



Certified ^{LLP} muckle
B
Corporation

IMPACT REPORT

hello

muckle^{LLP}

Welcome to our first B Corp impact report.

We've been committed to operating in a socially responsible way for many years. However, it's also important to us that we consistently look at ways to improve how we do business. That was the driving force behind our decision to seek B Corp accreditation. B Corps represent a new business model – one that balances purpose and profit – and a model for companies committed to tackling social and environmental problems. We recognise that as a law firm, we're in an extremely privileged position – but we're also in a position to use that privilege for good.

The B Corp movement in the UK has gained considerable momentum over the last few years, and we were delighted with our accreditation in December 2023. However, that was just the start. The application process allowed us to take a step back and evaluate and celebrate all that we were already doing, but it also helped us look at where we could be doing more. We've been able to build on that over the last 12 months, using the measurements and criteria set out in the B Corp framework.

I think it's fair to say that there are ever-increasing challenges in our local communities. Just as one example, a recent Government report on social mobility in the UK highlighted what they called the "North East effect", suggesting that the lack of opportunities in the region is holding people back from good qualifications, well-paying jobs and the chance to improve their lives.

We are committed to doing all we can to break down barriers to opportunity across the North East. Our support will continue to focus on four key areas: supporting young people, overcoming disadvantage, improving social mobility and supporting causes close to the hearts of our people.

In this report, we've included a snapshot of what we've achieved over the last year, the fantastic charities we've worked with and the people here at the firm who've embraced our commitment to positive impact.

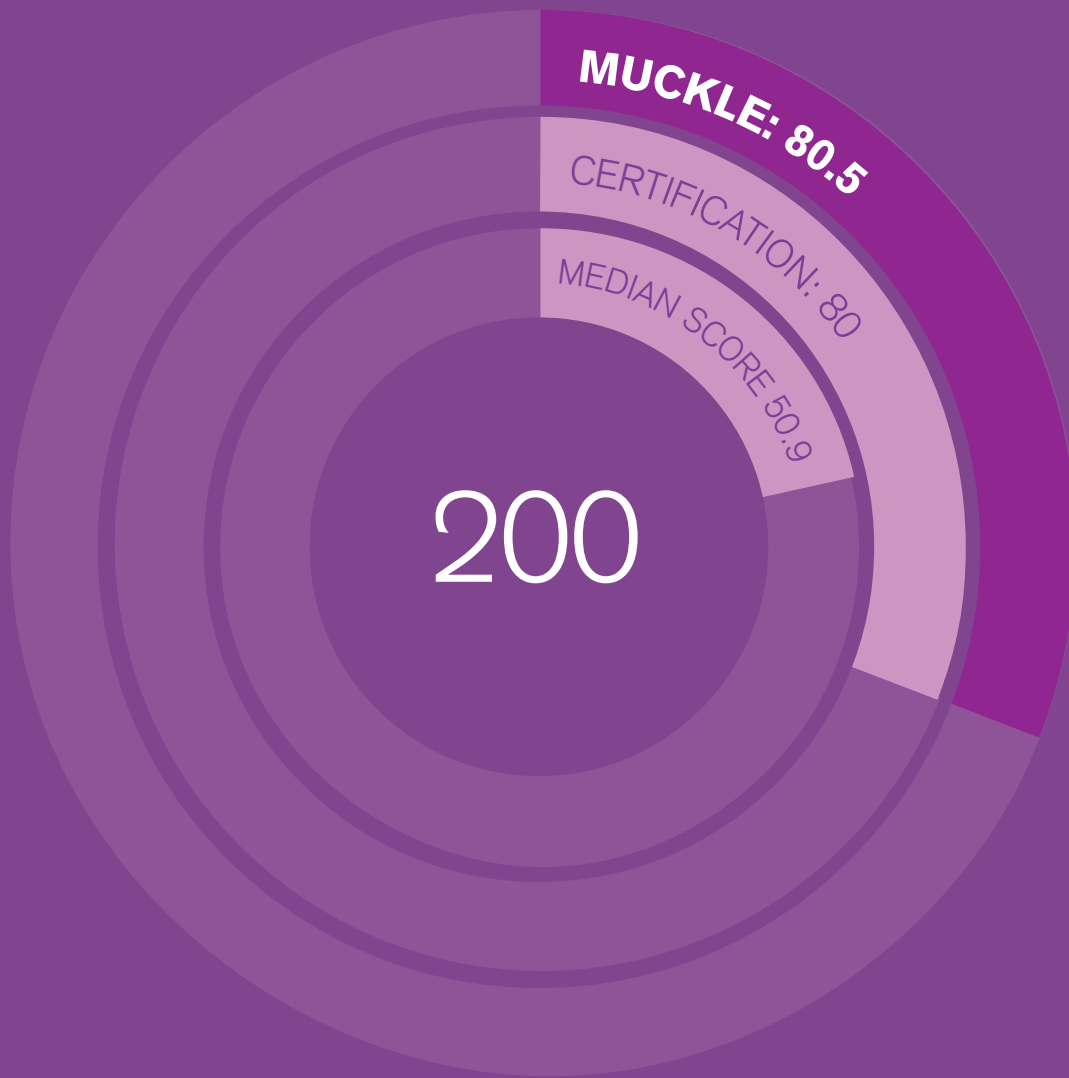
The last 12 months have been an important milestone in our corporate responsibility journey, and we will continue to strive for our business to be a force for good in everything we do.



Hugh Welch, Senior Partner, Muckle LLP



our B Corp score



We are part of a global community of businesses that meet high standards of social and environmental impact. Our score of 80.5 reflects the hard work our people put in daily to ensure our firm is doing business better. The median score for businesses that complete the assessment is currently 50.9.

