



Impact Report

October 2021

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OUR ACHIEVEMENTS



GOOD CAUSES SUPPORTED



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AS A BUSINESS AND FOR THE SAKE OF OUR PLANET, WE STILL HAVE MUCH FURTHER TO GO AND SOCIAL WILL DO WHAT IS REQUIRED

Thank you for reading our second annual Impact Report since we amended the legal objects of Social to reflect an explicit commitment to have a material positive impact on society and the environment.

In what has been another challenging year, managing public health guidance and its effects on business, I am very proud of the progress the whole team at Social has made in delivering positive results across our triple bottom line of people, planet and profit.

I believe that success in all three areas will be the benchmark of future business. That is why we submitted our application in December 2020 to become a certified B Corporation. While the sheer volume of applicants means that we are still awaiting verification, accomplishing B Corp readiness has been a huge achievement for us and I thank everyone in the business who has made that happen.

Among many other areas of progress we have created 12 new roles – including some targeted at helping young people at the start of their career – and promoted almost one-third of our team. Our investment of resource and time in staff development has more than doubled, enabling our colleagues to flourish in rewarding careers. And we have taken numerous important steps to create a more equitable, supportive and inclusive workplace.

The launch of our specialist net zero consultancy is enabling our clients to communicate and share their own progress to net zero, helping to spread good practice and practical advice.

Our understanding and attention to our own direct environmental impact, and that of our suppliers, is one area where we know we can do even better and is a priority for the year to come.

Importantly we have continued to grow our business, increasing turnover and profit levels to facilitate our ability to do the right thing by our colleagues, clients and communities.

I know that to get where we need to, as a business and for the sake of our planet, we still have much further to go – and I am committed that Social will do what is required. That means additional investment in people and processes to accelerate the transition to a cleaner and more just society. It means reaching out to communities who are not yet adequately represented in our sector and society and it means speaking up and taking action where we see the need for change.

I hope you find this report useful – and I would love to [hear your thoughts on it](#). Thank you for your interest and your support.



John Quinton-Barber, Founder & CEO



WHAT WE DO

The Social group is a purpose-driven, integrated family of specialist communications consultancies helping organisations tell their stories, engage people and improve lives. Founded in 2013, [Social](#) has communications consultancies with offices in Manchester, Leeds, Bristol and Liverpool, three specialist practices providing [ESG](#), [net zero](#) and [technology communications](#), and an innovative creative consultancy, [for the curious](#).

WHAT SOCIAL IMPACT MEANS TO US

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

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

ABOUT THIS REPORT

This report sets out the progress we have made on the targets we set for our financial year of November 2020 – October 2021. It is based around the B Corp evaluation and measurement framework. It also sets out our targets and priority actions for November 2021 - October 2022.



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CASE STUDY

ACTIVE COMMUNITIES NETWORK MANCHESTER

Services (Pro bono project)

Videography

We produced a video for the Manchester team of this [national charity](#), which uses sport as a pathway for young people to access education, training and employment. It was designed to showcase their work for use on social media and to prospective funders and partners.

Active Communities works with young people aged 8 years to 24 years old. They operate in partnership with other community-based organisations and run activities such as dance, football, basketball and boxing from sports centres across East Manchester.

The young people also have the chance to take part in a programme of volunteering and can gain accredited qualifications through work experience and employment opportunities.

Our video focused on three young people taking part in Active Communities Manchester's programme.

[VIEW HERE](#)



CASE STUDY

PRESS RED

Services (Pro bono project)
Strategic campaign development,
social media strategy, PR advice

We worked with [Press Red](#), a charity campaigning to end gender-based violence. Our Manchester PR and creative teams supported them on the development of a campaign targeting men to challenge their peers when they see them acting aggressively and inappropriately towards women.

We supported the strategic development of the campaign, worked collaboratively with the Press Red team and their video producers on campaign content and advised on social media strategy and approaches that would gain traction with the media.

[VIEW HERE](#)



**CAMPAIGN
 LAUNCHED IN
 NOVEMBER 2021**

CASE STUDY

MENTAL HEALTH MOTORBIKE

Services (Pro bono project)

PR

One of our pro bono projects is [Mental Health Motorbikes](#). It's a registered charity which aims to support people in the motorbike community who are struggling with their mental health. It does this by getting people trained as Mental Health First Aiders, running support sessions and providing resources to help people in the biking community manage and enhance their mental health.

