



Sustainability & Social Value Report 2023

© Bloom Procurement services





“ As the founder of Bloom, it brings me immense pride to present this year’s Sustainability and Social Value Report, a testament to the journey we embarked upon in 2012. Bloom was not simply created to disrupt the market; it was created to redefine it, pushing boundaries and challenging conventional thinking. Our commitment to innovation and the constant pursuit of social value have set us apart. ”

“From day one, we set out to be a torchbearer of change, a catalyst for creating a dynamic marketplace that goes beyond traditional norms. We dared to ask the ‘commissioning question’ - shifting the focus from inputs to outcomes. This emphasis has proven to be a “secret sauce” that has fuelled our journey.

Our approach has not only delivered substantial average savings of 14% to the taxpayer, it’s also opened doors for SMEs and social enterprises, providing them with fair access to a market that was once elusive. We are not just a marketplace; we are architects of synergistic relationships between the public and private sectors, removing limitations and capitalising on strengths.

This report is not merely a compilation of numbers and achievements; it is a narrative of our commitment to social value. Through Bloom, we have woven a vision of positive change for citizens, taxpayers, and SMEs alike. By reducing the time and cost of procurement, we accelerate the delivery of outcomes that enhance the lives of citizens across the UK. Our platform has empowered SMEs, enabling them to access, win, and deliver contracts in a more sustainable and environmentally conscious manner.

In every success, there is a story, and within these pages, you will find the story of Bloom - a story of innovation and a commitment to making a positive impact.”

Adam Jacobs - Bloom Founder and Entrepreneur

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About this report

Bloom's annual Sustainability and Social Value Report charts our evolution as a business committed to ethical and sustainable practices – covering the period between 1st September 2022 and 31st August 2023.

Throughout the report, you'll find detailed examples of how we are building a marketplace that opens access to public sector procurement opportunities with social value at their heart. Our commitment to our purpose actively contributes to the equitable distribution of economic and social benefits, particularly in supporting smaller and diverse businesses. This promotes growth and innovation, and provides job opportunities, especially in regions like the North East of the UK, yielding benefits for broader society.

We are equally dedicated to creating a progressive and sustainable working culture and taking tangible steps to protect the natural world. While celebrating our progress, our commitment to continuous improvement establishes our business and brand as pioneers in innovation and societal impact.

Please note that we have calculated all social value figures using the National TOMs Framework.



As an industry leader,
we are dedicated to delivering
far-reaching social value and positive
outcomes for all our stakeholders.

About Bloom

Since 2012, Bloom has served the public sector throughout the UK, providing a unique procurement solution that ensures a rapid route to market and far-reaching savings for tax payers. We've established ourselves as a trusted name amongst some of the nation's largest public bodies, delivering the outcomes that they, and the communities they serve, expect.

We've demonstrated our ongoing commitment to being an industry leader in a variety of spaces, each represented by our five strategic pillars – Our Marketplace, Our People, Our Community, Our World, and Our Ethical and Responsible Business. Each of these informs and guides our growth as a business, delivering far-reaching social value and positive outcomes for all our stakeholders.

Our marketplace of professional service providers has grown to cover 20 categories and 380 sub-categories of spend, meeting even the most niche requirements of our clients. It's also become a force for good, centring social value. Social value refers to the wider value (financial or otherwise) created through an organisation's day-to-day activities, in terms of the wellbeing of individuals and communities, the creation of social capital, and how we preserve the environments in which we live.

Since September 2019, we've delivered over £154 million in social value through our collective activities – with 70% of projects being awarded to SMEs. This has opened up impactful opportunities for businesses that would otherwise struggle to work with the public sector, which has helped to nurture local economies.

Our commitment to sustainability and social value

As a business, we are committed to fostering a sustainable marketplace, placing social value outcomes at the core of our mission. Our dedication to partnering with SMEs fosters community development and supports widespread economic and employment benefits. Our simple and transparent route to market leads to budget savings, effectively putting money back into the public purse, and allowing resources to be allocated where they are needed most.

Social value extends far beyond the traditional measures of cost and quality. It is a commitment to fostering positive societal impacts, including environmental sustainability. We champion projects that not only deliver their main outcome but also actively contribute to the betterment of the communities and individuals they serve. Our approach seeks to ensure that public funds result in lasting, tangible benefits that extend far beyond the immediate scope of projects. Collectively, our people set a higher standard, where every decision is guided by the principle that our actions should generate meaningful and enduring social value for everyone.



Key Highlights and Progress

Our Marketplace



- 772 new suppliers became accredited, of which 680 had SME status.
- 770 projects with a combined value of £158,077,752 were awarded to SMEs.
- £157,190,000 has been paid to SMEs, creating £43,616,040 worth of social value.
- Between the commencement of NEPRO³ in September 2019 and August 2023, Bloom have invoiced £41,426,000 to SMEs within the North East region, equating to £11,682,133 worth of social value.

Our People



- 2023 eNPS +66, a measurement of how satisfied and loyal our employees are.
- Armed Forces Covenant Employer Recognition Scheme Silver Award 2023 awarded.
- Advanced Good Work Pledge awarded by the North of Tyne Combined Authority.
- Featured in the Sunday Times Best Places to Work 2023 Medium Company list.

Our Community



- 37 jobs were created at Bloom during the third year of the NEPRO³ contract, which created £984,320 worth of social value.
- £6,200 worth of social value generated through our apprenticeship programme.
- 121 mentoring hours delivered by our team.
- Between 1st September 2022 – 31st August 2023, we raised a total of £8,300 for our chosen charities.

Our World



- We committed to the SME Climate Hub's pledge.
- 2,515 trees were planted around the world.
- £1,200 granted to support local charity Climate Action North East.
- 43 laptops recycled via our partner Stone Group.

Ethical & Responsible Business



- Achieved Ecovadis' Silver Sustainability Rating.
- Retained Real Living Wage accredited employer certification.
- Launched our Supplier Code of Conduct, taking steps towards a more sustainable supply chain.



A statement from our CEO

I am immensely proud to present our refreshed Sustainability & Social Value Report, one that embodies our commitment to fostering a more sustainable future and creating lasting social impact. As a trusted partner of the UK's public sector, we recognise the profound responsibility we hold in shaping a better society.

Our partnership with NEPO, and the NEPRO³ procurement framework, continues to enable far-reaching relationships between the public and private sectors. These provide meaningful outcomes that deliver for communities throughout the country, stimulating local economies and providing the public with greater value for money.

I'm exceptionally proud that, through our marketplace, 770 out of 988 projects issued during the period covered by this report were awarded to SMEs. This serves as a clear illustration of the transformative power of our procurement solutions, opening up otherwise inaccessible opportunities to work alongside the nation's public sector. This has allowed smaller businesses to compete fairly with larger organisations, driving growth, creating new employment opportunities, and providing outcomes that benefit communities at large.

At Bloom, we firmly believe that our success should be measured not just by our financial performance, but also by the positive change we bring to the communities we serve and the environment we inhabit. Our dedication to sustainability and social value is not just an aspiration; it is deeply ingrained in our core values and is reflected in every decision we make.

Through this report, we strive to provide transparent insights into our efforts to integrate sustainability into our business practices and drive social value at every level. We are committed to engaging with our stakeholders and partners, leveraging their diverse perspectives to enhance our understanding and drive meaningful progress.

As we make progress, we acknowledge that sustainability is a continuous process, and each organisation will be at a different point along its journey. We are dedicated to listening, learning, and evolving as we work together towards a more prosperous, resilient, and socially responsible future. Together, we can lead the transformation towards a more sustainable and socially conscious society.

“ At Bloom, we firmly believe that our success should be measured not just by our financial performance, but also by the positive changes we bring to the communities we serve and the environment we inhabit. Our dedication to sustainability and social value is not just an aspiration; it is deeply ingrained in our core values and is reflected in every decision we make. ”

Amabel Grant, CEO - Bloom Procurement Services



Introduction to the Sustainability & Social Value Committee

As a business, we firmly believe that sustainability is not just a buzzword; it is the foundation upon which a better future for our company and the world at large is built. To bring this vision to life, we have established the Sustainability and Social Value Committee, a group of dedicated individuals who will serve as the driving force for sustainability across our organisation.



Our committee's mission is clear - to foster a comprehensive and integrated approach to sustainability that encompasses environmental, social, and economic considerations.

They recognise that sustainability is not the responsibility of a single team but an ethos that must be embedded in every aspect of our business. That's why our committee actively engages with all areas of Bloom to ensure that sustainability becomes ingrained in our DNA. One of their primary roles is to stay informed about market and industry initiatives and trends, with a keen eye on their relevance to our respective areas. By staying up to date with the latest developments, we can provide guidance to our teams and align our efforts with broader sustainability goals. This ensures that we are not only keeping pace with sustainability trends but are also actively shaping them.

