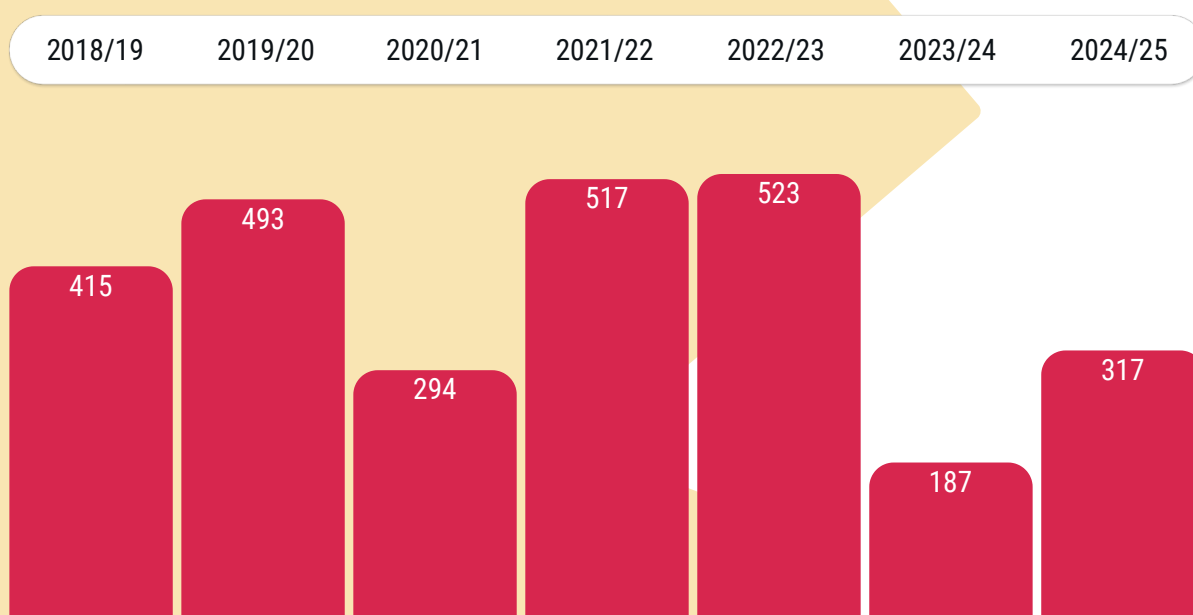


# SUPPORTING EMPLOYMENT

## JOBS SAFEGUARDED

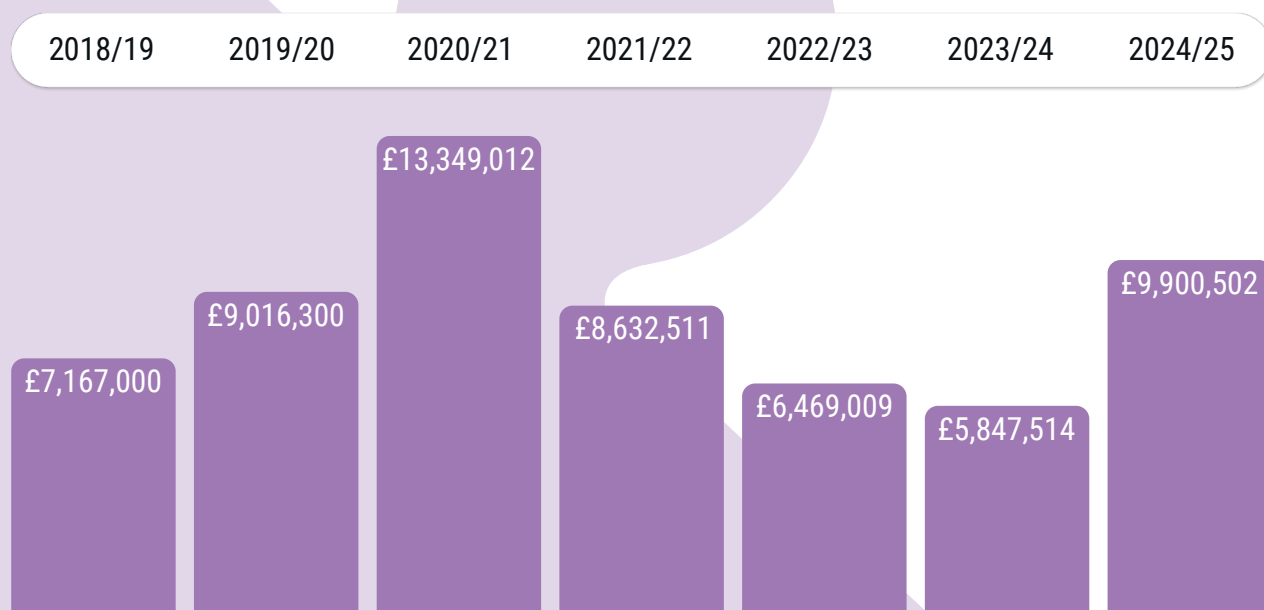


## JOBS CREATED

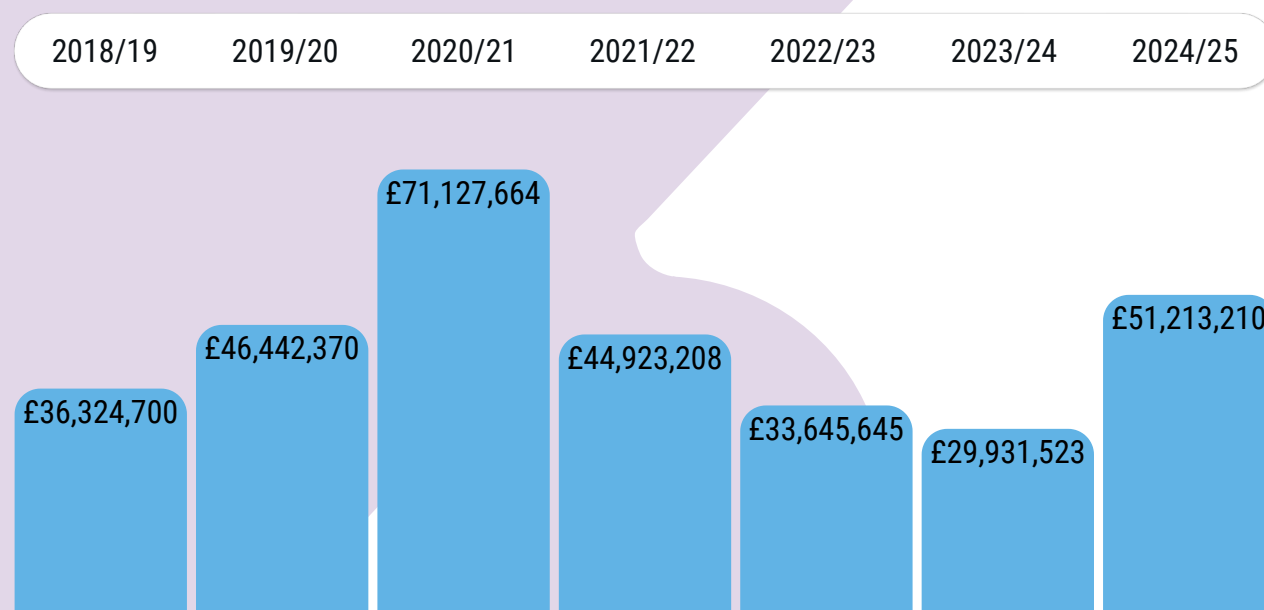


# IMPACT OVER THE YEARS...

## AMOUNT LENT



## ECONOMIC IMPACT



# NET-ZERO PLAN

BCRS recognises the role that financial institutions play in the transition to net zero and it's our goal to become market leaders in impactful action, values and sustainability.

In 2023, Environmental Technologies & Resource Efficiency Support Service (EnTRESS) found that we were emitting 29.6 tonnes/yr of CO<sub>2</sub>. In our 2024 survey, we found that we were emitting 23.45 tonnes/yr.

In the last year, BCRS Business Loans has supported the prevention of 34 tCO<sub>2</sub>e from being emitted through 24 verified carbon avoidance projects, which is the equivalent of 4,080,000 smartphone charges.

While the biggest impact we can make is to reduce our own emissions, carbon avoidance projects all provide complementary climate solutions to prevent greenhouse gas emissions, restore nature, and support local communities.

Follow our carbon reduction on *Ecologi*, by clicking below.




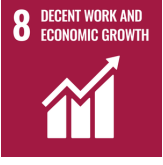
<https://ecologi.com/bcrsbusinessloans>

WE ARE OFFSETTING  
**34**  
TONNES/YR  
OF CO<sub>2</sub>






# UNITED NATIONS SUSTAINABLE DEVELOPMENT GOALS

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


Goal	Description	What we do
	<b>End poverty in all its forms everywhere.</b>	Provide loans to businesses in some of the most deprived areas of the UK to help facilitate job creation and improve job security, reducing poverty.
	<b>Achieve gender equality and empower all women and children.</b>	Raise awareness of funding available to small and medium sized businesses led by women and female individuals who are excluded by traditional finance providers.
	<b>Access to affordable, reliable, sustainable, and modern energy for all.</b>	Support local community with sustainable energy projects through funding.
	<b>Promote sustained, inclusive and sustainable economic growth, full and productive employment and decent work for all.</b>	Enable sustainable economic development, recognising the importance of small and medium sized businesses in supporting economic prosperity and meaningful employment.

