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# RESPONSIBLE PROCUREMENT

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End of year summary 2024

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# INTRODUCTION

## Our vision is to become the national leader in the provision of sustainable water and wastewater services.

Our values are the set of guiding principles which collectively define who we are, what we do and how we do it. They make us different from the rest and allow us to make decisions and take actions which drive us towards our vision. Our values can be seen throughout the business, but they are at their most powerful when they are demonstrated through everything we do at every level.

Responsible procurement (considering the impact we have on the environment, the economy, and society in general when we purchase goods works and services) plays a vital role in making sure we can achieve our vision. This document sets out our commitment to responsible procurement, which is reflected in how we select, and work with our supply chain.

## FOREWORD

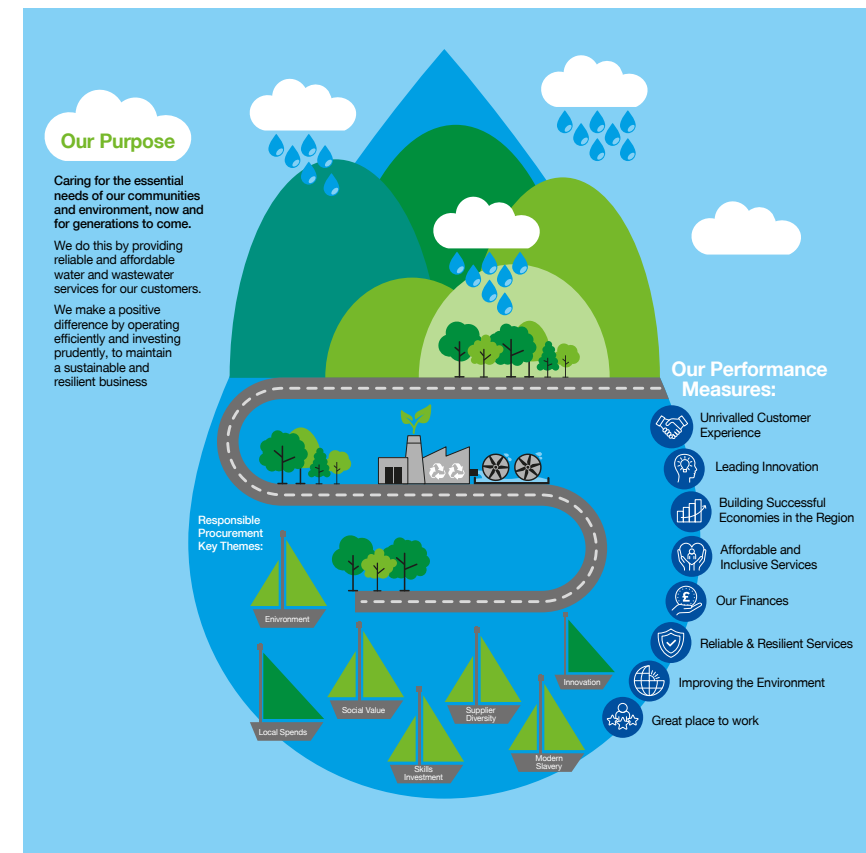
In 2022 we introduced our Responsible Procurement strategy. Our strategy is output focused and aims to drive sustainable value across all our categories of spend. We build on our activity each year and involve our suppliers and their supply chains wherever possible. This approach has allowed us to have a real impact and make sure that the communities in which we operate, see real sustainable benefit from our operations.

Key projects like our work with the County Durham Pound (CDP) initiative have added real value to both our business and our suppliers who are now supporters of the CDP. Our journey with the CDP has allowed us to build strong foundations for our work on Social Value and has given us the skills and knowledge to work with our suppliers to drive social value in all of our operating areas.

Our Impact Initiative 7 has set a consistent approach and supports our purpose and goals. It is based on seven key themes: environmental, local spends, social value, supplier diversity, skills investment, innovation, and modern slavery. In this report we're delighted to share with you some case studies from both our work within business, but also our suppliers and the impact they have had.



