

Barking & Dagenham
Giving



GROW Live: Back Purpose-Led Business

A special part of

GROW
2026

13th May 2026

They pitch. **You vote**
Your say powers local businesses.

Contents Page

Welcome	Page 3
Voting Instructions	Page 4

The 15 entrepreneurs & their businesses

Bee Market	Page 5
Couleur Cafe	Page 6
Dagenham Eagles	Page 7
Eastbrookend Country Park Tea Room	Page 8
Elite Coaching Academy	Page 9
Empower	Page 10
Koala For Work	Page 11
Kunle's Games Night	Page 12
Nourishment East	Page 13
So Sow Garden	Page 14
Soul and Sound	Page 15
Taahirah Health	Page 16
True Cadence	Page 17
U-Turnships	Page 18
Wander Wild Forest School	Page 19

Notes	Page 20-21
Our GROW community	Page 22
Jargon Buster	Page 23



Hello...

We're excited to welcome you to this special event, where the energy, talent and ambition of our local business community takes centre stage!

Today 15 bold and brilliant local entrepreneurs will pitch their businesses and invite you to be part of their story. These entrepreneurs are all finalists in Barking & Dagenham Giving's GROW Fund - an investment fund that will back 10 entrepreneurs in 2026.

Each entrepreneur you'll hear from has something unique to offer, whether it's solving a local challenge, creating jobs or up-skilling young people. They've all worked hard to get here, and today you'll help decide who receives a £10,000 grant, 7 months of dedicated business support and access to investment from BD Giving.

This booklet will help you get to know each business better. We encourage you to connect with other like-minded residents and businesses in the room.

Thank you for being here, for backing local, and supporting our local economy.

Let's GROW something amazing, together!

Jack Webb
On behalf of Barking & Dagenham Giving



Voting Instructions



You'll hear 15 entrepreneurs give a 2½ minute pitch about what they do, why they do it, their vision for the future, and why they should get GROW support.

Using the information you've read and listened to, we'd like you to vote for the 3 businesses you want to see invested in. After you've heard from all the entrepreneurs you'll be able to cast your votes.

We don't want to restrict how you'd like to vote but we've offered some questions to help you make your decision:

- Do they inspire you?
- Do they seem eager to learn?
- Have they clearly identified the problem their business solves?
- Do you want to see more of their work in the borough?
- Should they be the one to win GROW?



IMPACT IN THE BOROUGH

Social

Based in Barking and Dagenham, a key part of its growth is creating positive impact for the local community. I plan to work with B&D College to support young people by offering traineeships, practical work experience, and entry-level opportunities. By building and growing the business within B&D, my aim is to contribute to the local economy through skills development, new opportunities and long-term job creation while bringing a modern digital business into the area.

Commercial

The business is in its early stage following a recent launch but we have begun onboarding sellers already, including five sellers in B&D, already generating initial sales on the platform. Longer term, there is potential to establish a small physical shop in B&D, complementing the online platform and providing a local point of presence for customers.

Bee Market

An online platform created to make it easier for people to buy and sell bee-related products in one place. This includes honey, live bees such as queen bees and nucleus colonies, and beekeeping equipment.

It was created to solve common problems in this space, especially around logistics, trust and organisation. Bee Market brings everything together in one dedicated platform designed for beekeeping. It helps simplify the process. My vision is to build a sustainable business that not only grows commercially but also supports a wider community of beekeepers and small producers, both locally and across the UK.

"My biggest motivator is building something new that doesn't currently exist in a clear and structured way. Bee Market is not just another marketplace - it's designed specifically for a niche community, and seeing that idea come to life and start working in real solutions is very rewarding."

Visit: <https://bee-market.co.uk/>

Yuliia





COULEUR CAFE

IMPACT IN THE BOROUGH

Social

As well as working hard to provide healthy and good quality food and drink options for the community, we have focused on creating a safe space for all members of the community to come and enjoy our offering. Over the years our team and our customers have built a community and visit us knowing they will be surrounded by friendly peers. We focus on hiring team members who live in Barking and Dagenham, and have also supported work integration programmes.

