



The GBCC Black Business Collective Bulletin

Welcome to your seventh edition!

In this quarterly bulletin, you will find opportunities, events and content all aimed at, and curated for, the black business community.

Our partners



Export Finance - Female Leaders Programme

UK Export Finance **Lifted.**
Elevating female founders

UKEF Female Founder Export Accelerator
in partnership with Lifted Ventures

Leeds launch event
Tuesday 4 November, 12-2pm

Birmingham launch event
Tuesday 11 November, 12-2pm

Scan the QR code to register

athena.labs
Elevating female founders through education
Delivered by Lifted.

We exist
increase
of early
capital
female

UK Export Finance (UKEF) and **Lifted Ventures** are proud to launch a first-of-its-kind programme that supports **female founders from diverse backgrounds**, who are ready to **expand internationally**.

The **UKEF Female Founder Export Accelerator**, in partnership with Lifted Ventures, will begin in **January 2026**. It's a **four-month** programme, combining **in-person** and **virtual workshops, mentoring** and **coaching** - designed to give you the insight, support and funding pathways you need to scale globally.

It's an unmissable opportunity for ambitious female founders from diverse backgrounds who are ready to go global, including those who:

- **Are already exporting and want to accelerate international growth**
- **Plan to expand globally in the next 12-24 months**
- **Are exploring how to export and need practical advice and support**

There will be two launch events this November:

Leeds

Tuesday 4th November

12:00pm - 2:00pm

Bruntwood, Platform, Leeds City Centre

[Book your place](#)

Birmingham

Tuesday 11th November

12:00pm - 2:00pm

Spanish Steps at Bruntwood Scitech's Birmingham Health Innovation Campus

[Book your place](#)

Jamaican digital services delegation visits London

10th - 14th November



A delegation of International Trade Centre–vetted **Jamaican digital service providers**, funded by the **UK Foreign, Commonwealth & Development Office (FCDO)** under the **UK Trade Partnerships (UKTP) Programme**, will visit London to connect with **UK scale-ups** and **SMEs** seeking cost-effective, high-quality tech partners.

The firms specialise in **software development, AI, cybersecurity, cloud transformation**, and **customer experience solutions**, offering flexible, right-sized partnerships for UK businesses.

UK companies are invited to book **B2B meetings** on **Monday 10th, Tuesday 11th or Friday 14th November**, or attend the **Jamaican Digital Services Cocktail Reception** at the **Jamaican High Commission, London** on **Tuesday 11th November** from **6:00pm–8:00pm**.

For enquiries and meeting requests, please contact jamprouk@jamprocorp.com.

AI Governance Hub – West Midlands Launch Event

Responsible AI in Practice

Thursday 13th November

University of Wolverhampton Science Park

FREE to attend

AI Governance Hub
West Midlands

LoyAI

Panel. Networking. AI Governance Hub West Midlands Series

Responsible AI in Practice

Bridging the gap between AI automation and responsible usage.

Olawumi Loye Karl George MBE Claire Roberts Richard Wood Sumathi Menon Akinoyemi Arabambi

13 November 2025
10:00 AM - 12:00 PM
University of Wolverhampton Science Park

REGISTER: bit.ly/aigwm

Join us for an exciting gathering of business leaders, policymakers, and academics exploring how organisations can adopt and scale AI responsibly.

This **half-day** event will feature expert panels and keynote reflections on **trust**, **compliance**, and **governance in AI adoption**. Speakers include:

- **Karl George MBE** (Founder, The Governance Forum)
- **Claire Roberts** (Co-Founder, Full Fathom Five)

- **Sumathi Menon** (Founder, Mave Social AI)
- **Richard Wood** (AI Growth Consultant, Rocketeer)
- **Akinyemi Arabambi** (AI Researcher)
- **Olawumi Loye** (Founder, LoyAI & Convenor, AI Governance Hub)

[Book your place](#)

'Stormzy' celebrates winners of 2025 Black Talent Awards

Celebrating UK black talent and impact



The **Evenfields Black Talent Awards 2025** has crowned its winners in a vibrant gala at the ICC Birmingham, shining a spotlight on outstanding Black professionals from across the UK.

Marking the fourth annual celebration of Black excellence, the event featured 16 award categories - from Rising Star to Senior Leader – all aligning with this year's theme of "Impact," which highlights those driving real change in their fields and communities.

More than just an awards ceremony, the Black Talent Awards (BTA) serves as the nation's only UK-wide platform exclusively dedicated to recognising Black professional talent.

