



Impact Report 2022-23

A message from our founders

We're very proud to be publishing our second B Corp impact report. Being members of this community has been and continues to be one of the best decisions we made for our team and our business. It's become the filter through which we make our decisions both big and small, it's brought our team closer together by involving everyone in the journey and it's allowed us to help our clients and our suppliers in understanding the impact of our collective actions. This year we have created our own community, called Building Better Business, which brings together purpose driven businesses in the built environment sector to share ways to improve their social and environmental impacts. Our industry is responsible for nearly 40% of UK carbon emissions and it's our responsibility to address this and take action. To build an inclusive and sustainable economy that works for everyone we must make a commitment to using business as a force for good and bring everyone along with us.

This impact report represents our journey so far and we hope you enjoy it.



Richard

Richard Garland,
Co-Founder

Clare

Clare Armstrong,
Co-Founder

Focus on impact

What did we achieve?

When we first certified as a B Corp business, we achieved an impact assessment score of 84 across the 5 key 'pillars' of Governance, Clients, Team, Community and Environment. These pillars are the focus of our impact report and they help us identify areas for improvement, define what action we need to take and measure outcomes. Our target is to reach a minimum score of 100 by the end of 2023.

Impact scores in the 5 'pillars':

- Environment = **6.2**/20
- Community **23.9**/50
- Team = **25.5**/50
- Clients = **12.7**/35
- Governance = **15.3**/25

Building on our progress, we set about understanding our assessment scores and setting targets to improve our impact, with a particular focus on lower scoring pillars.



The UN Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs) were agreed in 2015 by 193 UN countries. The purpose of these 17 goals is to provide a blueprint to achieve a poverty-free, prosperous and protected planet by 2030. We are working to make positive changes and implement the goals and respective targets alongside our everyday business.



