

B Corp Impact Report 2025

Together we make progressive places





We're investing in our people and the next generation to make architecture a force for good.

Over the past year, we have dedicated ourselves to refining and enhancing our people-focused initiatives. We are proud to be recognized for these efforts, including Investors in People Gold, a spot on the Sunday Times Best Places to Work list, a listing on the Regenerative Design Index for being a 'Good Ancestor' and a nomination for Employer of the Year in the Architects Journal's AJ100 awards.

2025 is our B Corp recertification year, but we are already looking ahead to 2028 establishing ambitious new targets within our two-year business plan. These goals are designed to drive continued progress in our social and environmental performance, while enhancing accountability and transparency.

Governance



Andy Rainford
Managing Director

June 2024 signalled the end of our 2022-24 business plan, the results of which were announced to our entire team at our End of Year Presentation. We reviewed and analysed our performance and celebrated our successes. This included making significant strides in our corporate governance, having become a B Corp and gained ISO 14001 accreditation in the period.

We also launched our new 2024-26 Business Plan at the presentation, with ambitious new goals set within our People, Projects and Performance Strategies. These will ensure we continue to lead from the front in meeting the highest standards of social and environmental performance, accountability and transparency.

Focusing on improvements in legislative compliance, we recently introduced mandatory training for all staff on anti-bribery, modern slavery, sexual harassment and harassment and bullying.

We also revised our procedures and up-skilled our team to ensure we're addressing the requirements of the Building Safety Act. This included forming a BSA working group, with four members of the team being successfully accredited on the RIBA Principal Designer Register.

Whilst our last financial year saw record turnover for the business, inflationary pay rises totalling 19.8% over the last 3 years, a new performance related bonus structure for our people and rising costs and market pressures, meant that profitability was reduced.

Despite ongoing challenges, we remain confident and committed to doing business in the right way. To this end, we are aiming to maintain our current accreditations and have set new targets for charitable giving as a percentage of company profit and the number of social value hours each member of staff is to achieve per annum.

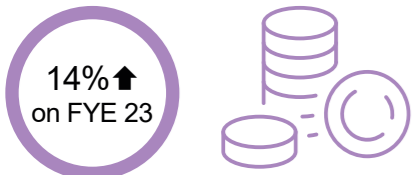


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Our approach in numbers

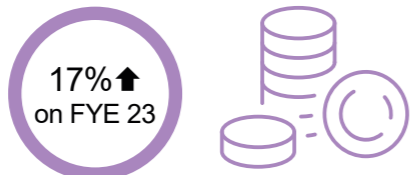
£8,714,130

Turnover FYE 24



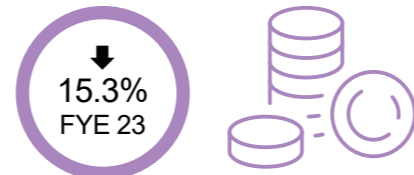
£8,118,879

Net Turnover FYE 24



12%

Net Profit FYE 24



↑ 1 place, 99th in
the Architect Journal's

AJ100



£0

Borrowings



4

new mandatory online training modules
for all staff on Anti-Bribery, Modern Slavery,
Sexual Harassment and Harassment & Bullying

Shortlisted for
Architectural
Practice of the Year
at the Insider NW
Awards for the 5th
consecutive year



Maintained
ISO9001
& ISO14001

This guides our approach governance approach



4

of our team joined the RIBA
Principal Designer Register
in response to the Building
Safety Act



Princess Court, Manchester - A High Risk Building (HRB) we have transformed the safety, aesthetics and sustainability of.



Our approach in action

Croydon Drive, Newton Heath, Manchester



The Croydon Drive Estate in Newton Heath, Manchester is a PAS2035 compliant retrofit project which is seeing us act as both Architect and Retrofit Designer. It is our largest Retrofit project to date.

We were appointed by Main Contractor Casey to help develop proposals for the refurbishment of the estate for Manchester City Council and Tenant Management Organisation Avro Hollows.

The aspiration was to transform the site into a 21st Century model social housing estate through extensive refurbishment works. Our work therefore needed to focus on improving energy efficiency and the overall aesthetics of the blocks, as well as addressing other issues identified by residents.

