



Funded by
UK Government

Community Led Business Support Project Sandwell Report 2025-26



West Midlands
Combined Authority



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Message from CEO



Our Community Led Business Support project reflects the kind of practical, locally driven approach needed in today's economy. Small businesses are vital to our communities, yet many face ongoing challenges that require collective solutions.

By bringing together business owners and local stakeholders, this initiative creates a network of shared knowledge, collaboration, and support. It is shaped by real needs, making it both relevant and impactful.

Ultimately, this project is about more than business it's about strengthening communities, driving resilience, and enabling sustainable local growth.

Davinder Kaur

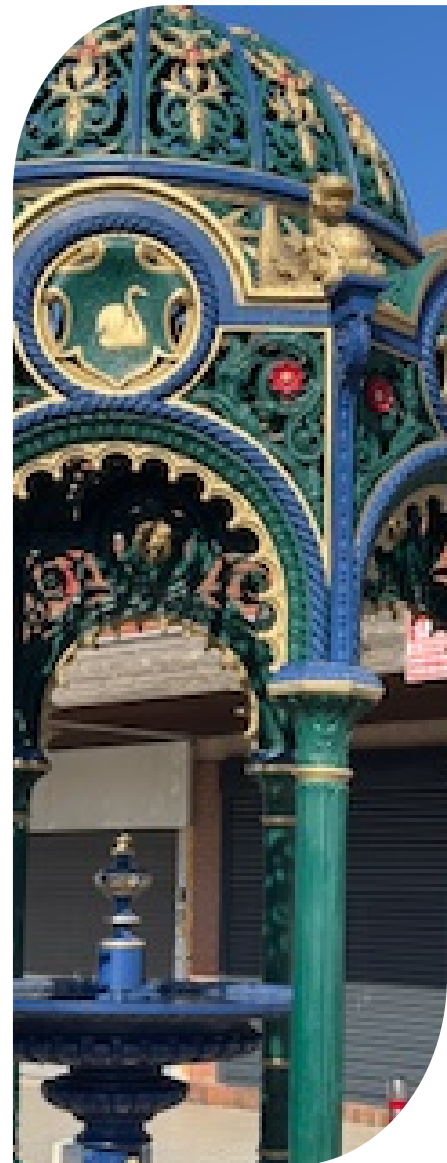
CEO of Skills Work & Enterprise Development Agency

Company Overview

SWEDA began in 1989 following a feasibility study that examined the need for a dedicated business advice service for women. The study identified several barriers, most notably the lack of childcare support, which prevented many women from starting their own businesses.

In response, SWEDA partnered with local nurseries to provide childcare, introduced a business advice service during school hours, and created play areas within meeting spaces to support clients attending with young children. These practical adjustments made SWEDA's services far more accessible to women and mothers, leading to the establishment of the Sandwell Women's Enterprise Development Agency (SWEDA).

Over the years, SWEDA has evolved and expanded both the variety of services it offers and the range of people it supports. This now includes men, young people, and disadvantaged groups. In 2014, the organisation adopted the name Skills Work and Enterprise Development Agency (SWEDA) to better reflect its broader mission.



Today, SWEDA is a registered charity based in West Bromwich, providing a wide range of fully funded services across the Black Country. With an agile, dedicated, and experienced team, the organisation continually adapts its services to meet the evolving needs of the community. By securing a variety of funding streams, SWEDA has been able to develop and deliver initiatives tailored to the groups that need them most.

As the charity has grown and its work has expanded, this rebrand became a natural progression. Throughout this evolution, SWEDA's commitment has remained unchanged: To support everyone who seeks help whether directly through its services or by connecting individuals with trusted partner organisations that can provide specialist support.

SWEDA's achievements would not have been possible without the strong collaborations it has cultivated over the years. Partnership has always been central to its work, reflected in the close relationships maintained with local authorities and funding bodies. Their financial support and guidance continue to play a vital role in enabling the delivery of high quality, accessible services.

Recognising the importance of these opportunities, SWEDA remains flexible, proactive, and responsive in expanding its offer. It is committed to welcoming new partnerships and exploring new avenues to deliver meaningful, impactful support where it is most needed. Supported by a diverse group of funders, SWEDA continues to empower individuals and communities by addressing the challenges highlighted in its earliest research while expanding its offer to meet evolving local needs.

**Employment
Support**

**Welfare
Advisory Services**

**Digital
Skills**

**Business
Support**



Cyber Security Workshop

Project Overview



Tender Writing Workshop

Executive Summary

This report outlines the delivery and impact of the Community Led Business Support Project in Sandwell, West Midlands. The project was designed to strengthen local enterprise, promote inclusive economic participation, and support sustainable business growth, particularly within underserved and underrepresented communities.

