

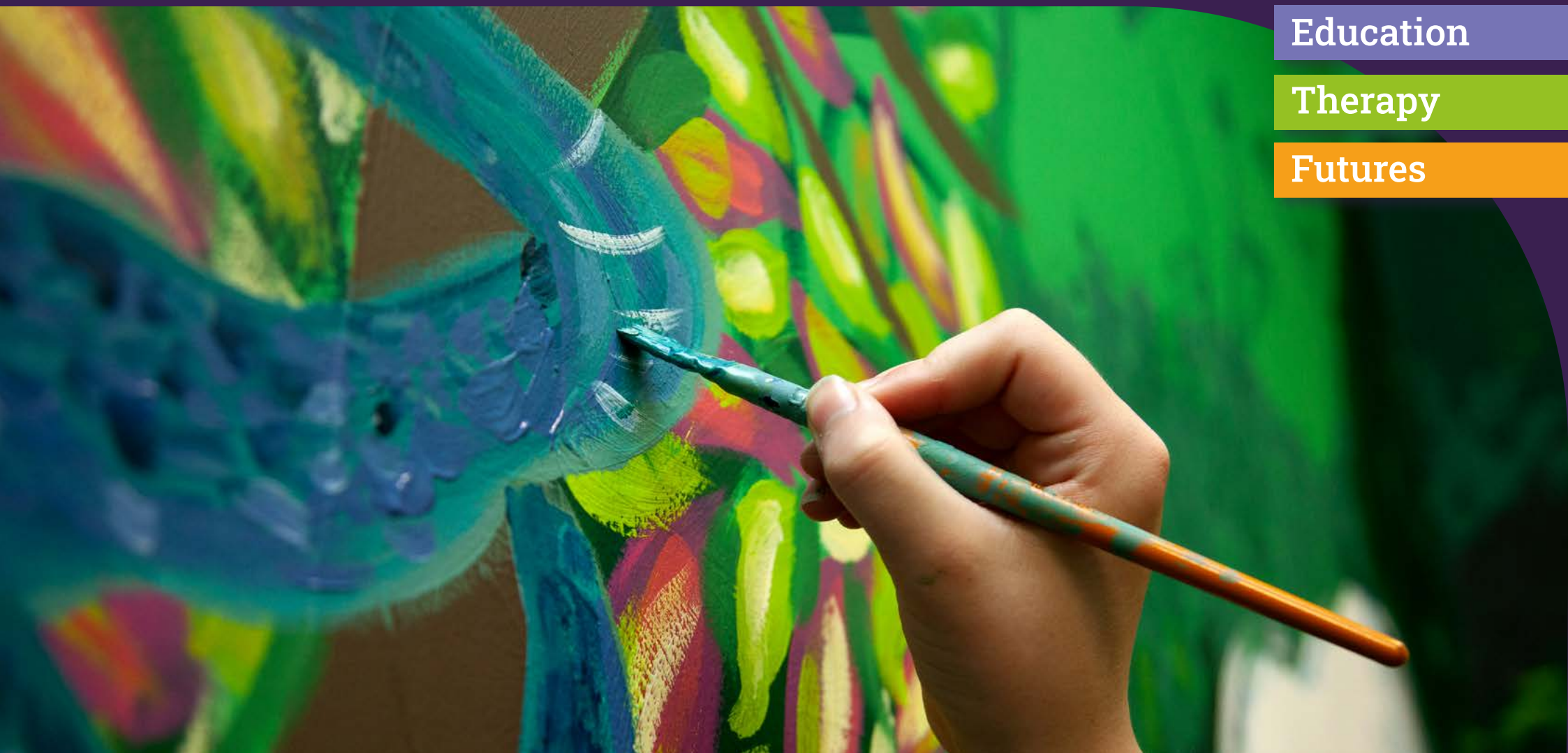
ESG Impact Report 2025



Education

Therapy

Futures



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Welcome from our CFO

I am delighted to share with you Witherslack Group's first ESG Impact Report. In this document, you can read the many examples of how our Group continues to make a lasting difference for our pupils, our people, and our planet. Our Sustainability Strategy, published in June 2025, provided the framework for our environmental, social and governance goals - with these gathered under the five strategic pillars of:

Creating sustainable, nurturing spaces

Strengthening community connections

Leading with integrity and accountability

Empowering our teams

Supporting tailored education and care for our young people

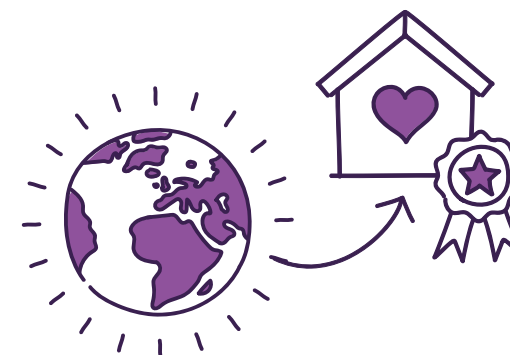
This ESG Impact Report provides the next level of detail, setting out how through collaboration, innovation, and commitment to continuous improvement, we have taken significant steps forward in these key areas.

Notable among the many achievements captured in this report is the accreditation from Inclusive Employers for promoting and supporting diversity and inclusion at work, as well as the considerable achievements of our WG Futures programme in putting employability at the heart of the learning experience.

The report also highlights the work in calculating our organisation's carbon footprint - so that through our procurement practices, our increased commitment to renewable energy, and taking a digital-first approach to minimise paper-based processes, we will see considerable, measurable progress in reducing our impact on the environment.

Our ESG journey, of course, is a shared journey – and what this report clearly illustrates is how we are bringing together our young people, their parents and carers, our employees and our community partners, so that we are working together to create a more sustainable and inclusive future.

Steve Bacon,
Chief Financial Officer



About This Report

This report covers information on ESG (Environmental, Social and Governance) activities for Witherslack Group Limited. The disclosures in this report reference the Global Reporting Initiative (GRI) and the Sustainability Accounting Standards Board (SASB).

To learn more, visit the [Appendix](#) of this report.

The United Nations Sustainable Development Goals

Launched in 2015, Agenda 2030 and its 17 Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs) are the only universally agreed, common global agenda to create a sustainable future. While we believe we contribute to all 17 SDGs, and have aligned our ESG ambitions with up to 12 of the targets, we continue to prioritise five goals where we can make the most impact.



THE GLOBAL GOALS



- | | |
|---|---|
| 1 No Poverty | 10 Reduced Inequalities |
| 2 Zero Hunger | 11 Sustainable cities and Communities |
| 3 Good Wealth And Well-being | 12 Responsible Consumption And Production |
| 4 Quality Education | 13 Climate Action |
| 5 Gender Equality | 14 Life Below Water |
| 6 Clean Water And Sanitation | 15 Life On Land |
| 7 Affordable And Clean Energy | 16 Peace, Justice And Strong Institutions |
| 8 Decent Work and Economic Growth | 17 Partnerships and Goals |
| 9 Industry, Innovation And Infrastructure | |

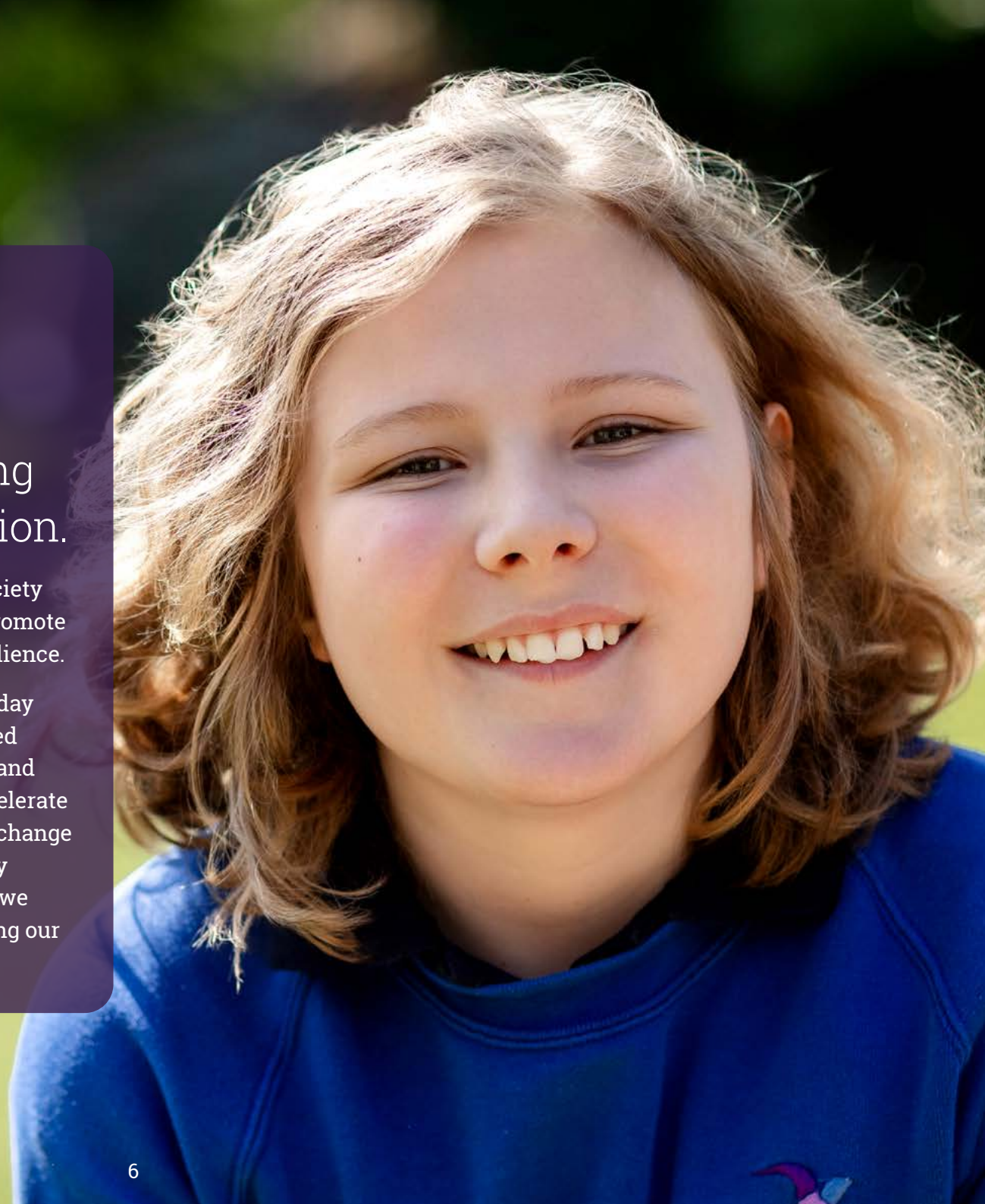


Our Mission

Witherslack Group, as a leading provider of SEN education in the UK, is committed to leading sustainable change by embedding sustainability into our core mission.

We strive to address the critical challenges faced by both society and the SEN sector, ensuring our practices and operations promote environmental responsibility, inclusivity, and long-term resilience.

The work that we do now not only helps our young people today but positively impacts society in the future. We are committed to leading by example, caring for the communities we serve and taking action to drive sustainability forward. We want to accelerate new behaviours that will help to deliver lasting, sustainable change across our sector. As an educational provider we are uniquely placed to educate our young people, lead by example in how we embed more sustainable practices, and to drive change among our partners and suppliers.

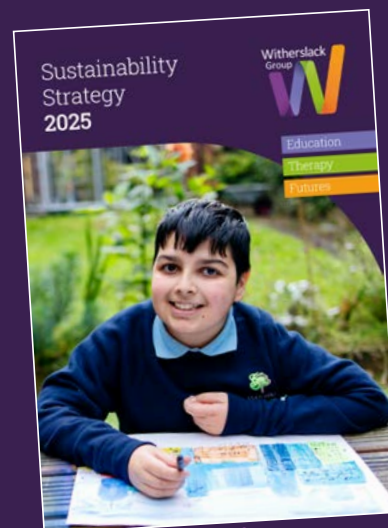


Sustainability Strategy

This year we formally published our Sustainability Strategy - this marks a significant milestone in our commitment to sustainability, social responsibility, and strong governance.

This strategy reflects our dedication to creating long-term value for our stakeholders, from the young people we support to our employees, investors, and wider communities. By setting clear goals and priorities, we are embedding ESG into our operations, driving meaningful change, and ensuring accountability in our progress. This is just the beginning of our journey, and we are excited to take measurable steps toward a more sustainable and responsible future.

Our Sustainability Strategy follows a clear and structured hierarchy that ensures each level drives tangible progress toward our overall vision. This hierarchy breaks down our ambitious goals into actionable steps, measurable targets, and key performance indicators (KPIs) to track our success.



This report will follow the structure of our Sustainability Strategy. Built around five core pillars which each address key aspects of our operations and the impact we aim to deliver across environmental, social and governance areas.



[Read our Sustainability Strategy here](#)

FY24 Highlights

Environmental Impact

- ✓ Carried out our first materiality assessment to develop our Sustainability Strategy

We measured our **First** carbon footprint through Greenly, our new carbon accounting software

We reduced our Scope 2 emissions to **Zero**



Social Impact

- ✓ Employee Net Promoter Score (eNPS) of **+42**, a **90%** response rate
- Achieved a **bronze accreditation** in Inclusive Employers' standards
- 8 employees graduating from the **Elevate & Aspire** programme



Governance

- ✓ Achieved **100%** good or outstanding OFSTED rating at our schools
- 105** employer partners supporting our WG Futures programme



Awards and Accreditations



Sustainable Nurturing Spaces

Our goal is to create sustainable learning environments that promote both environmental responsibility and young people's well-being.

These spaces are carefully designed to align with our young people's unique needs, supporting their educational journey while reducing our environmental impact.



