



# Social

## Impact Report

October 2022

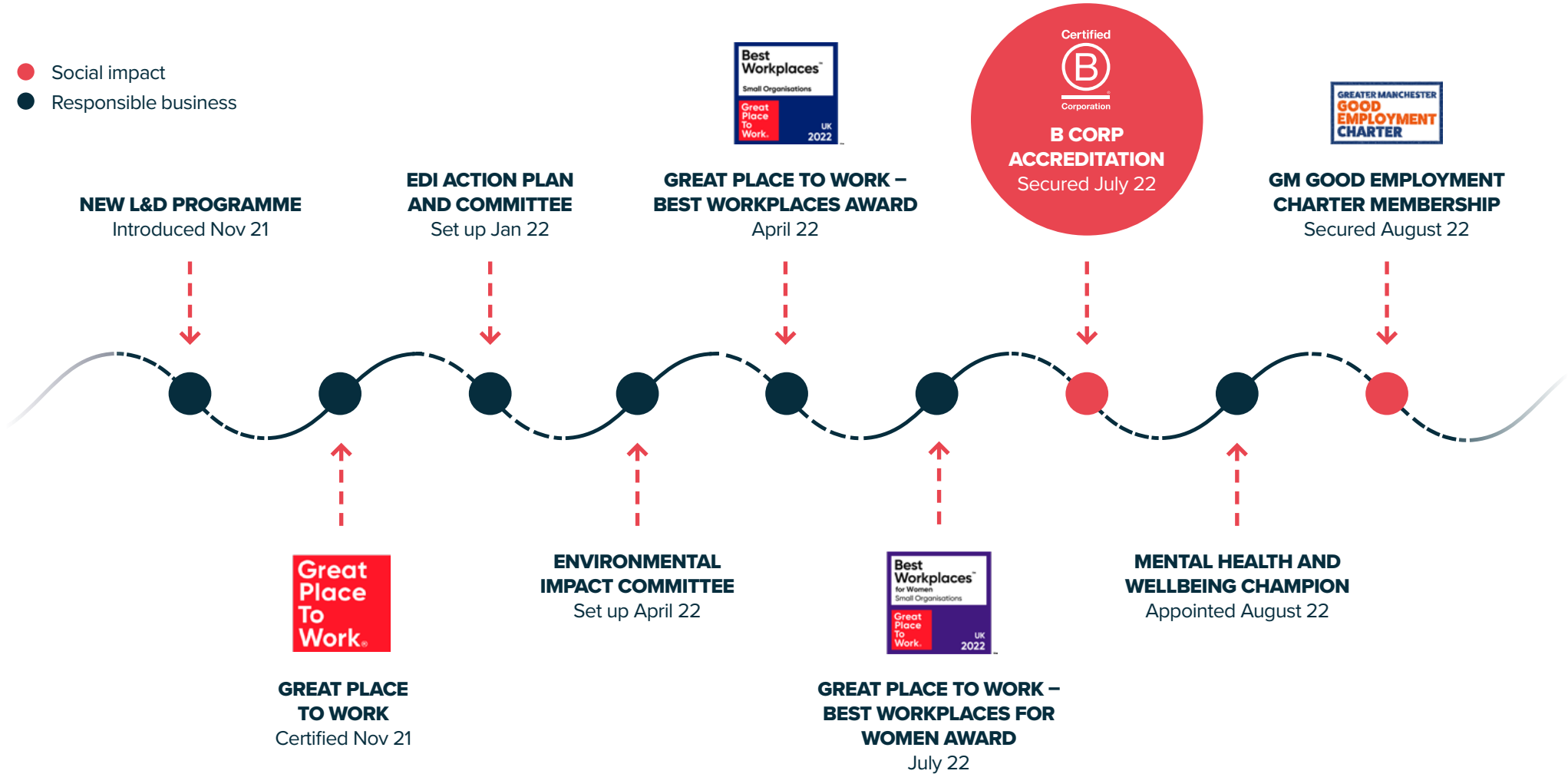
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# KEY ACHIEVEMENTS FROM 2021/22

- Social impact
- Responsible business



# GOOD CAUSES SUPPORTED



**WE DONATED**  
**£4,500**  
**TO CHARITABLE**  
**CAUSES CHOSEN BY**  
**OUR COLLEAGUES**



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## WE MADE IT!