**SUSTAINABLE
DEVELOPMENT GOALS**

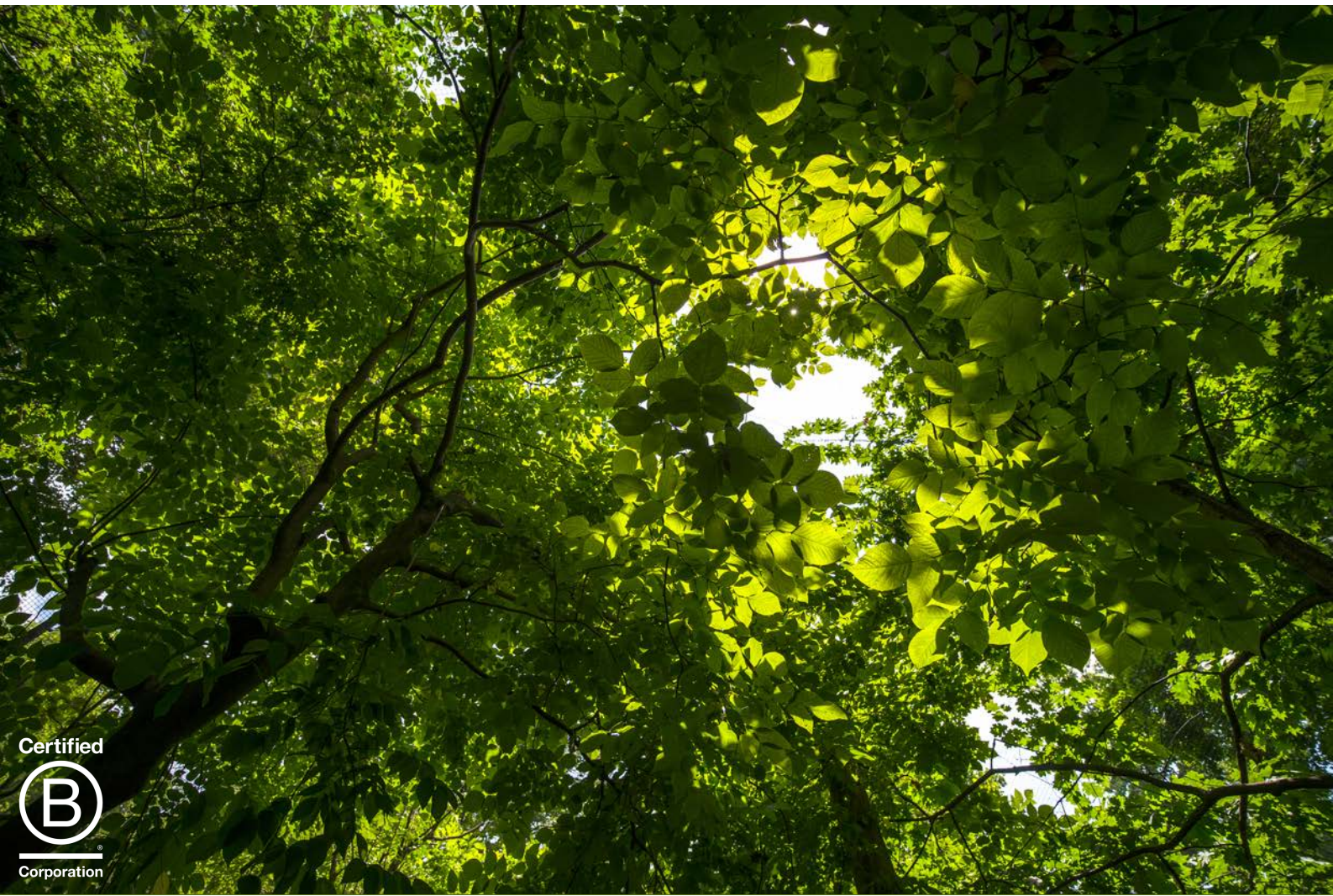


Environment

When we first certified as a B Corp our lowest scoring area was Environment. Now more than ever climate action is essential for the future of the planet and we knew this was something we had to urgently improve. We set about drawing up a plan to operate responsible business practices that have a materially positive impact on people and the planet.

Our focus has been to:

- understand and measure our scope 1, 2 and 3 emissions in order to reduce our CO2e emissions
- adopt targets to reduce greenhouse gas emissions to limit global warming to 1.5°C
- introduce practices to achieve Net Zero by 2030





Environment

What we achieved



Target 1: Understand and measure our scope 1, 2 and 3 emissions in order to reduce our carbon emissions.

Using the Greenhouse Gas Protocol Technical Guidance we have calculated our scope 1, 2 and 3 emissions.

Our scope 1 emissions are 0t/CO₂e because we have no gas connection, or directly owned vehicles and we don't use refrigerants and machinery.

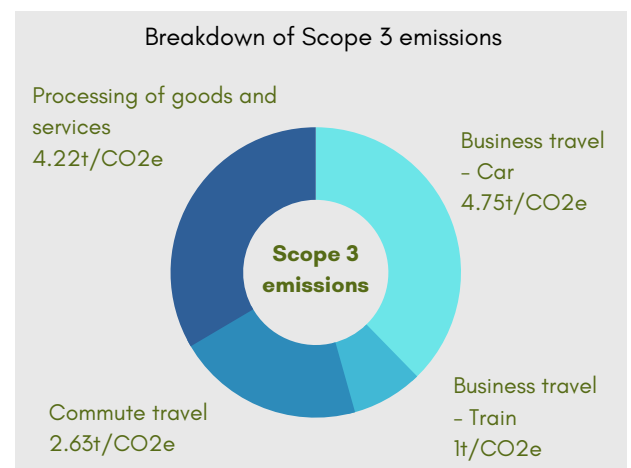
Our scope 2 emissions are 1.25 t/CO₂e which come from our emissions from electricity use based on square footage of our office space.

Our scope 3 emissions as calculated to date are 12.60 t/CO₂e based on our travel and indirect downstream emissions from processing of goods and services such as cloud storage, home working, emails and virtual meetings.

Over the last year measuring scope emissions data has helped us identify where we can make reductions. Travelling to site is an essential part of our work and our travel carbon emissions are measured for each project and are then offset through our partner Ecologi. We include this information in our fee quotation to share with our clients so they can see what action we are taking to reduce the carbon emissions of their project.

We have installed LED lighting and infrared heating panels into our refurbished office spaces to improve energy efficiency. Our landlord has installed PV cells for renewable electricity generation, increased roof insulation to align with Building Regs and installed window film to reduce solar gain and heat loss.

Reducing our scope emissions has been built into our Net Zero pathway in which we commit to make reductions each year until we reach Net Zero in 2030.



Through our partnership with **Ecologi** over the last 12 months...

We saved 66.94t
of CO₂



We planted 1,152
trees



We supported over

20

global carbon
reduction projects





Environment

What we achieved

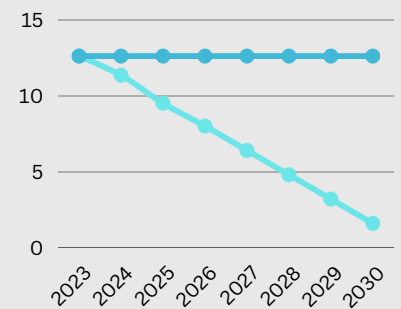


Target 2: Adopt targets to reduce greenhouse gas emissions to limit global warming to 1.5 C

Using 2023 as a year in which we measure all of our CO₂e emissions, our goal is to make a 13% CO₂e reduction year on year from 2024 to 2030. This will have reduced our overall emissions by 90% by 2030 with the final 10% being offset to achieve Net Zero.

As a professional services consultancy, we recognise that we have considerable influence in how our clients and their construction based projects can reduce GHG emissions. Our purpose is to ensure our services have a positive impact at all stages from briefing and strategic definition to design, construction and handover, as applicable.

With under 7 years to go, our **Net Zero pathway** is designed to **reduce our emissions** year on year by approximately **10-15% per annum**.



Our Co-Founder, Richard, represented Gradient on the panel at Eastbourne's Sustainable Business & Solar Conference speaking on how businesses can adopt more sustainable practices and embrace green energy. This forms part of our agenda to support our community in improving their environmental performance.

Working to eliminate single-use plastic



We certified as Plastic Free Business Champions with Surfers Against Sewage. This commitment means we have pledged to cut our single-use plastic consumption by replacing it with alternatives or eliminating it where possible, to work towards freeing our beaches and green spaces of plastic.