Renewable Energy

Carbon Management

Sustainable Procurement

Resource Use

Energy Efficiency

Biodiversity

Our Targets

Renewable Energy



Achieve **80% purchased renewable energy** by 2030

20% of schools will have **renewable energy systems installed** by **2027** and **50% by 2029**

Carbon Management



Reduce carbon emissions by **20%** across all operations by 2030

Transition **30%** of the **vehicle fleet to hybrid/electric** by 2030

Install **EV charging points** at **20%** of our sites by **2026** and **50% by 2029**

We will open the **UK's first zero carbon SEN school** by the end of **2027**

Net Zero by 2050

Sustainable Procurement



Achieve at least **50% of procurement spend on sustainable suppliers** by **2028**, starting with high-impact categories like energy, office supplies, and food services

Reduce Scope 3 Emissions Linked to Procurement

Ensure **75% of key suppliers** are actively **engaged in sustainability initiatives** by **2028**

80% of IT vendors vetted for **ESG compliance** by the end of **2025**

Resource Use



Install water-efficient fixtures (e.g., low-flow taps, toilets) **in 100%** of facilities by **2026**

Divert 80% of waste from landfill through enhanced recycling programmes by **2028**

Ensure 50% of food waste is **composted** or **repurposed** through local partnerships by **2028**

100% compliant e-waste disposal by certified recyclers by the end of **2025**

Energy Efficiency



Transition **100%** of **lighting systems to LED** or equivalent **energy-efficient technologies** by Year **2029**

Achieve **5% reduction** in overall **energy consumption** across facilities within five years

Increase the usage of **sustainable energy** for our data centres

Biodiversity



Create biodiversity-enhancing green spaces (e.g., native plant gardens) in 100% of facilities by **2027**

100% of all **new construction sites** undergo a **biodiverse assessment** and **fully comply with regulation**

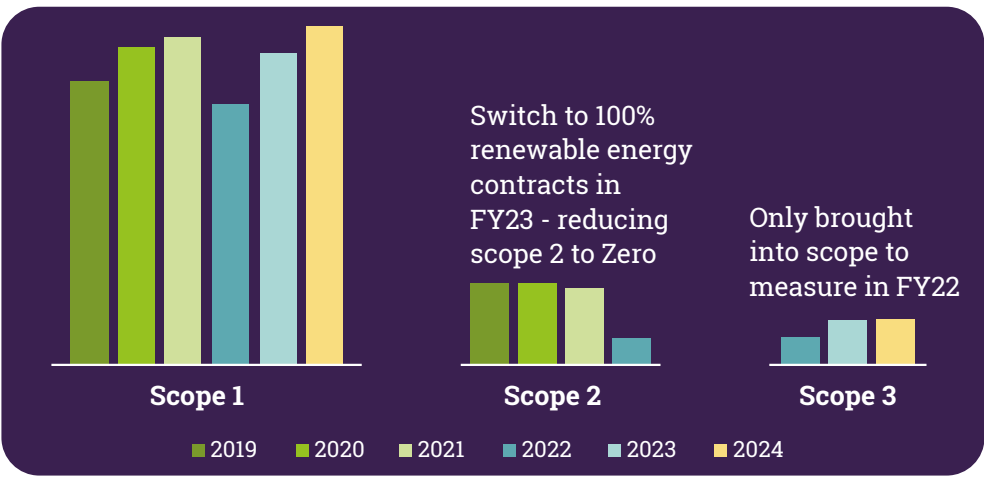
Sustainable Nurturing Spaces

Renewable Energy

In FY24, we saw an overall increase in emissions across all scopes, with total gross emissions rising by 9% to 4,475.2 tCO₂e due to growth in locations and employees.



As we have expanded, total greenhouse gas emissions have naturally increased due to increasing sites, developments and a growing workforce. However, during this growth, we've made significant strides in improving our efficiency and sustainability practices. Therefore despite the rise in absolute emissions, carbon intensity had reduced, highlighting gains in operational efficiency relative to revenue growth.



-51% (LB)
-62% (MB)

46% Reduction in location-based and 57% reduction in market-based carbon intensity since FY2019

Location-based emissions (LB) are emissions calculated using the average emissions of the electricity grid in the area where the energy is consumed.

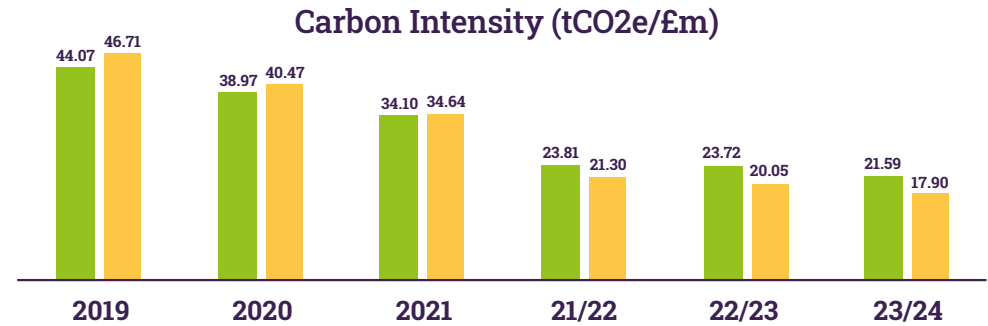
Market-Based emissions (MB) are based on the specific energy sources that we choose to purchase, therefore our switch to green tariffs is reflected in our market-based emissions rather than our location-based emissions.

-100%

Reduction in scope 2 emission due to switching to renewable energy contracts.

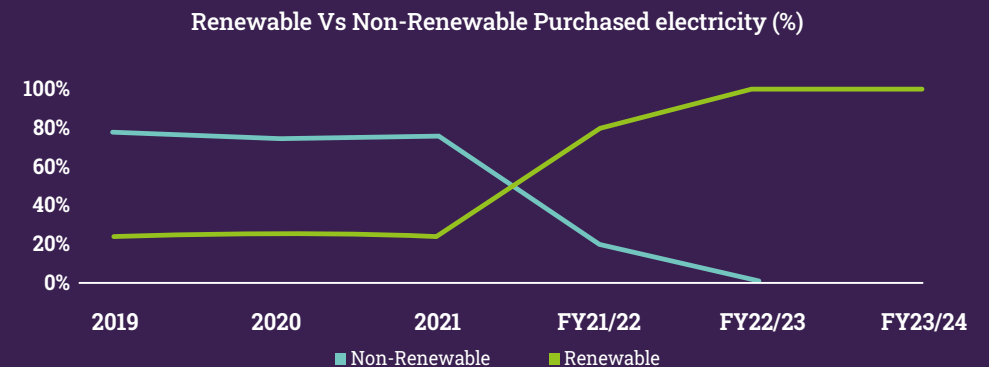
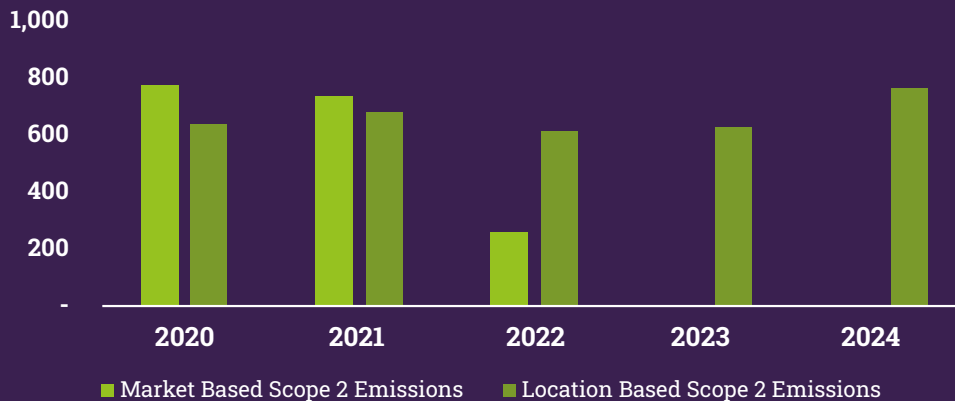
The carbon intensity figures show a positive trend in operational efficiency relative to emissions. In FY24, the organisation’s location-based carbon intensity decreased from 23.7 to 21.6 tCO₂e per £m revenue, while the market-based intensity fell even further - from 20.1 to 17.9 tCO₂e per £m.

These reductions of 9% and 11% respectively indicate that although total emissions increased year-on-year, revenue grew at a faster rate (20%), resulting in lower emissions per unit of economic output. This shows that as a group we are becoming more carbon-efficient and decoupling emissions growth from financial growth - an important step in aligning with long-term sustainability goals.



Metric	2022-23	2023-24	Change	Change
Intensity – Location-Based (tCO ₂ e/£m)	23.7	21.6	-2.1	-9%
Intensity – Market-Based (tCO ₂ e/£m)	20.1	17.9	-2.2	-11%
Intensity – Energy (kWh/£m)	112,122	102,376	-9,746	-9%

Our Scope 2 emissions are our indirect greenhouse gas emissions generated from the consumption of purchased electricity and heating. In FY22 we switched 80% of our electricity contracts to those from entirely renewable sources, including wind and solar (verified by carbon trust). This eliminated most of our Scope 2 emissions and supported the global shift towards a cleaner, low-carbon economy. In FY24 we increased the number of renewable contracts and purchased carbon offsets on those where we are still transitioning, to get our scope 2 emissions to ZERO.



On-site Renewable Energy

We are committed to reducing our environmental impact and enhancing sustainability across our sites.

As part of our ongoing efforts to promote renewable energy, we have implemented onsite renewable energy sources at several locations. We have solar panels at Castlefell School as well as Cheshire Hall School. We also have an air source heat pump at Lavender Lodge School. These installations not only help to reduce our carbon footprint but also contribute to the generation of clean energy, further supporting our goal of achieving net-zero emissions.

By integrating renewable energy into our operations, we are fostering a more sustainable future while ensuring that our sites remain energy-efficient and environmentally responsible. This initiative aligns with our broader Environmental, Social, and Governance (ESG) strategy, reinforcing our dedication to sustainability and positive long-term impact on the communities we serve.



Castlefell School
Solar panels installed



Cheshire Hall School
Solar panels installed

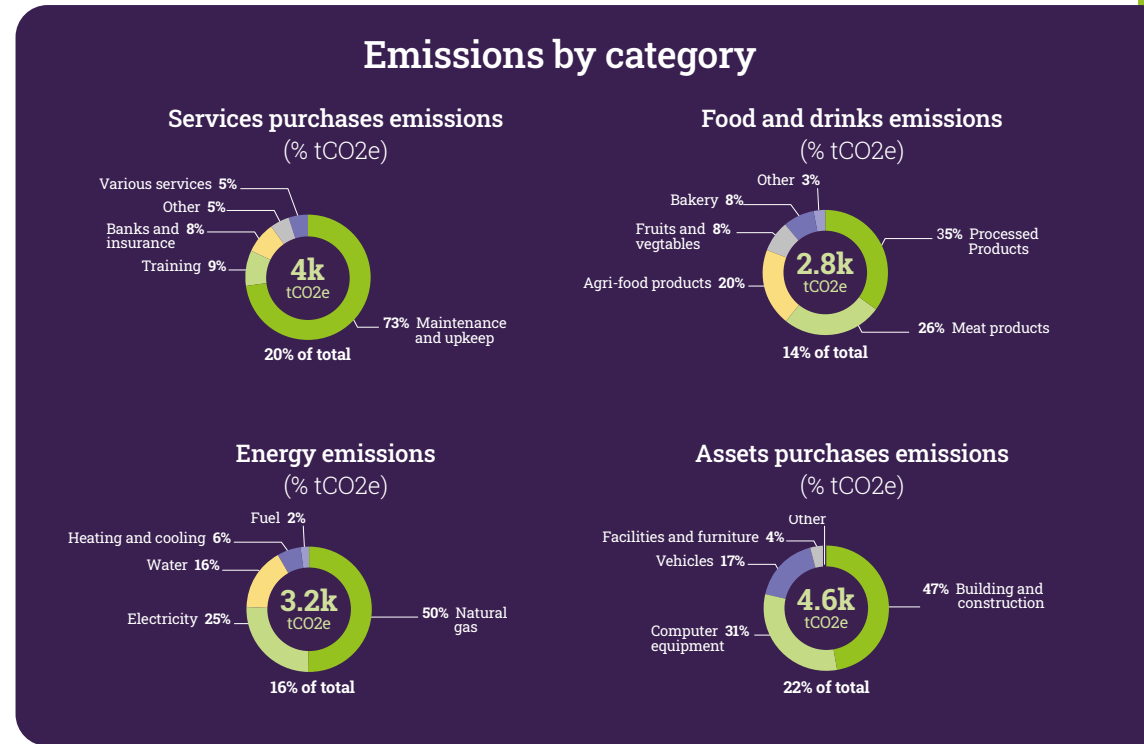
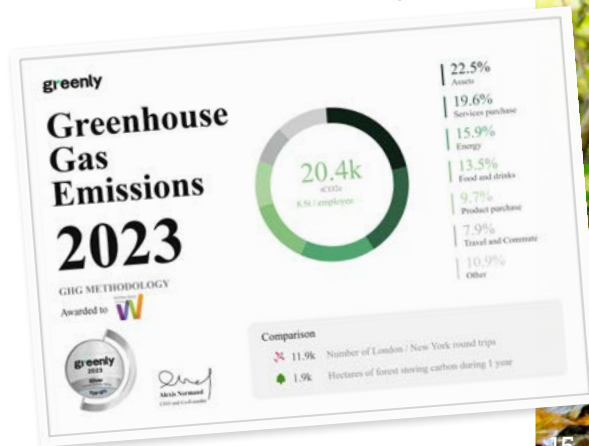


Lavender Lodge School
Air source heat pump installed

Playing our part in the efforts to mitigate the effects of climate change will always be a priority for Witherslack Group as we look to regularly measure and manage our carbon footprint.

This year we set up a lot of processes, collected a lot of data and measured our first full carbon footprint (including scope 3). While we have been measuring our scope 1 & 2 emissions for some time, we wanted to know the full impact of our operations and calculate our full carbon footprint figure. Therefore, we have measured our indirect scope 3 emissions for FY23 and we will continue to build on this moving forward.