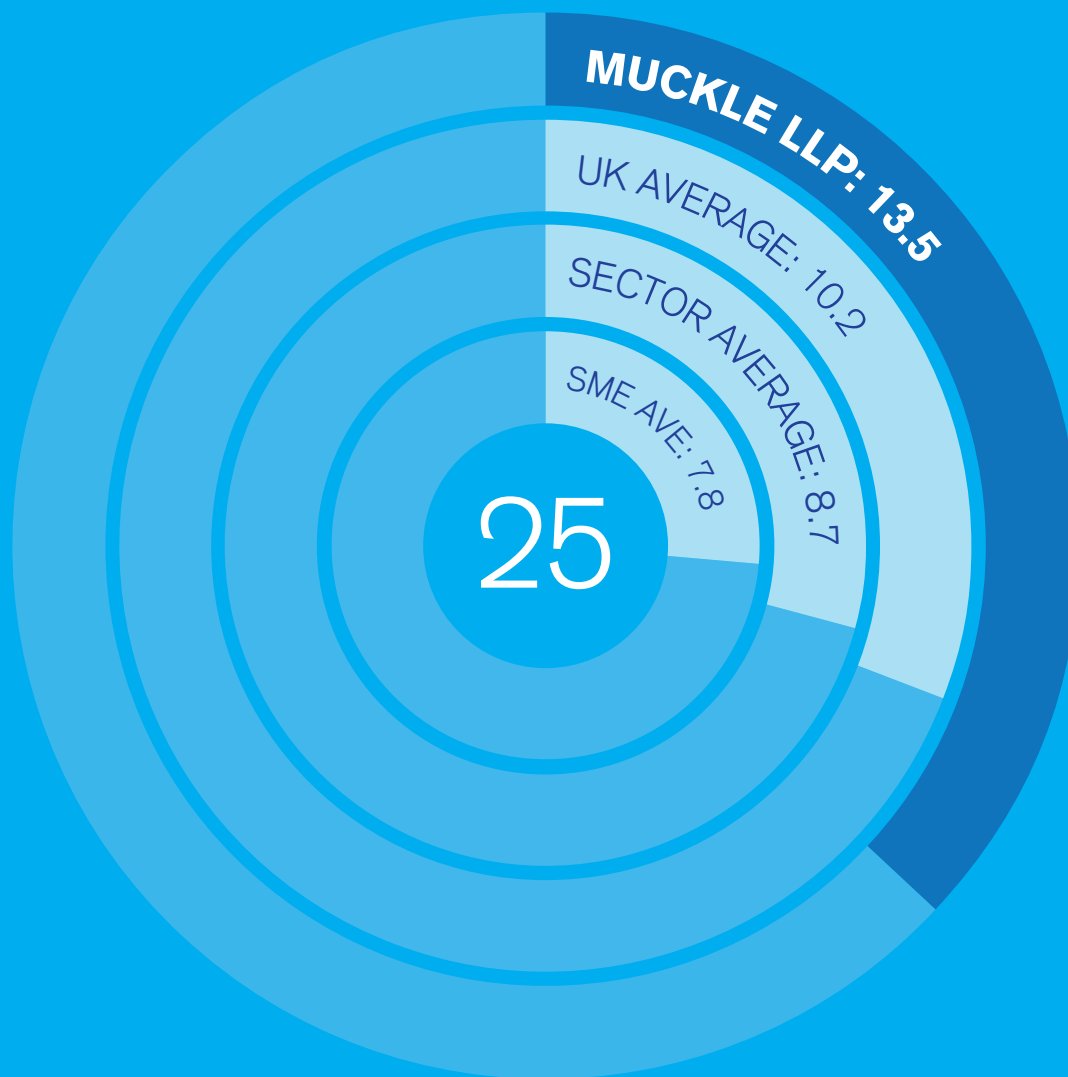
Becoming a B Corp isn't just a tick-box exercise, we're committed to continuous improvement – both small and large – in order to have a greater impact.

our purpose



Be a **values-led,**
responsible
business for our
people, community
and **clients**

governance



setting standards

Governance evaluates a company's overall mission and engagement around its social and environmental impact, ethics and transparency.



governance

our strategy

Our aim is to be successful, forward-thinking and distinctive. Caring deeply about our people, clients and community. This is driven through our strategic plan – or as we call it – the 6-Ps.

Everyone at Muckle understands our strategy, and the 6-Ps form part of personal development plans so our people can understand and feel appreciated for how they contribute to our impact.



Purpose

Be a values-led, responsible business for our people, community and clients.



People

Recruit, develop, engage and retain the right people for the right roles.



Performance
& Service

Deliver proven, consistent, quality client service.



Profitability

Design and deliver a successful, sustainable business model by 2027.



Plans

Strategic business development plan delivering
↑ 7% p.a. turnover growth.



Process

Deliver process, quality and cost improvements through continuous innovation and increased automation.



governance

this way forward

Throughout the year, we've worked on further engaging our people with the B Corp message, what we've achieved so far, and how they can impact our future.

People from all across the business sit on our community, green and mental wellbeing teams – helping to drive these elements of our B Corp strategy forward. We also have purpose champions who act as ambassadors within each of our service area teams.

Our annual strategy day in April saw all our people spend the day offsite looking at our values, progress, success, lessons learned, and how we incorporate B Corp moving forward.

In July, we had our first B Corp Day, celebrating our achievement with a day of all things B Corp.



Our commitment to becoming a B Corp aligns seamlessly with our long-standing values of trust, teamwork, responsibility and care. By achieving this certification, our firm not only underscores its dedication to legal excellence but also sets a benchmark for ethical leadership in the legal sector throughout the North East and Cumbria.

Jason Wainwright, Managing Partner, Muckle LLP



governance

our governance goals

What we've done:

- Introduced social and environmental training across the firm through our Lunch & Learn programme.
- Senior members of our firm own and manage the Key Performance Indicators (KPIs) on the company's social and environmental performance.
- People from across the firm sit on our B Corp steering group, created to implement B Corp strategies across the firm.
- We offer a profit-share scheme for all of our employees.
- Lead the Muckle Way – our programme that supports our leaders to lead with awareness, heart, great conversations and action.
- Collaborative workshops with our people on preventing sexual harassment.