Our final design proposes a PAS2035 compliant Retrofit of each block under the Social Housing Decarbonisation Fund (SHDF) route to dramatically improve their energy efficiency and safety.

Our proposals adopt a contemporary aesthetic which will collectively create a unique identity for the neighbourhood. The design concept links with the sites historic references to plane manufacture and aviation during world war one.

As the estate includes Higher-Risk Buildings, as defined by the Building Safety Act (BSA), the project saw us submit our first Gateway 2 submission under the BSA with support from our BSA Working Group.





Karey Wardhaugh
Head of People



As a people first business, our team have remained a core focus of our work as a B Corp this year. We've been reinforcing our processes and procedures and reviewing and improving our benefits. This has seen positive results both in terms of feedback from our team and through external awards and accreditations.

Coaching Culture places an emphasis on regular "conversations" as opposed to one-off annual reviews. The platform also offers 'Mindset Module' training which is supporting and empowering our team by building confidence, resilience and helping tackle issues such as imposter syndrome and fear of failure. Centred on the principles of understanding mindset and behaviours, through the platform we are supporting our people's long-term development, performance and wellbeing.

Pinnacle meanwhile provides easily accessible industry-leading training for our team as well as a platform for us to host our own training.

Building on last year, and our achievement of Investors in Wellbeing Gold, our positive steps as outlined above, saw us also achieve a Gold accreditation for Investors in People in 2024.

One key area of improvement has been in our financial wellbeing offer. We have transferred to a new pension provider which has not only resulted in lower fees for our team, we are also able to offer confidential one-to-one financial planning meetings for every member of staff along with the freedom to prioritise the ESG performance of their investments.

We also saw continuous improvement in our learning and development offer. This saw the introduction of a new coaching led review process and associated online platform - Coaching Culture - and a new on-demand online training platform - Pinnacle.

Our approach in numbers

People statistics FYE 24



Transferred to a new pension provider. Unlocking lower fees and 1-2-1 financial advice for staff



2%
Inflationary salary increase & transparent salary benchmarking



Launched our peer-to-peer Recognition Awards process with:

218
nominations received within the year



Annual People Survey FYE 24
How likely are you to recommend AEW as a good place to work? We received an NPS score of:

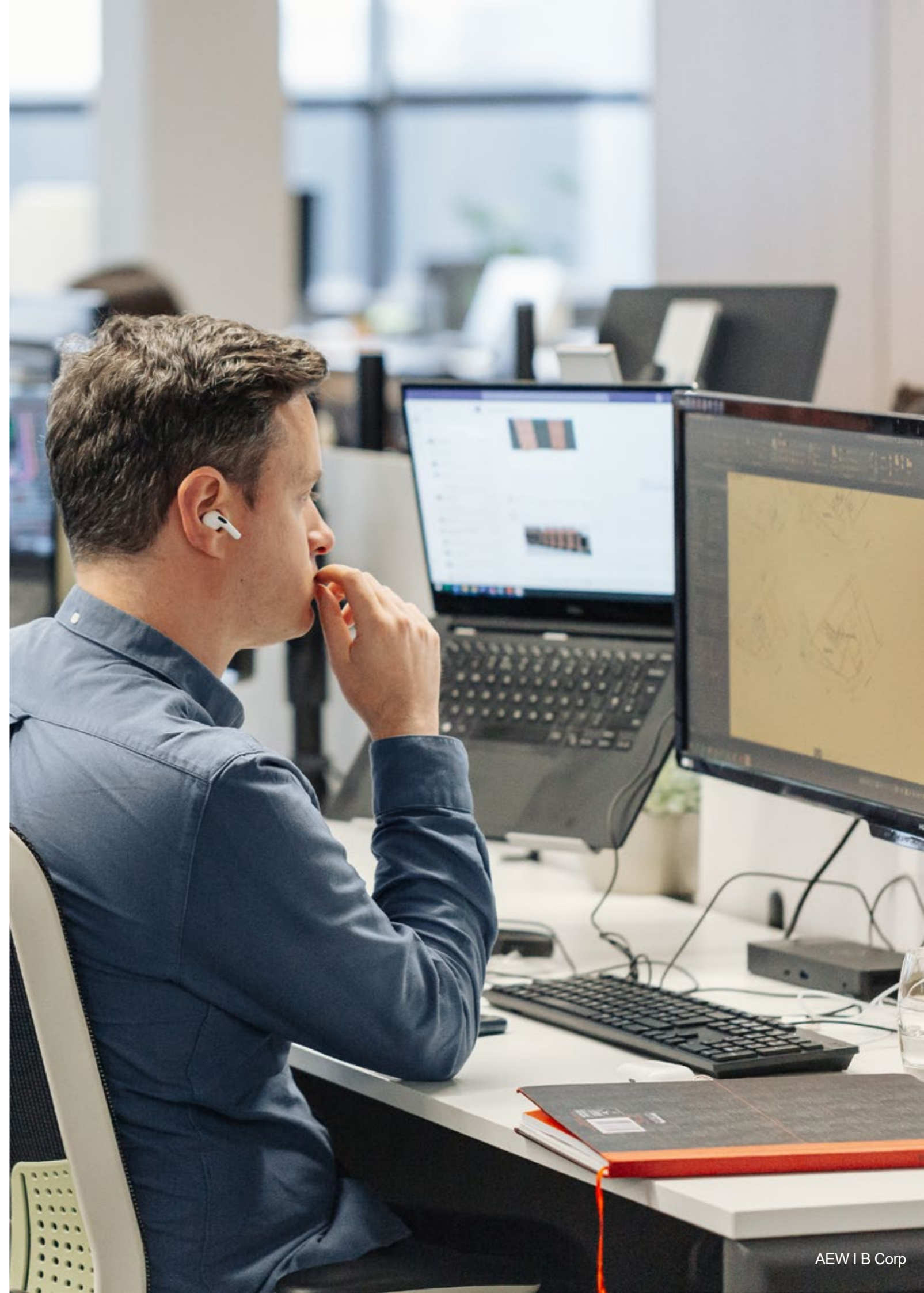

78

Investors in People & Investors in Wellbeing

GOLD



Named in the Sunday Times Best Places to Work 2024



Our approach in action

The AJ100 Awards where we were a finalist in the Employer of the Year category

Sunday Times Best Places to Work & AJ100 Employer of the Year



For the second consecutive year, we were named in The Sunday Times Best Places to Work list, and were Highly Commended in the Best Places To Work For LGBTQIA+ Spotlight Awards.

The nationwide workplace survey, honours and celebrates Britain's top employers and acknowledges the best workplaces in the UK. In addition to the main list, the Spotlight Awards recognise organisations that excel in boosting staff happiness within specific areas and demographic groups. We were commended for our 90% engagement rate from LGBTQIA+ survey respondents, our dedicated Equality, Diversity and Inclusion Committee and our team of Mental Health First Aiders.

After once again being named on the Architects Journal's AJ100 - a list of the largest architectural practices in the UK - we were delighted to be named as one of six finalists in the AJ100 Employer of the Year Awards.

The coveted category recognises employer best practice in relation to employment issues such as training, workplace culture, diversity, inclusion, and staff wellbeing and satisfaction. Despite not winning, we were proud to be the only Manchester-headquartered practice in the running, up against some huge practices and previous winners.

The accolades underscore our relentless commitment to excellence and innovation in our people offer.





Alex Southall
Director

2024 saw us maintain our focus on supporting the communities we work with and in, including a concerted effort to better embed equality, diversity and inclusion (EDI) throughout our day-to-day operations and our community and social value initiatives.

Our EDI Committee has gone from strength to strength this year, with a record number of events, workshops and campaigns to raise awareness and understanding of issues such as accessibility in building design and non-binary visibility. Our approach is seeing positive results, with three new female Architects mentored through to their professional qualification and two female Architects promoted to our Management Team in the year.

We have also continued our commitment to fundraising and volunteering, including several events to raise money for our long-term charity partner Ronald McDonald House Charities (RMHC).