Environment

What we achieved



Target 3: Introduce practices to achieve Net Zero by 2030

Our Pathway to Net Zero covers short and longer term planned activities to reduce our business and personal GHG emissions, as well as our push for a greater reduction in the emissions of the projects and services we advise on and can influence. It identifies the status of activities, a lead, an estimated date for achievement and the emission saving impact. Our initial focus on emissions reductions centres around activities including:

- Providing our scope emissions calculated at fee stage with options for reducing emissions through less site visits or use of public transport. A client guide is being developed to accompany this calculator to show how our costs and fees can be reduced in line with emissions.
- Our fee calculator shows our financial contribution to social projects in our community, and also identifies an approximate number of trees that will need to be planted to off-set our emissions in providing a service.
- Calculating and setting carbon budgets for office consumables, e.g., paper and printer ink, and source goods and services aligned to strong environmental policies for waste reduction.
- Using RICS Whole Life Carbon Calculator for measuring and reporting embodied and operational carbon on projects.
- All projects and commissions are viewed through our framework for Nature Based Systems which can be applied to all services and construction projects.



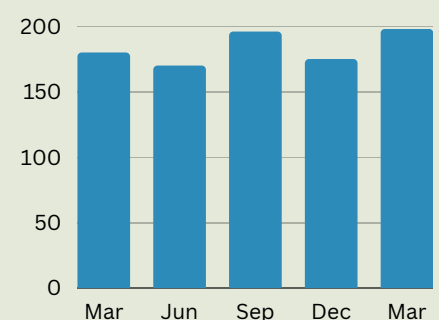
Through our partnership with DoNation....

We look to connect with our B Corp community and support fellow members. We've partnered with certified B Corp DoNation, who enable our team members to pledge reductions to their carbon footprint in everyday life.



Total carbon avoided

CO₂ 917 kg/CO₂





Community

Community can take on different meaning for different people, it can refer to a group of people or a place. Our impact focuses on our engagement with our communities and how we operate within them, from charitable giving to local business. We have deepened our relationship with our communities but we've also reflected upon our responsibility to have a positive impact on people's lives and where we live and work.

Our focus has been to:

- give back to our community
- expand our positive impact within our local, professional and B Corp communities
- support a community of purpose-led businesses within the built environment sector





Community

What we achieved



Target 1: Give back to our community

Over the last year we donated more than £1000 to charities and community groups. This is thanks in part to our clients who have engaged with us in nominating good causes to donate to. We have supported Plastic Free Eastbourne with their annual festival to celebrate our waters and to raise awareness of the effects of single use plastic on the planet. We also supported the social enterprise and rebel supermarket HISBE, who are on a mission to transform the food industry, for a fairer and more sustainable future.

Each year the team at Gradient choose a charity to support and this year they nominated Mates in Mind, who work across the UK to promote mental health within the construction industry and related sectors such as transport and logistics. So far the charity has enabled over 331 Mates in Mind Supporters and they plan to reach 75% of the industry by 2025.



Maximising our impact

Each member of our team has one paid voluntary day to support our community, add value and make a positive change to people's lives. Together we volunteered 50 hours through a variety of activities:

Volunteering
50
hours



School volunteering

Giving our time to support school events and raising funds for much needed resources.



Mentoring

Delivering 1-to-1 support to a secondary school pupil to develop key skills and confidence. Providing work experience opportunities for local students to gain industry insight.



Supporting local charities

Supporting causes close to our hearts through fundraising, beach cleaning with SAS, tackling e-waste by donating our old phones to HUBBUB and giving those without access a means to connect.



Professional advice

From helping local businesses on their journey to becoming socially and environmentally responsible, to supporting a charity in their new build project.



Community

What we achieved



Target 2: Expand our positive impact within our local, professional and B Corp communities

Positive change comes through collaboration and this past year we have worked with our communities to forge partnerships, engage with people to understand what matters to them and help create successful and sustainable outcomes.

As members of the B Corp Built Environment Working Group, we collaborate and share solutions with industry leaders, focussing on ways of reducing embodied carbon and lowering the carbon footprint of our industry. In June we were joined by members TFT Consultants, FORE Partnership and Bennetts Associates to speak at the UK property event for a zero carbon future, FOOTPRINT+, promoting the value of B Corp and measuring impact.



As President of Eastbourne UnLtd Chamber of Commerce, Co-Founder Richard is leading a new strategic business plan for 2023-24 that includes bringing a more diverse programme and tackling net zero. Richard is also non-exec Chair of RICS London and South East Regional Board, whose members help support strategy delivery and effect positive change in the built and natural environment.



Our Associate Director, Duncan, gives his time and expertise to the RICS professional community through APC assessing. Assessors play a pivotal role in ensuring candidates who apply to become chartered surveyors fulfil the highest standards of professional competency.

The word is spreading and the move towards better business has caught the attention of several local businesses whom we have advised in starting their own B Corp journey.

Celebrating 1000 B Corps in the UK

Being part of the first 1000 B Corps in the UK was a proud moment for us. Certifying has not only given us the tools to respond to challenges such as the climate emergency, to continuously improve and support other business to do the same, but it's also expanded our concept of community and empowered us to connect and add value to B Corp, local and professional communities.