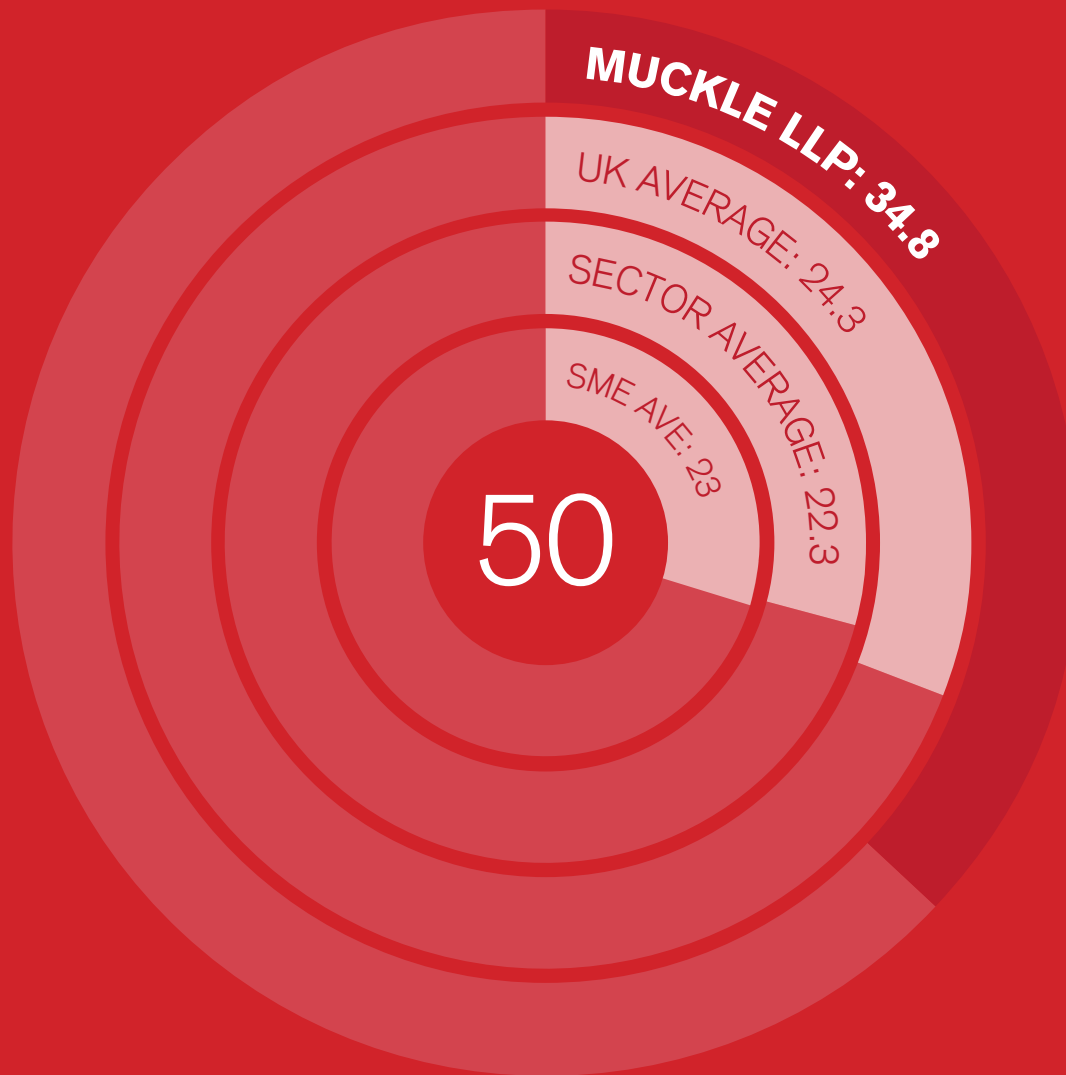


Our commitment in 2025:

- Amend our members' agreement to fully embed B Corp's principles.
- Build on what we're doing well – transparent financial reporting and quarterly financial and strategy presentations to all our people.
- Implement our sexual harassment risk assessment, designed in collaboration with our people.



people



people-first culture

B Corp's 'workers' measurement evaluates a company's contributions to its people's financial security, health and safety, wellness, career development, and engagement and satisfaction. We work hard to create a culture of care, understanding how our people feel about their jobs and what we can do to create a supportive workplace where they can thrive.



people

beyond the fruit bowl

Whilst perks such as free fruit in the office or a subsidised gym membership are great, they don't always make a significant difference to how people feel at work.

We work hard to embed a culture of wellbeing, which means tackling the root causes of poor wellbeing alongside supporting the symptoms.



Positivity Corner

Our Positivity Corner has been created as a quiet corner where our people can go to and have a little time out, listen to a podcast, read a book from the small library that has been built, relax with a warm drink or just make themselves comfortable.

That means focusing on those causes, such as unsustainable workload, poor management or lack of flexibility, as well as focusing on helping with the symptoms.

We've introduced initiatives such as our wellbeing passport, where our people have confidential and documented conversations with line managers to discuss and implement reasonable adjustments to support their wellbeing.

We keep a close eye on working hours, if an individual's workload becomes excessive, it triggers a conversation with a manager.

We recognise that leaders influence 70% of the climate that our people experience, so we invest heavily in leadership to ensure that we're driving meaningful relationships, which impact wellbeing in positive way.



health matters

Our mental health team is made up of 11 individuals, including our managing partner, trained to give advice and signpost people to services that can support anyone with issues or in crisis. They also coordinate an annual programme of activities to raise awareness of mental health.

As part of our firm's Employee Assistance Programme, our people have 24/7 access to mental health experts, structured clinical counselling and bereavement counselling.



Did you know?

Colouring in helps reduce stress, anxiety and even symptoms of depression by engaging in a focused and repetitive activity.



people

take the plunge

In September, we invited our people to dip their toes (and more) in an ice bath. A wealth of research suggests that a cold plunge results in a temporary mood boost that may extend to long-term mental health benefits, including reduced anxiety.



“

Such a positive experience, I enjoy the calming effect of cold water and the energised feeling afterwards, it was great that everyone completed the challenge!”

Julie Garbutt, Partner, Muckle LLP



earn while you learn

The typical route into law isn't for everyone, but that shouldn't hold someone back from pursuing a career in our industry.

We helped found the innovative North East Solicitor Apprentice Scheme (NESA) over seven years ago, and in 2024, we had our first solicitors qualify through the scheme.

We currently have nine solicitor apprentices in the firm who are working towards an LLB (Hons) in Legal Practice without the burden of university fees - and they earn while they learn!



“

As a solicitor apprentice, the hands-on experience is priceless. You learn things that university doesn't teach, and just being in the office helps you pick up valuable skills. Working with experienced professionals and having mentoring opportunities really pushes you to grow. Plus, seeing how the legal concepts we study are actually applied in real cases makes everything feel more real and practical than just reading about it in books.”

Awa Traore, Solicitor Apprentice, Muckle LLP

“

The NESA programme made it much easier to enter the legal profession, and I've found it to be a really positive experience. I get the chance to be mentored by top legal experts and apply everything I've learned in the classroom in real-life situations. At Muckle, the wide variety of support available shows a real commitment to helping solicitor apprentices grow – from getting hands-on experience and the opportunity to communicate with clients to earn while I learn.”

Harrison Watson, Solicitor Apprentice, Muckle LLP



people

belonging together

We are committed to diversity and inclusion, but we understand that change does not happen overnight. We're continually learning how we can improve through recruitment, promotion and initiatives to foster change.



We carried out our annual diversity and inclusion survey and acted on our people's feedback and ideas, including:

- Training on unconscious bias and microaggressions, sexual harassment, menopause support, and neurodiversity.
- More diversity in our recruitment processes, including blind scoring all graduate recruitment applications.
- Introducing a multi-faith prayer and lactation room.
- Running a number of parenting-focused lunch and learn seminars.



people

learning to lead

We have invested substantially into our leadership programme, "Lead the Muckle Way". It's a 12-month programme designed to deliver a practical leadership and development programme that aligns with the business's values, behaviours and needs.

