

Certified



Corporation



# Annual Impact Report 2024-25

Society

# Contents

- 4 Introduction
- 6 The Story So Far
- 8 What We do
- 10 Global Reach in 2024-25
- 12 Being a B Corporation
- 14 Our Clients and the SDGs in 2024-25
- 16 People
- 18 Planet
- 20 Profit
- 22 Partners
- 24 Our Foundation
- 26 Looking Ahead

## Our Purpose

“To effect positive change in the world.”

## Our Mission

“Placing diverse and effective change-makers into purpose-led organisations and responsible businesses.”

## Our Vision

“We will be a beacon of responsibility in our sector; a trusted partner for organisations seeking to make a positive impact on the world around them.”

# Introduction

To be honest, I didn't think I would ever be writing one of these introductions again. In October 2023, I stepped down as Society's CEO and I genuinely intended for that to be a permanent change. The fact that it only lasted 14 months is rather characteristic of the turbulent times in which we live. But I'm returning to the helm with renewed energy and considerable excitement for the future of our business.

From our offices in both the United Kingdom and New Zealand, we solve senior recruitment challenges for an eclectic portfolio of clients spanning the private, public, and not-for-profit sectors, including:



Higher Education



Hospitality and Leisure



Not-For-Profits



Purpose-Led Businesses



Retail and Consumer Goods



Schools and Colleges

Our work is informed by a deep and profound commitment to Equity, Diversity and Inclusion, as well as by high ethical standards and the wish to deliver an exceptional candidate experience.

Above all, our firm is grounded in the belief that individuals can make a positive difference to the world around them. Look closely, and you can see that this idea is even embedded within our logo. If we can get exceptional people into meaningful roles within purpose-led organisations, then we believe they can initiate a chain reaction of transformative change. The 'ripple effect' of great senior appointments can be a more inclusive and sustainable future for us all.

This report is our attempt to inform our stakeholders about our work and our social impact in the most holistic sense possible, including:

- the quality of the appointments we help our clients to make;
- the integrity with which we help candidates to define and to attain their career objectives;
- the way in which we look after, and develop our colleagues;
- our consumption of resources, and the size of our carbon footprint;
- the impact and longevity of our work in the community;
- the leadership we show within the wider recruitment industry on issues of responsibility, ethics, sustainability, and diversity.

I'm delighted to be able to share it with you, and I want to pay tribute to the amazing Society team, past and present, who have made its contents possible.

Simon Lucas  
Chief Executive & Founder





# The Story So Far

2009

Society Ltd established in the UK

2010

Society hires its first full-time colleagues

2011

Society becomes a founding signatory of the Voluntary Code of Conduct for Executive Search Firms

2014

Society establishes The Society Foundation

2015

Society becomes an accredited Living Wage employer

2016

Society launches an office in New York, USA

2019

Society becomes a certified B Corporation, declares a Climate Emergency, and commits to Net Zero by 2030

2020

Society remains stable throughout the COVID-19 pandemic

2021

Society launches an office in Auckland, New Zealand

2022

Society recertifies as a B Corporation with a significantly increased score

2024

Society makes major investments in its underlying tech infrastructure, upgrading its ATS/CRM, rolling out our company-wide access to LinkedIn Recruiter, and embracing new AI tools such as Metaview

2024 saw us complete **87** assignments for **55** clients across **21** countries on **5** continents

49% of our appointed candidates during 2024 were female

49%

Our 2024 Net Promoter Score (NPS) was 83.7

83.7

And 20% of our appointed candidates were People of the Global Majority

20%

## Over the past year, we have:

1 Improved our brand positioning with a relaunched website and completely reworked client reports

2 Refocused on business development activity with improved monitoring and sharing of outreach activity and our assignment pipeline

3 Strengthened our sustainability through a more granular understanding of our existing carbon footprint and our road to Net Zero



# What We Do

We often design bespoke processes for clients, particularly when trying to address specific Equity, Diversity and Inclusion challenges, however the general 'blueprint' for an executive search looks something like this:



01

## Briefing and Discovery

The process begins with a full set of briefing and discovery conversations involving all the key stakeholders. Through these, we ensure that we understand every dimension of the role, and have a strong grasp of the wider organisation's context and culture.