Scope 3 emissions come from a wide range of sources, including the purchase of goods and services, employee commutes and emissions from our suppliers. Our total emissions for the year were 20.4k tonnes of CO₂e, or 8.5 tonnes per employee, earning us a Silver sustainability rating from Greenly. This is a crucial milestone in our sustainability journey, helping us identify key areas for action as we work together to reduce our carbon footprint.



Reducing our carbon footprint

Now we have measured our complete carbon footprint for FY23, which was an essential starting point on our journey to Net Zero. We can use these as a benchmark to set reduction targets in line with Science based Targets initiative (SBTi) which recognizes our commitment to reducing our absolute emissions.

The base year was chosen in accordance with the GHG Protocol guidance for tracking emissions over time as management believes FY23 provides an accurate reflection of our overall emissions profile, boundaries and current methodology. The Scope 2 indirect emissions for the base year were calculated using the market-based methodology.

We are driven by a dedication to creating a more sustainable future for our young people, employees and the wider community. Understanding the impact of climate change, we actively seek innovative ways to lower our environmental footprint, from carrying out ESOS surveys on our sites and increasing energy efficiency across our properties.



By making sustainability a core part of our operations we not only contribute to global environmental efforts but also foster a better, greener world for the people it serves, ensuring a positive legacy for future generations.



Roadmap to emission intensity reduction and net zero



Standard operating features

- Current practices require no or low costs
- Employee training on ESG issues
 - Increasing level of monitoring & tracking



Energy Efficiency

- Enhancing Efficiency
- Full LED retrofits
 - Light Sensors
 - New build efficiency



Renewable Power Procurement

- Investing in off-site renewable power
- Renewable gas and electricity contracts to replace existing



Retrofits and Electrification

Higher efficiency mechanical equipment to replace less efficient systems

- Fuel switching
- Electrification of heating
- New build efficiency

On-site generation

Harnessing clean renewable power

- Solar panels on-site
- Geothermal power on-site

Offsets and renewable energy certificates

Purchasing offsets and recs as a last report

- Shortfall (offsets)
- RECS, EACS, GOS

Employee Emissions

This year we conducted a company-wide employee survey gathering information on our employees' commute to work arrangements as well as their work from home and eating habits to establish an appropriate carbon emission attached to each employee. This will help us get a more reliable and accurate scope 3 emission figure.

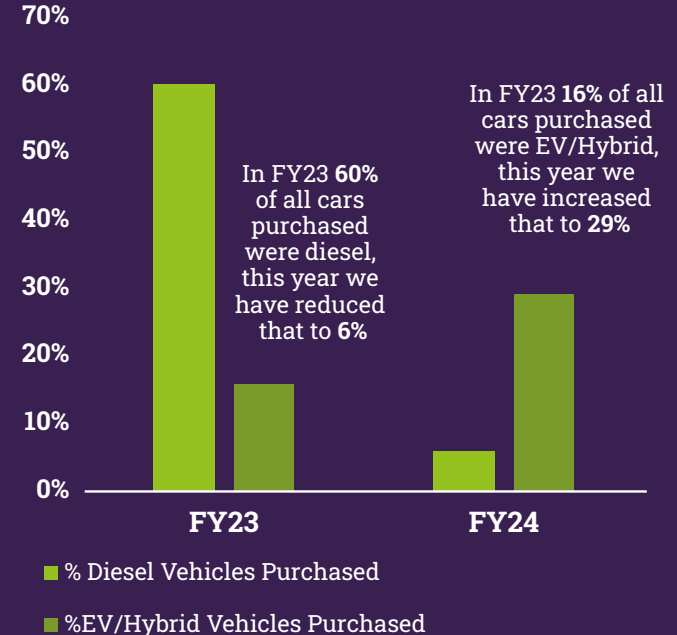
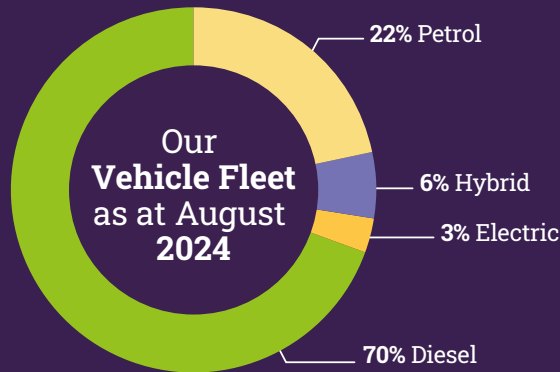
greenly

Average yearly commute emissions per Witherslack Group employee (kgCO₂e)

733.54

Decarbonising our vehicle fleet

We have set a goal to achieve a 30% electric and hybrid vehicle (EV/hybrid) fleet by 2030 as part of our broader commitment to sustainability and carbon reduction. Currently at 9%, the company is focused on gradually increasing adoption through strategic initiatives, including investment in charging infrastructure and aligning fleet procurement policies with sustainability objectives. As part of this commitment, we will stop purchasing diesel cars - ensuring that all new car additions to the fleet contribute to a lower-carbon future moving forward. In the last year only 6% of car purchases were diesel (FY23: 60%) and 29% were electric or hybrid (FY23: 13%).



To support the transition to a more sustainable fleet and to also encourage employees to make more conscious commuting decisions, we are investing in the installation of EV charging points across our sites.

This initiative ensures that as our company expands its EV and hybrid fleet, the necessary infrastructure is in place to facilitate efficient charging and vehicle usage. Additionally, by providing accessible charging options, the company aims to support employees who are considering switching to electric or hybrid vehicles which will have a positive effect in reducing our Scope 3 emissions.



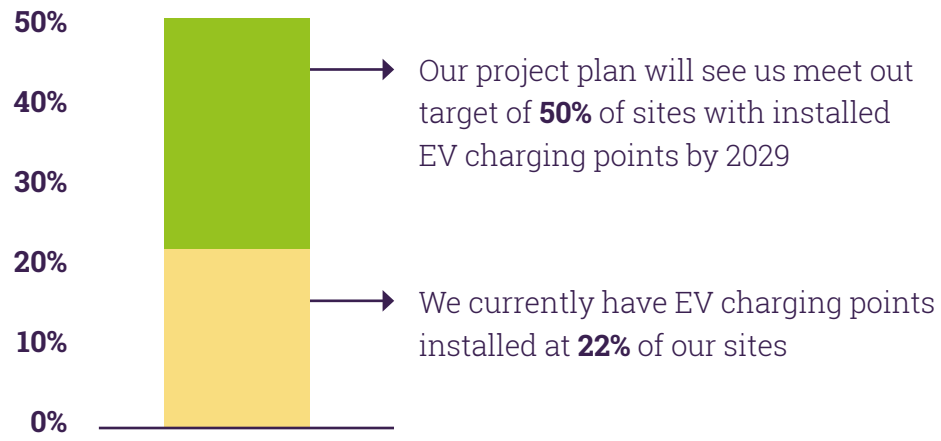
We have a goal to Install EV charging points at **20%** of our sites by 2026 and **50%** by 2029.



Castlefell School



Millcourt School



The Gables



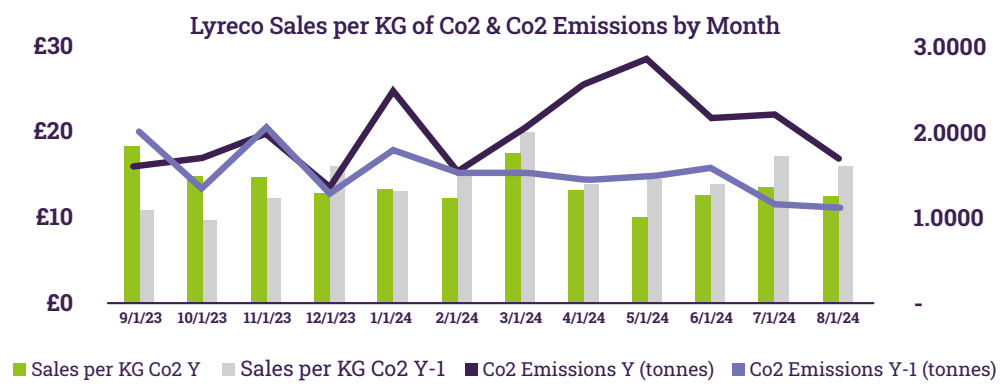
Hilden Park School

Sustainable Procurement


By prioritising ethical sourcing, reducing carbon emissions, and selecting suppliers who align with our ESG goals, we enhance operational efficiency while minimising environmental harm. This approach also ensures compliance with evolving regulations, promotes social responsibility within our supply chain, and contributes to our broader sustainability strategy.

This year we developed our procurement policy that includes our sustainability requirements.

Suppliers shall comply with all applicable environmental laws and regulations in the jurisdictions in which they operate. This includes laws, regulations, procedures and standards related to but not limited to air quality, air emissions, water conservation, water quality, water use, waste management, biodiversity, chemical use, re-use, recycling and energy efficiency. The Supplier shall provide to Witherslack Group information on its own carbon emissions on request.



Lyreco
(41% of our current YTD stationery spend)



- In FY24 280 deliveries were made by electric vans which represents 16% of all our Lyreco deliveries. This is a 96% increase on last years EV deliveries.
- Electric van deliveries have reduced CO2 emissions by 1.73tCo2.
- 71.46% of our spend YTD has been on Sustainable Products.



Reducing Food Waste

Estimates suggest that 8-10% of global greenhouse gas emissions are associated with food that is not consumed. Food is one of our largest material purchase as a company with over 50 sites proving daily meals to employees and students, food waste makes up a large proportion of our emissions. To tackle this, we have partnered with Nutritics, a data food management software which will not only allow us to set appropriate menus to support out students' diet and nutrition but also allow us to order exactly what's needed and in time reduce food wastage. The software will also support our compliance with food regulations. Alongside the food waste benefits the software has capability for carbon and water footprint scoring. This will allow us to engage in better procurement practice and reduce our environmental impact.



Little Wasters - Fern Park

The Little Wasters project at Fern Park was set up to reduce the levels of food waste at the home and encourage the young people to get involved. Providing straightforward strategies such as meal planning, effective storage solutions, and inventive methods to repurpose leftovers. The project has had a huge impact on the running of the home, changing daily habits for the better, and educating the home's young people on budgeting, resourcefulness and taking a sustainable approach which has long-term benefits for the environment.

These positive changes set a powerful example for our young people by showing them that small, consistent actions can lead to meaningful impact. These lessons align perfectly with Witherslack Group's wider sustainability goals by fostering a culture of awareness and action around reducing waste and conserving resources. By embedding sustainability into everyday routines, the Little Wasters project not only improves the home's efficiency but also empowers young people to carry these habits forward and drive positive change.



ESG CONTRIBUTION
OF THE YEAR

Reginald Dowson, Deputy Manager at Fern Park was our ESG Star Award winner this year for his efforts in setting up the project.

Small steps to drive meaningful change

Recycling

By the end of FY25 all sites will have **recycling** facilities to **recycle**, **paper**, **plastic** and **glass**.



Water Efficiency

This year we have **installed water efficient fixtures** (low-flow taps, toilets) in the majority of all our sites with the **aim to have them installed at 100% of our sites by 2026**.



Filtered Water Taps

We have installed filter water taps at all sites to **reduce the use of single use plastic water bottles**.

The installation of filtered taps also replaces the need for watercoolers which mean we can reduce the amount of plastic needed to refill the coolers regularly.



Composting

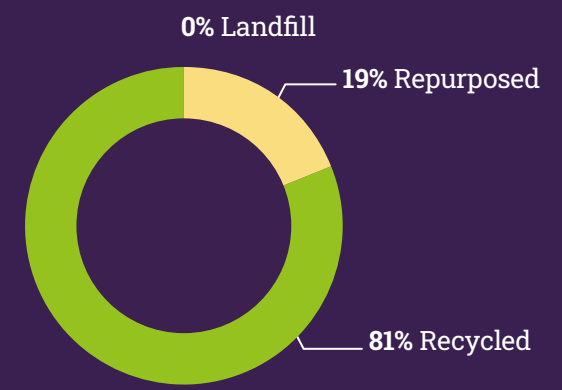
We have plans to **implement composting facilities** at all our sites to further **reduce food waste**.



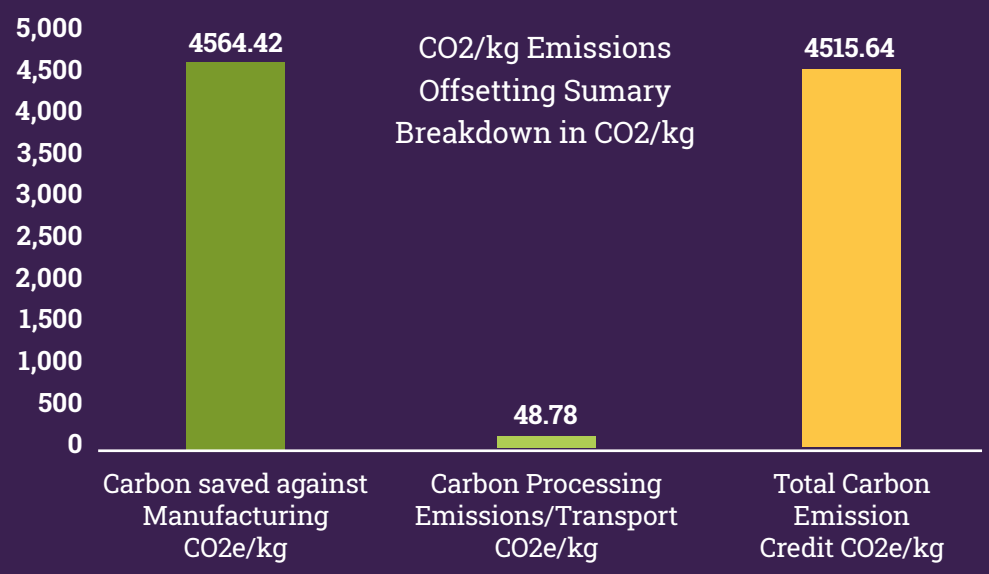


Recycling Our Redundant IT Equipment

We currently run a recycling programme where our retired IT equipment including desktops, laptops and smart phones are recycled. This prevents them generating e-waste for landfill where the chemicals and toxins within each device break down and leak into the surrounding soil, waterways, and natural habitats. In this recycling scheme the equipment is either repurposed and given a new lease of life becoming a valuable resource or it is safely recycled.



