



power to
change



Power to Change | Research summary

The Community Business Market in 2021

Community businesses are bouncing back from the impact of the pandemic more financially confident and economically stronger. With a renewed mandate to meet the evolving needs of their communities and strengthened relationships with local people and the public sector, they take on society's biggest challenges, including increasing inclusivity and tackling climate change.



£20k → £130k
Median total annual income increased by £20,000.



volunteers
There are an average of 30 volunteers per community business, a return to pre-pandemic levels. Volunteers are crucial to the increase in income.



63%
were fully operational in summer 2021 compared with 15% the previous year.



59%
are more confident about their financial prospects over the next year, compared with 11% last year.



During the pandemic, community businesses have:



delivered food to vulnerable local people



provided remote access to existing services



offered space and facilities for the vaccination programme

Relationships between community businesses, local people and the public sector were strengthened.



66%

expect to develop new partnerships or collaborations in the coming year.

“ During COVID we became much more responsive to the whole community, so the parents, the older people, people who were having to isolate at home and were feeling very vulnerable... We’ve continued to be more of a whole community focused organisation.

The pandemic caused a marked increase in demand for wellbeing and support services:



88%
mental health support



80%
financial advice



78%
health and social care



75%
food provision



88%

The pandemic led to greater grant dependency. 88% per cent accessed grant funding.



The number of public-facing support community businesses continues to grow:



31%

The number of community businesses offering more than one public-facing support service grew by 31%.

There was notable increases in provision in particular sub sectors:



30%

employability support and information, advice and guidance (an increase of 9 percentage points compared to 2020)



23%

youth services (an increase of 7 percentage points compared to 2020)

Community businesses said they made a positive impact in:



95%
reducing
social isolation



95%
improving
health and
wellbeing



97%
increasing
community
cohesion



95%
increasing
community
pride and
empowerment

Community businesses are actively responding to the changing climate.



72%

said they had some impact on improving their local environment in four main areas:



40%

growing, providing, or educating people about, food



37%

improving buildings



37%

improving or protecting the natural environment



32%

managing waste or resource consumption

“ We’ve got some wasted space that was just used to dump litter and stuff outside. So that’s been greened and will become a herb garden to supply the canteen and that will be run by local residents and volunteers. ”



58%

said they had employed at least one person who had never been in paid employment before.



4x

Community businesses were nearly four times more likely to be led by people from minoritised ethnicities (19%) compared with the UK’s small and medium enterprises (5%).