Responding to identified local challenges such as limited access to tailored advice, structural barriers faced by early stage and micro businesses, and the need for culturally relevant support, the project adopted a community led delivery model. This approach ensured that services were accessible, trusted, and aligned with the real needs of local entrepreneurs.

Over the reporting period, the project successfully engaged and supported a total of 95 businesses, including 85 receiving light touch support and 80 receiving more intensive, medium touch support. Notably, 82 of supported businesses were ethnic minority-led, significantly contributing to the project's commitment to inclusive economic development. In addition, 44 businesses were identified as ready for growth, exceeding expectations in supporting enterprise progression.



Canvassing - West Bromwich 4



Promoting
Local
Economic
Participation

Project Delivery

A comprehensive programme of activity was delivered, including one-to-one business advice, workshops, mentoring, networking opportunities, and targeted outreach. Support focused on key areas such as financial planning, marketing, compliance, and business resilience. Delivery methods were intentionally flexible and community based, reducing barriers to participation and enabling engagement from priority groups.



96 Businesses
Supported In
Total

The project also facilitated onward referrals to key support organisations, including Business Growth West Midlands, Sandwell Council Employment Team, and a wider network of specialist providers, ensuring businesses could access continued and tailored support beyond the project.



Strengthen
Local
Enterprise



Support
Sustainable
Business
Growth

Project Outcomes

Outcomes for participants were positive, with businesses reporting increased confidence, improved knowledge, and a clearer strategic direction. Several entered new markets, developed new products or services, and improved productivity, demonstrating early indicators of sustainable growth.

Beyond direct business outcomes, the project contributed to wider community benefits by strengthening local networks, enabling peer support, and enhancing trust in business support provision. The community led model proved highly effective in reaching underserved groups and generating meaningful engagement.

Overall, the project successfully met its objectives and delivered measurable economic and social impact across Sandwell. Key learning highlights the importance of flexible, locally rooted delivery, strong partnership working, and continued investment in community-led business support to sustain long term, inclusive growth.

Targets and Finances

Outputs and Outcomes	Target	Achieved
Overall business engaged with 2025-2026		96
Number of businesses receiving light touch support	85	85
Number of businesses receiving medium intensity support	50	80
Number of businesses supported that are ethnic minority led (target - at least 75%)	64	83
Number of business supported that are ready for growth (target - at least 20%)	17	44

Number of businesses referred to BGWM	5
Number of businesses referred to (add partner/programme) Sandwell Council Employment Team	2
Number of businesses referred to (add partner/programme) SWEDA Consultant & SCVO & other organisations , BID team, central business finance	41
Businesses reporting improved productivity	4
Jobs created	0
Businesses engaged in new markets	5
Businesses adopting new to market technology/processes	7
Businesses developig new to market products or services	7

Background and Local Context

Sandwell is a metropolitan borough in the West Midlands, comprising six towns: Oldbury, Rowley Regis, Smethwick, Tipton, Wednesbury, and West Bromwich.

The borough has a diverse population, with a highly ethnically diverse community, and a strong history of industry, manufacturing, and enterprise. It is widely recognised for its industrial heritage and central location, forming a key part of the Black Country.

Despite its strategic location and proximity to major economic centres such as Birmingham, Sandwell continues to experience persistent socio economic challenges that impact both residents and local businesses.

The borough has higher than average levels of deprivation compared to national figures, with many neighbourhoods ranking among the most deprived in England. This is reflected in lower average incomes, higher levels of unemployment and economic inactivity, and reduced business density compared to regional and national averages.

Sandwell is home to a large number of microbusinesses, sole traders, and early-stage enterprises. Many of these operate within their local communities, contributing to the local economy through self employment and essential service provision. There is also a significant presence of ethnic minority led businesses and family-run enterprises, which play a vital role in sustaining local high streets and neighbourhood economies.

However, many local businesses operate in sectors that are particularly vulnerable to economic shocks, including retail, hospitality, personal services, and construction. Rising operational costs, changing consumer behaviour, and ongoing economic uncertainty have placed increasing pressure on small businesses, highlighting the need for accessible, tailored, and locally relevant business support.



The Community Led Business Support project is designed to deliver accessible, locally rooted support to businesses by operating at the heart of the communities it serves.

At SWEDA, we embody this approach, as one of seven Community Hubs based across the West Midlands, we are embedded within Sandwell, enabling us to engage directly with local businesses that may feel disconnected from, or less confident in accessing, traditional support services such as those provided by the Council.

Our presence within the community allows us to build trusted relationships with local entrepreneurs and small businesses, ensuring they are aware of and able to access the support available to help them start, sustain, and grow their enterprises.

To effectively reach these businesses, we adopt a proactive and flexible approach to engagement. This includes door-to-door canvassing, attendance at networking events, targeted use of social media, and the provision of out of hours support to accommodate the needs of busy business owners.