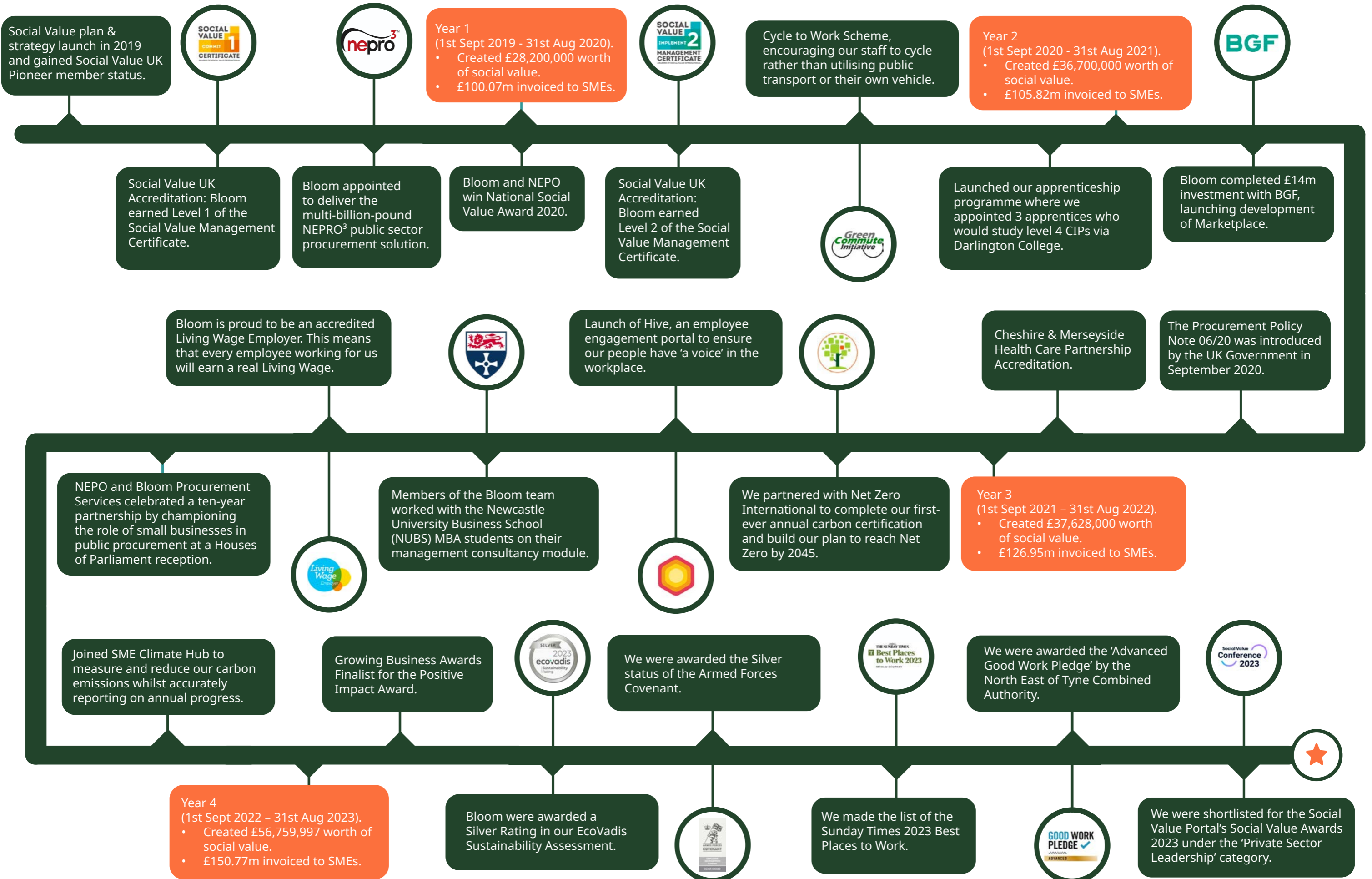
Committee members take on the responsibility of being sustainability advocates within our teams. **They understand that driving real change requires more than just high-level strategies; it calls for action at every level.** As such, the business actively promotes sustainable practices, encourages innovation, and lends support to the implementation of sustainability initiatives and strategies. Leading by example, the committee inspires others to embrace sustainable behaviours, fostering a culture of conscious decision-making that leads to positive change.

Transparency and accountability are key. The committee regularly report back to the larger group, sharing updates on its sustainability efforts, challenges, and successes. This open communication allows everyone at Bloom to learn from one another, refine our strategies, and strengthen our collective impact. Moreover, all committee members are committed to delivering on the actions assigned to them, ensuring that they actively contribute to Bloom's sustainability agenda.

Our vision for sustainability extends beyond the walls of Bloom. We recognise that we are part of a larger business community and, as such, we strive to be a force for good beyond our immediate operations. From fostering strong relationships with suppliers who share our values, to supporting local communities through initiatives and partnerships, we seek to create a positive social impact.



Our Sustainability & Social Value Journey





Bloom is delighted to have worked in partnership with the North East Procurement Organisation (NEPO) for over a decade.

This year...

Since 2019

the NEPRO³ Solution has delivered

£47,591,657

worth of social value, demonstrating the framework's capabilities, & ongoing potential.

the NEPRO³ Solution has delivered

£154,366,792

worth of social value, in total since its commencement in September 2019.

Our Founder, Adam Jacobs, was inspired by the vision shared by NEPO's Steven Sinclair and Nicola Shelley, NEPO's Procurement and Commercial Director, and Managing Director, respectively. Both envisioned an alternative procurement framework, capable of simultaneously providing both the public sector and suppliers with greater value. Not only did this vision align with Adam's, but he also knew that he had the skills and passion that could help to transform it into a reality.

Adam's belief in NEPO's value proposition would lead to the incorporation of Bloom Procurement Services. Since then, Bloom has been the exclusive provider of the unique NEPRO framework, which is now in its third iteration. The nationwide framework prioritises effective, long-lasting relationships between the public and private sectors, overcoming the weaknesses of both and amplifying their respective strengths. The results of these partnerships entail demonstrable advantages for society at large, providing greater value for money for the public, and delivering measurable social value outcomes.

The NEPRO³ Solution has delivered critical projects to support the ever-changing demands of the public sector, whilst embedding social value into the project lifecycle. Through this delivery, Bloom has been able to give back to users of the solution, directly supporting their return on investment in their local communities. Bloom operates a commercial return model allowing spend to go back directly to the public purse. This allocation of funds has supported local job retention and freed up additional resources to focus on other priority areas.

Our partnership with NEPO serves as a clear and informative illustration of what can be achieved when the public and private sectors collaborate. By developing this relationship over ten years, an anniversary we recently celebrated at the Houses of Parliament, we've drawn upon the strengths of both the public and private sectors.



www.nepro.org.uk

“ Since the commencement of the NEPRO³ contract we have created over £154m of social value, making a real difference to the regional economy and our local communities.

Social value is at the heart of what NEPO and Bloom do. In 2020 we were proud to be awarded the National Social Value Award for embedding social value in NEPRO.

Over the past ten years we have helped SMEs to grow, who have in turn created jobs and started apprenticeships. This has delivered tangible economic impact locally, regionally, and nationally. ”

Steven Sinclair, NEPO Procurement and Commercial Director



Our Marketplace

We are committed to long-term growth and continuous product and process innovation through our marketplace. We continue to actively promote a level playing field and equal opportunities for all our customers, as we seek to deliver maximum value for society and ensure that what we do today has a positive impact on our communities tomorrow.

Our marketplace has become a rapid and dependable route to market for the public sector, allowing buyers to access the professional services they need, precisely when they need them – in a way that’s both compliant and cost-effective. Our procurement solutions have demonstrated themselves to be an intuitive and dependable means for smaller businesses to access otherwise inaccessible opportunities to work alongside the public sector.

Utilising a neutral vendor approach, we provide a level playing field for SMEs and the 3rd sector. This spreads economic and social outcomes more fairly, targeting income for smaller and more diverse businesses which would otherwise struggle to access these opportunities. By enabling lasting relationships between SMEs and public bodies, we promote economic growth and innovation, job creation, skills development, and apprenticeship opportunities.

Thanks to the savings delivered through our marketplace, we contribute to alleviating the financial pressures faced by the public sector – allowing organisations to redirect funds to where they’re most needed. Crucially, this delivers value for taxpayers.

We also recognise that late payments continue to present challenges for SMEs, causing significant disruption to cashflows. Late payments prevent small businesses from innovating and making sound investments when they’re needed. Having awarded £545 million worth of projects to SMEs, we pride ourselves on providing an average payment time of just 26.75 days for our accredited suppliers. This allows them to confidently bid for public sector contracts through our NEPRO³ framework without fear of late payments. The result is a strong foundation for financial stability, positioning our suppliers for sustained growth within the marketplace.



“ The Bloom team really gets us. They’ve taken the time to build real relationships with us, understanding who we are, what we do, and how we work.

As former public servants, we’re passionate about giving back to the sector that shaped us, and our team is dedicated to collaborating with councils on impactful projects that make a real difference. Working with Bloom has opened up some fantastic opportunities in adult’s and children’s services through their framework. Bloom’s approach has made us feel like more than just another name on a list.

Sanjay Mackintosh, Managing Director, Roretti ”

Our Marketplace

How we help embed social value

Social value is also at the heart of our marketplace. We work in partnership with our clients, irrespective of size, to centre, measure, and evidence social value throughout their activities. This allows them to pursue growth in a way that's both sustainable and ethical.

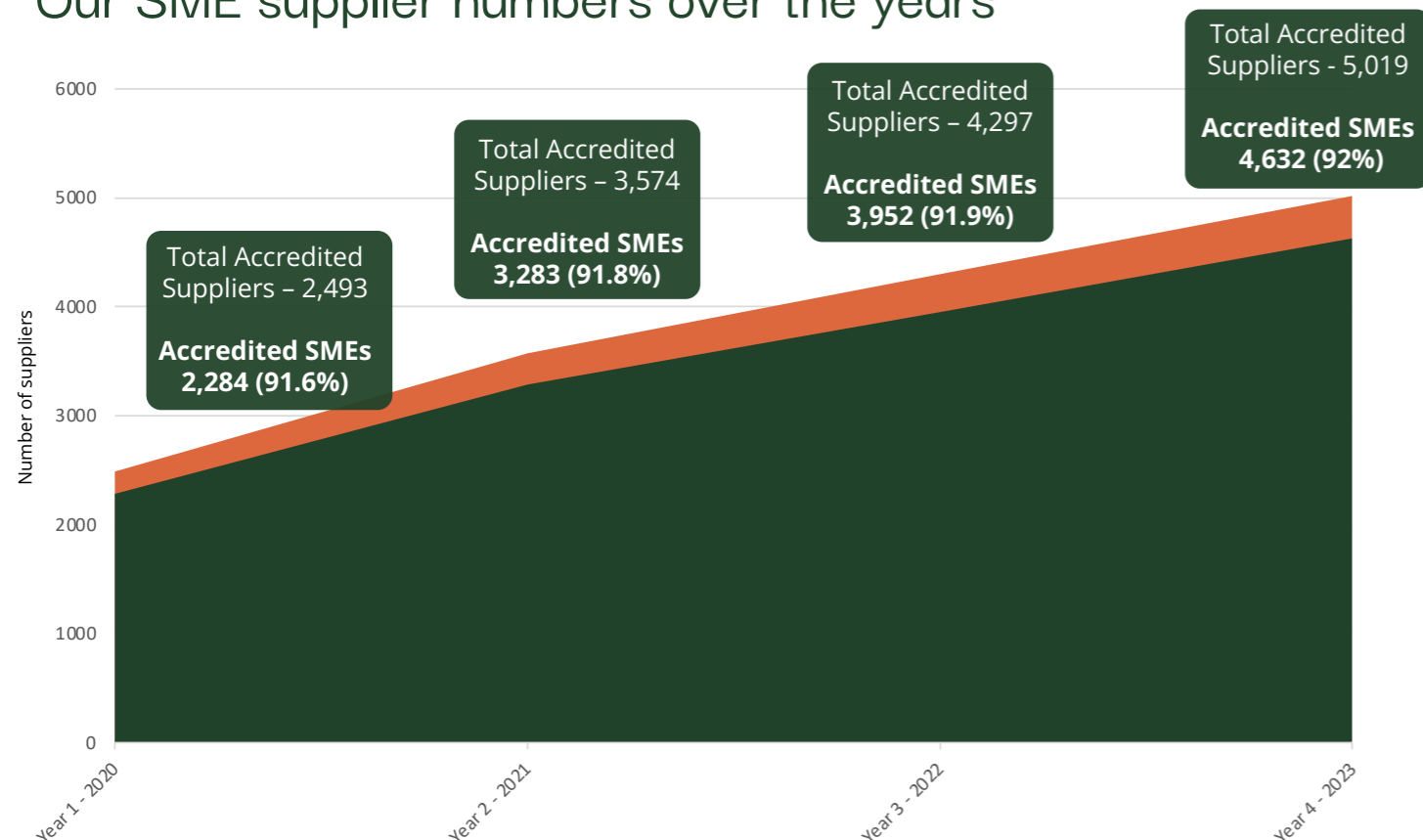
We specifically tailor individual projects to incorporate the unique social value requirements of our clients, ensuring that they are embedded from the very start of the procurement process. We also carefully report on impacts throughout the lifetime of a project, providing insights into project-level SME data, case studies, and tailored reports for each stakeholder.

