



SOCIAL IMPACT REPORT

» 2022
2023



FINANCE FOR
ENTERPRISE

Behind every statistic found in this report is a story. Here are just some of the people Finance For Enterprise has supported over the past 12 months.



Estates Tea



Saphex



Avalon Mill



Skipper's

2022 » 2023

Our year in numbers



406

*Jobs
safeguarded*



414

*Jobs
created*



266

*Businesses
assisted*



£48.65m

*Added to the
local economy*



£9.32m

*Loaned
to SMEs*



187

*Businesses
created*



266

*Loans
agreed*

A message from our Managing Director

During times of economic uncertainty, even the most robust of businesses can face challenges. Yet it can also be a time of great ingenuity, innovation and opportunity, and in our latest social impact report, we are proud to share some of those success stories.

UK businesses have been carefully navigating their way through rising levels of inflation, the well documented cost of living crisis and rising energy costs. It is during these times of uncertainty that access to finance is increasingly important.

There is something of an irony that during these challenging times, SMEs often struggle to access financial support when they need it the most. One of the businesses featured in this year's report is the Newcastle based Estate Tea Company – a specialist distributor of rare and unusual tea varieties. The company had benefitted in the past from lending provided by its high street bank, a loan that had been successfully repaid; but to the company's surprise, when it came to raising funds to support further growth, and despite having a good track record and a robust business plan, their application for a new loan was declined.

Their experience isn't an unusual one and it perhaps should come as no surprise that this year saw the value of funds provided by non-mainstream lenders such as Finance For Enterprise, alongside the new generation of challenger banks, increase significantly whilst the value of finance from traditional sources shrank.



Andrew Austwick
Managing Director
Finance For Enterprise

Following two highly unusual years, largely driven by the need to equip businesses with the vital financial assistance provided to navigate their way through the Covid-19 pandemic and to subsequently rebuild, the amount of money loaned to SMEs continues to exceed pre-pandemic levels. It is clear that many would-be entrepreneurs who chose to delay their plans of starting up new businesses have returned to the marketplace, and collectively, the loan funding successfully delivered by Finance For Enterprise over the past 12 months has helped to create and safeguard over 800 jobs, many of which can be found in some of Britain's deprived communities.

Within the context of spiralling levels of inflation, the global energy crisis and rising interest rates, it is

perhaps no surprise that across the banking sector, the levels of business debt have decreased. To help counter this, we at Finance For Enterprise have continued to expand our geographical reach across the UK, and for the very first time in our history, we successfully approved lending applications from businesses operating in every region of mainland Britain.

In this regard, agile, forward-thinking SMEs are often better placed to adapt to a changing economic climate than their larger blue-chip counterparts, and at Finance For Enterprise we are committed to helping businesses overcome the very real barriers they face to unlocking their growth potential.

And that's what happened to the Estate Tea Company. When we stepped in to support them, it not

only helped the business to develop a new source of revenue, but as a direct result, the company's workforce grew from four members of staff to a team of twelve, to cope with the workloads generated by the increased demand.

It can be easy to overlook the enormous impact each and every SME business has upon the communities it serves; from the skilled jobs they create, to the unique and innovative work they deliver; from retailers meeting demands for new and unusual products, to engineers and manufacturers working at the cutting edge of technology. I feel incredibly proud of our team of business lending managers who consistently go the extra mile when it comes to helping SMEs overcome the very real challenges they are facing.

What help has Finance For Enterprise provided over the past 12 months?

We believe that no viable business should be denied access to finance. In addition to using our own capital, Finance For Enterprise has continued to work collaboratively with partners and stakeholders to help businesses access the financial support needed using the following investment funds and tools:

Recovery Loan Scheme

The successor to the Government's Coronavirus Business Loan support packages designed to help companies rebuild following the Covid-19 pandemic. Finance For Enterprise became an accredited delivery partner of the Recovery Loan Scheme in August 2021 and we have provided loans of values between £25,001 and £250,000 to businesses across the UK.

Northern Powerhouse Investment Fund

Finance For Enterprise, working in partnership with the Bradford-based Business Enterprise Fund, has supported businesses based in Yorkshire & The Humber and Tees Valley to access business loans between £25,000 and £100,000. The Northern Powerhouse Investment Fund was created by the British Business Bank and aims to drive sustainable growth and prosperity by supporting access to finance for SME businesses. Collectively, the Northern Powerhouse Investment Fund has invested £384m in supporting SMEs across Northern England.