**I am so proud that Social became a certified B Corp in July 2022. It was a long journey, beginning in 2019, and one that taught me as a founder and the company as a whole some invaluable lessons. It has transformed how we run our business, helping us take the good practices we have followed since the business was formed, and transform them into a robust, systematic approach to putting people, planet and profit at the heart of our decisions.**

While this is our third social impact report, its our first as a B Corp and we are delighted to join the global network with more than 1,000 UK members in a quest to build a stronger, more inclusive and just society. It's great to be part of a community of like-minded businesses, sharing best practice and lessons learned along the way.

We were proud to secure recognition from Great Place to Work, ranking highly in their national listings of small business and on their Great Place to Work for Women. Offering people the opportunity to learn and develop through doing good work has been my ambition since I founded the business, and this kind of recognition is fantastic.

But we are not sitting back and relaxing. Becoming a B Corp has shown us how much more we need to do, so our journey continues through challenging economic times. We have invested in the business, re-shaping it for the challenges ahead including improving our learning and development offering to staff, stepping up our provision of internships and work placement opportunities and focusing on measuring and reducing our environmental impact.

As we enter our 10th year, we will continue to seek out new ways to support communities where we operate and beyond. Unleashing the potential of people of all ages remains my passion and we are looking to step up the opportunities we offer to young people from all backgrounds, particularly those that are not widely represented in the creative industries.

I hope you find this report interesting and I would [welcome your thoughts](#) on it. Thanks to all our clients, partners and friends for your ongoing support.

We could not do any of this without you.



**Offering people the opportunity to learn and develop through doing good work has been my ambition since I founded the business**



**John Quinton-Barber,**  
Founder & CEO



# WHAT SOCIAL IMPACT MEANS TO US

**The Social group is a purpose-driven, integrated family of specialist communications consultancies helping organisations tell their stories, engage people and improve lives. Founded in 2013, Social has teams in Manchester, Leeds, London and Liverpool with specialist practices providing ESG and technology communications.**

Social impact is the long-term difference we make to the people and places we work with. As a small-medium business operating in the communications and campaigning space it means:

- › Running our business in a responsible, sustainable way by locking our commitment to make a material positive impact on society and the environment into our business objects.
- › Looking after our employees and providing them with an environment in which they can all thrive and achieve their potential.
- › Making a positive impact in the communities in which we operate through in-kind support and direct financial contributions.
- › Tracking, managing and reducing our environmental impacts.
- › Being transparent in how we monitor and report our social impact.

## ABOUT THIS REPORT

This report sets out the progress we have made on the targets we set for our financial year of November 2021 – October 2022. It is based around the B-Corp evaluation and measurement framework. It also sets out our targets and priority actions for November 2022 - October 2023.





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## PRO BONO WORK

# MANCHESTER TECH FESTIVAL

**Our team supported the organisers of the first Manchester Tech Festival, created by the tech community, for the tech community. The conference had a strong social mission which included raising donations for the Manchester Food Partnership and establishing schemes through which supporters can donate tech equipment to communities in need Manchester.**

A key theme of the event was about diversity and inclusion, with sessions open to Greater Manchester residents who were interested in a tech careers, panels with neurodiverse speakers and ex-military personnel now working in tech as well as other people who had followed unusual paths to their tech career.

Support, led by our Social Tech Communications team, included:

- › PR support from the festival launch in March 2022 and publicising pre-conference events.
- › Profiling key spokespeople.
- › Regular updates ahead of the conference to maintain interest and encourage bookings.
- › Profiling and appearing on podcasts to support the festival.
- › Taking part in some of the panel discussions and 'fireside chats'.