We've had 51 leaders go through our programme to date, and 14 are going through a consolidated version next year.

51 leaders
through our
programme

14 leaders
going through
in 2025



our people goals

What we've done:

- Gained Real Living Wage accreditation.
- Won 'Best Place to Work' at the North East Business Awards for the second year in a row - our people turnover sits at 3.7% against a national average of 10.4% and the regional rate of 9.68%.
- Awarded 'Most Inspiring Employer' at the North East Chamber of Commerce Inspiring Female Awards for the second year in a row.
- Implemented our succession planning – connecting people with mentors and coaches, as well as our job crafting initiative.
- Achieved ranking in the Social Mobility Index by collecting our data on social mobility, acting to address our imbalances and holding ourselves accountable.

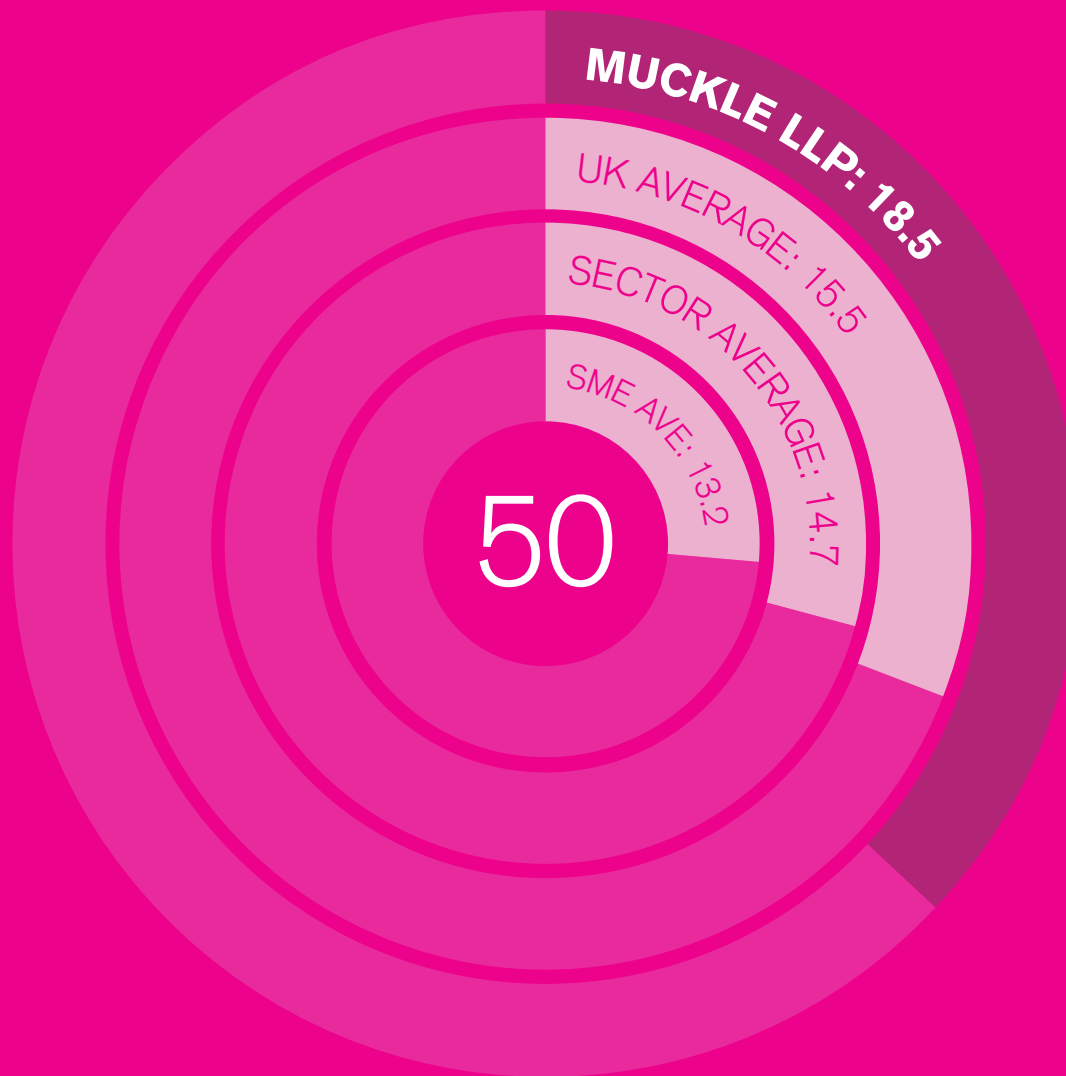


Our commitment in 2025:

- Help employees form deeper connections with peers, family and community
- Rewarding our people in line with our reward principles and values
- Support our people to achieve optimum wellbeing both inside and outside of work
- Provide our people with enriching jobs, offering autonomy, mastery, purpose and flexibility
- Create a shared purpose, aligned to our values that people feel they can contribute and impact upon



community



purpose in action

Working in the communities where we operate has been part of the fabric of the firm for as long as we've been operating. Over the last few years, our focus has been on long-term impact rather than just addressing short-term needs. As we move into 2025, we will continue to work hard to increase our pro bono work and encourage our people to take on volunteering roles.



community

Muckle Fund hits £700,000

Each year, we give 1% of our profits to our Muckle Community Fund at The Community Foundation to help local charities across the North East and Cumbria. That has amounted to more than £700,000 in grants to local causes since our charitable fund began.



community

follow-on funding

This year, we have given grants to 30 charities, totalling £46,000.

This includes four charities across Cumbria, Northumberland, Tyne & Wear and Teesside – all of which we've supported in the past – receiving follow-on funding.

in 2024 we've made

£46,000
in grants

supporting
30
charities

for follow-on funding,
our four chosen charities are:

Choysez ●

Carlisle Key ●

The Country Trust ●

Clean Slate Solutions ●



community



CARLISLE KEY
Opening Doors For Young People

Over the last three years, we've supported the charity with three grants totalling £9,500. These grants have been used to help young people in and around Carlisle access accommodation, prevent eviction, buy household goods, help with utilities and food – all ordinary, everyday things, that for most of us are achievable, but with the recent cost of living crisis – the ordinary becomes difficult.



When young people move into social housing, they move into an empty shell, adding more stress to someone who is already vulnerable. Muckle's funding has been used to support with furniture, as well as utilities to help them get on their feet; it goes a long way to keep the everyday manageable for these young people."

Steven Harkins, Carlisle Key



Choysez

Choysez is a classroom-based, all-girls provision in Bedlington, Northumberland, offering an alternative provision for girls not in mainstream education. Specialist, fully qualified teachers who previously taught in mainstream schools deliver a range of subjects, including KS3 and GCSE English Language and Maths. Over the past two years, we have supported Choysez with two grants totalling £8,000.



