



UK
FINANCE

SUPPORTING ETHNIC MINORITY ENTREPRENEURSHIP IN THE UK

The role of the financial services sector



July 2022

FOREWORD

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This report reflects a growing consensus on the state of ethnic minority entrepreneurship in the UK. First, the already significant economic contribution of ethnic minority businesses (EMBs) to the UK economy – £25 billion gross value added prior to the global pandemic – could increase dramatically if they were counted correctly and received the right support.

But the long-reported detachment of EMBs from vital support networks continues, and it is concerning that too many EMBs still feel estranged from the wider enterprise ecosystem. Nonetheless, it is encouraging to see banks taking steps to both understand the underlying causes and deepen engagement with ethnic minority communities.

Second, ethnic minority entrepreneurs are ambitious. They're keen to start, develop and grow businesses, and they are alert to the importance of external funding to finance their growth aspirations. But this growth potential is being thwarted because too many aspiring ethnic minority entrepreneurs are not translating their high business creation rate and growth aspirations into durable enterprises. There is a real opportunity here for banks and other business support providers to join forces to tackle the barriers that impede the entrepreneurial journey of ethnic minority entrepreneurs. Focusing policy efforts on encouraging the durability and growth of EMBs, rather than start-ups, could also be an important feature of the 'levelling-up' agenda.

Finally, viable ethnic minority business owners are put off from seeking the finance they need, both debt and equity. To the detriment of the banks, investors and ethnic minority entrepreneurs, 'discouragement' continues to act as a brake on the development of EMBs. My colleagues

and I highlighted the need to tackle this problem when we conducted the first large-scale study of EMBs in the UK in the early 2000s. Banks initiated several remedial measures the following our report. Clearly more concerted action is required now.

At least banks are actively taking steps to tackle discouragement, something which is not commonplace across either the UK corporate sector supply chain or in public services. The banks' proactive stance has lessons especially for the wider business support system, which also has a 'trust-deficit' with EMBs. Several interesting and imaginative attempts to build relationships with EMBs are presented in the report. Importantly, these activities are seen as a starting point. There seems to be strong realisation of the need to ensure that sustained engagement with EMBs becomes integral to, and firmly embedded in, the business engagement work of banks.

FOREWORD

Stephen Pegge

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It is the defining characteristic of entrepreneurial businesses that they reflect the unique perspective of their founders and owner managers and they achieve their competitive advantage through differentiation. It is therefore no surprise that individually, the diversity of business is at the heart of success.

For a nation, the drive of newcomers and their descendants is often a source of ambition, application and innovation. Their international connections also clearly benefit trade. For the finance sector, whose business is in exchange and the mobilisation of resources for productive use, the opportunity to facilitate that for the widest network of customers is a clear commercial rationale. But that isn't always obvious to those who see the sector as remote and established.

Banks and finance providers have for many years taken an interest in the debate about access to finance for entrepreneurs from different ethnic communities, seeking insight, reviewing outcomes and developing initiatives to engage and support customers and new markets. As the policy debate has considered equal opportunities, financial inclusion, diversity and unconscious bias, so the industry quite rightly has reflected on its own contribution and accountability. There may be good evidence to conclude that the ethnicity of customers is not a driver of decisions but if perceptions are that barriers to access and fair treatment exist, discouragement and poor communication can still impact results and the issues can become entrenched.

My experience in the industry for nearly four decades is that great progress has been made and this report illustrates the wide range of examples of good practice out there. But as we face the challenge of transformation of the UK economy with a new trade framework, recovery from Covid-19, transition to net zero and digitisation, never has it been more important to embrace the widest range of opportunities and diversity of talent that we have.

I'd like to thank our working group of UK Finance members, our strategic partners representing networks of businesses and those research experts who have helped us develop this insight. I commend it to the industry and all those who share our vision of an inclusive and dynamic commercial finance sector.

The opportunities and challenges for ethnic minority businesses in the UK

A thriving economy needs to build on the talents of all entrepreneurs regardless of ethnic heritage, race, religion or nationality. The FSB¹ estimates that the economic contribution of ethnic minority entrepreneurs to the UK's gross added value is £25 billion. But this could be even higher if all entrepreneurs received more help and support.

Access to banking and investing in ethnic minority businesses (EMBs) are strategic priorities for UK Finance. This report sets out the challenges faced by ethnic minority businesses, evidenced by a significant body of research by a range of organisations, including the British Business Bank, Aston University and UK Finance. It highlights some targeted activities developed by lenders in partnership with EMB representatives and sets out what more needs to be done.

The evidence base is extensive. This paper provides some key findings from academic literature and industry reports.

The FSB Unlocking Opportunity Report reveals that 250,000 firms are ethnic minority-led (EMBs). Since 2002 typically ethnic minority entrepreneurs have reported a higher Total Entrepreneurial Activity rate than non-ethnic minority entrepreneurs.

