

2022 - 2023

ANNUAL IMPACT REPORT

**BRISTOL WOMEN IN
BUSINESS CHARTER**



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EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

The Bristol Women in Business Charter brings together a group of ambitious commercial organisations. Employing over 32,000 people in Bristol and the surrounding areas, these organisations are all committed to making progress on gender equality in Bristol. This Impact Report shares the progress reported to us by Charter signatories between April 2022 and March 2023. It also provides an overview of our financial position and details of our future plans for the Charter.

Research continues to show us that the covid 19 pandemic had a significant impact on the way we all work and balance our lives. Achieving diversity is a challenge for some organisations, especially those in traditionally male dominated sectors; technology, engineering, construction. However we know that the hard work is worth it, more diverse businesses benefit from engaged and productive teams, attracting and retaining the best talent and achieving commercial success. Post pandemic there has been a focus on employee wellbeing, ensuring support and equal opportunities for their dispersed teams.

Companies that sign the Bristol Women in Business Charter commit to one or more of the seven goals of the Charter, setting their own business targets for the year. Our signatories told us that the goals act as a useful framework for change, they enjoy the ability to share ideas and hear inspiring stories at our events and this helps them to focus their work on gender equality.

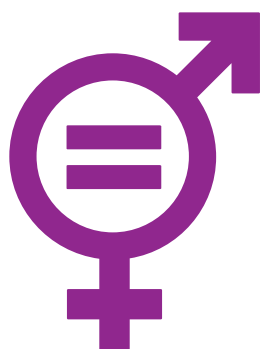
They have also stated that the Charter has helped to solidify their commitment to gender equality in their businesses and hold them accountable to the goals that they have chosen.

“We have benefitted from being part of a wider community that shares good practice in improving and maintaining gender diversity and inclusion. Being a Charter signatory also demonstrates to our employees, clients and local community that we take these issues seriously and finally, being a signatory keeps gender equality on the firm’s agenda.”

The Charter has several new signatories this year and it’s encouraging to see that they are seeing a benefit from joining already. “Our first-year membership of the Charter has helped us maintain our ongoing focus on diversity and inclusion. Events held with Charter signatories have provided a broader insight into progressive approaches for us to consider, which has prompted healthy discussion internally about opportunities to further our gender equality.”

We have continued to listen to the needs and suggestions from our Charter community throughout this year, to help improve the value of being a signatory and ultimately to achieve the aims of the Charter.

A common theme we’ve seen in the feedback from signatories revolves around mentoring and support from other signatories, which has led to the launch of our Peer 2 Peer Mentoring Program.



One of the benefits of being a Charter signatory is creating the opportunity to bring companies together to share their experience and knowledge and learn from each other through regular events. Throughout 2022/23 there have been a number of Signatory exclusive events and for the first time since the start of the pandemic and us becoming a CIC, we were able to host in person public events.

We have seen progress made from our signatories outside of their chosen goals on a number of other activities. Such as changes to key policies, recruitment, the implementation of inclusive leadership training and connecting with various networks that support women within organisations.

We are grateful to our charter Ambassadors who have continued to be supporters and advocates for the work of the Charter and for gender equality in Bristol. They have helped us to fly the flag and increase awareness of the Charter and its goals within the local business communities. We have valued their expertise, passion, and commitment to the work of the charter during the last year.

The Charter would like to acknowledge Jackie Longworth and Sue Durbin from the Bristol Women's Commission for their invaluable contributions towards creating the concept and Charter goals.

We would also like to thank Jane Ginnever, one of the founding Directors of the Charter who retired this year, who was instrumental in setting up the CIC in 2020.

Our signatories have made significant progress in the last year, we share the details in this report in order to celebrate their success and inspire others to follow their lead by joining the charter and achieve our ambition to make Bristol the first gender equal city in the UK.



THE PURPOSE OF THIS REPORT AND OUR AMBITION

The Charter was launched by the Women in Business Task Group, a group of volunteers and part of the Bristol Women's Commission in March 2019 and became a Community Interest Company (the Bristol Women in Business CIC) a year later in 2020.

The Bristol Women's Commission with the organisations that are signatories of the Charter, are our key stakeholders. One of our Directors, Sandra Gordon, is now a member of the Commission and continues to hold a seat on the Women in Business Task Group. We also contribute to the Women's Commission's annual report to Bristol City Council on progress on gender equality.

We recognise that it would take time to achieve our aims and ambitions of the Charter helping to accelerate the pace of change that would benefit women, the businesses they work in and the communities they live in. Therefore, it was important to create an entity that would ensure the Charter would have longevity and be sustainable as a long-term project.

This Bristol Women in Business Charter annual impact report provides a detailed summary of the impact the Charter has had in the last year. The report also provides an overview of our financial position and details of our future plans for the Charter.

We have continued to see significant progress being made by our organisations in the charter community as they continue to build back from the impact of the pandemic. We acknowledge their continual commitment shown towards creating a gender equal workforce.

Bristol Women's Commission

Bringing together partners to identify and tackle inequality.