In addition, we allow our clients to select local suppliers to deliver projects, harnessing talent from across the public, private, and voluntary sectors.

By developing their understanding and knowledge of social value in areas such as tendering, recording, and reporting on social value outcomes, we enable them to consistently embed social value throughout their projects.

For our suppliers, we provide clear examples of how to embed social value throughout the lifetime of a contract, in addition to how to evidence and report on it. We also craft user-friendly documentation, which clearly explains social value requirements from the start of the procurement process. This is reinforced with consistent and regular access to our procurement specialists.

Our SME supplier numbers over the years



“ We work with our clients to develop specific social value programmes which align to their organisational goals, objectives, and initiatives. We create a level and equal playing field for SMEs to do business and drive significant growth back into the local economies in which they operate. ”

Sarah MacNab, Head of Social Value, Bloom Procurement Services



MERITEC
Talent & Technology

“ Meritec Ltd has been a supplier to Bloom for over five years working with many customers in the public sector. Bloom’s partnership with NEPO for the delivery of NEPRO³ provides an OJEU compliant framework, with a neutral vendor approach, and is a fast and compliant alternative to traditional public sector frameworks for professional services.

Our experience as an SME has been that Bloom helps to remove time-consuming pre-qualification stages, allowing us to compete on a level playing field against larger suppliers. The process moves quickly for both buyers and suppliers, and a whole procurement process can go from submission to contract award in less than two weeks. This enables delivery to commence quickly and for us to start making positive impacts with our customers. ”

Stuart Minors, Products and Services Manager

Our Marketplace

A good example of our marketplace's potential includes works delivered by the Kovia Group, a Bloom accredited supplier, on behalf of Cornwall Council.

In 2018, the Council required a competent, responsive and cost-effective supplier to provide localised Asbestos Refurbishment Surveys. They therefore approached Bloom's extensive marketplace of specialist professional services.

Due to their very nature, Asbestos Refurbishment Surveys require precise and expert executions – providing accurate and, crucially, comprehensible data and information. Cornwall Council required a trusted supplier that could work professionally and quickly in rural environments, enabling works to be completed in the homes of both vulnerable and disabled people. In addition, the supplier would need to maintain quality whilst keeping costs to a minimum, thereby enabling as many people as possible to benefit from grant funded money that was available at the time.

The scope of Kovia's ISO/IEC 17020:2012 accreditation means it is within the top 10% of accredited suppliers nationally in terms of the breadth of services it can offer its clients. It covers all asbestos survey types and building sector capabilities. In addition, it also offers the added coverage of 'priority assessment'. Accreditation for Priority Assessments enabled Kovia to accurately risk assess, in relation to the Council's specifications, the possibility of exposure present for building occupants and / or third-party contractors.



Kovia
GROUP



All of Kovia's staff possess Safeguarding of Vulnerable Adults (SoVA) training and are DBS checked at predetermined intervals. This was essential for the project, as the homes were being used by isolated, vulnerable, and disabled occupants. An unblemished three-year Health and Safety Executive (HSE) Asbestos Removal License enabled Kovia to provide integrated support for the Council and their supply chain, ensuring that all identified asbestos was removed safely prior to any work commenced by contractors.

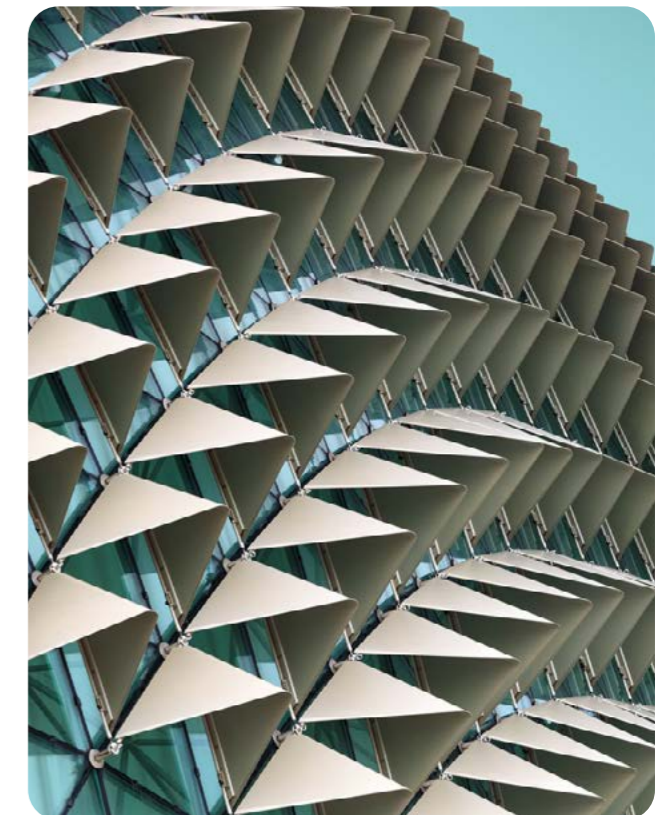
Localised Asbestos Refurbishment Surveys

Throughout the duration of the project, Kovia completed more than 1,000 localised Asbestos Refurbishment Surveys for Cornwall Council. Its average delivery timescale stood at five-working days, from receipt of works to final reports.



Highly Competitive Pricing Structure

Due to Kovia's area of operation, and the number of clients they serve in the Southwest, they were able to provide a highly competitive pricing structure. Throughout 2022, they were able to commit to not rising prices from the unit cost provided as part of the 2018 tendering process. Due to their thoroughness, competitive pricing structure, and rapid delivery times, Kovia was ultimately chosen as the sole service provider for the entirety of the County of Cornwall.



Our Marketplace

The success of Bloom’s expanding marketplace has also allowed us to support a variety of good causes in both local and North East communities. These causes typically reflect initiatives that match our principles, values, and social value objectives.

Whilst we’ve grown to become a truly nationwide business, we continue to provide far-reaching impacts in the North East – where we began our journey.

Between the commencement of NEPRO³ in September 2019 and August 2023, Bloom have invoiced £41,426,000 to SMEs within the North East region, equating to £11,682,133 worth of social value.

We also continue to support a variety of community initiatives. On May 30th, 2023, 17 children from deprived areas aged between 8 – 12 took part in the Stockton Borough Council Healthy Noodle Challenge. Organised by the Stockton-on-Tees Food Power Network, and taking place at the Primrose Hill Community Centre, it saw the children being taught how to make cost-effective, healthy versions of the popular ‘Pot Noodle’ snack.

Their healthier versions cost just 50p per serving, possess lower volumes of salt, and contain a variety of vegetables. The recipe itself was also designed to be accessible and easy to follow, even for children with limited experience with preparing food. For many of the children, this was also their first introduction to basic cooking skills, which included things like opening tins with a tin opener and draining vegetables.

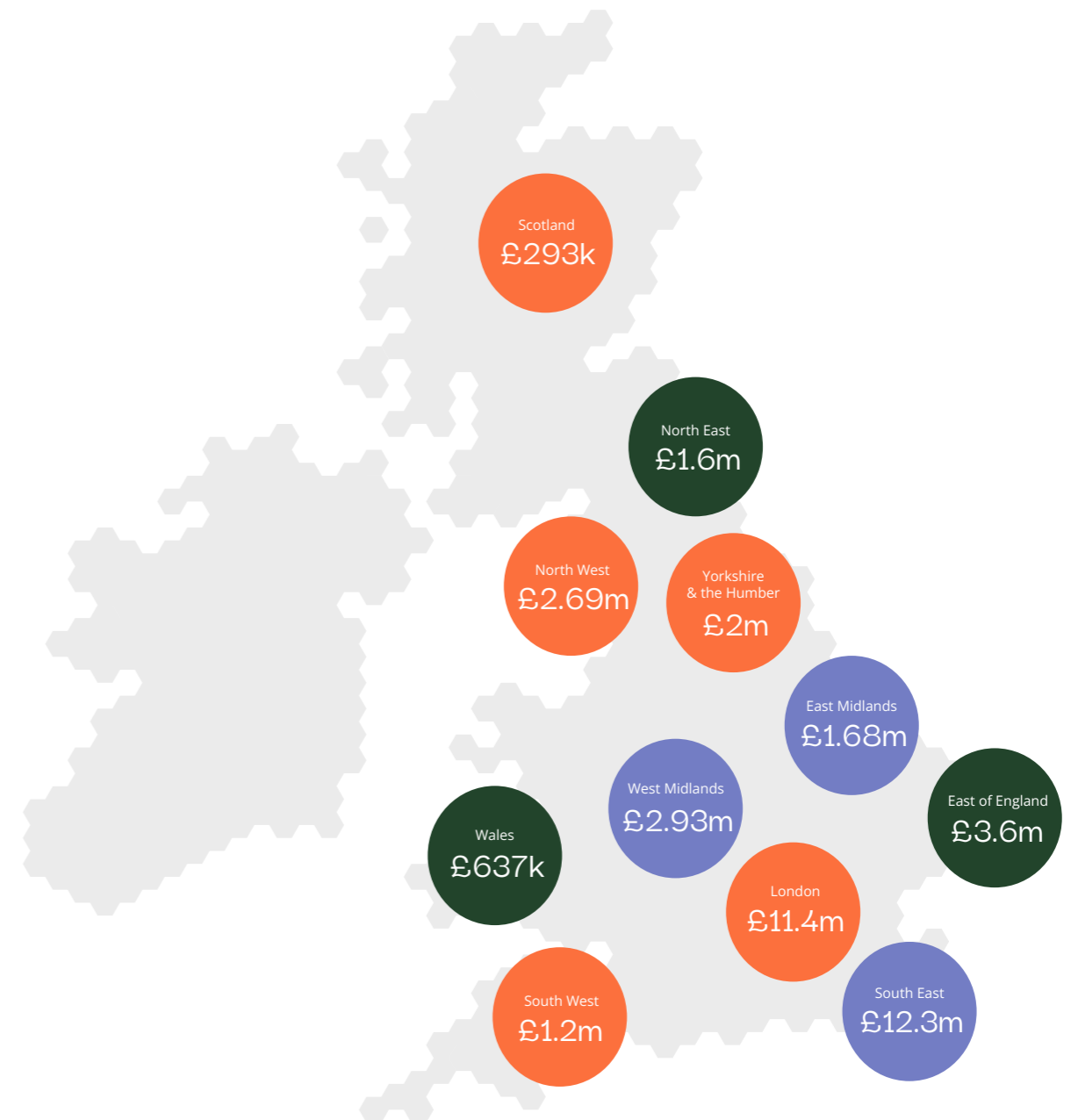
Bloom donated £200 to the SBC Healthy Noodle Challenge, recognising the initiatives’ potential to empower children from deprived backgrounds, providing them with skills that can serve them throughout their lives.



