



OUR PURPOSE **TO MAKE A POSITIVE DIFFERENCE TO PEOPLE'S LIVES**



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ROBSON / LAIDLER ACCOUNTANTS





Robson Laidler is a firm of accountants and business advisors with a team of almost 100 staff operating from offices in Newcastle and Chester le Street.

Our purpose is to “Make a positive difference to people’s lives”. This means a commitment to positively impact all our stakeholders - our people, our clients, the local and global community, our contacts and our suppliers.

In 2021 we became the first accredited B Corp in the North East of England. This was a huge milestone for us in gaining external global recognition for using business as a force for good and we love being part of the growing community that pursues purpose as well as profit.

We’re passionate about sharing our story and welcome working with ambitious business owners who are interested in generating a positive impact to make a better life for themselves, society and the world.

We align our annual business objectives to fit with our over-arching purpose- driven business strategy, which in turn links with the UN’s Sustainable Development Goals.

We believe that through living our purpose, as a business, underpinned by our values, that this will deliver long term sustainability for Robson Laidler. We are committed, as the current stewards of this business, to promote operating in a way that is true to our purpose of serving all our stakeholders in such a way as to create positive value and impact for them whilst preserving the longevity of our business.

We are only just getting started on this journey...

How being a B Corp has benefited our business?

- / Being a B Corp provides a framework for us to continually measure our environmental and social performance to become a more sustainable business and a tangible way to track our progress.
- / 86% of staff who responded to our B Corp engagement survey now understand what it means to be a business a force for good. We will continue to work on embedding the B Corp ethos throughout the organisation so that this becomes 100%.
- / We have witnessed clients and other external stakeholders becoming more interested in business sustainability.
- / Access to B Corp community – becoming an active member of the B Corp community has allowed us to promote responsible business, share best practice and learn from other sustainable businesses.
- / Business success – we have learnt that businesses want to work with other likeminded businesses. Being an accredited B Corp has allowed us to win work with other purpose led businesses in a collaboration to be a force for good.



I am delighted to share with you our Impact Report for the year ended 31st March 2023. This is our first Impact Report and in it, you will find the continuous improvements we seek to achieve as a business aiming to be both a “force for good” and living our purpose of “making a positive difference to people’s lives”. As I often mention, we are only at the start of our journey with B Corp acting as our guiderail to developing as a company that lives and breathes the triple bottom line of People, Planet and Profit.

We kicked off on the pathway to our B Corp certification with our people at the centre of our focus and this continues to be in point as we move forward. Post-pandemic, we have seen a shift in ways of working and individual priorities in the context of the workplace. We will look to continually address these challenges and strive to enhance the personal wellbeing of our team as we move forward. On a personal level and in the spirit of complete transparency, there is still work to do in embedding the B Corp ethos across the wider team and we will look to grow with those who share and embrace the values we hold dear.

LETTER FROM OUR MD GRAHAM PURVIS

“Our people” also includes the clients we work with. We produce the same commodity as every other accountant and tax adviser; to live our purpose we must seek to understand our clients’ purpose. This involves being curious and getting to the root of why they do what they do. Then we can match our service accordingly to provide them with the support, guidance and care to make a positive difference to their lives. Since certification we have had a volume of enquiries from businesses who share the same ideals and values who would like to work with us and that is heartening to witness. Going forward we can do better on informing and reinforcing our B Corp credentials to our wider client base and our supply chain. We have started some initiatives in this area, but we want to do business with those suppliers who share our principles and vision for a better world.

There have been so many highlights since B Corp certification but there are five which stand out for me:

1. With the positive incremental changes, we have implemented our BIA score has increased from 85.3 to 95.4. You can read more about these in the rest of this Report.
2. We were delighted to be one of the global Best for the World™ B Corps for Governance in 2022. This means we are amongst the global top 5% for businesses with 50-249 employees for achieving a top score in overall mission, ethics, accountability and transparency.
3. We investigated many means by which we could quantify and measure our social responsibilities and actions and ended up implementing our own non-financial scorecard for the business. So “success” and sharing the rewards of that “success” is not a restricted definition linked solely to financial performance. It also includes hitting metrics on our non-

financial scorecard which covers areas across governance, people, community and planet.

4. We achieved a reduction in our carbon footprint of 11%. This is a positive achievement because included in our most recent footprint measures is the moving of one of our offices to a new building in Chester-Le-Street which involved a complete fit-out of that new office combined with a complete IT refresh for the entire business. Again, lessons are learned through the process, and we will think about the circular economy principles when considering purchasing equipment in the future and the impact of that on our carbon footprint.
5. Finally, I have mentioned the fact that we need to “bang the drum” more about B Corp with some of our stakeholders but I am proud of our impact in that regard in our community. Not only did we set up our own Fund with the Durham Community Foundation to provide funds to well-deserving local organisations, but we also helped to set up the first B Social events in our region and these have proved to be popular events where we can share our stories and the impact becoming a B Corp has had on us. We have also spoke at national conferences and events to spread the message and informally acted as a sounding board to others in our community who are on or are considering the B Corp journey. It is exciting and fulfilling to be part of a growing community of like-minded businesses and individuals where there is palpable vibrancy and energy around being the change we seek.

