

# DISMANTLING

POVERTY THROUGH INVESTMENT  
IN SOCIAL ENTERPRISE

resonance



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Cover photo: SoFab Sports provides employment opportunities for young people in Gloucester.

Thank you to the enterprises that took the time to speak with us and provide the photos used throughout the report.

# ABOUT THE FUNDS

The Resonance South West and Resonance West Midlands Social Investment Tax Relief (SITR) Funds are pioneering social impact investment funds aimed at helping to dismantle poverty across the two regions of England in which they operate by investing in local social enterprises. Both funds took advantage of SITR, which lowered the cost of loans for enterprises whilst enabling the potential for competitive returns to investors.

The heroes of these funds are the enterprises and the people they support and work with. We are proud that since 2016, when the South West SITR Fund made its very first investment, **twenty-seven social enterprises have received investment from the funds to help support their social impact ambitions.**

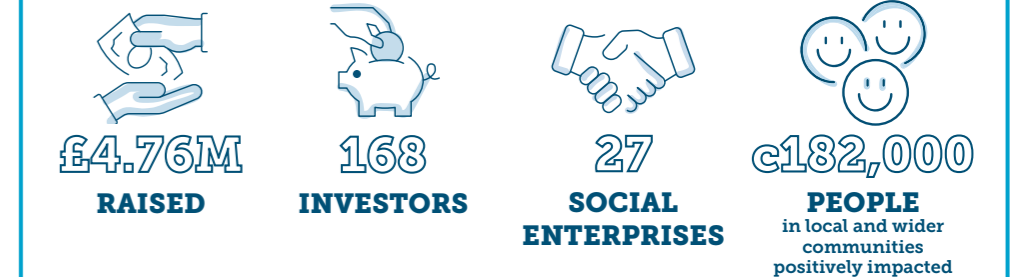
Unfortunately, despite representations to Government about extending and improving the scheme, the Government closed the tax relief in March 2023.

Both funds are now closed. In total they raised an investment amount of £4.76m from 168 Investors. The South West SITR Fund made its final deployments in April 2021. The West Midland SITR Fund made its final deployment in March 2023 and returned a balance of uninvested funds to investors before the SITR regime ended in April 2023.

Whilst no longer raising capital, the fund's team continue to support these enterprises by offering business advice, support and connections that enterprises say are crucial to their ability to continue to grow and make a difference to the people and communities they serve – especially during the current cost of living crisis - as well as contributing to strengthening the wider social enterprise sector as a whole. In the last three years, the enterprises have had a positive impact not only on the immediate people they support but also wider communities in both regions, in fact during this time around 182,000 people have either benefitted directly or in a secondary way.

In previous years we have produced individual, annual Social Impact Reports for each of the SITR funds. However, going forward we will be reporting on the two funds in this combined report format. With no further SITR funds being opened (due to SITR regime ending) and both existing funds now closed and fully deployed it's the right time to integrate into one report. From an investment management, monitoring and technical support perspective we continue to run the funds with regionally located teams. Investors will continue to see how their investments are contributing to the social impact of the enterprises, whilst Resonance and social enterprises continue to learn and improve their impact over time.

This report covers the period of time from September 2021 to September 2022.





# THE SOCIAL ENTERPRISES' ACHIEVEMENTS

## ACHIEVEMENTS AS AT SEPTEMBER 2021/22:



**69,000**  
**PEOPLE SUPPORTED**  
in a variety of ways  
by the social  
enterprises



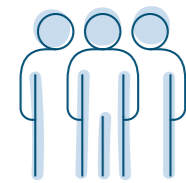
**716**  
**PEOPLE EMPLOYED**  
by enterprises



**90%**  
**OF ENTERPRISES**  
found Resonance's  
ongoing support  
helpful or invaluable



**74%**  
**OF ENTERPRISES**  
have increased  
their turnover



**82%**  
**OF ENTERPRISES**  
provide volunteering  
and work experience  
opportunities



**496**  
**VOLUNTEERING**  
placements for  
local people



**£1 MILLION**  
**OF LOANS**  
repaid early or on schedule

## HIGH LEVEL ACHIEVEMENTS IN THE LAST 3 YEARS:



**c182,000**  
**PEOPLE**  
in local and wider  
communities  
positively impacted



**c1,200**  
**LOCAL JOBS**  
provided



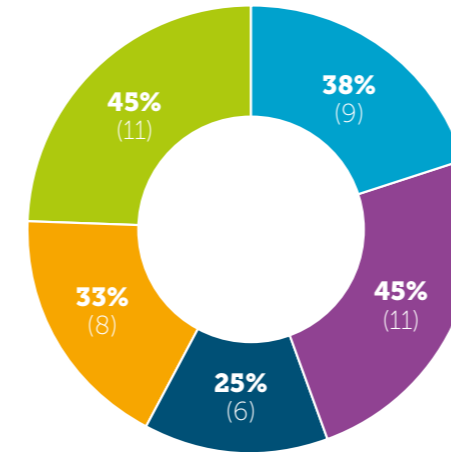
**27**  
**SOCIAL ENTERPRISES**



**c800**  
**VOLUNTEERING**  
opportunities  
provided

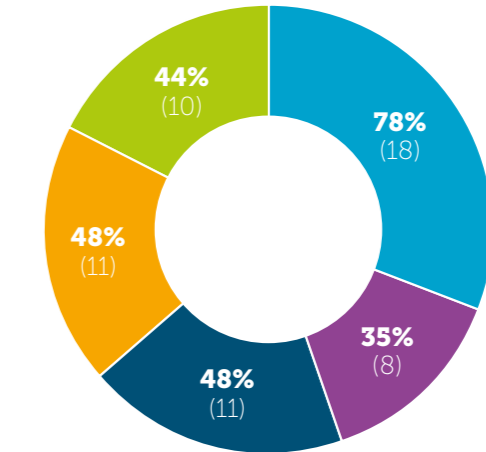
The funds have achieved good diversification of impact across five key themes, creating numerous positive outcomes for the people they support.

## KEY IMPACT THEMES ACROSS BOTH REGIONS, IN 2021/22



- OVERCOMING BARRIERS TO EMPLOYMENT
- EDUCATION AND LEARNING OPPORTUNITIES FOR YOUNG PEOPLE
- ADDICTION AND HOMELESSNESS
- EQUITY, DIVERSITY AND INCLUSION
- TACKLING HEALTH AND WELLBEING INEQUALITY

## 5 OUTCOMES SOCIAL ENTERPRISES ARE HAVING MOST IMPACT ON IN 2021/22



- DEVELOPING SKILLS
- JOB CREATION
- STRENGTHENING RELATIONSHIPS /SUPPORT
- IMPROVING HEALTH AND WELLBEING
- RAISING ASPIRATIONS

Social enterprises can have impact in more than one theme and more than one outcome. Percentage figures are the percentage of total enterprises invested in by the funds having impact in that theme/outcome.

## THE SOCIAL ENTERPRISES







Photo: The Skill Mill employs young ex-offenders, through their employment and learning opportunities on environmental projects.

"During my time with Skill Mill I have gained practical skills and experiences, such as woodworking, bricklaying, ground maintenance, site maintenance, gardening and laying turf, also using different tools and equipment. This experience has really helped me, as I want to move into construction. As soon as I got into The Skill Mill, it opened my eyes, and I just want to work more now."

*Skill Mill student*

# THE FUNDS' INVESTORS

The funds have engaged with 168 investors and 13 Wealth Managers.

### SOUTH WEST

**£2.96M** SUCCESSFULLY DEPLOYED

**£975K** CAPITAL RETURNED TO INVESTORS AS OF 31/3/23

**43%** OF INVESTORS LIVE IN THE SOUTH WEST

**45%** OF INVESTORS ARE FEMALE

**55%** OF INVESTORS ARE MALE

**130** INVESTORS

### WEST MIDLANDS

**£1.25M** SUCCESSFULLY DEPLOYED

**£100K** CAPITAL RETURNED TO INVESTORS AS OF 31/3/23

**53%** OF INVESTORS LIVE IN THE WEST MIDLANDS

**29%** OF INVESTORS ARE FEMALE

**66%** OF INVESTORS ARE MALE

**5%** INSTITUTIONAL INVESTORS

**38** INVESTORS

## FINANCIAL ADVISORS / WEALTH MANAGERS WITH CLIENTS INVESTED





# INVESTMENT TIMELINE

The funds have consistently deployed over seven years into 27 social enterprises, including during the pandemic, a time of social and economic disruption.