Commercial

Currently all of our trading comes from everyday café trade. We've been working on growing catering for events. We also see ourselves focusing on providing more jobs for residents. We want to do this by focusing on homemade products and building an in-house bakery that will supply local residents at markets and future locations.

"Seeing our Couleur Café community grow, come together and build intergenerational relationships with each other. We are now seeing people who have met through being customers that now sit down with each other. Customers who visited us as children are now coming with their children."

Couleur Cafe

Our goal is to provide healthy, fresh brunch, lunch and treats to the local community at a reasonable price and in a safe space.

We have been serving the Barking and Dagenham community for 18 years. We moved to our new and bigger home in 2023 allowing us to grow our food offering and provide a larger space for our guests.

Our team is also built of local residents who are passionate about food and community.

Kamila



IMPACT IN THE BOROUGH

Social

We respond to families and health inequality levels in Barking and Dagenham by providing safe, structured, affordable activities and:

- Trusted space where young people feel valued to build confidence, teamwork and leadership skills
- Improved mental wellbeing, healthy meals and physical activity
- Civic pride, representing their borough, building long-term cultural asset
- Reduced isolation and training pathways

Commercial

My vision is to make Barking and Dagenham the go-to London and UK content creator for civic drum culture - producing high quality music, drills and digital media that showcase local talent. We currently trade as an out-of-school enrichment provider. Income is from school contracts, HAF delivery, performance bookings and early merchandise sales.

“Witnessing transformation in real time is rewarding. A young person who once avoided eye contact suddenly leading a routine with pride – those moments prove that our model of rhythm, discipline and teamwork genuinely changes lives.”

Dagenham Eagles

A purpose-led grassroots youth organisation supporting children and young people in Barking and Dagenham for over five years.. We specialise in civic drumming, drilling conventions and rhythm based teamwork, offering children and young people a safe, structured and inspiring space to build confidence, discipline and positive life choices.

We currently hold B&D Standards and are the Council’s Civic Drummers. We blend physical activity, creativity, leadership development and emotional wellbeing that is culturally grounded and accessible to even the hardest to reach young people.

Dionne





IMPACT IN THE BOROUGH

Social

We are developing the Rootino Initiative, which will bring multigenerational community activities to the team room. These include Walk and Talk sessions, Cuppa and Talk gatherings for older residents, Knit and Natter groups, and community quizzes. By creating simple, inclusive activities, we aim to reduce loneliness, strengthen social connections and create opportunities for people of different ages and backgrounds to come together.

Commercial

The business generates revenue through the sale of food and beverages. We also have access to the Rangers classroom which provides additional revenue through hired events. Our location within a well-used public park creates strong potential for continued growth as more people discover the space. By combining a successful café model with venue hire, catering services and community engagement, we aim to grow the tea room into a sustainable business.

Eastbrookend Country Park Tea Rooms

A welcoming community café located within the Discovery Centre at Eastbrookend Country Park. We serve freshly prepared food and coffee to families, walkers and local residents.

Over time the tea room has become more than a café – it is a place where people meet, talk and build friendships. Many visitors return regularly simply for conversation and connection and the relaxed setting within the park provides a welcoming environment where people of all ages feel comfortable spending time.

“When someone tells us that they feel welcome, that they have made a new friend, or that something we have done has helped them through a difficult time, it makes the work worthwhile. Moments like that show how powerful community spaces can be.”

Visit: <https://www.eastbrookcountryparktearoom.co.uk>

Kelly





IMPACT IN THE BOROUGH

Social

Our programmes use sport to engage young people and provide structure, while delivering education, mentoring and support for life skills. Our aim is to provide young people with a safe, supportive environment where they can rebuild their confidence and work towards a stable future. With an estimated 42% of children in Barking and Dagenahm living in poverty, we present opportunities pupils might not otherwise access.

