

Certified



Corporation

**EMW**

LAW WITHOUT LIMITS

# B CORP IMPACT REPORT 2024

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# CHAIR'S INTRODUCTION

It's now just over a year since we became B Corp Certified, an achievement that I remain as proud of, and as excited by, as I was then.

The application process took over 18 months from start to finish and was incredibly demanding (other law firms, including at least one based in the City of London, have abandoned it for that very reason) but unquestionably worth it.

At the time of writing, we are:

- one of 2,793 B Corp Certified businesses in the UK and one of 8,913 around the world;
- the only B Corp certified law firm with its head office based in an area extending from Norfolk, Suffolk, Cambridgeshire and Essex in the east to Bedfordshire, Buckinghamshire and Hertfordshire in the west; and
- one of only 10 B Corp law firms in whole of the UK.

We are proud to be trailblazers but this is not about exclusivity. By the time you read this, at least some of those numbers will be higher – as far as I'm concerned, the higher the better.

Seeking B Corp certification wasn't something we needed to debate for long – it was clear from the very outset that what it represented was consistent with our values and beliefs about how business should be conducted in the 21st century. B Corp certification is a designation that a business is meeting the highest standards of verified performance, accountability and transparency in areas such as employee benefits, charitable giving, environmental impact and supply chain practices. All companies operate for the benefit of their stakeholders, but as a B Corp we include our employees, clients, suppliers, local community and environment amongst our stakeholders.

The purpose of this report is to explain how EMW has sought to promote a material positive impact on society and the environment as a whole. It will also set out our plans to strengthen that positive impact moving forward. We are doing this not just because we have to (constitutionally and as a requirement of certification) but because we want to. B Corp certification is a journey, not a destination and we want our stakeholders to feel part of that journey. A journey on which we constantly strive to be a better business. Better for our people, our clients, our community and our environment.



**NICK LLOYD**  
CHAIR

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# OUR MISSION STATEMENT

Independent and ambitious. A people first business. Making it fun. Helping to build a fairer and sustainable future.

# OUR B CORP PROFILE

EMW is a top 200 law firm in the UK with offices in Milton Keynes, Northampton, London and Gatwick. It provides a full range of legal services to clients ranging from start-ups and SMEs through to financial institutions, public bodies and household names. However, EMW identifies itself not by what it does but how it does it. EMW is comprised of talented people who care deeply about its clients and the journey they are on. They want to be the first people clients think of if they have an idea, challenge or opportunity and they take pride in delivering a service tailored to the individual needs of each and every one of them. That delivery also comes with a healthy dose of personality - down to earth and easy to talk to, EMW's lawyers take what they do really seriously, themselves less so. They are people clients relate to. EMW's values are at the heart of everything it does and everyone it interacts with, from clients, suppliers, and employees to the wider community within which it operates. Its people take pride in themselves, their clients and their work. They believe in community and have integrity, confidence and a humble self-belief in each other and what they are doing. They do not feel the need to conform. EMW is proud to be part of a force for good in the economy.



# CONTEXT

In assessing how we impact society and the environment and what we can do to improve it, we started with our B Impact Assessment. Although forming the basis of our certification, using this approach should not be mistaken with a “tick box” exercise. The B Impact Assessment is also a management tool for assessing our impact on our various stakeholders, including our people, our community, our clients and the environment. On certification, B Corps also provides an improvement report, helping certified businesses optimise the steps they can take to improving their performance.

We are reporting to you in the same way by setting out how we performed in relation to each B Impact Assessment impact area and what we are going to do to better that performance.

## How We Scored on Certification

We certified in June 2023 with a score of 91.1 against a pass mark of 80. Our performance in relation to each impact area is summarised below.

Impact Area	Description	Score	Available points	Percentage score
Governance	Overall mission, engagement around its social/environmental impact, ethics, and transparency.	18.9	50.58	37%
Our People	Contributions to employee financial security, health & safety, wellness, career development and engagement and satisfaction.	34.5	40.76	85%
Community	Engagement with and impact on the communities in which it operates, hires from, and sources from.	22.7	44.33	51%
Environment	Overall environmental management practices and impact on the air, climate, water, land and biodiversity.	10.7	18.56	58%
Clients	Stewardship of customers through the quality of products and services, ethical marketing, data privacy and security and feedback channels.	4.1	4.47	87%

To help you understand the timelines we envisage, references to “short-term” in this report means the next 12 months and references to “medium-term” means the next 2 to 5 years. There are no references to the long-term – life is too short.

# OUR GOVERNANCE IMPACT

Impact Area	Description	Score	Available points	Percentage score
Governance	Overall mission, engagement around its social/environmental impact, ethics, and transparency.	18.9	50.58	37%

## Comment

A cursory review would suggest that Governance is an unusual area for a legal practice to be falling short on. A more careful analysis reveals that we need to focus specifically on measuring our environmental and social impact, setting improvement targets and monitoring and publishing our performance. This, alongside “Environment” (with which it is directly linked) will be our primary short-term to medium-term focus for improvement.