Big Society Capital/Triodos

In 2019, Finance For Enterprise successfully secured funding worth £15m to support SMEs based in South and East Yorkshire, Lincolnshire, Derbyshire and Nottinghamshire in a scheme intended to operate until 2022, but which has been extended with the benefit of additional capital. To date, Finance For Enterprise has successfully invested over £22 million in loan funding through the scheme.

Start Up Loans UK

Finance For Enterprise has been a delivery partner of the British Business Bank's Start Up Loans scheme since its inception over 10 years ago. The programme provides loans to entrepreneurs with new start or early stage businesses which invariably struggle to access mainstream financial support. Across the UK, nearly 100,000 would-be business owners have benefitted from funding from the Start Up Loan scheme.

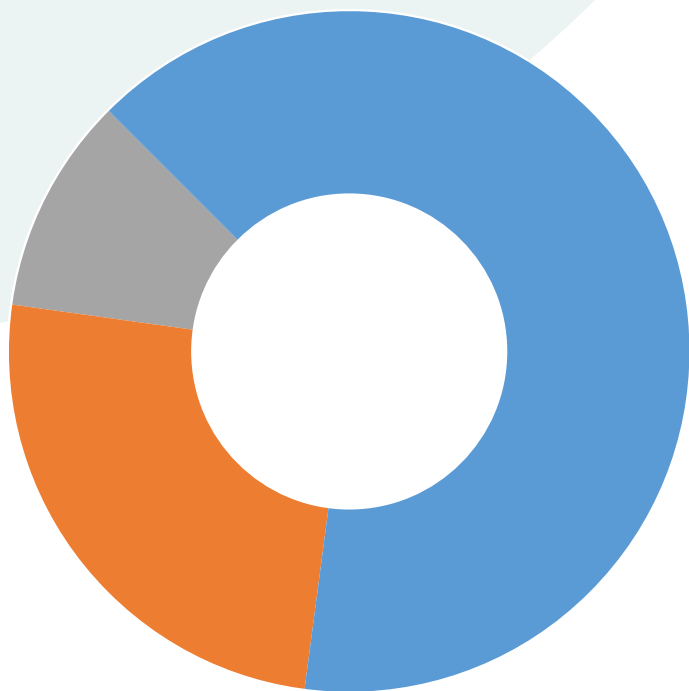
Partnership Investment Finance – Legacy Funding

In September 2021, Finance For Enterprise was appointed to oversee legacy funds arising from the now defunct Partnership Investment Finance programme, specifically managing the £700,000 allocation for The Humber region. We have subsequently been actively helping businesses based in The Humber.

Breakdown of loans made

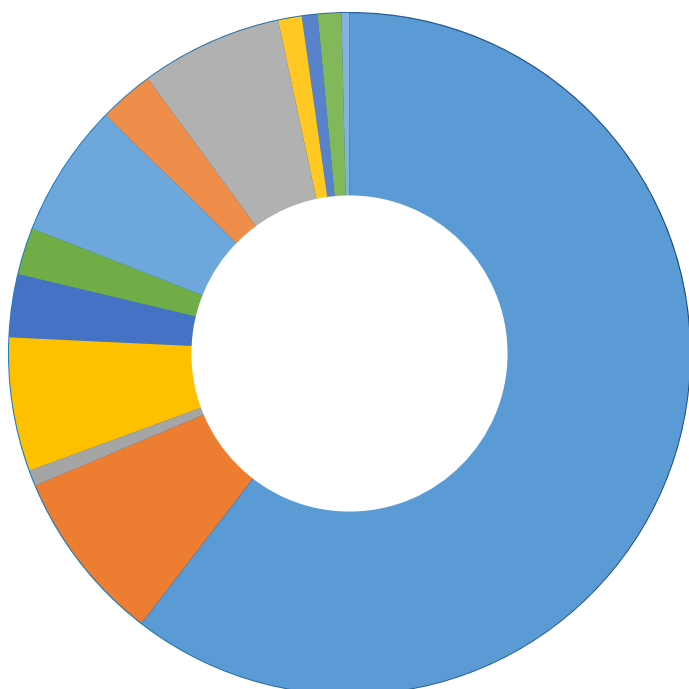
Loan overview

Finance For Enterprise successfully delivered a total of 266 loans across all forms of lending programmes. Loans provided to businesses in South Yorkshire accounted for 60% of all lending provided.