The business also donated £150 to Durham County Council for their Annual Foster Careers Awards celebration, which went towards buying bouquets of flowers for the foster care professionals who provide an exceptional service.

The event serves as an opportunity for children in care to enjoy a social event and for their carers to be recognised.

Social Value created through regional SME spend



SME accredited suppliers on the Bloom marketplace can be found all across the UK. Figures above show the social value created through regional SME spend.

Our Marketplace

Bloom's marketplace consists of over 5,000 accredited suppliers of specialist professional services, spanning 20 categories and 380 sub-categories of spend. Since its inception, it's delivered a collective £1.25 billion in projects, whilst delivering an average saving of 14% for our clients.

A crucial component of this approach is centring local spend throughout our marketplace. During the period covered by this report, we've been delighted to have realised the following milestones.

772

accredited suppliers on Pro-Vide 2.0 (from 01 Sept 22 – 31 Aug 23) of which 886 had an SME status, equating to 88.3% in total.

770 projects were awarded to SMEs

with a total value of **£158,077,752**

£157,190,000 invoiced to SMEs

creating £43,616,040 worth of social value.

The impact of Bloom's marketplace has been felt throughout our supply chain, as demonstrated by the feedback we've received from our clients



“ Once again, I do want to formally give Bloom a big ‘thank you’ for all of your ongoing support and guidance with our related projects. Your team has been a great source of help and support as our business partner.

Bloom has provided excellent MI and have helped to develop KPIs to further enhance our data. A specific example of the added value you've provided is the recent 'Multiply' project (Multiply is the government's new adult numeracy initiative for adults aged 19+ who have not previously attained a GCSE Grade 4/C or higher maths qualification).

Your team took a lot of time to meet with Council representatives, understand the requirements, help to further develop the specification/milestones and lots, ensuring it was compliant for NEPRO³, and then undertaking work to liaise and engage with various colleges to ensure we had bids to review. There was a lot of hand holding needed for this, which was very much appreciated and, ultimately, it helped to deliver six different contracts totalling circa £750k in value. ”

Janet Ellison-Jones, Cheshire East Council



“ We are shaped and defined by our people, and it’s a fantastic privilege to serve as Chief People Officer for the business. Throughout the period covered in this report, we’ve sought to build upon employee engagement and voice in several innovative and exciting ways.

Initiatives have included the development of our Trademark Behaviours, the launch of the Hive employee engagement platform, and a number of wellbeing initiatives that are designed to help employees to be the best possible versions of themselves, both at home and the workplace.

Our People Team were also recognised by the wider business in the 2022 Annual Culture Awards, picking up the ‘Teamwork makes a Dreamwork’ award which is voted for by our people.

We’re determined to make Bloom a welcoming and engaging place to work, that encourages cooperation and personal development. We’ll continue to build upon our commitment to build a progressive, diverse, and motivated working environment – which serves our people, our clients and suppliers, and broader society. ”

Pam Lamming, Chief People Officer

Our People

Our mission is to build an exceptional team that’s motivated and supported by a progressive working culture – which enables employees to be the best possible versions of themselves, at home and at work.

Practically, this means creating a positive working environment that allows everyone to grow and thrive. That’s why we actively promote our Trademark Behaviours throughout every aspect of the business. These help us to improve employee engagement and wellbeing, encourage teamwork and collaboration, and properly reward our people when they go above and beyond expectations.

Our Trademark Behaviours consist of:



We work together

Bloom’s success is built upon collaboration, whether amongst our people, our customers and suppliers or the communities we serve. Everyone at Bloom takes responsibility for their own actions, whilst considering the impact they can have on others. We take the time to thoroughly understand the needs of the people we work with, and enthusiastically share ideas, information, and experiences.



We are real and true

Authenticity matters at Bloom. We want to enable our people to be the best versions of themselves, both at home and at work. We don’t simply welcome difference, we celebrate it. Our diverse teams support one and other, treat each other with respect, and commit to their pledges and promises.



We are curious

Our success as a business reflects our readiness to continually take the initiative in everything we do. We’re continually innovating, determining new and better ways to improve the services we offer. More importantly, everyone in the business is encouraged to learn from their mistakes, optimising processes, and striving towards continual improvement.

Our People

To encourage our people to embed Trademark Behaviours into their working lives, we use Hive, an employee feedback system.

Hive makes it possible for colleagues to grant 'Hive Fives' to colleagues who demonstrate a passionate and proactive approach to their work. More specifically, Hive Fives can also be granted for embodying any of the three Trademark behaviours.

Between September 2022 and August 2023, our people awarded:



In addition to Hive Fives, Hive also serves as a way of our people providing anonymous feedback to our People team. Their thoughts, perspectives, and considerations informed our broader People strategy - whilst creating an 'open doors' culture.

Between September 2022 and August 2023, our people submitted:



Bloom's use of Hive is built upon our desire to foster employee engagement in progressive and innovative ways. Not only does the platform help to embed our Trademark Behaviours throughout the business, but it also provides our people with a secure and reliable way of expressing themselves.

The feedback we receive from Hive, or generally, is highly valued throughout the business. It shapes and informs the wellbeing initiatives produced by our People Team. Recognising that our people are our strongest asset, we strongly value both the health and wellbeing of our employees. This is why we continually rollout a series of wellbeing initiatives throughout each year.

Each year, we conduct an Employee Engagement Survey. This is to determine how happy our people are with how the business is developing, the nature of their work, and their overall experiences. Our People Team strives to improve employee engagement with the survey each year, whilst using feedback to inform our processes and initiatives.

The ultimate aim of the survey is to continually improve upon our Employee Net Promoter Score (eNPS), which is a way of measuring how likely employees are to recommend an organisation as a good place to work.



+66
2023 eNPS
score

Our People

Throughout 2023, our People Team launched diverse wellbeing initiatives, informed by employee feedback and suggestions. These covered:

- Dry January
- Burnout
- Loneliness Awareness Week
- No Smoking Month
- World Cancer Day
- On Your Feet Britain & National Walking Month
- Financial Wellbeing
- LGBT+ / Pride

To demonstrate the extent and nature of these initiatives, here are a number of highlights that centred employee feedback.

Burnout

Burnout is a state of physical and emotional exhaustion. It can occur when someone experiences long-term stress in their job, or when they have worked in a physically or emotionally draining role for a long time. The lines between work and home life have become increasingly blurred, too. More people are working longer hours and, in many cases, social environments and means of social interaction have changed.

This is why, throughout March, we launched a burnout wellbeing campaign. As well as raising awareness of burnout, and offering advice, we also had a number of expert guest speakers share their knowledge and solutions with our teams.



Ryan Ridgeway is a wellbeing speaker, accredited Mental Health First Aid Instructor and Luminate workshop facilitator. Ryan struggled with compulsive thoughts from a young age, which later gave way to depression, addiction and resulted in him planning suicide. Since then, Ryan has learned how to manage his mental health through various support systems, outlets, and proactive tools. His session covered understanding stress and how it can lead to burnout, prioritising self-care, and cognitive restructuring for stress management.



Frances Taylor is a Sleep Expert and Fellow of The International Stress Management Association (UK). She has 15 years' experience of facilitating resilience events in diverse settings, from universities to international film studios. Her session covered what gets in the way of sound sleep, and five insights to bring better sleep and boost health, performance, and productivity.

Financial Wellbeing

In addition to burnout, recent research has shed light on just how many people in the UK are suffering from money-related stresses and anxieties. Given that this can have a profound effect on both mental and physical wellbeing, our June wellbeing campaign centred on highlighting advice and support.

As well as signposting our people to trusted sources of support, we also invited two guest speakers to address the topic.

Christopher Booth, Head of Financial Services at Lycetts, delivered a presentation on 'Planning for your future – Pensions'. An expert financial planner, Chris discussed how employees could effectively plan their financial future and provided advice on pension schemes.

Phil Holdsworth, a multi-award-winning money psychologist and financial wellbeing professional, delivered his session on 'Psychology behind money'. This covered a variety of topics, including cultural attitudes towards money, what sorts of financial planners to use, and neurofinance.

Our People Team also produced our own, in-house podcast, sharing support and advice from perspectives from within the business itself.



Our People

As part of our overall wellbeing strategy, Bloom conducts a Stress Risk Assessment on an annual basis. Whilst there haven't been any instances of stress-related ill health in the company, we recognise the need to proactively protect and support our employees.

OURMINDSWORK

Bloom's Chief People Officer, supported by Our Minds Work (a mental health consultancy), developed the assessment to be as informative and relevant to our employees as possible.

Its objectives include:

- Identifying potential hazards, especially in the context of the business and the nature of the work our employees engage in.
- Creating a way of receiving anonymous feedback from employees, allowing the business to listen to opinions and concerns surrounding stress in the workplace.
- Accumulating findings and presenting them to the Board, ensuring all decision-makers are properly updated and informed.
- Agreeing on specific controls for all identified hazards. Where existing controls were insufficient, improvements were identified and prepared for.
- Sharing findings and observations with colleagues within the business, ensuring everyone understands risks surrounding stress and how to access support.

Whilst wellbeing initiatives are an important component of our people strategy, it's crucial that Bloom provides its employees with a working lifestyle that suits their needs and contemporary trends.

