

# Building Purposeful Businesses

## IMPACT REPORT

July 2022 - June 2023

Pulse

Certified



Corporation





A year on from our last Impact Report and we are delighted to have been re-certified as a B Corp, as well as having delivered another impactful year for our clients and staff.

Now that COVID-19 is firmly in the rear mirror, we believe that we have come out of it with a clearer sense of purpose and belief in what we do.

This is ever more important as we continue to help our clients chart their way through increasingly uncertain times. Climate change, culture wars, real wars, migration pressures and a cost-of-living crisis would be bad enough individually - but simultaneously they create immense challenges, stresses and complexities.

Our firm belief is that successful outcomes will not be achieved without collaboration and dialogue, often with people we might not always agree with. Business has a key role to play here working alongside government policy, key stakeholders and the local community to effect real and fair change.

That's why we were so pleased with the development of the MovingBeyond initiative. Together with our co-creators we hosted our second event in October 2022, bringing together over 60 leaders from business, NGOs, local government and other stakeholders to help find solutions to the Net Zero challenge and to building a sustainable future.

Our work with client organisations in fields as diverse as energy, human rights, sustainable food and education continued to create meaningful impacts while providing the chance for our own staff to develop their own learnings and skills. Away from our client work, we continue to reduce our own environmental impact through a range of measures and contribute to our local community with volunteering and donations.

Although our re-certification score has noticeably increased since we initially became a B Corp, we are very aware of the challenges we face supporting businesses looking to transition. There are still several areas where we should be able to make improvements over the coming period and we look forward to tackling those!

Central to the way Pulse works is our Purposeful Impact model. This also acts as a navigation tool to help guide you through this report. We hope you enjoy reading it!



These are the SDGs we've identified to work towards.



# B Impact Score

After a rigorous process, we re-certified as a B Corp earlier this year and were delighted to see that our overall score increased by **24.4%**!

OUR SCORE IN  
**2019**

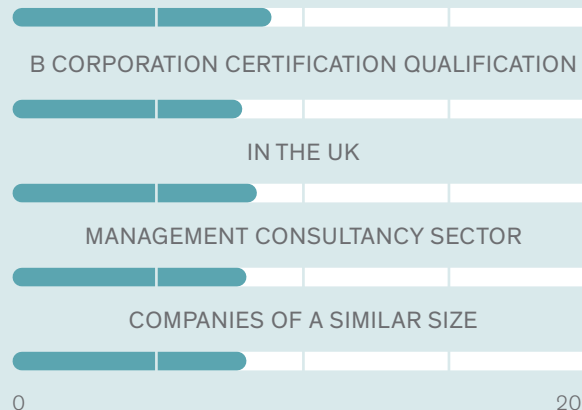
**83.2**

**24.4%**  
INCREASE

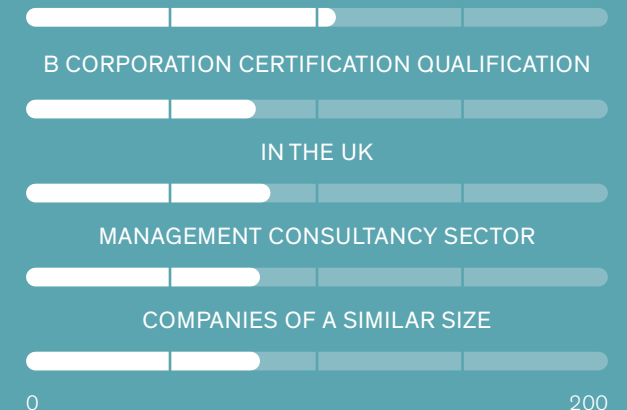
OUR SCORE IN  
**2023**

**103.5**

PULSE



PULSE



## Our score by category

Over the three years since we originally certified we have become more active in our community and increased the amount of volunteering and pro bono work we do. We have also committed to and donated 1% of our fees to charitable and good causes. On the environment, we now measure our carbon emissions and track our impact against SDGs. We have learnt more about diversity and inclusion and have introduced new practices.

With the exception of the Workers section, all of our scores increased with the Environment and Customers sections seeing the biggest rises.

As part of our assessment, B Corp scrutinised the work that we are doing for clients in controversial industries, and this has led us to review our policies and create a formal screening process.

We still have work to do and are looking forward to continuing growing and developing in a positive way, while always keeping our ways of working under review.