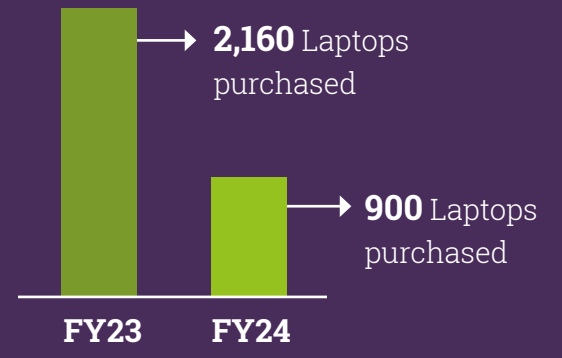
EGO Technologies limited measures our carbon emissions savings of all our recycling collections we plan to save lots of carbon emissions from entering the atmosphere by repurposing our redundant IT equipment.



Expanding IT Life Span

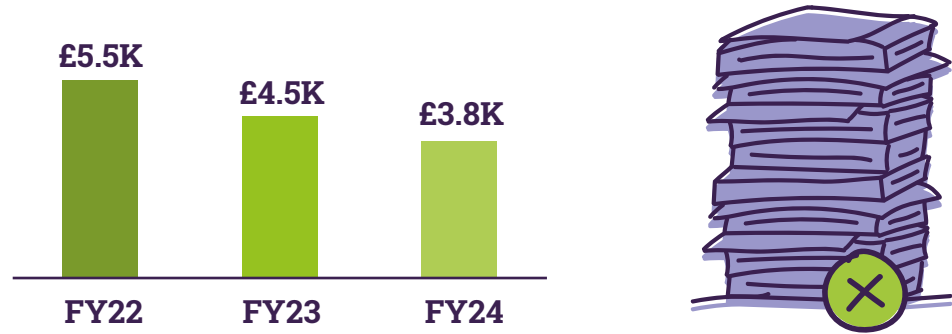
In the past couple years, we have increased the lifespan of our IT inventory from **3 years to 4 years** to reduce the amount of IT equipment that's required to replace outdated equipment.

Increasing our IT lifespan has reduced the number of laptops we have purchased by 58% since last year.



Going Paperless

Over the past 2 years we have reduced our paper usage at Head Office by 30%, measured through annual spend on our confidential waste disposal. Spending dropped from 5.5k per annum to 3.8k showcasing our efforts to move toward a paperless office.



This year, as part of our paperless initiative across the group we have brought in new software around planning to help prevent the need for printing and ensure our employees can still perform efficiently without the need for generating excess paper waste. We also utilise DocuSign to reduce the amount of printing required. Our employees have said that the system as well as increased awareness of sustainability through training and the roll out of the group-wide initiative has seen a drastic reduction in day-to-day paper usage.



Through Shred-It, our current paper waste removals for multiple sites, we have **saved 325.20 CO2e**. By recycling our paper waste. This is equivalent to 246.38 trees, 19,754 litres of water and 5,478 litres of petrol. It's also equivalent to 36.2 m³ of landfill saved (That's the same size as 240 full bath tubs).

To enhance our savings even further next year we will opt for collections to be made using EV vehicles to reduce associated scope 3 emissions.

Economic Cloud Provider

We have switched our cloud provider to ensure our data centre uses liquid colling rather than coal heated. The running and maintenance of data centres require significant power radiationally, data centres have relied on air cooling, but that method has its limitations, especially as data centres grow more powerful. More servers mean more heat and this is where liquid cooling comes into play. Liquid cooling systems circulate coolant directly to heat-producing components, effectively absorbing heat and removing it from the system faster than air could. This method is more efficient at removing heat, which means servers can operate at higher loads without overheating.

This transition has meant we have resulted in a **net power consumption reduction of over 18%**.

In addition to this, the new location in which our server is ran from now uses **100% renewable energy** to further enhance our Scope 3 Carbon Emissions Reductions.



Nurturing Biodiversity

These natural areas promote well-being, encourage outdoor learning, and provide habitats for a variety of plants and wildlife. By nurturing biodiversity on school grounds, we help foster environmental awareness in young people and contribute to a more sustainable future.



Strengthening Community Connections

We recognise the importance of building strong relationships with the communities in which we operate.

By collaborating with parents and carers, local authorities, stakeholders, and community partners, we empower positive change through education and sustainability efforts.

Together, we not only enhance our collective impact but also inspire responsibility for a brighter, more sustainable, inclusive future for all.



Stakeholder Engagement

Partnership & Outreach





**Stronger
Community Bonds**

Engaged communities that collaborate on sustainability initiatives and share common goals.

**Positive
Local Impact**

Tangible improvements in the local environment and community well-being through sustainability projects.

**Enhanced
Community Investment**

We are recognised as a leader in community-driven sustainability, further building trust and local support.

Our Targets

Stakeholder Engagement



We will have supported **1 million** parents and carers of SEN Children by 2030

Develop and distribute a quarterly **sustainability newsletter** for parents and the wider community by 2026

Publish annual impact reports available to all external and internal stakeholders

Partnership & Outreach



1% of our annual **net profit** will be allocated to community development and investment activities

Partner with over **100 employers** through our WG Futures programme by the end of 2025



Stakeholder Engagement

We pledge to support **1 million parents and carers** of SEN Children by 2030.

385,000 
Website visitors

There have been an outstanding number of visitors to our website where people can access free advice and support. We partner with charitable organisations and sector leading influencers to bring together the best advice and support in the SEN sector.

14,500 
Direct support calls taken

Our parent support line offers bespoke advice, guidance and support to parents and carers. Whether it's advice on how to get an EHCP, to finding the right school for your child or how to work better with your social worker.

60,000 
People signed up

Parents and carers and professionals can sign up to receive regular updates and advice. Each week we share out our latest advice and support with our engaged marketing audience. The advice is shared in multiple formats; articles, videos, webinars, podcasts and support packs.

16,000 
Podcast listens

We have over 100+ podcasts recorded with teachers, therapists, external guests to provide expert advice and guidance. We release new episodes monthly with special guests from our partner organisations of SEN sector influencers, bringing the most up to date topics to parents, carers and professionals to enable them to empower their children and young people with SEN.

80,000 
People engaged - events and support packs

We host monthly face to face events across the country and weekly online webinars to empower parents, carers and professionals across the SEN sector. For example, webinars on ADHD & Autism: Masking In School, to Promoting Inclusion and supporting learning at the home. We ensure that we promote our webinars to make sure they are accessible to everyone and maximise the number of parents and carers we can impact. During each webinar Q&A sessions receive hundreds of comments where our community of parents, carers and professional support each other. Our regular support packs receive 38,000 sign-ups a year too.

1%

This year we have pledged to **donate 1%** of our **annual net profits** to community development and investment activities.



WG Futures Programme

We have seen over 600 partnerships with employers created across our schools that enable so many positive experiences and inspirational encounters for our young people.

These partners have been so generous with their time, effort and ability to inspire our students. Over the last 18 months, passionate and engaging professionals from a wide range of roles and sectors have attended our schools and talked to our young people about their job role, chosen career path, and how they progressed along this journey, realising over 8,000 student and employer contacts. Through these Futures Ambassador sessions, our young people have continually been made aware of the different jobs within so many industries, the skills required, and the opportunities and rewards that could potentially be on offer to them.

Young people have also been provided with a host of opportunities to connect with employers through group visits to the workplaces of a wide range of businesses, enabling 938 individual experiences to gain a real understanding of the world of work. This activity brings to life the job roles that the young people have heard about through Future Ambassador sessions and accompanying careers related learning.



In collaboration with The ADHD Foundation Neurodiversity Charity, we have created the WG Futures Employer Award, celebrating the commitment of organisations and teams that have created opportunities and experiences to encourage and inspire aspirational futures for young people with a wide range of special educational needs. To date we have recognised 6 companies with the award, including the likes of Roadchef, Wilmott Dixon and Inclusion Housing.



Strengthening Community Connections

Partnership & Outreach

“ At Microsoft, we believe in empowering every individual to achieve more, and our partnership with Witherslack Group through the WG Futures programme aligns perfectly with this mission. By supporting neurodiverse young people, we’re fostering an inclusive future where talent is recognised beyond traditional measures. The Futures programme is a powerful initiative that creates meaningful opportunities, and we’re proud to contribute to a journey that helps young people reach their full potential.

Microsoft, Olivia Edwards,
Cloud Solution Architect



“ Our partnership with Witherslack Group is so important. By supporting the WG Futures programme, we hope to be able to show how incredibly versatile and exciting life in hospitality, and the wider working world, can be. We are also really proud to be supporting Futures through mentorships and workshops, making sure that everyone understand they have a seat at our bench.

Wagamama, John Conyers,
Kaizen Culture Lead



Strengthening Community Connections Partnership & Outreach

At GMI Construction Group, we believe in investing in future talent, and supporting the WG Futures programme aligns perfectly with our commitment to inspiring and educating the next generation. Helping any student build confidence or curiosity about the industry is a fantastic achievement and a testament to the impact of this initiative, and we're proud to be a part of it.

**GMI Construction, Nick Turner,
Senior Responsible Business Partner**



Our partnership with Witherslack Group has been incredibly valuable in raising brand awareness and creating meaningful opportunities for growth within the communities we serve. The WG Futures programme has proven to be a transformative initiative, fostering skills development, building confidence, and creating clear pathways for success. It aligns perfectly with our strategy of breaking down barriers and creating opportunities for all. We wholeheartedly support the programme, as it empowers individuals to reach their full potential through practical experiences. Together, we are shaping a brighter, more inclusive future for everyone involved.

**Mollie's Motels - Rebecca Lester,
People & Development Business Partner**



Leading with Integrity and Accountability

Effective governance and strong leadership are essential to ensuring that Witherslack Group's sustainability goals are achieved with transparency, accountability, and a commitment to ethical practices.

We aim to lead by example, ensuring that all practices, decisions and operations reflect our core mission of supporting children with special educational needs. By embedding integrity in our educational governance and sustainability practices, we set a benchmark for trust, leadership, and responsibility in the education sector.

Corporate Behaviour & Ethics

Sustainability Governance

Educational Governance

Climate Risks

Data security & privacy



Our Targets

Corporate Behaviour & Ethics



Code of conduct is reviewed and updated annually and distributed to all employees

Board members to undergo an **annual board self-assessment**

Sustainability Governance

Ensure that The Witherslack Group's **sustainability policies** and **strategy** are **reviewed** and updated on an annual basis, achieving **full compliance** with **industry best practices**

Educational Governance



Benchmark educational performance annually against national and international peers (and Ofsted)

Climate Risks



We **assess climate risk** on a regular basis as part of our annual risk review



Data Security & Privacy



Achieve 100% compliance with **UK Data Protection Act** across all operations by the end of 2026

Annual audits ensuring **compliance with GDPR** and other data protection laws

100% of relevant employees trained in **safeguarding** and **secure practices** tailored for special needs environments

A Culture of Integrity

At Witherslack Group, our ethics and compliance programme forms the foundation of our organisation. Our Code of Conduct defines our responsibilities to our stakeholders and guides our decision-making, ensuring that integrity remains at the core of everything we do. The Code of Conduct applies to all employees, across our organisation.

We encourage employees to report any suspected misconduct or concerns through our confidential reporting system, which is available 24/7 online and by phone. Reports can be made anonymously unless otherwise required by law, and we takes steps to protect the confidentiality of those who report in good faith.

We are committed to fostering a safe and ethical workplace and encourage employees to speak up about any potential violations of our Code of Conduct, including safeguarding concerns and unethical practices. All reported issues are thoroughly investigated, and appropriate actions are taken.



ESG Structure



Policies

Our policy statements govern our ESG programme and establish our expectations for employees and business partners. Our ESG policy governs all departments and provides clear guidelines.

ESG Committee

Our established ESG committee is made up of department heads, regional directors and heads of operations. They meet monthly and are responsible for overseeing ESG compliance and regulation.

In FY24 we proudly achieved
100% good or outstanding Ofsted
rating of our schools.



We know our schools are amazing but don't take our word for it, see what Ofsted said:



**Avon Park
School**



**Bridgeway
School**



**Dovetree
School**

For many pupils attending Avon Park School, it is a life-changing experience. Pupils get a fresh opportunity to succeed in education, sometimes after previous negative experiences. Pupils appreciate the ambitious, high-quality curriculum provided. They know that staff will do whatever they possibly can to support them. Pupils feel safe, listened to and understood.

Pupils receive an education at Bridgeway School. They develop the confidence, self-esteem and perseverance that they need to approach their next steps with success. Many parents and carers described the school as 'life-changing' for their child. The school has a remarkable impact on pupils, academically and socially.

Dovetree is an ambitious school. Pupils, staff and the wider school community are inspired by the drive to 'Dream, Believe, Achieve'. Pupils' personal development is at the heart of everything that the school does. It is woven into all aspects of the curriculum, teaching and wider provision.

Enterprise Risk Management

Enterprise Risk Management (ERM) at Witherslack Group is a crucial framework for identifying, assessing, and mitigating risks that could impact the organisation's ability to provide high-quality education and care.

Given the Group's focus on supporting children and young people with special educational needs, its ERM strategy ensures operational resilience, regulatory compliance, and financial stability.

Key areas of risk management include safeguarding, regulatory changes, financial sustainability, ESG-related risks (such as carbon footprint and workforce diversity), and cyber security. By integrating ERM into strategic decision-making, Witherslack Group ensures a proactive approach to risk, enabling long-term growth while maintaining its commitment to excellence in care and education.



Leading with Integrity and Accountability

Climate Risks

Climate risk is an increasingly important consideration in Witherslack Group's Enterprise Risk Management (ERM) framework. As ESG (Environmental, Social, and Governance) factors become more embedded in risk management, climate-related risks must be identified, assessed, and mitigated to ensure long-term sustainability and regulatory compliance.