## What we do

Aspects of how we run our business that contributed to our “Governance” score include:

- a fundamental object of the business to have a material positive impact on society and the environment is enshrined in our Members Agreement;
- robust internal controls, procedures and feedback mechanisms to protect against theft, bribery, corruption and money laundering;
- our financial controls; and
- a management board with an independent, non-executive member.

## How we plan to improve

We will, in the short to medium-term:

- set performance targets for environmental and social issues;
- measure the outcomes produced by our performance;
- carry out an annual Board review of our key social and environmental performance;
- publish our social and environmental performance on our website; and
- where relevant, incorporate social and environmental issues and performance into job descriptions and performance reviews.

# OUR PEOPLE IMPACT

Impact Area	Description	Score	Available points	Percentage score
Our People	Contributions to employee financial security, health & safety, wellness, career development and engagement and satisfaction.	34.5	40.76	85%

## Comment

The health, happiness and wellbeing of the EMW family has always been a primary focus for the business. Brimming with talented people, committed to getting the best outcome for our clients, they are fundamental to our success and also shape our brand and culture.

## What we do

Aspects of how we run our business that contributed to our “People” score include:

- our worker flexibility options including flex-time and telecommuting;
- our induction programmes;
- our ongoing training, including management training;
- our performance review process;
- our encouragement of internal promotions;
- our supplementary benefits such as private healthcare and life insurance.

## How we plan to improve

We will, in the short-term:

- renew our focus on employee satisfaction by surveying our people and listening to what they want; and
- measure and monitor movements in attrition rates.

# OUR COMMUNITY IMPACT

Impact Area	Description	Score	Available points	Percentage score
Community	Engagement with and impact on the communities in which it operates, hires from, and sources from.	22.7	44.33	51%

## Comment

We are proud to be members of, and make a positive contribution to the communities in which we work, whether through volunteer work, charitable donations or simply the work we do.

By way of example, several years ago we identified and set about focusing on the growth potential in an emerging area of M&A, namely selling to an employee ownership trust (“EOT”). Following something akin to “the John Lewis model”, EOTs are trusts set up for the benefit of a company’s employees. By specialising in selling to EOTs, we have played, and continue to play, a pre-eminent role in the growth of employee ownership and thereby made a hugely positive impact on the commercial landscape of the regions in which we operate.

Today, Tracy Evans is one of the country’s leading legal advisors in this field, having advised on 39 EOT sales in the last 4 years and in the process has extended ownership to more than 1,500 employees.

## What we do

Aspects of how we run our business that contributed to our “Community” score include:

- a statement in all job postings concerning our commitment to diversity, equity and inclusion as well as conducting “blind” reviews of applications;
- the work done by our Diversity, Equity & Inclusion committee;
- our local purchasing policy; and
- our charitable donations and volunteer work.

## How we plan to improve

We will, over the short-term:

- encourage more employees to take paid time off for volunteer services; and
- monitor movements in annual volunteer hours as a multiple of hours per full time employee.

Over the medium-term, we will target greater female management and Board representation.



# OUR ENVIRONMENTAL IMPACT

Impact Area	Description	Score	Available points	Percentage score
Environment	Overall environmental management practices and impact on the air, climate, water, land and biodiversity.	10.7	18.56	58%

## Comment

Although we are rightly proud of some of our environmental achievements, it is fair to say that they have been introduced in an unstructured, ad hoc manner. As such, we didn't need to review our B Impact Assessment to know that the next step on our B Corp journey needs to be measuring, and targeting reductions to, our carbon footprint.

## What we do

Aspects of how we run our business that contributed to our "Environment" score include:

- the certification of our facilities as "accredited green building programs";
- our energy efficiency improvements and waste reduction programs;
- our "working from home" policy;
- our paperless files and sustainably sourced paper;
- our waste recycling;
- meeting our energy needs from renewable resources; and
- our EV charging points.

## How we plan to improve

We will, over the short to medium-term:

- assess our environmental impact, set quantifiable targets to improve it, devise a plan for meeting those targets and periodically audit performance against targets;
- monitor and record greenhouse emissions, set reduction targets;
- monitor and record water usage and set reduction targets; and
- monitor and record waste production and set reduction targets.

# OUR CLIENT IMPACT

Impact Area	Description	Score	Available points	Percentage score
Clients	Stewardship of customers through the quality of products and services, ethical marketing, data privacy and security and feedback channels.	4.1	4.47	87%

## Comment

We constantly strive to improve the service that we provide to, and the value that we add for, our clients and this is reflected in our score in this impact area.

## What we do

Aspects of how we run our business that contributed to our “Clients” score include:

- our service level guarantee;
- our Investors in People, Lexcel and other accreditations; and
- our data protection policies and practices.

## How we plan to improve

We will, in the short-term, look into measuring client satisfaction and introducing and monitoring targets for improving client satisfaction.