Commercial

Our business model is based on funding received per learner enrolled onto our programme. At Leisure Utd there are still over 80 unused hours per month, giving us clear numbers to grow on site. Over the next year we aim to increase learners to 150. Our dream is to become a DfE-registered alternative provision, tripling our revenue per learner, allowing us to scale sustainably.

Elite Coaching Academy

We are a full-time post-16 football and education provider in Barking and Dagenham, based at Leisure Utd, Parsloes Park. We work with learners who often do not thrive in mainstream settings, including those from disadvantaged backgrounds and those at risk of falling out of education or employment.

Since starting in 2020, we have welcomed over 500 full-time learners, providing them with 12-16 guided learning hours per week and participate in 12 hours of football activities per week. All delivered by UEFA-qualified coaches.

Jason



"One of the most rewarding parts of my work is seeing young people transform their lives. For example, a learner on our post-16 programme was previously involved in a gang and is now about to graduate from university with a degree in finance."

IMPACT IN THE BOROUGH

Social

We believe Empower will bring significant social and economic benefits to the communities of Barking and Dagenahm by:

1. Enabling residents to live better, more independent lives;
2. Creating meaningful, flexible employment for local people;
3. Strengthening the local care market;
4. Delivering costs savings that can be reinvested in local services.

Commercial

Our big dream is to grow Empower in a way that strengthens personalised support in Barking and Dagenahm while building a model that can be replicated in other boroughs. Our core services are funded through a two-year contract with the council. Our wider vision is to develop an online PA matching service and community hub. GROW would accelerate this opportunity.

Empower

Empower a not-for-profit set up in January 2026 to support disabled and older people, and their families to understand their social care options and feel confident arranging support that works for them. Much of our work involves helping people make sense of Direct Payments, which allow them to manage their own care funding rather than relying on council-arranged services.

For many people, this freedom is life-changing, but it can also feel confusing or overwhelming. Empower aims to make the process clearer, more accessible and far less stressful. We talk to people in plain language, take time to understand what matters to them, and help them explore support that fits their culture, interests, routines, and goals.

“My big dream is to make personalised support a reality for everyone, not just people who already know how to navigate the system. I want it to be something that sits at the heart of communities, where people feel confident and in control of their lives.”

Clare



Meet the Agents

The Regulator



I use proven coaching strategies to help you stay grounded with calming check-ins and emotional support, especially when things feel too much.

The Orchestrator



I turn chaos into clarity by breaking down and prioritising tasks, helping you focus on what matters next.

Integrations



IMPACT IN THE BOROUGH

Social

Young people growing up in Barking and Dagenham today are the same demographic that has historically gone the longest without support for conditions like ADHD and autism: Black and ethnicity minority people, children of immigrants, young people from working-class backgrounds. Koala was built to fill this gap. From June 2026 we are moving into community outreach phase and Barking and Dagenham is our intended pilot borough. We want to grow our roots first here.

Commercial

We sell directly to individuals on a subscription basis. Early revenues are coming in and we are moving into full paid subscriptions. We want to scale this alongside employer licenses and institutional partnerships with local government. The big dream is that Koala becomes the standard tool for neurodivergent people at work and in education.

Koala For Work

Around one in five people are neurodivergent. Most of the tools they are expected to use at work and education were not designed for them. I know this because I lived it.

Koala is the workstation for ADHD brains: an AI-powered tool that adapts to how you actually think and work, rather than expecting you to adapt it. I started building this in 2025. We now have over 300 people using it and 2000+ on our waitlist. People pay for it because it works when nothing else has. For people who look like me, who have gone the longest without support, it is the first tool that has ever felt like it was made for them.

Valerie



"I want it to be what a neurodivergent young person is handed when they start a new job. But the dream behind the dream is to live in a world where a neurodivergent Black girl is diagnosed early because we all understand neurodivergence better."