**SOUTH WEST SITR FUND LAUNCHED**  
£752K INVESTED

**2016**

**APRIL:**  
  
Investment: £250k  
**SOUTH WEST**

**JUNE:**  
  
Investment: £150k  
**SOUTH WEST**

**DECEMBER:**  
  
Investment: £240k  
**SOUTH WEST**

**DECEMBER:**  
  
Investment: £112k  
**SOUTH WEST**

£150K INVESTED

**2017**

**APRIL:**  
  
Investment: £150k  
**SOUTH WEST**

**WEST MIDLANDS SITR FUND LAUNCHED**  
£647.5K INVESTED


**2018**

**APRIL:**  
  
Investment: £112.5k  
**SOUTH WEST**

**NOVEMBER:**  
  
Investment: £200k  
**SOUTH WEST**

**AUGUST:**  
  
Investment: £100k  
**WEST MIDLANDS**

**NOVEMBER:**  
  
Investment: £85k  
**WEST MIDLANDS**


**OCTOBER:**  
  
Investment: £150k  
**WEST MIDLANDS**


£984K INVESTED

**2019**


**FEBRUARY:**  
  
Investment: £109k  
**SOUTH WEST**


**OCTOBER:**  
  
Investment: £100k  
**SOUTH WEST**

**APRIL:**  
  
Investment: £250k  
**SOUTH WEST**

**NOVEMBER:**  
  
Investment: £250k  
**SOUTH WEST**

**AUGUST:**  
  
Investment: £100k  
**SOUTH WEST**

**DECEMBER:**  
  
Investment: £75k  
**SOUTH WEST**

**SEPTEMBER:**  
  
Investment: £100k  
**SOUTH WEST**

£980K INVESTED  
£240K REPAID

**2020**

**JANUARY:**  
  
Investment: £100k  
**SOUTH WEST**

**FEBRUARY:**  
  
REPAID their £240k loan two years ahead of schedule  
**SOUTH WEST**

**JULY:**  
  
Investment: £150k  
**WEST MIDLANDS**

**AUGUST:**  
  
Investment: £100k  
**WEST MIDLANDS**

**THE SKILL MELL**  
  
Investment: £100k  
**WEST MIDLANDS**

**DECEMBER:**  
  
Investment: £180k (Second Investment)  
**SOUTH WEST**

**DECEMBER:**  
  
Investment: £100k  
**WEST MIDLANDS**

**DECEMBER:**  
  
Investment: £100k (Second Investment)  
**SOUTH WEST**

£562.5K INVESTED  
£112.5K REPAID

**2021**

**FEBRUARY:**  
  
Investment: £126.5k (Second Investment)  
**SOUTH WEST**

**JUNE:**  
  
Investment: £40k (Second Investment)  
**SOUTH WEST**

**MARCH:**  
  
Investment: £125k  
**WEST MIDLANDS**

**JUNE:**  
  
Investment: £66k  
**SOUTH WEST**

**APRIL:**  
  
Investment: £105k  
**WEST MIDLANDS**

**REPAID their £112.5K loan**  
**SOUTH WEST**

£209K REPAID

**2022**

**SEPTEMBER:**  
  
REPAID their £100k loan three years ahead of schedule  
**SOUTH WEST**

**DECEMBER:**  
  
REPAID their £109K loan  
**SOUTH WEST**

£100K INVESTED  
£350K REPAID

**2023**

**JANUARY:**  
  
REPAID their first £250k loan  
**SOUTH WEST**

**MARCH:**  
  
Investment: £100k (Second Investment)  
**WEST MIDLANDS**

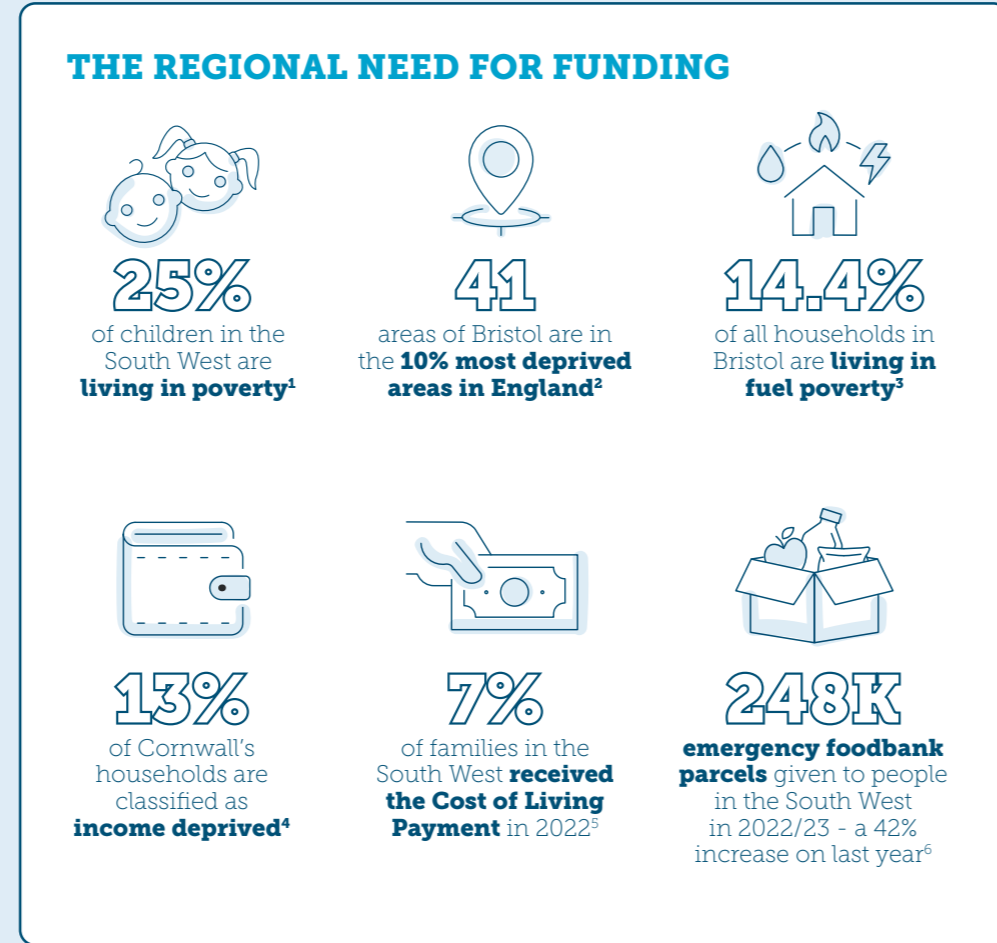
**REPAID their £100k loan three years earlier than scheduled**  
**WEST MIDLANDS**

# SOUTH WEST

In the South West, twelve social enterprises are helping to lift people out of poverty, especially some of the most marginalised communities, by addressing the need for - amongst many others - decent education, employment and health care.



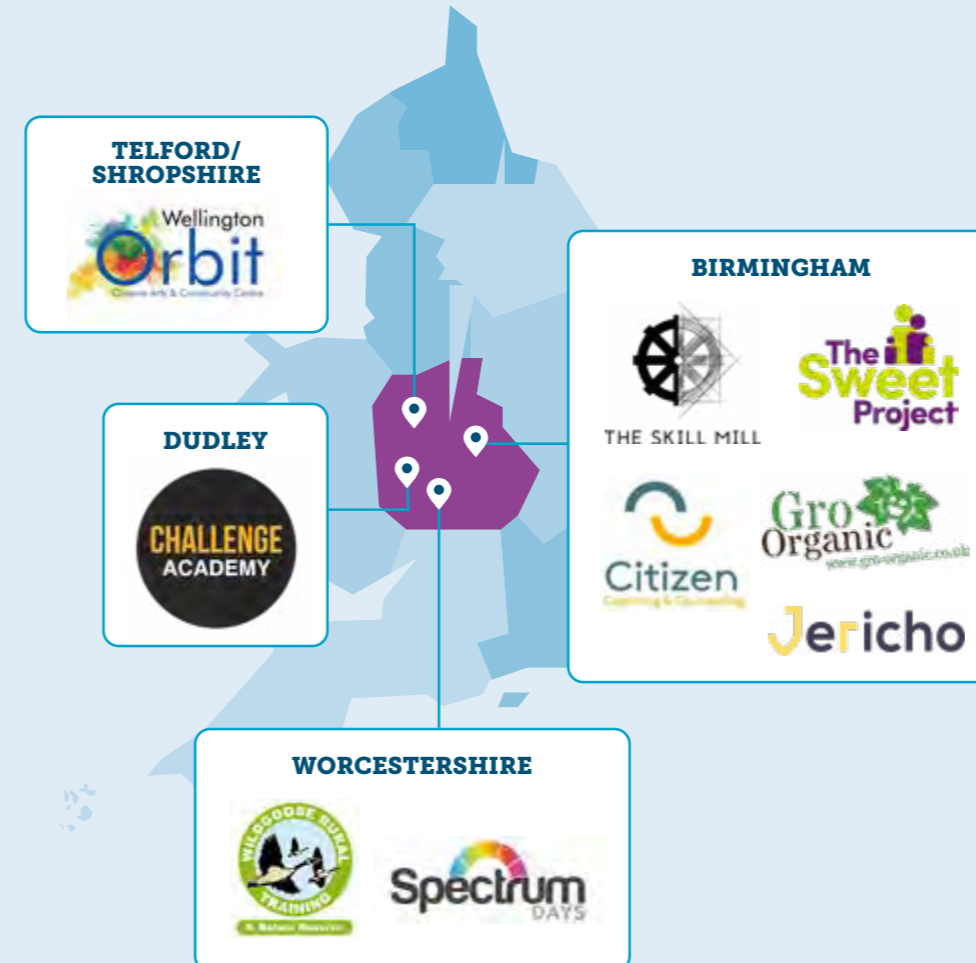
Current investees as of 2022



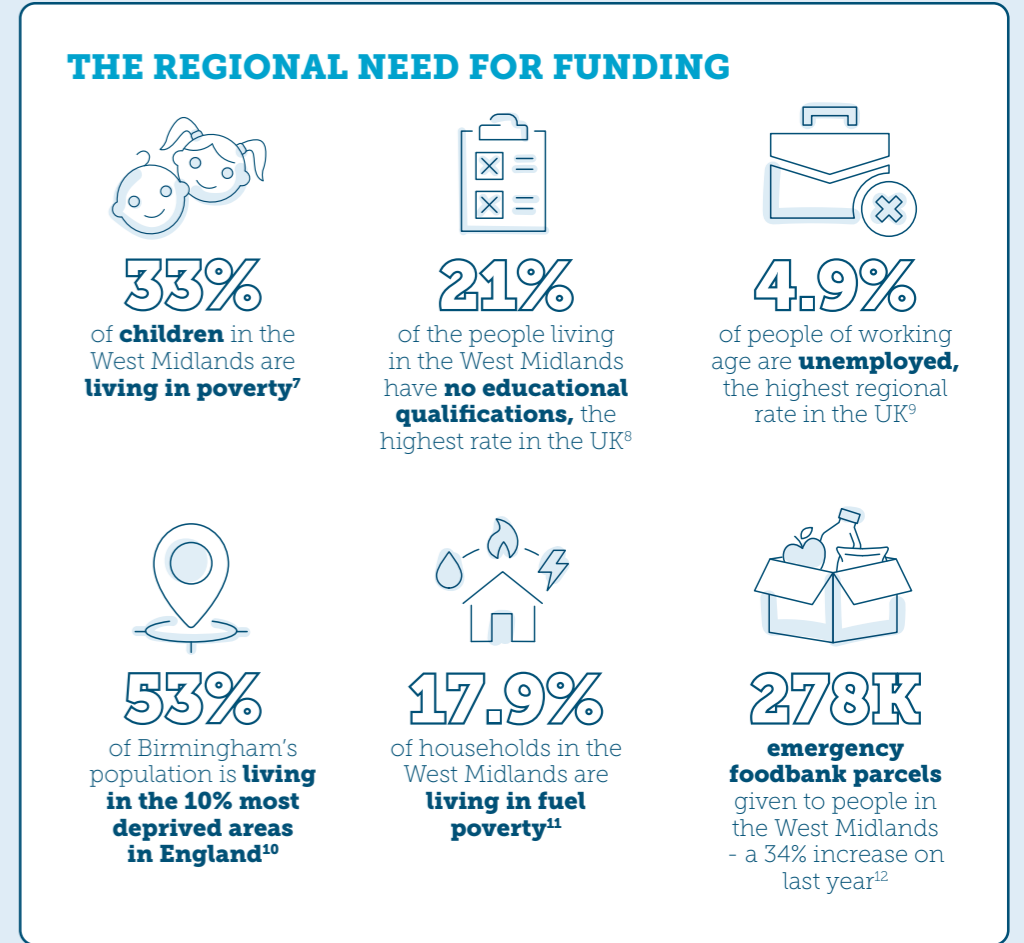
\*Unless otherwise stated, all stats as of 2021/22.

# WEST MIDLANDS

Nine social enterprises in the West Midlands are making a positive difference to people living in poverty and often the furthest from access to basic needs, by providing accessible and inclusive health and wellbeing services, employment, training and more, empowering them to live healthy and productive lives.