Lending breakdown by value

- FFE Capital » £6.02m
- Start-Up Loans » £2.34m
- NPIF » £0.96m



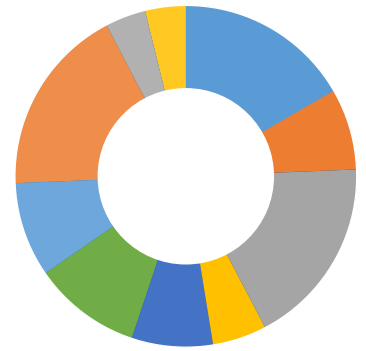
Loan breakdown by region

- South Yorkshire
- Humber & Lincs
- North Yorkshire
- West Yorkshire
- North West
- North East
- East Midlands
- West Midlands
- London
- South East

Enterprise loans by region

Demand for Enterprise Loans (loan values between £25,001 and £250,000) was highest in West Yorkshire (14), London and the South East (14) and South Yorkshire (13). Collectively, the majority of Enterprise Loans during the year were delivered to businesses operating in Yorkshire & The Humber and the Midlands.

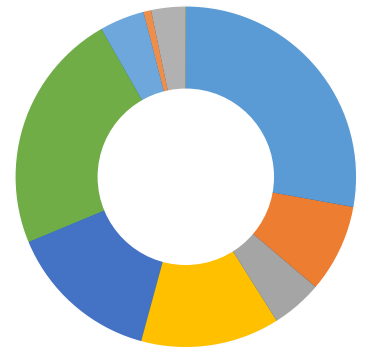
- South Yorkshire
- Humber & Lincs
- North Yorkshire
- West Yorkshire
- North West
- North East
- East Midlands
- West Midlands
- London
- South East



Value of Enterprise Loans

Most Finance For Enterprise Loan funding was to businesses operating within the Yorkshire & Humber region. The South East saw the second highest number of requests for funding, reflecting the greater geographical reach of loans delivered during the past 12 months.

- South Yorkshire
- Humber & Lincs
- North Yorkshire
- West Yorkshire
- North West
- North East
- East Midlands
- West Midlands
- London
- South East



Start-up Loans

According to the latest published government data, more than 800,000 new businesses started trading in 2021, more than double the number of start-ups that opened their doors for the first time in 2020.

This year saw the number of start-up businesses supported by Finance For Enterprise increase substantially, with 212 new business owners receiving access through the scheme, compared with 69 in 2021.

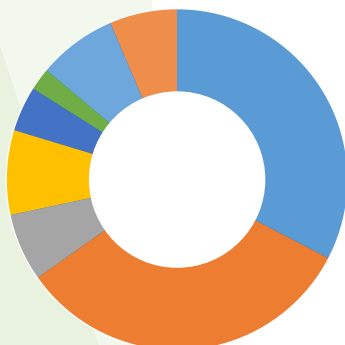
The volume of loans delivered during the year showed a small increase on the previous year, and the average loan value was £12,327.

Another factor that may have influenced the number of loans granted in the past 12 months was a change to the scheme's eligibility rules, which were extended to allow businesses aged up to 36 months to receive support under the Start Up Loan scheme.

81% of Start Up Loans were for South Yorkshire based businesses, which included a significant increase within Doncaster, where 61 loans were granted, compared with 29 in 2021. Both Rotherham and Barnsley also saw slight increases in the numbers of loans approved.

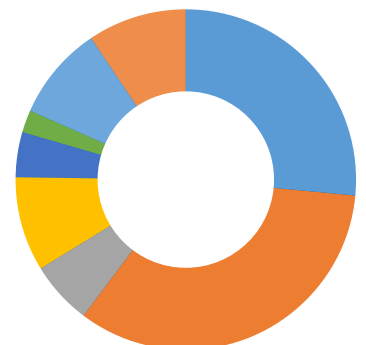
Start-up Loans (Number of loans granted)

- South Yorkshire
- Humber & Lincs
- North Yorkshire
- West Yorkshire
- North West
- North East
- East Midlands
- West Midlands
- London
- South East



Start-up Loans (Value of loans granted)

- South Yorkshire
- Humber & Lincs
- North Yorkshire
- West Yorkshire
- North West
- North East
- East Midlands
- West Midlands
- London
- South East



Lending reach

These maps illustrate locations throughout the UK where businesses have benefitted from Finance For Enterprise lending and reflects all forms of lending activity delivered during 2022/23.