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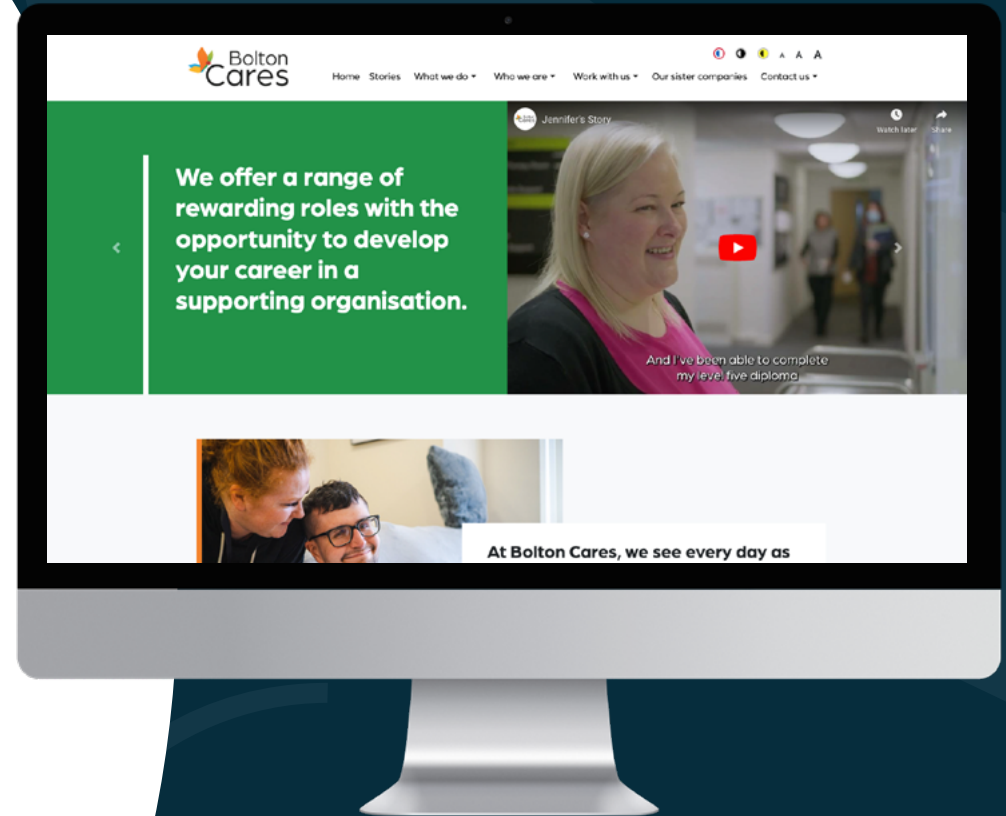
## PRO BONO WORK

# BOLTON CARES – SHARED LIVES

**Bolton Cares works with people to enable them to live independently in the way they want and get the support they need when they need it. It works with older people, including those with a dementia diagnosis, people with learning disabilities, autism and mental health needs.**

They are a longstanding client of Social's and in 2022 we provided pro bono support to help them promote their Shared Lives Service. This is a dedicated service, which supports adults with a variety of needs within a home-based setting by matching them with approved carers who welcome them into their homes.

Our Manchester Managing Director led a strategy sprint with their leadership team to help them focus on the future of the service and how best to grow it, while Senior Content Writer James Ellaby supported with copy to bring the service to life on their website.





# OUR VOLUNTEERING

**In March 2021 we introduced a volunteering leave policy, giving all of our team members five days of work time to support charitable or community projects in their area. In total this year we have donated 180 hours (around 25 days) to projects chosen by our team members.**

Here are some examples.

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## **Andrew Cameron-Smith** - *School Governor*

“I’ve done a couple of projects with my volunteering time. I am a platelet donor, which are used to help people in the treatment of serious injuries and illnesses, including cancer. And I am also a school governor at my youngest son’s school. In that role, I sit on the main Governors Board, the Preparatory School committee, the Finance and General Purpose committee and will be taking up the role of Eco Governor to help mentor the student committee looking into making the school more sustainable in its operations. It’s a chance for me to use my professional skills to support and motivate young people, which is fantastic!”




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## **Yolandé Haynes** - *Friendly Fridays*

“Over the past year, I’ve spent five days volunteering at Friendly Fridays, a community drop-in centre. I was able to spend time with some amazing people who are all working to better their community. I loved learning about the work they were doing and hearing about their experiences!”




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## **Clif Barrett** - *St John Ambulance*

“I volunteered with St John Ambulance (SJA) as a Logistics Team Member, where I helped maintain stocks, ensured equipment was in order and that everything was ready for events.”



“I became interested in volunteering with SJA after discussions about the decreasing numbers of volunteers (since covid) and the amount of work they do locally and at nationwide events. The opportunity to help out at a sporting event in the future made me chose SJA. It’s been a real eye opener helping in the logistics team, learning about what’s needed for events and what sort of equipment goes into first aid boxes, and why.”

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**James Ellaby** - *Beechwood Cancer Care*

“My initial volunteering work was working as a Crisis Volunteer with Shout, working afternoon shifts talking via text message to people in crisis. Since 2022 I have used my volunteering days on a placement as a volunteer counsellor with Beechwood Cancer Care, offering counselling services to people affected by cancer, including patients, people with terminal diagnoses, partners of those undergoing treatment and people bereaved by cancer.