Current investees as of 2022



\*All stats as of 2021/22

# WHAT THE ENTERPRISES ACHIEVED IN 2021/22

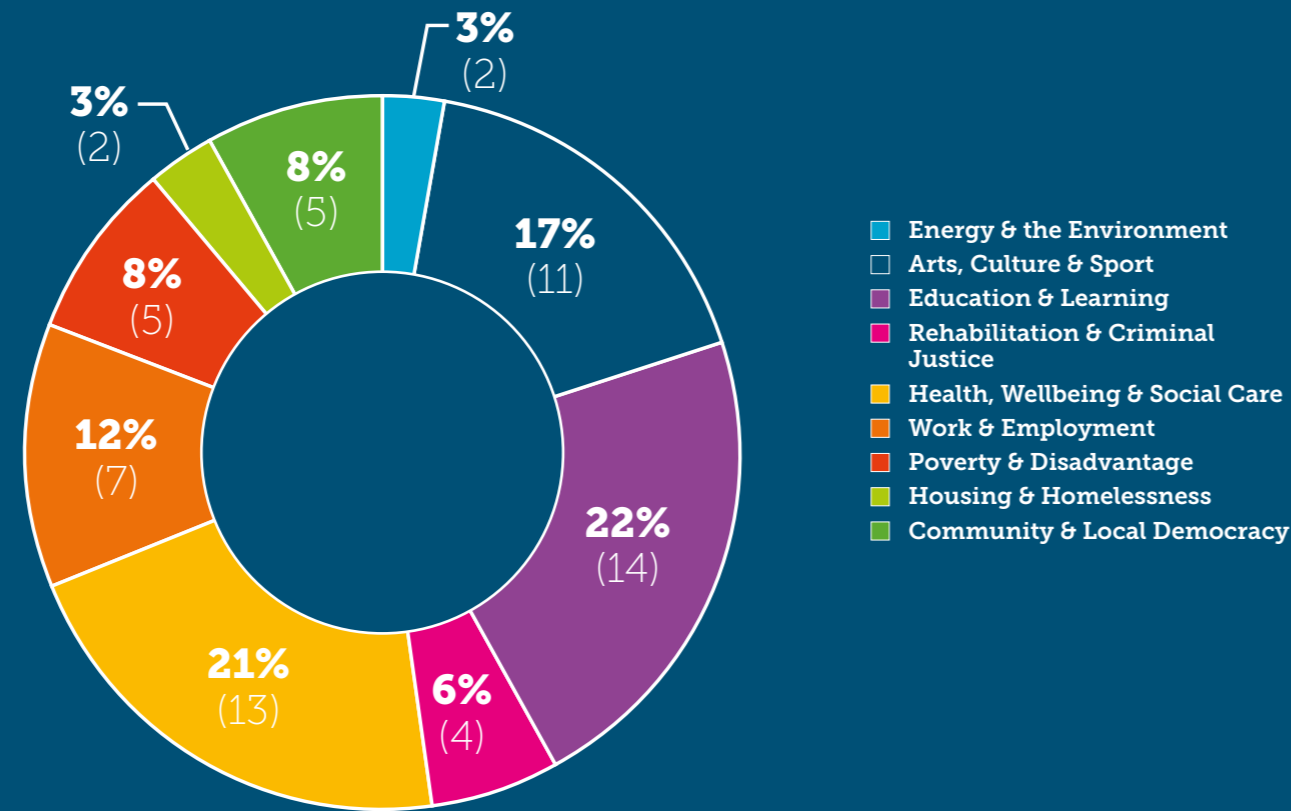
The funds have achieved good diversification of impact across nine themes, creating numerous positive outcomes for the people they support.

According to Joseph Rowntree Foundation, 13.4 million people in the UK were living in poverty in 2020/21 – that's around 20%, or one in five, of the UK population. Of these, 3.9 million were children: in the West Midlands 33% and in the South West 25% of children are living in poverty. Factors including ethnicity, unemployment, low income, lack of decent housing, experience of the criminal justice system, and lack of decent education have a significant impact on people's health and wellbeing, stripping away confidence and ambition, and damaging life chances.

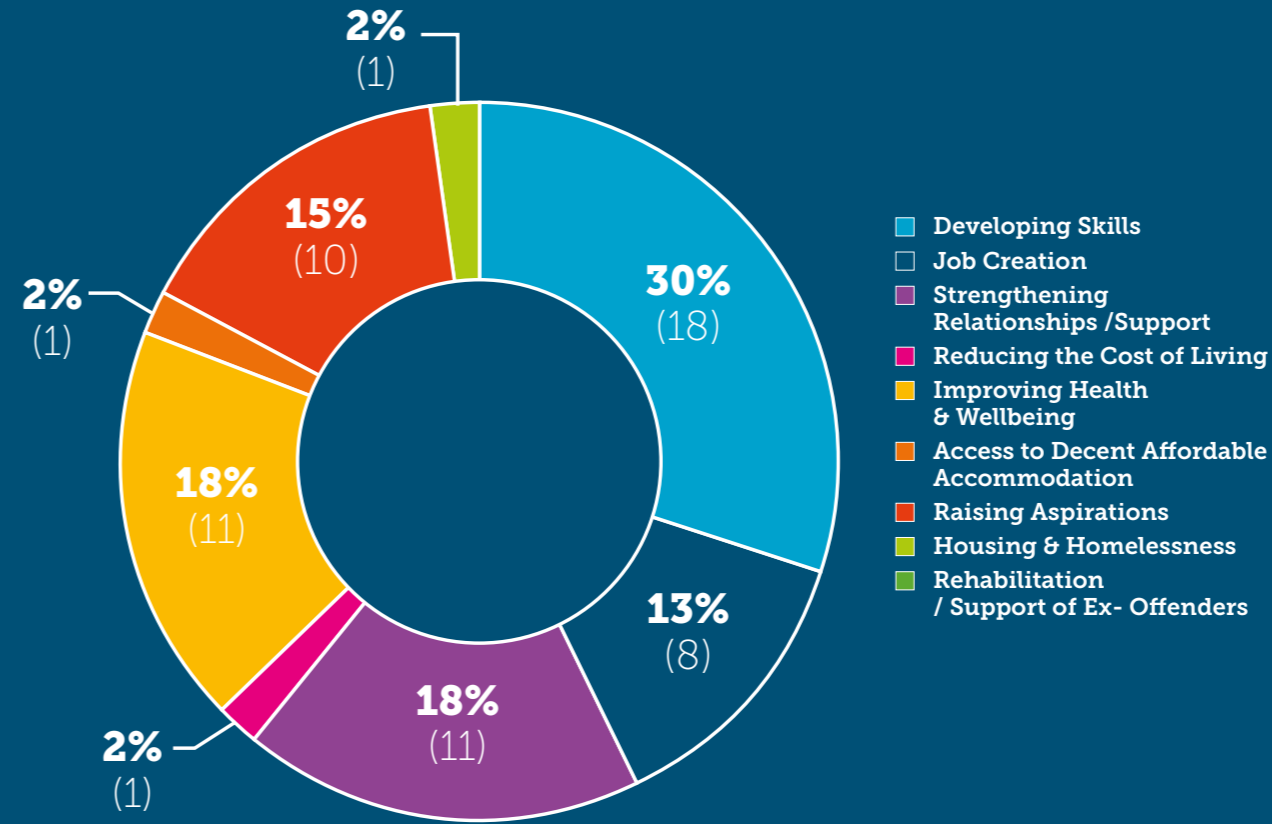
Our enterprises respond to many of these causes and impacts of poverty, from the lack of meaningful work and decent education to health and wellbeing: mental health issues, addiction, loneliness, inclusion and equality - all of which impact on life outcomes.

By addressing the impacts of poverty on people's health and wellbeing, providing them with opportunities to work, to learn, to gain confidence, to feel included, to feel seen, our social enterprises are creating sustainable social impact, providing pathways out of poverty for many people.

## IMPACT THEMES THE FUNDS CONTRIBUTED TO



## OUTCOMES THE FUNDS CONTRIBUTED TO







Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs) are a collection of goals set by the United Nations General Assembly. Each goal has a list of targets, which are measured with indicators to help understand how progress is being made towards the goals.

Resonance's South West and West Midlands SITR Funds, and the social enterprises invested in and supported by the funds, contribute to the following SDGs:



### SDG 8 DECENT WORK & ECONOMIC GROWTH – A CASE STUDY

#### SoFab Sports

The SoFab team is passionate about social inclusion and providing decent employment opportunities for young people and people with learning disabilities and furthest from meaningful employment, living in Gloucester.

SoFab provides young people with a variety of roles including processing online orders, warehouse packing and distribution that mean they gain new skills and recognised qualifications, and at the same time improve their confidence and self-belief. So far fifty-five first time jobs have been created, twenty of which have been given to people with physical and learning disabilities. And because the skills young people gain are transferable, it has enabled some of them to successfully move on to other permanent employment.

For young people with learning disabilities, it can be particularly challenging to find decent employment. For example, Scotty was born with severe cerebral palsy and was living in care with very few opportunities for personal growth, inclusion and a decent quality of life, until he was offered a job at SoFab in 2018. Since then, he has become an experienced and valued member of the team and has grown in confidence immeasurably, so much so, that he has moved out of care and into his own home and fully independent living.



"The job at SoFab Sports means I get into a routine of getting up early and actually doing something and being around my friends ... I enjoy working here. I've felt part of the team since day one."  
*Scotty, SoFab Sports employee*

Photo: Scotty was not only provided with employment at SoFab Sports but his new found independence and confidence also enabled him to move into his own home.





# THE ENTERPRISES INVESTED IN BY THE FUNDS

## IMPERIAL SPORTS GROUND (PREVIOUSLY KNOWN AS SOUTH BRISTOL SPORTS CENTRE)

**Investment Size:** £250,000

**Deal Closing Date:** April 2016

**Legal Structure:** Charity

**Fund:** South West

**Location:** Bristol

### What They Do

Imperial Sports Ground reaches young people in particularly deprived areas of Bristol through sport: engaging them in something productive, increasing skills and confidence with opportunities to become coaches. They also support the local

community – especially groups of people often furthest from inclusion, e.g. people with disabilities, LGBTQ+, older people and more - to engage in sport, and become more physically active, as well as increase their social opportunities.

### What The Investment Was For

To finance the construction of six new five-a-side football pitches suitable for year-round use, a new bowls club, and a full 4G - synthetic turf - pitch. This helped Imperial Sports Ground to increase engagement with young people, and provides a revenue stream from evening hire to adults. Enabling social inclusion activities to grow and to target the most deprived areas.

"I still have bad times, but on the whole, my mental health is much better and now the bad times are further apart. My confidence has grown tremendously, and my physical health has improved. Through my friendships here I have a bigger social group which means there is always someone I can talk to."

Sports session participant



## BRISTOL 24/7

**Investment Size:** £150,000

**Deal Closing Date:** June 2016

**Legal Structure:** Community Interest Company

**Fund:** South West

**Location:** Bristol

### What They Do

An online newsletter and printed magazine celebrating Bristol, covering local news and social issues. Providing new skills and opportunities in media for underserved groups and giving marginalised communities more of a voice in Bristol. They also provide apprenticeships and work experience opportunities with local businesses as part of their Better Bristol social and environmental impact projects.

### What The Investment Was For

To develop their community projects, training opportunities and collaborative approach as they work with other community organisations across Bristol.



## STREET IMPACT BRISTOL

**Investment Size:** £112,500

**Deal Closing Date:** April 2018

**Legal Structure:** Limited Company (Social Impact Contractor)

**Fund:** South West

**Location:** Bristol

**£112.5K LOAN PAID BACK IN JUNE 2022**

### What They Do

St Mungo's, Second Step and Bristol Drugs project were commissioned by Bristol City Council to form a consortium to deliver an innovative social enterprise

initiative Street Impact Bristol (SIB), in response to the Entrenched Rough Sleeper Fund target to reduce Bristol's rough sleepers by 2021.

SIB worked with 125 individuals with a history of rough sleeping in the city providing them with intensive and focussed support for addiction, mental and physical health issues and to access and sustain accommodation. The vision was for these individuals to have their own home, good health, access to opportunities and a recovery network to sustain them in this by the end of the project in March 2021.

### What The Investment Was For

For a personalised, assertive outreach approach over a sustained period to develop relationships with 125 rough sleepers and bring them off the streets in a way that would last.







**PROFIT THROUGH PURPOSE**

## BRISTOL BRAILLE TECHNOLOGY

**Investment Size:** £200,000

**Deal Closing Date:** November 2018

**Legal Structure:** Community Interest Company

**Fund:** South West

**Location:** Bristol

### What They Do

Designs and manufactures braille equipment and promotes literacy for blind people, at a time when braille literacy is falling into decline. Aims to help reverse this trend and in doing so, increase blind people's educational and employment opportunities.

### What The Investment Was For

To design, manufacture and distribute a revolutionary new braille machine - the Canute - which makes braille literacy more affordable, therefore increasing blind peoples' opportunities for education and employment.