Steve Betts  
Head of Procurement



# WHY IS RESPONSIBLE PROCUREMENT IMPORTANT?



We strongly believe that responsible procurement is a powerful driver for delivering improved economic, environmental and social outcomes, and believes that responsible procurement underpins the achievement of cost effective, leading practice procurement.



We believe in applying a whole life costing approach to procurement, rather than selecting on purchase price alone.



We believe that responsible procurement is a means of generating value for money and gaining efficiencies within and between organisations, for example, from managing supply risk, and increasing resource productivity.



We contribute to encourage procurement and supply management professionals to ensure that all supply chain dealings meet the highest standards of governance and transparency which should be aligned with the NWG Code of Conduct and the responsible procurement charter.



We believe that optimum business benefits from responsible procurement are realised through integrating sustainability throughout the procurement decision making process.



We believe that maximum effectiveness is gained by a truly holistic perspective, with consideration of environmental, economic and social aspects of sustainability.

# WHY IS RESPONSIBLE PROCUREMENT IMPORTANT?



We believe that procurement and supply management professionals should be trained effectively in responsible procurement. Procurement professionals should upgrade and maintain their education. We will support this through activities aimed at developing and communicating responsible procurement.



We believe that procurement is central to delivery of the organisation's corporate commitments on sustainability at an operational level due to reliance on high levels of purchased goods and services.



We believe that procurement and supply management professionals can only deliver responsible procurement through ongoing engagement and collaboration with internal stakeholders, budget holders and key suppliers to reach the most effective solutions.



We acknowledge that responsible procurement is a priority when setting policy, which should be reflected in appraisal frameworks and procurement objectives are brought to the fore, and supply management practices so that responsible Organisations should promote the principles of responsible procurement throughout their supply chains.



We believe that responsible procurement represents a significant opportunity for the profession to raise its profile and to demonstrate leadership in a key strategic area of the organisation.

# ENVIRONMENTAL

## Outcome

‘Minimise and where possible eliminate the negative impact our supply chain activities have on the environment’.

## Four key activities

Work with our supply chain to reduce the use of plastic packaging, help them in the use of recycled packaging and where possible eliminate the use of packaging.

Make sure we consider and use recycled materials where possible in all relevant contracts.

Build and maintain internal and external relationships with support groups to learn and share best practice through our Carbon Reduction working group and external organisations.

Understand our current supply chain environmental policies and activities to minimise the effect on the environment through use of the Sustainability Matrix, Achilles UVDB and tender documentation.

**IMPACT  
INITIATIVE**





# CASE STUDY: ENVIRONMENT

Shining a light on sustainable  
traffic management by Beacon TM

## WHERE?

15 sites across the company

## WHEN?

February 2024 - ongoing

# CASE STUDY: ENVIRONMENT

Shining a light on sustainable traffic management by Beacon TM

## THE CHALLENGE

Traditional traffic lights need their batteries changed often, which causes three main problems:

1. It costs more money because of the frequent need for new batteries and the labour to change them.
2. Vehicles use more fuel traveling to change the batteries about every five days, especially for long-term roadwork.
3. They're not very reliable, as they can stop working during power cuts or when the batteries run out (usually in around five days).

## THE MEASURES

Using solar panel traffic lights can solve the problem of frequent battery changes. In 2024, Beacon TM partnered with SRL Traffic Systems to use their Solar Plus Systems. This solar technology makes traffic management more sustainable by reducing the need for battery changes, saving power, and cutting emissions. The system has been tested on the roads and is proven to be reliable and durable. Since February 2024, they have implemented 35 solar-powered traffic lights in the North East to improve battery life for road and traffic schemes.

## THE RESULTS

At 15 sites, we've doubled the battery life to about 10-11 days. This reduces labour costs and vehicle use, cutting fuel consumption and boosting carbon reduction efforts. Solar traffic lights are less affected by power outages, ensuring they work consistently and improve traffic flow where installed. Resources are used more efficiently with less manual handling needed. We're using less electricity to recharge batteries at our depot, saving significant money on electric and fuel bills.