Choysez works with some of the most vulnerable young women in Northumberland. The care and support we can give relies upon regular donations such as the grant from Muckle. A regular donation allows us to plan so much further ahead and ensures we get extra value from the donation and more support for those who need it. This allows us to stretch every pound from the donation and is very much appreciated."

Chris Conroy, Centre Manager, Choysez



community



The Country Trust's aim is for children to discover how it feels to be in the countryside, supporting their wellbeing, but also, through first-hand, immersive experiences on working farms, to begin to understand the idea of interdependence. We were introduced to the charity through our people volunteering and have since supported it with three grants totalling £9,100 to fund transportation for farm visits.



£2,100
in 2022

£2,000
in 2023

£5,000
in 2024



The Country Trust has developed a great relationship with the firm; it's not only the financial support that is so important, but the enthusiasm of the wider team, many of whom use their volunteering days to don a pair of wellies and come out on the farms to help the Country Trust visits, providing additional help for the hundreds of disadvantaged primary school children we work with. We are also indebted to the ambassadorship of so many at Muckle LLP, who have introduced us to other valuable supporters and championed our cause with professional partners and clients alike."

Sue Thompson, The Country Trust



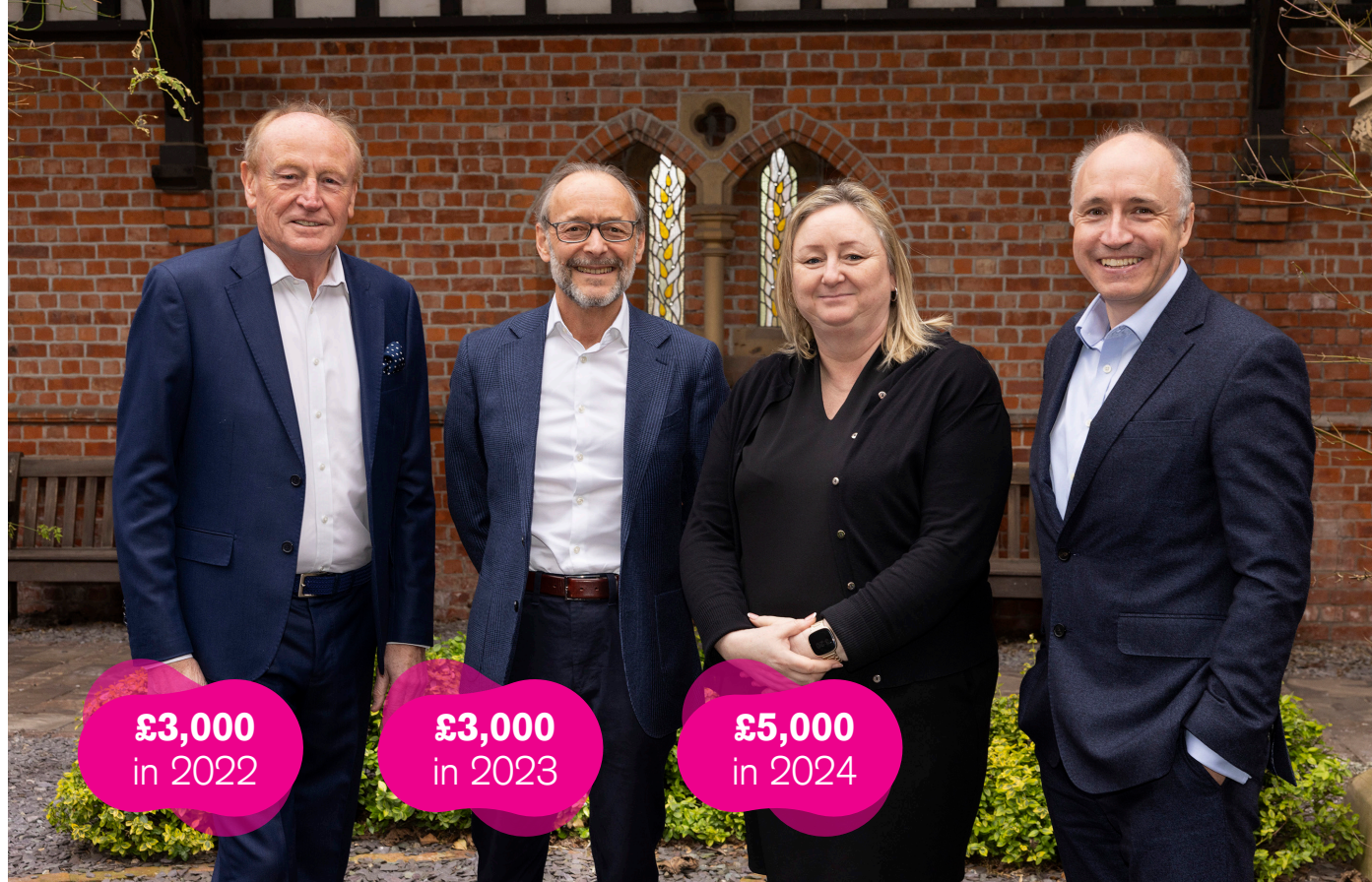
community



Clean Slate Solutions works to provide prison leavers in Teesside with support and hope for a future, that at one stage just didn't exist in our region. This is magnified even more in these times with significantly more being released early from sentences across the UK without any extra investment into community resettlement from the government.

Statistics show 77% of those Clean Slate placed into employment stay in the job beyond 3 months, and 97% of those they support never land back in a courtroom again.

Since 2022, we've supported with three grants of £11,000 in total, helping the charity with funding desperately needed when demand for services is at an all-time high.



Muckle has been such a significant partner on our journey whilst establishing our charity over the last few years. The impact of this provision has enabled us to support 45 men and women into secure employment via our network of socially invested employers."

Richard Brice, Clean Slate Solutions



community

causes close to our hearts

From grants to charities they work with to boosting their individual funding efforts – it's important that we support the causes that mean the most to our people. And many of them take us up on the offer!

Steve Cunningham, our in-house graphic designer, organised a trip to Lilidorei at The Alnwick Garden for 107 pupils from Kelvin Grove Primary School, where his wife works. The Alnwick Garden kindly donated the tickets for free, and we gave a £1,500 grant to pay for travel costs and packed lunches.

£1,500
donated

“

Thanks to Muckle and The Alnwick Garden, we were able to provide a new and exciting opportunity for our children. The current climate is making it harder and harder to provide enriching and exciting learning opportunities in schools, and being awarded this grant has meant we were able to provide a unique experience for 107 pupils. It means a lot to our staff to be able to provide this experience for our children, as many come from vulnerable backgrounds where travel is very limited.”