Engagement Strategy

A key element of our delivery has been proactive, on the ground engagement with businesses across Sandwell's high streets, industrial estates, and surrounding areas. This direct approach has enabled us to connect with businesses in their own environments, better understand their needs, and build meaningful relationships with local entrepreneurs.

As a team, we have valued the opportunity to visit businesses in person and see first hand the passion and commitment behind their work. These visits have played a crucial role in reaching businesses that may not have been aware of SWEDA or the support available through the Community Led Business Support Project.

We recognise, however, that this approach requires persistence and consistency.

In many cases, it has taken multiple visits often three or four to build trust and fully demonstrate the value of engaging with the project. This highlights the importance of a relationship-led approach when working with businesses that may be hesitant or have not previously accessed formal support.

In addition to direct outreach, we have strengthened partnerships with key local stakeholders to widen our reach and referral pathways. This includes collaboration with local libraries, where we have delivered outreach activities such as Saturday drop in sessions to support businesses unable to engage during standard working hours. We have also worked with the Department for Work and Pensions (DWP) to support individuals who have been trading for over 12 months but continue to rely on benefits and are classified as not yet gainfully self-employed.

Further referral routes have been developed through relationships with local accountants, who have signposted clients requiring additional business support, as well as through engagement with community organisations such as Brushstrokes. These partnerships have been instrumental in extending our reach and ensuring that support is accessible to a wide range of businesses across Sandwell.



Meeting with Black Country Chamber of Commerce

Networking

Raising Awareness Through Networking and Engagement

Another key approach we have taken to ensure that small businesses in Sandwell are aware of the support available to them is through consistent engagement at networking events.

Over the past twelve months, we have both attended a wide range of established networking events and delivered our own. This has enabled us to directly connect with local businesses, raise awareness of our services, and build strong, trust based relationships within the business community.

Attendance at Established Networking Events

We have actively participated in several well established networking events across the region, including:

Get Connected in Sandwell

A networking event specifically aimed at Sandwell based businesses

Sandwell Means Business

Another event focused on supporting and connecting local enterprises

Club 1991

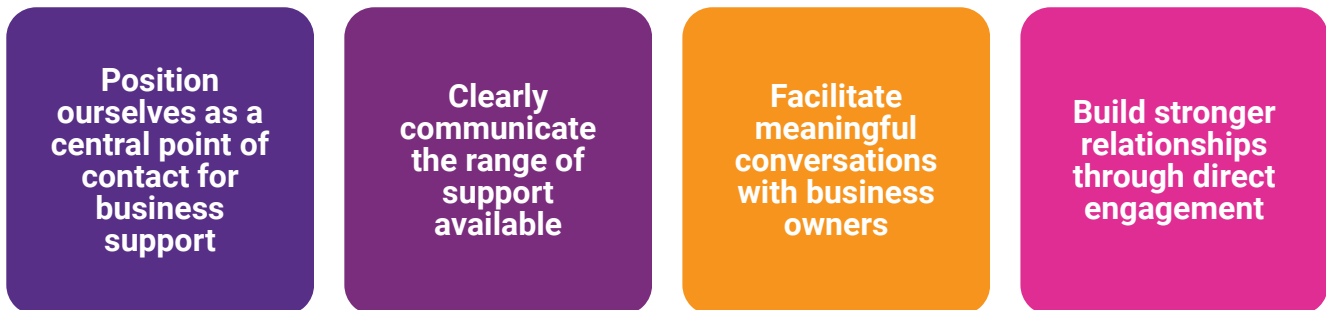
A networking group based in Willenhall that attracts businesses from across the wider Black Country area

Attending these events has provided valuable opportunities to engage with a diverse range of businesses at different stages of their growth journey. It has also allowed us to increase visibility of the support program within existing business networks and ecosystems.

Hosting Our Own Networking Events

In addition to attending external events, we have also organised and hosted our own networking sessions. These events created a dedicated platform for engaging directly with businesses across Sandwell in a more focused and controlled environment.

As hosts, we were able to:



This approach ensured that attendees not only became aware of the program but also gained a clearer understanding of how it could support their specific business needs.

Impact of Networking as an Engagement Tool

Networking has proven to be a highly effective method of engagement. Businesses attending these events are typically already motivated to grow, improve, or explore new opportunities. As a result, conversations around support, strategy, and development were more targeted and impactful.

This environment made it easier to:



This approach ensured that attendees not only became aware of the program but also gained a clearer understanding of how it could support their specific business needs.

Social Media

As Sandwell is such a large area, we decided to use social media as a way to engage with some of the local businesses that we may not have yet engaged with.

Through our use of social media, we were able to promote the project in general, our workshops and networking events.