We have provided PR and communications support, helping the charity secure coverage in both mental health and biking magazines.



Matt Stansfield, photo courtesy of Anattie - Commercial Production House

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CASE STUDY **TECHFUGEES**

Services (Pro bono project) PR

Our new Tech Communications division provided PR support to [Techfugees](#), a global not-for-profit social enterprise which supports the inclusion of refugees through technological solutions. It works in refugee camps and in host countries, helping displaced people support themselves through access to the internet and online services, and by upskilling them when they arrive in their new countries.

We worked with their chief executive officer to raise his profile and secure coverage in titles in the trade media in particular. Our support helped to raise awareness of Techfugees and its work among targeted audiences who could support their work through financial or in-kind donations.



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OUR VOLUNTEERING

In March 2021 we launched a volunteering leave policy to benefit staff and the community. All staff can use up to five working days per calendar year to volunteer at a charity, community group or other not-for-profit of their choice.

Freeing up work time removed some of the practical barriers for our team and we get the benefit of increased staff motivation and retention, as well as wider value to the business.

In the last financial year, we completed over 110 hours of volunteering as a business. Participants came from all parts of the business and included:

- › Mentoring via the [Ben & Jerry's Ice Academy](#), part of its social value offering
- › Four staff holding school/college governor roles
- › Acting as a non-executive director for a community interest company which supports young people who have been excluded from mainstream education
- › A role on the advisory board for [BME PR Pros](#) and [The Blueprint](#) diversity mark as well as being a mentor for its first leadership programme, [The Xec](#)
- › Mentoring a recent graduate through the [One Million Mentors](#) scheme and a year 10 student through [The Girls Network](#)
- › Delivering care packages and acting as a mentor for young people through [Rochdale Connections Trust](#)
- › Acting as a communications coordinator for [Volonteurope](#)
- › Providing text-based mental health support via [Shout](#)
- › Helping at a foodbank for [Fareshare](#)

FOR NEXT YEAR OUR
ASPIRATION IS TO DONATE
500 HOURS
OF SOCIAL'S TIME TO
SUPPORTING GOOD CAUSES



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B CORPORATIONS ARE BUSINESSES THAT MEET THE HIGHEST STANDARDS OF VERIFIED SOCIAL & ENVIRONMENTAL PERFORMANCE, PUBLIC TRANSPARENCY AND LEGAL ACCOUNTABILITY TO BALANCE PROFIT AND PURPOSE.

They are legally required to consider the impact of their decisions on their workers, customers, suppliers, community and the environment. The B Corp community is a community of leaders, driving a global movement of people using businesses as a force for good.

We submitted our application for B Corp certification in December 2020 and, given the large number of organisations seeking to join the B Corp community and resource constraints at B Corp, we remain in the queue awaiting verification. We are hopeful that our verification will be completed in the first quarter of 2022.

Certified



Corporation

B CORP STANDARDS

In working towards B Corp certification, we are focused on consistent improvement across the five B Corp impact areas:

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

In each area we are assessing our performance against the requirements set out in the B Impact assessment which allows organisations to measure and manage their social and environmental impact.

63.3

OUR (NON-VERIFIED)
SCORE AT
31 OCTOBER 2020

91.5

OUR (NON-VERIFIED)
SCORE AT
31 OCTOBER 2021

OUR ACHIEVEMENTS

GOVERNANCE

We have taken steps to make our governance, management and financial structures more transparent. These include:

- > Disclosing all financial information (excluding salary details) at least yearly, both to employees and publicly via our financial statements published on Companies Houses
- > Recruiting an additional independent Non-Executive Director to our board
- > Incorporating social and environmental issues as a standing item on our board agendas
- > Producing a formal organisational chart setting out our leadership, management and reporting structure

COMMUNITY

We donated 3% of pre-tax profits to good causes chosen by our team and delivered over 130 hours of pro bono work.