**Outcome: Candidate Pack and Advertisement**

We create an attractive Candidate Pack PDF to showcase the opportunity. Assuming the client wishes to advertise the role in parallel with the search, we will facilitate that too and create an accompanying social media campaign.

02

## Proactive Headhunt

We reach out to both established contacts and to new people, getting them excited about the opportunity and following up on advice and recommendations. We also hold weekly update calls with the client, so that they know how the search is progressing.

**Outcome: Candidate Review Meeting**

Following the conclusion of the proactive headhunt, we conduct an initial 'sift' of the applicants and then debrief with the client in order to decide upon a 'longlist'. All candidate paperwork and details are made transparently available to the client through our secure online 'Client Portal'.

03

## Society's Interviews

We conduct an in-depth interview with each of the longlisted candidates. During these sessions, we build up a more textured understanding of each candidate's background, suitability, and personal style and produce detailed notes

**Outcome: Shortlist Review Meeting**

We provide 1-2 page written commentaries on the strongest candidates. We then meet with the client again to review these reports and to agree upon a 'shortlist' of around 3-5 people who can be invited to formal interview.

04

## The Client's Interviews

We remain fully engaged during the tail-end of the process, standing ready to assist with negotiations and other logistics as required, and providing advice on questions and assessment methods.

**Outcome: Successful Appointment**

We take up two detailed references on the preferred candidate and assist with the offer process and any negotiations that need to take place. Finally, we will also take responsibility for turning down and feeding back to the unsuccessful candidates.

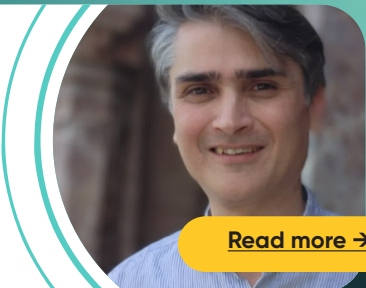


# Global Reach in 2024-25



## Pakistan

GNI per capita \$1,460 USD  
Dr Sayed Muhammad Turab Hussain becomes the 19th Principal in the 138 year history of the Lahore's famous Aitchison College



[Read more →](#)



## Netherlands

GNI per capita \$60,670 USD  
The Social Hub, a B Corp pioneer of 'hybrid hospitality' appoints Trix van der Vleuten as its new Chief Marketing Officer



[Read more →](#)



## United Kingdom

GNI per capita \$47,800 USD  
Osai Ojigbo and Manpreet Dhesi appointed to the governing boards of the National Union of Students: NUS UK and NUS Charity



[Read more →](#)



## United Arab Emirates

GNI per capita \$53,290 USD  
Spa and wellness expert Emma Darby moves from Switzerland to Dubai to join Fairmont Hotels and Resorts as a Global Vice-President



[Read more →](#)



## New Zealand

GNI per capita \$48,610 USD  
Kim Cunio appointed to head up Te Kōki (The New Zealand School of Music) at Victoria University of Wellington



[Read more →](#)



## Hong Kong

GNI per capita \$55,200 USD  
David Brightling moves from The Tanglin Club in Singapore to lead this famous 82-year-old meeting place for the international media



[Read more →](#)



## United States of America

GNI per capita \$80,300 USD  
San Francisco's brand-new dual-language Hiba Academy Bay Area appoints Colette McWilliams as its inaugural Principal



[Read more →](#)



## Vietnam

GNI per capita \$4,180 USD  
Digital Media expert Professor Lim Kok Yoong joins RMIT's campus in Vietnam from Multimedia University in Malaysia



[Read more →](#)



## Belgium

GNI per capita \$54,530 USD  
ALL DIGITAL, the leading pan-European association for digital inclusion selects David Mekkaoui as its new CEO



[Read more →](#)



## Australia

GNI per capita \$63,140 USD  
Mahmoud Mostafavi joins Monash University in Melbourne to head up Mechanical and Aerospace Engineering



[Read more →](#)