Of these, 30 per cent are engaged in recent product or service innovation – 11 percentage points higher than non-ethnic minority firms – while they are more likely to export. They make the UK socially and culturally richer, provide employment to ethnic minority groups, and enhance cultural diversity throughout the UK.

The latest BVA BDRC Ethnic Minority Business Report (March 2021) states that ethnic minority SMEs on average are very ambitious, report high growth rates and innovate more than non-ethnic minority SMEs. Ethnic minority SMEs report greater interest in funding growth through debt, apply in similar proportions to non-ethnic firms, and use external finance in line with the SME average. However, they were more likely to see barriers to running their business, including political uncertainty, the current economic climate, changes in the value of sterling, access to finance and recruiting and retaining staff.

EMBs in the UK have equal access to debt finance products and lenders neither use nor capture data associated with ethnicity. However, EMB SMEs are less likely to obtain the finance they applied for – 48 per cent are made an offer by lenders compared to 78 per cent by SMEs overall.²

The factors leading to lower success rates apply to all SMEs and are risk predictors such as business age, track record and credit histories. EMBs are more likely to operate a business through a personal account meaning there is a lack of identifiable business banking activity.

EMB owners perceive that it will be hard to obtain commercial finance and there is a lack of trust which leads to discouragement. The [Black. British. In Business & Proud](#) report by Lloyds Bank, in partnership with the Black Business Network, (September 2021) revealed that Black business owners are 21 per cent more likely to be self-financed than to use financing from banks. Research suggests that ethnic-led businesses often don't apply for finance out of the expectation that it will be denied or in the belief that they will be perceived as being less competent or skilled than other social groups

This self-exclusion by credit worthy and ambitious entrepreneurs who would be approved for finance if they applied is an issue that needs to be addressed. Both perceived and tangible barriers need to be tackled.

There are other deep-rooted socio-economic factors at play that serve to impede and disadvantage EMBs. Many papers point to the detachment of EMBs from mainstream business support networks and call on the need for greater mentoring to provide advice and industry contacts. Economic background and pre-existing pay gaps can also affect business outcomes as those with lower household incomes often have less resource and capital to begin with. As a result, they can struggle to support their business in periods of economic downturn, such as the pandemic. The British Business Bank's [Small Business Finance Markets Report](#) (March 2022) outlined these complexities, revealing almost half (48 per cent) of ethnic minority-led businesses reported that they were worried about whether they had enough funding for the next six months, compared to 26 per cent of White-led businesses.

¹ FSB [Unlocking Opportunity: The value of ethnic minority firms to UK economic activity and enterprise](#)

² [Ethnic Minority Businesses 2020, BVA BDRC](#)

In summary, the research evidence points to socio-economic and risk factors behind poorer outcomes and general alignment on the existence of discouragement. Therefore there is clearly a need to build awareness, confidence and accessibility with targeted communications, positive role models and outreach

Recommendations

UK Finance and our members are committed to supporting ethnic minority businesses at every stage of their journey, from start up through to growth and scale up.

The evidence base suggests that lenders can have the greatest impact by providing support in three key areas:

- tackling issues of trust and discouragement
- business support and access to finance
- internal change

This report sets out some of the activities that lenders are undertaking in these three areas. This report is not designed to be a comprehensive guide to all activities by all lenders. Many of these industry approaches are currently being piloted and will evolve and change in response to customer and community feedback.

INDUSTRY CASE STUDIES

Tackling issues of trust and discouragement

The evidence base clearly indicates that low levels of trust, along with pre-existing perceptions of discrimination, are having a damaging impact on the growth and performance of ethnic minority businesses.

There is a clear need for industry-led programmes to promote stronger relationships and communication between banks and EMBs to build trust and reduce discouragement.

The following case studies provide an example of some of the many activities and initiatives that banks are working on to tackle these underlying factors.

HSBC: BLACK BUSINESS WEEK & SHOW

In 2021, HSBC UK were headline sponsors of the Black Business Week & Show. It had the aim of creating a presence and platform at the BBW/S that would:

- support and connect with more business start-ups from Black ethnic groups;
- help existing business owners become more successful, for example by promoting networking.

HSBC UK has committed to another two years as a headline sponsor.

HSBC: STUDENT INCUBATOR PILOT

HSBC UK is working in collaboration with five universities across the UK, to pilot a competitive enterprise programme which targets aspiring entrepreneurs from under-represented and low-income backgrounds to bring their business ideas to reality.

Successful candidates receive one to one mentoring from HSBC UK Commercial Banking Relationship Directors, alongside guidance from the Start Up Discovery School, access to HSBC UK customer webinars and some modest financial support to enable them to bring their commercial ambitions to fruition.

LLOYDS: IMMERSE PROGRAMME

In January this year, Lloyds launched the [Immerse programme in partnership with Foundervine](#).

Inspired by the Black. British. In Business & Proud Report 2021, the programme creates an ecosystem of support with multiple touchpoints for working professionals and founders from diverse backgrounds at various stages of their entrepreneurial journey.