Community

What we achieved



Target 3: Support a community of purpose-led businesses within the built environment sector

At the start of 2023 we created a new community called Building Better Business in partnership with our friends and fellow B Corp Boutique Modern Ltd.

This community centres on the built environment and addresses our responsibility to adopt business practices that balance people, planet and profit. With our industry responsible for nearly 40% of UK carbon emissions we felt it our duty to take action and bring together purpose driven leaders to share ways to improve their social and environmental impacts, especially when it comes to adapting and constructing new buildings and spaces.

As two B Corps, we wanted to promote a sustainable approach and held our most recent meet-up at Lewes's Depot, which is right next to the train station, making sure the venue was easily accessible via public transport and we recycled our old train tickets to use as name badges.

The success of this community highlights the growing appetite for better business and the need to throw the spotlight on social and environmental performance in the built environment sector. We're proud to have built a community of like minded people who can share and learn about how we are all facing up to and solving the challenges of sustainability, social value and achieving net zero.





Team

Our team are at the core of who we are as a business and investing in them has always been a top priority. Our B Corp journey has helped us further support their wellbeing, satisfaction and development so they feel engaged and empowered. Building on this over the last year we have worked to listen to and understand what our team needs to feel happy and thrive.

Our focus has been to:

- understand team satisfaction and engagement
- support learning and development
- support the health, safety and wellbeing of the team





Team

What we achieved



Target 1: Understand team satisfaction and engagement

For the past year we have focussed on measuring and understanding team happiness and culture. Through our partnership with Friday Pulse we carry out weekly surveys to collect real-time, actionable data to improve the wellbeing of our team and achieve maximum impact.



Overall Happiness score

Happiness is dynamic - it ebbs and flows because of many different factors, all overlapping and interacting with one another.



Your Happiness score is excellent, about the same as last week.



In addition to this, the team check-in on each other daily through WhatsApp and team meetings where everyone shares their priorities and concerns for the week and has the opportunity to ask for support. Through this we have created ways of having everyday conversations about wellbeing.

The nature of our work can often see the team on site and coupled with our hybrid working policy, which allows for greater work-life balance, we can often work independently, making check-ins, catch-ups and pulse surveys a great way to bring the team together and get support.

The weekly surveys are a simple way to assess satisfaction and engagement and we can act quickly if any issues arise. They also offer the opportunity to express gratitude, share successes and ideas and offload frustrations and it reinforces a sense of connection with the team.



Duncan thanked Luke

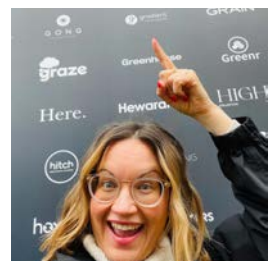
Thank you for your research ahead of the project presentation and the support you gave, it made such a difference.



Championing female-led business



Gradient is 50% female owned and led. Our Co-Founder, Clare, is pictured here on International women's day at Coutts Bank, where our logo was displayed on the bank's façade in solidarity with other female-led B Corps.



Team

What we achieved



Target 2: Support learning and development

Learning and development are an important part of job satisfaction and delivering an informed and up-to-date service to our clients. Through our training and development scheme, ESG Lead, Julia Johns, is now a qualified Associate Practitioner of Social Value and SROI, which allowed us to expand our social value consultancy service to our clients.



As a team, in the past year we completed over 450 hours of learning...

450+
hours

...and we engaged in 240 learning sessions.

240
sessions



We are supporting our Building Surveyor, Luke Maglennon to study for his RICS accreditation. Becoming a chartered surveyor assures the highest standards of professional and ethical competence for our clients and is globally recognised within our industry.



Over the last year our Co-Founder, Richard, achieved his Leadership in Sustainability certificate with the University of Cambridge. Addressing future-focused leadership training and development, the course has enabled Richard to pioneer sustainable change within our team and business, helping to deliver meaningful outcomes that underpin the value we place on sustainable practices and doing better business.



UNIVERSITY OF
CAMBRIDGE



Beyond the classroom

Our learning and development strategy focuses not only on advancing our skills and knowledge but also on learning together as a team and engaging with different perspectives and ideas. Field trips have included the iconic eco-village BedZED in South London, which provides inspiration for zero-carbon homes worldwide and we attended Work:Reinvented in Brighton, which reframed the definition of work and how we are tackling the climate emergency.





Team

What we achieved



Target 3: Support the health, safety and wellbeing of the team

We achieved the Bronze Wellbeing at Work Bronze award in January. The scheme, which is delivered by East Sussex County Council in partnership with Public Health England, supports our wellbeing improvement journey. Our Bronze status demonstrates our commitment to our team's health and wellbeing, ensuring there is support available to everyone and wellbeing conversations are kept current and at the forefront.

To achieve our Bronze award we surveyed the team to understand everyone's needs, identify where we need to improve and measure the impact of these improvements. Through this we are also able to benchmark against the wider population.