I’ve found this work challenging at times, dealing with difficult situations and subjects, but it has been really rewarding to be able to help people going through some of the darkest times of their lives.”




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**Chris Mckeown** - *Food Bank*

“I volunteered in a local food bank, collecting supplies and creating food bags for people in need in the current cost of living crisis. It was great to have the time to help in my community and support people in need.”




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**John Quinton-Barber** - *St Thomas More*

“I’ve taken part in a few projects with my volunteering leave. I’ve mentored three business owners this year. I love to support (and occasionally challenge!) entrepreneurs at the start of their journeys and I’m happy to share the lessons I’ve learned the hard way, so they might not have to.

My other passion is engaging and inspiring young people about business and their careers. I didn’t have a great time at school and couldn’t wait to leave. I had no self-confidence or belief that I could achieve much at 16 years old. So it’s really important to me to help young people understand the wealth of opportunities there are beyond school – and help them build the confidence and skills they need to make the most of them.

I’ve done presentations in schools through State Talking, a Manchester-based organisation that works to raise the aspirations of young people by pairing pupils with relatable role models. I’ve done a couple assemblies at St Thomas More in Denton – and the feedback from the head was that the children found them rewarding and gained a different perspective from them, which is great.”




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**Brandon Henderson** - *Leeds 2023*

“I’ve signed up as a volunteer for Leeds 2023, the year-long celebration of Leeds culture. I was able to attend my volunteering training during work time, which was massively helpful – and I can’t wait to get to work when the festival kicks off!”



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**Nishall Garalla** - *Rainbow Services (Harlow)*

“I do a lot of volunteering out of hours, but it’s been great to have the flexibility to take part in day time events. I used some volunteering hours for a trustee meeting and an AGM at Rainbow Services (Harlow). It made a big difference to the staff and volunteers see board members coming in and spending time with them, rather than just making “management decisions” behind “closed doors”. Being a trustee gives me a sense of fulfilment and a route to happiness.”




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**Claire Quansah** - *BME PR Pros*

“I’ve been supporting BME PR Pros for a few years now and really enjoy helping the mission to give Black, Asian, Mixed Race and Ethnic Minority PR professionals the career opportunities they deserve. In 2022 I was honoured to be on the selection panel and mentoring group for The Xec, the first leadership programme for BME PR and comms professionals. I loved seeing the impact of scheme on the individual members and how much they developed as a group. Knowing that I’m (hopefully) helping to shape the future of our industry’s leadership and make it more diverse is something that I’ll always be proud of.”




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**Becki Ord** - *Yes.*

“I joined the Board of Trustees for Yes in April 2022 to bring PR and marketing expertise. Yes helps people living in North Manchester who aren’t working, or who are in low-paid or insecure jobs, to get into meaningful employment. They work with people to give them the skills, confidence and experience they need to succeed. I find the role rewarding because it’s an opportunity to give something back to the wider community of North Manchester, which is close to the area I live, and to support a charity that is helping people to realise and aspire to greater and improved employment opportunities.”



“I am using my PR and communications expertise and experience to help Yes communicate with and build relationships with its target audiences and raise the profile and impact of its work so Yes can get more employers on board and help more local people into meaningful employment.”

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**Lauren Stradling** - *Action Together*

“I help Action Together which supports charities across Rochdale, Oldham and Tameside. Each week grant applications from various organisations are shared and we review them against funding criteria. Reviewers then and give feedback to suggest how charities can use the funding. It gives me a much broader sense of the great work that is going on day in day out.”



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**CERTIFIED B CORPORATIONS ARE  
BUSINESSES VERIFIED TO MEET  
HIGH STANDARDS OF SOCIAL AND  
ENVIRONMENTAL PERFORMANCE,  
TRANSPARENCY AND ACCOUNTABILITY  
TO BALANCE PROFIT AND PURPOSE.**

They are legally required to consider the impact of their decisions on their workers, customers, suppliers, community and the environment. The B Corp Community is a global movement of businesses that provide leadership by demonstrating their commitment to people and the planet.