Data published by the British Business Bank in its Small Business Finance Markets Report 2023 revealed the number of small businesses using external finance reduced by 33% during the past 12 months. The total amount of lending delivered by Finance For Enterprise during this period was £9,323,658 in new loan funding.

The British Business Bank's report noted that although fewer firms sought financial assistance during this period, the value of loans provided increased, which it attributed to increased inflationary pressure. Finance For Enterprise average loan values in 2022/23 remained much in line with 2021/22 at just over £90,000.

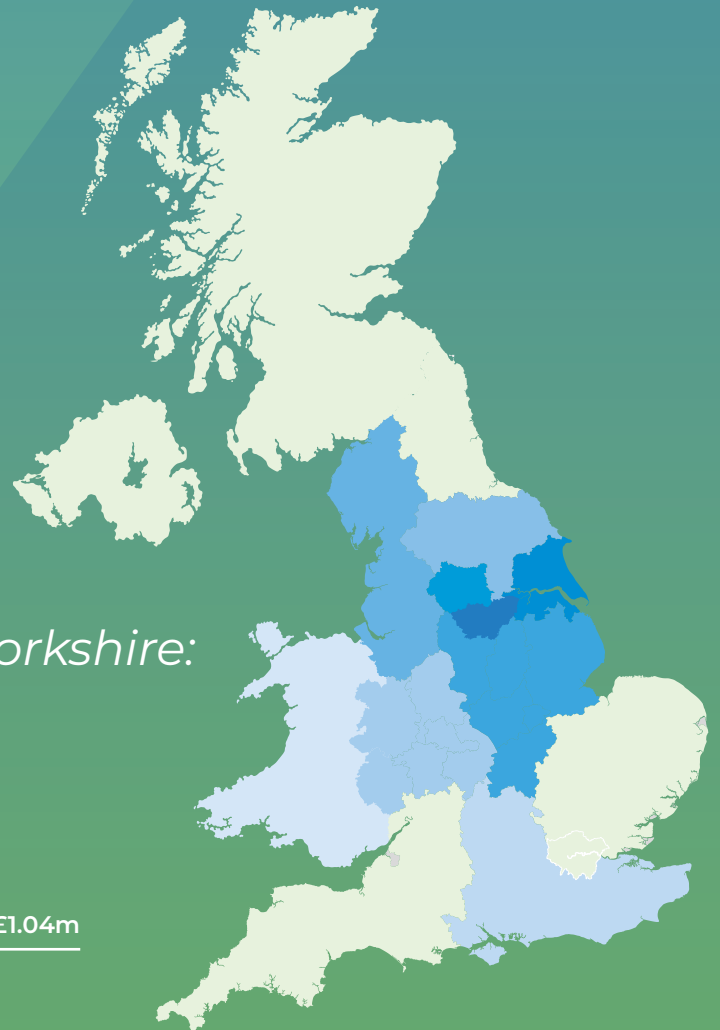
Breakdown of loans by region

For the first time in the history of our organisation, Finance For Enterprise provided loan funding to businesses operating in all areas of the UK, granting 266 loan applications.

- ▶ South Yorkshire » £2.49m
- ▶ Hull, East Yorkshire & Lincs » £0.69m
- ▶ Leeds & West Yorkshire » £1.03m
- ▶ York & North Yorkshire » £0.032m
- ▶ North East » £0.37m
- ▶ Scotland » £0.00005m
- ▶ North West » £0.57m
- ▶ East Midlands » £1.09m
- ▶ London & South East » £1.64m
- ▶ South West » £0.29m
- ▶ East of England » £0.99m
- ▶ Wales » £0.22m
- ▶ West Midlands » £0.000004m

Breakdown of loans – South Yorkshire:

During the past 12 months, the total number of loans approved in South Yorkshire accounted for 26% of applications granted by Finance For Enterprise, reflecting the increased geographical reach of the organisation.