SWEDA Services
215 followers
1mo •

Attention business owners in Sandwell!
Are you facing barriers to growth?
SWEDA is working to identify and remove obstacles holding back businesses—helping you access funding, expert guidance, and proven programmes.
Let's unlock your potential.
Email: sweda@sweda.org.uk | Call: 0121 525 2558
Funded by the UK Government | In partnership with Sandwell Council & West Midlands Combined Authority
[#BusinessSupport](#) [#InclusiveGrowth](#) [#WestMidlands](#) [#Entrepreneurship](#) [#SWEDA](#) #

Funded by UK Government

Struggling to grow your business?
Something holding you back? **We're here to help!**

sweda (Skills Work & Enterprise Development Agency) is seeking to identify the obstacles faced by diverse businesses in Sandwell.

Need funding? We'll help you unlock finance and smash the barriers. →
Want real support? Work with your dedicated Business Advisor. →
Looking to grow fast? We'll plug you into proven business programmes. →

Let's unlock your potential.
What's stopping you from thriving?
Let's fix that.

contact SWEDA:
sweda@sweda.org.uk or
0121 525 2558

SWEDA Services
215 followers
3w •

As it's [#smallcharityweek](#) we should shout about the work we do and how we've helped support the people of [#Sandwell](#) and beyond. ...more

Did you know?

SWEDA Business Advisors have supported 68 pre start clients & 51 established businesses, also securing our clients grants of £106,000

with SWEDA Services

Book your space now using the link below
From Hidden to Hot: Marketing That Works Tickets, Thu, Jan 8, 2026 at 10:00 AM | Eventbrite

🎁 Bonus: A few lucky attendees will also get a FREE 1-on-1 strategy session with our digital marketing expert to build your strategy - dates open soon!

Spots for these workshops go fast — save your seat here:

<https://lnkd.in/ew4zJATH>

We warmly invite you to partake in our informative and enlightening in person workshop with

Martin Goncalves
Digital Marketing Expert & Founder of Martin Gee Video

Marketing and AI Workshop

Thursday 8th January 2026
10:00am – 12.30pm
SWEDA Church Street, West
Bromwich B70 8PP

with Martin Goncalves and 1 other

SWEDA
3d •

Last night we had our first [#business](#) [#networking](#) event here at SWEDA.

It was a really great event and we got to hear from Fiona Allan from Fiona Allan Nutrition and Mavis Coffie from Yahweh Housing Ltd and their business journeys.

Everyone made great connections and saw the start of some collaborations being formed.

Our next event is on Thursday 26th February 2026!

Save the date and further details will follow...
[#swedaservices](#)
[Fiona Allan Nutrition](#)

We also used the project to promote the work of our clients and show them how we can support them in their business this way too.

As well as our own work and the work of our clients we were also able to repost the support available via Sandwell Business Growth Team and Business Growth West Midlands, showing those who follow our channels the support available across the board.

Out-of-Hours and Weekend Support

Another key way in which we adapted our service delivery was by extending support beyond traditional 9–5 working hours. We recognised that many business owners particularly sole traders, start-ups, and those in the early stages of growth are often unable to engage during standard office hours due to operational demands.

To address this, we introduced a more flexible and accessible approach, offering support during evenings and weekends. This ensured that businesses could access guidance at times that suited their schedules, without disrupting their day to day operations.

Our engagement methods were also adapted to maximise accessibility and convenience. These included:



Online sessions

Via Zoom and Microsoft Teams, enabling flexible, remote access



Telephone consultations

Providing quick and direct support



In-person drop-in sessions

Held in community locations such as libraries and local coffee shops

This blended delivery model enabled us to reach a broader range of businesses, including those who may otherwise have been unable to access support. It also helped to create a more informal and approachable environment, encouraging open conversations and stronger working relationships.

Activities Delivered

Throughout the last twelve months we have delivered many sessions and events to help the small Businesses and Social Enterprises in Sandwell.

This included business workshops, 1 to 1 mentoring and advice sessions along with specialists , networking events, outreach and community engagement.

Business Workshops

When planning the programme for the year, we reviewed client feedback to understand the challenges they faced and the support they needed. This allowed us to design a series of workshops that directly addressed those areas. We worked with specialists in each field to deliver sessions covering LinkedIn, Funding & Finance, Cyber Security, Marketing, and Social Media.

For the Funding & Finance and Cyber Security workshops, we drew on our connections at Business Growth West Midlands to provide expert delivery. Our Marketing Associate, Martin Goncalves, led the Marketing and Social Media workshops and supported our event during the West Midlands Business Festival. His contribution has been invaluable in helping clients overcome marketing and social media related challenges.

The guidance provided through these workshops was also translated into one to one support for clients on the Community Led programme.

Business Workshops

1-to-1 Mentoring

Advice Sessions

Networking

Outreach & Community Engagement



Instagram Workshop

Collaborative Working and Local Partnerships

While the above demonstrates the breadth of support delivered, this work would not have been possible without the collaboration and ongoing support of key business support organisations within the local area.

Our strong connection with the Sandwell Business Growth Team has been particularly important in enabling us to engage with and support businesses across Sandwell.