### GOVERNANCE

**19.5** /25

Mission & Engagement **4.5**  
Ethics & Transparency **4.9**  
Mission Locked **10**

### WORKERS

**29.0** /50

Financial Security **6.8**  
Health, Wellness, & Safety **9.0**  
Career Development **5.4**  
Engagement & Satisfaction **5.4**

### COMMUNITY

**21.4** /42

Diversity, Equity, & Inclusion **5.8**  
Economic Impact **6.4**  
Civic Engagement & Giving **6.3**

### ENVIRONMENT

**13.2** /20

Environmental Management **1.8**  
Air & Climate **4.8**  
Water **0.0**  
Land & Life **3.7**

### CUSTOMERS

**20.1** /65

Customer Stewardship **3.6**  
Support for Underserved/  
Purpose Driven Enterprises **2.2**  
Impact Improvement **14.3**



# Our impact model



# Impact

July 2022 –  
June 2023

DONATED **1%**  
OF OUR FEES

to communities and  
environmental causes

- Co-hosted a MovingBeyond event in Wales, bringing together corporates and civil society to accelerate action towards the energy transition
- Scoped out the next edition of the Pulse Purpose Report
- Continued to use our Purposeful Principles to drive client programmes



Re-certified as a B Corp,  
**INCREASING  
OUR SCORE BY  
24.5%**

- Passed our annual PRCA CMS
- Held a workshop to look at our vision, values and aspirations and drafted a blueprint for the business
- Created a screening process to review new business leads

Our staff benefitted from

**645** HOURS  
OF TRAINING &  
DEVELOPMENT

- Won the PRCA Workplace Champions Award for Positive Impact
- Introduced new mental health and money management schemes
- All staff continued to benefit from annual 360° reviews
- Held away days in London and Kent
- Hosted an intern through the Taylor Bennett Foundation







Carried out

## 499 HOURS OF PRO BONO WORK

for The Children's Literacy Charity, Soil Association and MovingBeyond

- Helped drive awareness and attendance at Iraqi Women's Community Centres for UNFPA
- Provided support to help a number of energy companies deliver Net Zero ambitions
- Created an open access legacy of scientific information for the CO2 Capture Project
- Helped raise public and sector awareness of the Queen's Anniversary Prizes for Higher and Further Education

## REDUCED OUR CARBON EMISSIONS

for 2022 by

**5%**  
TO 10.276 tCO<sub>2</sub>e

- Committed to reduce our carbon emissions by 50% by 2030 and to reach Net Zero by 2050
- Donated to 11 environmental charities on behalf of our staff
- Recycled 79% of our waste and ensured nothing went to landfill



SPENT **212** HOURS  
of our time volunteering

- Partnered with and volunteered at The Connection and Luminary Bakery
- Donated to 12× community charities and social causes on behalf of our staff
- Partnered with the Meshwar Foundation to renovate schools in Basra

# Driving Purpose

## What we're doing:

We continue to work with and challenge leadership teams on their purpose and wider role serving society. We help them to fully engage all parts of their workforce and to connect with wider society to convene change.

We continue to help build bridges between different sectors and society so that they can take decisive action and commit to operating differently.

## Why it's important:

In an increasingly uncertain world, it is now more important than ever that businesses step up and take responsibility for bringing people together and carving a way ahead. We believe that businesses – with their agility, resources and expertise – can inject real impetus to the change we need to see in the world.

## How we're doing it:

When working with our clients we are keen to uncover or build upon the deeper meaning beneath their businesses to engage their workforce and other stakeholders in getting behind their purpose and vision.

We have also co-hosted the second of our MovingBeyond initiatives which brings together leaders from sectors including investors, energy companies, government representatives and civic society to consider new ways of collaborative working to tackle the challenges of climate change and reaching Net Zero by 2035.

We continue to engage with our 12 Purposeful Leadership Principles to inspire and guide business leaders. Additionally this year we embarked upon the development of our second Pulse Purpose report, which will be published in early 2024.

## Our impact:

Through purpose-driven engagement, our client work and our work with MovingBeyond continues to drive change.



# Creating Impact for Our Clients



## What we're doing:

We create bespoke programmes for each of our clients to help them meet their very specific challenges. This means listening carefully to what the operational objectives of the business are, understanding the challenges and issues that exist and developing appropriate solutions.

Sometimes we will come in at a very early stage, helping to uncover purpose and formulate strategies, while other times we will work within existing structures and processes.

In all cases we pay attention to helping leaders lead and engage more effectively with their workforce and the key stakeholders that shape the success of their business.