Economic impact

These impact figures are calculated using a formula developed by industry body Responsible Finance, which is committed to building a fairer financial lending system to bring about positive societal change by ensuring no viable business is unable to access the financial support needed at the times when it is needed most. Of course, the economic impact of our lending does not capture the full impact of the financial support we have provided, but instead illustrates how decisions we have made have contributed towards building a stronger, fairer society.

£48,685,936

Total value added by Finance For Enterprise during the past 12 months

£201,619,444

The total value contributed by loans provided by Finance For Enterprise since 2021

Impact calculations

£10,841,760

Start-up lending

£37,689,343

Loans to established businesses

£154,860

Financial advice to individuals

Finance For Enterprise assessment of a lending application doesn't solely consider the financial viability of a proposal, but also explores how the funds provided can help to bring about positive change within local and regional economies.

Every pound invested by Finance For Enterprise during the past 12 months helped to contribute **£5** to the regional economy.

Social impact

At Finance For Enterprise, we believe social impact is closely linked to bringing about positive social change: creating new opportunities for the next generation entering the workforce, retaining the vital skills and expertise within our local and regional economy, and above all, creating an environment that allows everyone in society to prosper.

A total of 44% of all loans delivered by Finance For Enterprise over the past 12 months were to female businesses and/or businesses owned/led by ethnic minorities and ethnic groups.

We believe that equality, diversity and inclusion are factors that every business should positively embrace, and our work at Finance For Enterprise is no exception. Considerations such as gender, ethnicity and sexuality should never act as barriers to entrepreneurship, and over the past year Finance For Enterprise has remained committed towards supporting building a fairer, more equal society.

Over the past 12 months, Finance For Enterprise loans have helped to create or safeguard 231 jobs amongst female and ethnic minority groups. At the same time, we have helped 30 ethnic minority led businesses to overcome barriers to finance.

The Alison Rose Review, which examined barriers to female entrepreneurship, revealed that 50% of female entrepreneurs reported difficulties accessing funding during the past year and that if female entrepreneurs received similar levels of access to finance as their male counterparts, a staggering £250 billion pounds would be added to the UK economy.

Ethnic Minority Led	8	22
Ethnic Minority Jobs Created	16	13
Ethnic Minority Jobs Safeguarded	4	0
A total of 44% of all loans delivered by Finance For Enterprise over the past 12 months were to female businesses and/or businesses owned/led by ethnic minorities and ethnic groups.		
Women Led	18.5	68
Women Jobs Created	10	37
Women Jobs Safeguarded	125.5	25

Brewing up growth in the North East

The Estate Tea Company is a specialist tea merchant, which sources some of the rarest and most unusual varieties of Britain's favourite brew. Operating from a former plumber's merchant in the Newcastle-upon-Tyne suburb of Heaton, business founder Tom Webb called on help from Finance For Enterprise to create a unique day-into-night venue.



Tea shop by day, Japanese-inspired cocktail bar by night, Tom first began developing his ideas for building a business around a modern-day tea shop whilst studying at Northumbria University. Upon graduation, Tom decided to revisit the business idea he had explored as a student and set about scouring tea producing countries across the world to source rare and unusual varieties of tea and bring them to the North East.

Today, the Estate Tea Company has secured collaborations with a range of small single estate tea growers from tea producing countries including India, Japan, China, Sri Lanka and Taiwan. The company also blends its own variations of popular brews, including English Breakfast Tea and naturally infused flavoured teas, which are sold to cafes, restaurants and grocery stores across the UK, and even in Selfridges.

Having first run the business from a small café in Gateshead, Tom decided to refine his business model during the Covid-19 pandemic, and when an opportunity arose to relocate the business to larger premises, he didn't hesitate to make the move, successfully transforming a

former plumber's merchant into a haven for tea lovers. The larger premises provided Estate Tea with the space needed to increase production of its tea varieties, and the café quickly attracted a loyal customer base. However, Tom recognised that large parts of the building were under-utilised, and he began exploring ways of maximising usage of the premises.

Drawing inspiration from Japanese bars, which combine a small tapas-style menu alongside a relaxed environment, Tom realised that his business could increase its customer base by offering an evening menu. To bring his growth plans to fruition, the Estate Tea Company needed to secure the finance essential to fund the upgrade of its kitchen equipment and refurbish the unused space.