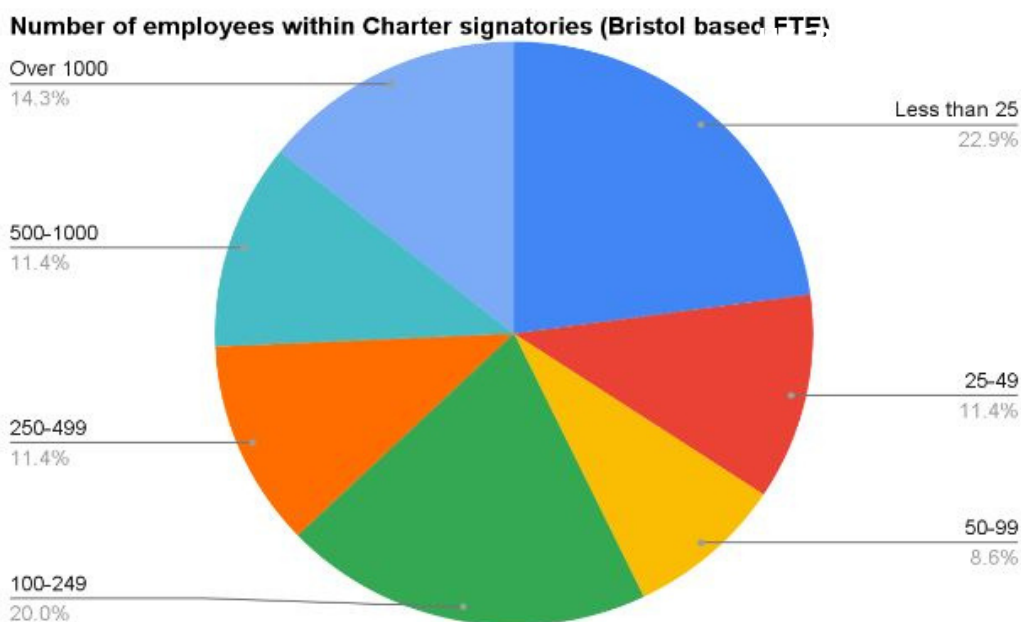




OUR LATEST NUMBERS

At the Charter we welcome companies with 3 or more employees.

Currently the Charter's signatory companies employ more than 32,000 people in Bristol and the surrounding areas.





SETTING GOALS

Why companies selected the goals they did in 2022

Both new applicants and current signatories are expected to set targets against one or more of the goals of the Charter. In addition, signatories are asked to explain why the goals they have chosen are important to their business. The answers demonstrate both the employer's values and the importance of the issue of gender equality to the business.

We asked new signatories to share why they joined the charter:



“Our gender diversity (Women at TRIA) is one of our key differentiators, and one of our core values is promoting women in recruitment and women in tech. We want to use our positive experience with a high proportion of our workforce working part time as an example to set working with our clients who are recruiting tech talent to encourage them to do the same. We have made a commitment to document our experiences of what promotes good gender diversity, and to share that with our client base in the tech sector for the benefit of our network.” **TRIA Recruitment** - selected 1. Part time working and 7. Women's Mentoring as their goals.



"Firstly, we believe in the mission! We're also interested in accessing more workshops, panels, discussions, and general networking opportunities in the Bristol area with like minded individuals who are passionate about equity and equality. Internally, we've supported female employees into management and leadership positions. We support them to speak on panels about diversity in the tech and farming sectors. We analyse our gender pay gap and ensure women in our organisation are paid fairly and in line with market rates." **Lettus Grow** - selected 5. Gender Pay Equity and 7. Women's Mentoring as their goals.

The logo for ForrestBrown is the company name in white text on a solid green rectangular background.

ForrestBrown

"We have joined to support our gender parity ambitions and wider ED&I initiatives. We have conducted a gender pay gap analysis, we have formed a women's leadership group internally, we have delivered training on gender specific topics and have introduced gender specific policies (menopause and miscarriage)." **ForrestBrown** - selected 4. Female career progression 5. Gender Pay Equity and 7. Women's Mentoring as their goals.

Existing signatories told us why they selected their goals:

Many of them are focused on increasing the number of women at senior levels in order to help balance their gender pay gap, as well as understanding that this diversity is good for their organisation and thought diversity in business decisioning.



“One theme is increasing the diversity of NCC - this is external, by reviewing recruitment processes and exploring campaigns to help us tackle under-representation. There are also internal activities, with training, coaching and mentoring to help individuals develop their career in NCC. The roadmap activities are set to be carried out over the next 2 years”

National Composites Centre



“We joined the Chartership as we want to continue to push our business forward and do more to provide a venue for the continued development of the women within our business, and improve our talent pipeline to support us in attracting, retaining, and progressing female talent, which is critical to our success as a business and help us continue to be a great place to work.” **Western Global**

Signature*

“It has allowed us to meet and connect with other organisations on a similar journey and to share and learn practical ideas to implement. It has also helped to demonstrate to our staff as well as our candidates and clients that we are focused and committed to improving the current challenges on gender equality.” **Signature Recruitment**

THE CHALLENGES BUSINESSES FACE WHEN TRYING TO MAKE PROGRESS ON EQUALITY



The COVID-19 pandemic has dramatically transformed the way people work, and remote working has emerged as the most popular approach to work, with research showing that the majority of workers would like to carry out hybrid working in the future. (Ref 1.)

