

STATE OF SOCIAL ENTERPRISE



IN THE EAST OF ENGLAND

This paper sets out headline findings on the state of social enterprise in the East of England, using government estimates and data from the State of Social Enterprise 2025, and SEUK's Social Enterprise Knowledge Centre.

<p>Around 9,700 of the 100,000 social enterprises in the UK operate in the East of England*. 54% of these operate as Community Interest Companies.</p>	<p>Median social enterprise turnover in the East of England was around £117,500 in the previous financial year.</p>	<p>The median number of employees for social enterprises in the East of England was 6.</p>
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Of the social enterprises surveyed:

43% deliver products
88% deliver services
13% deliver works

The main sources of income for social enterprises in the East of England were trading with the **general public (22%)**, followed by trading with the **public sector (20%)**, and trading with the **private sector (13%)**.

The median amount of time social enterprises in the East of England have been trading is 8 years.

	EAST ENGLAND	UK
Up to 6 months	1%	3%
7 months to a year	4%	2%
1-3 years	17%	19%
4-5 years	10%	17%
6-10 years	26%	26%
11-15 years	20%	14%
16-20 years	10%	7%
More than 20 years	10%	11%

ECONOMY

The portion of social enterprises in the East of England making a profit has decreased from **60%** in **2021** to **36%** in **2025**.

In 2025, **the number of social enterprises developing new products and services was higher in the East of England than the UK figure.**

	PROFIT		LOSS		BROKE EVEN	
	EAST	UK	EAST	UK	EAST	UK
2025	36%	40%	29%	26%	30%	28%
2023	43%	48%	22%	26%	30%	22%
2021	60%	49%	11%	25%	28%	25%

	EAST ENGLAND	UK
2025	52%	50%
2023	43%	53%
2021	59%	61%

45% grew their turnover from the previous financial year.

28% decreased their turnover versus the previous financial year.

61% expect to grow their turnover in the next financial year, and **13%** expect it to decrease.

Financial barriers were perceived as the biggest barrier to growth (**77%**). Of these financial barriers, **obtaining grant funding** was viewed as the biggest barrier to growth (**68%**).

Of those who expect their turnover to grow, most plan to achieve this through:

partnerships with the public/private sector (**69%**), developing new products/services (**67%**), and diversifying and expanding into new markets (**62%**).



SOCIETY

59% of social enterprise leaders in the East of England are women, which is slightly higher than the figure of **57%** across the UK.

12% come from a minority ethnic background. This is lower than the UK-wide figure of **17%**.

35% are disabled or neurodivergent. This is higher than the UK figure of **30%**.

74% have lived experiences of the social issue(s) addressed by their social enterprise.

88% of social enterprises in the East of England are real living wage employers.



Sammy Hunt, Founder of Mud Hub CIC's stall at Social Enterprise Day Showcase 2025 hosted by FUSE Network. Photo credit: Keith Osborne Photography.

The **top three impact** areas for social enterprises in the East of England are:

- Mental health/wellbeing (**49%**)
- Benefitting a particular locality/community building (**42%**)
- Supporting vulnerable people (**39%**)

SUPPORT

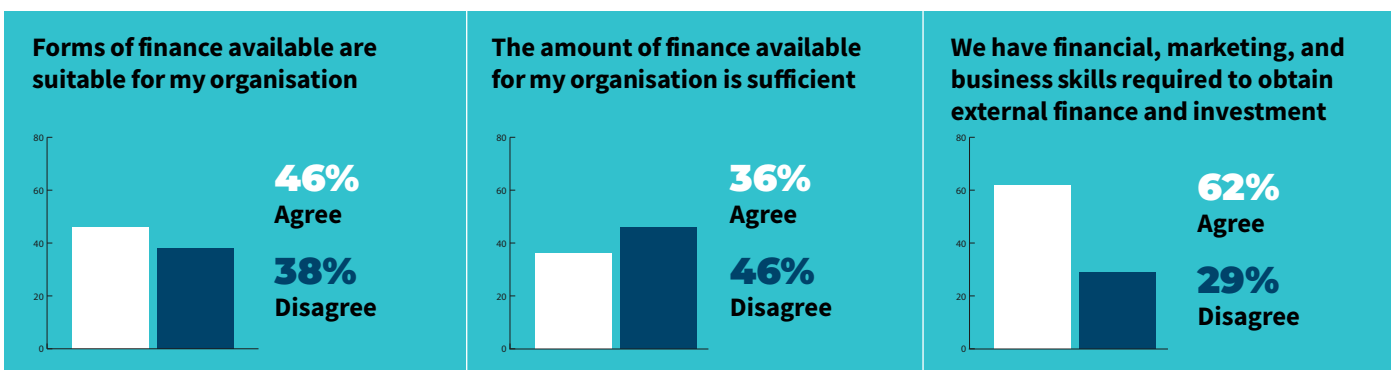
Summary of interest in external finance (not including grants) in the last 12 months.

The three most common reasons for deciding not to apply to new sources of finance in 2025 were:

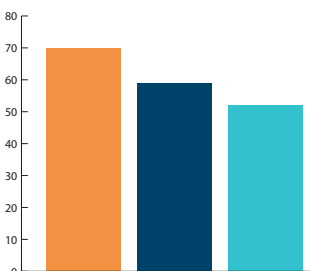
	2025	2023	2021
Applied for external finance	4%	2%	26%
Considered applying but didn't	35%	24%	15%
Not considered applying	61%	71%	59%
Don't know/prefer not to say	0%	3%	N/A

	2025	2023	2021
Other	38%	0%	25%
Not the right time (economic conditions)	21%	20%	25%
Didn't want to take on additional risk	17%	27%	25%

Opinions on external finance were as follows:



The three most common areas where external information/advice were sought were:



- 70%** Business growth/business plans
- 59%** Financial advice e.g. accounting, cash flow, general running of the business
- 52%** Marketing