We implemented 10 criteria covering mental health, alcohol and smoking, sickness absence and return to work, physical activity and active travel, management and workplace culture, musculoskeletal health and health and safety.

Our commitments to creating positive impact on staff wellbeing has promoted a happier and healthier team, improving performance and productivity and fostering a positive working environment.



Supporting our team's financial wellbeing

We're a Living Wage employer, which means we are committed to fair pay and we stand with all Living Wage employers who believe everyone deserves a wage that meets every day needs.

We support our team through life events like moving home and during the cost of living crisis we supported our team with a winter fuel bonus to help with rising energy and consumer costs.





Clients

We value and respect our clients and we want to provide them with the very best service and experience. We are continuously reviewing the quality of our services and have further developed our focus on improving their social and environmental through the work we do.

Our focus has been to:

- improve our clients social impact through our social value consultancy
- provide social and environmental support to projects
- to develop our work in social housing and the public sector





Clients

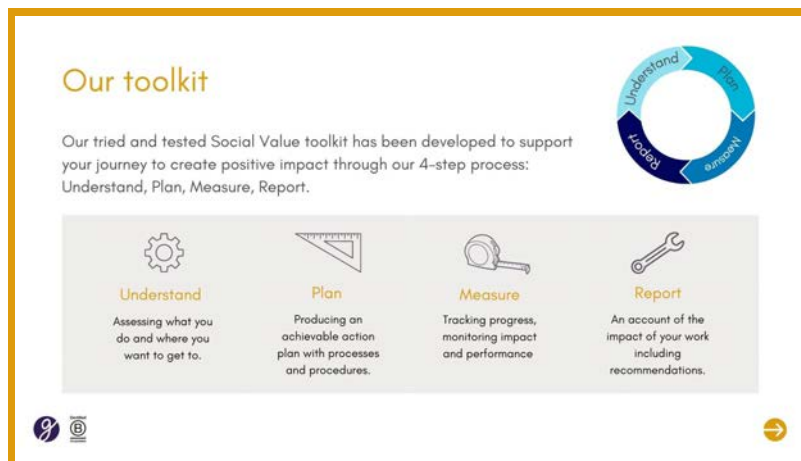
What we achieved



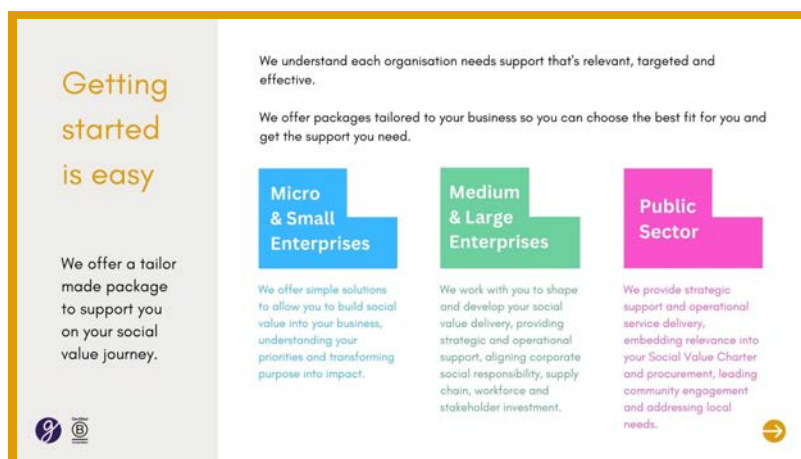
Target 1: improve our clients social impact through our social value consultancy



Social value has driven change in the industry for the past decade ever since the introduction of the Public Service Act 2012. There is a demand now from government, policy makers and the public for businesses to do better. The improvement of economic, environmental and social wellbeing is now an expectation of both public and private sector organisations alike.



In response to this we have expanded our services to offer social value consultancy. ESG Lead Julia Johns is a member of Social Value UK, the professional body for social value and impact management in the UK, and a qualified Social Value Associate Practitioner. She has written a free guide to help businesses navigate the social value landscape.



Gradient's work on new build residential and commercial projects in Sussex has brought clients and contractors together to ensure that social value is seen as a positive journey and not just a contractual obligation. Our game changing approach has resulted in collaboration, including the sharing of targets, and is now directly benefitting local charities, schools and all those involved.



Clients

What we achieved



Target 2: Provide social and environmental support to projects

Our Pathway to Net Zero sees that all projects and commissions are viewed through our framework for Nature Based Systems which can be applied to all services and construction projects. Whether it's new build or existing building projects, we endeavour to always take a nature first and community approach to the work we do. This can include looking at the impact of construction work on the health and wellbeing of residents, selecting climate resilient materials and identifying opportunities for greener solutions. The value of this approach is benefitting building owners, residents and communities alike by having a positive impact on people and the planet. The buildings we work on in the urban landscape can be transformed into sustainable places, improving peoples outlook and making them happier in their settings and surroundings.

With a view to supporting a Net Zero future, we are working with a local café, bar and restaurant that supports local heritage, tourism and the community. The project will transform a faux Victorian tea room to include a new extension in a lightweight timber structure clad with a hemp render, installing a super insulated roof and façade glazing which will reduce heat loss and heat gain respectively.