We categorise our climate risk into two pillars

Transition Risk

Policies and regulations are constantly changing especially surrounding carbon emissions and the reporting required. Increased regulatory compliance is a step in the right direction to tackle the problems we face globally but it does propose a risk of noncompliance to us as a company. That's why we are taking a forward-thinking approach and ensuing we are transparent in our ESG ambitions and goal as well as our carbon footprint measurement.

Our ESG ambassador, Rebecca Cronin, attends regular training to ensure that we are compliant with upcoming updates and regulation changes.

Physical Risk

Physical risks arise from climate change-related events, including extreme weather events such as floods and storms. These events pose a risk to all our school and home sites so we ensure we measure and manage the risk associated with each site by carrying out individual risk assessments and putting in place appropriate methods of defence to mitigate the risk. Longer term risks may increase as rising temperatures and increased rainfall could disrupt building integrity of sites, so not only do extreme weather events need to be considered but also how we improve the long-term mitigations by considering how we are building new infrastructure or considering acquisitions of new sites.

Climate-Resilient Infrastructure

All new school and home developments are designed with climate resilience in mind. This includes elevated construction in flood-prone areas, enhanced drainage systems, heat-resilient roofing and ventilation, and the use of sustainable materials that withstand extreme temperatures and conditions.

Business Continuity and Emergency Preparedness



Our organisation maintains business continuity plans tailored to extreme weather scenarios. Employees across all sites receive training on emergency procedures, including fire wardens. We conduct regular drills and revise our plans based on seasonal forecasts and post-incident reviews.

Energy and Utilities Resilience

We are investing in energy resilience, including solar power installations and battery storage at key sites. These systems ensure the uninterrupted operation of essential services during outages caused by weather-related disruptions.

Supply Chain and Transportation Contingency

Recognising the vulnerability of logistics and transport during extreme weather, we request business continuity plans from our suppliers and flexible transport arrangements to ensure the continued delivery of food and educational resources.



Site Risk Assessments and Adaptation Planning



Each site undergoes environmental risk assessments that include climate-related hazards. We collaborate with environmental consultants and local authorities to evaluate flood risk maps, historical weather data, and future projections. These assessments inform both short-term response strategies and long-term investment planning for adaptation works.

Governance and Continuous Improvement

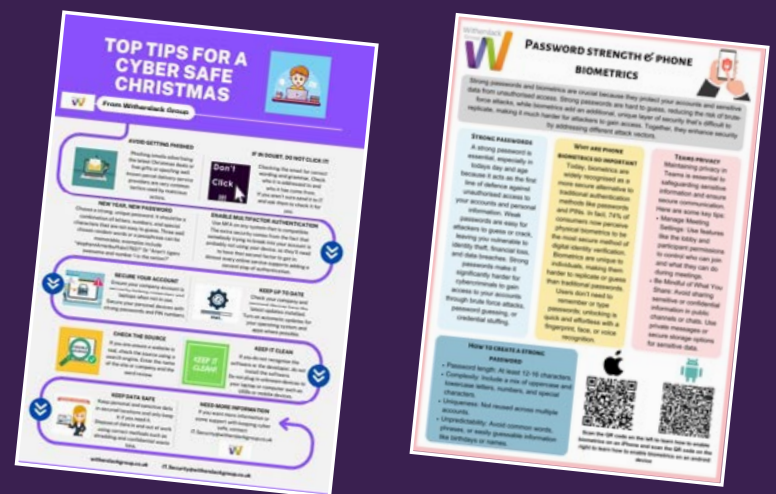


Oversight of climate-related risks is integrated into our risk management framework, with regular updates to the Board and Audit & Risk Committee. We also monitor developments in climate science and participate in sector-wide initiatives to improve resilience practices.

Data Protection

We have a responsibility to protect our young people's data and privacy. We use all the tools available to us to ensure we have systems including technological solutions, strong policies and processes, and employee training.

We have a full in-house team led by a Data Protection Officer dedicated to ensuring the safety of our young peoples and employees' personal data. Employees are required to complete annual cybersecurity and privacy training courses. We engage with third parties to conduct periodic assessments on our cybersecurity at both the corporate and property level, and to perform on-site breach simulation exercises. We also undergo annual audits to ensure our technology environment remains aligned with the ISO 27001 security control requirements.



We have a range of policies surrounding data protection to ensure that any breach's are handled appropriately and efficiently



Our IT & Data Security team send out monthly newsletters to all employees covering a range of topics, including the benefits of setting a strong password, how to avoid common cyber scams and general online safety. This ensures all our employees remain vigilant in this area and keeps them updated on any new issues.

Our employees are required to complete annual data protection training courses. We also have a range of online resources readily available to all employees surrounding data protection and online safety.



Data Protection Induction - E-Learning



Data Protection Refresher - E-Learning



Online Safety for Young People - E-Learning



Data Protection for School Administrators



Cybersecurity on the curriculum

We also try to highlight the importance of staying safe online to our young people. At the end of last year talks were held at multiple schools including Bridgeway School and Oversands School.

During the sessions, they covered the dangers of cybercrime, shared valuable tips on how to protect personal information on social media, avoid online scams, and create strong passwords. Our young people were also educated on the consequences of hacking and cyberbullying, reminding us all of the need to act responsibly online.



Empowering Our Teams

We believe that our employees are our greatest asset. Empowering our team through professional development, well-being support, and sustainability leadership is essential to driving our sustainability goals forward.

By investing in our people, we create a workplace culture that thrives on collaboration, innovation, and inclusion. Through targeted leadership initiatives and holistic support, we equip our team to drive positive change - within the organisation and beyond.

Diversity & Inclusion

Employee Wellbeing

Health & Safety

Ethical Recruitment

Sustainability Awareness



Our Targets

Diversity & Inclusion



Achieve a **Silver Award** from **Inclusive Employers** by **2026**

Ensure all **people policies use inclusive language** by the **end of 2026**

Deliver **D&I training to all managers**, ensuring all those in leadership roles have completed EDI training and include this as part of the managers' induction and development programs (Aspire, Elevate)

Ensure **transparency in pay equity** and **reduce the pay gap** by tracking EDI metrics

Employee Wellbeing



Provide **access to mental health and wellbeing resources** for 100% of staff

Regularly **assess employee engagement** and wellbeing through the **Happiness Index**



Health & Safety



All employees receive **H&S training** every 3 years

Ethical Recruitment



Ensure that **100% of recruitment is aligned with ethical practices**, focusing on diversity and skill fit

Sustainability Awareness



Provide **sustainability training** to 100% of employees annually

Workforce

As at August 2024 we had a workforce of **2,628 people** made up of:

205 
Therapists

We have a wide range of therapists including Speech & language, Occupational and psychologists

921 
Teachers

From head teachers to teaching assistants, we have a wide range of teachers at all stages of their career

263 
Head Office Employees

Teams including; finance, human resources, recruitment, marketing, property and more

466 
Other Employees

Including grounds maintenance, chefs, administration, and cleaners

773 
Care Employees

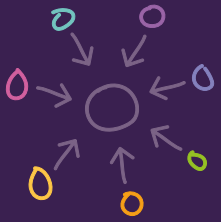
Pastoral care staff in our schools and homes



“ We are committed to being a place where every person is accepted as equal, inspired to participate and empowered to succeed. We aspire to be a magnet for talent from all backgrounds, cultures and communities and provide an environment where people can be their authentic selves and contribute to creating an amazing environment for our employees and young people.

Jenni Morris, Chief People Officer





EQUALITY, DIVERSITY AND INCLUSION



Our EDI Strategy

Witherslack Group is dedicated to fostering an inclusive workplace that mirrors the diverse backgrounds of the families and young people they support.

They believe that when individuals can be authentic and feel safe to express themselves, it enhances collaboration and outcomes for all.

This commitment extends to teaching the importance of diversity, including neurodiversity, to our young people, reinforcing a culture of empathy and understanding. By encouraging employees to bring their full selves to work, Witherslack Group aims to create an environment where everyone can thrive and advance their careers.

It's really pleasing to see that the inclusivity work we're already doing - such as neurodiversity e-learning, using workforce diversity data to help inform our decision making, including recruitment strategies, as well as our focus on reviewing and updating our policies, and promoting diversity awareness events throughout the year - has been recognised with this accreditation. Partnering with Inclusive Employers not only means we can access a considerable range of resources to support our focus on equality, diversity and inclusion, but - through the accreditation process - help us identify areas where we can continually improve.

Jo Sibson, Associate Director HR



Our inclusive approach in creating a Great Place to Work has been recognised with a leading workplace inclusion accreditation.

It's the first time we've entered the Inclusive Employers accreditation process, so to gain bronze for a first submission is a real achievement. Our aspiration is to ultimately reach gold. Inclusivity forms a key part of the Great Place to Work pillar of our Group Strategy, where we say:

We have a fair and inclusive culture where people feel comfortable being themselves at work.

We want to continue our efforts in ensuring we are providing an inclusive workplace and have developed an action plan which will see us making further developments.



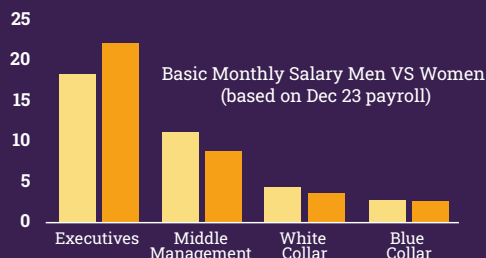
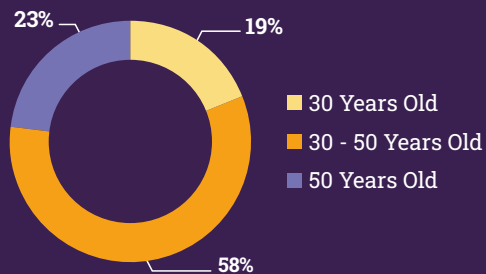
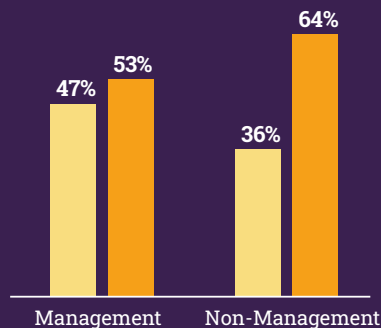
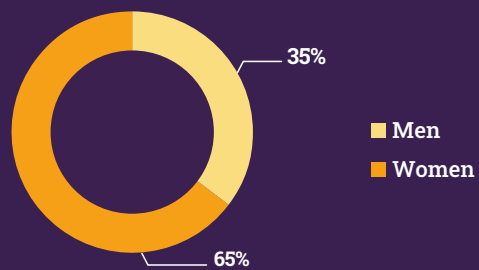
At Witherslack Group we want to celebrate diversity and this year we have added a number of eCards to our online platform so all events can be celebrated among employees including Black history month, Pride and Diwali.

The grid contains the following eCards:

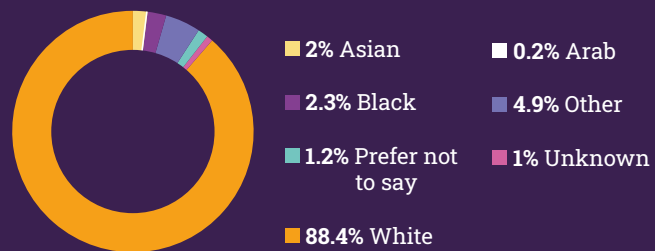
- Happy Hanukkah: Blue background with a menorah and stars.
- Celebrate with Pride: Rainbow heart with 'PRIDE' text.
- Happy Eid: Purple background with mosque domes and lanterns.
- Happy Diwali: Dark purple background with a lit diya.
- Happy Easter: Light blue background with a rabbit and flowers.
- Have a Merry Christmas: Green and red background with a Christmas tree and gifts.
- Celebrating Black History: Black background with colorful geometric patterns.
- Happy Holi: Purple background with a heart and colorful powder.
- Happy Passover: Light blue background with a matzah and a glass of wine.

Workforce

As at August 2024



Ethnic Diversity



Building a diverse, equitable and inclusive workplace

At Witherslack Group our Gender Pay Gap is 6.79% (median). This is lower than the national average gender pay gap of 13.1% for all employees, inclusive of both full time and part time (Source Office for National Statistics 2024 provisional data). As a company we have seen an improvement from our previous results in 2023 where the Group's Gender Pay Gap was 8.98% therefore narrowing our gender pay gap. We are pleased with this positive improvement; however, we are committed to continuously improve. We typically have more people in lower paid roles (e.g. teachers, teaching assistants, cooks, maintenance workers) than in higher paid roles, for example head teachers. Our lower paid roles have a higher percentage of female workers which can be seen in the Lower and Lower Middle quartile, which reduces the median pay for females.



Overall headcount

	Female	1623		Male	933
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Difference in Mean Pay 5.98% **Difference in Median Pay 6.79%**

How the median pay gap is calculated - The median is the midpoint of the hourly pay levels of all our employees. The gap between the median male pay and median female pay is then divided by the median male pay and expressed as a percentage.

Board Diversity

	Women	21%		Ethnic diversity	9%
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[Read Our Gender Pay Gap Report Here](#)

Fostering a positive work environment

Employee wellbeing is a priority for Witherslack Group, as our people are at the heart of the exceptional support we provide. By fostering a positive work environment, offering mental health support, and promoting work-life balance, we enhance employee satisfaction, retention, and performance. Prioritising wellbeing not only aligns with our ESG commitments but also strengthens our ability to deliver high-quality care and education, creating a lasting positive impact on both our workforce and the communities we serve.

Me@WG is our internal wellbeing and recognition program designed to support employees across the organization. It focuses on promoting mental health, personal development, and work-life balance through various initiatives, resources, and support networks. We partner with a variety of companies and organisations to offer our people high quality benefits and resources.



Flexible Benefits

We offer our employees the opportunity to flex their benefits to better support them and their family.