Over the course of the year, Immerse offers spotlight events, community get-togethers, accelerators and an online series of educational videos, covering themes such as: finance, marketing, digital skills, scaling a business and mental health. These initiatives are led by subject matter experts from across the business spectrum to provide founders with the skills, tools, and resources to build and grow their business, while helping to develop networks within a community of like-minded entrepreneurs.

SANTANDER: WOMEN OF COLOUR IN BUSINESS

Santander works with PRECIOUS and its network of women of colour business founders to understand the unique and specific challenges they face when starting and growing businesses. In addition to jointly working on a [research paper](#) which has underpinned the programme design for women of colour, the bank has also set up a fully funded Mentoring Circles pilot programme to support women of colour in business. This is part of the bank's support for ethnic minority-led businesses which features a peer-to-peer approach to business guidance.

NATWEST: RACIAL EQUALITY TASKFORCE

In 2020 NatWest launched a [Racial Equality Taskforce](#) to listen, learn and better understand the barriers faced by colleagues, customers and communities from Black, Asian and minority ethnic backgrounds. The Taskforce set out ten commitments in the Banking on Racial Equality report, including a new UK target to have Black colleagues occupying three per cent of the top five UK leadership roles by 2025.

SANTANDER: FINANCED UNLOCKED BLACK INCLUSION PROGRAMME

The [Black Inclusion Programme](#) with Finance Unlocked provides students and recent graduates from communities under-represented in the financial services sector with further professional development as they prepare for and embark on their future careers.

The course focused on developing applicants' financial skills by concentrating on the fundamentals of finance and covered topical subjects including green finance and blockchain. 3000 students undertook the training, with 30 going on to receive £1500 scholarships to support their education.

SANTANDER: PROMOTING INCLUSIVE GROWTH

Santander has encouraged other SMES in the UK to consider their own responsibility to creating a diverse and inclusive society by continuing to build on our [suite of resources](#) to promote inclusive growth within our businesses. These include inclusive design advice to meeting the needs of all members of society.

NATWEST: ETHNICITY ADVISORY COUNCIL

In 2021, NatWest relaunched an [Ethnicity Advisory Council](#) to support its ethnicity and inclusion strategy. The Council is made up of nominated diversity and inclusion specialists from different industries to provide critical challenge, guidance, and direction on our strategy.

NATWEST: TIME TO CHANGE: ADVANCING THE UK'S ETHNIC MINORITY BUSINESSES

Over the past year NatWest has worked with the Centre for Research in Ethnic Minority Entrepreneurship (CREME) on a research project [Time To Change: Advancing the UK's Ethnic Minority Businesses \(EMBs\)](#). The research explores the contribution of and barriers faced by EMBs, access to finance and business support for ethnic minority entrepreneurs and comparison with international best practice. CREME has devised actionable recommendations to address the challenges faced by ethnic minority entrepreneurs, for adoption by policy makers, financial institutions and business support organisations. These will ensure a collaborative and robust approach to advancing ethnic minority business owners.

Business support and access to finance

Research shows that many EMBs struggle to access the vital networks, contacts and information that are key to building, innovating and expanding businesses. Banks are well placed to provide the infrastructure to break down social capital barriers and provide EMBs access to the support they need, through activities such as tailored mentoring services, online resource hubs and national events that showcase entrepreneurs from a range of backgrounds.

BARCLAYS: BLACK FOUNDERS ACCELERATOR

Barclays Black Founder Accelerator was designed to help early-stage digital and tech businesses founded by one or more Black entrepreneurs in the UK. Aimed at boosting diversity in entrepreneurship, the Black Founder Accelerator is delivered in partnership with Foundervine, a social enterprise specialising in supporting and championing underrepresented founders and communities. It includes expert masterclasses focused on core business skills, such as product development, sales strategy, operations and leadership. The founders are mentored by and receive professional coaching from scale-up experts.

In 2021, 40 businesses participated in the programme. It culminated in a Demo Day for founders to present their business to potential clients and investors. A further 40 businesses will participate in 2022.

SANTANDER: FINANCIAL READINESS

[Financial Readiness](#) is a business support programme for SMEs founded and/or led by women of colour. It's fully funded by Santander and delivered in partnership with [UpSkill Digital](#).

The programme consists of digital sessions focused on 'Grow your finance', 'Demystifying business borrowing and managing its benefits'. It also provides access to networking and mentoring circles as well as showcasing examples of relevant and powerful role models and case studies.

LLOYDS: LET'S TALK FINANCE

In 2021, Lloyds Black Business Advisory Committee hosted five National and Regional Community Conversations, providing networking opportunities and practical advice on different topics.

The ['Let's Talk Finance' event](#) consisted of an expert panel talking about money and mindset, how to get a business off the ground, different types of funding, key financial and non-financial metrics and how to tell a story to gain investment. Using their own experiences, participants discussed challenges faced in the Black business community and shared tips on seeking the right finance to start or grow a business.

One participant commented: "Really valuable to hear experience and advice, really helpful stories, great examples and practical guidance from this panel!" Another stated that they were "Feeling more confident going to speak with a bank".