## SOMERSET WOOD RECYCLING

**Investment Size:** £109,000 and £40,000

**Deal Closing Date:** February 2019 and June 2021

**Legal Structure:** Community Interest Company

**Fund:** South West

**Location:** Somerset

**£120K LOAN PAID BACK IN DECEMBER 2022**

### What They Do

Somerset Wood Recycling (SWR) helps disadvantaged young people facing multiple barriers to work including

the long-term unemployed, to gain work-based employment, volunteering and skills to re-position their lives in a positive way. At the same time, it challenges perceptions of 'waste' via its paid-for waste/wood collections, green space maintenance service and wood re-use through the manufacture of individually designed, well-made wooden items and bespoke furniture made from recycled wood.

### What The Investment Was For

Investment has enabled workshop upgrades (new more powerful, accurate machinery), an upgrade to their power supply, retail development, website development and purchase of stock.

A second investment of £40,000 from the South West SITR Fund in June 2021 has enabled Somerset Wood to create a new retail space for its bespoke handmade furniture and to purchase a new works vehicle.



## BELONG LEARNING (PREVIOUSLY KNOWN AS COMMUNITY MENTORING AND SUPPORT)

**Investment Size:** £250,000 and £180,000

**Deal Closing Date:** April 2019 and February 2021

**Legal Structure:** Community Interest Company

**Fund:** South West

**Location:** Gloucestershire, Devon & Wiltshire

### What They Do

Provides services to youth clubs and youth projects, including professional mentoring for young people who have additional needs, and alternative education for young people who, for a variety of reasons, are not accessing mainstream schools.

### What The Investment Was For

Investment has enabled the development of sites and resources to increase breadth of the curriculum offered. It has also increased the training and development of staff to provide greater depths of support for the needs of children.

"We are pleased with all he has achieved and that he is finally with people and staff that listen and understand. I always feel updated with all that is going on with him. His behaviour is so much more improved."

*Parent of a student*



## SPIKE ISLAND ARTSPACE

**Investment Size:** £100,000

**Deal Closing Date:** August 2019

**Legal Structure:** Charity

**Fund:** South West

**Location:** Bristol

**£100K LOAN PAID BACK IN SEPTEMBER 2022, THREE YEARS AHEAD OF SCHEDULE**

### What They Do

Spike Island is an international centre for the development of contemporary art, offering a place where artists and the public can meet; using art to promote mental wellbeing, community cohesion and allowing voices to be heard that otherwise may remain silent.

### What The Investment Was For

To support more artists and increase the reach of art to broader communities, whilst also seeing Spike Island Exhibition Services become a sustainable income source to support the charity.





## BRISTOL BEACON (PREVIOUSLY KNOWN AS BRISTOL MUSIC TRUST)

**Investment Size:** £100,000

**Deal Closing Date:** September 2019

**Legal Structure:** Charity

**Fund:** South West

**Location:** Bristol & Southwest

### What They Do

Bristol Music Trust (BMT) is an independent organisation created to develop Bristol Beacon's artistic programme and to promote music and music making in the city

through Bristol Plays Music. Developing numerous projects, programmes, events, workshops and festivals to engage with local communities – especially school children and young people.

### What The Investment Was For

Alongside commercial income, SITR investment was used to support its community and education music programme. Its music education hub programme forms part of their wider programme of 'Creative Learning & Engagement', which also encompasses their artist development programme, National Centre for Inclusive Excellence and community engagement programme.

"My confidence has definitely got a lot better since I've started coming...The main thing is the friends that I've made through music, which is such an easy way to get to know people."

*Our Music Club participant*

## RAISED IN CIC (PREVIOUSLY KNOWN AS RAISED IN BRISTOL)

**Investment Size:** £250,000 and £126,000

**Deal Closing Date:** November 2019 and February 2021

**Legal Structure:** Community Interest Company

**Fund:** South West

**Location:** Bristol

### What They Do

Provides Ofsted regulated early years education and childcare services, whilst supporting local communities. It does this by helping to sustain the future of community-owned buildings - paying rent as a tenant reinvesting all profits into Bristol's communities, contributing to a local circular economy.

### What The Investment Was For

To scale up the business, enabling Raised In to open new nurseries and employ new, local staff. The investment is also being used as ongoing working capital to support rent, staff costs, and more. In February 2021 Raised In received a £126,000 investment from the South West SITR Fund, enabling it to grow its early years' education in a fourth community space and nursery in Southmead.



## SOFAB SPORTS

**Investment Size:** £100,000 and £180,000

**Deal Closing Date:** October 2019 and February 2021

**Legal Structure:** Community Interest Company

**Fund:** South West

**Location:** Gloucestershire

**FIFTY-FIVE FIRST TIME JOBS CREATED FOR YOUNG PEOPLE**

### What They Do

Provides paid retail employment opportunities for young adults with physical and learning disabilities through its online sports shop and warehouse, building their confidence, self-esteem and employability skills.

### What The Investment Was For

To increase stock sales via its online retail outlet in order to support additional warehouse space and staff wages. Also to implement new stock management software.

In February 2021, SoFab received a second investment, £180,000 this time, from the South West SITR Fund. It has used this to expand its warehouse space and to take on new employees.

"It's amazing what a little job opportunity can do for somebody."

*Dale Rawlins,  
Managing Director  
of SoFab Sports*



## LOVED SQUARED (PREVIOUSLY KNOWN AS LEADING LIGHTS EDUCATION AND WELLBEING)

**Investment Size:** £75,000

**Deal Closing Date:** December 2019

**Legal Structure:** Community Interest Company

**Fund:** South West

**Location:** Bristol & South West

**PROVIDED 420 HOURS OF SUPPORT PER WEEK TO YOUNG PEOPLE**

### What They Do

Provides tuition and mental health and physical wellbeing services to help children and young people with social, emotional and mental health difficulties.

### What The Investment Was For

Investment has focused on developing core staffing. This includes taking on additional administrative and operational support to enable growth and capacity as well as ensuring quality assurance and infrastructure development. Investment has also been used for essential renovations to 'Glow', Loved Squared's specialist children's hub.



## PROFIT THROUGH PURPOSE

### NATIONAL CENTRE FOR INTEGRATIVE MEDICINE

**Investment Size:** £100,000

**Deal Closing Date:** January 2020

**Legal Structure:** Community Interest Company

**Fund:** South West

**Location:** Bristol & South West

#### What They Do

The National Centre for Integrative Medicine (NCIM) work with over 2,000 people on their healthcare journey, providing a diverse and comprehensive range

of opportunities, such as a Diploma in Integrative Medicine, and nourishment and nutrition courses, and mindfulness courses for those tackling a cancer diagnosis.

#### What The Investment Was For

The investment is enabling NCIM to scale its business, increase its team and reach, expand its services and impact by bringing a broader vision of healthcare to the South West. It is also helping to minimise health inequalities in disadvantaged communities by offering low-cost options, minimising financial pressure, so patients can focus on self-care.

The investment is also enabling NCIM to work collaboratively with other organisations, including Heart Research UK and Subway, to help people make sustainable changes in the way they shop, cook and eat to improve health and wellbeing.



### SOUTHMEAD DEVELOPMENT TRUST

**Investment Size:** £66,000

**Deal Closing Date:** June 2021

**Legal Structure:** Charity

**Fund:** South West

**Location:** Bristol

#### What They Do

Southmead Development Trust operates The Greenway Centre, a community run health and wellbeing and enterprise hub based in Southmead, the most deprived

neighbourhood in north Bristol. It supports around 1,000 people from the local community and incorporates health services, playing fields, a sports centre and community gym and cafe, small business units and over thirty different community classes or groups a week. It provides specialist support services for people in the local community who need support for substance misuse, physical and mental health issues, learning difficulties, and those looking to gain employability skills and training.

#### What The Investment Was For

This loan was invested in essential works to parts of The Greenway Centre site that were ageing - including the repair of a leaky roof and extension to the dance and fitness studio - and was also used to make adaptations during the pandemic to ensure it was safe to continue supporting the health and wellbeing of Southmead's residents.

### BF ADVENTURE

**Investment Size:** £150,000

**Deal Closing Date:** February 2020

**Legal Structure:** Charity

**Fund:** South West

**Location:** Cornwall

**2,000 SESSIONS DELIVERED TO YOUNG PEOPLE**

#### What They Do

BF Adventure is an outdoors education and activities centre in Cornwall. It provides challenging and creative

programmes focusing on improving self-esteem, building life skills and coping strategies in young people, empowering them through a wide range of outdoor activities from archery and abseiling to coasteering and canoeing. These outdoor activities help disadvantaged young people to overcome social and educational barriers in their everyday lives supporting them on journeys of positive change.

#### What The Investment Was For

The investment has enabled BF Adventure to develop its tourism and leisure sector income stream by installing the South West's first Via Ferrata - an 'Iron Stairway' - a protected climbing route, which is now operating as a social enterprise trading arm of BF Adventure. It has also opened a café offering work experience and training opportunities for local young people.



"Some young people we'll work with for potentially years to support them, to face their challenges to learn life skills and to move on to a sort of much more positive future."

*Adrian Richards,  
BF Adventure CEO*

### WILDGOOSE RURAL TRAINING

**Investment Size:** £85,000

**Deal Closing Date:** November 2018

**Legal Structure:** Company Limited by Guarantee with Charitable Status

**Fund:** West Midlands

**Location:** Worcestershire

#### What They Do

Wildgoose offers access to land-based activities, training, education and work experience for people with learning

disabilities, brain injuries, mental health issues and school-excluded children. Sessions help individuals develop skills for independent living, learn valuable trades, gather work experience and employability skills and secure accredited qualifications.

#### What The Investment Was For

The investment enabled Wildgoose to relocate operations from their previous two-acre site to a new forty-acre site, along with a new on-site activity hub. This meant Wildgoose was able to increase capacity and student numbers, as well as offering a wider range of activities. This is translating into further qualifications and a wider variety of training opportunities offered, as well as an increase in the number of partnerships with local schools.





## PROFIT THROUGH PURPOSE



"The best thing about my apprenticeship has been learning about my mental health and wellbeing and I have gained the confidence to speak to people."

*Jericho apprentice*

## THE JERICHO FOUNDATION

**Investment Size:** £100,000

**Deal Closing Date:** August 2018

**Legal Structure:** Company Limited by Guarantee with Charitable Status

**Fund:** West Midlands

**Location:** Birmingham

**103 PEOPLE UNDERTOOK 5,111 DAYS OF WORK IN JERICHO'S SOCIAL ENTERPRISES**

### What They Do

Jericho supports people who face multiple and complex barriers to employment, training or social inclusion to become fulfilled, skilled and employed. They provide paid work experience, personal development plans, vocational training, ongoing mentoring, an events-based social club and also a job search suite within its IT facilities.

### What The Investment Was For

The investment facilitated the growth of one of Jericho's most successful social enterprises, the ReUsers, where second-hand items are restored and sold through Jericho's two retail outlets.

The investment also provided the initial working capital required to take on additional staff and retail space, as well as investing in refurbishment work and an updated sales system. This has increased retail space by 25%, enabling an increase in product ranges available, and ensuring the stores are working as efficiently as possible - significantly increasing the income generating potential of the business (as well as unlocking additional training and employment opportunities).



## CHALLENGE ACADEMY

**Investment Size:** £150,000

**Deal Closing Date:** October 2018

**Legal Structure:** Community Interest Company

**Fund:** West Midlands

**Location:** Dudley, West Midlands

### What They Do

Challenge Academy uses a range of outdoor adventure facilities and activities to make innovative learning and development opportunities accessible for all. Their activities help develop aspirations and crucial soft

skills - from confidence building to teamwork - and contribute positively to physical and mental health for communities living in particularly deprived areas. They also offer specialist interventions for vulnerable groups ranging from individuals who have been excluded from mainstream education to those on 'Back to Work' programmes, as well as youth offenders.