**Mrs Stokes, Year 4 Teacher,
Kelvin Grove Primary School**



community

time well spent

Everyone at Muckle gets **two** paid volunteering days per year, and in 2024, we encouraged more team volunteering days, which led to an increase in uptake.

In 2025, we're putting plans in place to accurately record our volunteering time to better measure and increase what we do.



community

the power of pro bono

We believe that, as lawyers, we have a duty to use our skills to benefit the community and that business can and should be a force for good. We encourage our lawyers to carry out pro bono work throughout the year, helping charities across the UK.



in 2024 we've carried out

493
hours of pro
bono work

worth
£147,845



We were delighted when Muckle approached us with the offer of free legal support for VCSE organisations. They went above and beyond to accommodate the range of enquiries, which led to an overwhelmingly positive response and resulted in Muckle supporting 21 local charities. Feedback showed that the clinics were a great resource to organisations that might otherwise be unable to afford essential advice to help in their operations and, ultimately, help them better serve the needs of their beneficiaries."

Jenny Forrester, Connected Voice



Connect Northumberland

pro bono case study

Connect Northumberland is a not-for-profit company that seeks to address workforce challenges specific to Northumberland, such as the skills gap, an ageing population, and younger people moving to more urban areas.

The organisation was a new concept and required legal advice on its constitution. Two lawyers in our corporate team – a solicitor and our senior partner – provided support to facilitate this. This gave us a wonderful opportunity to use our skills to help a very worthwhile new employment project.



“

This type of pro bono support significantly enhances the ability of companies like ours to make a positive impact in our communities – and to do it at pace. Muckle's legal expertise was instrumental in successfully launching Connect Northumberland and helping us to drive economic growth in our region. We couldn't have done it as quickly without Hugh and Josh's guidance and support. Their advice was always professional, knowledgeable and timely, and we greatly appreciate the speed with which they helped us register the company.”

**Brian Palmer, Founder, Tharsus and chair of
Connect Northumberland**



community

our community goals

What we've done:

- Committed 1% of our annual profits to our Muckle Fund at The Community Foundation.
- Introduced 'Purpose Champions' in each team, whose goal is to encourage more volunteering, pro bono and engagement with our B Corp goals.
- Given larger, strategic grants to charities we've previously supported.

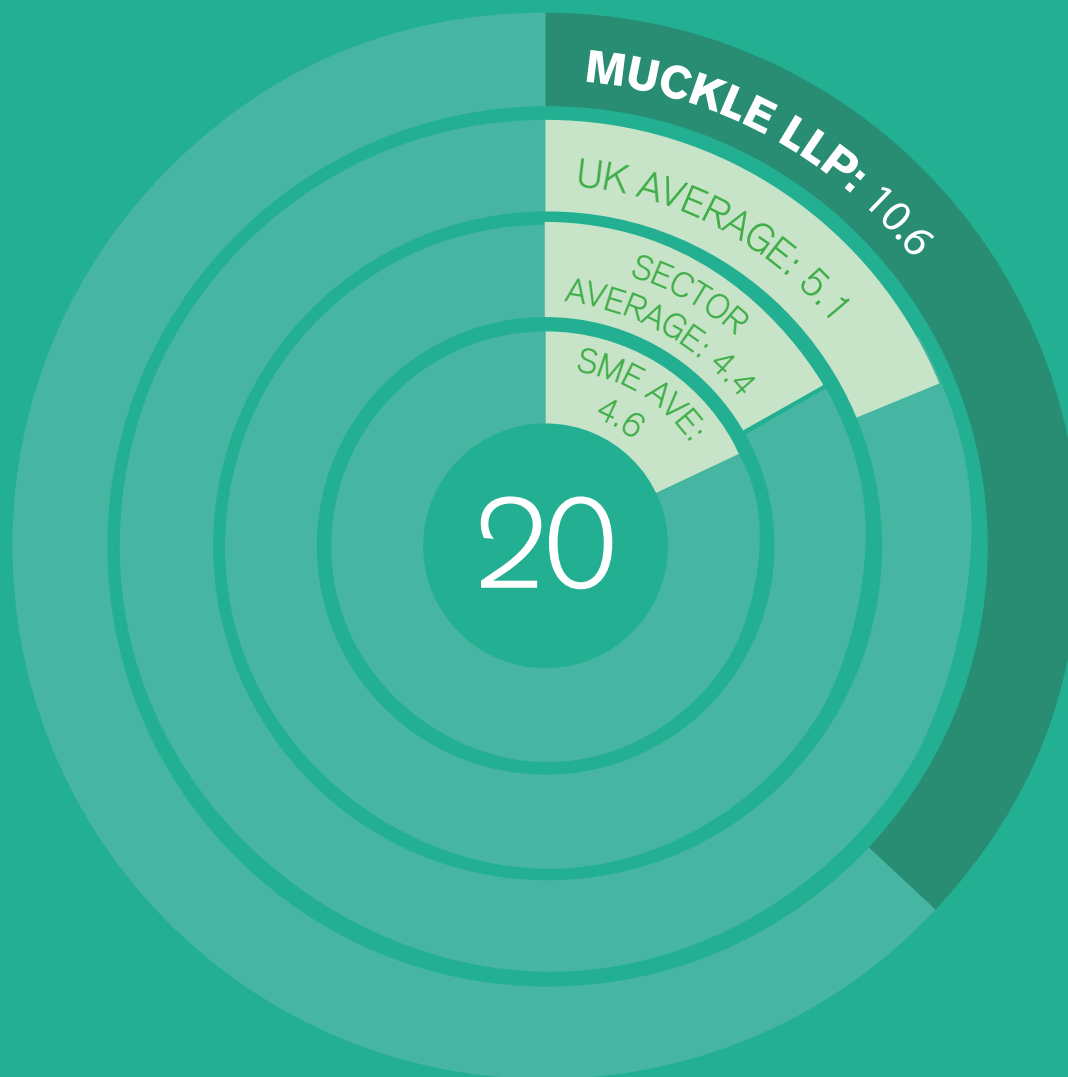


Our commitment in 2025:

- Get better at accurately recording our pro bono, volunteering and trustee time so we can have a baseline for improvement.
- Set team targets of a 10% increase in pro bono work.
- Encourage at least one group volunteering day per team.
- Continue with strategic grant giving and building on our relationships with these charities.



environment



down to earth

Environment evaluates a company's overall environmental management practices as well as its impact on the air, climate, water, land, and biodiversity. We're committed to reducing our greenhouse gas emissions and embedding climate change considerations into long-term business planning.