The journey continues and over the next 12 months, we will drive improvements with the aim to increase our BIA measure on re-certification next year.

OUR B CORPORATION IMPACT SCORE

Business needs comprehensive, credible, comparable impact standards to support economic systems change.

The B Impact Assessment is a digital tool that can help measure, manage, and improve positive impact performance for environment, communities, customers, suppliers, employees and shareholders.

Not only does this report give us independent recognition of our approach to the way we operate as a business, this reporting system is now an integral part of Robson Laidler's purpose led strategy, guiding our thinking into the future.

To become a B Corp, a business must score a minimum score of 80 on the B Impact Assessment.



Governance

Accountable & transparent across the company

20.3



Workers

Ensuring diversity, inclusivity & flexibility in the workplace

32.7



Community

Sharing time & resources with our community

31.2



Environment

Making sure our impact is as little as possible

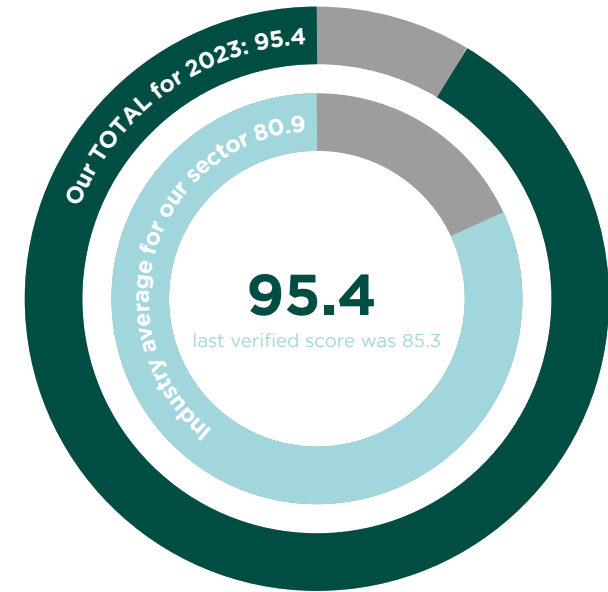
7.1



Customers

Giving our customers the best experience possible

3.8



IMPACT PLANS AND PROGRESS

Since becoming a B Corp in July 2021, we identified the following areas for potential improvement. There are more details elsewhere in this report, but the following is a quick overview:



1.

Establish mechanism for measurement of the social and environmental positive difference we can make as a business.

✓ Done



5.

Part time team members become eligible to participate in supplementary benefits offered at time of hire and entitled to full day of paid volunteering activity.

✓ Done



9.

Revise procurement process to consider climate impacts in purchasing.

✓ Done



2.

Set up working groups for “B Corp Impact”, “Community”; “Climate”; “DE&I” to set out annual strategies and targets (some mentioned below).

✓ Done



6.

The proportion of team member work time to donated as volunteering, community service or pro bono work to be increased by 18%.

In progress



10.

To report annually on the positive impact made through specific measurable goals.

✓ Done



3.

Become a Real Living Wage employer.

✓ Done



7.

Reduce waste production and implement proper recycling process for the offices with set reduction targets.

✓ Done



11.

Reducing electricity and water consumption via permitted efficiency measures within offices.

In progress



4.

Achieve improvement in level of team satisfaction and engagement to 90% of all employees who agree or strongly agree with the question “I would recommend RL to friends and family as a great place to work”. (previously reported was 75%).

In progress



8.

Encourage alternative modes of transport (to private vehicle use) for our people.

In progress



ENVIRONMENT



Race to Net Zero

Our company recognises that climate change poses a threat to the economy, nature and society-at large, and so we have pledged to act immediately in a full and lasting commitment;

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
3. To maintain and report the total GHG emissions of our business regularly

In doing so, we are proud to be recognised by the United Nations Race to Zero campaign, and join governments, businesses, cities, regions, and universities around the world that share the same mission.

	Year
Pledge to be Net-Zero	2050
50% Emission	2030

Net-Zero Strategy

In determining our carbon reduction plan, we follow the Greenhouse Gas (GHG) Management Hierarchy set out by the Institute of Environmental Management and Assessment (IEMA). Robson Laidler is committed to prioritising the elimination, substitution, and reduction of carbon in advance of any offsetting commitments.