**Certified**



**Corporation**

# IMPACT AREAS

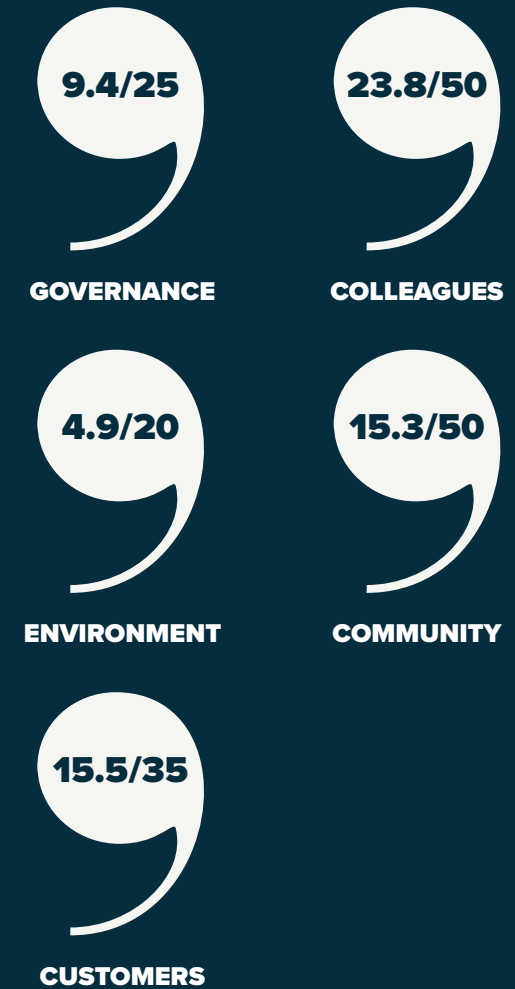
In securing B Corp accreditation, we are focused on consistent improvement across the five B Corp impact areas:

- > **GOVERNANCE**
- > **COLLEAGUES**
- > **COMMUNITY**
- > **ENVIRONMENT**
- > **CUSTOMERS**

## OUR SCORES



## UK AVERAGE SCORES



# OUR ACHIEVEMENTS

## GOVERNANCE

We revised our new suppliers' form to gather diversity, social and environmental impact data, helping us to make more informed decisions about who we work with, and to deliver greater benefits through our expenditure.

We published our first gender pay gap report following methodology published by the UK Government, which showed a small pay gap. We have developed plans to address this within two years.

## COLLEAGUES

We strengthened our internal learning and development programme in November 2021, setting up a range of channels which make it easier for colleagues to access training and information at a convenient time for them. We run sessions throughout the year which are recorded and available for colleagues to catch up afterwards, covering everything from setting up new suppliers, advice on pricing work to how to do research reports, evaluating PR, ESG and creative services.

We secured Great Place to Work certification in November 2021 and were ranked 16th in its list of Best UK Workplaces 2022 in the small business category (April 2022).

In July 2022 we were placed 20th in its list of best UK Workplaces for Women (small business category).

We established an Equality, Diversity and Inclusion committee staffed by volunteers from across our business and published an action plan in January 2022, providing insight and direction to our efforts to become more inclusive. This is an important step on our journey to achievement of the [Blueprint Diversity Mark](#).

Having been a Supporter of the Greater Manchester Good Employment Charter Member since it was founded, we were delighted to step up to Member status in August 2022, which requires employers to demonstrate excellent practice in the seven key characteristics of employment practice measured by the Charter.

In growing recognition of the importance of protecting our team's mental health, we appointed a mental health and well-being champion in August 2022.

Great  
Place  
To  
Work.

**16th**

PLACE IN  
GREAT PLACE TO WORK'S  
BEST UK WORKPLACES  
(SMALL BUSINESS CATEGORY)





# OUR ACHIEVEMENTS

## ENVIRONMENT

We set up an Environmental Impact Committee staffed by volunteers across the business and utilising the expertise of our specialist Net Zero communications consultancy. They will gather data and put in place plans to reduce our carbon footprint.

This year also saw us embed social, environmental and EDI objectives into our team's individual performance frameworks.

## COMMUNITY

Our team delivered 25 days of volunteering action across a wide range of community-based organisations and charities. You can hear from some of our team about what they did and why on our volunteering pages (9-11).

We established a partnership with Channel 4's Content Creatives programme, welcoming our first two paid interns in February 2022 followed by two more in July. Each individual worked with us for eight weeks. The initiative offers young people the chance to kickstart a career in creative digital media and is targeted at young people aged 18 – 24 years from disadvantaged backgrounds.

In addition to the Channel 4 initiative, we hosted two further paid internships, including one to upskill a mature person ahead of their return to the workplace after a significant gap, and one work experience placement for a school leaver.

We also appointed a social value champion from within our business to help us build up networks and contacts to increase volunteering opportunities and grow our social impact.

## CUSTOMERS

We conducted a client satisfaction survey and launched a client onboarding process to improve how we welcome clients to our agency, formalising and strengthening our client welcome processes.