IMPACT IN THE BOROUGH

Social

These events bring together residents and visitors for an evening that encourages conversation, teamwork and shared experiences. Many people attend on their own or in small groups and leave having met new people and made new connections. In an area where people can sometimes feel disconnected, events like this help create a stronger sense of community.

Commercial

By hosting events in local venues in Barking and Dagenham, Kunle's Games Night brings customers to local businesses and encourages people to spend their evenings locally rather than travelling into central London for entertainment. As the events grow, I plan to work with more local venues and collaborate with local DJs, hosts and creatives.

Kunle's Games Night

Kunle's Games Night is a social events company that brings people together through fun, interactive game nights and social experiences. Our events combine classic games, team challenges, quizzes, and music to create a relaxed environment where you can meet new people, spend time with friends, and enjoy a night out that's more interactive than a typical bar or club night.

I started Kunle's Games Night in Barking in 2023 after noticing that many people wanted more social ways to connect that didn't revolve entirely around drinking.

Osikunle

"My big dream is to make Kunle's Games Night a consistent part of the local social and cultural scene, working with local venues and partners to create events that people look forward to."





IMPACT IN THE BOROUGH

Social

An ecosystem of young professionals and early or emerging creatives /cultural practitioners from underrepresented backgrounds. Our physical and digital experiences blend education, inspiration and genuine human connection to create cultural moments that leave a lasting impression.

We build and sustain our community through social events, art & cultural field trips, workshops, networking events, and mentoring schemes.

Commercial

We generate revenue through two streams: content creation and event production for arts organisations, cultural institutions and brands, and community events for our own growing network of diverse young creatives. Our clients include V&A East and Brixton House.

"Nourishment exists because I wanted to make a difference. I wanted to build the community, the platform and the connections I wish had. I want underrepresented and working class people to feel the arts, culture and creativity are genuinely for them."

Visit: <https://www.nourishment.land/>

Nourishment East

Nourishment is a community and cultural marketing agency, founded in Barking and Dagenham in 2020. We connect new, young and underrepresented audiences with arts and culture organisations through content creation, facilitation, consultation and event production.

We are a Black and youth-led organisation that is committed to amplifying the voices of our communities.

Our mission is connecting underrepresented communities, young professionals & creatives to London's Arts and Culture through empowering content, workshops and events/activations that inspire, educate and connect.

Tito



IMPACT IN THE BOROUGH

Social

I've been running this business out of my residence in Barking and Dagenham since I started. I've built the retail side but I am keen to build the social impact side. I am looking to create a community growing space in the borough, and would like to expand the educational side through community growing workshops. I envisage this to be for a variety of groups such as older people, schools and early years groups.

Commercial

The business trades on Amazon, Ebay, Etsy and Not on the High Street, as well as my own platform. I'd like to develop a functioning growing space which can be sustained by the retail profits. With a combination of profit from online sales and grants for community classes I'd like to turn it into a community gardening centre.

"I would love the opportunity to transform a disused space into a purpose-led growing space to show people that building a sustainable food source is possible while living in the city."

So Sow Garden

My business is an online retail business specialising in vegetable and fruit grow kits, seed packs and gardening accessories to encourage novice growers to get involved in growing their own food.

My aim is to encourage people to be more economical and sustainable and educate themselves in growing. I've been doing this since 2018 and now sell on all major selling platforms. I grow my own chilli and tomatoes which I then harvest the seeds from to sell in the grow kits. I design all my own graphics and product packaging.

Oliver





IMPACT IN THE BOROUGH

Social

Socially, we create safe, inclusive and welcoming spaces where people from different backgrounds can connect, express themselves and feel a sense of community. These events give residents access to high-quality, culturally relevant experiences within their own borough, helping to build pride in the local area. Our Healthy Mind Healthy Grind workshops focus on practical, affordable plant-based cooking, helping people develop skills to eat well on a budget.

