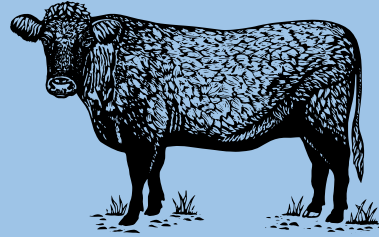


UN Global Compact

# cowshed

Communication on progress 2023



# WORK WITH MEANING

SINCE 2014

### *Statement of continued support*

This is our fourth year as an active supporter of the United Nations Global Compact's Ten Principles of Human Rights, Labour, Environment and Anti-Corruption.

We review our business, team and client culture, practices and policies annually against the societal and sustainable goals and continue to drive forward our progress with new initiatives year on year.

The things we care about can be viewed by all on our website and we publish our progress annually:  
[wearecowshed.co.uk/about-us](https://wearecowshed.co.uk/about-us)



Managing Director  
December 2023

*Human Rights*

## **Principle 1:**

support and respect the protection of internationally proclaimed human rights  
and;

## **Principle 2:**

make sure that they are not complicit in human rights abuses.

## Continued commitments

---

Our new vision 'work with meaning' can be defined in two ways: we deliver work that creates positive change, and we do it with purpose.

We continue to only work on campaigns that have a meaningful impact, for clients we love and causes we believe in. We scrutinise our clients, workforce and supply chain and turn down business or people who don't share or practice our values.

We work with meaning by looking after our people through embedding business practices and nurturing a culture which are representative, respectful and protective. We review our policies and practices annually against principles of equity and inclusion – and involve the team throughout the process.

## Further progress in 2023

---

We remain committed to pro-actively combatting human rights abuse issues.

We have updated and rolled out our new code of conduct which sets out our commitments to all employees, clients and suppliers and was created with the UN Sustainable Goals at the core. We also request to see similar documentation and evidence of good practice from all new clients and suppliers.

We have given our PR expertise pro bono for our charity of the year, Trussell Trust and spent time in our local depot to provide volunteer manpower to sort food for families in crisis. We have also run marathons for our client Cancer Research Wales and donated supplies to women and children escaping domestic abuse.

## Further progress in 2023

---

We retained our Blueprint Allyship for a second term. In addition, we have started a Cultural Competency Certification Scheme with Diverse Cymru, opening with refresher training for the whole team on the Equality Act and protected characteristics.

We have obtained accreditations for our expansive benefits package including Bloom MPower for our menopause policies and Adoption Friendly and Foster Friendly status for our extended leave and support packages.

We have enhanced our personal development processes to be even more people centred and introduced individual wellness plans to better implement our benefits based on personal circumstance. We have supported three people in the organisation to successfully return to work following major surgery and invested in our HR function to support this.

## Further progress in 2023

---

We have been working closely with education, health, and social care policy makers in Wales to not only deliver campaigns but to shape policy approaches.

Wales is the first nation to roll out free school meals for every primary school child and our work with the education team has increased applications for free school meals by almost 25% and uplifted applications for a supplementary schools' essentials grant by 53%.

Wales is also moving to eliminate profit in care. Our work with Foster Wales has resulted in 43% increase in not-for-profit foster enquiries within one month of our latest campaign launch and is improving sentiment of local fostering services (5%).

Our campaign to combat Violence Against Women in Wales – SOUND – has gained global recognition and is shaping the direction that Welsh Government develop and deliver the policy. We've been approached by the Cabinet Office, United Nations, police forces, third sector organisations, politicians, including members of the Lords, trade unions, universities, and global anti-violence specialists to discuss where this early intervention programme goes next.



*Human rights*

## Future ambitions

---

We will continue to work only with organisation which pro-actively promote social justice and who are committed to eradicating human rights issues and inequalities. And to review our practices to ensure we are never in a human rights dispute and that it stays that way.

Our focus for this year will be to reinforce our commitment to being a fair and just place to work for everyone by obtaining our cultural competency certification.

*Labour*

## **Principle 3:**

uphold the freedom of association and the effective recognition of the right to collective bargaining;

## **Principle 4:**

the elimination of all forms of forced and compulsory labour

*Labour*

## **Principle 5:**

the effective abolition of child labour; and

## **Principle 6:**

the elimination of discrimination in respect of employment and occupation.

## Continued commitments

---

Safeguarding is our number one priority, and we proactively create conditions for people to share their experiences safely in our campaigns and in the workplace.

Our people strategies are centred in three core principles:

- Everyone is welcomed, valued and trusted.
- We support everyone personally and professionally based on their individual circumstance.
- We develop a diverse workforce in Wales and the PR industry through creating career enhancing opportunities.

All employees are free to join a union, have the right to collective bargaining and access to a fair hearing for any grievances.

Our zero-tolerance to discrimination and clear escalation processes are detailed in our company handbook.

We publish our diversity targets and data annually:  
[wearecowshed.co.uk/about-us](https://wearecowshed.co.uk/about-us)

## Further progress in 2023

---

### **Everyone is welcomed, valued and trusted.**

We will never exploit a participant of our campaigns and as much as possible will look for opportunities to add value to their contributions. For example, for our latest adoption podcast series, we worked for a year with adopted young people to produce and promote an episode about their experiences of adoption. In the process they were empowered and upskilled in podcast making and media production and attended the British Podcast Awards on behalf of the adoption service to collect an award.

Delivering on our EDI strategy, we have introduced a blind recruitment process. The development of our new website and bringing HR in-house has enabled us to implement a process where details are removed before reaching the hiring manager.