2019/20 versus 2022/23

A carbon footprint is the total quantity of greenhouse gases produced by an organisation, project, or place over a given period (usually a year). However, we decided to omit the years to 31st March 2021 (pre- B Corp) and 31st March 2022 for consideration as our baseline year due to the fact of pandemic-enforced office closures during those time periods. We feel measuring carbon emissions in these years wouldn't give a true reflection or any meaningful comparable data.

The table shows we have reduced our carbon emissions by 12% from our benchmark year.(18.75 tCO₂e), the equivalent to 14 Long Haul Flights (London to New York) or saving 57 metres squared of sea ice! There is a 22% reduction in Scope 1, 100% reduction in Scope 2 and a slight increase in Scope 3 mainly due to a business-wide IT refresh and expenditure relating to the fit out of a new office. Our switch to renewable electricity has removed all associated Scope 2 emissions.

This overall reduction has come against a 9% increase in FTE workers from the benchmark period.



The target years show our GHG emissions targets in the years 2024 and 2029, split by scope. If we hit these targets, we will be aligned with 1.5 degrees global warming.

Robson Laidler are ahead of 2025 targets in Scopes 1 & 2, but behind in Scope 3 due to increased reporting and a whole business IT and furniture refresh.

Scope	Base Year 19/20	(%) Reduction	Current year 22/23	Target - 21% 24/25	Target - 42% 29/30
Scope 1 (tCO ₂ e)	46.6	22%	36.47	36.80	27.1
Scope 2 (tCO ₂ e)	16.0	100%	0.00	12.6	9.3
Scope 3 (tCO ₂ e)	91.8	+8%	99.18	72.5	53.2
Total	154.4		135.65	121.9	89.6



We donated our old IT equipment to a Learning for Life - a charitable provider of education and social care services for children and adults who have a diverse range of complex needs.



In 2022 we made the decision to change our loo roll supplier to a more environmentally friendly product. We chose Naked Sprout - voted the most ethical toilet paper out there!

Every month, we offset and exceed our carbon emissions by;

- 🌲 planting 72 trees
- ✂️ rescuing 8kg of food, and
- 💡 providing 2 months of access to a solar lamp to families in need.

Environmental action plan and targets

81% of staff who completed our staff engagement survey said they thought RL does its utmost to reduce its carbon footprint as a company". We aim to increase this score to 83% in 2023/24.

Purchased goods & services accounted for >46.4% of this years recorded emissions, whilst these purchases are required infrequently and distort the emissions for this year, future targets will be to look at the purchase of refurbished technology and furniture and extending the life of current tech to extend the associated embodied emissions.

Gas usage represents 31.5% of carbon emissions - We will therefore conduct an energy audit in 2024 to highlight any further opportunities in this area.

Business travel accounted for 21% (28.2 tCO₂e) of carbon emissions. Further focus is needed in this area.

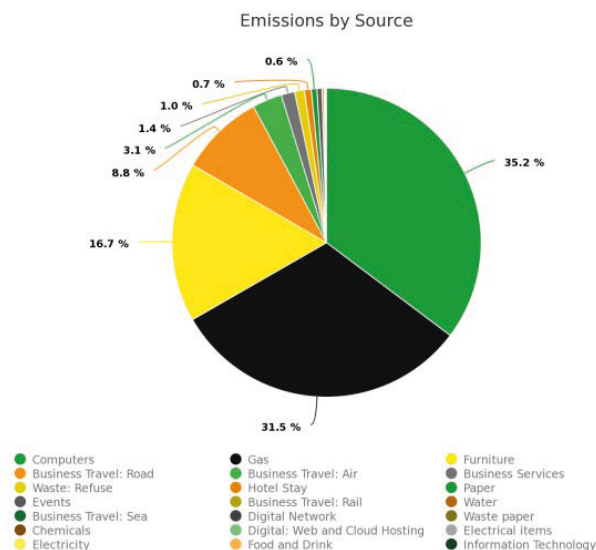
Reduction in paper usage

We have successfully moved 99% of our VAT registered clients onto a virtual reporting system and issue 1676 of accounts via our online portal with 67% approving documents this way now too to reduce our paperchain. Further work is required to ascertain the level of our digital footprint through such initiatives and to understand what can be done to minimise that.

Waste management improvements

To improve the issue, in our offices, of recyclable waste being deposited into general waste which is then taken to landfill we have introduced the following measures:

Figure 1: Robson Laidler's 2022/23 carbon footprint represented proportionally in a Pie Chart



- Doubling the number of communal wastepaper bins in the offices and reinforcing the message that all wastepaper, magazines, etc must be placed in these bins which are then taken for recycling by an independent third party.
- Halving the number of office general waste bins and collection frequency of these bins with the local councils.
- Introducing a policy to remove all personal waste bins at individual desks in the offices to encourage thinking about waste management on an individual level.