LLOYDS: BLACK INVESTOR 360 FINANCE FESTIVAL

In partnership with the Black Business Network, Lloyds sponsored the 2022 [Black Investor 360 Finance Festival](#), which is aimed at accelerating the personal and business financial journey of current and aspiring black business owners. The event had eight panel discussions tackling topics such as digital currencies, managing cashflow and funding, cyber security and smart data management. The event also included practical finance skills workshops for more personalised learning, a specialised exhibition featuring over 50 financial and business advice/service providers and investment groups as well as designated space for networking.

Several elements of the Lloyds Bank [Immerse programme in partnership with Foundervine](#) are centred on access to finance. The Investment Readiness Accelerator is a four-week programme which ensures founders have a strong understanding of what is required to raise finance. The educational video series will include topics such as how to raise funds for your start-up, the finance fundamentals for your start-up, key criteria for investing and pitching and financial literacy. It also has a spotlight event on financial myth busting.

NATWEST: SUPPLIER DIVERSITY PROGRAMME

NatWest won the supplier diversity programme of the year award at the 2022 British Diversity Awards, for delivering an entrepreneurial support programme for diverse businesses which focused on providing support to those from ethnic minority groups. The 12 week pre-accelerator programme provided support on how to grow their business and confidently pitch and win business.

LLOYDS: BLACK BUSINESS RESOURCE HUB

In partnership with Black Business Network, Lloyds sponsored the creation of the [Black Business Resource Hub](#) – a directory of business resources curated by members of the Advisory Committee, to help navigate to useful information including funding, networking, mentoring, events and marketplaces. We also have a dedicated [Lloyds Bank Black Business Hub](#) as a one-stop shop for information on finance, networking and about our initiatives and partnerships.

LLOYDS: MENTORING

In partnership with [Mentor Black Business](#), Lloyds is providing 100 mentors from across the organisation, delivering vital support for Black business owners to help them tackle challenges and grow. The aim of the programme is to create a safe space to give industries an organised experience of Black businesses, as well as giving Black businesses experiences of industries.

Mentors receive bespoke learning to upskill them and increase their understanding of the unique culture and challenges for Black businesses. This includes video resources, comprehensive guides, bespoke sessions delivered by experts and bi-monthly mentor group check-ins.

Following an initial 'get to know you' meeting to gauge fit, mentors are asked to facilitate one-hour monthly virtual sessions with their paired mentee to share their experiences, help mentees to develop ideas to try new things and give practical advice, creating a safe space for both mentor and mentees to share and learn from each other.

Businesses can sign up via [Mentor Black Business – Take action \(mcsaatchi.com\)](#)

SANTANDER: BREAKTHROUGH WOMEN

Now in its 4th year, the [Breakthrough Women](#) programme is delivering support to 214 business owners. Partnering with Moving Ahead, a social impact organisation looking to improve workplace inclusion & diversity, the programme has two key aspects:

Traditional mentoring support –this includes a dedicated 1:1 mentor for the duration of the programme and a themed suite of virtual masterclasses designed for the mentee and their business, with activity delivered by inspirational role models and speakers.

Beyond mentoring – tailored support targeted for building business knowledge and insight, addressing competing demands, pressures and motivations for support with finance, marketing and management of a business. This also includes a peer-to-peer network, created solely for the 214 businesses on the programme, building a community to exchange ideas and encourage collaboration.

NATWEST: BUSINESS KNOWLEDGE BUILDING

NatWest works in partnership with Hatch Enterprise to support underrepresented entrepreneurs to develop the knowledge, confidence, and skills needed to launch and grow a business. Hatch support businesses through workshops, events, and 1-2-1 volunteering support, connecting entrepreneurs in a vibrant supportive community, and building networks.

HSBC: BUSINESS MENTORING PILOT

In the summer of 2021, HSBC UK launched its Business Mentoring pilot, based in the Midlands. The mentoring programme was built on independent research considering reasons for SME business failure, which highlighted a disparity between ethnicity. It concluded that in part this was because of a lack of experienced business support for ethnic minority business owners.

HSBC UK trained over 40 experienced banker colleagues on how to mentor businesses (as their day-to-day roles gives them huge amounts of practical expertise to call on) Through a variety of different connections it sourced 40 mentees who felt mentoring could benefit both them personally and also the success of their businesses. While the pilot has not yet finished, the experiences from both a mentor and mentee perspective are positive. HSBC UK is now considering rolling out the pilot nationally.

NATWEST: SUPPORTING BUSINESSES IN BRADFORD AND COVENTRY

In 2021 NatWest agreed a partnership with [Business in the Community](#) to look at challenges faced by small businesses in Bradford and Coventry, with a focus on the barriers faced by ethnic minority communities. The programme signposts businesses to sources of support and delivers a programme of events and networking opportunities for SMEs.