## Maldives

GNI per capita \$11,030 USD  
Minor Hotels appoints Mark Ferguson from Turks and Caicos to join its cluster of properties across the Maldives



[Read more →](#)



## United Kingdom

GNI per capita \$47,800 USD  
The former CFO of Waterstones jumps sector to lead the finance team at top dementia charity Alzheimer's Society

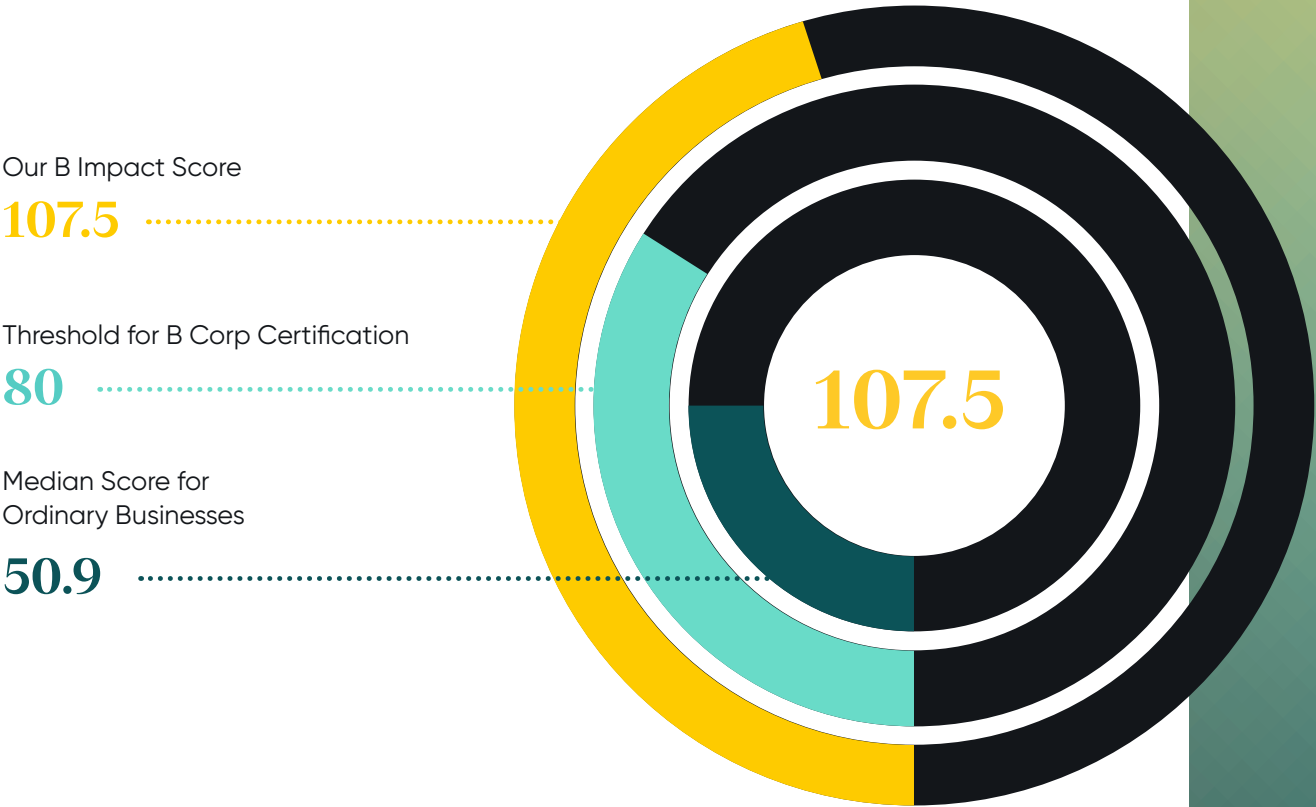


[Read more →](#)

# B Corporation

Society is a certified B Corp. This means we're dedicated to balancing stakeholder interests over chasing profit at any cost.

Every three years, we undergo a rigorous external audit to ensure we meet the highest standards of social and environmental performance, accountability, and transparency. Society originally achieved certification in 2019, with an overall score of 86.9. We set ourselves a target score of 95+ for recertification, but far surpassed this with a score of 107.5. This represented an uplift of over 23%.