However the introduction of Hybrid working has reduced the focus on the need from some employees for reduced hours working, or fixed flexible working patterns, which was previously referred to as flexible working. Now when we ask employers what their flexible working approach is, most of the time the answer is that they offer hybrid working.

But hybrid working isn't the answer for many, there is still a need for formalised flexible working arrangements and a family friendly approach. This is particularly true for women who often bear the bulk of caring responsibilities for children, elderly relatives, and other family members. Access to flexible working is essential for women as it enables them to balance their work and personal responsibilities more effectively and contributes to a gender equal workforce. Without offering more formalised reduced hours working options, organisations will face challenges on making progress on gender equality.

The hybrid model may exacerbate the workload for women who work from home. Studies have shown that women who work in this model tend to have longer working hours and less time for self-care, this can lead to burnout and impact their mental and physical health. (Ref 2.)

Many with caring responsibilities need to work reduced hours in order to manage childcare, school drop off and pick-ups and eldercare. With 72% of women in the UK labour force and 79% men (Ref 3), there is an untapped pool of talent who are looking for more than just hybrid working to enable them to work. In 2021, data from a survey of more than 9,000 UK workers showed 65% of job seekers prioritised work-life balance over pay and benefits (Ref4)



Women are more likely to want to work from home and as such may miss out on promotion and career progression opportunities compared to their colleagues who may be able to be more present and front of mind to senior management. The same is true for those with physical disabilities who may find it more difficult to regularly commute to a physical work environment. As well as those who are neurodiverse or have protected characteristics which may mean they experience workplace harassment or microaggressions, which means they self-select to work remotely more often.

Organisations need to work hard to avoid a two tier workforce, creating equal opportunities for progression and safe spaces to participate and engage with colleagues without judgement, particularly when remotely working. Putting in place a clear and transparent strategy for equity, diversity and inclusion and ensuring equal opportunity, will lead to a more diverse and inclusive workplace.

Some of our signatories are using employee councils and employee resource groups to engage with their teams, understand the intersectional challenges and put in place strategies to ensure equality and diversity.

It is important to them to ensure that they support employees without making any individuals feel uncomfortable being put in the spotlight, for example in case studies.

Other signatories have undertaken significant change in their businesses over the last 12 months which has taken the focus away from Diversity and inclusion initiatives and focused on more operational and commercial transformation. A number of our signatories have also been affected by under-resourcing / staff shortages in their teams, vacancies have been hard to fill in the current recruitment climate, this has made it difficult for them to focus on these initiatives.

A number of our signatories operate in industries where women and other diverse candidates are less representative in their sectors, for example technology/digital, engineering, data and legal they experience the challenge of not enough women in their organisation to promote and also not enough applications for roles they advertise externally. This is a challenge across the UK and we will continue to work with our signatories to support them with this challenge, including supporting them in their outreach into schools to promote STEM subjects to girls in school.





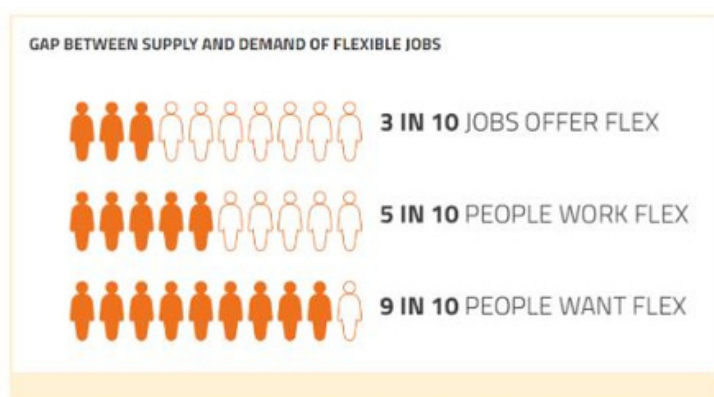
THE PROGRESS CHARTER SIGNATORIES HAVE REPORTED

For this section, we have looked at each goal individually and what progress was made against it. As signatories set their own targets for each goal they select, they can make progress regardless of where they start and proceed at their own pace to achieve their targets for the year.

Goal 1 - The promotion and availability of flexible and part-time working, especially at senior levels that attract higher levels of pay and conditions

Signatories have continued to evolve new ways of working post pandemic, which of course needs to focus on flexible and part time roles specifically, in addition to hybrid working solutions.