- Ongoing education to the team on waste management.

We also have means to recycle batteries, crisp packets, and bottle lids.

Carbon Emissions HOTSPOTS

The following carbon hotspots have been identified from Robson Laidler's 2022/23 carbon footprint



GAS USAGE



BUSINESS TRAVEL



PURCHASED GOODS - COMPUTERS



PURCHASED GOODS - FURNITURE



Responsible purchasing policy and supply chain management

We have introduced a new purchasing policy as part of our task to raise awareness around environmental sustainability in our supply chain.

Before making a purchase, we always consider the performance of the item against its social and environmental impact and cost.

We recognise the following to identify good practices within relevant industries and favour such suppliers:

- Certified B Corp – all industries
- Living Wage Foundation – all industries
- Fair Tax Mark – all industries
- FSC – paper products
- Soil Association Organic – food products
- Cyber Essentials Certified – digital suppliers
- EU Energy Rating A or above – electronic goods

All catering for RL events must be from a local and environmentally responsible supplier. Food produce should be plant based, organic and homemade wherever possible.



Travel

We have looked at incentives to encourage as many of our people out of fossil fuel cars for work travel. We have encouraged the adoption of electric cars through the introduction of an electric car leasing scheme via salary sacrifice. Our cycle to work schemes, a car sharing policy for business travel and upfront loans for public transport annual passes all contribute towards highlighting greener transport options to our team.

Despite seeing a rail travel spend decrease of 26% , our air travel has increased from 11,761km to 25,028 km (113%). This solely relates to travel necessary to work with an overseas client and more air miles being travelled compared to the base year due to more of the team travelling to service this client. Although there is little we can do to influence that directly we are mindful of its impact on our carbon footprint and will review whether there are any reasonable steps which can be taken to mitigate it.

Similarly, road travel has increased by 9,020km (23%) as clients have reverted to more face-to-face meetings as the preferred format.

We have also raised the options of free electric scooters for the team to undertake short distance business travel to meetings as well as proposing carpooling for commutes with our team but the response has, to date, been underwhelming. We are acutely aware of the additional work needed in this area to improve on the numbers in our team who will embrace and adopt more sustainable ways of travelling.

Carbon literacy training has been offered on an optional basis to all staff, and we have partnered with Sustainable Business Services to drive environmental ambition.

We are committed to reducing our travel carbon footprint and will undertake a review of what steps we can take to make a positive difference for all of our stakeholders on this topic.

Helping clients to invest sustainably

ROBSON / LAIDLER

WEALTH

We recognise the power that investors and our clients have in shaping the future and it is important to us that we continue to provide alternative and sustainable investment options that not only seek to generate a financial return but also a positive social and environmental change.

Therefore we recommend our clients who are looking to invest sustainability to speak exclusively with our sister firm Robson Laidler Wealth, who, after researching the investment world to find specific funds that meet high environmental standards, launched 5 new ethical investment portfolios.

By October 2021 17% of RL Wealth's existing clients had made the decision to switch their existing mainstream investments into one of the sustainable portfolios.

Each investment portfolio is made up of individual funds which embrace the UN's Sustainable Development Goals.

By the end of April 2023 15% of the total assets RL Wealth manage on behalf of their clients (£128m) were invested in either a sustainable investment portfolio or fund.



SUSTAINABLE DEVELOPMENT GOALS





CUSTOMERS

Helping our customers to have a positive impact

We serve businesses across diverse sectors and sizes, offering comprehensive accounting, tax and business advice to companies, sole traders, partnerships, charities, trusts, and individuals.

Our Purpose as a business is to “Make A Positive Difference to People’s Lives”. In the context of the services we deliver to customers we seek to understand what their “Why” is; what is their “Purpose” and then mould our service offerings around that.

We love to work with those with whom we have shared values and we have been delighted with the upsurge in interest from potential customers who are aligned with our ethos.

There is more work needed to educate our customers about B Corp and its impact on running a business.

Customer stewardship

Our annual net promoter score (NPS) is a key metric in gauging customer satisfaction. This year,

we achieved an NPS of 65, surpassing the ‘great’ threshold of 30 and nearing the ‘excellent’ mark of 70.

A major goal for 2023/24 is to increase our NPs to 70 through understanding better our customers and this means more contact and curiosity.

We have an obligation to help our customers (and all stakeholders) with their own journeys to be more sustainable and influencing positively the world around them. In that regard, this year we launched our own ESG service line. This is to provide support to our customers with sustainability awareness,

assessment, training, and reporting. We have developed an online ESG assessment tool, which can be used to identify areas for improvement within the business around sustainability. Our team deliver advice on how to make a positive difference and build a business which is positively contributing long-term to the Triple Bottom Line of People, Planet, Profit.