Post-pandemic, it's clear that hybrid and home-based working are here to stay. Not only are they favoured by an increasing number of people, but they also provide several verifiable benefits. To this end, we are proud to support people in working in a way that suits them and their lifestyles.

In November 2022, we conducted a Hybrid Working Survey. The purpose of this was to determine the preferences and perspectives of our employees. Doing so helped us to produce a working culture that better reflected their lifestyles and favoured methods of working.

The survey established that many employees enjoy flexibility and being able to work from home more frequently. However, we also discovered that some preferred busier, and more social, office environments. For this reason, we've been trialling working hubs to provide otherwise remote workers with the opportunity to work away from home, closer to some of their colleagues. This initiative reflects our commitment to taking on employee feedback and pursuing experimentation.

Our People

Our progressive approach to work styles is accompanied by tangible commitments to the healthcare our people have access to. The mental and physical wellbeing of our people is a key priority for Bloom. We've partnered with a variety of healthcare providers, ensuring employees have access to professional support when they need it.

The Employee Assistance Programme (EAP) is a confidential helpline designed to help employees with personal and professional problems. Entirely confidential, it's available to our people on a 24/7 basis, 365 days a year. Structured telephone counselling enables them to access advice and support, for themselves and for their partners and dependents.

The EAP includes the following services:

- Comprehensive, 24/7 helplines
- Formal counselling, either over the phone or face-to-face
- Online counselling
- Online portal
- My Healthy Advantage app
- Critical incident support



We've also partnered with Simplyhealth to provide our people with an accessible and flexible way of accessing healthcare. For a small, monthly cost, they can access a GP service via video call at any time – for themselves and their families. Face-to-face check-ups, appointments, and counselling are also available through the service, covering everything from eyes, teeth, and even physio.



In addition, nine of our colleagues have undergone training to provide mental health first aid through Access Training Limited - taking the total to twelve within the business, which is over 10% of our team.

By ensuring that we provide thorough support to our people, we can build a progressive and positive employee experience. This enables our teams to deliver for our partnered suppliers and clients alike. This wouldn't be possible, however, without championing equality, diversity, and inclusion throughout every aspect of our business.

Through a new dedicated equality, diversity, and inclusion policy, we've committed to eliminating discrimination, promoting equal opportunities, and encouraging diversity amongst our workforce and

for job applicants. Our objective is to create a working environment in which there is no unlawful discrimination, and all decisions are based on merit. We aim to create a workforce and to fill skills gaps by recruiting from the widest possible talent pool.

Our policy clearly states our expectations for Bloom employees and those we work with. We've reinforced our commitment by providing all our people with online training, helping them to understand and appreciate the need for a welcoming and tolerant working environment.

Our People

Bloom recently launched a dedicated Reserve and Cadet Forces Policy, which reflects our commitment to being a Forces Friendly employer.

Key aspects of the policy involve:

- Ensuring that services personnel and the armed forces community are not unfairly disadvantaged as part of our recruitment and selection processes.
- Providing support for employees whose partners are deployed.
- Assisting employees who are members of the reserve forces, or those that are volunteer leaders in military cadet organisations.

This is reflected in a number of initiatives, including:

- Hosting the North of England Armed Forces Business Forum.
- Advertising our roles on armed forces specific job boards.
- Exploring ways of supporting a not-for-profit, concerning how we can support spouses in the military.
- Organising a volunteering day with a local veterans mental health charity.

In 2023, we were delighted to have been awarded the MOD's Employer Recognition Scheme Silver Award. It recognises employer organisations that demonstrate support for the Defence and the Armed Forces community and align their values with the Armed Forces Covenant.



“ We joined the Armed Services Covenant to show our commitment to demonstrating fair treatment to those who serve, or have served, in the BAF as well as their families.

Since joining it has been an eye-opening experience, learning more about some of the difficulties and challenges military forces and their families experience when looking for suitable opportunities in ‘civvy street’.

Since signing the Covenant, we have attended numerous events across the North East, hosted an event at our office in Newcastle, and have volunteered with a local charity that focused on veterans’ mental health. We have also become a partner with Spouse Force which supports the families of serving personnel. Here we provide career support and guidance for the partners of serving personnel. ”

Kyla Edwards, Bloom's Internal Talent Acquisition Partner

Our People

The business' efforts in creating a people-centric working environment have also been recognised in other ways, too. In May 2023, Bloom was awarded the 'Advanced Good Work Pledge' by the North of Tyne Combined Authority. The pledge recognises efforts to ensure employee well-being and social responsibility in the workplace.

The North of Tyne has increasingly become a great place to live, work, and do business. However, local authorities have acknowledged that many people in employment are also living in poverty. What's called 'poor employment' is often to blame. This typically involves low pay, unreliable hours, and minimal benefits.

The Good Work Pledge is designed to encourage businesses to offer better employment, and to acknowledge those that do. We're delighted to have been awarded the Advanced Good Work Pledge, which serves as a testament to the commitments we've made as a part of our People strategic pillar.



THE SUNDAY TIMES
T Best Places to Work 2023
MEDIUM COMPANY

We were also thrilled to have made the Sunday Times Best Places to Work 2023 list, in the 'Medium Company' category. The list recognises organisations with the highest levels of employee engagement, wellbeing, and satisfaction.

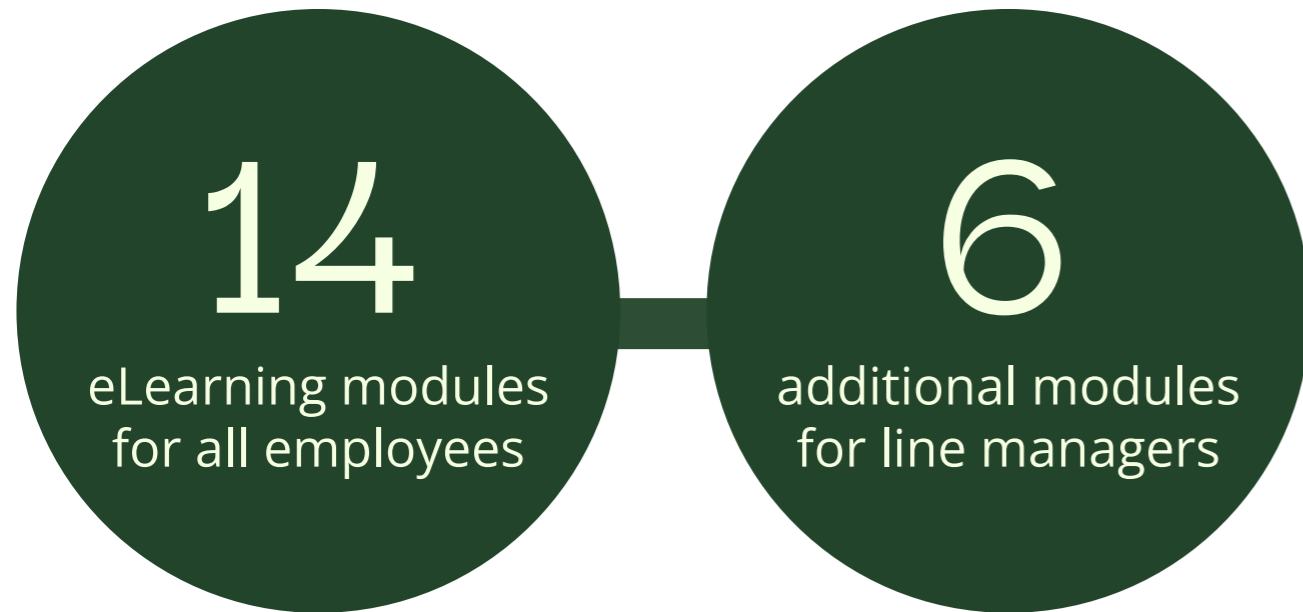
This is a particularly important accomplishment for the business, as we've made employee experience a central pillar of our overall strategy. We want to be an organisation that's recognised for the care it has for its people and for cultivating a truly engaged workforce. This means that we're actively developing a commitment culture towards our team, striving to go above and beyond our obligations in providing a working environment in which everyone can flourish.

Making the Sunday Times Best Places to Work 2023 list is an encouraging testament to the employee experience we're cultivating. But we won't be complacent, we'll continue to build upon the strong foundations that make Bloom a fantastic place to work and grow.



Our People

All colleagues at Bloom undertake learning and development. This currently consists of 14 eLearning modules, which are taken every two years. These typically take between 30 minutes and an hour to complete. Line managers have an additional 6 modules, specific to their responsibilities.



It's not just Bloom employees who benefit from our people strategy. We're also proud to open Bloom's doors, literally or figuratively, to the employees of the future.

We offer internship opportunities when possible, allowing people to acquire the experience and knowledge they need to flourish in a modern working environment. Our team endeavours to provide interns with the support and guidance they need to make their time with us as productive and informative as possible.



Here's an insight analysis from one of our interns, Theodore Freeman:

“ During my internship at Bloom, I've had the privilege of being involved in both the Sales Team and the Growth Team. Within the Sales Team, I've undertaken several significant projects, including developing an account plan for Northampton Council and creating a multi-dimensional presentation detailing the financial opportunity of work between Bloom and the NHS.

Overall, this experience has been very engaging, especially when creating the presentation on the opportunity for Bloom within the NHS. This task tested a wide range of skills, ranging from data visualisation and statistical analysis to critical thinking, slide design, and presentation skills. This has been invaluable for myself as while I had previously practised many of these skills through my background in psychology, I had not previously been fully immersed in the business world or tasked with business-specific projects.

I was very lucky to be mentored by James Kent and Jack Whowell. I really can't speak highly enough of both of them. James made a special trip from Manchester to London to share a meal with me, and this really showcased his friendly and warm character. It also spoke volumes as it underlined how much James cared that I felt valued and welcomed into the business. In addition, James would very frequently call myself to check in, see how I was doing, see if I was on track with the work himself and Jack set and also just to have a general chat. James also took lots of time out of his own busy schedule to ensure my day was structured and filled with interesting work to do. I really enjoyed the project set for myself from him and Jack.

Both James and Jack have been integral to my time here at Bloom. They both made a massive effort to get to know me on a personal level and this made all the difference. Although I was only here for 8 weeks, I felt truly part of the Sales Team, and this was further shown to me when Jack and James got me involved in their Friday quiz which was great fun. I felt at ease from day one talking to both of them, and they really made my time at Bloom the best it could be. ”

Our Community

Community engagement is a fundamental component of our sustainability and social value strategy programme. The entire business is committed to supporting a diverse range of causes that reflect our values. Our team is dedicated to rendering the business a movement for good in society – contributing to a lasting legacy that provides positive benefits for everyone.