# CASE STUDY: ENVIRONMENT

Eco-friendly over-pumping:  
a sustainable solution for  
sewer collapse by Selwood

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## WHERE?

Horsley Woods

## WHEN?

March 2023 to date

# CASE STUDY: ENVIRONMENT

## Eco-friendly over-pumping: a sustainable solution for sewer collapse by Selwood

### THE CHALLENGE

In February a sewer collapsed within Horsley Woods out of working hours. Selwood was contacted to provide over-pumping (a technique used to redirect the flow of sewage from one location to another using pumps) to mitigate pollution.

Over the next few days, a thorough investigation found damage in several parts of the sewer pipeline throughout the woods. The site was about 200 meters into the woods with no vehicle access. The over-pumping covered 315 meters. We realised that repairing the sewer would take time, so we needed a low carbon solution to reduce the environmental impact of long-term pumping.

### THE MEASURES

A solution was created to reduce the amount of diesel needed for pumping. It included an electric system powered by a hybrid battery generator. This setup had two S150 electric pumps on standby, controlled by an ultrasonic level control system.

### THE RESULTS

Selwood delivered and installed a solution which is much more manageable for the client. This has resulted in reduced fuel usage, saving over £600 per week and 980kg CO<sub>2</sub> emissions due to the use of hybrid technology. It also has less impact on the client due to the use of electric pumps ran from ultrasonic level control and the telemetry that allows the client to be informed of any potential issues remotely 24 hours per day. To date this solution has saved £5,350 and reduced emissions by 8.7 tonnes of CO<sub>2</sub>.

# LOCAL SPENDS

## Outcome

‘Protect relationships with local suppliers and continue to create awareness and opportunities’.

## Four key activities

Maintain 60p in £ of supply chain spend with local businesses to our operating regions in the North East, Essex and Suffolk.

Build and maintain external relationships with local organisations to offer business mentoring and provide ‘Meet the Buyer’ events.

Provide a pipeline of tendering opportunities on our website and use social media platforms such as LinkedIn to alert businesses of upcoming opportunities.

Membership of the County Durham Pound - a collaborative group of local partners who seek to work together to increase collective local spending, create business opportunities for local SMEs, VCSEs and other local businesses.

**IMPACT  
INITIATIVE**





# CASE STUDY: LOCAL SPENDS

Empowering local economies: our commitment to regional growth by Northumbrian Water Group (NWG)

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## WHERE?

Durham

## WHEN?

November 2024

# CASE STUDY: LOCAL SPENDS

Empowering local economies: our commitment to regional growth by Northumbrian Water Group (NWG)

## THE CHALLENGE

Local Spends are a key part of our responsible procurement strategy. By working with local suppliers, we help keep money within the North East, Essex, and Suffolk regions, which drives economic growth, creates jobs, and strengthens communities. At Northumbrian Water, we aim to spend at least 60p of every £1 with local suppliers. We are also founding members of the County Durham Pound group, working to maximise social, economic, and environmental value within County Durham.

## THE MEASURES

To achieve our targets, we've attended several 'Meet the Buyer' and local Chamber of Commerce Expo events. These events let us speak directly with local organisations and guide suppliers on how to do business with us. We provide contact details for our Procurement teams, who can then share more information on relevant upcoming opportunities. In November 2024, the County Durham Pound group organised the Social Value Business Exchange at the Radisson Blu in Durham. The event featured speeches from key figures and a 'Meet the Buyer' session where we spoke with local suppliers.

## THE RESULTS

A total of 125 delegates attended the event, leaving with valuable new connections, actionable insights, and a better understanding of how to tender with local organisations. By actively engaging with local suppliers, we are driving economic growth and fostering stronger communities. Our efforts ensure that money stays within the regions, maximising social, economic, and environmental value.

# SUPPLIER DIVERSITY

## Outcome

‘Make sure procurement activities are inclusive of all suppliers, allowing fair and equal opportunities’.