Customer rewards

We run a client ‘surprise and delight’ programme to provide a positive customer experience through thoughtful gestures, such as personalised gifts from our roster of ethical suppliers—many of whom are B Corp certified.

Our clients are also invited to exclusive ESG-themed events, including our ‘Introduction to ESG’ session, charity balls, ladies lunches and health and wellbeing activities.



B Corp advocacy

As the first B Corp in the North East we felt it was important to be at the forefront of spreading the message around Business As A Force For Good in our business community.

We were involved as a headline supporter at VentureFest North East in 2023 – an event organised by Innovation Super Network, Northern Powerhouse and the European Development Fund. The event brought together speakers with a global perspective on the challenges impacting society around the theme Our Future, Now. Our MD Graham Purvis was a speaker during the 2-day festival, and as part of a panel with fellow regional B Corps, gave delegates the opportunity to understand the B Corp framework and how it could maximise the positive wide ranging benefits that were possible.



We also hosted a North East Initiative on Business Ethics (NIBE) Business Leaders Lunch with 12 leaders from across the region around the theme of “What it means to lead an ethical business”.

We presented to over 70 delegates at the UK200 Group global conference in Belfast in November 2022 on the theme of being an purpose-led business and the stakeholder benefits of being that.

We have worked closely with our fellow North East England B Corps, in organising and presenting at the first three B Socials in our region, bringing together hundreds of likeminded business leaders and building a mailing list of over almost 100 recipients who are interested in exploring B Corps and what it means for them.

Our Head of Marketing is the current B Corp UK Marketing Working Group Co-Chair.



Marketing & Advertising

We implemented an ethical marketing policy which lays out our commitments to ensure that our marketing efforts meets or exceeds the highest ethical standards for professional services. Our policy is based on a foundational belief that marketing should be honest and transparent.

As a member firm of the Institute of Chartered Accountants England and Wales (ICAEW) we are required to ensure that promotional material reflects the dignity of the profession. Advertisements must comply with the law and with current codes of practice. All our advertising material is objective, legal, decent, honest, truthful and clear.

As a B Corp, we explicitly commit to rejecting impact washing or greenwashing.

“We commit to being fully honest and transparent about the social and environmental impacts of our work.”





External recognition:

We have received external recognition for our sustainable practices, winning the following achievements or kitemarks.

- North East Chamber of Commerce Best Small Business Award Finalist 2021
- North East Accountancy Awards Mid-Sized Accountancy Firm of the Year 2022
- Shortlisted in the Multicultural Apprenticeship Awards Small to Medium Employer of the Year 2023
- Investors In People Standard Accreditation
- Better Health at Work Maintaining Excellence Award 2023
- Northern Society of Chartered Accountants Presidents' Awards Contribution to Net Zero
- North East Chamber of Commerce Inspiring Female Award presented to Amy Park, director, for Best female in a medium-sized business
- North of Tyne Combined Authority, Good Work Pledge Certified



COMMUNITY

The Robson Laidler Community Foundation Fund

In May 2022 we set up our own Community Fund, managed by the County Durham Community Foundation, which sees us donate 5% of our profits each year to charitable causes in our region.

So far, we have supported 15 different community projects and positively impacted more than 4,690 people. From training new fathers in paediatric first aid to helping young people who have experienced domestic abuse, we are contributing to tackling urgent and important societal issues.

The projects supported have been focussed around the following four UN Sustainable Development Goals:



What difference is the fund making?

When applying for funding, all groups select the most important outcome of their activities. Of the 15 projects supported by Robson Laidler:

- / **5 are improving health and wellbeing, both physical and mental,**
- / **2 are improving access to services and support,**
- / **1 is working to improve aspirations for the future,**
- / **1 is focussed on improving economic wellbeing,**
- / **3 are increasing access to sport, leisure and exercise,**
- / **1 is helping people move towards employability,**
- / **1 is reducing homelessness,**
- / **and 1 is reducing isolation.**

Example story of lives we have enriched:

Recycle y'bike

The first community group to receive support from the Robson Laidler Fund was Recycle y'bike. They were awarded £5,000 to support them as they established their new shop in Chester le Street. The team have established a range of community activities. Local people have volunteered their time and learnt new skills as they repair bikes, giving the bikes (and often the volunteers) a new lease of life!

"Recycle have helped develop my knowledge of bikes and provided skills training to enable me to service / repair bikes. I'm far more confident than I was in tackling bike related issues. The staff are extremely helpful and supportive and willing to share their knowledge. I've made lots of new friendships. I enjoy saving bikes and helping people!"