This collaborative approach has strengthened our ability to reach businesses and provide meaningful, accessible support tailored to their needs

This partnership has helped us to:

Ensure businesses are signposted to relevant support where needed

Deliver a more coordinated and effective support offer

Share knowledge and resources

Connect with a wider network of local businesses

SWEDA Hosting Sandwell Means Business with Black Country Chamber of Commerce



Barriers Faced by Local Businesses & Entrepreneurs

Local businesses and entrepreneurs in Sandwell face a series of interconnected barriers that limit their ability to start, sustain, and grow successful enterprises.



Access To Finance

Access to finance remains one of the most significant challenges, particularly for early stage businesses and individuals from under represented backgrounds. Limited personal capital, insufficient credit history, and low awareness of available funding mechanisms restrict opportunities for investment and growth.



Investment Readiness Workshop

Business Knowledge Gaps

Entrepreneurs also frequently report gaps in business knowledge and skills, including financial management, marketing, digital capability, and understanding regulatory requirements. These issues are often intensified by limited access to affordable professional advice and a lack of confidence in navigating formal business support structures.



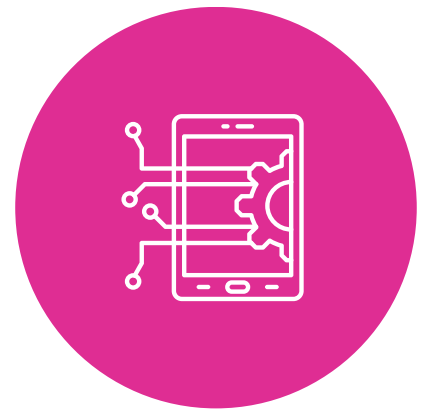
Social & Structural Barriers



A range of social and structural barriers further affects participation. Language differences, cultural expectations, caring responsibilities, and time constraints can all reduce engagement with traditional business support services. Some individuals also express low levels of trust in mainstream institutions, underscoring the importance of community based, locally delivered support.

Digital Exclusion

For many business owners, digital exclusion adds an additional layer of difficulty. Limited digital skills or lack of access to technology can impede their ability to market services, manage finances, or access online guidance and funding opportunities. This particularly affects older entrepreneurs and those with minimal digital experience.



Isolation

Furthermore, many local businesses operate in isolation, without access to peer networks, mentors, or collaborative opportunities. This lack of social capital can reduce resilience and slow development, highlighting the value of community led initiatives that encourage connection, shared learning, and mutual support.



Through registrations, consultations, and one-to-one sessions, several recurring challenges became evident:

Strategic Direction

- Uncertainty about priorities and next steps
- Difficulty identifying effective growth strategies
- Lack of clarity around core business purpose and direction

Marketing & Client Engagement

- Confusion about which marketing activities yield results
- Weak or unclear value propositions
- Inconsistent or irregular marketing activity
- Difficulty converting content and engagement into paying clients
- Low confidence in personal branding and digital promotion

Business Planning & Finance

- Unpredictable income and cash flow pressures
- Over-reliance on referral based work
- Limited understanding of customer sources and marketing effectiveness
- Difficulty interpreting financial data
- Challenges in scaling operations or developing repeatable processes

Operational Challenges

- Over dependence on the business owner
- Lack of established systems and processes
- Reactive working patterns and limited strategic planning

These interconnected issues demonstrate the need for targeted, long-term support across strategy, finance, marketing, and operations ensuring that local businesses in Sandwell can develop sustainably, build resilience, and pursue growth with confidence.

Insights from Engagement with Ethnic Minority Businesses

A significant number of ethnic minority owned businesses reported feeling overlooked by regional initiatives. Common issues included:

Lack of awareness of available support

Missing deadlines or failing eligibility criteria

Complex application processes

Businesses considered "too small" for funding

Many also lacked confidence or knowledge in digital marketing, branding, and customer acquisition. SWEDA addressed these gaps through workshops and intensive one to one support.

Access to finance remains a major barrier, with many businesses caught between needing investment and being unable to secure loans or grants. Economic pressures, rising costs, and tight margins mean many operate in survival mode, leaving little capacity for strategic planning.