## Four key activities

Build and maintain internal and external relationships with support groups to learn and share best practice through our Diversity and Inclusion approach and external organisations such as MSDUK.

Capture supplier diversity information, through the use of our tender documents and supplier surveys, to better inform our approach to market and current levels of diversity.

Make sure public money is not spent on practices which lead to unfair discrimination.

Look towards a long-term goal of creating a diverse and integrated supply chain.



**IMPACT  
INITIATIVE**





# CASE STUDY: SUPPLIER DIVERSITY

Driving diversity: our commitment  
to inclusive procurement by TRUK

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## WHERE?

Nationwide

## WHEN?

Ongoing

# CASE STUDY: SUPPLIER DIVERSITY

Empowering local economies: our commitment to regional growth by Northumbrian Water Group (NWG)

## THE CHALLENGE

Total Resources UK Ltd (TRUK) provides temporary traffic management solutions for infrastructure projects in the UK, serving both public and private sectors. They focus on safety and minimising disruption for projects like roadworks, bridge repairs, and construction sites.

Recognising the importance of diversifying its supply chain, TRUK aims to promote inclusivity by creating opportunities for businesses from diverse backgrounds, including minority-owned, women-owned, and small enterprises.

## THE MEASURES

TRUK has developed a comprehensive Supplier Diversity Policy to promote inclusive procurement. This policy includes clear guidelines for evaluating and selecting suppliers based on diversity criteria. The company actively engages with diverse suppliers through outreach events, local business forums, and diversity networking events, collaborating with organisations like the Federation of Small Businesses (FSB).

Its supplier assessment process now considers not only capability and cost but also a supplier's commitment to diversity and support for underrepresented communities. Additionally, TRUK offers training resources, such as compliance workshops and best business practices advice.

## THE RESULTS

By collaborating with the National Federation of Builders (NFB), TRUK has supported minority-owned businesses in construction through networking and resources. Partnering with Women in Construction (WIC) has provided them with resources to support women-owned businesses, including certifications and networking opportunities. Additionally, the company has worked with local Chambers of Commerce to connect with local suppliers and leverage business intelligence, fostering partnerships with community-based enterprises. To ensure fair practices, TRUK used IHASCO for anti-discrimination and inclusivity training, educating staff on the importance of diversity in procurement and supplier management.

Its long-term strategy involves setting annual diversity targets, conducting regular audits and reviews, and implementing continuous improvement plans to address diversity gaps. Annual diversity reports are shared with stakeholders to demonstrate TRUK's commitment to transparent and inclusive practices.

# SKILLS INVESTMENT

## Outcome

‘Strengthen our supply chain contribution to the investment in our workforce’.

## Four key activities

Long-term commitment to the Energy and Utilities Skills (EUS) Partnership and the Procurement Skills Accord to address the skills shortage in our sector.

Sign up at least one supplier annually to the Procurement Skills Accord in as part of the EUS.

Continue to review procurement processes to make sure we promote the Procurement Skills Accord to our supply chain.

Promote the use of the Supply Chain Sustainability School within our supply base and make sure we are constantly working to improve our own assessment scores against the school’s models.

**IMPACT  
INITIATIVE**





# CASE STUDY: SKILLS AND INVESTMENT

Building futures: inspiring young minds with get into STEM by Esh Construction

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## WHERE?

North East & Tees Valley

## WHEN?

Throughout 2024

# CASE STUDY: SKILLS INVESTMENT

Building futures: inspiring young minds  
with get into STEM by Esh Construction

## THE CHALLENGE

Get into STEM engages Early Years Foundation Studies through a 40-minute interactive workshop. Through Esh Construction's award-winning construction themed kit and workshop plans, we positively shape career aspirations while developing skills essential for Science, Technology, Engineering and Mathematics (STEM) careers. Each kit contains bright and vibrant resources which are commonly used in construction such as foam bricks, measuring equipment and personal protective equipment. Students dress up as different roles in construction such as a Bricklayer, Site Manager, Architect and Quantity Surveyor and are required to complete a small task specific to the job role.