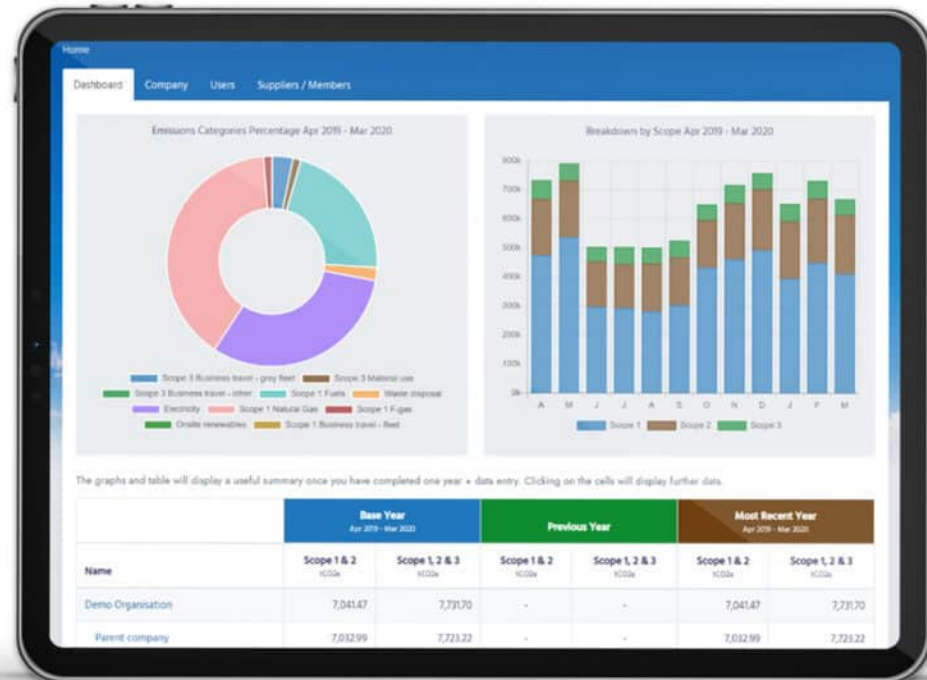




getting smart about carbon

We've been working with SmartCarbon to assist us to calculate our carbon footprint. We've collected data from 2019 (our baseline year) up to date and, using SmartCarbon's carbon calculation portal, we now have the relevant data to enable us to review our impact areas and to create an action plan as to how we can reduce that impact.

The action plan is in the process of being agreed by our management team and we will continue to use SmartCarbon's carbon calculation portal to track our progress and then report on that progress annually.



Our commitment to reducing our carbon footprint isn't just about meeting targets—it's about creating a sustainable future for our firm, our employees, and the communities we serve. As a professional services firm, we face unique challenges in reducing our carbon footprint because we don't produce tangible goods. However, we recognise that every business has a role to play, and we are committed to trying to find innovative ways to make a difference."

**Debbie McCormack, Director of Operations,
Muckle LLP**



environment

a change through clothes

It's estimated £140m worth of clothing goes to landfill in the UK every year – less than a fifth of used clothing is recycled. As part of our environmental calendar of events, we hosted our very first 'Muckle Minted' – where we swapped our unwanted items.

Through sharing, we're extending the lifecycle of various products, such as books, games and clothes.

A donation to the food bank was the price of entry and all proceeds from the sales went to local reforestation projects. All leftover items were donated to St Vincent's clothing bank.



£250
to North East
Community Forest

£250
Tees Valley Trees
on Tees



environment

shop with a clear conscience

Everyone loves a freebie, and we've been guilty of producing quite a bit of merchandise in the past. It's important that we still get our brand out there, but that we do it in a sustainable way.

That means choosing merchandise that we believe will be loved and reused, buying from sustainable retailers and using recyclable materials where possible.

We wanted to cut down on the number of disposable coffee cups we see in our bins, so every person at Muckle received our reusable branded mug to mark B Corp day – encouraging them to 'drink responsibly'.



Guilt-free treats

For B Corp day we handed out ethical treats to all our people, including an eco-friendly, reusable mug and ethically-produced chocolate from a fellow B Corp, Tony Choccolony.



environment

our environmental goals

What we've done:

- We've worked with SmartCarbon to calculate our carbon footprint.
- We've started to capture data on our people's daily commuting habits which will feed into our carbon footprint data.
- Offer our people both a cycle to work and an electric car salary sacrifice scheme.
- Annual calendar of events, including litter picks and clothes swaps.