In addition, we have improved our equality monitoring with the roll out of an equality monitoring form across the business and as part of the application process. This data will help us better understand how we attract and retain talent.

*Labour*

## Further progress in 2023

---

**Everyone is supported based on individual circumstance.**

Bringing HR in-house, we have revised our people approaches, and the introduction of wellness plans has created another channel for the team to discuss bespoke adaptations to their working conditions.

Members of the team have facilitated whole organisation discussions on lived experience of topics inc. health, religion and gender.

We have introduced a staff survey to gather feedback on skills confidence, development opportunities, trust, and value. 100% of the team reported feeling supported, 93% feel valued with 90% expressing overall satisfaction.

We have staff at all levels trained in mental health first aid, medical first aid and fire safety.

*Labour*

## Further progress in 2023

---

### Creating career enhancing opportunities.

We are Saatchi&Saatchi's partner to deliver its Upriser initiative in Wales. Upriser was formed to inspire the next generation of creatives, particularly among underrepresented groups into the sector.

For the next seven years, we will be working with one of Cardiff's most diverse schools (60% free school meals, 50% English as a second language) to deliver mentoring, 121 sessions, creative lesson planning and workshops to generate a diverse creative talent pool.

Every member of Cowshed has the opportunity to be part of the initiative with speaking and mentorship opportunities in the pipeline.

*Labour*

## Future ambitions

---

We will continue to invest in training and mentoring for our team and monitor the effectiveness of our people practices. We'll adapt how we do things based on staff and candidate feedback and surveys.

We will reinforce our commitment to being a fair and just place to work for everyone by obtaining our cultural competency certification.

We will continue to work with accrediting bodies to review and progress our approaches to recruitment, training, benefits and talent management to ensure we meet best practice standards, for example Investors in People.

We will annually measure our Upriser programme to monitor the propensity of ambitions to work in creative industries across school year groups and develop the programme over the seven years to demonstrate impact in the future creative labour market.



*Environment*

## **Principle 7:**

support a precautionary approach to environmental challenges;

## **Principle 8:**

undertake initiatives to promote greater environmental responsibility; and

*Environment*

## **Principle 9:**

encourage the development and diffusion of environmentally friendly technologies.

## Continued commitments

---

Our code sets out our commitments to the planet as:

- Buying reduced plastic, recycled and reusable products.
- Utilising as little as possible, as many times as possible and as local as possible.
- Procuring services as local as possible with the right credentials.
- Choosing public over private transport as often as possible.
- Tracking our progress to continue to make conscious choices.

We continue to follow the Government's Green Claims Code and have consecutively maintained our Level 2 Green Dragon Environmental Standard since 2020.

For a second year we have led the Fast Growth 50 Good Business Award to celebrate companies up and down Wales putting planet and people first and to share best practice ideas across industries.

## Further progress in 2023

---

Our Sustainability Director has attended a series of events and conference to gather learnings from similar organisations on best practice and conducted a comprehensive review of our practices and implemented several changes to how we operate.

As part of the review, we have changed our IT systems and practices supplier - selected for its green credentials and shared ambitions to lower its environmental impact.

We have also installed energy saving methods such as a zip tap and automated plug systems.

Two members of our team have completed Carbon Literacy training and certification and have shared their learnings with the wider organisation, improving whole team understanding and embedding a collective commitment to recycling and planning campaigns with sustainability in mind.

## Further progress in 2023

---

We have carried out an initial scope of our scoring status and an audit of our evidence with a view to obtain BCorp status in our next financial year.

As well as our own practices, our objective has been to work with more organisations in the sustainability sector and this year we have secured a contract with a wind energy supplier to promote its community benefits, investment in the natural habitats and provision of local grants.

## Future ambitions

---

As we diversify our services, we are reviewing how each department contributes to our footprint. We are working with our Production Manager on ways to implement the principles of Albert - the leading screen industry organisation for environmental sustainability - into our creative practices and supply chain.

We continue to map our environmental approaches to move closer to B-Corp and ISO 14001 EMS accreditations.

*Anti-corruption*

## **Principle 10:**

Businesses should work against corruption in all its forms, including extortion and bribery.

## Continued commitments

---

Cowshed rejects bribery and would never extort a colleague, client or supplier.

Our assessment on risk of corruption remains low, based on our contained location, size of our supplier network and markets we operate within.

We uphold our role as a signatory of the UN's anti-corruption call to action and Welsh Government Ethical Supply Chain - holding ourselves accountable to our own strict anti-bribery policy and promotion of fair competition in the marketplace.

We have a well-established whistleblowing policy, champion and anonymous helpline in place and this information is accessible via our company handbook and internal HR system.



## Further progress in 2023

---

Our supplier network predominantly consists of photographers, videographers, animators and media suppliers who assist us in the delivery of our campaigns. We have recruited two new roles – production manager and head of media and digital – who are responsible for ensuring the ethical and fair procurement of suppliers for each contract.

These defined roles have centralised the control of our supply network and both are developing robust processes for reviewing our supplier agreements, sharing our code of conduct and obtaining supplier codes in return.

## Future ambitions

---

We will continue to roll out our code of conduct and handbook – outlining our zero-tolerance approach to bribery and corruption – to all new suppliers and colleagues and request our supply network share evidence of similar practices with us.

Procurement, financial best practice and our code of conduct will form part of this year's internal training programme, so everyone understands the corrosive effects of corruption and bribery and conduct themselves and business in the right way.

# DIOLCH