## Why it's important:

An outside perspective is often critical to help organisations identify where they need to focus and provide some of the skills and resources to carry out the work. We provide clients with fresh thinking based on our understanding of purposeful leadership, where and how cultures can get stuck and develop effective communications and engagement programmes.

## How we're doing it:

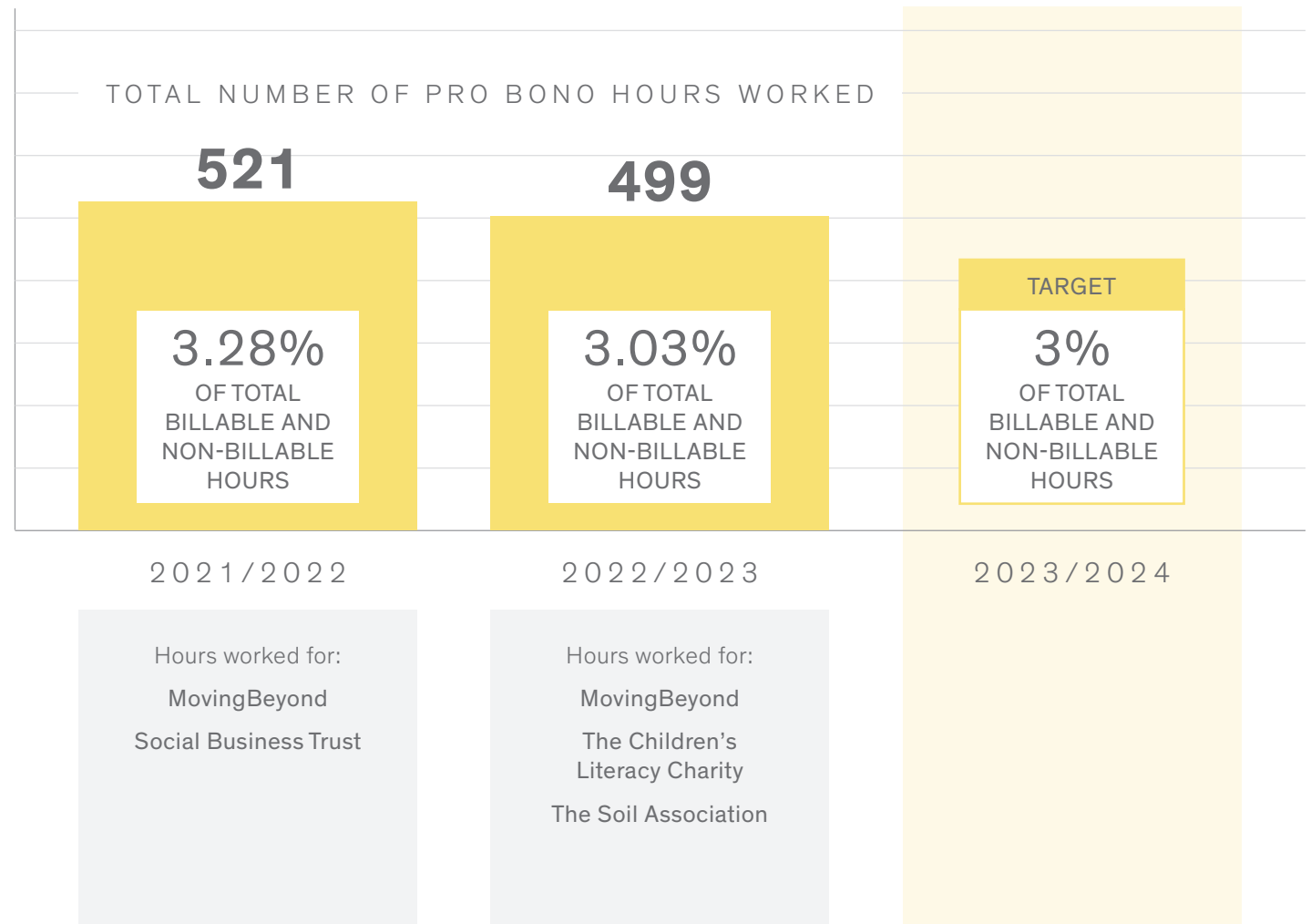
Our best work comes when there is a truly collaborative relationship with our clients. When this happens, mutual respect helps us to co-create with clients more effective ways to lead and communicate.

We are lucky to have a talented group of strategists, writers and designers within our ranks, drawn from varied professional, cultural and international backgrounds. Our offer is truly integrated across these disciplines and each client is given the type of support required, dependent on the specific challenges faced.