NATWEST: DIGITAL BOOST

As part of NatWest's SME Taskforce programme to support the UK economic recovery, the bank collaborated with Digital Boost to support the SME recovery and help drive inclusive economic growth. This includes a commitment to support Digital Boost to offer expertise to 200,000 people from ethnically diverse backgrounds.

Internal change

As well as promoting new initiatives and offering practical support for EMBs, there is a need for the industry to lead by example through internal programmes. To better combat the underlying socio-economic issues and institutionalised disadvantage that EMBs experience, it is important for banks and firms to facilitate internal training and education programmes to promote cultural and diversity awareness.

Banks understand that a key point relating to trust is the lack of ethnic minority senior representation within financial institutions. In response to this, banks have set out race action plans. For example, HSBC has set out its [Race Commitments](#), Lloyds Banking Group published '[Our Stand Against Racism](#)' and Barclays was one of the first signatories of the UK's [Race at Work Charter](#).

The following case studies provide an example of some of the many activities and initiatives that banks are working on to bring about positive cultural change.

HSBC: ENGAGE: INCLUSIVE LEADERSHIP

In January 2022, HSBC UK partnered with Upskill Digital in a programme to educate people leaders across its commercial banking business on inclusive leadership as part of our 'Respect' ambition. [Upskill Digital](#) is a specialist training provider dedicated to empowering leaders and accelerating progress in the workplace culture.

The aim of the programme was to explore definitions of inclusive leadership, discover the ways in which people leaders can manage diverse teams effectively and discuss the roles of inclusive communication, cultural intelligence and active allyship.

Upskill Digital led and facilitated discussions which centred on the barriers and challenges faced by Black and minority ethnic employees at HSBC UK and what leaders and managers are doing to support career progression for Black and minority ethnic colleagues.

The programme has concluded phase 1, with excellent feedback. Phase 2 of the programme focused on active allyship, delivered via a 'Get Active Hub' challenge, with leaders and managers asked to take part in a number of 'challenges' such as completing inclusive management e-learning modules and nominating colleagues for recognition awards for work on inclusion.

SANTANDER: BLACK INCLUSION PLAN

In 2020 Santander launched a Black Inclusion Plan to engage colleagues in inclusion training centred on breaking bias, micro messaging and respect. Employees are also involved in the bank's programmes to support women of colour to upskill and increase engagement and understanding of different ethnic groups.

Bank employees representing different ethnic groups actively engage in peer-to-peer sessions helping to coordinate, host and deliver sessions to SMEs and feature in internal podcasts sharing thoughts on how to best support women of colour who run businesses

LLOYDS: EMPLOYEE TRAINING

Lloyds Banking Group has developed and launched a comprehensive race education programme for colleagues, which started in 2020 with a series of sessions for all executive leaders with external experts.

In March 2021, the bank launched its Race Education for Line Managers programme, an in-depth workshop which has been delivered to over 9,500 line managers. The programme is an interactive journey through race, culture and inclusion that delves into tricky topics and explains structural vs 'in-your-face' racism. Most importantly, it gives line managers a deeper understanding of how cultural difference can play out in the workplace. In September 2021, the programme was extended to senior leaders.

In January 2022, an immersive Race Education for All Colleagues e-learning module was made available to our entire workforce to help colleagues identify racism and microaggressions, promoting awareness, allyship and action. So far over 90 per cent of our colleagues have completed the training.

BARCLAYS: RACE AT WORK PROGRAMME

In 2020, Barclays made a public commitment to be a trusted ally in the pursuit of racial justice and to help overcome inequity across all. It was an early signatory of the UK's Race at Work Charter, and voluntarily discloses ethnicity pay gaps including publishing separate ethnicity pay gaps for colleagues who identify as Asian, Black and multiracial ethnic groups.

In 2021, Barclays added measurable tools to its Race at Work programme to track progress over time, strengthening transparency and accountability. Implemented actions include:

- on track to meet the ambition of doubling the number of Black MDs in the UK and the US by the end of 2022; specialised career coaching service established for colleagues at VP level and below; mandatory training on race and ethnicity assigned to all colleagues;
- grown relationships with early careers partners, including SEO London in the UK and Modern Guild in the US who provide training, mentoring and support to young people from underrepresented backgrounds;
- investing in flagship diverse talent programme, Launchpad: designed to accelerate the career development of mid-level ethnically diverse and female colleagues.

Conclusions

We believe these initiatives will help to improve outcomes for ethnic minority business owners in practical ways by providing support, engagement, help and opportunities. They also provide a starting point for further significant and tangible action which is needed to unlock the potential of ethnic minority-led firms by tackling the real and perceived barriers they face.

There is a strong commitment by the industry and the banks who provided case studies to drive change, though the initiatives already in place or planned and the commitments outlined below.

By concerted and coordinated action we can make a difference.

COMMITMENTS BY UK FINANCE WORKING WITH MEMBERS

The commitments set out below are focused on tackling the issues highlighted at the start of the report, especially the alleviation of ethnic minority borrower discouragement and improving trust in the industry.