### What The Investment Was For

Investment was used to further develop their on-site Adventure Hub at Baggeridge Park, particularly indoor classrooms and activity areas, as well as its team capacity. This has enabled the enterprise to expand its offering, engaging more groups and a wider range of beneficiaries at any one time, delivering educational interventions more effectively and reducing the seasonality of their income.

## CLIFTON COMMUNITY ARTS CENTRE (WELLINGTON ORBIT)

**Investment Size:** £100,000

**Deal Closing Date:** February 2020

**Legal Structure:** Community Benefit Society

**Fund:** West Midlands

**Location:** Telford/ Shropshire

**£100K LOAN PAID BACK IN MARCH 2023, THREE YEARS AHEAD OF SCHEDULE**

### What They Do

Clifton Community Arts Centre - known as Wellington Orbit - is a community-run space providing a crucial facility which is accessible to all in its local community, helping to reduce isolation and build community. They target marginalised groups including adults with learning disabilities, LGBTQ+ groups, the elderly, and those living with dementia. Wellington Orbit also provides volunteering and training opportunities for local young people and those facing barriers to employment.

### What The Investment Was For

To finalise the first stage of a conversion of a former bank building into a Community Arts Centre. The development of the ground floor with a cinema - the Wellington Orbit - an arts space and café, with redevelopment of the upper floors to follow.





## GRO-ORGANIC

**Investment Size:** £150,000

**Deal Closing Date:** July 2020

**Legal Structure:** Community Interest Company

**Fund:** West Midlands

**Location:** West Midlands

### What They Do

Gro Organic specialises in the design and build of educational, commercial and domestic landscape gardens, as well as delivering specialist workshops, mentoring and programmes focused around the outdoors and food growing, to help support the mental and physical wellbeing of local people, particularly in the area of Chelmsley Wood. All of Gro's activities are centred around improving mental and physical health and wellbeing, reducing isolation and promoting community cohesion whilst developing transferable skills. The aim of their work is to move people closer to living healthier, happier lives and support them towards greater opportunities for connecting with others whether that be through socialising, volunteering, education, training or employment. This ranges from supporting young people facing exclusion from school, to ex-offenders, adults with learning disabilities and vulnerable women.

### What The Investment Was For

To enable Gro-Organic to purchase new equipment, new expert assistance and the recruitment and development of specialist teams in order to increase its mentoring programme across a wider range of schools and to expand its landscaping services, enabling them to offer more training and employment opportunities in the local area.

"They really enjoy it here. They look forward to what they will be making each week and it has given them a safe space to practice their English and meet new friends."

*Gro-Organic support worker*



## THE SWEET PROJECT

**Investment Size:** £100,000

**Deal Closing Date:** June 2021

**Legal Structure:** Community Interest Company Limited by Guarantee

**Fund:** West Midlands

**Location:** South Birmingham

### What They Do

Provides family support services in one of the most deprived parts of Birmingham, which focuses on safeguarding children and supporting the vulnerable. This is achieved by managing quality placement learning opportunities for student social workers.

### What The Investment Was For

To take on and refurbish better-suited and fit-for-purpose premises to facilitate their longer term growth and to recruit two new business development and service delivery team members.

"Continuing support has been invaluable for us here at The Sweet Project. After many years of applying for funding to have this opportunity and an organisation that believed in what we stand for and what we do was like a breath of fresh. We are extremely grateful to everyone who provided this opportunity for us."

*Jayne Cresswell  
Director of Business*





## SKILL MILL PARTNERSHIP LIMITED

**Investment Size:** £100,000

**Deal Closing Date:** August 2020

**Legal Structure:** Social Impact Contractor

**Fund:** West Midlands

**Location:** Birmingham (plus five regions Nationwide)

**OVER 90% OF YOUNG PEOPLE PARTICIPATING THE THE SKILL MILL PROGRAMMES DID NOT REOFFEND**

### What They Do

The Skill Mill Partnership Limited works with young ex-offenders to increase their employability through a range of supported training and employment opportunities, primarily through their environmental projects including flood management and construction. As well as a recognised qualification, the young people at The Skill Mill also gain the skills and self-confidence to reconnect with their community as well as improved emotional and physical wellbeing.

### What The Investment Was For

To finance the delivery of an Outcomes Contract between seven local authorities and Skill Mill Partnership Limited, an accredited social impact contractor, with the aim of delivering outcomes for young people with a history of offending.

"Before I got into this I was in a bad routine, bad schedule, bad mindset, waking up late, wasting my time, just not valuing my time right ... Now I can see changes in myself."

*Skill Mill student*

## SPECTRUM DAYS

**Investment Size:** £100,000

**Deal Closing Date:** December 2020

**Legal Structure:** Charity

**Fund:** West Midlands

**Location:** Worcestershire & Staffordshire

### What They Do

Spectrum Days supports twenty-nine people (members) who have profound and multiple learning difficulties

through flexible Monday to Saturday support and care services so that families can choose the tailored support they need. Individuals can either visit the centre itself which has a range of facilities to meet their needs, or the Spectrum team can provide respite and support within the home – or a mixture of both.

### What The Investment Was For

The investment was used to purchase a new fleet of vehicles to transport members between the centre and their homes, to take part in community activities and to access specialist services. It enabled the enterprise to continue delivering its vital service, as well as being able to expand its services to new families.



## CITIZEN COACHING

**Investment Size:** £125,000

**Deal Closing Date:** March 2021

**Legal Structure:** Community Interest Company

**Fund (SW OR WM):** West Midlands

**Location:** Birmingham

### What They Do

Making counselling and mental health support more accessible for people across Birmingham, regardless of their circumstances. Delivering a range

of high-quality counselling, personal development coaching and anger management services, which address mental health issues, offending behaviours, addiction recovery and barriers to employment, helping people discover better lives and create brighter futures.

### What The Investment Was For

To expand their counselling team, invest in delivering more specialist therapy interventions, and also support younger clients with specialist support needs, through a new sensory play therapy space.

The investment is also helping to develop Citizen's crucial online mental health service, widening the scale and reach of their service significantly, and therefore enabling the organisation to have a much wider social impact.



# FIVE CAUSES OF POVERTY THE FUNDS HAVE AN IMPACT ON

The funds have achieved good diversification of impact across five key impact themes, chosen because we believe them to be five main causes of poverty.

We know that poverty has many causes. It can often be complex and is incredibly damaging to peoples' health and wellbeing and life opportunities. It can be caused because of a lack of sufficient income – either due to unemployment or low-paid employment; a lack of skills or decent education; negative life events including redundancy and relationship breakdowns; the high costs of housing and essential goods and services; abuse, trauma, and mental health issues – which can lead to homelessness; substance misuse and experience of the criminal justice system; and discrimination, including gender, ethnicity, disability, age, sexuality or religion. The current cost of living crisis is only adding to the depth of poverty that some people are experiencing as well as increasing the numbers of people falling into poverty – this includes people who are working but not earning enough.

The social enterprises our SITR funds have invested into and work with continue to tackle some of the main root causes of poverty, reaching out to and supporting people who are harder to reach.

Over the last six years, the enterprises are having the most impact on these five causes of poverty:



**1. OVERCOMING BARRIERS TO EMPLOYMENT**



**2. EDUCATION AND LEARNING OPPORTUNITIES FOR YOUNG PEOPLE**



**3. ADDICTION AND HOMELESSNESS**



**4. EQUITY, DIVERSITY AND INCLUSION**



**5. TACKLING HEALTH AND WELLBEING INEQUALITY**

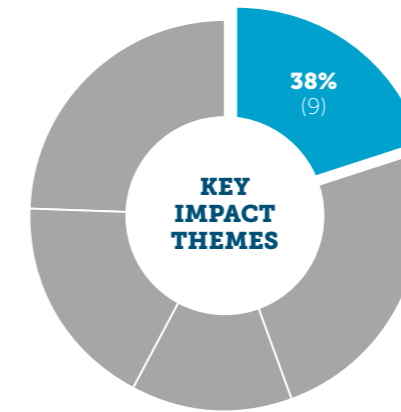
## 1. OVERCOMING BARRIERS TO EMPLOYMENT

### The Facts

- In 2021, **21.1%**, (**1 million people**) of the West Midlands population had no educational qualifications- the highest rate in the UK.<sup>13</sup>
- The highest regional unemployment rate in the UK in 2022 was the West Midlands (**4.9%**) compared to 3.7% for the UK as a whole.<sup>14</sup>
- Across the UK, only **25% of men and 20% of women** leave the criminal justice system and into some form of employment. And only 17% of ex-offenders manage to get a job within a year of release.<sup>15</sup>
- In Bristol, significantly fewer young people go on to higher education after school; **31.6%** compared to the national average of 42.2%.<sup>16</sup>
- 3.2% of 16 and 17 years old** in Cornwall were not in education, employment or training (9,613 young people).<sup>17</sup>

### How the Enterprises Help

- In Cornwall, **BF Adventure** coordinates the delivery of Level 2 and Level 3 Youth Work Qualifications, enabling youth workers to access high quality training and qualifications to improve their career prospects. And the government funded Kickstart scheme provided funding to allow BF Adventure to create two jobs for 16–24-year-olds receiving Universal Credit. After finishing the Kickstart contract, both were taken on as permanent employees.



- Gro- Organic:** "Our mentoring services, community empowerment projects, our work with young people at risk of exclusion from school and work with people with convictions all help to move people closer to education, training, and employment. Our person-centred approach ensures all services are individually tailored to provide the right support at the right time in the right way. There is no one size fits all."
- SoFab Sports** is an inclusive employer, providing secure employment for people furthest from the job market, whatever that reason might be. In the last year it has employed three additional people: a homeless ex offender and two people with learning disabilities, neither of whom had worked previously. Employment with SoFab not only provides people with increased financial income but provides them with a sense of purpose, improved self-esteem and the confidence to make positive change in other parts of their lives.
- Raised In:** "We are keen to attract talent from the local communities that we operate in, offering training, development, and internal progression to our staff. We are continuously seeking ways to increase the diversity of our team. We support staff through their certifications as they progress within Early Years. We are offering above real Living Wages in a sector that is most commonly underappreciated and undervalued - offering a valued and recognised employment opportunity."
- Skill Mill Partnership Limited:** "The stigma attached to having a criminal record, lack of previous opportunity and the negative societal attitudes towards children who have committed offences creates enormous barriers for children. Often even with the best will in the world children are unable to access education, training or employment opportunities which are vital to helping them move forward with their lives. The Skill Mill removes these barriers and enables them to gain work skills, knowledge and importantly confidence."
- Southmead Development Trust:** "We provide a European Social Fund/Big Lottery funded programme to support three hundred people furthest from work to gain skills, confidence and employment. This includes our community adult learning service and working with three training providers to deliver a comprehensive programme of non-accredited and accredited courses. We also offer volunteering and work experience opportunities."