Having previously borrowed from a high street lender and repaid in full, Tom was initially confident of raising the funds needed to complete the renovation work, but to his surprise, after several frustrating conversations with a call centre, Tom discovered that disappointingly, his application had been declined.

After researching alternative means of raising finance, Tom decided to approach Finance For Enterprise for advice. Following an initial phone call, he met face-to-face with experienced business lending manager Jeremy Meadowcroft, and within a matter of weeks, he received the capital his business desperately needed.

Tom and his team worked around the clock to develop the new bar; he called on friends, family members and his staff to complete the renovations, often working into the early hours to enable the business to continue trading. Since completing the work, the Estate Tea Bar has proved to be a popular addition to Newcastle's night scene; at the same time, Tom has seen his business triple its workforce, rising from just four members of staff to a close-knit team of twelve.

Over the past year alone, Estate Tea has sold enough of its popular English Breakfast Tea to brew up a staggering 2.5 million cups of tea, and the relationships he has forged with small growers has seen the company secure contracts to stock some of the rarest teas found anywhere in the world.



I liked the idea of creating a café that could provide a safe, relaxing environment in the daytime, but also a venue capable of operating in the evening.

Tom Webb, Founder, the Estate Tea Company, said: *"Britain is a nation of tea drinkers. Collectively, we drink 100 million cups of tea on a daily basis, and I felt that even if I could secure just a small share of that market, it offered a golden business opportunity. When I launched the Estate Tea Company, I wanted to create a business that supported independent tea growers by paying a fair price for their produce, as well as creating different ways of generating income.*

When we launched our first café, I was really surprised by how popular the venue became; this led to us looking for larger premises, providing the space to grow the business further in the future. I liked the idea of creating a café that could provide a safe, relaxing environment in the daytime, but also a venue capable of operating in the evening.

My idea was to create a Japanese-inspired bar that offered a selection of small dishes which can be enjoyed as a snack while socialising or used to create a meal by combining several dishes. It's a different experience to a traditional bar. I knew that financial support would be needed, and having previously secured funding from my bank, I felt confident that they would support our plans. Following various lengthy and frustrating conversations with call centres, the bank told me they couldn't support my business; the experience left me puzzled and very frustrated. I began searching the Internet, and after reading about how Finance For Enterprise had helped so many businesses, I decided to reach out and see if they could help my company to secure the funds I needed. Instead of dealing with a call centre, I was delighted to be given a point of contact in Jeremy Meadowcroft. Jeremy took the time to get to know my business and to understand our future plans. He visited our premises, and within a relatively short period of time, he called me to advise that my application had been successful. Since opening the bar, we've been able to increase our

trading hours and create several new jobs within the business. This has also helped us to expand our blending facilities, and the number of businesses that stock our tea range has increased from approximately 50 customers to nearly 80. As well as growing the business further, the support received from Finance For Enterprise has given us the confidence to explore new ways of expanding the business further in the future."

Jeremy Meadowcroft, Business Lending Manager, Finance For Enterprise, said:

"Tom is an extremely driven and motivated entrepreneur who spotted a gap in the market, and today, he and his team at Estate Tea are helping to bring some of the rarest and most unusual types of tea to the North East, which are now being enjoyed by his customers across the UK.

The current economic climate has seen many banks tighten their lending criteria, and in Tom's case this left him with the paradox of needing additional capital to grow his business but unable to source financial help, leaving him with empty and wasted space that couldn't be utilised.

At Finance For Enterprise we judge every lending application on its own merits. It was clear during our discussions and visits to Estate Tea that Tom had built a strong business which benefitted from multiple sources of revenue generation, and I could see that the loan funds wouldn't just help to strengthen Tom's existing business offering but would also act as a catalyst to drive future growth. The success Tom and his team at Estate Tea have enjoyed is well deserved, and I am certain that the business has a very bright future."

Tom's future plans for the Estate Tea Company are to open small satellite cafés across the North East as well as continuing to build and strengthen his network of independent growers in his quest to search out some of the rarest and most unusual varieties of tea produce.

Building a sustainable future

Research produced by the British Business Bank has revealed that collectively, SMEs are responsible for generating half of all greenhouse gas emissions generated by UK businesses.

At Finance For Enterprise we recognise that every business has a role to play when it comes to building a sustainable future, and we believe it is important to lead by example when it comes to implementing a decarbonisation strategy.

Over the past 12 months we have continued to monitor and review the environmental impact of our own operations.