## Our impact:

In helping to build purposeful businesses, we have co-created a series of impactful projects for our clients. These have included:

- Increasing awareness and use among Iraqi women of a network of help centres across Iraq through development of a new visual identity and collateral (UNFPA)
- Opening up free access to insights and resources about carbon capture and storage generated by a 20-year international climate change R&D programme (CO2 Capture Project)
- Supporting a leading UK nature charity drive revenues through corporate partnerships (Soil Association)
- Using social media to raise awareness and encourage entries for a UK educational awards scheme (Queen's Anniversary Prizes)
- Helping a leading international energy company pursue its commitment to the energy transition through its operational businesses (bp)
- Supporting the building of energy capacity in Angola with the development of identities for two new businesses (Azule, Solenova)
- Improving workforce safety by embedding safety leadership principles at a major Iraqi oilfield (Rumaila)
- Carried out 499 hours of pro bono work for The Children's Literacy Charity, Soil Association and MovingBeyond





# Protecting our Environment



## What we're doing:

Since we became a B Corp in 2019, we recognised that we needed to focus our attention on measuring and reducing our environmental footprint. In 2019 we scored a modest 9 in the B Corp certification, but by 2023 we had increased our score to 13.2 out of 20, reflecting an important shift in understanding and implementation.

Even though – as a small, service-based organisation – our actual impact on the environment is relatively small, we understand that small changes can still make a difference. We have therefore been looking at ways in which we can increase our understanding of potential impacts, make positive changes and track our progress. We've taken steps to: measure our emissions; reduce, re-use and recycle our waste; donate to environmental charities; and carry out environmental volunteering.

## Why it's important:

We know that we are experiencing a climate crisis and that we must take action to mitigate the impact of global warming. In 2018, the Intergovernmental Panel on Climate Change warned that global temperatures must not exceed 1.5°C to avoid the catastrophic impacts of climate change.

To achieve this, GHG emissions must halve by 2030 and drop to Net Zero by 2050. We believe that every business must transform – whether they are large or small – and this is why we have signed up to the Science-Based Targets and the SME Climate Hub.

## How we're doing it:

In 2020 we started measuring our emissions and we now have three years' worth of information. Each year, we have increased the breadth of our measurements. We have decided to use our 2022 data as the benchmark year from which to reduce our emissions by half by 2030.

We've also been much more rigorous with our recycling and our current recycling rate, as provided by First Mile, is 79%.

We spent a morning carrying out a beach clean in Kent during our 2022 away days. Furthermore, each member of staff selected an environmental charity to which we donated £100 on their behalf.

And finally, we offset the emissions that we haven't been able to reduce with Ecologi, by funding the planting of 500 trees and the avoidance of 11 tCO<sub>2</sub>e.

## Our impact:

We recognise that our impact may be small. But, our increased awareness leads to better habits, not only within our company but also in our personal lives. By keeping this issue front of mind, we will continue to reduce our impact and encourage others to do so too.