Commercial

We trade through a mix of ticketed events, bar sales, workshop delivery and venue-based activity at The Exchange in Barking Riverside. Over the next 12 months, our focus is to strengthen Jus Jammin as a regular, profitable series. Our goal is to build a sustainable, scalable business that generates consistent income while delivering meaningful impact.

Soul and Sound

A community-focused, Black-led creative enterprise that has been operating since 2010, using music, culture, and food to bring people together while creating opportunities for local people.

We run Jus Jammin, a live music event that showcases local emerging artists, celebrates diverse talent, and brings the community together in a positive and inclusive environment. Our overall objective is to build it into a high-quality, self-sustaining event brand. A percentage of the profits from the events is reinvested into delivering free Healthy Mind Healthy Grind workshops for low-income families and individuals.

"Seeing an artist perform onstage for the first time, or watching someone grow in confidence through being a part of our events, is something that never gets old."

Marcel





IMPACT IN THE BOROUGH

Social

Through education: our platform gives Barking and Dagenham women free access to expert-led health guidance that accounts for their faith, culture and background.

Through community: our app creates spaces to track health without shame, supporting GP consultations and reducing the isolation many women carry alone.

Through data: the insights we generate will contribute to research that currently overshadows Muslim voices.

Commercial

Taahirah currently trades through app subscriptions. The plans to grow cover, first 1:1 practitioner support, the second stream is institutional licensing - partnerships with mosques, charities, researchers and clinics who want to either license Taahirah's technology or data for their communities. Our target is ten institutional partners within twelve months.

Taahirah Health

Taahirah is a digital health platform and app built for Muslim women's health, supporting them from menstruation through to post-menopause. We bring together trusted medical and Islamic guidance throughout our community, education and tech initiatives.

We launched in 2023. Our web platform hosts expert-led articles covering reproductive health, nutrition, lifestyle and faith-based perspectives. Our social media channels demystify topics and offer lived stories, giving Muslim women accessible, accurate and culturally relevant information.



"Our big dream is for Taahirah to become the leading health ecosystem for Muslim women globally. A place where every woman can find the education, tools and community she needs, wherever she is in her health journey."



IMPACT IN THE BOROUGH

Social

We work with young people who often don't see clear pathways into creative careers. Our impact goes beyond sessions, we: create paid opportunities for young people, support progression into education, training and work, and help build confidence and identity.

Every young person we move into work or self-employment is a direct contribution to a stronger, more inclusive Barking and Dagenham.

Commercial

We've been trading since 2020, working through commissioned programmes with local authorities, community organisations and education providers. Our vision is to build a financially sustainable organisation where traded income is the primary driver of growth: not grants. We want True Cadence to be a business that thrives because of what it sells and who it serves.

"Growing up, I didn't have access to the opportunities we now provide. I had a speech impediment, and music became a way for me to build confidence and express myself. That experience shaped how I see this work: it's not just about skills, it's about what those skills inlock in people."

Visit: <https://truecadence.org/>

True Cadence

A multi-award-winning social enterprise based in Barking and Dagenham, supporting children and young people aged 8–25 to build skills, confidence and real pathways into the music and creative industries.

We design and deliver a range of programmes including live performance workshops, songwriting sessions, and mentoring that supports young people's personal and professional development. Crucially, our programmes are co-designed with young people, so they reflect what participants actually need and want, not just what adults assume.

Emmanuel





IMPACT IN THE BOROUGH

Social

We support students with employability and life skills, while also supporting mental health and well-being through our gym and physical activity facilities.

We have recently acquired a premises in Dagenham, which we plan to use to expand our Alternative Provision services while also serving as a creative hub.

Commercial

The Dagenham site will also allow us to develop a creative community hub for local artists to be able to participate in and produce their own events. This will pave the way for commercial creative events that will be new expansion of our revenue stream. We will hire the space out for those who wish to use our space, as well as producing our own events for attendees to enjoy and pay for their experience.