As a B Corporation, our Articles of Association contain a pre-amble on 'Responsibility' that states:

*"The objects of the Company are to promote the success of the Company for the benefit of its members as a whole and, through its business and operations, to have a material positive impact on society and the environment, taken as a whole."*

You can view Society's full B Corp profile here. We are also an accredited Living Wage Employer.



Our score is based on the following five categories:

<b>Governance</b>	17.4
Our overall mission, and our engagement around social/environmental impact, ethics, and transparency.	
<b>Workers</b>	30.9
Our contributions to our employees' financial security, health and safety, wellness, career development, and engagement and satisfaction.	
<b>Community</b>	33.2
Our overall mission, and our engagement around social/environmental impact, ethics, and transparency.	
<b>Environment</b>	2.4
Our overall mission, and our engagement around social/environmental impact, ethics, and transparency.	
<b>Customers</b>	23.2
Our overall mission, and our engagement around social/environmental impact, ethics, and transparency.	

In addition, Society receives recognition for the following Impact Business Models (IBAs):

**Mission Locked**

Our overall mission, and our engagement We are intentionally designed to create positive outcomes for our stakeholders.

**Serving In-Need Populations**

We intentionally work with organisations from low-income countries and/or with in-need beneficiaries.

**Support for Purpose-Driven Enterprises**

Our Client Framework directs us to work with organisations that are themselves purpose-driven.

**Designed to Give**

We give at least 10% of our profits to charity every year through The Society Foundation.



# Our 2024 Clients and the SDGs

The ultimate beneficiaries and end-users of Society's services vary widely, but we are always especially keen to partner with clients who work closely with underserved groups or individuals, and/or whose work directly relates to one of the 17 UN Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs). Examples from the past year include:

3

GOOD HEALTH AND WELL-BEING

LONDON SCHOOL of HYGIENE & TROPICAL MEDICINE

4

QUALITY EDUCATION

5

GENDER EQUALITY

8

DECENT WORK AND ECONOMIC GROWTH

10

REDUCED INEQUALITIES

11

SUSTAINABLE CITIES AND COMMUNITIES

Coin Street

13

CLIMATE ACTION

15

LIFE ON LAND

16

PEACE, JUSTICE AND STRONG INSTITUTIONS

17

PARTNERSHIPS FOR THE GOALS





# People

**2024 saw significant changes in personnel at Society. This included the departure of Tanya Stevens, who left us in December after 11 years with the business and 14-months as CEO. Recent changes have also altered our overall demographics, reducing the proportion of female colleagues on our SLT as well as the overall proportion of Global Majority colleagues in the business. It will take a while to rebalance this, but we are 100% committed to doing so.**

In the meantime, we are re-centering on what we believe is a compelling employer offer:

- hybrid or remote working for all colleagues, with flexible hours as standard, and part-time options available;
- 25 days holiday per annum, increasing with long-service, plus all UK Bank Holidays or an equivalent number of days for non UK colleagues;
- a whole-company closure period between Christmas and New Years' Day;
- a Group Company Pension Plan (employer contribution of 5%);
- free financial and investment advice
- quarterly bonus and commission schemes;
- a life assurance or 'Death in Service' scheme equal to 4x salary;
- season ticket loans, if required;
- access to a Personal Professional Development Allowance (topped up on birthdays and work anniversaries);
- an Employee Assistance Programme;
- a Cycle to Work scheme;
- Give As You Earn (GAYE) payroll giving;
- an annual whole-company charity day;
- two additional days of paid volunteering leave per annum;
- support for taking on part-time Trustee/Governor roles;
- dedicated HR advisory support;
- quarterly colleague feedback surveys;
- enhanced maternity leave;
- stress risk assessments and Mental Health First Aid
- formal policies on issues like Domestic Abuse, Endometriosis, Menopause and Perimenopause, Miscarriage, Stillbirth and Infertility, Transgender, Non-Binary and/or Transitioning Colleges, and Whistleblowing, as well as a written Code of Ethics;
- whole company events like our annual, Summer Picnic, STEPtember competition, Strategy Away Day, and Christmas Party.