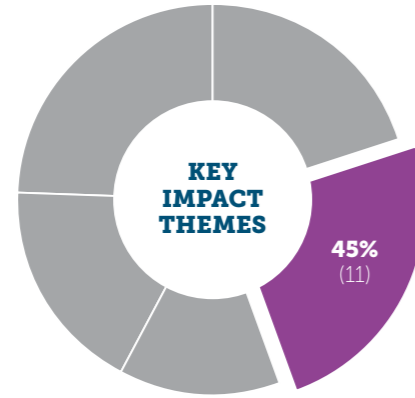
## 2. EDUCATION AND LEARNING OPPORTUNITIES FOR YOUNG PEOPLE

### The Facts

- Across the UK, **11.5% (788,000) of young people aged 16-24 years** were not in education, employment or training (NEET) in September – December 2022, an **8% increase** on the previous quarter.<sup>18</sup>
- In autumn 2022, **2,100 young people** were permanently excluded from school and education settings, an **increase of 23%** on autumn 2021.<sup>19</sup>
- In 2022, **18% of children aged 7 – 16 years** and **20% of young people aged 17 – 24 years** had a probably mental disorder, with more than **400,000 children** a month being treated for mental health problems.<sup>20</sup>
- **68% of young people** experiencing mental health problems report being absent from school due to their mental health.<sup>21</sup>

### How the Enterprises Help

- **Gro-Organic:** "We take a partnership approach to everything we do, young people do not exist in a vacuum, by engaging with their family, school, and other support networks we are able to take a joined up approach, putting the young person in the lead, discovering what matters to them and supporting them to make the changes that are realistic to them so that they can reengage with education and find the right opportunities for themselves with our support and signposting."
- **BF Adventure & Via Ferrata Cornwall CIC:** "The charity supports upwards of five hundred Not in Education, Employment or Training (NEET) young people each year, looking to reengage them with education, offering a range of learning opportunities within our programmes. Our recreational activities help to improve their conditions of life so that they may develop their physical, mental and spiritual capacities and grow to full maturity as individual members of society."

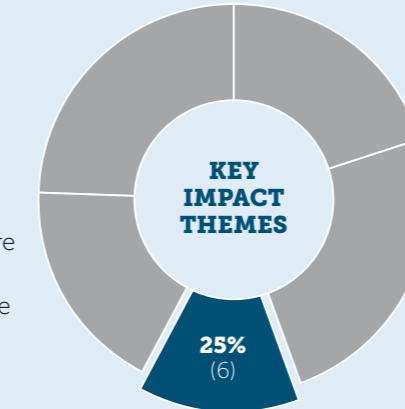


- **Jericho:** "We provide customer service apprenticeship opportunities in our social enterprises that are mainly filled by 16 to 24 year olds. In addition, we run a project aimed at young people who are not engaging in school providing them with real work experience, formal and informal work-based learning and business-specific training modules."
- **Skill Mill Partnership Limited:** "Many of the individuals employed by The Skill Mill have not engaged with the education system. As such the The Skill Mill provides a structured environment where basic qualifications are secured and with their experience provide a sound basis for ongoing employment."
- **Belong Learning:** Our organisation currently works with seventy-two students and their families, providing full-time education provisions for students with an Education and Health Care plan (EHCP) for Social, Emotional and Mental Health (SEMH) needs. Many of the students we are working with have experienced significant challenges in life prior to starting their time with us. We work on a model which builds networks of trusted adults for our young people."
- **Bristol Beacon:** "We offer bespoke activities which use the transformative power of music to support vulnerable young people - in care, care leavers, adopted teens and young carers and young disabled people - to improve their confidence, creative skills, relational skills, focus and ambition."
- **Southmead Development Trust:** "We support young people with education and learning opportunities through our youth centre and small targeted activities as part of our social prescribing service such as forestry school. We're working with."
- **Love Squared:** "We provide bespoke education and wellbeing packages for young people with EHCPs, many of which have struggled in school and are no longer able to attend. Many of the young people have Special Educational Needs (SEN) and/or SEMH needs which is often correlated with a history of trauma."
- **Wildgoose** provides work experience and educational opportunities for young people – some of whom have physical and learning disabilities - experiencing difficulties engaging in mainstream education. The opening of a new onsite café, Bonnie's, means that young people can enjoy both social time there and gain skills such as waiting and clearing tables and helping in the kitchen. Students can also gain qualifications in gardening and other land-based subjects.

## 3. ADDICTION AND HOMELESSNESS

### The Facts

- Around **18,980 people** in the West Midlands are believed to be homeless and living in temporary accommodation, with 190 people on any given night sleeping rough.<sup>22</sup>
- In the South West, an estimated **9,700 people** are living in temporary accommodation and the number of people sleeping on the streets on any given night is 330.<sup>23</sup>
- In 2022 in Birmingham, there were around **10,500 people** actively using opiates and/or crack cocaine and around **13,500 people** dependent on alcohol.<sup>24</sup>
- Of the major cities in the UK, Bristol has the 2nd largest opiate and crack using population, with **4,940 opiate and/or crack cocaine users** currently in treatment.<sup>25</sup>



### How the Enterprises Help

- At **Jericho**, some of the beneficiaries of the Equiano project, that supports survivors of modern slavery, have experienced addiction and homelessness. By providing them with a job in their social enterprises, clients are able to claim benefits, including housing benefit, and gain supported accommodation.
- Some of the people referred to **Challenge Academy's** courses have lived experience of addiction and homelessness. Their courses develop resilience which provides holistic support enabling behaviour change in order to cease taking risks and unhealthy life choices.
- **Bristol Beacon's** Hope Creative programme offers weekly music sessions to vulnerable young people in care and care leavers, many of whom have experienced addiction and homelessness. As part of this programme, they also receive referrals from other agencies such as Bristol City Council's Hope Virtual School and Barnardo's, and work holistically with carers and social workers, whilst also signposting to other services and progression routes that may be beneficial.
- Many of **Gro-Organic's** service users have issues around addiction. Subsequently, around 25% of young children living in families supported by Gro-Organic are experiencing a range of traumas including conflict and separation from their parents, often passed between family members as their parents are unable to cope. By building resilience in individuals and communities, Gro-Organic supports and empowers families to tackle issues affecting them.
- Many of **Somerset Wood's** employees and volunteers have a history of addiction and substance misuse, which also means their housing situations can be inappropriate for their needs. The support, stability and opportunities Somerset Wood provides individuals with, enables them to make positive changes in their lives and We provide references to current and ex-volunteers and employees for the purpose of housing.

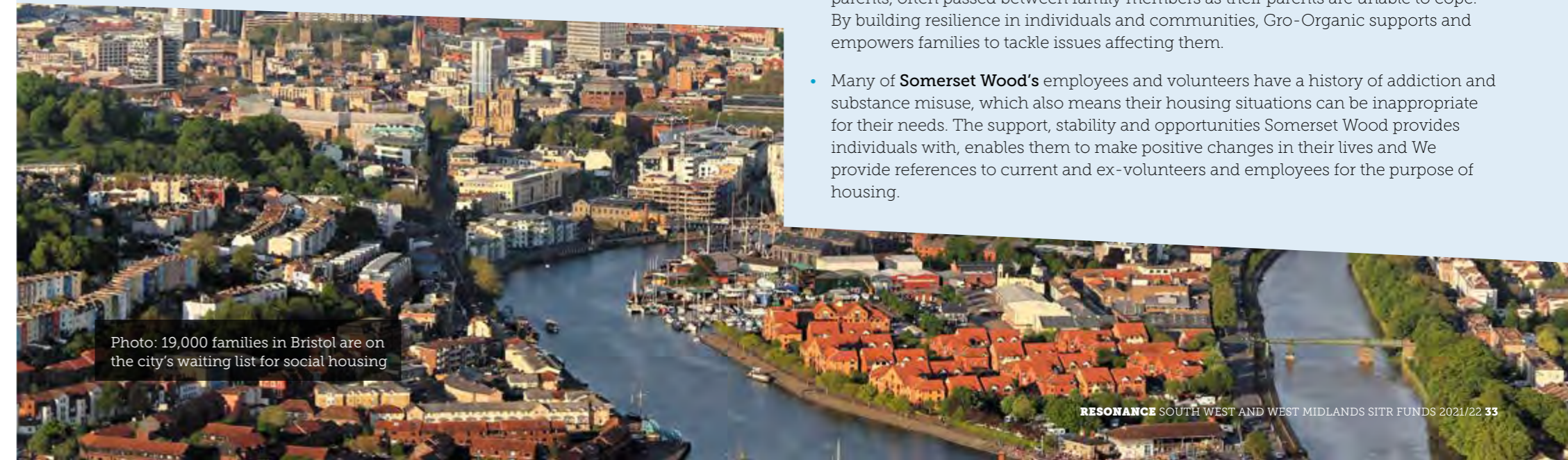


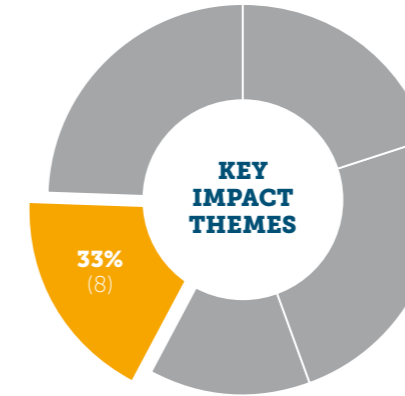
Photo: 19,000 families in Bristol are on the city's waiting list for social housing





Photo: Raised In Bristol children at Sweet Mart, Bristol for Black History Month

## 4. EQUITY, DIVERSITY AND INCLUSION



### The Facts

- **12,790** hate crimes were recorded by West Midlands Police in 2021/22 – a **35% increase** on the previous year. With the 4,355 offences motivated by transgender identity increasing by 56% during the same period.<sup>26</sup>
- In Bristol, there were **2,482** recorded hate crimes in 2021/22, a **28.9% increase** on the previous year. Over 71% of this hate crime was recorded on the basis of racial prejudice.<sup>27</sup>
- Across the UK, in 2022 the disability employment rate in for disabled people was **52.6%** compared to 82.5% for non-disabled people, the widest that the disability employment gap has been since 2018.<sup>28</sup>
- Over **93%** of the population in the South West is white with ethnic minority groups making up almost 7%. This compares to the West Midlands where 77% of the population is predominantly white and 23% ethnic minority groups.<sup>29</sup>
- The gender pay gap in the East Midlands is **16.6%** compared to the UK average of 14.9%, meaning women in this region work 'for free' for nearly two months of the year.<sup>30</sup>

### How the Enterprises Help

- **Gro-Organic:** "We provide some services that are open access and accessible to all. We all provide bespoke closed services for groups that would have barriers in accessing our open provision. For example, we provide closed sessions within domestic violence refuges, our teams travel to the beneficiaries to ensure we are accessible, and translators are used to counteract any language barriers."
- **BF Adventure:** "We are fully inclusive, with a specialist team supporting young people with physical disabilities to access the outdoors, also those with learning difficulties. And we have dedicated mental health and support programmes for LGTBQ+ people."

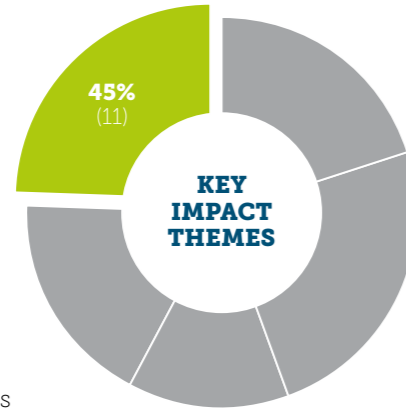
- **Raised In:** "We are set up by three founding women - and remain a majority women-led organisation. We have an open and inclusive recruitment practice with strong encouragement in the local communities that we serve; attract and manage a variable age range and background among staff."
- **Bristol Braille Technology CIC:** "Blind people are one of the most excluded groups in society. We have worked hard with our partners to make sure they have equal access to information, entertainment and productivity as sighted people."
- **Bristol Beacon (official name Bristol Music Trust):** "Access, Inclusion and diversity have been central to Bristol Beacon's work and impact since 2014. Our EDI Plan includes working with local partners, promoters and communities to ensure our artistic programme is relevant to our communities; broadening our talent pipeline to include more underrepresented artists; expanding our creative learning programme to more groups experiencing barriers; developing our 'Transformation Promise' community engagement programme and maintaining our well-established reputation for excellent customer service."
- **Imperial Sports Ground:** "We run free sessions especially for marginalised groups within the local community, such as our Pan-disability football (for people with a broad spectrum of impairments and health conditions); over 50s, adult mental health sessions, adult weight loss programmes, visually impaired, LGTBQ+ groups, women's and girls' only groups, and sessions for young people in foster care."
- **The National Centre for Integrative Medicine:** "We offer integrative healthcare services, free to access, across different communities in Bristol, delivering courses in situ to ensure accessibility and work with the social prescribing teams and community organisations to learn what their community needs are, which includes the types of courses and what times of day courses should be delivered, such as our work with the Bristol Black Carers."