They can apply to:

- Buy or sell up to 3 days of your annual leave
- Flex up on the existing 2x life insurance that we offer to employees and benefit from the preferential rates we have from our provider, Canada Life
- Upgrade on their existing Medicash cover which we provide to all employees

Our employees and their loved one's health is important to us, that is why we work with Medicash to provide all employees with everyday healthcare cover which includes a confidential EAP (Employee Assistance, programme) offering unlimited access to advise, information, coaching and counselling where appropriate.



Move

In connection with class pass we have a selection of exercise videos available to all employees on our wellbeing portal as well as articles and offers for gym and leisure memberships to encourage staff wellbeing and fitness.



Money

We provide guides, tips and tool to help employees manage their money and improve financial wellbeing.



Munch

In connection with hello fresh we offer our employees a variety of recipes as well as guidance on diet and nutrition. Alongside discounts through a variety of supermarkets.



Mind

We offer a collection of mindfulness audios and tips to help reduce stress, increase productivity and help you sleep better.



Elevate and Aspire



The **Aspire** programme is designed to support and broaden skills and knowledge for career next steps. It offers awards in leadership & management and face to face masterclass sessions from experts in the business on topics that give leadership insights into how we run our business and the value that drives us. It allows employees to make connections within the business and gain the expertise that shape knowledge and understanding. Ultimately the programme is designed to equip people with necessary skills to take the next step in their career.



50% of our Aspire and Elevate delegates across all cohorts have been successful in progressing or changing career paths.



The **Elevate** programme is focused and intensive to identify, develop, support and nurture high potential deputy managers and deputy head teachers to take that next step in their careers. It is important to us to invest and grow our own talent to be able to deliver our growth strategies. This consists a series of workshops, learning experiences, coaches and mentoring.



8% of our workforce are part of the early talent programme.

Claire Dinsdale, Deputy Head Teacher at Hartwell School joined the Elevate programme in 2024 and was Deputy Headteacher of Elmbank and Wrenfield Learning Centres. After being Acting Head of the Learning Centres, she then moved to be Deputy Head Teacher at Hartwell School to gain experience of the role in larger and more diverse setting.

I was lucky to be part of a fabulous team of leaders during my time on the course. We developed professional relationships, but also learnt about each other's leadership styles and vulnerabilities. It is good to have people to call and bounce ideas off who are in similar roles to myself, which I wouldn't have known without the networking opportunities the course provided. I learned how my career could develop in ways I didn't think possible prior to joining Witherslack Group. The company are supportive in developing leaders from within and this has further boosted my motivation to reach for these future possibilities.

Claire Dinsdale, Deputy Head Teacher, Hartwell School



Annual Star Awards



As part of our commitment to employee wellbeing and recognition, the **WG Star Awards** continue to play a vital role in celebrating the outstanding contributions of individuals and teams across our organisation. Launched to recognise those who go above and beyond in embodying our values, the WG Star Awards highlight the exceptional dedication, innovation, and teamwork that drive our shared success.

Nominated by peers and leaders alike, award recipients are selected for demonstrating excellence in their roles, culture, and making a tangible impact in their areas of responsibility, each winner represents the very best of Witherslack Group.



The Awards not only honour individual and collective achievements but also reinforce a culture of appreciation and inclusivity. They serve as a key pillar in our broader approach to employee engagement and wellbeing, ensuring that our people feel valued, seen, and motivated.

This year we saw a record number of nominations, reflecting the strong spirit of recognition and mutual respect that exists across the organisation.

Mental Health First Aid

We have trained a number of our employees through mental health first aid England accredited programs. This external course provides insights and strategies to support employees at their point of need. Each mental health first aider is aware of what support is available to Witherslack Group employees and will listen without judgement.

Employee Assistance Programme (EAP)

This is a service we provide to all employees with 24/7 telephone counselling and support plus up to eight face-to-face counselling sessions as well as online counselling and support.

Refer a friend

We run a refer a friend scheme where existing employees can earn a bonus if they recommend friends or acquaintances for open positions. This increases retention as referred employees typically feel more connected to the company and boosts employee engagement knowing they have a say in building the team.



Monitoring Employee Engagement

Conducting employee engagement surveys is essential for promoting employee well-being. These surveys provide valuable insights into the needs, concerns, and overall engagement levels of the workforce.

By identifying areas of stress or dissatisfaction, employers can address potential issues before they escalate, fostering a healthier work environment. Regular feedback also empowers employees, making them feel heard and valued, which in turn boosts morale, engagement, and productivity. Ultimately, employee engagement surveys help organisations create a supportive workplace culture that prioritises employee well-being.

As a group we conduct confidential surveys twice a year to monitor our employee engagement at the company. From the results we can gather scores based on sites, age brackets, gender, length at the company, and job role.

This year we received an overall Enps score of **+42**.

This is a **10% increase** on last year with an increased **response rate** of **90%**.

Year	Happiness Index Score
2022	29
2023	38
2024	42

Following the survey relevant managers are provided with action plans to help address areas of concern or improvement that have been identified from the survey to ensure that employee feedback is recognised and acted upon.

OUR TEAM'S SURVEY ACTION PLAN
WE ASPIRE TO BE A GREAT PLACE TO WORK AND PROVIDE GREAT OUTCOMES FOR OUR YOUNG PEOPLE. WE'RE DRIVEN BY A PASSION FOR SUSTAINABILITY AND MAKING A DIFFERENCE TO THE COMMUNITIES WE'RE PART OF.
FROM OUR EMPLOYEE SURVEY RESULTS:
WE CELEBRATE THE THINGS WE DO WELL, WHICH ARE:
AND WE'LL DO THE FOLLOWING TO IMPROVE:
WE'LL UPDATE THIS ACTION PLAN ON:

Health and Safety

Our in house SHE team publish regular health & safety bulletins for our employees to read to ensure compliance covering a variety of topics such as electrical safety, first aid, training opportunities available and updated policies.



Employee Training

This year we held a health and safety forum, delivered by our inhouse SHE team to other members of staff. The forum presented a fantastic opportunity to discuss topics and share ideas with colleagues. This helped in setting the tone for the health and safety culture of the group.

HEALTH AND SAFETY BULLETIN
Issue 7 – September 2024

Updates and information from the Safety, Health, and Environment Team
The information has been split into three categories to help clarify what action you need to take. Some categories may not appear in each bulletin, depending on the topics we share.

Alerts Critical - Action Required	Updates Check Operational Practices	Information Learning and Development
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This year we made a switch to BioHygiene as our chosen supplier for general cleaning products. They were chosen due to the lower environmental impact and health risks associated with their substances, a move made to not only support our environment but our employees and young people's health.



Empowering Our Teams

Health & Safety

The Health and Safety team undertake reviews of all of our settings each year and provide ongoing support to employees to ensure we stay legally compliant but also continually work towards best practice standards. We work closely with our Primary Authority and specialist partners to ensure we are aware of current risks, changes to practice, and new technologies to allow us to continually improve and look at how we can keep everyone safe and healthy. We have staff in each setting who are focussed on overseeing health and safety and checking we are following our policies and procedures and that any issues are worked through to reduce risks.



Proud to hold an ISO 45001 accreditation

Witherslack are proud to hold an ISO 45001 accreditation for our occupational health and safety management system which sets us apart from other educational providers.



This externally audited and accredited standard provides a robust framework for how we manage risks across the organisation and ensures we are continually reviewing and improving the safety of our environments and reducing health risks to our young people and employees. At its core, ISO 45001 helps us move from being solely reactive to legislative requirements to a proactive and positive safety culture that aims to be best in class with employee involvement at all levels of the organisation and within settings. We work through a continuous cycle of planning, supporting implementation, reviewing operational practices, and evaluating performance to correct gaps and areas of non-conformity to continually enhance our standards. Having a dedicated health and safety team means we are focussed on the specific topics important to Witherslack Group and responsive to our needs whilst continually building on our current standards and a positive safety and health culture.

For parents, relatives and those responsible for children with special educational needs, trust is everything. Our ISO 45001 certification is our public promise to you that we have gone beyond standard safety practices. It means we have implemented a globally recognised framework to systematically and continuously identify, manage, and mitigate every potential health and safety risk, to create the safest possible environment for our young people. This is not just about doing the basics, it is about weaving health and safety into every decision we make because their safety and well-being is our highest priority.

Emily Brimson-Keight, Head of Group Health & Safety

Ethical Recruitment

Ethical recruitment is essential to Witherslack Group's commitment to fostering a diverse, inclusive, and responsible workplace.

By ensuring fair hiring practices, safeguarding workers' rights, and partnering with ethical recruitment agencies, we attract skilled professionals who share our values. This approach not only enhances our reputation as a responsible employer but also supports our broader ESG commitments, ensuring a positive social impact across our operations.

Being consciously inclusive in our hiring

Each member of our Recruitment team completes ED&I and unconscious bias training. To combat potential biases, we provide inclusion training for all our recruiters and assessors to ensure evidence-based hiring decisions in conjunction with a trained and dedicated inclusion adviser.



We want individuals from all backgrounds to get to know us, engage with us, and explore what opportunities we have to offer. We run:

- Virtual opportunities across all regions for candidates to get to know us, regardless of where they live, work, or study, giving a wider and more diverse pool of candidates the chance to connect with us
- Talent attraction programs
- Recruitment events
- Working with a variety of partners

Partnerships and Awards

We became an official partner of Movement to Work.

We are thrilled to be working with movement to work charity, providing young people with meaningful employment opportunities, skills development, and career pathways. Through this collaboration, we offer work placements, mentoring, and training to help individuals gain confidence and experience in a supportive environment. The partnership aligns with our commitment to social impact, ensuring that young people, including those facing barriers to employment, have the chance to build a brighter future.



This year our Recruitment team were finalists in a range of awards, including:



In-House Recruitment Team of the Year (1,000 to 4,999 employees) category at the British Recruitment Awards 2024.



Recruiter Awards 2024: Most Effective Employer Brand



Talent Lab Awards: Best Development of an Employer Brand



Personnel Today Awards: Innovation in Recruitment

We partnered with the Diversity jobs group. Our job vacancies are now published on their job boards, which connect diverse talent to inclusive employers who are proactively sourcing talent from under represented groups.



We have gained the Bronze Award in collaboration with the Armed Forces Covenant. The Bronze Award is given to employers who have signed up to the Armed Forces Covenant and promote being a forces-friendly employer - providing careers for veterans, and supporting reservists and the partners of serving military personnel. Our partnership has been instrumental in fostering a strong relationship with the armed forces community, offering them fantastic future employment opportunities.



Sustainability Training

Teaching our employees about sustainability at Witherslack Group is essential to fostering a culture of environmental responsibility and long-term thinking across our schools and services.

By equipping our team with the knowledge and tools to make sustainable choices, we not only reduce our environmental impact but also set a strong example for the children and young people in our care. Sustainability education empowers employees to integrate eco-friendly practices into everyday operations, from energy and waste management to curriculum planning and community engagement. We have plans roll out these training programmes on our online learning portal to make accessible to all employees and always be accessible.



Supporting tailored education and care for our young people

At the heart of our strategy, we are committed to empowering our young people with the knowledge, skills, and values needed to become aware and responsible towards global sustainability issues.

By embedding sustainability and social responsibility into our curriculum, we provide personalised support that aligns with each student's unique needs and aspirations. Through innovation, adaptability, and collaborative learning, we equip young people with the tools they need to navigate real-world challenges and create meaningful, positive change in their communities and beyond.



Curriculum Integration

Young Person Outcomes via Futures Programme

Sustainability Challenges

Our Targets

Curriculum Integration

4 17



100% of schools to integrate climate change into at least 3 areas of the curriculum

Map the sustainability curriculum to UN Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs) by 2026

Young People Outcomes via WG Futures Programme

8 10



100% of our engaged alumni will be in employment, education or accessing direct WG futures support by the end of 2025.

Sustainability Challenges

11 13



All schools to achieve eco schools award by the end of 2025

Eco-committees set up at every school to lead on action plans and ESG related projects.





Global Goals Week

A world where **individuals and communities** can live and work with **dignity and equity** within the planetary boundaries.

Global Goals Week (GGW) is an international annual awareness campaign to mobilise communities, demand urgency and supercharge solutions for the Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs) - held whilst world leaders are meeting in New York.

The SDGs are the only agreed blueprint for our planet, and they provide an accessible yet holistic framework that influences beyond green technical skills, to embrace the mindset every future employee will require to create the change we need by interconnecting climate, social and economic uncertainty.

Global Goals Week 2025 at Witherslack Group will help young people understand the context, roles, skills, and employability opportunities of tomorrow and through to 2030 and beyond.



GENERATION EARTHSHOT

Along with aligning our group wide goals with the sustainable development goals (SDGs) we also want to make sure our young people also understand them.

GGW at Witherslack Group will consist of 5 themed days of lessons, access to support materials + signposting, interactive activities, and guest speakers to inspire, educate and guide students in connecting localised solutions to global challenges.



Our WG Futures Programme

We are proud to see the positive impact that WG Futures is making, not just on our current students but also in supporting their wider families, as well as engaging our long-term alumni and assisting them in finding not only employment, but a pathway forward into the future they deserve. We are supporting an ever-growing number of young people directly into employment and are supporting our alumni to provide assistance into employment, when the time is right for them.



3,317 student contacts with employers



395 experiences of the workplace



119 young people being supported into employment



114 engaged student Alumni



25% of school leavers are choosing an employment related pathway



34 young people have been supported into roles

Data as at the end of the 2024 academic year

Matthew's Futures Journey

NetworkRail

The Journey

Matthew left Pontville School in 2016 to do a Level 3 qualification in Design. After achieving this, he went onto Salford University and gained a 2:1 degree in Geography.

One of the key things Matthew wanted to do was to work with trains, as he is a train fanatic, so Matthew and his mum were put in touch with one of the Futures Team's Talent Managers who produced a presentation outlining the types of jobs available in the rail industry. Between them, they had several meetings and did some work on updating Matthew's CV.