Colleagues are also supported with thorough and structured inductions, regular ongoing training including our in-house 'Society Business School', a buddy scheme, and lots of rolling opportunities for development and progression.

## Our New Growth Shares Scheme

In 2024, we took a significant step forward in how we think about ownership, value, and the future of the business, with the introduction of a new Growth Shares scheme. Developed in partnership with the employee equity platform Vestd, a fellow B Corp, the scheme is designed to give long-serving colleagues a greater stake in the long-term success of the firm. We've always believed that our strength lies in the talent, creativity, and commitment of the people who choose to build their careers here. This new initiative is an important expression of that belief.

Through the Growth Shares scheme, colleagues will be able to benefit directly from the value we create together as the business grows. It's about more than reward though: it's about alignment, transparency, and inviting our team to play an even more active role in shaping the direction and destiny of the firm.

As we look to the future, we want to build a business that is not only successful in traditional terms, but also progressive in how it distributes that success. This scheme is one way we are putting that ambition into practice.

## Our New Cap Table





# Planet

Recognising the urgency of the climate crisis, Society has declared a Climate Emergency and committed to achieving Net Zero greenhouse gas (GHG) emissions by 2030, 20 years ahead of the targets set by the Paris Agreement. This ambition reflects Society's dedication to its B Corp principles and its broader responsibility to contribute positively to the environment and the communities it serves.

Overall, Society achieved a 47% reduction in emissions in 2024, with total emissions falling from 52.95 tCO<sub>2</sub>e to 27.91 tCO<sub>2</sub>e. The emission intensity per full-time employee (tCO<sub>2</sub>e/FTE) also dropped from 2.71 to 1.69.

Scope	Category	2023	2024	2024 %
Scope 1	Gas	0.76	0	0%
	Company Vehicles	0.44	0	0%
	Sub-total	1.20	0	0%
Scope 2	Market-based	2.24	0.75	3%
	Location-based	2.46	1.26	-
	Sub-total	2.24	0.75	3%
Scope 3	Purchased goods & services	35.26	20.95	75%
	Fuel and energy-related activities	0.25	0.09	0%
	Waste	0.22	0.08	0%
	Business Travel	6.85	0.52	2%
	Employee commuting	6.94	5.52	20%
	Sub-total	49.51	27.16	97%
	Total	52.95	27.16	100%
	Emission intensity tCO <sub>2</sub> e/FTE	2.71	1.69	
	Reduction from baseline (%)		-47.30%	

In 2024, Purchased Goods and Services remained the largest contributor to Society's carbon footprint, representing 75% of total emissions (up from 67% in 2023). While overall emissions in this category have decreased significantly (from 35.26 tCO<sub>2</sub>e in 2023 to 20.95 tCO<sub>2</sub>e in 2024), this shift is largely attributed to strategic supplier changes, with a conscious move towards more sustainable brands and service providers.

Travel-related emissions – including Business Travel and Employee Commuting – saw a substantial reduction. Business Travel decreased by 90% and Employee Commutes saw a reduction of 20% year-on-year. But this decline is primarily linked to the winding down of Society's New York office, and a reduced need for long-haul business travel. Employee commuting emissions also fell, reflecting ongoing hybrid working arrangements and optimised office usage, but also an overall reduction in headcount.

This means that, although our recent rate of reduction is deeply encouraging, reaching Net Zero by 2030 remains ambitious and challenging. In particular, we now need to achieve sizeable reductions in supplier emissions, which is where we have a more limited level of influence.

Working with our fellow B Corp, Inhabit, we have created a detailed Carbon Reduction Plan underpinned by the GHG Protocol Corporate Accounting and Reporting Standard. This has defined a series of goals aligned with the Science Based Targets initiative (SBTi). By adhering to SBTi guidance, we aim to ensure that our ongoing emissions reduction efforts are rooted in climate science and contribute meaningfully to the global effort to mitigate climate change.