Throughout the period covered by this report, we worked diligently to work towards these objectives in practical and meaningful ways. We supported a range of charities, including Changing Lives and Feeding Families. As a business, we contributed to their transformative causes, creating measurable impacts, and assisting in the delivery of positive outcomes.

Between 1st September 2022 – 31st August 2023, our team raised a total of £8,300 for our chosen charities.

These charities included:



To provide a sense of the work we do with these charities, here are some highlights:



Feeding Families is a charity based in North East England that offers support, hope, and security to those experiencing food poverty. Working closely with other organisations and agencies, they ensure that thousands of families in desperate need have access to their Emergency Food Boxes and support packages.

Feeding Families don't accept that anyone should go hungry. They believe everyone has the right to be able to feed themselves and their children. The charity offers more than just food, it shows compassion to those in crisis.

Bloom contributed £500 to Feeding Families, which has helped support over 20 families in need. This enabled the charity to provide much needed Emergency Food boxes, with each feeding two people for between 3 and 5 days.

Meanwhile, The Wildlife Trusts' purpose is to bring wildlife back, to empower people to take meaningful action for nature, and to create an inclusive society where nature matters. Their vision is of a thriving natural world, with wildlife and natural habitats playing a valued role in addressing the climate and ecological emergencies – inspiring everyone to get involved in nature's recovery.

Bloom's donation of £1,000 will assist the Wildlife Trusts in protecting the nation's natural environment, whilst inspiring people to act responsibly for the wildlife in their own communities.

Our Community

In a similar vein to charity work, Bloom actively encourages our team members to participate in volunteering days, to give back to their communities – regardless of where they reside in the UK.

Volunteering days provide benefits for both mental and physical health, help participants acquire new skills and relationships, and often entail a new sense of purpose. This is why everyone at Bloom is granted a volunteering day each year, in order to give back to their communities and good causes.



Beach Clean

In August 2023, colleagues at Bloom gathered on Red Acre Beach in Seaham to take part in a beach clean with our CSR partner, Climate Action North, led by Seascapes. We litter picked a 100-metre stretch of the beach and recorded what we found as part of the data recording process for the Marine Conservation Society's 'State of the Beach' initiative.

The beach clean was a fantastic way to reinforce our commitment to social value, helping to keep our beaches free of litter, protecting wildlife, and contributing to wider strategies through the MCS marine litter survey.



Feeding Families Inspirational Women's Luncheon

Bloom's Sandra Nowaczec, Jenny Carr, Danielle Swanson, and Sophie Rodgers gave back their time to help support the Feeding Families Inspirational Women's Luncheon at Wynyard Hall. The team volunteered their time on the day to sell raffle tickets, check people in, and help the day run smoothly.

"I wanted to personally thank you all so much for all your hard work on Friday. You really helped make the event run smoothly. I'm delighted to let you know we raised £8003.44."

Sarah McPhie, Feeding Families



Essential Food Packages

Bloom's Sarah MacNab, Luke Garthwaite and Victoria Elliott supported Feeding Families at their premises in Blaydon. There they assisted the charity in preparing Essential Food Packages during the busy, festive period.



Durham Wildlife Trust

In order to support the Durham Wildlife Trust, Bloom's People Team, including Kyla Edwards, Elli Maggs and Pamela Lamming, removed scrub and debris to make way for new wildlife.

Our Community

Supporting good and charitable causes is deeply important to Bloom, but it's just one way we're committed to giving back to communities. Job creation, for instance, remains a crucial component of community regeneration and growth.

We opened 37 jobs across all functions of the business during the third year of the NEPRO³ contract. These represented a total value of £984,320. Bloom recognises that our greatest asset is our people, and we fundamentally believe in their talents. They're passionate about the work they do and thrive best in a culture predicated on hard work and team spirit.



Bloom has created £6,200 worth of social value through our apprenticeship programme and has delivered 121 mentoring hours throughout the year.

Engaging with our community, particularly in local education, is of utmost importance to Bloom. We have established positive collaborations with students at NUBS, undertaking significant projects relevant to our initiatives at the time. These projects included tackling carbon reduction in the public sector supply chain and, more recently, focusing on SME ESG Resilience and Development. The research and proposals generated from these partnerships have greatly contributed to shaping our sustainability strategy.



The Newcastle University Master of Business Administration (MBA) degree programme has an essential requirement for students to apply theoretical learning to real world business problems. Newcastle University has also achieved a top five ranking in The Times Higher Education 2023 Impact Rankings survey for supporting sustainable development in our work.

The opportunity to work with Bloom Procurement again this year offered students the challenge of applying their theoretical learning by researching and proposing actions to support the SME business and Diverse Supplier community in enhancing their understanding of Environmental, Social and Governance frameworks and public sector procurement requirements. Proposing actions to tackle environmental and social issues aligns both with our MBA programme and university strategic objectives, contributing to action on sustainability and social value enhancement.

Bloom's collaboration with the university was well-received by students...



“ Collaborating with Bloom was an enriching experience that aligned perfectly with the objectives of the module. It provided a platform to contribute to a meaningful project and gain valuable insights into the consulting industry's best practices. The support and guidance from both the academic staff and Bloom's team created a nurturing environment that enhanced my learning experience. ”

“ Working with Bloom on this project provided me with valuable knowledge, skills, and experiences that have significantly enriched my professional growth. I gained a deep understanding of sustainability practices, social value, and net-zero strategies in the public sector. Engaging with Bloom's network of suppliers and consultants allowed me to broaden my perspective on procurement processes and supplier diversity initiatives. ”

Our Community

Concerning the programme, Jo Clark, Deputy Degree Programme Director MBA, said...



“Working with Bloom colleagues, Sarah MacNab and Ben Stevenson, in a well-structured and supportive intensive project environment, gave our MBA students a chance to test their skills and knowledge, applying these to define actions for enhancing sustainability and social value priorities.

Public sector procurement needs to evidence support for social value and sustainability in the process and the students' proposals for the SME Sustainability Empowerment Programme and the Diverse Suppliers Acceleration Programme are practical solutions that can have a real impact on the ability of SME businesses to contribute in these aspects, whilst at the same time increasing the chances of success in the procurement process, supported by the Bloom Procurement platform team.

Academics at Newcastle University Business School, myself and colleague Peter Lamb, together with students, were delighted to engage with Bloom Procurement and we look forward to working on further impactful projects next year. ”

Jo Clark, Deputy Degree Programme Director MBA

Local Suppliers working with Bloom

We recognise that we can stimulate economic activity and growth in the areas they're most needed by supporting local suppliers. This helps to create jobs, encourages investment, and can help to create more sustainable supply chains. Crucially, we apply our principles and commitments to the local suppliers we work with – ensuring that they extend beyond the boundaries of Bloom itself.

A great example of our commitment to this ethos is the work we do with local cleaning consultants, NE Clean. We began working with NE Clean in 2019 when Bloom moved into our Gateshead office. As we'd committed to become a Living Wage employer, we wanted to extend the same ethos to our contractors, too. We arranged with John Curry, Managing Director at NE Clean, that we would cover the difference between our cleaners' standard wages and the living wage set by the foundation.

“As Office Manager at Bloom, my role is to ensure a comfortable, safe, and legally compliant space for our people to work in. This regularly involves purchasing both goods and services. We've always recognised the importance of utilising local businesses as a first port of call for these requirements. We currently work with six local businesses on our general maintenance, security, and fire safety etc – putting money back into the local economy”.

Jay Tuckwell, Office Manager at Bloom.

“We have been working with Bloom for the past four years at their Gateshead site. It exemplifies the power of local companies supporting each other and the positive impact it has on the local economy. By choosing to work together, we've seen how local businesses can forge lasting relationships that benefit not only our respective businesses but also the broader region. It's a testament to the strength of local partnerships and the potential for growth when we invest in one another.”

John Curry, MD of NE Clean, one of Bloom's trusted suppliers.



Our World

We are committed to reducing the impact our business and supply chain have on the environment and natural world. Our core focus is on activity that will take steps towards achieving Net Zero by 2045, reducing both our direct emissions and those produced by our broader supply chain.

Our company continues to recognise the importance of making a full and lasting commitment to reducing the greenhouse gas emissions from our activities, in support of the wider commitment of the world to limit global temperature increases and the impact on the planet.

As a signatory member of the Network Net Zero Community, we are committed to the following:

1. For our company to achieve Net Zero in line with the Science Based targets set out by the UNFCCC i.e. to achieve Net Zero no later than 2050 and target a 50% reduction in emissions by 2030.
2. To set realistic short and long-term targets that are designed to achieve our Net Zero commitments.
3. To report the total greenhouse gas emissions of our business regularly and for our performance to be part of the Community's annual reporting back to the UNFCCC. We acknowledge that our commitment is reported on the Network Net Zero website.

Since May 2022, we've been supported by Net Zero International which has been instrumental in advancing our sustainability efforts. With their support, we are fostering a culture of sustainability within our organisation and are leveraging resources and networks in the sustainability community. Moving forward, we are committed to making a lasting impact on the environment with ongoing dedication and continuous improvement.

“ Net Zero International have been pleased to be partnering with the team at Bloom for the past couple of years, helping them to measure, manage and reduce their carbon emissions in line with science-based targets.



The team at Bloom are passionate about understanding their impact and considering this in the overall business strategy, with carbon reduction a key part of the business culture.

Increasingly, we're now using its influence with suppliers and customers to make a broader impact in carbon reduction and sustainability to wider society. ”

David Hawes, Co-Founder at Net Zero International

We also committed to the SME Climate Hub's pledge in February 2023. The pledge represents our commitment as a business to sustainability and far-reaching climate action.

The SME Climate Hub is a non-profit initiative that empowers small to medium sized companies to take climate action and build resilient businesses for the future. Through the hub, businesses pledge to halve their emissions by 2030, achieve net zero by 2050, and report on their progress on a yearly basis – providing accountability.



Our World

The total calculated emissions for the business in 2022 were 45.4 tCO₂e. This is compared to 40.5 tCO₂e in the previous period. The total emissions of 40.5 tCO₂e is a different value to the published report from last year. The change in emissions is due to more accurate calculations year-on-year and the carbon emissions from both the electricity consumed by employees working from home and waste.