## THE MEASURES

Since our Get into STEM programme launched in 2015, we have engaged over **19,000** students. During the 2024 we have delivered **115** workshops engaging **3,394** students, this equates to **390,425** learner hours.

## THE RESULTS

Our Get into STEM workshop helps open students' eyes to the world around them, encouraging and inspiring them to consider a career in the construction industry and the breadth of opportunities available. It also promotes STEM topics and raises students' aspirations, particularly in deprived areas. Our Get into STEM workshop also reinforces important health and safety messages, in turn improving site safety awareness in communities near our sites.



# INNOVATION

## Outcome

‘Collaborate with suppliers to challenge existing practices and foster a progressive and dynamic environment’.

## Four key activities

Long-term commitment to the Energy and Utilities Skills (EUS) Partnership and the Procurement Skills Accord to address the skills shortage in our sector.

Sign up at least one supplier annually to the Procurement Skills Accord in as part of the EUS.

Continue to review procurement processes to ensure we promote the Procurement Skills Accord to our supply chain.

Promote the use of the Supply Chain Sustainability School within our supply base and make sure we are constantly working to improve our own assessment scores against the school’s models.

**IMPACT  
INITIATIVE**





# CASE STUDY: INNOVATION

Innovation Connect Challenge:  
sparking global collaboration  
and creativity by NWG

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## WHERE?

NWG Innovation Festival, Newcastle

## WHEN?

July 2024

# CASE STUDY: INNOVATION

Innovation Connect Challenge: sparking global collaboration and creativity by NWG

## THE CHALLENGE

This year, we ran the Innovation Connect Challenge for the second time. The competition, which first launched in 2022, provides businesses with an opportunity to collaborate with us and gain funding for their innovative ideas, a bit like Dragon's Den. The challenge was to attract a diverse range of proposals from businesses worldwide and select the most promising ones to bring to life.

## THE MEASURES

To address this challenge, we received a record number of entries with over 30 proposals from businesses as far as Canada, India, and Germany. Our procurement and innovation teams had the difficult job of shortlisting the final four proposals. These finalists were then invited to present their ideas to our 'Dragons' at the Innovation Festival at Newcastle Racecourse in July. The successful finalists, who presented ideas related to our wastewater operations, information services, and low carbon solutions, are now in discussions with us to bring their proposals to life.

## THE RESULTS

The Innovation Connect Challenge has successfully fostered innovation and collaboration within NWG and with external businesses. The record number of entries and the successful finalists demonstrate the competition's ability to attract innovative ideas from around the world. The finalists are now working with us to implement their proposals, which are expected to enhance our operations in wastewater management, information services, and low carbon solutions. This collaboration is a testament to our commitment to fostering innovation and supporting businesses in bringing their innovative ideas to life.



# CASE STUDY: INNOVATION

InvestQuest: Sparking innovation  
from within by NWG

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## WHERE?

Company wide

## WHEN?

2024



# CASE STUDY: INNOVATION

## InvestQuest: Sparking innovation from within by NWG

### THE CHALLENGE

Delivering the best outcomes for customers at a price they can afford relies on us working as one team, always looking for opportunities to innovate and identify different ways of working. We ran 'InvestQuest' for the seventh year in 2024. Much like our Innovation Connect Challenge, this competition takes inspiration from Dragon's Den. It's our internal innovation competition that every colleague can be part of. The challenge we set our colleagues is: 'If we gave you £250,000 to spend, how big a benefit could you deliver for NWG?' Colleagues get involved by identifying areas for change in the way we work and propose solutions that will benefit our customers, the business, and our people. We stress that it does not have to be groundbreaking. Our colleagues have some fantastic ideas, and InvestQuest is one of the ways we can support them in turning these ideas into reality.