## 5. TACKLING HEALTH AND WELLBEING INEQUALITIES

### The Facts

- People in the South West - primarily Bristol, North Somerset and South Gloucestershire - were the most likely to have experienced a common mental disorder in the last week, across all regions in England, making up **20%** of all self-reported mental ill health.<sup>31</sup>
- Of the people in England reporting a common mental disorder in the last week, the highest percentage, **23%**, was by people identifying as Black.<sup>32</sup>
- Often linked to living in poverty and deprived areas, children living with obesity in the West Midlands was at **11.3%** (the second highest region in the UK) and at **8.9%** in the South West.<sup>33</sup>
- Life expectancy for men in Wolverhampton is **just over 76 years**, and in Plymouth, **just over 78 years**, both on lower end of life expectancy rates across the UK, compared to the highest in England, 84 years in Kensington and Chelsea.<sup>34</sup>
- Across England, the number of children who had at least one contact with mental health services in the last year rose by **21% to 690,000** in 2021. This includes over 16,000 children and young people in the Black Country and West Birmingham areas alone.<sup>35</sup>



### How the Enterprises Help

- **Jericho:** "Much of our work in the last year has been around helping our beneficiaries improve their mental health and wellbeing as they were disproportionately impacted by the pandemic and successive lockdowns."
- **Raised In** supports employees, families using its services, and the wider, local community in a number of ways, including raising living standards, paying the living wage and offering employee and family support; healthy food and catering on all site.
- **Skill Mill Partnership Limited** offers employment which is primarily outdoors and physically challenging. The combination of physical work in nature has demonstrable physical and mental health and wellbeing benefits. Additionally, its employment scheme provides a structured environment where drug and alcohol usage are not acceptable. As such, this employment provides an opportunity for reduced drug and alcohol intake leading to direct benefits for the individuals concerned, with wider, positive, impacts to their communities.
- A lack of Braille access can be extremely isolating. So, especially throughout the pandemic and beyond, **Bristol Braille** was instrumental in supporting the Brailleists in keep vulnerable people in contact with their communities online whilst learning new skills.

- **Bristol Beacon** (official name Bristol Music Trust): "Our Transformation Promise community engagement programme works with some of our community's most isolated and invisible groups and uses the transformative power of music to improve their health and wellbeing. These activities include Our Music Club for people living with dementia and their families; Movement & Music for people with physical/ and mental ill health (through GP social prescribing referrals); our BLOOM music group for mothers and babies to support perinatal mental health and wellbeing, and Empowerment to build the confidence and raise the voices of young women and non-binary young people."
- **Southmead Development Trust:** "We deliver social prescribing services to adults and children and young people. Our greenway gym provides low-cost gym membership and working with Age UK, we provide services for older people and those with physical disabilities to stay mobile and to help them manage long-term pain."
- **Love Squared:** "Our free services are providing support for mental wellbeing for young people who often fall through the cracks due to not meeting thresholds for funded support."
- **Imperial Sports Ground:** "We run a number of free sessions every week, in partnership with a local football charity, the Robins Foundation, part of Bristol City Football Club. We run a number of inclusive sessions, ranging from our work with disadvantaged young people through to adult fitness and wellbeing, making sport and fitness accessible to people in the community who otherwise might not be able to participate."
- **The National Centre for Integrative Medicine:** "By supporting an empowered, more diverse healthcare model, which offers choice, we are helping local communities as well as patients get access to free and low-cost services and courses."
- In the last year, **Citizen Coaching** has expanded its counselling and therapy services to give more young people access, particularly those whose first language isn't English or who have autism spectrum disorder and other complex needs. It also reaches other marginalised groups with its good quality services, for example people with learning disability, mental health issues, offending backgrounds, language barriers and young people having trouble engaging with mainstream education, with 85% of all clients agreeing that they had a positive experience of counselling that enabled them to move forward in life.

Photo: Pedestrians walking in Birmingham city centre



Photo: The Skill Mill only employs young ex-offenders, actively reducing reoffending rates in the young people it employs





# IMPACT MODEL

The funds Impact Model is a way of thinking about the overall difference that the funds make. The ripple effect shows a progression from the funds core activities through to the wider aim of dismantling poverty in the South West and West Midlands.

Resonance builds relationships that connect social enterprises to support and investment



Stakeholders see the funds as true to their intentions, aligning social and financial outcomes in the South West and West Midlands



Social enterprises receiving investment restore the lives of individuals and communities, in part thanks to investment



The funds contribute to dismantling poverty in the South West and West Midlands, that is greater than the sum of its parts

This report is based on a range of sources. We issue questionnaires to each of the social enterprises into which the funds have invested. For consistency we try and ask the same questions annually, however we sometimes include additional questions. In addition to the questionnaire, we also conduct interviews with representatives of enterprises. And to identify the key social themes in the South West and West Midlands we use both quantitative and qualitative data from a range of sources, each of which is referenced.



Photo: BF Adventure supports young, disadvantaged people in Cornwall on journeys of positive change.



# BUILDING CONNECTIONS: PEOPLE AND INVESTMENT

**INTENTION:** Resonance builds relationships that connect social enterprise to support and investment.

Part of the funds' intended impact is connecting social enterprises to the support and investment they need – in other words, acting as a “bridge” between need and provision. This is a broader understanding of impact than simply finding social enterprises in the South West and West Midlands that require investment, although that is part of the intention and impact. It is rooted in an understanding that enterprises often need more than money and that resources may come from sources other than the funds.



**RELATIONSHIPS INCREASE AS A RESULT OF RESONANCE'S ACTIVITY, ADDING VALUE TO SOCIAL ENTERPRISES INVESTED IN – BOTH INDIVIDUALLY AND AS A NETWORK**

Bridge-building happens directly in a variety of ways beyond just the investment, for example, networking and speaking opportunities, introductions and connections to experts and consultants, and opportunities to strengthen relationships between social enterprises and the wider Resonance team.

- Through introductions to individuals and organisations that can help take the work of the social enterprise forwards. By introducing **BF Adventure** to potential new partners, such as **Dangerous Dads**, they are broadening their networks and links, and are now hosting Dangerous Dad's annual 'DadsFest' on their Cornwall site.

- By investing in organisations and people that bring others together, such as **Southmead Development Trust**, a community run health and wellbeing hub based in the Southmead area of Bristol. Around 1,000 people from the local community benefit annually from the range of community and specialist support services and activities available. **Gro-Organic** is a West Midlands based social enterprise transforming and creating green spaces with and for local people and communities, providing harder to reach groups with opportunities for learning, socialising, education and employment.
- By investing in resources, facilities or property that become the basis for collaboration or bringing communities together. The SITR investment **Bristol Beacon** received supported its community and music education programme and hub, helping it reach and engage with wider audiences and underrepresented communities; people living with dementia and experiencing isolation as well as younger groups, such as school children and those living in care. And the conversion of a former bank building into **Wellington Orbit's** community run cinema, café and art space is providing an inclusive and accessible place for its local community, particularly some of the most marginalised groups such as the elderly, LGBTQ+ groups, those living with dementia and people facing barriers to employment – offering them volunteering and work placements.



**DEVELOPING RELATIONSHIPS WITH SOCIAL ENTERPRISES INVESTED IN BY THE FUND**

We work with our investees over a significant period of time, enabling us to not only gain a thorough understanding of their business but to also grow strong relationships. We support them to identify areas in their businesses where development is required, such as governance, board structure and recruitment, financial forecasting and growth planning, customer and market analysis, management accounting processes, cost review analysis, social impact measurement and marketing.

- **BF Adventure:** “Enabling access to additional grant funding to support our post-COVID recovery was invaluable in boosting our marketing campaigns and knowledge, ensuring we reached a wide audience and generated sufficient footfall to achieve our financial targets.”
- **Belong Learning:** “In the last year, Paul Handford, Resonance's Communications Director, gave us his time and expertise to successfully re-brand our provision and ensure our marketing and communication was effective.” Additionally, Belong Learning said: “Our working relationship with Resonance has resulted in far more than financial support. The unexpected and invaluable benefits of our work with Resonance include connection to social investors, consultants and Non Executive Directors as well as links to pro bono legal advice and personal and hand on support and professional advice to enable a rebranding.”
- **Spectrum Days:** “The initial support was incredibly valuable because we became investment ready. This opened new opportunities for the organisation Including a successful grant application, which then sustained us through the hardest of the COVID years. The ongoing support has become more than a compliance issue. I feel we have built an excellent relationship with mutual trust which allows for a candid conversation that will be dealt with discreetly. There is a team of people who can advise on any matter concerning the charity. I look forward to the regular meetings.”



**CONNECTING THROUGH FINANCE**

Both funds stopped raising capital in 2020 but not before £4.76m capital was successfully raised from 168 investors into twenty-seven social enterprises.

The Resonance team continues to support social enterprises to secure additional support through other funding streams, particularly during the tail end of the pandemic and the current cost of living crisis. This has included sign posting to relevant support programmes, including the 2021/22 Social Enterprise Support Fund, that saw five social enterprises receive funding amounting to £129,000. Resonance also supported four organisations during this reporting period in successful Reach Fund applications, resulting in £43,000 of additional funding for business support and development for these organisations.

“The Sweet Project cannot thank the Social Enterprise Support Fund enough. We have successfully set up our remote working programme and have reached far more service users than we had predicted and are now working on a further programme to increase knowledge and skills for our trainee social workers. Without this funding we could not have achieved this. Thank you so much.”

*Jayne Cresswell, Director of Business, The Sweet Project, following SESF funding*



# FULFILLING ITS INTENT: EXPERIENCES AND PERCEPTIONS

**INTENTION:** Stakeholders see the funds as true to intentions, aligning social and financial outcomes in the two regions within which they operate. Enterprises appreciate their relationship with Resonance, which is a mix of hands-on and hands-off support, depending on need. Many of the enterprises use Resonance as a critical friend to discuss ideas with, both in good times and more challenging times. This strength of relationship has been particularly relevant since the pandemic and more recently, the cost of living crisis, where the Resonance team continues to be in contact with all the enterprises, supporting them with their business needs, listening to their concerns around income and repayments, and reacting where necessary.



## ONGOING SUPPORT FROM THE FUND'S INVESTMENT TEAM

- **Gro-Organic:** "Our investment manager has been available and accessible to us at all times providing support and guidance where needed and helping us to ensure we are reporting only what is relevant in the best ways that work for everybody."
- **Jericho:** "We have valued our ongoing supportive discussions with Anne which have kept us aware of key financial issues and helped us develop our financial and social impact reporting."
- **Raised In:** "Resonance has been in contact and supported us with information about potential additional grant and loan sources; directly or indirectly through Resonance. These are always helpful as we continue to look for opportunities to grow as well as carry some ongoing financial challenges from COVID (impacting our growth rate)."
- **SoFab Sports:** "I think just knowing that people of the calibre of the team, including Donna Thomas, are there if we need them for advice and guidance makes us feel secure."
- **Bristol Beacon:** "Being able to access the Resonance networks has been very helpful."