We have bee bricks and hotels being installed at two of our on-going affordable housing projects, one for each apartment, along with swift boxes, all carefully positioned to make the most of the building orientations.

We have Bio Solar roofs making the most of our sunny south coast location, which are sedum roofs covered in a blanket of South Downs wild flowers, on which PV cells can be positioned without reducing the biodiversity benefits.

One of our new build schemes utilises a Solshare technology, which is one of the first such installations in the UK. This technology allows traditional solar systems to be accessed by flats and apartments.





Clients

What we achieved



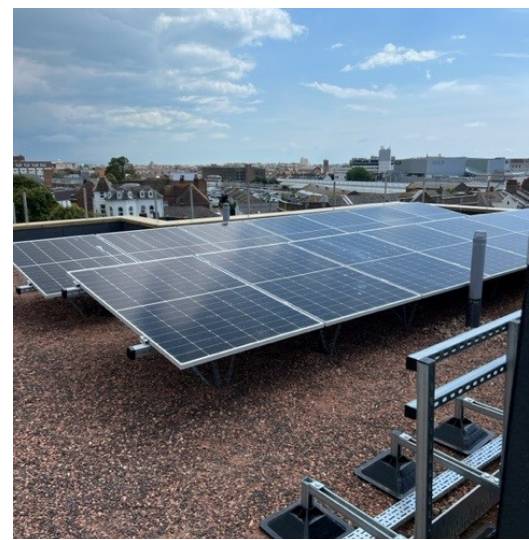
Target 3: To develop our work in social housing and the public sector

Creating positive change in people's lives through the projects we work on has become an important focus and it enables us to add value for our clients. Our commitment to positive impact in all we do has resulted in partnerships with charities, CIC's, Local Authority Council's, the NHS, housing associations and education sector, accounting for 54% of our turnover for the last year. Our work improves the social impact of our clients, seeks solutions to social and economic issues and puts sustainable practices at the forefront.

Recent projects include council affordable housing projects, benefitting from sustainable technology to create low carbon, climate resilient homes. These developments respond to housing needs and deliver accessible housing for those with physical and additional needs.

Our work with charities Bexhill Museum and Leaf Hall saw us deliver renovation and restoration work to increase community use of the spaces and open up access to underserved communities.

As specialist asbestos consultants to the social housing sector and NHS we lead the way in ensuring that asbestos risk is managed, our clients are compliant and their residents are safe.