- ADLIB has in place a flexible working policy and five reduced hours working roles, ranging from 3 to 4 days a week, four of these roles are at management level.
- Western Global has a flexible and hybrid working model for all employees allowing them to offer all roles as flexible from day one, both in location and working hours. This allows them to attract and retain talent that we previously might now have been able to.
- In 2021, TLT launched TLT World, a fully flexible model which enables all staff, at all levels, to choose the hours, location and environment that best suits them and the work they are doing. Recent survey feedback indicates that women highly favour the current flexible working provision.
- Bristol University has introduced a framework which takes into account individual circumstances, such as flexible and / or PT working, equality factors and / or the impact of COVID-19 and has increased the levels of female professors from 13% to 31% - an additional 121.
- Ian Williams advertises all roles with flexible working. They have a number of senior female managers working part time and regularly communicate this internally to help ensure flexible working is seen as the norm. They now offer the right to request flexible working from day one.
- OVO continues to promote flexible ways of working, allowing individuals of all genders to work in the way that best suits their needs.
- Triodos Bank advertises roles with the opportunity to discuss flexibility. We continue to review all vacancies and whether there is an opportunity to recruit on a part-time basis. Hybrid working is now part of the fabric of the organisation and this is communicated in both adverts and during interviews and in most roles they also offer flexible start and finish times as part of the commitment to flexible working.



- Great Western Credit Union has been supporting flexible working at all levels, especially for people with caring responsibilities, including at senior levels. Flexibility and part time roles have been advertised with recruitment.
- Bishop Fleming introduced a Hybrid and Flexible Working Policy in the summer of 2021, in 2022 our inclusion and diversity (I&D) employee working group rolled out a series of employee blogs and webinars about the experiences of working part time at the firm. The series had a noticeable impact in encouraging our women in particular to talk about their own challenges in balancing their home and work life and many also reported that they found it reassuring to hear that so many others have similar struggles, allowing them to find support in each other when needed.
- Stride Treglowan consulted with their employee forum to create their Hybrid, Agile & Flexible Working Policy with reduced core hours (10-3) and enhanced parental entitlements. The policy allows employees to choose when and where they work and helps everybody achieve a better work/life balance. We're seeing lots of people changing their working hours and some going part time as a result across all levels in the business - both male and female.

Only 3 in 10 jobs are advertised with flexible working. Or, to look at it another way: people who need flexibility are unable to apply for 7 in 10 jobs. The problem is most acute for those seeking part-time work – the forgotten form of flexibility, given all the recent focus on hybrid working. Only 12% of job adverts offer part-time work, with most of the posts concentrated at low pay levels. (Ref 5)

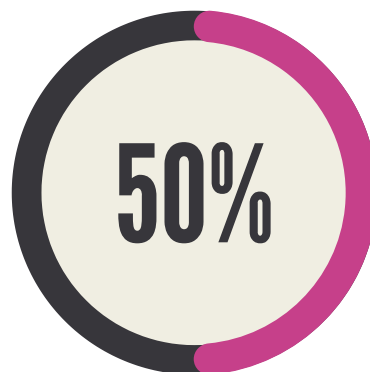
We look forward to other signatories taking their provision of hybrid working solutions further, to include reduced hours working where possible, as there is an untapped pool of talent who are looking for more than just hybrid working to enable them to work, put simply, many parents want more flexibility than is currently on offer to them.



Goal 2 - A commitment to increase the numbers of women at senior levels and on the board

This goal has continued to demonstrate the commitment towards ensuring that gender equality is prioritised and driven from the top of the organisation. There have been some notable areas of progress from our signatories during the reporting year.

We are pleased to share that many of our signatories have 50% gender split in their senior management teams and/or boards including; ADLIB, GCP Chartered Architects, Hargreaves Lansdown, Great Western Credit Union, Simitive, UWE



- Western Global have put in place measures to increase the representation of Women within the operational side of the organisation which previously was an area of the organisation that was heavily weighted to male employees.
- In order to increase senior women, National Composites Centre has created an EDI roadmap, and a range of internal activities, with training, coaching and mentoring to help individuals develop their career.
- TLT's gender target remains a priority, they report that female partner representation has grown year on year, currently standing at 30%. Focused development interventions commenced with several high potential senior female fee earners and, as a result, women represented 60% of Equity Partner promotions in the last financial year.
- Bristol University Elevate programme aims to address the underrepresentation of racially minoritized women at more senior levels in the sector through developing their personal leadership style and influence. In 2022, the Elevate programme was awarded a Universities Human Resource Award. Out of a cohort of 19, six staff were successful in applying for new roles and one was headhunted as a result of raising her profile. Bristol University Trustee Board is close to equal gender split at 47.4%. Board of Trustees is 43% female: 48% male: 9% non-binary.

- OVO set a target to reach at least 40% of our leadership roles to be covered by women by 2025, currently at 37.8%, putting them on track to achieve the target.
- UWE were pleased to start the 2022/23 academic year with 53% of the Board being female, with 10 out of 19 positions held by women.
- Hargreaves Lansdown recognise the importance of tone and accountability from the top and that the plc Board's approach to Inclusion and Diversity is key to the wider HL group. We have a Board Diversity policy and a commitment to Board diversity, we are proud to have a female Chair and to have exceeded the FTSE Women Leaders (previously Hampton Alexander) target for women on Boards for the 5th year and now have 50% female representation.
- Kets Quantum have developed, published and implemented a new process internally for the hiring of senior level employees and consultants to ensure that there is a consistency of process at the more senior levels of the business.
- Stride Treglowan has an Inclusion and Diversity group - Stride Together who are leading initiatives across the business.