### THE MEASURES

This year, we had two finalists who gave excellent presentations to our panel of judges. Both proposals involved using AI and machine learning to bring benefits to the wider business. The teams behind the ideas received a prize which included a £500 donation per team to a charity of their choice. By encouraging colleagues to identify areas for change and propose innovative solutions, we foster a culture of continuous improvement and collaboration within the organisation.

### THE RESULTS

InvestQuest has successfully inspired our colleagues to propose innovative solutions that benefit NWG, our customers, and our people. The two finalists' AI and machine learning-based proposals are expected to bring significant benefits to the wider business. The competition not only supports the implementation of these ideas but also encourages a culture of innovation within the organisation. The success of InvestQuest demonstrates our commitment to fostering innovation and delivering the best outcomes for our customers at an affordable price.



## IMPACT INITIATIVE

# SOCIAL VALUE

## Outcome

‘Assess the impact our suppliers’ activities have on our local communities and the collective benefit we can achieve’.

## Four key activities

Integrate social value into Opex sourcing through tendering process and updated tendering and contract documents.

Membership of the County Durham Pound - a collaborative group of local partners who seek to work together to deliver social value outcomes within County Durham by the strategic use of procurement spending power and other resources.

Build awareness with our people of social value through training opportunities through the social value portal.

Encourage our supply chain to support and/or contribute to our company Just An Hour scheme.



# **CASE STUDY:** **SOCIAL VALUE**

County Durham Pound: driving local impact and social value by NWG

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## **WHERE?**

Durham

## **WHEN?**

Ongoing



# CASE STUDY: SOCIAL VALUE

## Innovation Connect Challenge: sparking global collaboration and creativity by NWG

### THE CHALLENGE

Northumbrian Water is a founding member of the County Durham Pound group, which launched in 2022. The group, consisting of Durham County Council, Believe Housing, Business Durham, County Durham Fire and Rescue Services, Durham Police and Crime Commissioner's Office, Durham University, Karbon Homes, Livin, New College Durham, and ourselves, was established with six main aims and objectives: to create more jobs for local people, prioritise better health and wellbeing, focus on equality, diversity, and inclusion, reduce environmental impact, support meaningful training and upskilling, and help communities, groups, and charities.

### THE MEASURES

To achieve these objectives, the group has significantly increased the amount of social and local economic value delivered back to the county for the tax year 23/24, achieving over £314M. Approximately £309M of this was from doing business with suppliers local to the Durham region, while the remaining £5M was delivered through social value initiatives. These initiatives included supporting over 15,000 weeks of apprenticeships, donating almost half a million pounds in donations or in-kind contributions, spending 1,000 hours volunteering in local schools, and an additional 5,700 hours volunteering to support the Durham community. In April 2024, the group launched the County Durham Pound Supporters' Charter, with thirty-five businesses joining as supporters to further increase social value in Durham. The launch event brought together supporters to collaborate, hear from experts, and discuss how to deliver more local benefits.

### THE RESULTS

The County Durham Pound group has set a target to deliver £1 Billion of social and local economic value in the County Durham region. In May 2024, the group won the 'Collaborative Procurement Initiative Award' and were runners-up for the 'Social Value' award at the National GO Awards, recognising the UK's best public procurement achievements. In 2023, the group was awarded the Best Public Sector Project award at the 2023 Social Value Conference. These accolades highlight the group's success in driving social and economic value in the region. Videos of the **Supporters Charter launch event** and the **group's achievements in 2024** can be viewed on YouTube, showcasing their commitment to fostering a positive impact in County Durham.



# CASE STUDY: SOCIAL VALUE

Uniting against hunger: our commitment to community support by North

## WHERE?

Durham

## WHEN?

July 2023

# CASE STUDY: SOCIAL VALUE

## Uniting against hunger: our commitment to community support by North

### THE CHALLENGE

North is the designated maintenance provider for the electronic security systems for Northumbrian Water sites, providing systems including Intruder Alarms, CCTV and Access Control. By joining forces to create community benefits, we have demonstrated a shared commitment to social responsibility and community engagement.