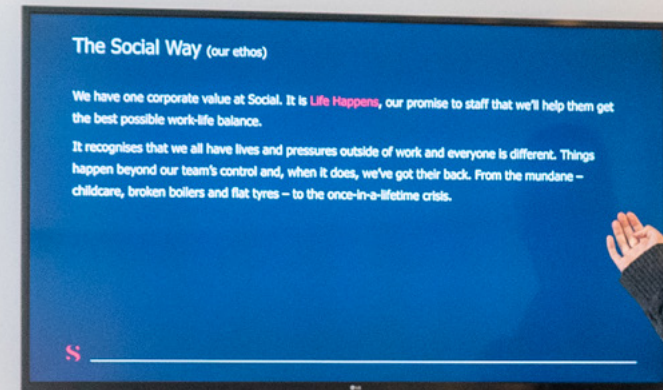
In March, we introduced a volunteering policy, giving all colleagues the opportunity to take up to five days' paid volunteering leave to support charities, good causes and not-for-profits that matter to them.

ENVIRONMENT

We updated our environmental policy to reflect the increase in home working. It now includes a section on managing your environmental impact at home.

CUSTOMERS

We ran our first formal annual client satisfaction surveys, securing a Net Promoter Score of 54.5 where 50+ is classed as excellent.



3%

OF PRE TAX PROFITS DONATED
TO GOOD CAUSES CHOSEN
BY TEAM SOCIAL



OUR ACHIEVEMENTS

COLLEAGUES

Financial security

30% of pre-tax profits distributed as bonuses to all members of our team

Health, wellness & safety

Health Shield (health & wellbeing services) and Xerlife (exercise and healthy eating) are now offered to all staff from day one.

We increased our paid maternity leave to 13 weeks full pay and created new policies for support for breastfeeding mothers, pregnancy loss and menopause.

We have transformed our approach to flexible working – adopting it as the new norm. All employees are encouraged to propose a working arrangement which suits their needs, with the presumption being that we will say yes unless there are compelling operational reasons.

Career development

We have formalised our onboarding process for new employees and strengthened formal and informal feedback mechanisms including an anonymous quarterly staff survey and 'Have Your Say' online form.

We introduced a transparent pay and grading system, setting out performance expectations and responsibilities at every level of the business. This makes it easier for people to understand what they need to do to move on in their career. We made 15 internal promotions (almost one-third of our team) during 2020/21.

We invested in learning and development (L&D), increasing our expenditure on it by 177 per cent, with staff spending over 1,100 hours of work time on L&D activities. These include professional qualifications and continuing professional development.

In the same way as for all our colleagues, we pay interns the Real Living Wage and gather their feedback on their experience.

Engagement and satisfaction

We have created a Staff Engagement Group to gather employee feedback about proposed operational or policy changes and we introduced quarterly staff engagement surveys including collecting employee Net Promoter Scores, which showed a consistently high score.

We updated our grievance procedure in consultation with our Staff Engagement Group, ensuring full understanding and accessibility of this further channel for staff to raise any concerns.



30%

OF PRE-TAX PROFITS
DISTRIBUTED AS BONUSES
TO THE MEMBERS
OF TEAM SOCIAL

B CORP: AREAS FOR DEVELOPMENT 2021/22

COMMUNITY

We will devise and implement an action plan to enhance our diversity and inclusion. Our longer-term aim is to achieve the [Blueprint diversity mark](#), a set of commitments developed to remove inequality and barriers to progression in the communications industry.

We will introduce a supply chain management policy to assess the environmental and social practices of our suppliers.

CUSTOMERS

We will instigate annual client satisfaction surveys to track client Net Promoter Score and introduce formal feedback/ complaint channels.

We will introduce enhanced formal quality control processes.

ENVIRONMENT

We will accurately record energy and water use and put in place action plans to reduce waste in partnership with the landlords of our offices across the UK. Our aim is to use 100 per cent renewable energy by 2023.





OUR SCORES SO FAR

The figures below show the median score for non-B Corps, alongside our marks at the end of 2019/20 and at the end of 2020/21. Our scores are not yet verified by B Corp.

GOVERNANCE



Mission and Engagement



Ethics and Transparency



Mission Locked



COLLEAGUES



Financial security



Health, Wellness and Safety



Career Development



Career Development (Salaried)



Engagement and Satisfaction



Engagement and Satisfaction (Salaried)



COMMUNITY



Diversity, Equality and Inclusion



Economic Impact



Civic Engagement and Giving



Supply Chain Management



ENVIRONMENT



Environmental Management



Air & Climate



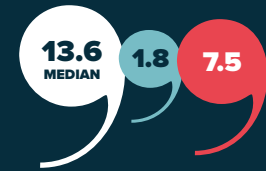
Water



Land & Life



CUSTOMERS



Customer Stewardship



Support for Underserved/ Purpose Driven Enterprises - Impact Business Model

This is a new B Corp measure reflecting support for purpose-driven businesses such as impact investing or organisations delivering public good. Social's score reflects the fact that 33% of our income arises from our work for clients considered 'purpose-driven enterprises'.