As part of our own commitment towards achieving net zero, we have invested in our Doncaster-based headquarters by upgrading all windows to reduce solar gain during the warm summer months and reduce heat loss.

We have also made a commitment to investing in renewable energy by installing solar panels, thus reducing our dependency on fossil fuels. This long-term investment will also serve to help safeguard the organisation against fluctuating energy prices in the future.

Going forward, we are exploring a new methodology when assessing the impact of our lending decisions by considering factors such as the potential environmental impact and the potential reduction in the carbon footprint generated, whilst also actively encouraging sustainable working practices in client businesses.



FFE Headquarters,
Doncaster

Innovative engineering company turns up the heat on future growth plans



It's taken Sheffield engineering company Saphex over 15 years of careful research and development to bring an innovative way of recycling excess heat to market, but with help from Finance For Enterprise, the company's groundbreaking work is already helping manufacturing businesses to save up to £280,000 on their energy bills.

Saphex designs, manufactures and repairs a wide range of industrial heat exchange units, which are typically used to help businesses regulate temperature during manufacturing processes.

Recognising that the primary purpose of a heat exchange mechanism is to remove excess temperatures typically generated during the manufacturing process, managing director Wayne Nelson began exploring ways of helping businesses to repurpose this energy elsewhere, helping companies to save money on their heating bills, as well as reducing carbon dioxide emissions. The solution Wayne and the Saphex team have pioneered is called Clix. The modular system draws on their extensive knowledge of the heat exchange industry, which transfers excess heat generated to another source. The process allows surplus energy to be recycled and used elsewhere in the business.

Recognising the impact of energy price increases facing businesses operating in many different sectors, Wayne and the Saphex team believed the time was right

to bring their years of work to market. However, to fully harness the potential offered by the new system, Wayne recognised that additional funding would be needed and reached out to Finance For Enterprise for investment. Working with business lending manager Gurinder Mandir, Saphex successfully secured a £150,000 investment, jointly funded by Finance For Enterprise and NPIF – BEF & FFE Microfinance, part of the Northern Powerhouse Investment Fund.

With funds in place Saphex is now targeting six figure growth within the next 12 months and has embarked upon a three-year growth strategy, which aims to see the business double in size over the next three years. Central to Saphex's growth plans, some of the loan capital will be used to invest in new software, which will be utilised to significantly reduce the time taken to undertake the complex thermal calculations necessary when designing heat recycling systems, and ultimately helping to increase capacity within the business.

Wayne Nelson, Managing Director, Saphex, said:

“There remains a great deal of uncertainty surrounding energy prices, and this is having a devastating impact on businesses of all sizes. Energy intensive industries such as food production, chemical manufacturing and traditional heavy industries have been particularly hard hit, and we felt that the time was right to bring a product we’ve been working on for over 15 years to market.

We are engineers and by nature, very risk averse, but having perfected the system, we felt confident that our new Clix system could play an important role, not only in helping businesses to save money on their energy costs, but also by playing a part in reducing the carbon footprint of British industry. As a relatively small business, we knew that additional funds would be required to bring the product to market, and we decided to contact Finance For Enterprise to see if they could help.

With funds in place, we’ve been able to invest in the vital software needed to bring the product to market, as well as enabling us to increase capacity within our business. All of our products are manufactured in Sheffield and each system is tailored to meet the unique needs of the companies we help. As a result of the funding we secured, we’ve not only been able to reduce the amount of time taken to develop each system, but it has also enabled us to target significant future growth as a consequence of the additional capacity.”

Gurinder Mandir, Senior Business Lending Manager, Finance For Enterprise, said:

“Saphex is a real success story for the British engineering industry. Although the work they have been producing has been quite a long time in the making, the launch of their Clix modular system is one that could prove to be a genuine gamechanger for energy-intensive businesses, which have seen their heating bills skyrocket in recent months.

Wayne and his team were quick to recognise the enormous potential of their truly innovative work, but they realised that to unlock the potential in their ideas meant devoting additional time and resources to the project. Like many businesses, the Saphex team needed to balance investing in new technology whilst continuing to meet the demand for their Sheffield-manufactured heat exchange mechanisms. The funds will help the business to fully exploit the innovative technology they have developed, giving

Wayne and his team the opportunity to invest in the vital resources needed to capitalise on their pioneering work, as well as helping the business to bring a unique product to market that will enable companies working in many different sectors to mitigate rising energy costs, as well as making a positive contribution towards the environment.”