Support

Matthew was successful at acquiring a job at Network Rail, not only did he have a job offer in an industry he loves, but this was all achieved in less than three months. After the job offer, we worked with him and the employer to make sure everything went seamlessly in the build up to starting and in the early stages in role.

Results

After our first meeting we felt much more positive knowing we had someone to support us on our journey, you gave us the confidence to think that yes, we can do this. You helped with the CV, with job searches and when Matt was offered his first interview you were there yet again giving advice, hints and tips - all invaluable to us and you are still here giving support to Matt with his personal development too, which in turn is also boosting his confidence. Speaking as a parent, those first steps were daunting, and you have made that scary road much easier to follow and understand.

Matthew's mum, Denise

Harley's Futures Journey



The Journey

Harley is a friendly and active young person passionate about music and community involvement. He turned his personal experiences into creative expression through rapping, DJing, and performing at open mic events.



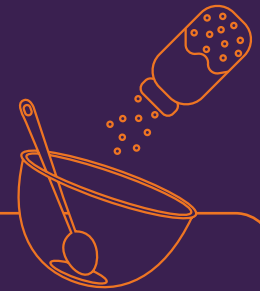
Support

In 2023, he was introduced to Roadchef through the Futures Partnership, where he explored career opportunities and attended taster days. Enthusiastic about the industry, he engaged in training, interview preparation, and mentoring. Successfully securing a role in June 2024, he gained confidence, impressed his manager, and adjusted to shift work with support. His passion for music remained, but he embraced career progression, proudly using his first pay check to buy a new phone. His father was incredibly proud of his achievement, marking a major milestone in Harley's journey.



Results

WG Futures has played a vital role in supporting Harley's journey, providing guidance, skill development, and career opportunities that helped him transition from a passion-driven mindset to a structured career path. Through workshops, mentoring, and real-world experiences, Harley gained confidence and practical skills, ultimately securing an apprenticeship with Roadchef.



Green Skills Programme

We want to equip our students with not just the skills and career options for the now, but also the future.

It is unquestionable that the green agenda and true sustainable solutions are what will drive society and industry over the coming decades and, in turn, will be the areas of true opportunity and acceleration across all sectors and careers.

Many of our students are truly passionate about issues such as climate change and ensuring the long-term well-being of our planet for future generations, and so, through this programme, we want to harness this passion and equip them with the skills, experiences and their own personal network to enable them to consider a wide range of 'Green' roles and career paths.

Ultimately, it's about ensuring our students not only have bright futures but can also play their part in shaping the future of our planet.

Key learning messages include:

- Climate change is accelerating and demands adaptation
- Sustainability is everybody's responsibility
- Global impact needs local actions
- Every job needs to become a climate / sustainable job

Learning competency themes include:

- Sustainability values - fairness / justice / connection to nature
- Acting for sustainability - political, collective and individual action
- Sustainability sciences - understanding planetary boundaries, regenerative practices and data management
- Sustainable futures - futures literacy, adaptability, exploration and circular design
- Embracing complexity - systems and critical thinking, solutions focus and information skills



Supporting tailored education and care for our young people Young Person Outcomes via Futures Programme

In this project we are working with 2030hub, the world's first, and only private sector, United Nations (UN) recognised Local2030 Hub, and active member of the new Local2030 Coalition accelerating sustainable cities around the globe. Built around the Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs) 2030hub inspires, cross-fertilises and supports passionate local and international changemakers within organisations across all sectors.

The learning programme includes and expands on traditional approaches to the often narrow and technical 'Green' skills approaches to fully embrace holistic sustainability.

It uses the United Nations Sustainable Development Goals as a guiding framework and utilises expert input, not just from our partners but also their network, to develop a learning experience that equips our students with a strong range of fundamentals across the Green Skills landscape.

The programme combines the latest thought-leadership on green and sustainability competencies; pragmatic real-world private sector experience; and the specific learning requirements of neurodivergent students to provide a unique hyper-local and global educational experience that delivers tangible career improving results.



2030hub



Eco Schools Awards

The Eco-Schools Awards is an internationally recognised award for excellence, celebrating environmental action and learning.



The pupil-led programme involves hands-on learning that gets the whole school and the wider community involved in exciting environmental projects. The programme celebrates the milestones of participants as they achieve Bronze Award and Silver Award, leading to the Green Flag Award. To achieve the award, pupils took ownership of the Eco-Schools programme, enabling them to develop their listening, communication and teamwork skills.

As at Aug 2024, 26 of our schools have achieved the eco school award with all schools looking to achieve it by the end of FY25. Those already with the award are looking forward to achieving the **Healthy School award** in addition.



They were passionate about making a difference through the programme, with one pupil commenting:

I want to be an eco-warrior to help us (the school) understand how easy it is to make a mini change but also how important it is overall.

Bridgeway's Green Flag Success

Staff and pupils from Bridgeway School get up the eco committees (made up of pupils across all age groups) and conducted a thorough review of the school environment and curriculum before developing a year long plan of action. Their hard work paid off this year when they were awarded with the highest grade possible.



An Eco-School representative had this to say about the school:

It's wonderful that you have appointed such a representative Eco-Committee, this shows your school's excellent commitment to both the programme and the eco-cause. It's great to see that you had such a group of eager, enthusiastic volunteers. Your Action Plan shows that your Eco-Committee has carefully considered how they can involve their entire school in their planned Eco-Schools' activities to achieve maximum impact and raise awareness amongst their school community. We love the range of activities that you and your Eco-Committee planned for delivery - the fact that they cover both indoor (energy monitors and a 'switch-off' campaign with awareness posters) and outdoor (creating a 'living wall', sowing wildlife-friendly plants, creating habitats and a beach clean) activities is excellent.

Appendix



Performance Tables

		2022	2023	2024
ENVIRONMENTAL IMPACT - SECR				
GREENHOUSE GAS EMISSIONS				
Scope 1 Direct Emissions	Emissions (tCO ₂ e)	2,527	3,014	3,255
	Emission Intensity (tCO ₂ e/£m)	17.58	17.48	15.70
Scope 2 Indirect Emissions	Location-based Emissions (tCO ₂ e)	619	54.7	68.0
	Location-based Emission Intensity (tCO ₂ e/£m)	4.31	389.9	382.6
	Market-based Emissions (tCO ₂ e)	259	445	451
	Market-based Emission Intensity (tCO ₂ e/£m)	1.80	2.58	2.17
Scope 3 Emissions	Fuel & Energy Related Activities Emissions (tCO ₂ e)	-	3,014	3,255
	Business Travel Emissions (tCO ₂ e)	-	17.48	15.70
	Total Emissions (tCO ₂ e)	276		
	Emission Intensity (tCO ₂ e/£m)	1.92		
Total Scope 1,2 & 3	Total Location-Based Emissions (tCO ₂ e)	3,422	4,090.9	4,475.2
	Emission Intensity (tCO ₂ e/£m) Location-Based	23.81	23.7	21.6
	Total Market-Based Emissions (tCO ₂ e)	3,062	3,458.8	3,705.9
	Emission Intensity (tCO ₂ e/£m) Market-Based	21.31	20.1	17.9
Energy				
Energy Consumption (kWh)	Natural Gas	7,068,095	7,978,867	8,592,825
	Electricity	3,199,569	3,052,172	3,715,625
	Transport Fuel	5,981,170	4,786,119	6,635,004
	Heating Oils/Fuels	-	3,509,855	3,868,867
	Total	16,248,834	19,327,013	22,812,321
	Energy use Intensity (kWh/£m)	113,051	112,106	110,045
	Energy use Intensity (kWh/YP)	12,613	11,899	12,627
	Energy use Intensity (kWh/FTE)	8,938	8,284	8,991

		2021	2022	2023	2024
SOCIAL IMPACT					
Average FTE for FY24	Teachers & Assistants	678	714	956	1,045
	Care Workers	640	645	696	838
	Ancillary Staff	109	108	131	154
	Admin & Other Staff	292	345	544	528
	Directors	7	6	7	5
	Total	1,726	1,818	2,334	2,570
Average Headcount for FY24	Teachers & Assistants	694	729	986	1,081
	Care Workers	647	649	786	830
	Ancillary Staff	142	142	178	196
	Admin & Other Staff	321	374	483	544
	Directors	7	6	7	5
	Total	1,811	1,900	2,440	2,656
GENDER EQUALITY (data based on reporting date of 5th April in line with our annual gender pay gap report)					
Gender Split	Women (%)			60.3%	63.5%
	Men (%)			39.7%	36.5%
Gender Pay Gap	Difference in Mean Pay (%)			7.8%	6.0%
	Difference in Median Pay (%)			10.7%	6.8%
	Difference in Mean Bonus Pay (%)			20.5%	8.3%
	Difference in Median Bonus Pay (%)			40.0%	-20.9%

Sustainability Accounting Standards Board (SASB)

	SASB Code	Metric	2024
DATA SECURITY	SV-ED-230a.1	Description of approach to identifying and addressing data security risks	At Witherslack Group, data security is a top priority given the sensitive nature of the information we manage, particularly in relation to the children and young people we support. We have a dedicated in-house Data Security and Data Protection team responsible for identifying, assessing, and mitigating data security risks across all areas of the organisation. This team operates under a comprehensive framework of robust policies and procedures, ensuring full compliance with legal and regulatory requirements, including the UK GDPR. Regular risk assessments, employee training, and proactive monitoring form a core part of our approach, helping to safeguard personal and organisational data. The importance of data security to our business cannot be overstated, it is essential to maintaining the trust of our service users, their families, and our stakeholders, and it underpins our commitment to delivering safe, high-quality care and education.
	SV-ED-230a.2 HC-DY-230a.2	Description of policies and practices relating to collection, usage, and retention of student information	We manage student data responsibly across its lifecycle, aligned with ESG goals and legal obligations: Collection: Transparent, lawful, and minimal data collection with annual consent updates. Use: Data used solely for education and care, protected by access controls, MFA, VPN, and annual staff training. Retention: Retained only as needed, per a regularly reviewed retention schedule. Processing: Secure processing with encryption, DPIAs, and vetted third-party contracts conforming with Article 28 GDPR. Disclosure: Shared only with consent or legal basis, under strict agreements and secure channels. Destruction: Securely destroyed per published retention timelines. We conduct PIAs/DPIAs for new or changed processing, integrating privacy-by-design and risk mitigation into our ESG framework. Breach response plans and data subject rights are governed by tested policies. See pages 44 & 45 for more information on data security at Witherslack Group.
QUALITY OF EDUCATION & GAINFUL EMPLOYMENT	SV-ED-260a.1	Academic outcomes*	Average number of GCSEs per pupil forFY24 was 7.6 with total amount of GCSE's achieved at 641 (201 young people in Year 11).
	SV-ED-260a.2	On time completion rate (%)	66% of our young people leavers in FY24 were through full completion (leaving naturally after year 11)
	SV-ED-260a.3	Percentage of school leavers opting for employment related pathways (%)*	25% of our FY24 leavers chose an employment related pathway. See page 68.
MARKETING & RECRUITING PRACTICES	SV-ED-270a.1	Policies to ensure disclosure of key performance statistics to prospective students in advance of collecting any fees and discussion of outcomes.	Prospective students can access key performance data and admission policies via each school's website, including: SEN Information Reports (per Children and Families Act 2014 & SEND Regulations 2014) School Prospectuses (per Non-Maintained Special Schools Regulations 2015) Outcomes and Impacts These disclosures support informed decisions, promote transparency, and contribute to stable enrolment. They also enhance trust and demonstrate compliance with legal and ESG standards.

We seek to provide material, decision-useful sustainability information to our investors in line with the recommendations of the Sustainability Accounting Standards Board (SASB). We considered SASB's Education Standards and Healthcare Delivery Standards in developing the following table of key sustainability metrics for our owned and leased properties. | *Witherslack Group has slightly adjusted the metric wording to better reflect its operations, while maintaining alignment with the intent of the SASB metric. Original metric wording can be found in SASB's Industry Standards

	SASB Code	Metric	2024
MARKETING & RECRUITING PRACTICES (continued)	SV-ED-270a.2	Total amount of monetary losses because of legal proceedings associated with advertising and marketing	£0
	SV-ED-270a.3	1. Instruction and studenty services expenses and	£128.8m
		2. Marketing and recruiting expenses	£2.2m
		Revenue from government funded student aid and private student loans.	£207.3m
ACTIVITY METRICS	SV-ED-000.A	Number of students enrolled, as at end of year	1,887
	SV-ED-000.D	Number of: (1) teaching staff and (2) all other staff (FTE)	959.84 1,694.75
ENERGY MANAGEMENT	HC-DY-130a.1	Total energy consumed (GJ)	70,707
		Total % of energy from grid electricity	18.78% - Excludes 99.78GJ from EV charging
		Total % of energy from renewables	18.78%

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	SASB Code	Metric	2024
EMPLOYEE RECRUITMENT, DEVELOPMENT & RETENTION	HC-DY-330a.1	(1) Voluntary and (2) involuntary turnover rate for: (a) physicians, (b) non-physician health care practitioners, and (c) all other employees	(1) Voluntary Turnover Rate (a) Physicians: Not applicable (b) Non-Physician Health Care Practitioners (Clinical): 28.9% (c) All Other Employees: School Staff: 20.1% Teachers: 3.2% Care Staff: 29.2% Head Office Staff: 2.5% (2) Involuntary Turnover Rate (a) Physicians: Not applicable (b) Non-Physician Health Care Practitioners (Clinical): 1.6% (c) All Other Employees: School Staff: 1.5% Teachers: 0.1% Care Staff: 1.3% Head Office Staff: 0.0%
	HC-DY-330a.2	Description of talent recruitment and retention efforts for health care practitioners	See report section 'Empowering Our Teams', pages 46-64
CLIMATE CHANGE IMPACTS ON HUMAN HEALTH & INFRASTRUCTURE	HC-DY-450a.1	Description of policies and practices to address: <ol style="list-style-type: none"> the physical risks because of an increased frequency and intensity of extreme weather events, emergency preparedness and response 	See pages 41-43 on 'Climate Risk'
ACTIVITY METRICS	HC-DY-000.A	Total Young People Capacity* <ol style="list-style-type: none"> Education Care Integrated 	2162 122 119

We seek to provide material, decision-useful sustainability information to our investors in line with the recommendations of the Sustainability Accounting Standards Board (SASB). We considered SASB's Education Standards and Healthcare Delivery Standards in developing the following table of key sustainability metrics for our owned and leased properties. | *Witherslack Group has slightly adjusted the metric wording to better reflect its operations, while maintaining alignment with the intent of the SASB metric. Original metric wording can be found in SASB's Industry Standards.