Access to finance

- Ensuring financial products, services and processes work for all communities.
- Working with the Business Growth Fund, UK Business Angels Association and investor groups to ensure equity finance is available for viable ethnic minority businesses which want to scale up and grow.
- Signposting alternative sources of finance or referrals to government-designated lending platforms, giving customers helpful information and advice if a loan is declined and raising awareness about the financial solutions they should consider.
- Working with the Lending Standards Board to ensure the lending principles and standards reflect the needs of ethnic minority businesses.

Delivering programmes that help ethnic minority firms to thrive

- Developing and maintaining networks that are inclusive to all by reviewing existing activities and their reach and by sharing good practices.
- Working with the government-owned British Business Bank (BBB) and BEIS to ensure government lending and support schemes are promoted such that participation is diverse e.g. Help to Grow.
- Supporting mentoring programmes across the UK.
- Continue with bank-led regional outreach events to enable ethnic minority business customers to meet with key enablers and staff to answer questions.
- Use existing fora to bring together senior representatives from the banks and representatives of ethnic minority business groups to discuss and review trends, identify emerging areas of concern, ensure problems are addressed and support the implementation of these commitments

Demonstrating impact

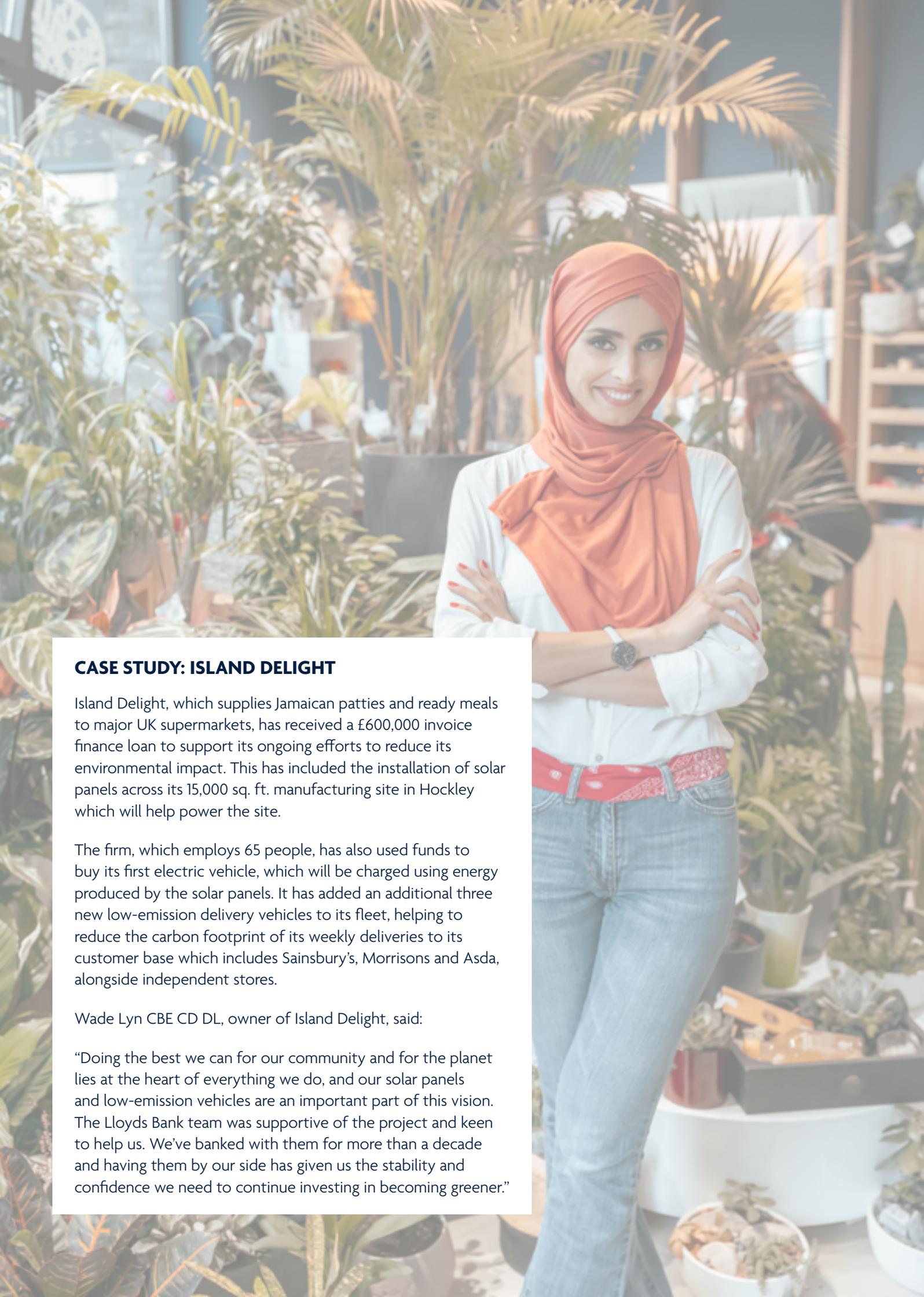
- Funding an independent Ethnic Minority Business report that monitors and tracks the experience of accessing finance and banking services.
- Developing key performance indicators to measure the change in outcomes for ethnic minority businesses over time, including success factors for initiatives.