Sean Hutchinson, Senior Investment Manager at the British Business Bank, said:

“Saphex has demonstrated exceptional innovation in pioneering the Clix modular system. It has the potential to revolutionise the energy-intensive manufacturing industry, providing a much-needed respite from soaring heating expenses whilst aiding wider national goals of achieving net zero by reducing carbon dioxide emissions. It’s exciting to see British innovation prosper, as Saphex has leveraged its innovative technology to cement their position as trailblazers in the sector. NPIF support has allowed them to expand their capabilities, pursue substantial and consistent growth and pave the way for a more efficient and sustainable future.”



With funds in place, we’ve been able to invest in the vital software needed to bring the product to market, as well as enabling us to increase capacity within our business.

Helping equine entrepreneur Sarah Belton take a leap of faith

A Belton-based Paralympian, who defied the odds to represent Great Britain in both Para and able-bodied equestrian events, is hoping to share her passion for horses with others after Finance For Enterprise helped her transform five acres of wasteland into her dream riding school.

Sarah first began exploring the idea of launching her own riding school when her promising showjumping career was thrown into jeopardy after she experienced a life-changing accident, which left her with a broken back, fractured pelvis and a dislocated shoulder. As a result of the accident, she had one of her fingers amputated, and to make matters worse, during her recovery, Sarah was diagnosed with cancer.

Facing the very realistic prospect of never being able to ride competitively again, Sarah used her recuperation to explore ways of passing on her knowledge and experience to others. She began working towards completing her coaching qualifications, and then she spotted an opportunity to give a new lease of life to some unused farmland, which had fallen into a state of disrepair. With terms agreed with the landowner, Sarah approached Finance For Enterprise to help her secure the vital funds needed to put her plans into practice.

Since securing her Start Up Loan, arranged by business lending manager Jane Cusse, Sarah wasted no time in purchasing over 400 tonnes of stone and 330 tonnes of sand to transform the unused land into an all-weather surface, which she uses to help teach others how to ride.

Today, Sarah regularly finds herself back in the saddle, and after successfully entering three shows and securing three wins, she decided to name her new horse-riding school in honour of her horse, Avalon Mill.

Last summer, the duo finished top of the table in the national Para showjumping league and followed up a European Para gold title by finishing second overall in the able-bodied category.

Although Para showjumping is not currently an internationally recognised Paralympic event, Sarah still dreams of representing her country at the Olympic Games and is currently considering whether to compete in dressage events.

Since successfully launching her riding school, Sarah has continued to diversify her business. Today, she combines her teaching and training alongside providing respite care for rescue horses and ponies, helping them to recover before being found foster homes. She is also planning to expand her horse-riding school by launching a dedicated charity aimed at helping children with hidden and visible disabilities to experience horse riding in a safe environment.



Sarah Cumberland, Founder, Avalon Mill Equestrian Centre, said:

"I've been horse riding for nearly as long as I could walk, but despite the injuries I experienced, it never crossed my mind to give up, and I could never have imagined a future where horses didn't play a part in my life.

The accident made me more determined than ever to be able to compete again, and although I was initially told it could take over a year before I could even think about horse riding again, I was back in the saddle within just eight months. During that time, I began thinking about my career and how I could use the knowledge I've built up during my lifetime to help inspire others.

When I secured the land I needed, I decided to approach Finance For Enterprise to help fund the

improvements I wanted to make. As the business was a fairly new concept, I wasn't sure whether I would be eligible to access a business loan, but my lending manager, Jane, listened to what I had to say. She helped to guide me through the application process, and when she called me to tell me my application had been successful, it felt like I'd won the tournament of my life!

"I decided to name my business after my horse, Avalon Mill. She's a once in a lifetime horse, and I wanted to call the business after her to recognise everything that she's made possible in my showjumping career. She must be something of a lucky charm for me, as I've not only continued to enjoy success in the events I've entered, but the business has also gone from strength-to-strength, and I'm hoping to launch a charitable arm of the business in the near future."

Jane helped to guide me through the application process, and when she called me to tell me my application had been successful, it felt like I'd won the tournament of my life!



F F E



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ENTERPRISE**