We are pleased with the progress made and the number of signatories that have at least 50% women in senior management positions. The focused achievement of the other goals will also help to drive achievements in this goal, as an increase in focus, reduced hours working, mentoring, promotional activities, will all lead to more women in senior roles.

Goal 3 - Making at least one member of the senior executive team responsible for reporting on gender equality and inclusion

Moving equity forward for women at work, needs to be a key objective for organisations, it is therefore vital that there are reporting structures in place to monitor and track the progression that is being made, and this is discussed at board level.

- During the reporting year we have seen Professor Judith Squires, Deputy Vice-Chancellor and Provost been made University of Bristol's senior champion for gender equality, with a Gender Inclusion committee establishing an action plan, monitor progress and steer priorities for the years ahead established which reports to her and the leadership team.
- Organisations such as Clarke Wilmott have ensured that senior executive team members who are accountable to the board are also part of their ED&I committee, where they report annually on progress against gender, this has demonstrated commitment from the top.
- OVO's CEO and CPO are co-sponsors for their Belonging/Inclusion & Diversity work, which also covers our gender equality work, in addition, to their Chief Tech & Product Officer, who is the sponsor for their Engender Network, helping them achieve full gender equality at OVO.
- Within the City of Bristol College the Vice Principal is the chair of the EDI steering group and this is promoted throughout the organisation and is championed by the senior team and governing corporation.



We have seen that a number of organisations are ensuring that they regularly report on gender into the exec team to ensure it remains firmly on the agenda and within the business despite there being no key person driving this on the exec board.

Goal 4 - Encouraging and supporting female employees in lower paid and lower skilled occupations to progress through the organisation, through appropriate training and other on-going support

This goal is vital in ensuring that women are given the tools they need to progress and fulfil their potential within organisations, it is pleasing to see that many of our signatories have recognised this as a priority and chosen to work on this during the last 12 months.

- KETS have continued to use their 90-Day Goals process to continually review the development of all employees. This year, they also implemented a progression point process to enable employees to take control of their own development, through completion and submission of a progression application if they feel that they are working at a level higher than their current role denotes. The first individual to utilise this process was female and they were supported through the completion of the application and subsequently promoted to a more senior role/responsibilities.
- Western Global's Personal Development Review Process provides a clear path for career progression, we are empowering our employees to take ownership of their career development and achieve their goals. They are also reviewing how training is done across the group to ensure that employees have the skills they need to succeed in their roles. This review process will help them identify areas where additional training and support are required, and help them to better equip our employees for success.
- OVO's Engender Network has been offering coaching to any women who are interested in receiving it. This was designed to help with confidence and career progression. In addition, they have a reverse mentoring programme (called OVO Experience) where some of our more junior female colleagues share their experiences and challenges with senior leaders to help them see the role they can play to accelerate gender equality.
- Hargreaves Lansdown have continued to build on their Reverse mentoring program pilot, for lower-level colleagues from under-represented groups to be paired with senior-level colleagues. The aim of the programme was to: - Support the career development of more junior colleagues and support them in building skills and capabilities to help colleagues progress. Due to the success, they are currently creating a framework to scale up the programme. They have been presented with the Stepping Up award acknowledging the leadership and support they are providing to change diversity and inclusion across the city and have 3 female colleagues taking part in the 2022/2023 cohort.

- NCCuk have developed their EDI roadmap from which they have 4 themes, which have a variety of activities and tasks that can help achieve their goals, one of the themes supports individuals develop their careers with training, coaching and mentoring.
- Ghyston has changed their salary band system, so it encompasses all staff (it used to be exclusively for developers and therefore start at a higher pay grade), and they co-created progression plans with their more junior staff (both of whom have since moved up a pay band).
- Bristol City Council have created a career development hub: with e-learning and in-person tools including career check in and personal development plan tool to help managers and their teams have conversations about career progression, talent development guidance for people managers, creating a leadership pipeline to help colleagues map out their career path, interview and application skills. By the end of 2022 over 800 staff have taken the opportunity to develop new skills and knowledge through apprenticeships from GCSE to Master's Degree 68% of apprentices are women.
- Pelican, Water2business and Wessex Water have undertaken a number of activities to develop their internal talent and ensure it is a key priority that supports their existing team members to develop their careers, and there have been some notable successes in this area. Such as two thirds of their internal moves have been completed by female team members.
- After our 'Eliminating Bias session' this prompted Pelican to offer job sharing as standard in their job adverts, ensuring that opportunities were more inclusive than typical full-time positions, particularly for women. This has resulted in having a number of job shares and part time positions held by women in more senior roles.