Projects supported by the Robson Laidler Fund, May 2022 – May 2023

Grant Recipient	Project Description	Amount Awarded
Recycle y'bike	To support Partnership development	£5,000
Furniture Reclamation and delivery Enterprise (FRADE)	To support a Volunteer and Employability Skill Coordinator	£3,770
Cruse Bereavement Care Tees Valley	Supporting bereaved people across County Durham	£5,083
Horden Youth & Community Centre	To provide a food hub	£5,000
East Durham Partnership	The Haven activities project	£5,000
Sacriston Youth Project	To support a Forest School and Outdoor Education Project	£5,000
Darlington ("Darlo") Men's Shed	Towards materials for the woodworking class	£5,000
North East Your Dads and Lads Project CIO	To provide first aid	£2,000
Skills4Work (Gateshead) Limited	To support a volunteer review programme	£2,000
Oasis Aquila Housing	To support the delivery of projects in Tyne and Wear	£2,000
Changing Relations C.I.C	To Support the Rabbits in Headlights Project	£5,000
Shildon Children & Young Action Network (SCYPAN)	To support a youth initiative	£5,000
The Great North Children's Hospital Foundation (Newcastle Hospitals Charity)	Towards a Hardship fund for families with children in hospital	£2,500
Learning Library	To support outreach worker	£4,877
FC Darlington Locomotives	To purchase lighting and signage	£5,000
MediCinema	To support the MediCinema at Newcastle RVI	£2,000





To celebrate the sign-on of a new customer, we invite them to select a preferred project from the following options which are based around specific UN SDGs (chosen by our team), to which we then contribute via our partnership with B1G1.

- 1825 days of essential access to clean water for families in Ethiopia, (SDG - Clean Water and Sanitation).
- Supply a goat to a rural family in Kenya, enabling sustainable income for a year, (SDG - No Poverty).
- 100 bricks towards constructing a classroom for a school in Nepal, (SDG - Quality Education).

Furthermore, for each attendee at a Robson Laidler event, we support 1 day of computer education to Aboriginal communities.

We have made the following impacts around the world since our B Corp certification in July 2021:



Access to life-saving water
No of Giving: 36,500 days



Reduce food waste by rescuing meals from
going to landfill
No of Giving: 232kg meals



Bricks toward classroom infrastructure
improvements
No of Giving: 800 bricks



Farm animals to help sustain income
No of Giving: 8 goats



Computer education to aboriginal
communities
No of Giving: 1106 days



Forest Trees to help restore the
environment
No of Giving: 2632 trees



Access to solar lighting for families in need
No of Giving: 54 months

Charity Donations

Charity total from B Corp inception (July 2021) to 31 March 2023.

In addition to the financial contribution to our Community Fund we have also added £92,880 to charitable causes in our region. The split is as shown below:

Monetary value out of office volunteering	£29,110
Monetary value volunteering in own time	£17,860
Donations to local charities/projects	£40,885
Donations to National/International appeals	£5,025



We have donated items to:

Newcastle Foodbank – Food, advent calendars, toiletries, flasks, hot water bottles, torches, energy prepayment cards.

Families First – Toiletries.

The People's Kitchen – Rucksacks filled with winter essentials.

Turkey/Syrian Earthquake Appeal – Rucksacks filled with winter essentials.

Reviving the Heart of the West End – Sewing Machine, fabric, and thread.

Look for a Book – Books hidden around the North East, 655 to date.

Jesmond nursery – Out of date letterhead.

Gateshead college – Used lever arch files.

Various projects, schools, and individuals – Laptops, monitors, keyboards, mouse, desks, and office furniture.

Social Justice Lass – Under desk fridge and microwave.

NCAT – Sweets and small gifts for their free children's Christmas parties.

NCAT – Biscuits and chocolates for their free Christmas parties for older or socially isolated residents.

South Tyneside Social Service – Christmas Gift Appeal.

Various Warm Space hubs – Large number of used mugs from the kitchen in Jesmond.

Projects4Change – A young woman they are helping who cannot live at home as it is deemed unsafe, has had a baby. We donated various essential items to help Katelynn who is now the proud mum of a beautiful baby girl.



We have made and donated.

Toiletry bags – Families First.

Teddy bears and elephants – Christmas gift appeal, North East Emergency Services to be handed out to children who have experienced trauma.

DARE Bears – Children North East for the children on their Domestic Abuse Recovery Education project.

Worry Monsters – Knit for Nowt charity Appeal.

Mindful Monsters – Schools and community projects to be given to children to assist with mental health issues.

Royal British Legion Poppy Appeal – Poppies sold in November 2022.



Volunteering

From our staff engagement survey in 2022, 75% of staff believe that RL's community initiatives drive positive societal change.