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SUSTAINABLE DEVELOPMENT GOALS

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

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

GOALS CONTRIBUTION

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

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

17 SDGS

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



PROGRESS IN 2020/21

SDG1 – NO POVERTY

Through our membership of Lend With Care we have invested £1,235 to support 71 entrepreneurs in low-income countries.

SDG 5 – GENDER EQUALITY

We have increased the number of females with line management responsibility at band 4 and above (management/ senior management level) on our pay scales.

While we did not deliver a formal action plan to address our gender pay gap, we have made good progress on a number of areas related to this. We have introduced policies to support breastfeeding mothers, people experiencing pregnancy loss and the menopause.

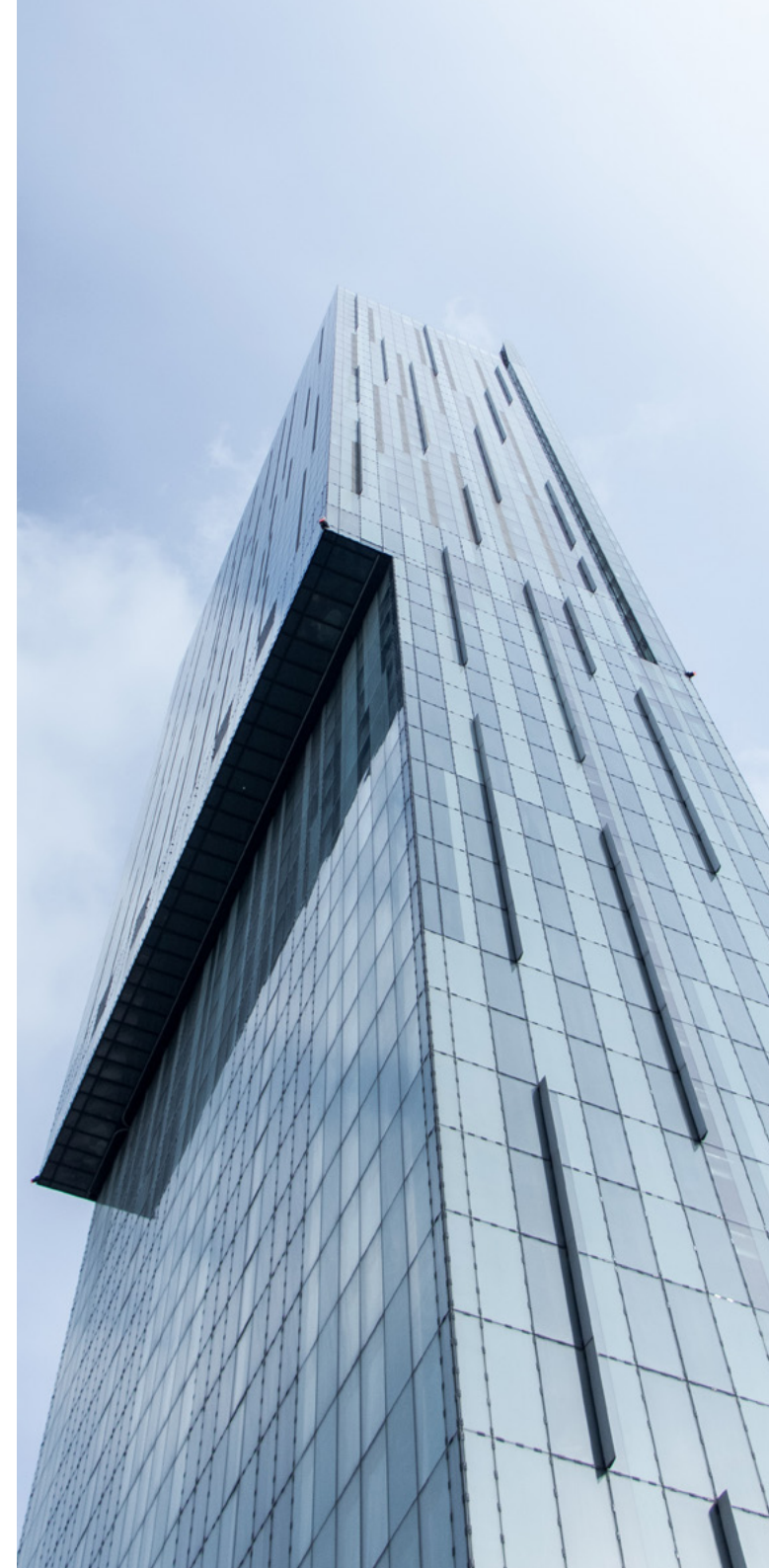
We have put in a place a transparent pay and grading scale, enabling people to clearly identify their next steps for career progression. This transparent approach enables team members to see that equal roles receive equal pay and resulted in the promotion of female members of staff to ensure alignment with their peers.