## RECYCLING RATE\*

JULY 2021/JUNE 2022

**78%**

ACTUAL 2022/2023

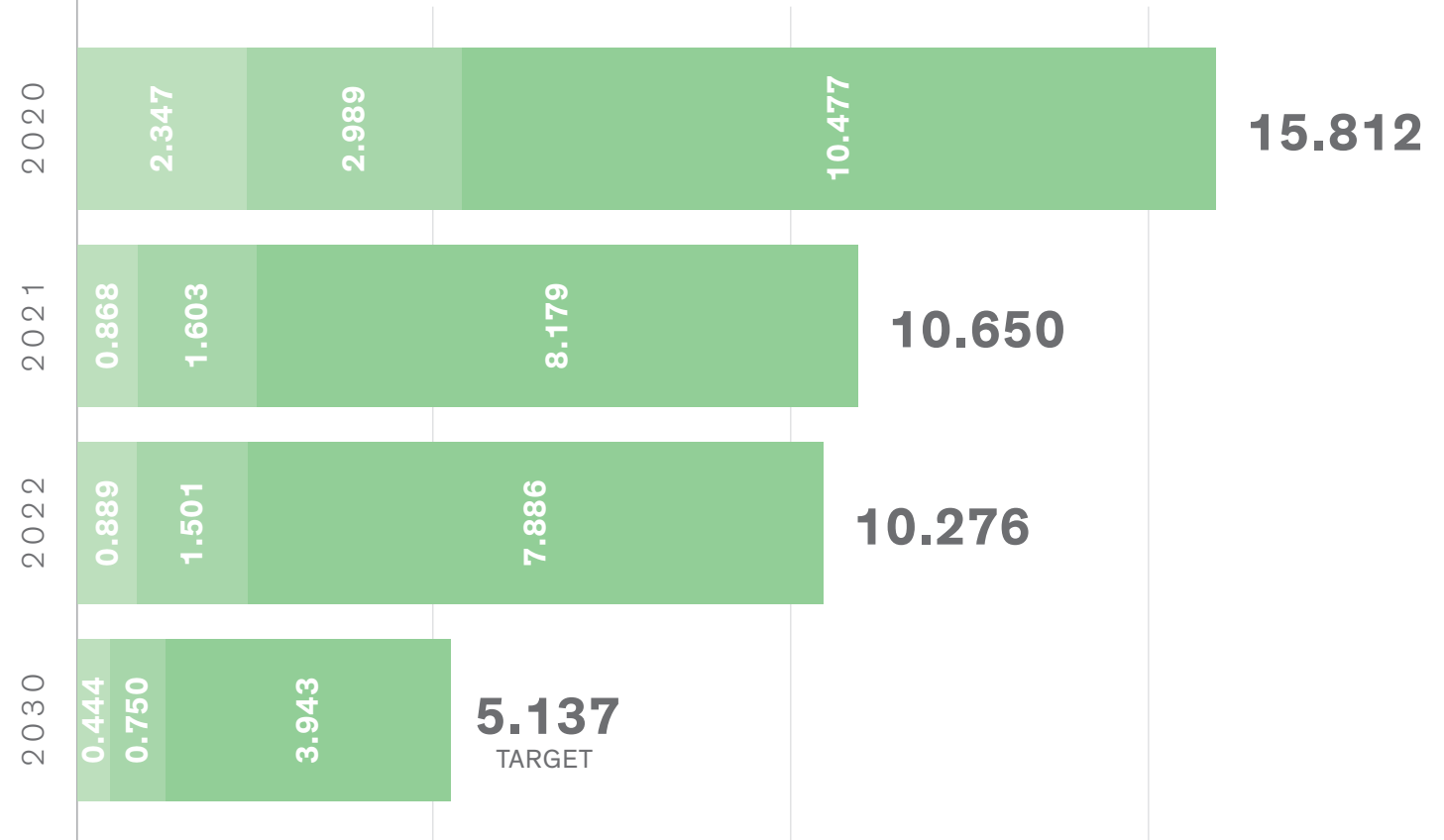
**79%**

TARGET 2023/2024

**85%**

\*As calculated by The First Mile based on purchase data, schedule info and average weight calculations

## TOTAL CARBON EMISSIONS\*\* (in tonnes of carbon dioxide equivalent (tco2e))



\*\*As calculated by  
compareyourfootprint.com

SCOPE 1 SCOPE 2 SCOPE 3



# Ensuring We Are a Sustainable Business



## What we're doing:

For us, a sustainable business is one that is fit for the future – purposeful, professional, profitable, with good governance in place and an attractive place to work.

Over the last 20 years we have strived to improve all aspects of our operation to ensure this aim continues to be met.

## Why it's important:

The working world has changed a lot since we were founded and this impacts Pulse both in our workplace, and in how we work with our clients.

With this in mind, Pulse continues to evolve and improve as a business, by changing our ways of working, adapting to new norms and trying to keep one step ahead.

## How we're doing it:

All Pulse staff are encouraged to contribute and lead initiatives to improve the running of the business. To enable this, we hold weekly staff meetings, annual staff feedback sessions and quarterly management meetings to review all aspects of the business. Financial and productivity performance is shared on a monthly basis with the management team and a business plan is prepared and shared at the start of each year.

Annual, 6-monthly appraisals and regular salary reviews ensure all staff understand their progress and are appropriately rewarded.

Pulse is a member of a number of professional organisations – B Corp, PRCA and the UN Global Compact – which provide guidance, training and access to peer networks. This helps us keep abreast of industry trends and regular review/recertification processes ensure we continue to operate to the highest standard.

All client programmes are designed to align with business objectives and progress is reviewed by the management team. Frequent contact with our clients at senior level also ensures that feedback can be taken of overall and individual team performance.