[Read the full story](#)

Investing in Future Leaders: The Key to growth, resilience and innovation

In an era of rapid change, economic uncertainty, and fierce competition, one factor consistently sets thriving businesses apart: the strength of their leaders. Businesses that invest in developing leadership capacity within their teams are better equipped to:

- **Retain their best talent**, reducing costly turnover.
- **Spot and seize growth opportunities** in new markets.
- **Navigate change** with resilience and confidence.
- **Embed values and purpose** into their operations, building trust with customers, partners, and communities.

The Nishkam Civic Association's Level 7 Senior Leadership Programme

The **Nishkam Civic Association (NCA)**, a values-led charity with deep community roots in Birmingham, works closely with **Professor Monder Ram**, Director of CREME, on a range of community-based projects supporting diverse businesses and civic initiatives.

As part of this mission, NCA is delivering the **Level 7 Senior Leadership Programme (SLP)**: equivalent to a Postgraduate Diploma designed for leaders and aspiring leaders in SMEs, third sector organisations, and public bodies. On completion, leaders can apply for the CMI Chartered Manager status and also apply to join the final stage of the **University of Aston's MBA or EMBA programmes**.

Key benefits include:

- **Strategic insight**: Shaping long-term direction in a competitive environment.
- **Innovation skills**: Finding creative ways to deliver value and differentiate your business.
- **Systems thinking**: Seeing the bigger picture and aligning resources for maximum impact.
- **Values-led leadership**: Building organisational cultures that attract and retain the right people.

The current **NCA-delivered SLP**, starting on **27th November 2025**, is such an exceptional opportunity. It is **fully funded for eligible employers and employees**, and with government funding scheduled to end in **December 2025**, this is the last chance to access the programme at no cost before that deadline.

For founders, business owners, and senior managers in the West Midlands, especially in SMEs and ethnic minority-owned firms, this is a rare chance to invest in your future leaders, strengthen your organisation, and secure long-term growth.

For more details or to register for an upcoming webinar or in-person briefing, contact **Prof Upkar Pardesi** (upkar.pardesi@ncauk.org, 07974 150320).

[Find out more](#)

[Apply now](#)

Funding opportunities

Feasibility Studies Round 1

Innovate UK is offering **up to £500,000** in grants (per applicant) for projects that accelerate **battery technology development**, support the **UK supply chain**, and boost competitiveness in **electrification sectors** like automotive, aerospace, and energy storage.

- **Competition opens:** Thursday 23rd October 2025
- **Competition closes:** Wednesday 17th December 2025 11:00am

[Find out more](#)

Global Business Innovation Programme

Women in Innovation in Health-Tech, India (Bengaluru & Chennai)

A funded programme for **women-led SMEs** to explore **health-tech opportunities in India**, including preparation workshops, a 5-day market visit, matchmaking events,

and ongoing support from innovation specialists. Focus areas include **digital health, AI diagnostics, wearables, and women's health solutions.**

Applications open: Thursday 16th October 2025

Applications close: Thursday 13th November 2025

[Find out more](#)

Global Business Innovation Programme AI Enhanced Manufacturing, USA (Boston & Pittsburgh)

Innovate UK-funded initiative for **SMEs** to build **AI-driven manufacturing collaborations in the US**, featuring workshops, a market visit with site tours and networking, and bespoke growth support. Covers technologies like **machine learning, robotics, predictive analytics, and digital twins** for efficient, resilient production.

Applications opened: Tuesday 23rd September 2025

Applications close: Friday 14th November 2025

[Find out more](#)

Business Energy Advice Service (BEAS)

Programme offering **free energy assessments** and **50% match-funded grants** (no repayment) for **energy-saving measures** like solar panels, LED lighting, insulation, or heat pumps.

Aimed at **reducing costs, emissions, and boosting sustainability** across the West Midlands.

[Find out more](#)

Exporting Starts Here



Fully funded support programme for **SMEs** to build export capabilities, including 1:1 expert advice, workshops on customs, e-commerce, and trade agreements, plus networking in high-growth sectors like **aerospace, health-tech,** and **professional services**.

[Find out more](#)

Birmingham and Solihull Export Support Programme (BASESP)

Funding has been fully allocated for Solihull

Grants **up to £6,000** (100% of eligible costs) for **export-readiness activities** like market research, trade shows, translation services/cultural advice, IPR consultancy, or product adaptation.

[Find out more](#)