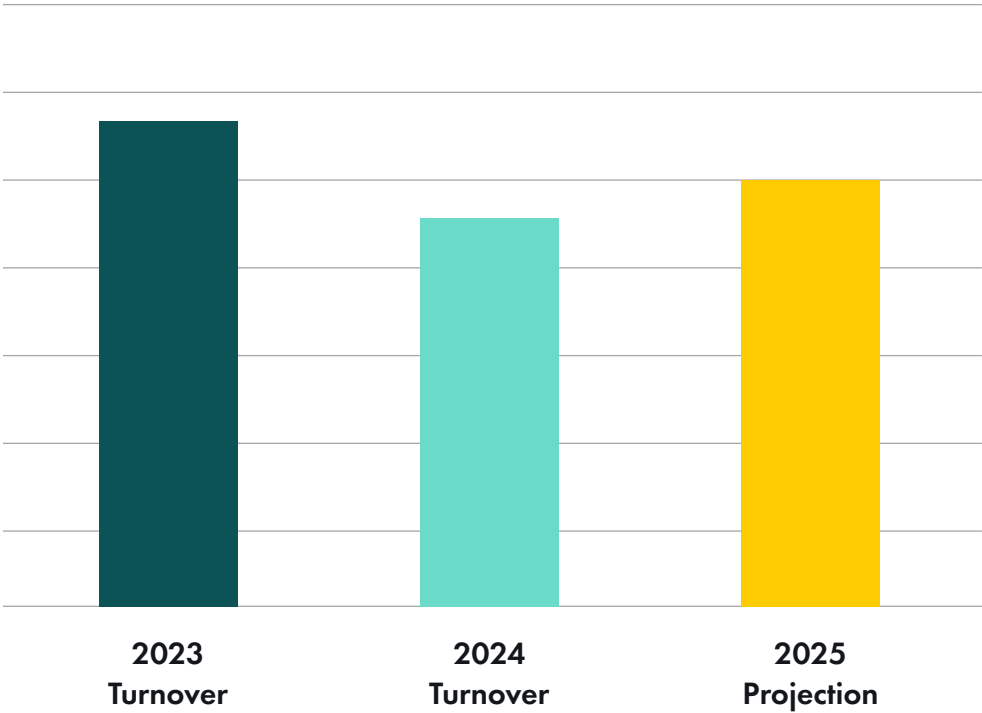




# Profit

**This past year has tested the resilience of organisations and communities across the globe—and ours was no exception. Military strategists talk of 'VUCA' environments, characterised by volatility, uncertainty, complexity and ambiguity. That feels like a pretty accurate description of the market conditions we have been navigating recently.**

Elections in both the UK and the US had ramifications for the economic outlook, as did ongoing conflicts, inflationary pressures, and the prospect of a 2025 Trump-initiated trade war. These forces created a backdrop that made it difficult for any organisation to plan, invest and grow with confidence. It was in the Higher Education sector that we saw our biggest headwinds though. Universities – particularly in the UK – have been hit by a perfect storm recently, and many of them implemented hiring freezes over the course of 2024. This caused our overall income to go down slightly versus 2023, with a corresponding hit to our profitability:



Nevertheless, whilst these headwinds have presented real challenges, they have also sharpened our adaptability, resilience and clarity of purpose. Throughout the year, we have remained focused on our mission and values, continuing to serve our stakeholders with integrity and commitment. We are proud of the way our team has responded – demonstrating professionalism, flexibility and resolve in the face of unpredictable circumstances. As we look ahead, we do so with cautious optimism. The external context may remain unsettled, but we are clearer than ever on what we stand for and where we want to go. Our strategy for the coming year is built not just to weather the storm, but to emerge stronger from it.



## Closing Our US Office

In November, we took the difficult decision to close our office in New York.


When we launched Society in the United States, it was with real optimism about deepening our connections with clients across the Atlantic and building a meaningful, long-term presence in North America. Sadly, over the past several years, the shifting political climate and a growing gulf between the UK and US economies have made it increasingly difficult for businesses like ours to operate effectively on the ground. Visa restrictions have presented a particular challenge. The process of securing the necessary permissions for UK colleagues to spend time working in the US has become frustratingly complex, unpredictable, and, in some cases, impossible.