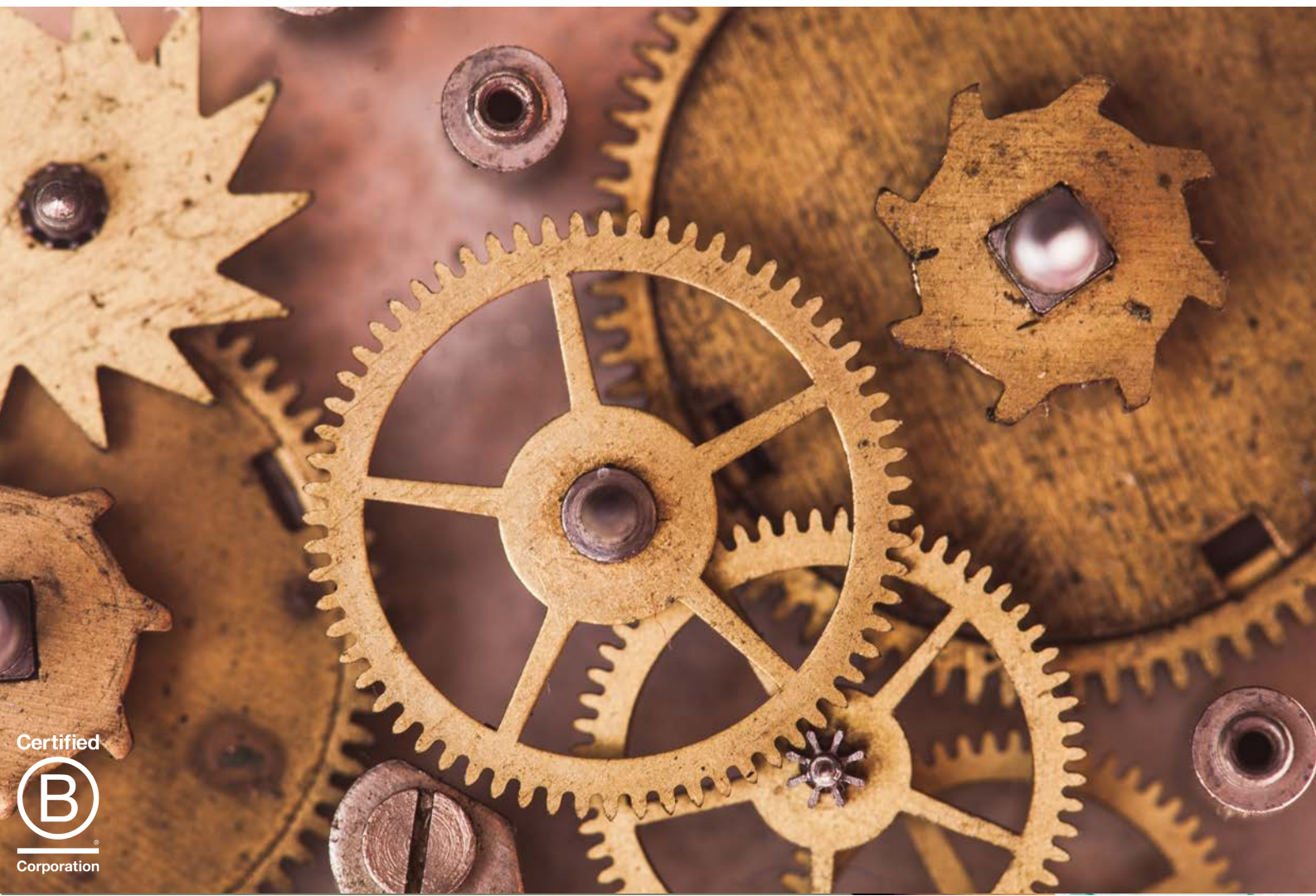


Governance

Our areas of focus in Governance have centred around social and environmental performance indicators, collecting data and understanding and measuring our impact to maintain transparency and accountability to our stakeholders.

Our focus has been to:

- monitor and measure through Quarterly Business Reviews
- capture and analyse performance data
- redesign our fee calculator to include our social and environmental impact



Certified



Corporation

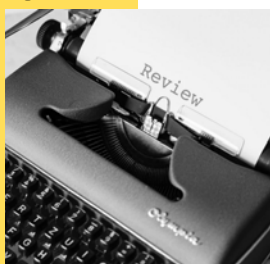
Governance

What we achieved



Target 1: Monitor and measure through QBRs

/01



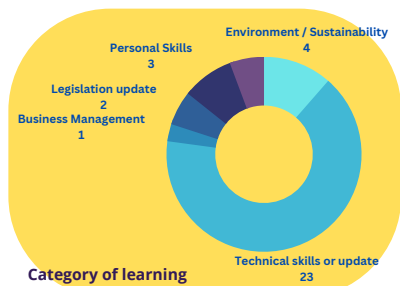
Quarterly Business Review

Our QBRs report on the progress we have made as a team towards our goals. Our KPIs are covered in sections relating to Goals, Fees, Clients, Business Development, Networking, People and Planet, Training and Development, Community, Health Safety and Wellbeing, Carbon Emissions, Planet Friendly Decisions and Progress and Change.

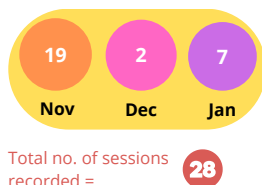
As a team we gain insight into the impact our work has. We target our data towards metrics that matter to us and to our clients, to measure our performance and outcomes throughout the year.

We gain perspective on the balance we are achieving between people, planet and profit. Analysis of data sits side by side with feedback from our clients, suppliers, team and other stakeholders we've worked with to review both qualitative and quantitative information.

As a result of our QBRs we have a clearer definition of the goals we want to achieve, we better understand our impact and we are able to measure it and improve each quarter.



Total no. of hours completed = **77**



Total no. of sessions recorded = **28**

/21

Training & development

Gradient Business Review | Q4 2022

NOV



Car - 811 miles | 11 journeys
Train - 450 miles | 5 journeys

DEC



Car - 1111 miles | 9 journeys
Train - 254 miles | 3 journeys

JAN



Car - 1242 miles | 14 journeys
Train - 428 miles | 4 journeys

/26

The average car emits 0.280 KG CO2e per mile

The average train emits 0.022 KG CO2e per mile

Source: Greenhouse gas reporting: conversion factors 2021 - GOV.UK (www.gov.uk)

Travel

Gradient Business Review | Q4 2022

Governance

What we achieved

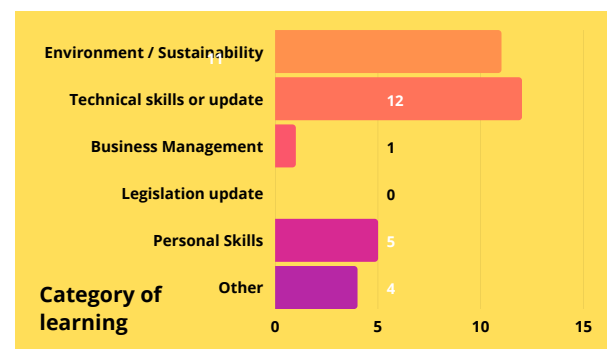
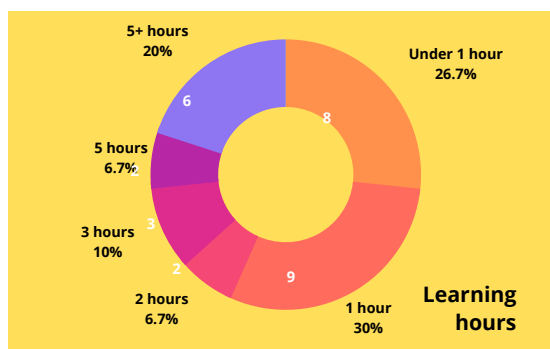
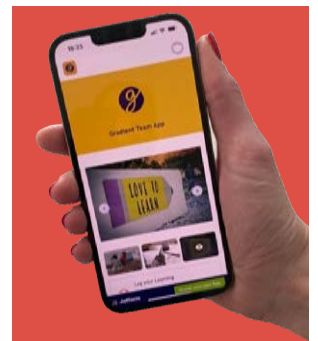
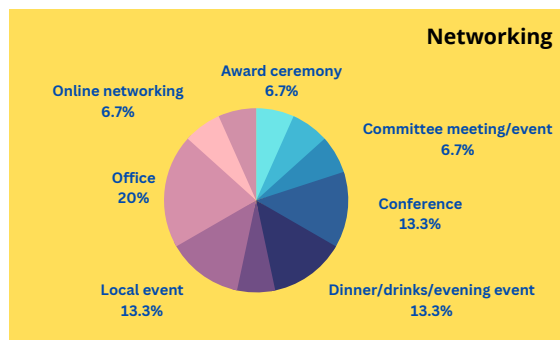