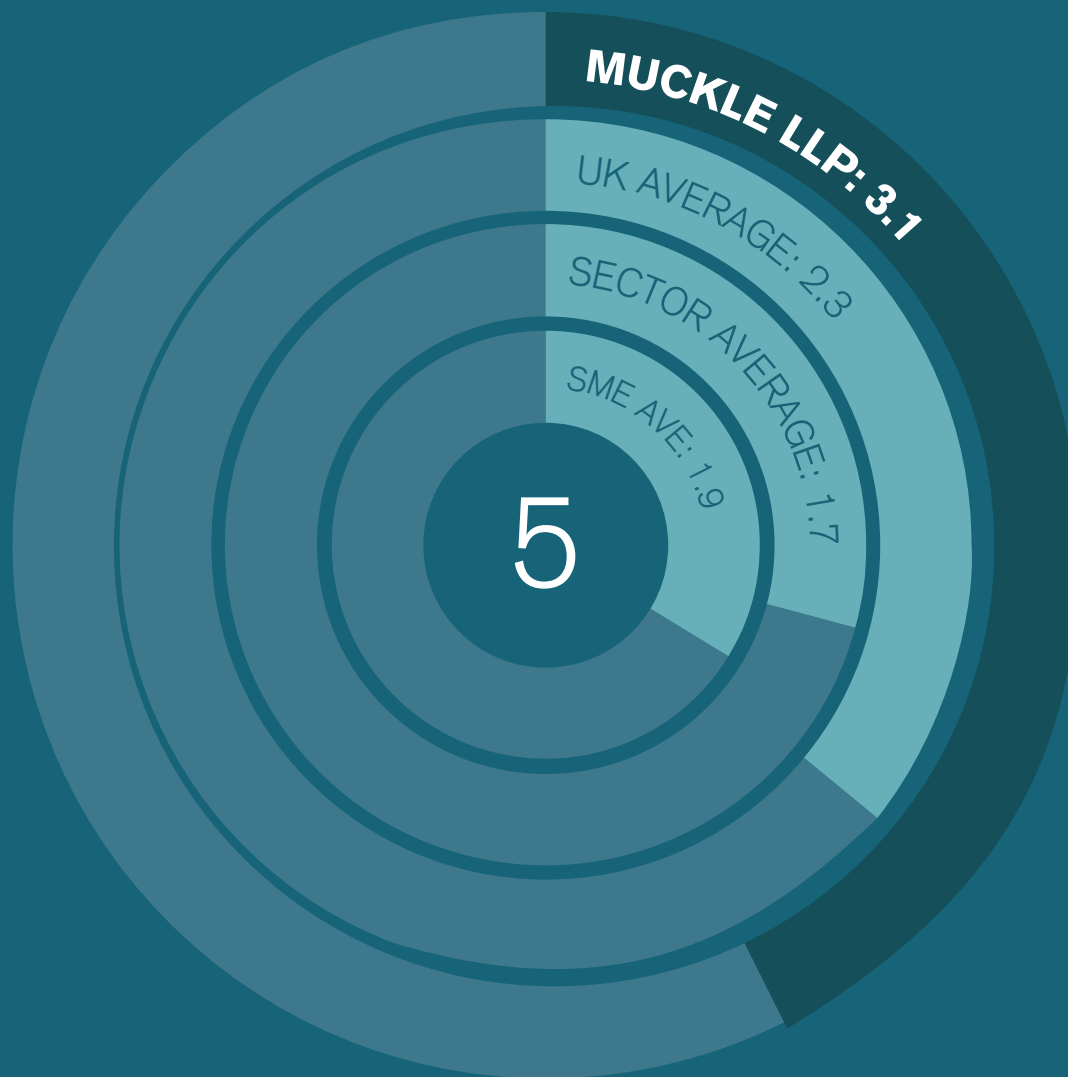


Our commitment in 2025:

- Agreeing and prioritising an action plan to reduce our carbon impact based on the data collected using SmartCarbon's carbon footprint calculation portal.
- Work closely with local stakeholders such as NE1 on sustainable initiatives.



clients



working together

B Corp evaluates a company's customer care through the quality of its products and services, ethical marketing, data privacy and security, and feedback channels.

We provide excellent and consistent service delivery through 'The Muckle Way'. Developed with our people, it articulates our vision, strategy, values, behaviours, and client service model. The Muckle Way is all about setting our compass, making sure that, no matter who you speak to, you get the same personal, high-quality experience that's uniquely Muckle.



clients

raise the bar

As a professional services firm, our client's experience is vitally important

Our service is partner-led, with each of our clients having a dedicated Client Relationship Partner (CRP) who has an overview of all the work we do. We recently undertook a series of client review meetings to understand our clients' priorities for the next twelve months, to gather feedback on how we look after them and to identify areas for improvement. We adapt our strategy based on feedback, enhancing areas that clients value and building an action plan for identified areas of attention. This regular process helps us to continuously improve based on our client's evolving needs.



public sector procurement wins

Our specialist public sector team were appointed to three regional and national procurement frameworks, including NEPO and the North West Legal Consortium (NWLC), as well as the recently launched national Pagabo procurement framework to help educational establishments convert to academies.

Our specialist education team was also appointed as the sole legal provider to what will be the largest Multi-Academy Company (MAC) in the country, as six companies combine to create a 63-school MAC.



We are committed to supporting people and communities through our public sector work, and we are especially pleased to have scored so highly on our 'social values' – something that is very dear to our hearts, and we're keen to continue working with our public sector clients to improve economic, social and environmental well-being in the areas in which we operate."

Jason Wainwright, Managing Partner, Muckle LLP



clients

bridging the skills gap

In a constantly changing business world, it has never been more important for an employer to support its employees when it comes to keeping their skills up to date. We offer our clients a range of free and paid events across the year to support their business needs.



“

Aside from the excellent legal support we receive from Muckle on instructions, we also see a huge benefit from the added value they offer. They provide monthly free of charge procurement clinics and given that this is an area of law that is continuously evolving, these are invaluable for keeping us up-to-date on new legislation, case law and current legal trends. The Muckle team is always on top of their game in this respect so we're always confident that we have the most up-to-date legal advice to remain compliant.”

Amy Clare, Head of Procurement, NCG



clients



Although you always have an idea about these processes, when you get into the nitty-gritty, you are reminded how super important it is to have skilled and professional people to guide the way. The team have become akin to a group of friends and has made the process much easier than I feared it might be. I know they have had my best interests at heart throughout. They have also worked seamlessly with other advisors, guiding the process strategically. I would not hesitate to recommend them to anyone."

**Louise Richley, Managing Director,
Beyond Digital Solutions**



clients



We chose to work with Muckle due to their experience in working with Northumberland County Council and their pragmatic approach to the application of this new legislation. Biodiversity Net Gain (BNG) is new for everyone, but Muckle was able to work quickly and was extremely responsive throughout. Richard and the team recognise the long-term possibilities of BNG and were hands-on in their approach, with Richard coming along to help plant the first hedge.”

Christopher Porter, Landowner



clients



Having advisers that share our enthusiasm and commitment to people is so important. Much like The Meldrum Group, Muckle has its people at its centre, and this people-focused approach was apparent from the get-go. I always felt like the team had our best interests at heart, and they worked very hard to ensure the best outcome for everyone."

**Dave Meldrum, Group Chief Executive Officer
and Trustee, The Meldrum Group**



our client goals

What we've done:

- Streamlined our compliance and onboarding checks to make it easier for clients.
- Introduced Firmex, a secure data-sharing facility which allows our clients to see all documentation relating to work we're carrying out.
- Offered a PR service to all our clients, meaning we can write and promote great news stories relating for them.
- Recruited a new business development manager to the team to support with building and maintaining strong client relationships by understanding needs, addressing concerns, and providing personalised solutions.



Our commitment in 2025:

- Upskilling our people's knowledge across the firm through a series of 'get-to-know' our client sessions.
- Train all our people on the best ways to communicate with clients; this includes sessions on written communications and how to deal effectively with complaints.
- Enhancing our onboarding process so new clients can get to know the firm better.
- Working with our clients to promote the B Corp message.



clients



I'd like to thank Muckle for its support in getting the MBO deal across the line. The team's agility and professionalism were instrumental in achieving the deal in some very demanding timeframes."

Dave Crone, Group Managing Director, Omega Plastics



clients

awards

We don't do it for the awards, but it is nice to be recognised. Here are just some of the accolades we're proud to say we've been given.



- ☆ North East Business Awards - Best Place to Work, 2023 and 2024.
- ☆ Insider North East Dealmakers Corporate Law Firm of the Year, 2024.
- ☆ Insider North East Property Law Firm of the Year, 2023 and 2024.
- ☆ NECC Inspiring Females Most Inspiring Employer, 2022 and 2023.





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