U-Turnships

A social enterprise & Alternative Provision established to work with disadvantaged young people, as well as those with special educational needs who have been marginalised by mainstream education. We provide mentorship by encouraging creative and artistic aspirations with the young people we work with, whilst also providing opportunities for diverse communities.

We focus on encouraging vocational studies such as our Arts Award qualifications, which can potentially lead to UCAS points. These subjects include photography, videography, studio recording, festival production, and hair & beauty.

Georgina

"With our alternative provision and creative hub endeavours, I believe that in our first year we will be able to impact 400-500 young people and emerging creatives in the local area through activities, events, employment, and voluntary opportunities."





IMPACT IN THE BOROUGH

Social

We provide affordable outdoor sessions that make it easier for parents and carers to spend quality time with their children in nature. A major need in a densely built area is access to green spaces; creating a habit of physical activity in the early years is pertinent. We respond directly to needs of local families. For many we work with, our sessions are their first experience of structured outdoor play.

Commercial

We want to grow Wander Wild into a sustainable and widely recognised model. A big part of our vision to develop our pop-up forest school boxes is simple, thoughtful kits that can be used by schools and libraries to run their own outdoor sessions. A key priority is to develop this box into a refined, ready-to-scale product. We have also begun selling nature-based educational resources.

Wander Wild Forest School

Over the past two years, we have supported hundreds of families to connect with nature, build confidence and form friendships.

We offer pre-school children and their parents a chance to learn new skills and connect with others from many different cultures and backgrounds at the Barking Food Forest; a community garden in the heart of East London's biggest housing development.

Zainab & Junior



"A child can gain confidence outdoors knowing that they are in a space that they are entitled to be in. Access to regular time outdoors should never be limited because of a family's postcode."

Our GROW community

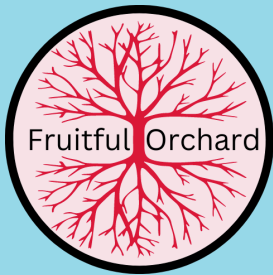
**th!nk
pieces**



the
**Boathouse
Studios**



ideate
education 



**HAIR
MEOUT!**
THE INCLUSIVE SALON



**DANCE
BDYD** in partnership with
Future MOLDS
Communities

**One Room Live
& Area44**



GROUNDED

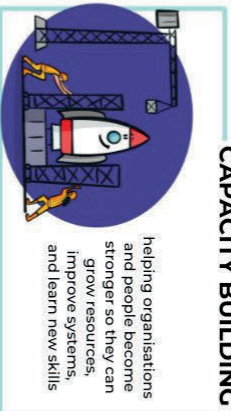
JARGON BUSTER

Social Investment Language Explained



ASSETS

the various resources that an individual or organisation owns (such as property, land, equipment etc)



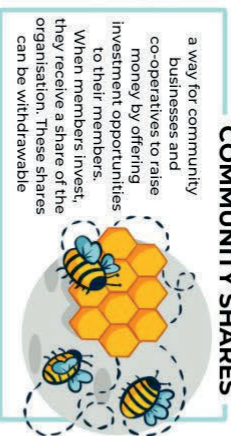
CAPACITY BUILDING

helping organisations and people become stronger so they can grow resources, improve systems, and learn new skills



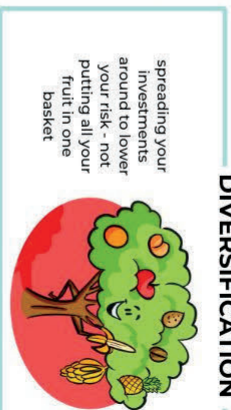
CAPITAL

the amount of cash and other assets held by an organisation



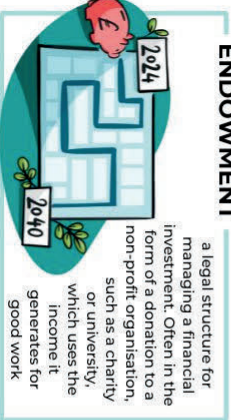
COMMUNITY SHARES

a way for community businesses and co-operatives to raise money by offering investment opportunities to their members. When members invest, they receive a share of the organisation. These shares can be withdrawable