Photo: Aerial photo of Birmingham, including suburbs



Photo: Raised In supports its team with a range of career progression and learning and training opportunities in an inclusive and diverse environment.



# THE FUND'S CONTRIBUTION TO DISMANTLING POVERTY

**INTENTION:** The funds make a contribution to dismantling poverty in the South West and West Midlands.

## HOW THE ENTERPRISES CONTRIBUTE TO DISMANTLING POVERTY

Poverty rarely has a single cause. Several factors including rising living and housing costs, low pay, lack of employment, marginalisation, high childcare costs, disability and ill health can lead to people falling into poverty and disadvantage. The SITR funds aim to tackle some of these issues by supporting local social enterprises working in these areas to scale their operations.

The enterprises in the funds engage in activities that might contribute to more systemic change by:



### ADDRESSING ROOT CAUSES RATHER THAN SYMPTOMS

Living in poverty often means living with multiple disadvantage. This can include barriers to employment, low income, poor housing, inadequate health care and exclusion to activities. This has an impact on mental health and wellbeing, with people living in poverty experiencing higher levels of anxiety, low self-esteem, loneliness and becoming socially isolated from communities. By addressing some of the root causes of poverty, social enterprises create transformational change in people's lives. By providing employment opportunities for young ex-offenders only, **Skill Mill Partnership Limited** is actively reducing reoffending whilst increasing engagement, participation, employability and educational levels of the young people to increase their life chances.



### REACHING OUT TO PEOPLE WHO ARE HARDER TO HELP

Marginalised groups often face more struggles than others in accessing decent and meaningful education, employment, health care and more and often get 'left behind' from policies that restrict public services. In the last year, **SoFab Sports** has employed three additional disadvantaged young people, one homeless ex offender, and two people with learning disabilities into their first jobs. And **Citizen Coaching** expanded its services to enable more young people – especially those whose first language is not English or who have ASD and other complex needs – to access its range of more affordable counselling and anger management services. Meanwhile, many of the social enterprises continue to support people that other agencies and services have been unable to help or reach.

- **Love Squared:** "Lots of our young people have taken their first exams and, following their success, they have been able to move on to college or back into specialist or mainstream schools. One of our young people who we have been supporting for around three years has now gone to university and is making friends and great progress there."
- **Jericho:** "We continue to see lives changed through our programmes at Jericho. This year we have focussed much more on beneficiary wellbeing and have run a broad range of social and therapeutic activities, particularly for our survivors of modern slavery. We have also had some great feedback from our accommodation provision which provides safe accommodation for female survivors."



### CUTTING ACROSS DIFFERENT DIMENSIONS OF POVERTY

Households are considered to be below the UK poverty line if their income is 60% below the median household income after housing costs for that year. In 2020/21 around one in five of the UK population – 13.4 million people – were living in poverty. And whilst there are many factors contributing to poverty, including income, the reality is that around 61% of people in poverty are working. Working-age adults in poverty are more likely to suffer from poor health, poor housing, social exclusion, and disempowerment and at risk of depression, spiralling mental health issues which all contribute to employment instability and long term disadvantage.

The enterprises provide support and opportunities for some of the region's most marginalised people, helping them find confidence, new skills and to 'level up'. In one of the highest areas of deprivation in the West Midlands, **The Sweet Project** provides crucial support services to vulnerable children and families experiencing poverty and other family difficulties through its student social work placements. **Somerset Wood Recycling** helps young people - including the long term unemployed and people with addiction and mental health issues – facing multiple barriers to work, to gain purposeful employment, volunteering and life and employment skills to re-position their lives in a positive way. And **Imperial Sports Ground's** strong connections with local communities means they can engage with young people, people with disabilities, LGBTQ+ groups and women and girls who would not normally engage in sport, through various football, social and healthy food sessions, helping them improve their mental and physical health and wellbeing, social inclusion, and providing a springboard for positive change in other areas of their lives.



### THE FUND DEMONSTRATED ADDITIONALITY BY INVESTING WHERE OTHERS WOULDN'T

The terms of the funds mean that we can often be a natural fit for an investee to increase their impact. The three year interest only period means that investees who have slower growth profiles can take investment and not feel as though they have to overstretch themselves when they are trying to establish, for example, a new service or new geography. We believe that this patient approach, differentiates us from other investors and enables enterprises to achieve greater longer term impact.



### PROVIDING CONNECTIONS TO OTHERS

Empowering and building strong, resilient communities and connecting and engaging with vulnerable people is what **Gro-Organic** is passionate about. The enterprise tackles and reduces social isolation and loneliness in local communities in the region, improves community cohesion and regenerates deprived areas through its range of activities and services designed to provide everyone with practical and life skills, and build friendships enabling them to become more independent and grow their social networks. Most of **Spectrum Days'** members live at home with their parents who carry the ongoing responsibility for lifelong care, so the day care services they provide for people with profound and multiple learning disabilities has an impact on both their members and wider families. Families are able to work, connect with others, learn new skills, have a sense of their own identity and Spectrum Days members build friendships in a stimulating and accessible environment, with specially adapted resources, equipment and activities. Bespoke support packages around each family allow individuals to flourish and sustains family units.



# NEW ENTERPRISE GROWTH FUND LAUNCHES



Photo: SoFab Sports has employed over sixty people into full-time employment selling discounted, end of line branded sportswear.

## THE RESONANCE ENTERPRISE INVESTMENT FUND

We are excited to announce the launch of a new Resonance investment fund, which will invest in high impact social enterprises enabling them to access the growth investment they need, whilst offering the opportunity for Professional Investors to invest for positive social impact and utilise Community Investment Tax Relief (CITR).

The Resonance Enterprise Investment fund is targeting a launch date in Summer 2023 and follows on from the successes of our SITR and Health & Wellbeing Challenge Funds which combined, invested over £10m into over 70 social enterprises.

The fund is initially focusing in three UK regions - South West, West Midlands and North West, where Resonance has a strong track record of investing; with our experienced investment teams on the ground and well-established social enterprise networks, before rolling out across the rest of the UK.

The fund will focus on investing into high impact Social Enterprises that are working within their communities to:

- **Tackle socio-economic inequality**
- **Improve health and wellbeing**
- **Support a just transition to a low-carbon economy**

The fund aims to provide a range of investment products to support the growth of social enterprises, which can be tailored to each enterprise's specific needs. It will embed an Equality, Diversity and Inclusion (EDI) lens across its entire model from pipeline development and investment assessments to internal process and team – supported and challenged by external EDI partners.

This approach has been developed and tested to meet the varied needs, growth and impact profiles of social enterprises. The products have been designed to allow investment into a wide range of legal structures from charities (with trading income) and Community Interest Companies to Companies Limited by Shares (with strong mission and dividend locks in place).

The product suite will include:

- **Launchpad Loans** – smaller, starter loans for enterprises starting their growth journey
- **Unsecured Loans** – larger loans of up to 8 years for enterprises with clear growth potential
- **Revenue Share Loans (Quasi-Equity)** – equity-like, patient investment for high-growth enterprises, a share of revenue is paid rather than a fixed interest rate (sharing risk & reward)
- **Equity** – patient investment for high growth enterprises with viable exits and suitable legal structures.

The fund will initially be open for investment from socially responsible corporate organisations (who qualify as FCA professional clients) that are looking to invest for positive social impact whilst utilising the CITR. The fund is an alternative investment fund and is not available to the general public. As with all investments, capital is at risk.

If you are a growing social enterprise based in the South West, West Midlands or North West, seeking investment and would like to find out more about the Resonance Enterprise Investment fund, please contact [enterpriseinvestmentfund@resonance.ltd.uk](mailto:enterpriseinvestmentfund@resonance.ltd.uk).



# ENDNOTES

- 1 Action for Children: Where is Child Poverty Increasing in the UK
- 2 Bristol City Council: Bristol Key Facts 2022
- 3 Bristol City Council: Bristol Health and Wellbeing Profile
- 4 Office for National Statistics: Exploring Local Income Deprivation
- 5 GOV.UK: Families Receiving Cost of Living Payment
- 6 The Trussell Trust: Emergency Food Parcel Provision
- 7 Action for Children: Where is Child Poverty Increasing in the UK
- 8 West Midlands Combined Authority: State of the Region
- 9 Office for National Statistics: Labour Market in the Regions of the UK
- 10 Birmingham City Council: Birmingham West Locality Profile
- 11 West Midlands Regional Economic Development Institute: State of the Region
- 12 The Trussell Trust: Emergency Food Parcel Provision
- 13 West Midlands Combined Authority: State of the Region
- 14 Office for National Statistics: Labour Market in the Regions of the UK
- 15 GOV. UK: Employing Prisoners and Ex-Offenders
- 16 Bristol City Council: Bristol Key Facts 2022
- 17 Office for National Statistics: Labour Market Profile: Cornwall
- 18 Office for National Statistics: Young People not in Education, Employment or Training

- 19 GOV.UK: Permanent Exclusions and Suspensions in England: autumn term 2021/22
- 20 NHS Digital: Rate of Mental Disorders Among 17 – 19 Year Olds
- 21 MIND: Young People Failed by Approach to Mental Health in Secondary in England
- 22 Shelter: 271,000 People Homeless in England Today
- 23 Shelter: 271,000 People Homeless in England Today
- 24 GOV.UK Adult Substance Misuse Treatment Statistics
- 25 GOV.UK Adult Substance Misuse Treatment Statistics
- 26 West Midlands Police: Hate Crime
- 27 Bristol City Council: Bristol Health and Wellbeing Profile
- 28 GOV.UK: The Employment of Disabled People
- 29 The King's Fund: The Health of People from Ethnic Minority Groups in England
- 30 The TUC: The Gender Pay Gap
- 31 House of Commons Library: Mental Health Statistics
- 32 House of Commons Library: Mental Health Statistics
- 33 NHS Digital: Obesity Figures for England
- 34 Office for National Statistics: Life Expectancy for Local Areas of the UK
- 35 NHS Digital: Rate of Mental Disorder Among Children

## TO LEARN MORE ABOUT THE FUNDS, CONTACT US:



**Grace England**  
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Grace manages the Resonance West Midlands SITR Fund, ranging from deal origination and deployment to ongoing portfolio monitoring. She is also co-leading the launch of Resonance's new social enterprise growth fund, due to launch in 2023, which will build on all that's been achieved through Resonance's SITR Funds to make social investment more accessible for high impact social enterprises across the UK. Grace has over twelve years of experience in the social impact investment sector, including nine years as part of the Resonance team.



**Anne Woolhouse**  
Investment Manager

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Anne is currently working on the West Midlands SITR Fund, having previously worked on the Community Asset Funds at Resonance. She is a qualified accountant having worked in both practice and the banking sector supporting a variety of businesses in their growth plans.



**Oliver Pollard**  
Head of Growing Enterprises

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Ollie has overall responsibility for the Growing Enterprises Team and its strategy as part of the impact labs at Resonance. His primary responsibility is to lead the team's continued innovation in social enterprise funding and manage the existing and new, investor and partner relationships that enable it.



**Donna Thomas**  
Senior Investment Manager

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Donna oversees the management of the Resonance South West SITR Fund, by working closely with each enterprise to ensure the Fund reaches its social and financial targets. Her key responsibilities are deal origination and portfolio management.



**Simon Chisholm**  
Chief Investment Officer

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Simon is responsible for the growth of Resonance's impact funds. He has twenty-five years of investment experience, including over ten years of social impact investment experience at Resonance and sixteen years in a number of roles with N M Rothschild & Sons in the UK and internationally.



PROFIT THROUGH **PURPOSE**



Photo: Bristol's Clifton Suspension Bridge and the International Balloon Fiesta


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We also have dedicated  
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