Other events have included our annual pilgrimage to the Lakes for the Cumbrian Challenge in aid of Walking with the Wounded, clothing and food collections for homeless charity Lifeshare, a bake off for McMillan Cancer Support and Movember in aid of men's health issues.

Our corporate volunteering days have also continued to be popular, with our team giving up their time to undertake activities ranging from woodland management and bulb planting to spending the day cleaning for RMHC.

From a project perspective, we have completed our design work for the refurbishment of the Alderhey House for RMHC, and have also seen our homeless accommodation project, Embassy Village, start on site.



Our approach in numbers

870
social value
hours recorded



Donated nearly
100
hours of our time
for volunteering



15 of our
team took on
the Cumbrian
Challenge for
Walking with
the Wounded

£26,000+
Combined fundraising
from our staff and
company for charity



DEC Partnership with Ashton-on-Mersey School 23/24

372 
Learner
Interactions

170 
Learning
Hours

62 
Volunteer
Hours

2 
Teachers
Trained

12 
DEC
Awards



Rob Foster was
named "DEC
Champion" in the
Teaching Awards for
his work at Ashton-on-
Mersey School



14
work experience
students supported

Our team at the, EDI Committee organised, dragon making day for Chinese New Year



Our approach in action

Embassy Village, Manchester



Embassy Village is a pioneering new community of 40 homes for the homeless in Manchester city centre. Located within disused railway arches between the Bridgewater Canal and the River Irwell, it will provide short-to-medium-term accommodation for up to 40 homeless men located around a community-focused village hall, communal outdoor green spaces, mini allotment plots, and a multi-use sports area.

The project is the idea of developer and landowner Peel Waters and will be run by Embassy, a Greater Manchester-based charity that helps people break the cycle of homelessness. Their aim is to reintegrate people back into society by helping them find work and a home.

Embassy Village will give residents a live practice experience of managing their own home in a supported environment, with the close support and guidance of Embassy's skilled resettlement team.

We are proud to be the project Architect for the scheme, building on the work done by other local supporters to date, and throughout 2025 we will be overseeing the design and delivery of the scheme.

In November 2024, we were delighted to join other local supporters for the project's ground breaking ceremony to mark the official start of construction.



AEW's team at the ground-breaking alongside Sid Williams, founder of the Embassy Charity



Peter Bartley
Head of Sustainability

In 2024, we've made progress decoupling our financial performance from our direct carbon emissions. Following a post covid bounce, we are now seeing net emissions fall and need to maintain this year-on-year rate of reduction to hit our 2030 goal of halving our emissions against a 2019 baseline.

Maintaining project performance has been a challenge this year, with uncertainties around funding and investment, in some cases ambition has had to be balanced against affordability. We still have several pioneer projects which align with best practice and we are making headway in uplifting minimum standards across all projects through our projects Environmental Management System (EMS).

In terms of our wider engagement with the industry, the UK Net Zero Carbon Building Standard pilot was launched - which we sat on the Storage and Distribution working group for - and we were proud to be listed within Architecture Today's inaugural Regenerative Design Index.

Both of these initiatives offer opportunities for us to develop over the next year. We will be overhauling the performance standards in our projects EMS to align with the UK Net Zero Carbon Building Standards and will be benefiting from shared best practice within the Regenerative Design Index. Both will allow us to continue to challenge the practice to deliver on our belief in Architecture as a force for good.




Our approach in numbers

passivhaus homes

593

 245
in technical design

 24
under construction

affordable home retrofits in design



115,000 sq ft commercial development



aligned with the UK Net Zero Carbon Building Standard in design



57%

of workload improving existing buildings



200,000 sq ft



BREEAM outstanding development in design

100%

of office electricity from good quality green tariffs from September 2024



5

Sustainability client engagement sessions



Our approach in action

Fletcher Street, Stockport



Fletcher Street is seeing us transform a vacant site into a sustainable new community of high-quality homes.

Our focus is on delivering age-friendly, contextually appropriate accommodation. Throughout the design process, we have drawn on guidance from Stockport Town Centre: Residential Design Guide and Creating Age-Friendly Developments by the Greater Manchester Housing, Planning, and Ageing Group.