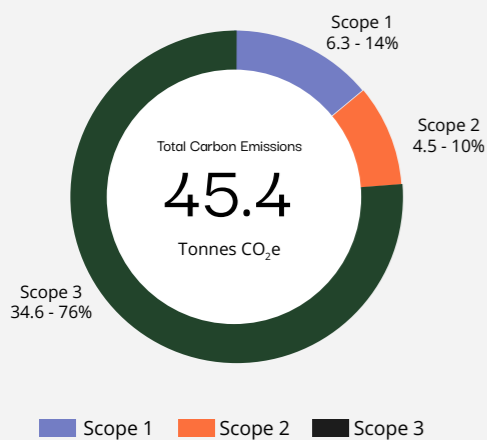
The increase in carbon is due to normal business activities resuming after covid-19 with increased business travel. The business continues to lease one office and operates from this site. Business energy has been calculated using the data made available by the providers. The company continues to measure an increasing amount of Scope 3 emissions and is committed to improving emissions across all scopes.

Operational Scopes Emissions from Scope 1 & 2 have been measured along with certain Scope 3 emissions. The Scope 3 emissions that have been included are those that have been practical to measure with available data, which are as follows:

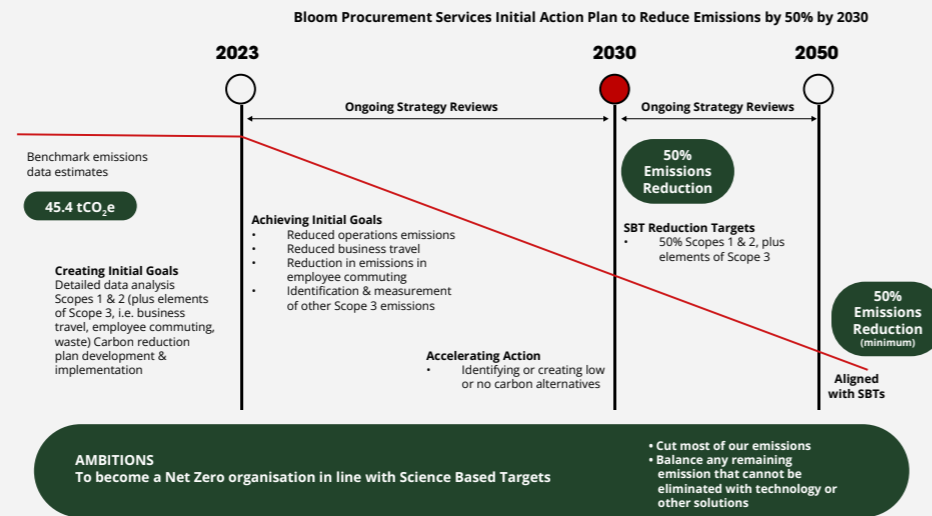
- Employee commuting
- Waste
- Business travel

Analysis by Scope

Scopes (CO₂e) 2022 Analysis



Emission Reductions Targets



To further our dedication to sustainability, we have established a meaningful partnership with Ecologi, a Bristol-based firm at the forefront of the fight against climate change and environmental degradation.



Our partnership with Ecologi is centred around a shared vision to safeguard the well-being of present and future generations by addressing the urgent challenges posed by climate change. As part of our journey towards achieving net-zero emissions and creating a sustainable future, we actively support impactful climate solutions.

Ecologi has proven to be an invaluable ally in this endeavour, offering a diverse range of climate projects that make a tangible and positive impact on our environment. Among these initiatives, tree planting stands out as a critical method for sequestering carbon and mitigating greenhouse gas emissions.

With every new client that joins Bloom, we take a significant step towards a greener future by collaborating with Ecologi to plant 25 trees. This commitment allows us to contribute actively to global reforestation efforts, which are vital for restoring nature's delicate balance and ensuring the thriving of all life forms.

To ensure transparency and accountability in our sustainability efforts, we work closely with Ecologi to measure and track the environmental impact of our tree-planting initiatives. By leveraging their robust tracking system, we gain valuable insights into the number of trees planted, the carbon offset achieved, and the overall positive contribution to the environment.

Our collaboration with Ecologi extends beyond tree planting. Together, we explore innovative climate projects and sustainability initiatives that align with our values and commitments. These projects are all gold standard or verified by Verra, further reinforcing our commitment to making a comprehensive and lasting difference in the fight against climate change and environmental degradation.

At Bloom, we are proud to join forces with Ecologi and stand united in our determination to create a sustainable future for generations to come.

Through Ecologi, we support a number of verified carbon avoidance projects.



Wind power project in Thailand

Thailand, which is home to 70.1 million people, has seen its average annual temperatures rise by a rate of 0.8°C since the 1950s. The geography of the country, which includes an abundance of coral reefs and diverse marine flora and fauna, is particularly vulnerable to extreme weather events, sea level rises, and aquaculture.

As with many countries, fossil fuels remain the primary source of power for Thailand – accounting for 93% of its energy in 2021. By supporting a significant shift to renewable energy sources, including wind, the country, its inhabitants, and its local biodiversity can be spared many of the effects of a warming climate.

This Ecologi project will see the utilisation of wind energy by using 30 Wind Turbine Generators (WTGs). The power that's generated will be converted into mechanical energy, and then into electrical energy – whilst producing no GHG emissions. The electrical energy will be exported to the Thailand Nation Grid, displacing energy that would have otherwise been generated using fossil fuels.

Overall, the project will prevent 131,883 tCO₂e from being released into the atmosphere during each year of its operation – equating to 1,318,830 tCO₂e over ten years. For perspective, the project started in 2018 and will run for 25 years, with a renewable crediting period every 10 years.



Mangrove planting at Kandranjy, Madagascar

The second largest island nation in the world, Madagascar is located 400 kilometres off the coast of East Africa. A biodiversity hotspot, around 90% of its wildlife is found nowhere else on the planet. Unfortunately, large areas of the nation's forests have been deforested. This has displaced a number of species and human communities. In addition, entire mangrove estuaries have been destroyed – leaving the remaining earth vulnerable to being washed away by the sea.

Mangrove estuaries are important for several reasons. They're excellent carbon sinks, provide habitats for marine species, and provide crucial protection from flooding. Through Eden Reforestation Projects, Ecologi is running projects to provide fair-wage employment to impoverished villagers as agents of global forest restoration.

Eden hires local people to grow, plant, and guard to maturity the trees planted through funding from our community – on a massive scale. As well as restoring forest ecosystems, Eden's "Employ to Plant" methodology results in multiple positive socioeconomic and environmental impacts.

Thus far, Ecologi projects in the country have funded mangrove planting spanning an area of around 600 hectares of this degraded coastal region – and as each small pocket of land is planted, our community's funding is directed to support further planting, further along the coast. Their community has supported mangrove planting in this part of Madagascar ever since their founding in 2019, and they estimate that during the full project period their community will have funded the planting of 13 million mangrove trees.



Distributing cleaner cookstoves in Kenya

Throughout much of the Global South, the burning of non-renewable biomass remains the most common source of heat for cooking purposes. In many cases, the stoves used in the process make inefficient use of biomass, which often leads to unsustainable levels of deforestation. They also produce harmful emissions that are bad both for the planet and for the respiratory health of the people using them.

In Kenya alone, 9 million people still depend on biomass when cooking. Women and children are often tasked with collecting it, exposing them to inequalities and vulnerabilities.

An Ecologi-led project has seen 'Jikokoa' cookstoves distributed to communities throughout Kenya. As well as reducing charcoal consumption by 64%, they also reduce indoor air pollution by 65%. Over the course of the project, a total of 380,000 cookstoves will be distributed – saving 4.3 million tonnes of CO2 emissions and reducing the demand for biomass fuel by 2.4 million tonnes. In addition, the manufacture and distribution of the Jikokoa stoves will take place at a local, solar-powered facility. This will create over a thousand jobs for local people.



Our World

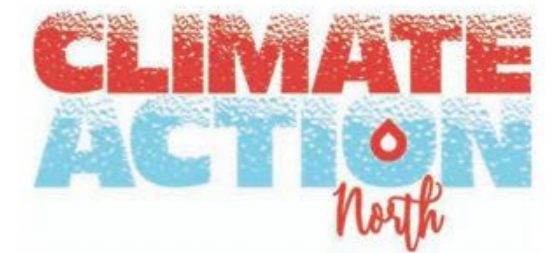
Alongside Ecologi, we work closely with a number of other stakeholders who are committed to meaningful environmental and ecological action.

Our partnerships are built upon the shared belief that the climate crisis is multifaceted, with solutions requiring far-reaching collaboration. An example of these partnerships includes Climate Action North.

Climate Action North is a community interest company run by Sharon Lashley, Jennifer Clair Robson, Julie Harrison and Phil Macari. They've worked independently on a wide variety of climate change issues, each for over a decade. They decided to pool together their knowledge and experience in order to take action and drive change.

Their projects for action on the climate crisis and the environment in the north of England include: pollinator parks, rewilding advice, events, litter picking, beach cleans, and working with businesses in the context of the climate emergency.

We're supporting Climate Action North East through a £1,200 annual sponsorship and by providing volunteers for a number of initiatives. These include beach cleans and tree planting. Bloom will also be involved in the "Bees of Bensham" project, which strives to help wild bees and pollinators in and around the Bensham area.



Our World

We recognise that our business has a responsibility to educate and inform its stakeholders concerning environmental and climate-based challenges.



Whilst this often takes the form of tangible, long-term commitments, it also means raising awareness amongst our people and partners by sharing knowledge, advice, and simple tips.

We've produced, and distributed, helpful resources such as our 'Carbon Cutting: Ideas That Don't Cost the Earth' flier. This provides practical and meaningful suggestions concerning how an individual can reduce their carbon footprint – making lifestyle changes that help us all to secure a greener and more sustainable future.



These resources have been accompanied by accessible and visible initiatives within our working space.

Designed to motivate and inform, they focussed on rendering our Gateshead office as sustainable as possible...



- We recycled 43 laptops through a Stafford based company that fully recycles all parts of the equipment, meaning none have ended up in landfill - even if the machine is no longer functioning. The laptops were refurbished and granted to local schools at a discounted rate, supporting circular economy practices. This local company also planted a tree for every equipment collection they made.
- Our electric vehicle salary sacrifice scheme, provided by Octopus, is approaching its 2-year anniversary. We relaunched this benefit at the beginning of 2023, and we are thrilled that we now have 7 electric vehicles on the road.
- We have switched to a 100% renewable energy provider, realising another carbon reduction plan objective. We conducted thorough research to ensure our energy comes from verified renewable sources. As a result, we've realised cost savings and reductions in emissions.
- We recently worked with Durham-based LED Supply & Fit on a relamping project at our Gateshead office. This was a key objective of our carbon reduction plan. The project retrofitted existing fittings with new, more energy-efficient lighting and fixed broken PIR sensors meaning our 1st-floor lights are no longer on 24/7. This project will result in cost savings from energy reduction.