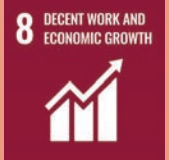
## Our impact:

Feedback from staff indicates that Pulse continues to be an outstanding place to work. This has been recognised by the winning of the PRCA Workplace Champions Award in 2023.

As we enter our 22nd year of operation, Pulse continues to grow and maintains its profitability.



# Encouraging Our People to Thrive



## What we're doing:

We have implemented a comprehensive programme of team and individual training, creating a culture of continuous learning that values growth and collaboration. This year, we have been focusing on mental health and wellbeing, providing third-party support services and internal initiatives.

We also ensured that everyone has a voice in their own development and that of the company through annual reviews, workshops and peer group reviews.

## Why it's important:

We want each and every member of our team to enjoy their work, to grow and develop professionally and to feel that what they do matters. Creating a positive work environment is crucial for their wellbeing and success and a thriving team contributes to a thriving business, allowing us to make a greater positive impact on the world around us.

## How we're doing it:

### Training and Development

We encourage everyone to take up external and internal training opportunities, at a company and personal level. For example, we encourage everyone to dedicate time to their learning edge, where they can explore their own personal interests or passions. We have also held internal workshops on the Future of Pulse, being a B Corp and the theme of Courage, as well as two away day events for team bonding and learning new skills.

### Wellbeing

This year, we introduced our staff to The Circle Line – which provides resources and therapy for mental health and wellbeing – and to Octopus Money – to help with their financial planning. Our staff attended mindfulness sessions and monthly in-office massages. We also provide Vitality Health Insurance to support our staff's physical and mental health.

## Our impact:

Our people are at the heart of our work and how we develop as a company. Nurturing a happy and healthy team not only benefits them individually but also positively impacts the work we do for our clients. Perhaps the best marker of our culture is that half of our staff have been with us for over five years and some for over ten.

A photograph of a man and a woman sitting at a table, looking at documents. The man is on the left, wearing glasses and a light-colored shirt. The woman is on the right, wearing glasses and a denim jacket. They are in a bright, modern office setting with a large plant in the background.