Social and environmental factors including political tensions and concerns about safety also affect confidence and decision making. Trust building requires multiple touchpoints, and face to face engagement with representatives who reflect the community has proven essential



Promoting Community Led Business Support at The Black Business Roadshow at Legacy Centre of Excellence

What Went Well



Attending The National Race Equality Engagement Group Meeting

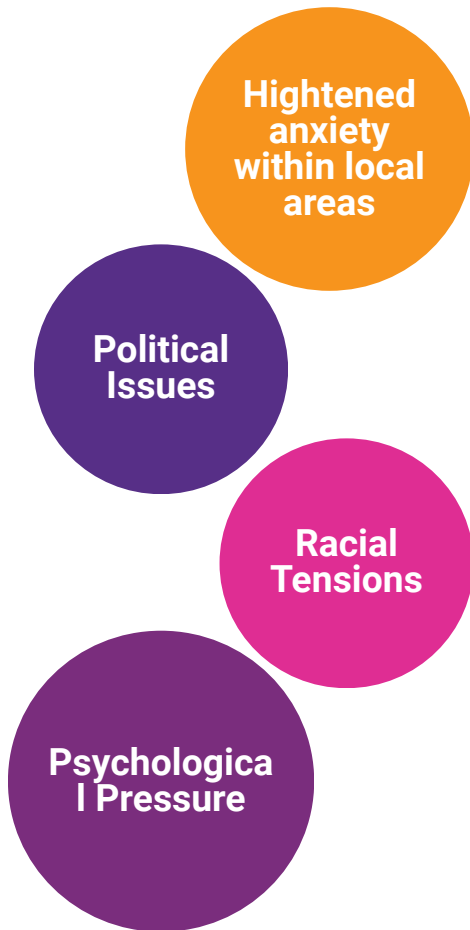
These partnerships and working relationships were instrumental in driving outcomes, expanding reach, and ensuring businesses received holistic, high quality support. We are extremely grateful to our partners for their contribution to the project's overall success.

A significant number of ethnic minorities owned businesses report feeling overlooked as a demographic group, with a perception that they collectively miss out on a wide range of initiatives delivered by the West Midlands Combined Authority (WMCA) and their respective local councils.

Many business owners are either unaware that these initiatives exist or only discover them by word of mouth or after an application deadline had passed. In other cases, they find they do not meet eligibility criteria, that application processes are overly complex, or that their businesses are considered too small to qualify.

Beyond access to funding, there are broader structural and capability gaps. Many businesses require practical support around marketing, social media strategy, branding, and customer acquisition but lack the time, confidence, or knowledge to implement effective growth plans. While digital presence is increasingly essential, some business owners struggle to navigate social media platforms, create consistent content, or use digital tools to scale their operations. As a result, growth opportunities are often missed. SWEDA provided workshops with general knowledge then followed with more intense one to one support these issues.

Access to finance remains a major barrier. Although funding is needed to stabilise and grow, cash flow constraints or poor credit histories frequently prevent businesses from securing loans. Others are understandably cautious about taking on debt due to fears around repayment and financial risk. At the same time, many do not qualify for grant funding, because of very high demand for grant funding, by the time they are ready to apply for grant funding the funding is already finished leaving them in a difficult middle ground needing investment but unable to access it.



For many of these businesses, survival is the immediate priority. Operating on extremely tight margins, they are often living hand to mouth working in the business rather than on the business focused on day to day trading in the face of rising business rates, increasing rents, and ongoing economic pressures. This leaves little capacity for strategic planning, innovation, or long-term growth.

These economic challenges are further compounded by social and environmental factors that can impact confidence and wellbeing. Some BME business owners describe feeling heightened anxiety within their local areas, Political issues and racial tensions, which can influence their sense of security and belonging. This additional psychological pressure inevitably affects focus, decision making, and long term planning. As a direct result of this barrier SWEDA scheduled several workshops around Business Finance in partnership with Oxford Innovation Advice.

While undertaking outreach and canvassing activity across Sandwell, it became evident that many businesses require multiple touchpoints before they are ready to engage with the CLB project.

Trust is not immediate; it must be built gradually through consistent presence and relationship-building. We plan to continue this type of outreach work and build upon going forward.

Face to face engagement has proven particularly important. Business owners respond more positively when they meet representatives who reflect their communities and who can relate to their lived experiences without fear of cultural misunderstanding or bias.

Visible representation plays a key role in breaking down barriers and encouraging open dialogue.

Although many businesses are willing to share their views verbally, a significant number of BAME businesses are reluctant to formally document their concerns or experiences. This highlights both a trust gap and a need for continued reassurance around confidentiality, safety, and genuine intent.

Canvassing in Great Bridge



In our recent history SWEDA has primarily focused on supporting pre-start businesses, while also engaging with established local enterprises. In developing our support package to existing businesses, we gained insights from the CLB pilot project, allowing us to identify the real recurring needs highlighted by clients. The resulting package addresses key areas such as funding, digital marketing, website development, and staying informed about local developments. Our goal is to bridge the gap between businesses and the decision makers shaping the local Enterprise landscape.

Growth Canvas has been a useful tool which has highlighted to participants vital insights into their businesses

Success Stories and Testimonials

Business - Evening Networking Event

The re-established Evening Business Networking Event our first since COVID restrictions were lifted brought together individuals at different stages of business development, all focused on building connections and strengthening their referral networks.

To support strong attendance, we promoted the event across social media and through our networks, and provided refreshments for those arriving directly from work.