DIVERSIFICATION

spreading your investments around to lower your risk - not putting all your fruit in one basket



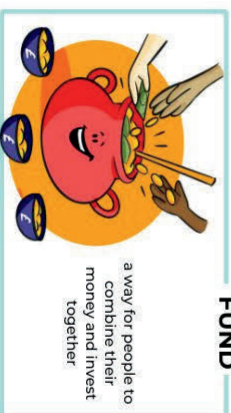
ENDOWMENT

a legal structure for managing a financial investment. Often in the form of a donation to a non-profit organisation, such as a charity or university, which uses the income it generates for good work




EQUITY INVESTMENT

an investor offers money to a business in return for a share of the company - a piece of the pie



FUND

a way for people to combine their money and invest together



LIQUIDITY

how fast you can get your money back from an investment without taking it back



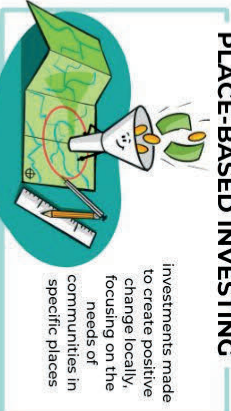
PARTICIPATORY GRANTMAKING

people who are affected by funding decisions choose how that money is spent. At BD Giving, residents of Barking & Dagenham decide how to use the money for their area



PARTICIPATORY INVESTING

a type of investing that lets communities who have been excluded from traditional methods have a say. It allows them to choose how money is invested, how the process works, how it happens, and what outcomes they want



PLACE-BASED INVESTING

investments made to create positive change locally, focusing on the needs of communities in specific places



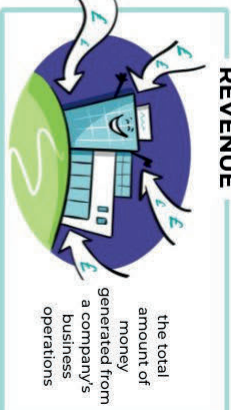
QUASI-EQUITY INVESTMENT

a mix of equity and debt. It lets an investor get a share of an organisation's future earnings through a percentage of sales. It's similar to equity investment but doesn't require giving out shares. Sometimes, it's called a 'revenue share agreement'



RETURN

the amount of money you expect to get back from an investment, usually as a percentage gained over a set period of time



REVENUE

the total amount of money generated from a company's business operations



RISK

when you invest money there is always a chance that you won't get the return you expected. Weighing that up is important before investing



SECURED VS UNSECURED DEBT

secured debt is a loan backed by something the borrower owns, like a house. If they can't repay, the lender can sell the asset to get some of the money back. Unsecured debt doesn't require backing from the borrower's assets but is often riskier for the lender



SOCIAL IMPACT

the positive or negative effect that an individual, organisation, or project has on the well-being and welfare of a community or society as a whole



SOCIAL INVESTMENT

using money to help people and communities while also making money back



SOCIAL INVESTOR

asset owners, such as donors and foundations, who invest their money with the goal of achieving specific social objectives rather than earning a profit





Barking & Dagenham Giving is a local, independent funder powered by the people who live here. We create ways for residents to make decisions about how money is spent in the borough - and everyone's included.

Our goal is to bring more money into Barking and Dagenham to back the ideas and energy that's already here. Whether it's improving community spaces, investing in local business, or connecting communities - local people have the solutions and our participatory grants and investments can accelerate their efforts.

Visit our website to see what we're working on and how you can get involved.

www.bdgiving.org.uk