Target 2: Capture and analyse performance data

Capturing the data that matters to us directly feeds into our QBRs. We have worked to refine the way we collect this information through our bespoke app. Initially we used this to help the team record what learning they had undertaken but this matured over time to build more focussed questions that allow us to dig deeper and understand what we are learning, how we are using and sharing this knowledge.

Expanding on this we now use our app to record our networking and business development, our community engagement and new work. We also use the app as a way to record our site risk assessments when we go out on site visits.

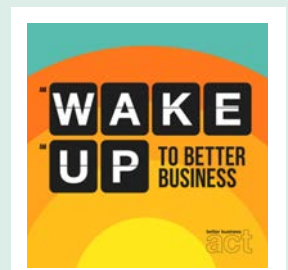
Collating real-time data means we can be responsive to immediate issues or challenges and it provides deeper understanding into productivity and performance so we can support our team and stay on track to achieve our goals.



Signatories of the Better Business Act



Raising awareness and giving voice to a better way of doing business doesn't stop with B Corp. As well as being part of the B Corp community, we stand united with our fellow BBA signatories to bring about legislation change for organisations across the UK, to make doing business in a socially and environmentally responsible way part of everyday operations.



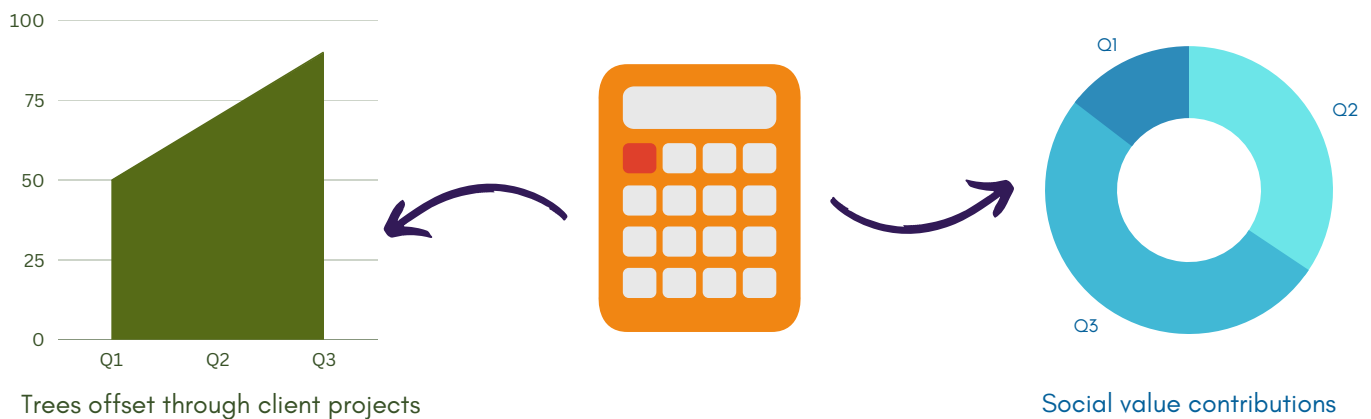
Governance

What we achieved



Target 3: Redesign our fee calculator to include our social and environmental impact

The recent redesign our fee calculator now includes our scope emissions for each project we undertake. It also calculates carbon offsetting through tree planting and social value to contribute a positive impact in our community.



This calculator not only increases transparency and accountability to our clients but it also communicates our commitment to doing business in an environmentally and socially responsible way and contributes to our net zero targets. This opens a dialogue with our clients to support their social impact and carbon emission reductions.

SME Climate Hub committed

We have committed to reduce our carbon emissions through SME Climate Hub, a global initiative that empowers SMEs to take climate action by committing to halve emissions by 2030 and achieve net zero by 2050. We recognise urgent action is needed, however, and our Net Zero pathway sees us reach Net Zero by 2030.





Being a B Corp means we are on a journey to do better business, balancing people and planet with profit and leading and influencing other businesses to join us in achieving greater accountability, transparency and responsibility. We honour and support our communities and create positive, meaningful impact, and we continue to take bold action to address the climate emergency.



If you want to find out more about what we do or how we got here then please get in touch.



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