

# STATE OF SOCIAL ENTERPRISE

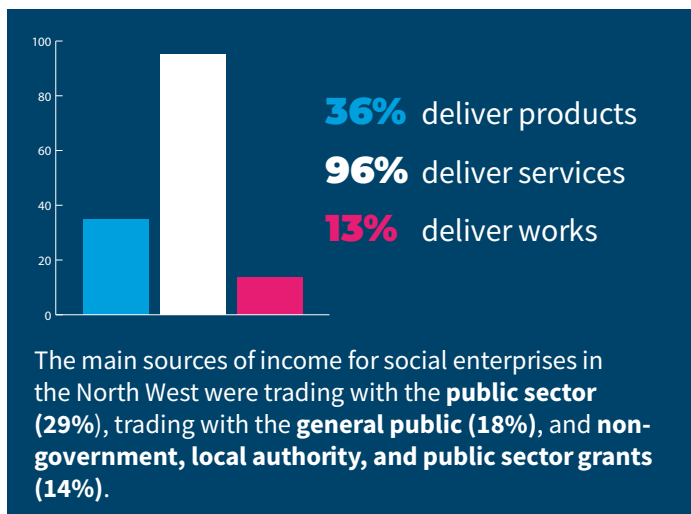
## IN NORTH WEST ENGLAND



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

<p><b>Around 12,100 of the 100,000 social enterprises</b> in the UK operate in North West England*. <b>53%</b> of these operate as Community Interest Companies.</p>	<p><b>Median social enterprise turnover</b> in North West England was around <b>£117,500</b> in the previous financial year.</p>	<p>Social enterprises in North West England employ a <b>median of 6 people</b>.</p>
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Of the social enterprises surveyed:



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

	NW	UK
<b>Up to 6 months</b>	3%	3%
<b>7 months to a year</b>	1%	2%
<b>1-3 years</b>	19%	19%
<b>4-5 years</b>	19%	17%
<b>6-10 years</b>	23%	26%
<b>11-15 years</b>	18%	14%
<b>16-20 years</b>	7%	7%
<b>More than 20 years</b>	10%	11%

## ECONOMY

The proportion of North West social enterprises making a profit has consistently been slightly higher than the UK figure, however it has decreased over time, from **53% in 2021** to **41% in 2025**.

While the proportion of UK social enterprises developing new products or services has decreased since 2021, the number of North West social enterprises developing new products and services has increased from **54% in 2021** to **61% in 2025**.

	PROFIT		LOSS		BROKE EVEN	
	NW	UK	NW	UK	NW	UK
<b>2025</b>	41%	40%	23%	26%	31%	28%
<b>2023</b>	49%	48%	26%	26%	19%	22%
<b>2021</b>	53%	49%	28%	25%	19%	25%

	NW	UK
<b>2025</b>	61%	50%
<b>2023</b>	56%	53%
<b>2021</b>	54%	61%

**51%** grew their turnover from the previous financial year.

**20%** decreased their turnover from the previous financial year.

**55%** expect their turnover to grow in the next financial year, and **16%** expect it to decrease.

Of those who expect their turnover to grow, most plan to achieve this through developing new products/services (**69%**), partnerships with the public/private sector (**66%**), and diversifying/expanding into new markets (**64%**).

**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 (**70%**).



## SOCIETY

**55%** of social enterprises in the North West have female leaders. This is slightly lower than the UK figure of **57%**.

**15%** have leaders from a minority ethnic background. This is lower than the UK figure of **17%**.

**36%** have leaders who are disabled or neurodiverse. This is

higher than the UK figure of **30%**.

**78%** have leaders with lived experience of the social issue(s) addressed by their social enterprise.

**87%** are real living wage employers.



Tenant forum held by by Baltic Creative CIC, which supports creative businesses in Liverpool.

The **top three impact** areas for social enterprises in the North West are:

- Mental health and wellbeing (**44%**)
- Benefitting a particular locality/community building (**41%**)
- Physical health and wellbeing (**40%**)

## SUPPORT

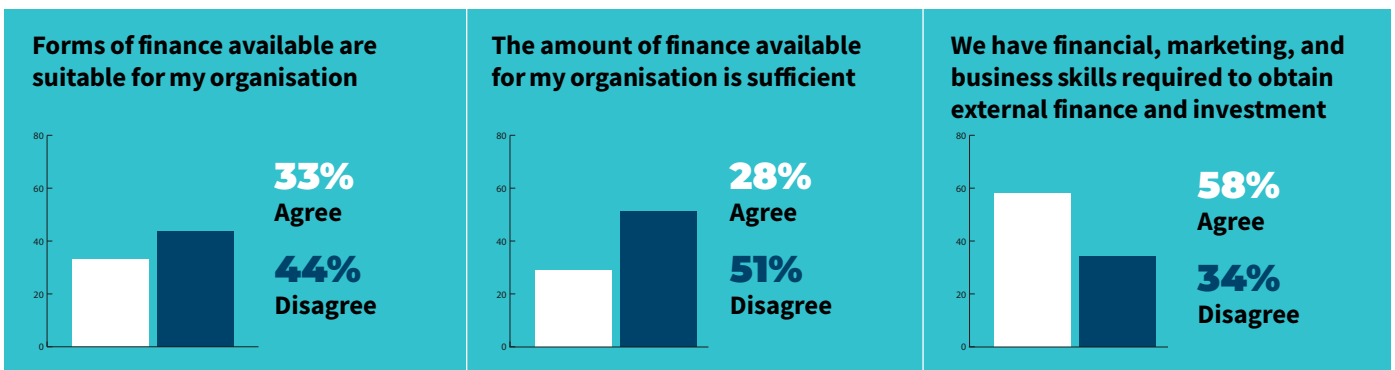
**21%** of social enterprises in the North West applied for external finance (not including grants) in 2025, while **30%** considered applying but chose not to. **46%** did not consider applying.

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

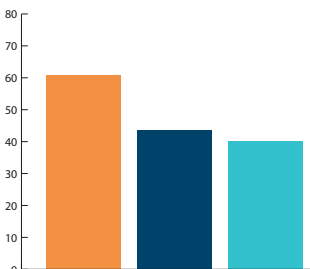
	2025	2023	2021
Applied for external finance	21%	14%	36%
Considered applying but didn't	30%	32%	21%
Not considered applying	46%	53%	43%
Don't know/prefer not to say	4%	1%	N/A

	2025
Didn't want to take on additional risk	25%
Not the right time (economic conditions)	22%
Time pressures/lack of resources prevented application	19%
Lack of confidence and skills to take on finance	19%
Thought finance would be too expensive/interest rate too high	19%

Opinions on external finance were as follows:



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



- 61%** Business growth/business plans
- 43%** Financial advice e.g. how and where to get finance
- 40%** Governance issues