# UNITED NATIONS SUSTAINABLE DEVELOPMENT GOALS

Goal	Description	What we do
 <b>9</b> INDUSTRY, INNOVATION AND INFRASTRUCTURE	<b>Build resilient infrastructure, promote inclusive and sustainable industrialisation, consumption and production, and foster innovation.</b>	Provide financial services to businesses who support local economic development through geographically focused funds.
 <b>12</b> RESPONSIBLE CONSUMPTION AND PRODUCTION	<b>Ensure sustainable consumption and production patterns.</b>	Reduce waste generation through prevention, reduction, recycling and reuse.
 <b>10</b> REDUCED INEQUALITIES	<b>Reduce inequality within and among countries.</b>	Support underrepresented demographics in deprived areas of the UK

# CUSTOMER FEEDBACK

**5 STAR  
LENDER  
FROM  
466 REVIEWS**

 **Trustpilot**



## **GREAT SERVICE AND PROFESSIONALISM**



"BCRS were very helpful from the beginning. Their support has provided the extra boost needed to advance my company to its current position. The team is easy to work with and highly accessible via phone, consistently available to answer my questions and guide me through all the application processes. I highly recommend their services."

## **FANTASTIC SUPPORT**



"After contacting BCRS, we were introduced to a Business Development Manager who really took the time to get to know our business and advocate for us for our requested Finance. The amount was not inconsequential and we appreciated the personal touch in facilitating the lending and supporting us through the process."

## **THE TEAM AT BCRS ARE OUTSTANDING**



"The team at BCRS are outstanding, they are willing to help and look at possibilities and not just past performance. I would not have been able to get my business to the stage its at today without their support."



# CUSTOMER FUNDING STORIES

## LONGA



Loan Amount  
£120,000

Jobs Created  
16

Jobs  
Safeguarded  
3

A Turkish restaurant brand, led by three women, expanded with the opening of a 100-cover venue in Cardiff city centre, creating a further 16 jobs.

Longa, which first opened the doors to its first café in 2019, has gone on to become a firm favourite go-to eatery for local people and those living further afield. Quickly becoming renowned for its menus which celebrate and share the rich, diverse flavours of Turkish cuisine, the new Park Place restaurant offers an all-day breakfast menu, whilst expanding to capture an evening clientele with a separate menu.

Founded by sisters Gizum Yorgun and Simge Yalcin, now operates with three women at the helm after actress Pinar Ogun joined the business in

2023. The new venture was supported with a £120,000 package.

“BCRS’ support goes so much further than helping us to secure finance, Niki has been overwhelmingly positive in supporting our entire venture.

Longa in Park Place has only been open for a matter of weeks, but we are already seeing the impact. Just this weekend we saw over 300 covers and our bookings for the weekends are huge! We can’t wait for more people to experience our food, after all it’s pretty amazing to sit back and watch their reactions, all the while knowing we created that plate.”

Co-Owner, Pinar Ogun

# CUSTOMER FUNDING STORIES

## HOLSIMS



Loan Amount  
£35,000

Jobs Created  
3

Jobs  
Safeguarded  
7

A family-run construction firm, specialising in the renovation of properties for disabled residents in Birmingham, secured £35,000 funding to purchase new equipment and support team growth.

Established in 2021, Holsims' improvements range from extensions to installing ramps, improving property access and bathroom modifications. The company recently won a contract to provide residential property renovations on behalf of Birmingham City Council.

Alongside purchasing new equipment, the funding will be used to create three new roles.

“ The investment from BCRS has been critical for us to continue to operate.

We initially approached high street lenders but were turned away, an issue many of us in the construction industry face.

BCRS Business Loans has helped us navigate through the whole process. The loan from the Midlands Engine Investment Fund II will help us to provide stable employment and apprenticeship opportunities.

Owner, David Simmins

# CUSTOMER FUNDING STORIES

## SNOWDON TIMBER



Loan Amount  
£100,000

Jobs Created  
3

Jobs  
Safeguarded  
7

Bangor-based Snowdon Timber Products is eyeing up expansion of sales into Europe after experiencing vast growth during the past year.

The Llandygai Industrial Estate-based business, which was established towards the end of 2019, has experienced a fluctuation in sales following Covid but following a £100,000 finance package it has unlocked a stream of potential business avenues and is optimistic about the future.

“ This funding has unlocked the potential of the business and without it, I think we’d be pretty stagnant. Instead, it’s allowed us to take the business in the direction it needs to go and we’re hopeful that through the B&Q Marketplace avenues that we can start selling outside the UK.

Last year was a huge milestone for us, and we’ve just exceeded last year’s turnover mid-way through the year. We are really optimistic and proud of the way the business is growing. Earlier this year we were in a catch-22 situation where we could see potential growth but needed investment. This funding has now unlocked our potential – we’re seeing defined growth and are looking forward to the next chapter. ”

*Owner, Jody Goode*

OUR

# FUNDERS & SUPPORTERS



Department for  
Business & Trade

The **co-operative** bank



Triodos  Bank





# MEET THE TEAM

The Business Development Team are always on hand to support businesses across the West Midlands and Wales, and are dedicated to helping businesses grow and prosper.



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**We believe in you**