We have strengthened flexible working opportunities, supporting both women and men who have caring responsibilities.

SDG 8 – DECENT WORK AND ECONOMIC GROWTH

We created a Staff Engagement Group to improve consultation about policy and operational changes and to enhance employees' rights.

We created two new full-time, permanent roles for workers aged under 24 years.



PROGRESS IN 2020/21

SDG 11 – SUSTAINABLE CITIES AND COMMUNITIES

We successfully submitted a Knowledge Transfer Partnership application to develop an innovative digital tool for use by housing associations to support effective, representative engagement with tenants, but took the difficult decision not to progress it at this time due to financial viability.

We contributed to sustainable cities and communities through the work of our business units including designing, developing and managing Unlock Net Zero, a knowledge portal set up by Ocean Media Group to support and guide organisations in the housing and built environment sector on their transition to net zero. We have also supported a number of towns to develop and implement improvement plans, including on the government's Towns Fund scheme.

SDG 13 – CLIMATE ACTION

We successfully launched a dedicated business unit supporting organisations to establish and communicate their net zero ambitions and achievements.

Our commitment to accurately record energy and water usage and work towards reducing our consumption was delayed by the impact of the global pandemic, but it remains an ambition for next year.



PRIORITIES FOR 2021/22

SDG 1 – NO POVERTY

We will continue to support entrepreneurs in low-income countries through our membership of Lend With Care.

SDG 5 – GENDER EQUALITY

We will deliver an action plan to address our gender pay gap, with specific targets ensuring equal pay for work of equal value and remediating pay inequalities.

We will report publicly on our gender ratio and ratio of basic salary by employee level and gender.

We will launch an enhanced learning and development programme, enabling all colleagues to progress in their careers in Social.

SDG 8 – DECENT WORK AND ECONOMIC GROWTH

We will secure external certification recognising our positive and supportive working environment.

We will create additional opportunities for workers aged under 24 years, including permanent roles, living-wage-paid internships and work experience.

We will introduce a supply chain management process incorporating an assessment of environmental and social factors.

SDG 10 – REDUCED INEQUALITIES

We will devise and implement an equality, diversity and inclusion action plan and will work toward the Blueprint mark, a set of commitments developed to remove inequality and barriers to progression in the communications industry.

We will develop proposals for the Social Academy, offering training and development opportunities to help us unlock the potential of those groups traditionally under-represented in our profession.

SDG 11 – SUSTAINABLE CITIES AND COMMUNITIES

We will continue to use our professional skills to advocate for policies which contribute to sustainable cities and communities.

SDG 13 – CLIMATE ACTION

We will implement accurate recording of our energy and water usage across our offices and introduce quantifiable energy and water efficiency and waste reduction programmes.



IN CONCLUSION

While we have not yet secured B Corp certification, we are confident that our business is 'B Corp ready'. It has taken a lot of investment of time and resource to make those changes but we are confident that this has made us a stronger business. We continue to strive to improve our existing (non-verified) B Corp scores.

This puts us in a good position to maximise, track and share our social impact. It has also helped instil a culture of challenge and learning in Social, where across the business we have a strong sense that making a positive social impact is not a destination, but a journey, and one that we are proud to pursue.



Social
Integrated Agency

Bristol | Leeds | Liverpool | London | Manchester
www.social.co.uk