There have also been a number of appointments of women to senior roles within their organisations including Adlib, and Bristol University are ensuring that their staff are using targeted positive action to increase the gender diversity at entry. Also equipping colleagues with a greater understanding of how they can refocus activity at all stages of their staff recruitment processes to boost representation of women.

Goal 5 - A commitment to close the gender pay gap

At this time of year while companies submit their report on their gender pay, this continues to be a point of conversation. The Gender Pay Gap is the difference in average gross hourly earnings between women and men. The gender pay has been reducing over the last 10 years, yet still significant.

- Recruiting women in senior roles has been key for Great Western Credit Union and Ian Williams. Ian Williams reduced their median pay gap, through training initiatives and an increase in female senior managers
- Both Stride Treglown and National Composite Centre reported a reduction in their gender pay gaps.
- Bishop Fleming achieved their lowest mean and median gender pay gaps since 2017, a great achievement for the accountancy firm. .
- Western Global focused on creating opportunities, by consciously applying inclusive hiring practices and nurturing internal talent.
- Alongside gender, Bristol University also explores ethnicity pay gaps to explore the intersectionality across their grading strictures. The intention is to support an inclusive workforce they are aiming to eradicate their gender pay gap by 2030.
- Triodos regularly analyses their data and creates a Gender Pay Gap action plan. This demonstrates great work within Triodos to be accountable to and source recruitment support, talent mapping and support

With women still underrepresented in the many tech companies in the city. Along with the lack of women in senior roles, mentioned by several signatories. Data still shows 'Among full-time employees the gender pay gap in April 2022 was 8.3%' (ONS, Gender Pay gap in the UK:2022). Our signatories continue to make the commitment to keep closing the gap in their organisations. Making great progress.



Goal 6 - A focus on implementing recruitment, appraisal, personal development and promotion processes that are non-discriminatory towards women and are free from unconscious bias

Challenging and re-visiting processes is a common theme for this goal. It can be easy for us to keep using the same systems, however our signatories are demonstrating review and tweaks can help make a difference to gender equality.

- Ghyston reviewed their data from the last year and as a result adapted interview processes with consideration to other skills and expertise that may fall outside of coding. Being visible in University discussions to encourage applicants.
- GCP Architects utilised a HR Consultant to refresh their internal appraisal documents.
- TLT has a strong level of women in the business, but noticed that representation stalled at Partner level. This formed part of a wider review and targeted approach to look at performance metrics. In addition to promotions, considering the wellbeing of female employees. Ensuring they are comfortable by providing sanitary products in each office and focusing on making changes which support various life stages for employees. At the end of last year, Bishop Fleming introduced a new performance management framework to support quarterly reviews and linking to the firm's strategy of better growth.
- Streidetown Treglown, in house Learning and Development programme 'Grow' has continued to evolve. Creating communities to bring learners together. Creating training and online learning which can be accessed by employees to allow conversations with their team leaders.
- Signature recruitment agency continue to challenge and review questions. Exploring the language to ensure it's gender neutral.
- City of Bristol college made the decision to remove sensitive data from application forms to remove unconscious bias. While Business West put job adverts through a programme to eliminate unconscious bias. Informing hiring managers of candidates through an anonymous system.



Goal 7 - Supporting women where they are underrepresented, through mentoring and women's networks

We know many businesses have employee resource groups (ERG) to provide support and a place to be heard for employees, which commonly focus on one protected characteristic – but people are not one-dimensional. It is encouraging to see that many signatories are adopting an intersectional approach to the way they support their colleagues, to ensure that everyone is represented.

- Stride Treglown's Director of Partnerships finished her year as National Chair for Women in Property in March 2022. A wider group of staff are involved in mentoring through networks supporting women in the construction industry such as Women in Architecture and Mentoring Circle. Stride also started an inhouse mentoring programme which is being run as a pilot from July 2022 through into summer 2023.
- TLT created a Menopause Policy, celebrating World Menopause Day and held a menopause discussion with a WEN committee member. For their International Women's Day celebration, the TLT Women's Equality Network hosted an incredible speaker, Martine Wright, survivor of the London July bombings. A captivating and inspiring presentation about how to succeed when faced with adversity.
- In 2022 Bishop Fleming sourced an external provider who can provide coaching support for working mothers and are beginning to introduce this coaching support for women before they go on maternity leave, during the leave and following the leave. The coaching will focus on how to overcome the challenges of combining family and work roles, whilst continuing to progress in the workplace.
- Signature won the Heart of the City Award at this year's Lord Mayor's Dragon Awards for their Professional Mentoring Programme. To positively impact the lack of female representation in leadership roles, they collaborated with other charter members to run a panel event to raise awareness, share ideas, experiences and best practice regarding equity.