Our design proposes a residential-led development of 245 high-quality, new homes. The development's diverse housing mix includes 12 townhouses and 233 apartments with residents able to choose from a range of one-, two-, and three-bedroom properties.

Additionally, 10% of the apartments are designed to M4(3) wheelchair-adaptable standards, and the surrounding public realm has been carefully planned to ensure accessibility, making the development as inclusive as possible.

Sustainability is at the heart of the design, which aligns with the 'Passivhaus Institute Low Energy Standard'. Key measures include orientating the buildings to maximise passive solar gain, incorporating natural ventilation to reduce reliance on mechanical systems, integrating solar PV panels on south-facing roofs, and enhancing landscaping across the site. The latter includes a shared rooftop allotment.



Customers



Danielle Purves
Director

Ensuring client satisfaction has remained a key focus for us over the past year, and to this end we've sought to reinforce and develop the tools we use to manage and monitor our client relationships.

We have maintained our robust client feedback processes and, as in previous years, issued our 'Annual Client Survey' to representatives from all companies invoiced throughout the year. This was supplemented by our 'Client Listening Interviews' which comprised one-to-one discussions with some of our key clients to gather further detail and intelligence on our performance.

Feedback was reviewed, results analysed and trends identified. We saw a marked increase in both response rates and our feedback score. The analysis was subsequently presented back to the whole team at our End of Year Presentation to drive continuous improvement.

We also maintained our commitment to our 'Key Client Management Process' which saw continued mentoring for our Management Team. This has gone hand in hand with the launch of our new 'Team Plans' which are produced by individual Associate Director-led teams to guide client management, sector understanding, business development and marketing activities.

This year also saw us launch our Knowledge Share Sessions, which comprise a menu of industry training sessions available to our clients and led by our sector and service experts. Topics range from the 'UK BIM Framework' to 'Demystifying Passivhaus' to 'Sharing our B Corp Experience'.

Finally, we completed the first draft of our new Client Welcome email, which is the first step in our new and enhanced 'Customer Journey' process.



Our approach in numbers

Maintained ISO9001 for our QMS

This guides our approach to client satisfaction.



Renewed our Cyber Essentials Accreditation to ensure the safety of our client's information



Annual Client Survey FY24

36%

Response rate from 152 recipients

In 4 out of the 5 questions, we were rated:

“Exceptional”

Across all questions, achieved an NPS score of **76**



£1,375

donated to RMHC from completed client surveys

“Always a pleasure to work with on projects, irrespective of who we're dealing with, and always available to help meet client's needs...”

Alex Andrews, CBRE



Client Listening Programme FY24

18

Interviews undertaken

“Exceptional”

NPS score when asked if the interviewees would recommend us



Our approach in action

McDonald's Supply Chain & Development Conference



For the past 28 years, we've worked closely with McDonald Restaurants UK, on a programme of reimage and new build restaurant projects nationwide, delivering in excess of 8,500 commissions to date.

They discussed issues ranging from collaboration and sustainability to resilience and change, and explored how the company's supply chain can come together to realise positive outcomes for all.

As a long-standing supplier, in January 2024, we were privileged to be invited to attend and speak on the panel at their first ever Supply Chain & Development Conference in London.

The event culminated in a gala dinner where Danielle was recognised with an Outstanding Achievement Award for her commitment to the company.

AEW Director, Danielle Purves, joined the panel alongside Lee Keeling, Mark O'Connor, Dr Steve Norris and Gareth Hudson.

Danielle said: *"Having worked with McDonald's for nearly 20 years, it was a privilege to join the panel for such a landmark event, and receiving an Outstanding Achievement Award just topped off the night!"*



Our Next Steps for Continuous Improvement

New 2024-2026 Business Plan Targets

2%
Charitable giving to be at least 2% of company profit



7.5
Hours of social value activity to be achieved per person



Establish growth and development plans for all roles

AI
Policy to be developed to protect workers and customers



Increase
ambition for year on year carbon reductions



Undertake a review of our family friendly policies





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