From 1 April 2022 to 31 March 2023 28% of our people have used all, or part of their 7.5 hours out of office paid volunteering hours, a total of 353 volunteering hours throughout the year. We have set a target to increase volunteer participation across our workforce to 33% in 2023/24.

Our uptake of paid volunteering hours needs work. We are looking at removing any perceived obstacles to volunteering in work time for our team including

working with local charities to increase the number of group employee activities and continuing to raise awareness of what opportunities exist for increasing the team's participation in giving back to their local community.

School engagement

Team members work with the North Tyneside Learning Trust careers team to deliver their 'world of work' programmes to young people from 9 high schools, 6 sixth forms and 5 SEND schools. This allows us to showcase future opportunities to young people and inform them on the many routes available to them (outside of further education) when they leave school.

In the year to 31 March 2023 our team have been involved in careers fairs, mock interviews, careers speed dating and talks to students on financial accounts and business advice. Through these initiatives we have impacted 208 students. We aim to increase this to 250 students in the year to 31 March 2024.

Local hiring

100% of our employees are within a 25-mile radius of their workplace and 75% are within 10 miles.

Partnerships

Redstart

Members of the team have been working with Redstart to help kids from disadvantaged

backgrounds learn more about money to give them a head start with their financial futures.

We have helped 272 schoolchildren through this partnership.

**CHANGE
THE GAME!**

**RED
START**

Find out more: [Click here](#)



Grassroots sports sponsorship

We have helped these local teams with financial contributions (outside of our Community Funds grants) so that they can buy the resources they need to improve and grow.

- Heaton Hawks FC
- Washington United FC
- South Shields FC
- West Allotment Celtic FC

- Hylton CWFC
- South Shields Cricket Club
- Chester le Street Cricket Club

Charities we have formed since July 21

Since becoming a B Corp, members of our charitable accounting team have helped to form Harmonia Housing, a charity that helps provide homes for homeless people or people with special physical needs and Northern Edge Sports

Limited, a charity based in a deprived sub region of Newcastle, which promotes fitness to young people by way of roller or ice hockey.

The charity formation and set up were done free. We helped incorporate the charity, write the charity objects, write the public benefit justifications for the charity commission, and helped steer the whole process to obtain charitable status.



WORKERS

Gender



Total female staff
(57%)



Total male staff
(43%)

Director Board



% female
(13%)



% male
(87%)

Senior Management



% female
(71%)



% male
(29%)

89% Retention

32% 10+ Years Employment


4% Identify as LGBT+

4% Reported having a Disability

88% Are White

12% Are from Minority Ethnic Background of which the largest 4% identify as mixed race and British Asian

17% from socio-economic disadvantaged backgrounds



We take pride in developing our own people, exemplified by our most recent director who became the fifth trainee to ascend to a director position.

We aim to nurture an equal and inclusive environment and, in support of this the following have been implemented in the period covered by this Impact Report:

- Creation of an internal project team to cover DEI in our workplace.
- DEI training to our management group.
- Mental Health training - All managers are now Level 3 trained in Managing Mental Health within the workplace. All staff have access to a Mental Health Continuum and a Stay Well at Work Plan to help them manage their own mental health at work and understand when and where to seek further support.
- Creating new rooms at both offices as dedicated spaces for prayer.
- Redesigning our bereavement guidelines to accommodate religious specific rituals concerning death and burial, offering our staff the necessary time off to address these matters.

Looking ahead to 2024, our objectives are:

- Research into a holiday entitlement policy or staff belonging to non-Christian faiths. This will provide them with flexibility around Bank Holidays, enabling them to take time off to observe their own religious celebrations.
- Raise representation of staff from socioeconomically disadvantaged groups to 18%.



Fair pay for all

In July 2022, we became a Real Living Wage employer.

Staff engagement / NPS

In our latest survey 75% of respondents “agreed” or “strongly agreed” to the statement: “I would recommend RL to friends and family as a great place to work”. We will look to address the challenges we have in order to increase this to 77% in 2024 with an ongoing target of 90%.

Flexible working

We offer a flexible working environment with a flexi scheme with core hours, which allows people with caring or child-care responsibilities or health issues, to work around times to suit their personal needs. We also offer “agile working” for most of the team, allowing them to work from home for up to 40% of their working week.

Work life balance

76% of staff recently surveyed said they feel like they achieve a positive work life balance at RL.

It is important to us to continually improve in all areas including this one. If our people are energised and happy then they will provide an even better service to our customers. We are therefore looking at initiatives to aim to increase this to 78% in 2024, with an ongoing target of 90%.

Team wellbeing

Measuring the five essential pillars of personal wellbeing as per Gallup, we improved our overall wellbeing score across the whole team to 70% in 2023.