Global Reporting Initiative (GRI)

Our report is in accordance with the GRI standards, using the GRI 1: Foundation 2021 guidance. There is no relevant GRI sector standard for our industry.

GRI Standard Title	Disclosure No.	Disclosure Name.	Response
GRI 2: GENERAL DISCLOSURES 2022	2.1	Organisational details	Witherslack Group began over 30 years ago with the mission to create better opportunities for children and young people with special educational needs (SEN) who were struggling to thrive in traditional school and care settings. The Group's origins trace back to the opening of its first school in the village of Witherslack, Cumbria – a setting that inspired both the ethos and the name of the organisation. Since then, Witherslack Group has grown to become the UK's leading provider of specialist education and care. Today, they operate a national network of over 35 specialist schools, children's homes, and integrated therapeutic services. Their services are designed to meet the needs of young people with a range of diagnoses, including autism spectrum conditions
	2.2	Entities included in the organization's sustainability reporting	Witherslack Group Limited
	2.3	Reporting period, frequency and contact point	Qualitative and quantitative disclosures in the Sustainability section refer to the calendar year 1 September 2023 to 31 August 2024 in alignment with our financial reporting period. Reporting frequency is annual. Publication date: 31 July, 2025 Contact point: sustainability@witherslackgroup.co.uk
	2.4	Restatements of information	None during this reporting period.
	2.5	External Assurance	External assurance was not obtained for this report. However, internal review processes were conducted to ensure data accuracy. The organization may consider independent assurance in future reporting cycles.
	2.6	Activities, value chain and other business relationships	Witherslack Group operates in the education and care sector, specialising in support for children and young people with Special Educational Needs and Disabilities (SEND)
	2.7	Employees	See page 46-64 for our 'Empowering Our Teams' chapter
	2.8	Workers who are not employees	We do not currently report on workers who are not employees. The most common type of workers are regular and limited term employees and the most common type of work performed is agency teachers and cleaning staff.
	2.9	Governance structure and composition	Witherslack Group is overseen by a senior executive team led by the Chief Executive Officer, Tracey Fletcher-Ray., supported by functional directors responsible for education, care, clinical services, HR, finance, and operations. The Group is owned by an investment firm, with governance also supported through board-level oversight and compliance committees. The governance structure reflects a commitment to safeguarding, quality assurance, and educational excellence, with key subcommittees addressing risk, safeguarding, and inclusion.
	2.10	Nomination and selection of the highest governance body	Appointments to the Board and senior leadership positions are made based on sector expertise, leadership experience, and alignment with Witherslack Groups values. Selection processes include due diligence checks and an emphasis on safeguarding and regulatory compliance. External recruitment is used where appropriate to maintain objectivity and diversity of thought.
	2.11	Chair of the highest governance body	The Chair of the Board is independent of the executive management team and is responsible for ensuring strong governance practices, ethical oversight, and alignment of strategy with the Group's mission to support children with SEN.

Global Reporting Initiative (GRI)

Our report is in accordance with the GRI standards, using the GRI 1: Foundation 2021 guidance. There is no relevant GRI sector standard for our industry

GRI Standard Title	Disclosure No.	Disclosure Name.	Response
GRI 2: GENERAL DISCLOSURES 2022	2.12	Role of the highest governance body in overseeing the management of impacts	The Board has ultimate responsibility for monitoring the organization's social, environmental, and educational impacts. Performance reports on outcomes (e.g., safeguarding, quality of care, education inspections) are reviewed quarterly, alongside risk registers and stakeholder feedback. Sustainability and ESG considerations are increasingly embedded into strategy discussions, particularly around inclusive education, workforce wellbeing, and environmental performance of properties.
	2.13	Delegation of responsibility for managing impacts	Operational responsibility for managing environmental and social impacts is delegated to the Sustainability champions by their relevant sponsors. These sponsors report regularly to the CEO and Board on performance, compliance, and improvement initiatives.
	2.14	Role of the highest governance body in sustainability reporting	The Board and senior executive team review and approve sustainability reporting, including environmental data, safeguarding outcomes, and stakeholder engagement summaries. Future reports aligned with GRI or ESG frameworks will also be signed off at the executive level.
	2.15	Conflicts of interest	Witherslack Group has a robust conflicts of interest policy in place that applies to all Board members, executives, and relevant employees. All members of the highest governance body are required to declare any personal, financial, or professional interests that may conflict with their duties. Declarations are updated annually and reviewed during governance meetings. Where a conflict arises, the individual is excluded from related discussions and decisions.
	2.16	Communication of critical concerns	Mechanisms include a dedicated whistleblowing policy with anonymous reporting options. Escalation protocols for safeguarding concerns, managed by Designated Safeguarding Leads. Quarterly review of serious by the Executive Leadership Team and Board. All critical issues are logged, reviewed, and acted upon in line with legal and regulatory requirements.
	2.17	Collective knowledge of the highest governance body	The Board and executive leaders receive regular briefings and training on key topics including: Safeguarding and child protection, Special educational needs (SEN) regulations, Inclusion and diversity, Health and safety, Emerging topics in ESG, regulatory compliance, and sustainable practices. The collective expertise of the governance body includes education, clinical care, business leadership, and social responsibility.
	2.18	Evaluation of the performance of the highest governance body	The performance of the Board is evaluated annually through Self-assessments and performance reviews.
	2.19	Remuneration policies	Witherslack Group's remuneration policy aims to attract and retain high-quality professionals, Align compensation with responsibility, impact, and sector standards, Maintain fairness and transparency.
	2.20	Process to determine remuneration	Remuneration is determined by a Remuneration Committee.
	2.21	Annual total compensation ratio	

Global Reporting Initiative (GRI)

Our report is in accordance with the GRI standards, using the GRI 1: Foundation 2021 guidance. There is no relevant GRI sector standard for our industry

GRI Standard Title	Disclosure No.	Disclosure Name.	Response
GRI 2: GENERAL DISCLOSURES 2022	2.22	Statement on sustainable development strategy	See our Sustainability strategy published on our website
	2.23	Policy commitments	Witherslack Group maintains and enforces policies in the following key areas: Child safeguarding and protection Equality, diversity, and inclusion Health, safety, and wellbeing Environmental sustainability Whistleblowing and grievance Anti-bribery and corruption All policies are reviewed regularly and implemented through structured training and internal audits.
	2.24	Embedding policy commitments	Policies are embedded in daily operations through mandatory training for all employees (e.g., safeguarding, EDI).digital policy platforms and staff handbooks. Staff induction and refresher programs. Leadership teams are responsible for cascading updates and reinforcing compliance.
	2.25	Processes to remediate negative impacts	Witherslack Group follows formal investigative and remediation processes: Immediate risk assessment and safeguarding response. Investigation by relevant management and/or external advisors. Action plans to address root causes and prevent recurrence. Regulatory bodies are informed where required (e.g., Ofsted, Local Authority, CQC).All actions are documented and monitored until resolved.
	2.26	Mechanisms for seeking advice and raising concerns	Employees and stakeholders can seek advice or raise concerns through; line managers or HR business partners. Designated Safeguarding Leads in each school or setting. Whistleblowing hotline or anonymous feedback forms. The Witherslack Way where policies and guidance are accessible. Concerns are treated seriously and managed with confidentiality, professionalism, and urgency.
	2.27	Compliance with laws and regulations	Witherslack Group complies with all applicable legislation in the UK across education, employment, safeguarding, and health & safety. During the reporting period, no significant non-compliance incidents or regulatory penalties were reported.
	2.28	Membership associations	Witherslack Group is a member of several professional and sector-specific associations that support continuous improvement, collaboration, and the sharing of best practice in special education and care services.
	2.29	Approach to stakeholder engagement	See page 31-32 for our 'Stakeholder Engagement Strategy'.
	2.30	Collective bargaining agreements	Witherslack Group employees are not currently covered by formal collective bargaining agreements.

Global Reporting Initiative (GRI)

Our report is in accordance with the GRI standards, using the GRI 1: Foundation 2021 guidance. There is no relevant GRI sector standard for our industry

GRI Standard Title	Disclosure No.	Disclosure Name.	Response
GRI 3: MATERIAL TOPICS 2022	3.1	Process to determine material topics	In 2024, Witherslack Group undertook an evaluation to assess the ESG topics most material to the company. Through this evaluation, more than 65 relevant ESG topics were identified, examined, and then consolidated into a list of 12 material ESG Aspects aligned to industry guidance and sector trends.
	3.2	List of material topics	The results materiality assessment were mapped onto a Materiality Matrix and Stakeholder Priority Map. This can be found on in our Sustainability Strategy.
	3.3	Management of material topics	We disclose our approach towards each of the 12 ESG topics and progress in our ESG Report. <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Safeguarding 2. Ofsted Results 3. Data Security 4. Energy Usage 5. Waste Management 6. Reputational Stability 7. Quality SEN Education 8. Leader in SEN Education 9. Realising Business plan 10. Community investment & Engagement 11. Ethical Marketing & Recruitment 12. Operational Stability
SPECIFIC DISCLOSURES - ENVIRONMENTAL			
ENERGY	302	Management approach disclosure	Witherslack Group is committed to responsible energy use across all our education and care settings. We recognize that reducing energy consumption and improving energy efficiency directly supports our environmental sustainability goals and contributes to reducing our carbon footprint. Our approach aligns with our broader commitment to operating sustainably and safeguarding the well-being of future generations. See our 'Sustainable Nurturing Spaces' chapter (Page 10-27).
	302-1	Energy consumption within organisation	2024: 21,226,571 kWh
	302-3	Energy Intensity	2024: 102.376 kWh per £m
	302-4	Reduction of energy consumption	9% reduction in consumption per £m of revenue since FY23. See pages 12-14 for further information. And carbon reduction strategy.

Global Reporting Initiative (GRI)

Our report is in accordance with the GRI standards, using the GRI 1: Foundation 2021 guidance. There is no relevant GRI sector standard for our industry

GRI Standard Title	Disclosure No.	Disclosure Name.	Response
ENVIRONMENTAL (Continued)			
EMISSIONS	305	Management approach disclosure	Witherslack Group is committed to managing and reducing our greenhouse gas (GHG) emissions as part of our broader sustainability and environmental responsibility goals. As a provider of specialist education and care, we recognize our role in contributing to climate action while creating safe, healthy, and sustainable environments for the children and young people we support.
	305-1	Direct (Scope 1) GHG Emissions	2024: 3,255.3 tCO2e
	305-2	Energy Indirect (Scope 2) GHG Emissions	2024: Location Based - 769.3 tCO2e Market Based – 0 tCO2e
	305-3	Other Indirect (Scope 3) GHG Emissions	2024: Location Based – 450.6 tCO2e Market Based – 444.6 tCO2e
	305-4	GHG Emission Intensity	2024: Location Based – 21.6 tCO2e per £m of revenue Market Based – 17.9 tCO2e per £m of revenue
	305-5	Reduction of GHG Emissions	9% reduction in Location Based Emission Intensity since last year and 11% reduction in Market Based
SUPPLIER ENVIRONMENTAL ASSESSMENT	308	Management approach disclosure	Environmental responsibility is an integral part of our commitment to sustainable and ethical operations. While our core services focus on education and care, the environmental impact of our supply chain – including catering, construction, maintenance, and transport providers – is a material concern. Through responsible supplier assessment, we aim to reduce indirect environmental impacts, ensure regulatory compliance, and promote sustainability across all procurement activities. See page 20 on our approach to sustainable procurement.
	308-1	New suppliers that were screened using environmental criteria	100%

Global Reporting Initiative (GRI)

Our report is in accordance with the GRI standards, using the GRI 1: Foundation 2021 guidance. There is no relevant GRI sector standard for our industry

GRI Standard Title	Disclosure No.	Disclosure Name.	Response
SOCIAL EMPLOYMENT	401	Management approach disclosure	Employment is a material topic for Witherslack Group as it is our largest expense and with a team of over 2500 people it directly impacts our operational effectiveness, and overall business sustainability. This topic covers all employees across our operations and focuses on employment practices including hiring, retention, working conditions, and employee benefits. See our 'Empowering Our Team' Chapter for further details.
	401-2	Benefits provided to full time employees	See page 53 on Employee Wellbeing.
TRAINING & EDUCATION	404	Management approach disclosure	Employee training and career development are vital to the long-term success of the company. We are committed to developing employee capabilities fostering a culture of continuous learning. Ensuring that our staff receive ongoing training and professional development is critical to maintaining a high standard of care and education. This topic is material to our organization because it directly affects service quality, client safety, regulatory compliance, and employee satisfaction. It applies across our operations, particularly to frontline staff in care, education, and support roles who require up-to-date skills, knowledge of best practices, and compliance with sector-specific standards.
	404-1	Average hours of training per year per employee	Average hours of training per employee – 51.1 Hours.
	404-2	Programs for upgrading employee skills and transition assistance programmes	See page 54 for further details on our Elevate and Aspire programmes.
	404-3	% of employees receiving regular performance and career development reviews	100% - Performance reviews conducted annually for every employee.
DIVERSITY & EQUAL OPPORTUNITY	405	Management approach disclosure	Diversity and equal opportunity are material to our organization because they are foundational to a fair and inclusive work environment and critical to attracting and retaining top talent. Our approach to diversity impacts all employees across the group and influences the broader communities in which we operate. We recognize that an inclusive culture enhances innovation, decision-making, and employee well-being. See page 50 for further reading on our EDI strategy.
	405-1	Diversity of governance bodies and employees	See page 52 for our diversity and inclusion statistics.






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