While the decision to close the office was not taken lightly, we remain committed to supporting our US-based clients. Our relationships in the US are strong and growing, and we will continue to deliver work for American organisations from our other offices – just as we have done successfully in other markets. Indeed, we recently completed two assignments for a client in San Francisco, which we resourced out of London and Auckland respectively.


# Our Partners

Wherever possible, we like to work with organisations that share our values. Here are some of our current partners.


## Fellow B Corporations




Our global tech partner




Our UK landlord




Our APAC bank




Our climate action partner




Our UK law firm




Our branding agency



Our UK Insurance broker




Our mobile phone network




Our employee equity advisors


## Other Partners




Our Impact Report designers




Our client design firm




How we do birthday cards



Our APAC/US accountants



Our UK accountants



Our UK financial advisors

We also have supplier relationships with a wide range of tech platforms (BrightHR, LinkedIn, Ezekia, Metaview, etc), publications and job boards, freelance researchers, psychometric testing providers, and 'Rec2Rec' firms



# The Society Foundation

The Society Foundation is an independent grant giving trust. It receives at least 10% of our profits every year, and uses the money to provide financial support for organisations that help potentially disadvantaged people move towards paid work.

The Foundation offers grants to small or growing organisations supporting people from the following groups:

- the recently homeless or vulnerably housed;
- ex-offenders;
- 16-24 year olds not in employment, education or training.

Its funding is targeted towards capacity building activities, including IT infrastructure and equipment, staff training and development, and external consultancy/support. Capacity building funding isn't particularly 'sexy', but we believe that it can play a transformative role by increasing the sustainability and effectiveness of organisations that are doing really vital work.

You can view further information about the Foundation on the website of the Charity Commission for England and Wales.



## Recent grant recipients include:



All People All Places is a small, locally focused homelessness charity working in the London Boroughs of Enfield and Haringey since 2010. Their mission is to break cycles of poverty and homelessness as they present locally. Currently they have an Enfield Day Centre that provides immediate respite and practical support to rough sleepers and a Night Shelter that provides emergency accommodation for up to six people at a time.



Founded in 1998, Trailblazers Mentoring offers support to prison leavers as they transition from custody back into the community. They support approximately 170 men annually at five prisons across London through intensive weekly one-to-one mentoring sessions and accompanying practical assistance which ensures the essential elements for re-settlement are in place at the time of release and during the critical early months of post-release.



Unlock was established in 2000 by a group of people who had been to prison and wanted to help others reintegrate into society. Through the development of an online 'DBS eligibility checker' Unlock hopes to further support people with criminal records to navigate their way through challenging times, to provide research and raise awareness of the systemic issues that people are facing, and to campaign for changes to legislation, policies and practices of government and employers.





# Looking Ahead

**Our goals for the immediate future include:**

- Securing B Corp re-certification in 2025
- Moving to a 'virtual first' operating model, where all colleagues work from home as default, unless there are specific face-to-face meetings for them to attend
- Further refining our Business Travel Policy to favour virtual meetings, low-impact transport modes, and robust emissions tracking
- Enhancing data security by increasingly sharing candidate paperwork through our new online Client Portal, rather than as emailed PDFs
- Continuing to embrace new technology and integrating AI tools such as Metaview into our established working practices
- Updating our popular Inclusive Recruitment Toolkit
- Continuing to work towards Net Zero and the following targets by 2030:
  - a 50% intensity reduction (per FTE)
  - a 60% absolute reduction in Purchased Goods in services emissions
  - a 40%+ engagement rate with Core Suppliers plus improved data accuracy
- Further aligning our procurement practices with our sustainability goals, focusing on environmentally responsible suppliers
- Enhancing colleague engagement with our Net Zero journey through targeted training, collaborative green initiatives, regular sustainability updates, and encouragement to adopt renewable energy and improve home energy efficiency.





# Contact

If you're interested in learning more about Society, we'd love to hear from you. Please contact us on [hello@society-search.com](mailto:hello@society-search.com) or via one of our offices:



## Auckland

+64 (0)21 1561 931



## Edinburgh

+44 (0)203 653 0486



## London

+44 (0)207 935 4052

Certified



Corporation



# Society