# AREAS FOR DEVELOPMENT 2022/23

## GOVERNANCE

We have started to align our practice to the commitments of the Blueprint, and hope to apply for it within this operational year.

Publish our EDI and gender pay gap data externally.

## COLLEAGUES

We will recruit our first apprentice as part of our commitment to creating opportunities for young people.

## ENVIRONMENT

Informed by our Environmental Impact Committee, agree a target date for our business becoming net zero and publish our plan to achieve that.

## COMMUNITY

While we offer an industry-leading volunteering package, we want to increase the participation levels among our team members in our volunteering programme. We will do this by building better networks across the third sector and offering a wider range of volunteering activities to give more colleagues the chance to give something back to their community in ways that work for them.

## CUSTOMERS

We will develop a more robust process to collect client feedback via the Net Promoter Score system.



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# SUSTAINABLE DEVELOPMENT GOALS

**The UN Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs), adopted by all United Nations Member States in 2015, provide a shared blueprint for peace and prosperity for people and the planet, now and into the future.**

They recognise that ending poverty and other deprivations must go hand-in-hand with strategies that improve health and education, reduce inequality, and spur economic growth – all while tackling climate change and working to preserve our oceans and forests.

## GOALS CONTRIBUTION

Linking efforts by Social to enhance our positive social and environmental impact directly with the sustainable development goals is not an exact science. However, using B Corp's SDG Action Manager we have identified those SDGs with greatest relevance to our business model and areas of activity as a UK-based services business.

For selected goals we have highlighted significant achievements during the year and identified key areas for action in the coming year.

## 17 SDGS

ARE AN URGENT CALL  
FOR ACTION BY ALL  
COUNTRIES IN A GLOBAL  
PARTNERSHIP





# PROGRESS IN 2021/22

## SDG1 – NO POVERTY

We have supported **94** entrepreneurs by making **45** micro-credit loans totalling **£1,530** through Lendwithcare.

We will continue to support entrepreneurs in low income countries to access microfinance. Within our own business, we are committed to continuing our Real Living Wage Employer accreditation.

## SDG 5 – GENDER EQUALITY

We produced our first gender pay gap report alongside our plans to eliminate this in the next two financial years and continue to support all our colleagues with a flexible working scheme which enables them to work where and when they need to best manage caring responsibilities.

## SDG 8 – DECENT WORK AND ECONOMIC GROWTH

We secured Great Place to Work Certification and were recognised as a Great Place to Work for Women. We deepened our involvement with the Greater Manchester Good Employment Charter from ‘supporter’ status to ‘member’, reflecting that we meet all seven of its criteria for good employment.

In our next financial year, we plan to recruit our first apprentice.



Photos courtesy of Fiona Finchett at Planit-IE

# PROGRESS IN 2021/22

## SDG 11 – SUSTAINABLE CITIES AND COMMUNITIES

We contributed to sustainable cities and communities through the work of our business units including designing, developing and managing Unlock Net Zero, a knowledge portal set up by Ocean Media Group to support and guide organisations in the housing and built environment sector on their transition to net zero.

We have also supported a number of towns to develop and implement improvement plans, including on a project to build a 60 hectare sustainable community on a brownfield site with low carbon homes and a two hectare park at its heart – an ‘urban lung’ in the heart of a one of the UK’s great cities.

Through our specialist ESG and consultations teams, we will continue to drive forward sustainable developments through supporting our clients to develop robust, credible ESG frameworks and through timely, inclusive and creative consultations that enable all parts of the community to air their views.

## SDG 13 – CLIMATE ACTION

We ran a successful programme of events with our client Ocean Media Group through Unlock Net Zero, an online and in-person resource to help housing associations and other organisations in the built environment sector to transition to net zero by 2050 and to upgrade the energy efficiency of their housing stock by 2030.

We are working with our landlords to accurately record our energy and water usage and have established an environmental impact committee and will publish our carbon reduction plan this year.

Members of our team will complete a net zero training programme as part of our journey to becoming a net zero business.



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## IN CONCLUSION

Securing B Corp certification has made this year a landmark one for Social. We will use it as a platform to grow our business and increase our social impact. With the many challenges facing the world, a smarter and more inclusive approach to business will be the only way to make a difference at scale. Responsible businesses must take action to balance economic development with the needs of society and the planet – and we are determined to play our part.



# Social

Leeds | Liverpool | London | Manchester  
[www.social.co.uk](http://www.social.co.uk)