CASE STUDY: AA EDUCATES

Andrine Allen, who recently set up AA Educates and is taking part in the Immerse Programme, said: “I am sure I speak for many when I say that the Foundervine Immerse programme in partnership with Lloyds Bank is hugely important for someone like me, who would have described themselves as ‘under-served’. The Immerse programme has provided me with a host of opportunities to connect and build my network. More importantly, it has provided me with opportunities to grow, not only my enterprise but also as an individual.

“Becoming part of the Immerse programme has allowed me to upskill, offering me the chance to gain knowledge and understanding in key areas of business, such as marketing and sales. I recently received my first masterclass on the Immerse Marketing and Sales Accelerator. I have since been able to build and refine my business marketing strategy, using the information that I gathered.”



CASE STUDY: ISLAND DELIGHT

Island Delight, which supplies Jamaican patties and ready meals to major UK supermarkets, has received a £600,000 invoice finance loan to support its ongoing efforts to reduce its environmental impact. This has included the installation of solar panels across its 15,000 sq. ft. manufacturing site in Hockley which will help power the site.

The firm, which employs 65 people, has also used funds to buy its first electric vehicle, which will be charged using energy produced by the solar panels. It has added an additional three new low-emission delivery vehicles to its fleet, helping to reduce the carbon footprint of its weekly deliveries to its customer base which includes Sainsbury's, Morrisons and Asda, alongside independent stores.

Wade Lyn CBE CD DL, owner of Island Delight, said:

“Doing the best we can for our community and for the planet lies at the heart of everything we do, and our solar panels and low-emission vehicles are an important part of this vision. The Lloyds Bank team was supportive of the project and keen to help us. We've banked with them for more than a decade and having them by our side has given us the stability and confidence we need to continue investing in becoming greener.”

A woman with long dark hair, wearing a light green top, is smiling and looking towards a man in a suit. They appear to be in a clothing store, with various suits hanging in the background. The woman is holding a piece of fabric or a garment. The man is partially visible on the right side of the frame, looking towards the woman.