- Bristol University continues to run the Bristol Women's Mentoring Network. This was first launched in February 2019 and since launching the programme, they have had two successful cohorts and there has been positive feedback from those that took part in a mentoring relationship over the last year with mentoring relationships helping with work-life balance, wellbeing, developing interpersonal skills and more.
- Chorus have been involved with local schools to provide support, such as helping with mock interviews and offering talks around Women in Tech to encourage students into the sector.
- Western Global have made significant progress in supporting women where they are under-represented through their recently launched Women of Western Network. This internal network has provided a safe space for women to discuss any issues they face and offer support for each other.
- This year NCC have started an inclusivity group. The foundation of the group is for like minded people who have a passion for EDI - they come together to allow feedback on EDI topics in NCC, and also to discuss best practice.
- Congratulations on Signature's Professional Mentoring Programme, winning the Heart of the City Award at this year's Lord Mayor's Dragon Awards and for the commitment to working with UWE Equity mentoring scheme.



Other progress made

We have seen progress made from our signatories outside of their chosen goals on a number of other activities. Such as changes to key policies, recruitment, the implementation of inclusive leadership training and connecting with various networks that support women within organisations.

- Pelican/Water2business have introduced to their leaders, culture, inclusion and diversity training which will ensure they are equipped to promote inclusive ways of working and support them in achieving their goal of being an open and inclusive culture where their people feel welcome, supported and included, regardless of characteristics.
- As a result of feedback provided from a staff survey on the topic of inclusion and diversity, Bishop Fleming has been coaching their people managers on the feedback of the survey to increase awareness of unconscious bias and ensure that they are checking in with their direct reports, especially women who felt less confident to speak up. They also launched a Menopause Group at the end of 2022. The group is made up of a mixture of people – some are experiencing the menopause (from early symptoms through to having full blown experience and therefore bringing knowledge and learnings to share), to others that are not there yet but curious to find out what to expect.
- We have seen a number of policies implemented including Hargreaves Lansdown's Menopause and Menstruation policy. They have continued with their commitment to ending period poverty by working with Time Of The Month to provide sanitary products for all our staff.
- They have launched their Trans and Non-Binary inclusion policy (June 2022). This shows their commitment in ensuring support and opportunities for the trans women of Bristol. The policy was launched externally to show their commitment not only to our colleagues, but our clients and the community of Bristol. Introducing gender neutral toilets so that all colleagues can use the facilities on the floor in which they work which not only provide additional safe spaces for their trans and non-binary colleagues.
- Through participation in the charter, has enabled Simitive to connect with and support other groups such as Motherboard and Women in Work, we have also seen Ghyston engage with the Women's Work Lab and hopefully through supporting the scheme will be taking on women for placements in the future.

- Triodos conducted a recent review of the benefits package, this has led to changes which will benefit our female co-workers, including paid emergency dependant's leave and carer's leave. They also launched menopause guidance and support, involving the development of some female co-workers to be "menopause champions". Triodos also hosted the re-launch event for the South-West & Wales Chapter of the Women in Banking and Finance network and has become a corporate member of this organisation which delivers thought leadership and practical support and guidance to both employers and individuals in promoting gender equality in the banking and finance sector.
- Clarke Wilmott now has 7 new members to our ED&I committee, contributing to wider diversity of thought / approach in all that they do. Their external careers website has seen improvements being made to ensure inclusive language and a new and improved colour pallet to ensure diversity is at the heart of all our communications. They are also working on making improvements to our general approach to offering work experience to students including those from less advantaged backgrounds and a firm wide vacation scheme.
- Our signatories have partnered and networked with a number of organisations to help them attract and recruit a more diverse range of employees especially women. Ian Williams commenced a mid - career change programme aimed at attracting new talent to the industry. They partnered with an organisation called Building Heros who support service leavers and their families into non military employment. This has helped them to recruit from a much more diverse talent pool as no previous experience or qualifications are required, providing another opportunity to increase gender diversity.

The progress made by our signatories in the past 12 months is impressive and we know that the pace of change we are witnessing is supported by their continued membership of the Charter. We were thrilled to be named as finalists in the Civic Category at the 2023 Bristol Life Awards in recognition of the work that the Charter does across the City.



THE CHARTER TEAM



Sandra Gordon - Director

At the heart of everything I do is about increasing representation and giving everyone a chance to be the best they can be and to bring balance and equity to those groups who are disadvantaged in our society. My hope is that everyone in Bristol and the surrounding areas have an equal opportunity to benefit and enjoy the fruits of this prosperous vibrant city. It will be normal to see diverse role models and those in senior prominent positions of power easily visible and reflect the make-up of a changing region. For our young women growing up, not to feel less than you are, or accept less than you are. I am proud to be part of the team implementing a charter that is helping to drive and deliver a gendered balance workplace.

I'm passionate about ensuring that there is gender equality and equal opportunity for ALL those that are underrepresented in the workforce. With a corporate background as a senior business leader, qualified and experienced in HR and Change Management, I work for the charter part time alongside my full time role, running an HR consulting business, focusing on transforming People&Culture, ESG and Workplace change.



Kristal McNamara - Director

THE CHARTER TEAM



Sonia Cohen - Operations Manager

Difference has historically been the justification for rules and behaviours. Growing up with Deaf parents, I have always been aware of social inequalities. In my full time role I work as an HR Coordinator and have developed my career working in people centred roles. Each of the Charter's goals is to provide a better working practice for women. Supporting businesses and the employee experience. This has a domino effect on our society. When working with amazing values, it's easy for me to support signatories and explore the great progress taking place.