Our Octopus-related CO2 savings are an estimation based on the following assumptions:

- All drivers switched from an average petrol car to an EV.
- EV usage is based on a driver's contract mileage.
- Drivers start saving from the delivery date of their EV.
- Manufacturing related emissions are not included in the calculation.
- All EVs are charged with the standard energy mix on the UK grid. This means that if users are charging their car with fully renewable energy (e.g. by using their own solar panels), the CO2 savings could be higher.

Ethical & Responsible Business

The recent rollout of our new sustainability policy framework marks a significant milestone in Bloom's commitment to becoming a responsible and sustainable organisation. This comprehensive framework consists of several interconnected policies.

This holistic approach to sustainability is essential because it allows us to address multiple dimensions of responsibility and impact.

- Our updated Corporate Social Responsibility policy ensures that we actively engage with our community, support charitable initiatives, and promote social welfare.
- The Environmental policy establishes our commitment to reducing our greenhouse gas emissions, reducing waste, and protecting the natural environment.
- Our Ethical Business Statement reaffirms our values, integrity, and commitment to ethical decision-making in all aspects of our operations.
- The refreshed Health, Safety, and Wellbeing policy emphasises the well-being of our colleagues, ensuring a safe and supportive work environment. The accompanying Health, Safety, and Wellbeing Statement details our dedication to fostering a culture of care and proactive measures to prevent accidents and promote well-being.
- The Supplier Code of Conduct sets clear expectations for our suppliers to uphold ethical and sustainable practices, creating a ripple effect that extends the positive impact beyond our organisation.
- The new Sustainable Procurement policy reflects our commitment to sourcing goods and services responsibly, considering environmental and social factors in our procurement decisions.
- Lastly, our Sustainable Travel policy demonstrates our dedication to reducing travel-related carbon emissions and supporting more sustainable travel options.

By integrating these policies, Bloom fosters a culture of accountability, innovation, and continuous improvement, driving us towards a more sustainable and prosperous future while positively contributing to the well-being of our stakeholders and the planet.

We recognise that sustainability is not just the responsibility of a select few; it is a collective effort that requires the engagement and commitment of all our people. To foster a culture of sustainability and ensure that every individual plays an active role, we have taken a significant step by setting a sustainability-linked objective for all colleagues this year.

The objective is simple yet powerful: each team member will involve themselves in at least one sustainability-focused activity or initiative during 2023 and report on their participation in their next annual review. This could include participating in a volunteering day to support environmental or social causes, attending webinars or engagement sessions to enhance their understanding of sustainability issues, or actively participating in activities suggested by the business as part of our carbon reduction plan.

Linking sustainability to colleagues' annual reviews reinforces the value we place on sustainability achievements. It sends a signal that sustainable actions are not just a checkbox exercise but a meaningful aspect of our colleagues' contributions to Bloom's overall success. Recognising and celebrating sustainability accomplishments in performance evaluations fosters a culture that values sustainability efforts, motivating individuals to go above and beyond to contribute positively to our environmental and social goals. By involving every colleague in sustainability-focused activities and recognising their efforts, we create a workforce that is deeply connected to our sustainability mission.

Ethical & Responsible Business

Due to our commitment to transparency, we were recently assessed by Ecovadis. Ecovadis are a global provider of sustainability ratings and performance improvement tools specifically designed for companies. They offer a collaborative platform that enables businesses to assess, monitor, and improve their sustainability practices. They also evaluate companies based on a wide range of sustainability criteria, including environmental, social, and ethical factors, covering areas such as environmental impact, labour and human rights, ethics, and sustainable procurement.



They then assign companies a rating on a scale of bronze, silver, gold, and platinum, indicating their sustainability performance, and these ratings serve as a benchmark for companies to measure their sustainability efforts and showcase their commitment to responsible business practices.

In 2023, Bloom was awarded its 'Silver Rating', a testament to the progress we're making. The rating highlights both our dedication to the cause of sustainability and our leadership and competitiveness in the market.



“ I am absolutely thrilled that we have been awarded a Silver Rating from Ecovadis. Sustainability and social value are not just buzzwords for us; they are ingrained in our DNA and are integral to who we are and what we stand for.

Our company purpose, 'enabling brilliant outcomes that build a better tomorrow,' fuels our ambition to make a positive impact. This Silver Rating is a testament to our unwavering energy and dedication to excellence in this field and demonstrates a commitment to continuing our journey towards a more sustainable future. ”

Ben Stevenson, Bloom's Chief of Staff and Head of Sustainability

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The very nature of Bloom is built upon collaboration with a vast array of stakeholders. In addition to our public sector clients, we work closely with a diverse range of professional service suppliers throughout the UK. Collectively, they form the dynamic marketplace for which we're known. We recently launched a new Supplier Code of Conduct, which is designed to ensure that all of our suppliers embody and share our values.

It serves as a testament to our unwavering commitment to operating as a sustainable and responsible business. It sets out clear guidelines that reflect our values and expectations for our suppliers. By upholding the highest social, ethical, and environmental principles, we aim to create a positive and supportive business ecosystem.

Our Supplier Code of Conduct outlines the requirements of all our suppliers, their employees, and contractors, including the values and behaviours they demonstrate.

We also expect suppliers to apply the following principles to their own supply chains, encouraging them to take steps to implement them wherever possible. Our objective is to work in partnership with our suppliers, and because of this, we do not intend to impose any unnecessary or onerous obligations. We expect our suppliers to implement adequate measures to adhere to all applicable legal, ethical, social, and environmental requirements and best practices.

Whilst our Supplier Code of Conduct helps to ensure that our supply chain is both ethical and sustainable, it's also an ongoing priority that our people receive the training they need – empowering them to make sound and ethical decisions throughout their working lives.



Ethical & Responsible Business

Applied ethics and good business governance at Bloom are supported by training and continuous learning.

We place a strong emphasis on these to ensure that our colleagues have the most up-to-date knowledge and skills that will support them in their roles and enable them to uphold the highest ethical standards. We recognise that a well-informed and responsible team is essential in fostering a culture of sustainability and achieving our broader business goals.

To achieve these objectives, we have established comprehensive annual training programs, and we are proud to partner with Access Learning, our trusted eLearning provider. Through Access Learning, we can offer engaging and interactive training modules that cover critical areas such as anti-bribery and corruption, information security, ethics, and sustainability. These modules cater to the diverse needs and roles within Bloom, ensuring that every colleague receives relevant and impactful training.

- Our anti-bribery and corruption training equips our workforce with a deep understanding of the legal and ethical implications of bribery, and how to detect, prevent, and report such activities.
- Information security training imparts knowledge about cybersecurity best practices, data protection regulations, and the importance of safeguarding sensitive information, ensuring that our colleagues play an active role in protecting our organisation and stakeholders from cyber threats.
- Ethics training forms the bedrock of our culture, instilling in our colleagues a strong sense of responsibility, integrity, and accountability. Armed with a clear understanding of our ethical principles, our workforce is better equipped to navigate complex situations and make principled decisions that align with our Trademark Behaviours.
- Sustainability training is equally critical as it empowers our colleagues to embrace sustainable practices in their day-to-day work. By promoting responsible behaviours and conscious choices, our team members become ambassadors for sustainability both within and outside Bloom.

The impact of this training is far-reaching. Our team, armed with the latest knowledge and equipped with ethical decision-making skills, becomes a powerful force in upholding Bloom's reputation as a responsible and trustworthy partner.

Our commitment to continuous learning and development also fosters a strong sense of colleague engagement. Moreover, as our colleagues embrace sustainability and ethical practices, they become influential agents of positive change in their personal lives and communities, extending the impact beyond the boundaries of our business.



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-  Awareness training performed to prevent anti-money laundering and anti-bribery and corruption
154 modules completed 
-  Awareness training to prevent information security breaches
455 modules completed 
-  Cyber security training completed
70 modules completed 
-  Health & safety training completed
487 modules completed 
-  Sustainability training completed
59 modules completed 

We're committed to creating a working environment in which everyone is both safe and respected.

Our dedicated modern slavery and human trafficking statement outlines our aim to prevent acts of modern slavery, both within the business itself and throughout our supply chain. We expect all our suppliers to consistently impose the same high standards throughout their own businesses.

[Click here to view our modern slavery statement in full](#)

Our approach is built upon practical and meaningful actions, designed to simultaneously encourage fair and ethical practices and to root out exploitation.

In particular, they...

- Establish and assess areas of potential risk in our business and supply chain.
- Monitor potential risk areas in our business and supply chain.
- Reduce the risk of slavery and human trafficking occurring in our business and supply chain.
- Provide adequate protection for whistleblowers.

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These measures support Bloom's compliance with the Modern Slavery Act. However, the business is dedicated to surpassing its obligations to continually set a leading example in ensuring fair treatment.

We have been working with employees, clients, and other stakeholders to assist with a review of our due diligence procedures. We are also collaborating with an academic partner to undertake a comparative study into best practice in supply chain due diligence in the UK professional services sector.

Over the last 12 months, we've also retained Real Living Wage accredited employer certification and have introduced a Supplier Code of Conduct.

This outlines our expectations of our suppliers, including...

- No forced or involuntary employment
- Safe and clean working environments
- No child labour or exploitation
- Payment of the real Living Wage
- No excessive working hours
- Zero discrimination
- No harsh or inhumane treatment



Our commitment to fighting modern slavery has also seen the introduction of several dedicated policies. These include our Equality and Diversity, Recruitment and Selection, and Whistleblowing policies.

These policies have been developed by the Group's People function in conjunction with directors and senior managers before being implemented across the business with all colleagues.

Bloom regularly assesses its risk of exposure to modern slavery occurring within our supply chain. We do not operate in high-risk sectors or markets. We operate exclusively within the UK, which has strong anti-modern slavery legislation, nor do we function as a recruitment agent, facilitate contingent labour, or procure the supply of labour. Bloom only assists in the procurement of outcomes-based professional services to public sector clients from accredited professional suppliers.

To continually improve our anti-modern slavery strategy, we've outlined a number of measures that will be taken over the next twelve months.

These include...

- Completing the GOV.UK Modern Slavery Tool (MSAT), making our response visible to Bloom clients.
- Conducting a thorough review and renewal of our due diligence processes and procedures in our supply chain to protect against slavery, money laundering, child labour, terrorist activities and other forms of human trafficking.
- Begin tracking, and monitoring, the number of suppliers that have viewed and signed up to our Supplier Code of Conduct.
- We will continue to support publicly funded organisations to find local SMEs which may lead to improving economic prosperity within the communities we work with.



Sustainability & Social Value Report 2023

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