Two SWEDA clients delivered short presentations, giving them a platform to showcase their services while offering valuable insight to other attendees. This helped pre-start entrepreneurs envision future milestones and reassured established business owners that their challenges are shared.

The event was very well received, with meaningful connections formed and networking continuing informally after the close. Attendees expressed strong enthusiasm for the next event in February 2026.

By facilitating new relationships and potential collaborations, the event enhanced the visibility of participating businesses and created opportunities for future growth. It successfully brought together individuals who may not otherwise have had the opportunity to connect, supporting the development of new professional partnerships.



Tender Writing Workshop

The clients who attended the Tender Writing Workshop were at various stages of their business journeys, but all came with one objective....how to write a successful tender.

There were varying degrees of skill and knowledge in the room, ranging from those who wanted to gain knowledge for prospective future tenders, those who were on the cusp of writing their first tender and those who have written an unsuccessful tender and wanted tips on how to make their next bid successful.

As we had so much interest from clients who wanted to know more about writing a successful tender we approached Andrea Childs, Managing Director of Klick Business Solutions Ltd, to deliver these workshops.

Following discussions between Andrea and ourselves, as to what our clients were looking for, where people were on their business journey and what Andrea believed would benefit those who attended. Andrea created a proposal of delivery, of which we all agreed would be extremely beneficial.

Once the proposal had been agreed, we agreed dates which worked for both parties and then began promotion of the workshop.

When we advertised the workshops, they were really welcomed and we had a great attendance of over 20 clients.

The workshop was really well received by the clients. It was clear to see the enthusiasm and thirst for knowledge that the attendees had, most notably the fact that both workshops overran due to the number of questions being asked.

Many of our attendees left the session were keen to research and apply for tenders as soon as the session finished.



“Today’s workshop was very informative and provided me with knowledge that I wouldn’t have been able to acquire otherwise.”



Almost everyone who attended left feeling more confident about writing a tender. Being able to write a successful tender means that our clients are able to grow their business, and long-standing working relationship with bodies such as Council. By securing a contract through writing a successful tender means that they will have secured a regular income and look to increase their business profile and profitability.

From the feedback received at the workshop there were so many positive comments including:

“Andrea is very knowledgeable & experienced and was able to share her knowledge in an understandable way.”

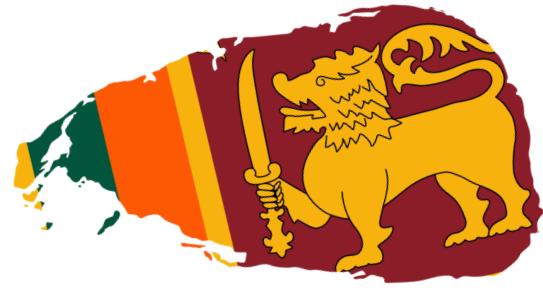
“This was brilliant. I really enjoyed this workshop. The trainer is amazing, very personable and knowledgeable”

“The content was extremely informative & went beyond my expectations”

Many say they could not have gained the knowledge without SWEDA’s help, with one client saying “Today’s workshop was very informative and provided me with knowledge that I wouldn’t have been able to acquire otherwise.”



SRI
LANKA



Sri Lankan Café

Chaminda is the owner of The Sri Lankan Café that opened in 2020 in the heart of Sandwell high street. The café has become popular for its authentic Sri Lankan curries, hoppers, kottu roti and Ceylon tea, offering customers a genuine taste of Sri Lanka in a warm, homely setting.

Challenges faced by Sri Lankan Cafe

The café has limited seating and Chaminda would like to revamp the site, new espresso machine, fridge and extraction equipment.

Being an active participant in the Community Led Business support project Chaminda has attended a number of business workshops hoisted by SWEDA and also was referred to the Sandwell Business Growth Team.

Opportunity

A larger space had become available in the brand-new West Bromwich indoor market, offering greater seating capacity and a high footfall of potential clients.

Chaminda has now safely installed herself in the new West Bromwich indoor market site.

She plans to over the next few months to revamp and develop the existing site during the day, at 5.00pm when the market closes she will open up the café for her regular nighttime trade.





Body Mind Collective – Yoga Business (CIC, 50+ Audience)

Bryony runs a yoga organisation focused on individuals over 50. She recognised the need to diversify her business model to ensure long-term sustainability and was considering developing online products such as video classes and workshops.

During the session, we developed a simple, actionable plan:

- Start a YouTube channel
- Create educational, helpful content tailored to her audience
- Use the channel as a foundation for future online products

Resources and step-by-step guidance were provided.

Outcome:

- Within one month, Bryony had launched her YouTube channel
- She had uploaded multiple videos and started gaining views
- Momentum began building quickly

Bryony later returned for further guidance on scaling the channel, demonstrating that the system was working effectively.



Brand Roots Lab – Branding & Website Specialist

Angelika initially struggled with positioning and visibility.