Despite ongoing efforts, food poverty continues to persist in the UK, exacerbated by factors such as the current Cost of Living Crisis. The Trussell Trust, like many foodbanks across the country, faces the challenge of meeting the rising demand for emergency food supplies while ensuring that these provisions reach those who need them the most.

### THE MEASURES

Employees from North dedicated their employee volunteering day to support the Trussell Trust. During their time at the foodbank, the North team witnessed the immense scale and coordination required to manage such a crucial operation. They worked alongside a team of passionate volunteers, sorting donations, lifting crates, packing boxes, and organising supplies. This hands-on experience provided them with a deep understanding of the essential role volunteers play in addressing food poverty.

### THE RESULTS

The day of volunteering at the Trussell Trust foodbank strengthened our commitment to combating food poverty and inspired us to continue our involvement. Our firsthand experience underscored the vital role foodbanks play in supporting individuals and families during financial crises. The volunteering efforts had a direct impact on addressing food insecurity, ensuring that vulnerable individuals and families received essential food supplies.

# MODERN SLAVERY

## Outcome

‘Safeguard from unethical practices and strive for transparency in our supply chains’.

## Four key activities

Develop an anti-slavery culture within the organisation through CIPS ethical test for the Procurement team and ‘Lunch and Learn’ sessions for internal stakeholders with the support of the Supply Chain Sustainability School.

Refresh and relaunch our whistleblowing hotline.

Clear identification of high-risk suppliers and enhance our onboarding checks for new suppliers through use of the Sustainability Matrix, Achilles UVDB and tender documentation.

Steering group membership and collaborative industry work with Utilities against Slavery working group in conjunction with slave free alliance.

**IMPACT  
INITIATIVE**



# CASE STUDY: SOCIAL VALUE

United against slavery: our commitment to ethical practices by NWG

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## WHERE?

Company wide

## WHEN?

Ongoing



# CASE STUDY: SOCIAL VALUE

## United against slavery: our commitment to ethical practices by NWG

### THE CHALLENGE

Since 2022, we have been a member of Utilities Against Slavery, a group dedicated to eradicating slavery and exploitation in the UK utilities sector and its supply chains. The group's mission is to raise awareness to prevent the exploitation of workers and the community, share best practices among members, and collaborate to produce a coordinated response to reducing risks in supply chains. Facilitated by Slave Free Alliance, Utilities Against Slavery brings together more than 24 energy, water, and gas providers, collectively employing over 100,000 people and with a supply chain spend of around £21bn. This positions the group to identify potential acts of modern slavery and take action.

### THE MEASURES

The group meets regularly to share insights and hear from guest speakers. In 2023, three workstreams were formed focusing on 'Supply Chain', 'Training', and 'Engagement'. Throughout 2024, we have been an active member of the Training working group, developing training resources to share across the utilities sector. Other recent projects include creating a high-quality pre-qualification questionnaire to enhance due diligence practices and developing a common approach to working with suppliers to support risk management.

In recognition of Anti-Slavery Day in 2024, we dedicated a week in October to raising awareness of Modern Slavery and Human Trafficking. Efforts focused on sharing information and resources with employees and supply chain partners about these critical issues. Internal communications platforms and TV screens in main offices were used to engage employees and share key information, including facts and figures, the company's commitment to combating slavery, guidance on spotting the signs of slavery, and what to do if there are concerns. This information was also shared with supply chain partners, along with useful links and information packs to support suppliers in raising awareness within their own businesses and across their supply chains.

### THE RESULTS

The formation of workstreams and the development of training resources have strengthened the group's ability to address these issues effectively. The Anti-Slavery Week initiatives successfully engaged employees and supply chain partners, providing them with the knowledge and tools to identify and combat modern slavery. These measures have reinforced our commitment to social responsibility and community engagement, ensuring that along with our partners, we are well-equipped to prevent exploitation and support vulnerable individuals.



**NORTHUMBRIAN**  
**WATER** *living water*

**ESSEX & SUFFOLK**  
**WATER** *living water*