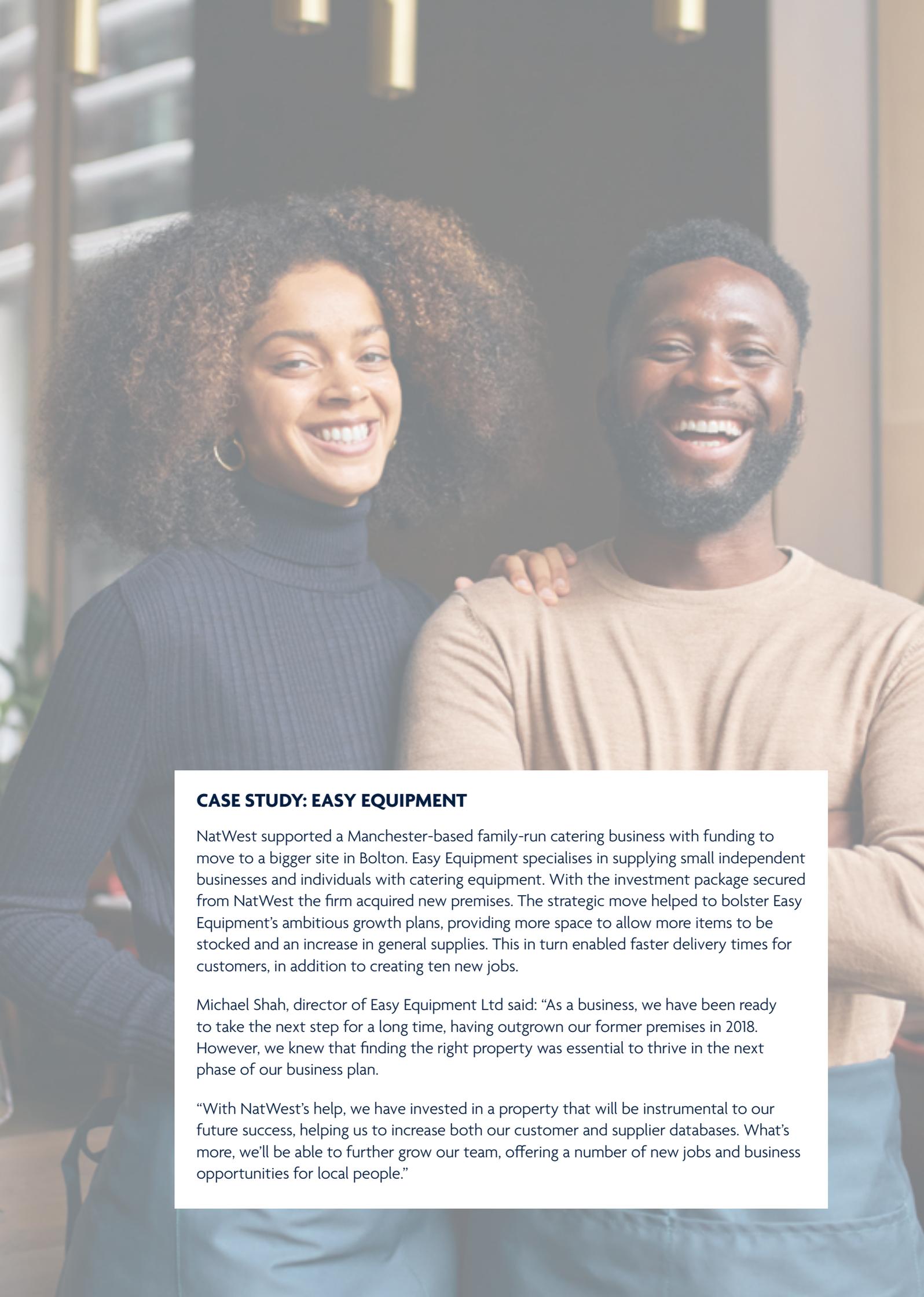
CASE STUDY: SHOGUN SOCIAL

James Gayle, Founder of Shogun Social, says: “Working in a Barclays Eagle Labs has completely changed my business for the better! When you first start a business, it can be an extremely lonely road, with potential pitfalls at every turn. Eagle Labs have perfectly crafted an experience and overall offering that can really support businesses like Shogun Social. We have grown from one permanent desk to four permanent desks, a custom area catered for our team and part-time studio rental – all in under a year.

This wouldn't have been possible without the support of the amazing in-house lab managers who connected us with potential clients and were a sounding board for new concepts and challenges. The outstanding range of mentors that we have had access to has helped us navigate complex business strategies in more depth. I was also fortunate enough to be a part of the Black founder accelerator led by Barclay's and Foundervine.

Often as a POC founder, it can be harder to get access to resources, funding and generally just being in the room where it happens. The BFA programme really helped to address all of that. I couldn't recommend the program enough and I urge the next generation to apply straight away, as it's all free.”

Shogun Social is a social media agency based in Southampton that focuses on helping businesses post more like creators using organic social media. It helps companies build true relationships and communities online and break into new platforms and formats like TikTok and podcasting.



CASE STUDY: EASY EQUIPMENT

NatWest supported a Manchester-based family-run catering business with funding to move to a bigger site in Bolton. Easy Equipment specialises in supplying small independent businesses and individuals with catering equipment. With the investment package secured from NatWest the firm acquired new premises. The strategic move helped to bolster Easy Equipment's ambitious growth plans, providing more space to allow more items to be stocked and an increase in general supplies. This in turn enabled faster delivery times for customers, in addition to creating ten new jobs.

Michael Shah, director of Easy Equipment Ltd said: "As a business, we have been ready to take the next step for a long time, having outgrown our former premises in 2018. However, we knew that finding the right property was essential to thrive in the next phase of our business plan.

"With NatWest's help, we have invested in a property that will be instrumental to our future success, helping us to increase both our customer and supplier databases. What's more, we'll be able to further grow our team, offering a number of new jobs and business opportunities for local people."



CASE STUDY: SOLARISKIT

Through Royal Bank of Scotland's (brand of the NatWest Group) Climate Accelerator Programme, Dundee-based company Solaris Kit is set to provide cheaper access to hot water in Rwanda after beginning production of a pioneering kit. Mechanical engineer Dr Faisal Ghani was inspired to create a flat-packable solar thermal collector after reading a journal paper about energy usage in Rwanda, where a large portion of household income is required to cover heating bills. As an equatorial country, Dr Ghani knew there was a solution to harness its abundant solar energy in an affordable, practical way to heat water. Through the Climate Accelerator Dr Ghani was able to establish a commercial plan, and to network and find investors to back the product. Royal Bank of Scotland also established a corporate partnership with SolarisKit, becoming its first UK customer, with plans in place to install the thermal collector at its HQ.

Dr Faisal Ghani, founder and CEO of SolarisKit, said: "When you're an entrepreneur, you feel siloed in your work, so support from the Royal Bank of Scotland has been great. From becoming our first customer in the UK, to providing networking opportunities and group coaching sessions through the Programme, the whole experience has been brilliant."



CASE STUDY: INTELLIDIGEST

Dr Ifeyinwa Kanu, founder of Intellidigest, based in London, has been supported by NatWest with funding and business support through the banks Back Her Business (a £1 million initiative to assist start-ups in the UK) and Entrepreneur Accelerator programmes. Intellidigest pioneers the way for global food waste elimination and uses cutting-edge research, technology, and market knowledge to promote a circular economy to businesses around the UK at every stage of the food chain, from farming to disposal.

Dr Ifeyinwa Kanu said: “Transitioning to a circular economy will be key to the UK’s net-zero targets and we’re proud to be one of the many businesses across the UK helping to meet this aim.”