Social and Financial wellbeing are two areas to improve on. Over the last 2 years we have increased salaries for most of the team by approximately 14%. In addition, we have floated the idea of introducing a variety of financial benefits aside from salary such as private medical cover but the feedback to such initiatives was lukewarm at best. However, we seek to offer competitive remuneration packages in our marketplace and will continue to see if we can enhance these where it is commercially sensible to do so. We have struggled to engage our whole team on Social wellbeing with much of the team

opting out of any planned collective social events. We recognise and completely accept the personal choice that individuals have in deciding whether to participate or not and, in line with our company values, we will continue to do what we can to encourage rather than enforce.

Recruitment

We aim to recruit from diverse backgrounds and regularly attend volunteering opportunities and careers talks in socially deprived areas of the North East.

Better Health at Work Award

We are currently accredited at the top level of Maintaining Excellence under the Better Health at Work Award programme.

At Robson Laidler, we have rolled out a number of awareness campaigns and workshops.

These include NHS health checks, sessions dedicated to cancer awareness, training on becoming Dementia Friends, informative alcohol awareness workshops, vital mental health training, and engaging physical activity classes.

We have team members who have been appointed as qualified Mental Health First Aiders and Domestic Violence Champions.

4 day working week

After participating in the second cohort of the national programme around the 4 day week, we will look at a period for trialling it across the business to ascertain whether it could be a successful initiative for all of our stakeholders.

Education

We will continue to educate our own team about what it means to belong to an organisation that is a B Corp. We will make it mandatory for all staff to complete the B Corp training module.

GOVERNANCE

Living our purpose

81% of our staff believe “I do everything within my control to contribute towards our company’s main purpose of “making a positive difference to people’s lives”.

We aim to increase this to 83% in 2023/24.

Ethics and integrity

81% of our staff believe “At RL, I feel comfortable discussing or reporting ethical issues and concerns without fear of negative consequences”.

We aim to increase this to 90% in 2023/24.

**All data is derived from RL’s company wide staff survey 2022.*

The B Corp working group

The overarching purpose of the B Corp working group is to identify opportunities to improve our B Corp scoring year on year and identify risk areas.

Working alongside our DE&I working group and our Culture Club members they will work collaboratively with other areas of the business to factor B Corp principles into every aspect of work.

Best for the world 2022

Robson Laidler was recognised as one of the Best for the World™ B Corps of 2022!

To be Best for the World™, B Corps must have scores in the top 5% of one or more of the five impact areas assessed and we were proud to be recognised for our efforts in the Governance area.



Round tables

In 2023 we have invited all staff to join in regular round table discussions with directors aimed to fuel creativity, generate debate, create fresh ideas, and give full transparency on the future direction of our firm.

We are also reviewing how we bring clients and suppliers voices into these sessions so that other stakeholder views are also considered.



MAKING A POSITIVE DIFFERENCE



WHAT'S NEXT?

We are continually looking to improve in all areas and here is a summary of some of the plans and goals for the foreseeable future, to help us grow our positive impact.

Environment

- Energy audit to highlight any further opportunities for reducing our carbon footprint.
- Review our digital footprint to seek out any improvements we can reasonably make.

- Review business travel and commuting arrangements to look for ways to reduce the carbon footprint in those areas.
- Continue to increase our focus on our supply chain in terms of sustainability and responsible sourcing.

Customers

- Work on the messaging to our customers about B Corp and its benefits.

Community

- Increasing our volunteering hours.

Workers

- Reviewing how we can give our team some time back for their own personal benefit and wellbeing.
- Continue to work on making our company policies (e.g., holiday, recruitment) more inclusive.
- Commitment to ongoing learning for the team about what being a B Corp means.

Governance

- Explore how we can assess what factors are important to all of our stakeholders and use that data to help us formulate our longer-term strategy around B Corp principles.

Impact score

- In July 2024 we will aim for an Impact Score of 96.5 in our reassessment year.

Conclusion:

Robson Laidler Accountants Limited has produced this Impact Report to reaffirm our commitment to social and environmental responsibility. The company's efforts in governance, worker wellbeing, community engagement, environmental sustainability, and customer impact showcase our dedication to creating a positive impact on all of our stakeholders. Robson Laidler continues to set an example for responsible business practices within our industry.



Thanks for reading!

Well done, you've reached the finish line! None of this would have been possible without the unwavering support from our dedicated team and valued clients. Their enthusiasm continually motivates us to strive for excellence.

We invite you to join us on this exciting journey and stay updated on our progress throughout the year by giving us a follow.



Alternatively, if you have any feedback, tips, or ideas for our future endeavours, please don't hesitate to reach out to us at ba@robson-laidler.co.uk.

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ACCOUNTANTS