**645**

TRAINING AND  
DEVELOPMENT HOURS

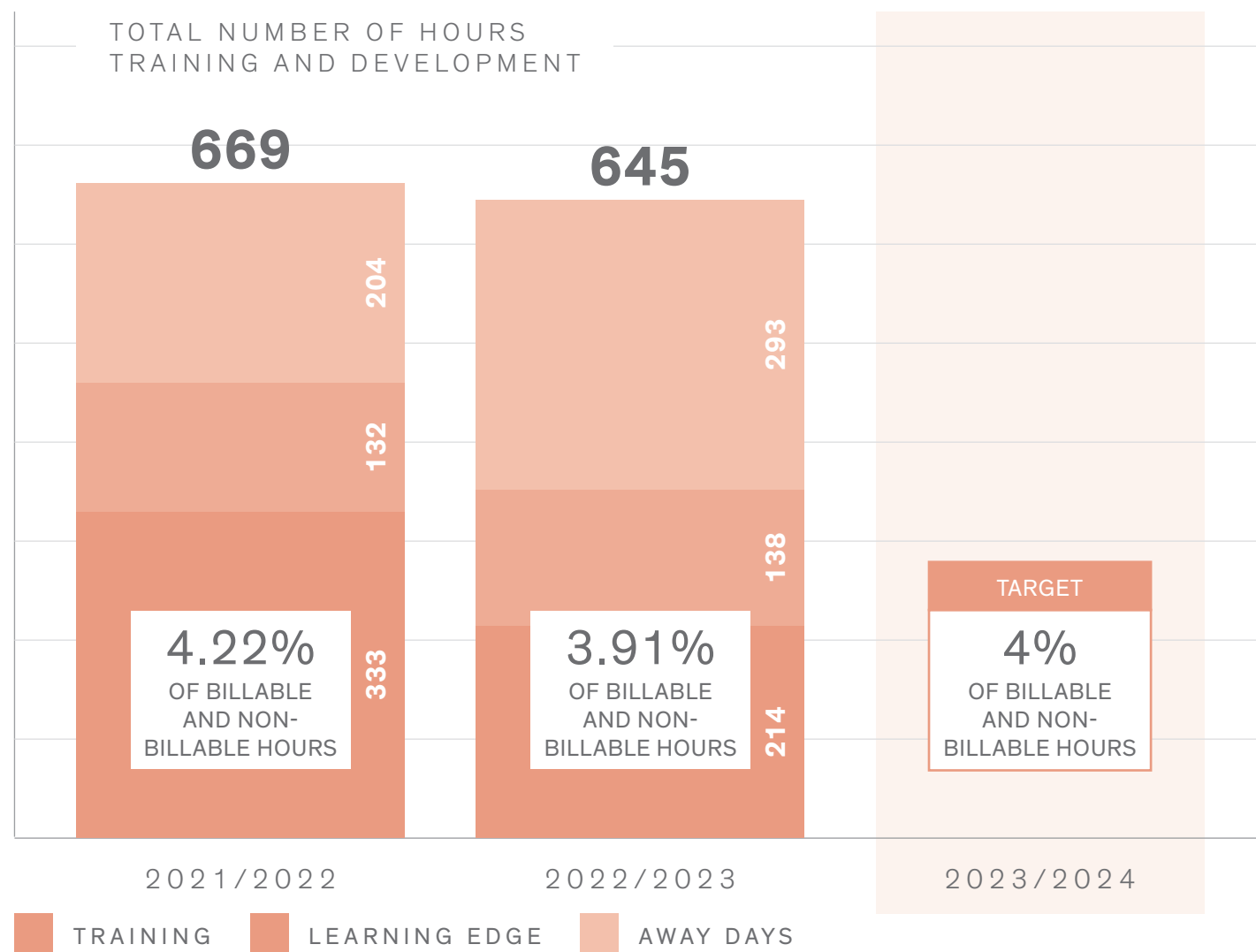
**3.91%**

OF BILLABLE AND  
NON-BILLABLE HOURS

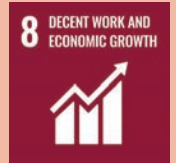


“ Helping to run our workshop exploring ‘courage’ was an enjoyable and challenging experience. It was a relaxed and supportive environment that gave me confidence to share my thinking and lead activities that I hadn’t before. It was also an opportunity to spend time listening more deeply to my colleagues. I recognise how this has helped build trust between team members and improved our collaboration, ultimately enhancing the work we create together. ”

- Emily



# Supporting Our Community



## What we're doing:

At the heart of Pulse is an understanding that the work we do does not exist in vacuum and that we have a duty to support the community around us. As a result, we commit to give our time, money and resources to local causes that support the most vulnerable in society. Last year, we focused our attention on two charities: Luminary Bakery and The Connection.

We have also recently partnered with the Meshwar Foundation – an Iraq-based charity that helps to renovate schools in and around Basra – to support the renovation of their first primary school and also to provide design support for their communications materials.

## Why it's important:

We believe that business should play a vital role in delivering meaningful change through its influence and resources. In our view, that commitment begins at our own doorstep. We also believe that supporting our community provides opportunities for our staff to give something back and have new experiences outside of normal working life. This gives staff a more vivid understanding of the work charities do day-to-day as well as an opportunity to form relationships with people in our community.

## How we're doing it:

We continued to provide the opportunity for Pulse staff to offer their support at our linked charities through volunteering on a regular basis.

We also continued our commitment to pledge at least 1% of our fee income to charitable causes. With the exception of 2020, we have achieved our target each year since 2019. Having increased our charitable donations significantly this year, we expect to exceed our target in 2023.

We also give an opportunity every year for each of our staff members to nominate a community charity for Pulse to donate to on their behalf. We have a diverse workforce, all bringing different lived experiences with different perspectives and interests. By giving staff the opportunity to nominate their own charities – those that they feel they have a particular connection to – we give staff a meaningful say in the charities Pulse supports.

## Our impact:

In supporting our community, all of us at Pulse are able to gain a deeper understanding of the people and environment around us.

Our partner charities benefitted from the financial donations as well as voluntary support to help them deliver services to their own clients.