Following implementation of the strategy:

She now creates content consistently on LinkedIn and YouTube

Her confidence speaking on camera has significantly improved

She has launched a video podcast that is already gaining traction



Well life Physiotherapy



Lotoya initially believed her primary issue was a lack of leads.

However, after analysing the business data, a different picture emerged:

- The clinic already receives 15–20 inbound calls per day
- The core issue was conversion, not lead generation

We also identified that achieving her financial goals required converting just two additional clients per day.

This insight reframed the strategy entirely.

Revised focus:

- Improving the conversion process
- Adjusting messaging and internal systems
- Clarifying the customer journey

Lotoya now has clear direction and is actively improving these systems.



Purple Mind Community Services Ltd

Winner of the Social Enterprise of the Year (2025)

In addition to helping Dr Monaa her with marketing, we worked on developing a structured 6-week coaching programme aligned with her expertise and audience.

This allowed her to reposition her offer, increase perceived value, and confidently charge more than she previously thought possible.





Tik Tok Workshop

Anonymous - We had a participant from the TikTok workshop series who runs an e-commerce business. She attended the session specifically to improve her sales through content. After implementing the approach we discussed, she returned the following day for another workshop and shared that she had already made sales using the exact method which she was genuinely surprised and excited about.



Anonymous - The client is running an online tutoring business. Her main challenge was building a personal brand and creating content to attract clients online. She was extremely uncomfortable on camera to the point where she was very emotional during the session. We worked through this together, broke it down into a simple approach, created content ideas, and built a system she could follow. We even filmed her first video during the session. By the end, she realised how achievable it is and left feeling much more confident and motivated to continue.

These are strong examples of how practical, implementation-focused support can quickly translate into real results for businesses.

Testimonials

"This was brilliant, I really enjoyed this workshop. "

"Excellent really good workshop"

"Excellent course"

"This was brilliant. I really enjoyed this workshop. The trainer is amazing, very personable and knowledgeable"

"Thank you For sharing your Wisdom and Experience."
-Dr Shergill

"Always welcoming and friendly and very helpful"

"The advisor was very friendly and informative, answered all questions perfectly."

"The content was extremely informative & went beyond my expectations"

"SWEDA has given me solid and structured support that meets my needs to grow me as a person."

"I appreciate your patience and encouragement"

Closing Statement

As we bring the 2025–2026 Community Led Business Support Project to a close, we would like to extend our sincere thanks to our funder the West Midlands Combined Authority for their valued support and investment in this work and clients whose collaboration, insight, and commitment have made this initiative such a success. We would like to offer particular thanks to partner organisations for your contributions have been instrumental in creating meaningful opportunities for local businesses and strengthening our wider community, within Sandwell.



Promoting at Festival of Entrepreneurs

A particular highlight of the project has been the ability to secure a 12-month Growth Canvas licence. This has proven to be a valuable resource, equipping both businesses and advisors with a practical tool, structured guidance, and a shared framework to support sustainable growth. The impact has been evident in the increased confidence, clarity, and capability demonstrated by those who have engaged with it.



Attending Business Advisor Forum

Together, we have built a foundation that will continue to benefit the business community beyond the life of this project. Thank you once again for your partnership, dedication, and belief in what we can achieve collectively.

Meet The SWEDA Team

Communtiy Lead Business Support



Davinder Kaur
CEO



Fran Tonks
Administration Officer

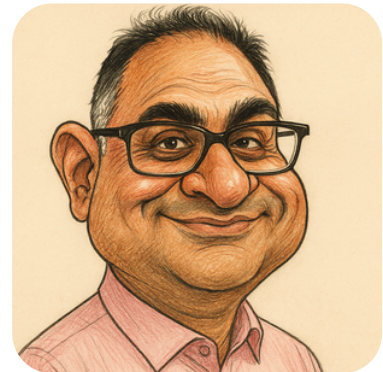


Des Ferguson
Business Advisor



Business Advisor

Claire Cooksey
Business Advisor



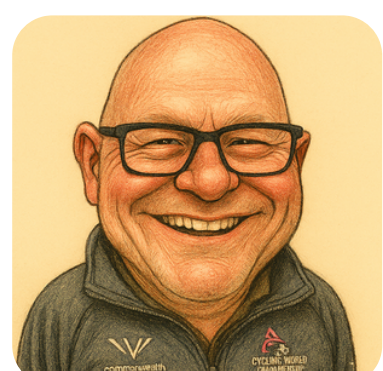
Gursharan Judge
Business Advisor



Angelika Widz
Business Associate



Martin Goncalves
Business Associate



Craig Carter
IT Support



Contact Us

At SWEDA we are inclusive and welcoming and work with all in an individual and personal way. We do this without prejudice or judgement and work with everyone regardless of your economic, educational, ethnic or religious background. As a team, we understand your obstacles and want to help you be the best you can be.

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