## DONATIONS TO CHARITABLE CAUSES

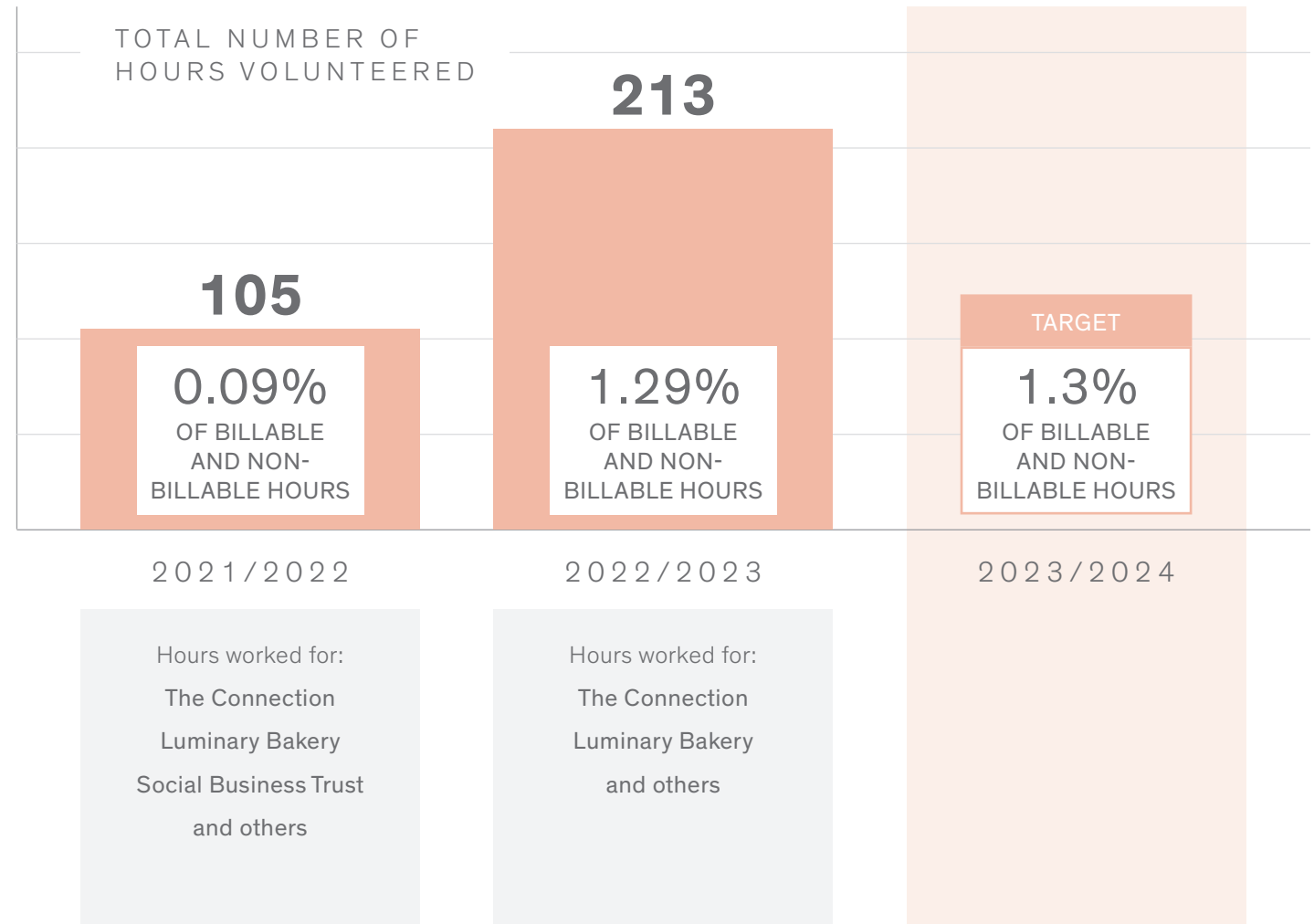
2019	2020	2021	2022
£10,850 TARGET MET	£2,287 TARGET NOT MET	£12,320 TARGET MET	£12,500 TARGET MET





“ Human nature is built on core characteristics, ways of feeling, thinking, and acting. It is in our nature to belong and exchange with each other. Working alongside community-based charities such as The Connection and Luminary Bakery has been both fulfilling and eye opening in equal measures. It has shown what a powerful force for positive change volunteering can be and the fundamental role it plays in building more compassionate, inclusive, and supportive communities. ”

- Olivia



# Looking Ahead

Some targets and ambitions for the year ahead.



Publish next edition of  
**Pulse Purpose Report**

**Internal inclusion campaign**



Sept – Dec 2023

**Donate at least 1% of our fees to good causes**



**Reduce our carbon emissions**



by half by 2030



Spend **4.3%** of our time **volunteering** and on **pro bono work**

Spend **4%** of our time on **training and development**



Raise awareness of  
**plastic pollution**



Co-host  
**MovingBeyond**  
in Teesside

Recertify for **PRCA** and  
**UN Global Compact**





---

# Pulse

## **Pulse Brands**

1-3 Langley Court  
London  
WC2E 9JY

[pulsebrands.com](http://pulsebrands.com)

Certified



Corporation