As a woman and a mother, I want us to live in a world where we embrace and celebrate difference. Only when we do this can we as a society benefit from the unique qualities that each person can contribute to our world. I have years of experience in marketing in my career and I joined the Charter Team to help spread the word and work towards a future in our city where women are truly celebrated for their contribution to the workplace.



Sarah Byfield - Marketing Manager



OUR AMBASSADORS

The charter Ambassadors have continued to be supporters and advocates for the work of the Charter and for gender equality in Bristol. They have continued to help us to fly the flag and increase awareness of the Charter and its goals within the local business communities.

We have valued their expertise, passion, and commitment to the work of the charter during the last year and would like to thank them for their continuing commitment. Meet our 2022-2023 Ambassadors and hear some of their thoughts on gender equality during the last year.

Kiki Paddy has extensive experience in strategy and operations, with her career spanning across several industries including housing, legal, social enterprise, and technology. As the acclaimed voice of the Black Professionals Network, she champions a vision to empower all black and ethnic minority professionals to advance in their careers and reach their full potential.

During the last year Kiki has personally seen her female friends and colleagues being promoted and recognised for the value they bring to the organisation. Recognition is important because it translates to representation for other women to aspire to achieve their ambition. For the year ahead Kiki would like to see more organisations promoting the benefits of shared parental leave so that women who wish to return to work early can balance their careers with motherhood.



Serrie Chapman is the co-founder of Women's Tech Hub which was set up to encourage local women in tech and find ways that they can develop their careers.

Over a number of years, Serrie has seen the number of companies taking gender equality in the workplace go from a talking piece to a piece of action. (in fact I feel like it's almost 'on trend')

She would like to see gender equality become a part of the natural culture of workplaces and sexist behaviour should be something to be ashamed of.



Welcome to **Jess Woodsford** who joined us this year, she is a professional coach, trainer, facilitator, with a passion for equality and social justice. In her role as a coach, she works with individuals and managers to become inclusive and empowering leaders. She is the Co-Founder of Inclusive Futures CIC, which provides coaching programmes to support underrepresented groups to access and succeed in higher educations.

During the last year Jess feels she has seen more brave and honest conversations taking place in the workplace around gender equality. People are more willing to ask difficult and often uncomfortable questions of their leadership. Jess also thinks there has been an increase in the number of women that feel more confident and empowered enough to challenge and drive change.

In the next 12 months Jess would love to see even more brave and honest conversations taking place about how we can collectively improve gender equality, and I think the Bristol Women in Business Charter provides a framework to facilitate those conversations.





Annie Budd is a professional recruiter, working at Sharkfin, where her role focuses not only on working with clients to recruit great talent but also how to improve their Diversity and Inclusion practices and ensure that they are able to provide an environment that marries the right people and businesses together.

We would like to welcome our newest Ambassador starting in April, **Laura Aiken**.

Laura is a Consultant and Founder of Thrive Leadership. She helps businesses understand and manage stress to build cultures of resilience through workshops, programmes and retreats.

Laura works with companies across sectors to deliver programming, workshops, coaching and retreats in resilience, inclusion, leadership, and culture change. This includes resiliency training for a construction workforce of over 6,000 people in the USA and multiple culture change programs in the middle east.

Laura has 10 years' experience in engineering design, construction, commissioning, and start-up and has worked and led teams on several multibillion-dollar engineering and construction projects in the Energy industry.

Alongside her work with Thrive Leadership, Laura is a registered yoga teacher and leads transformational retreats around the world, where she brings her experience in mindfulness practices to develop integrative solutions that help leaders build self-awareness, empathy, and resilience.



During the last 12 months we saw **Kristal McNamara** leave the role of Ambassador, but we're pleased to say that she joined the team as a Director.



EVENTS OVER THE PAST 12 MONTHS

One of the benefits of being a Charter signatory is creating the opportunity to bring companies together to share their experience and knowledge and learn from each other through regular events. Throughout 2022 there have been a number of Signatory exclusive events and for the first time since the start of the pandemic, we were able to host an in person public event.

In May, we ran a virtual event to talk about ***Eliminating Bias from your Management Processes***. Some very different organisations were involved in the roundtable discussions at this event, but the challenges they were facing around equality were often remarkably similar. Research conducted has shown that it's when women have children that they begin to face real challenges in continuing their careers through promotion within that organisation. Leadership role models are required that demonstrate more 'feminine' leadership traits, rather than the traditional male ones that some senior women may have had to demonstrate to get to where they are.



Our next online event focussed on Goal 4, **Supporting Women in Lower Paid Occupations to Excel**. We heard from expert speakers Camilla Rigby, founder of The Women's Work Lab CIC and Robert Halton, Chief People Officer at independent law firm Burges Salmon, who shared with us their views and advice on how to provide appropriate training and ongoing support.



In October, Burges Salmon played host to our first public face to face event since 2019. **The Untapped Talent Pool** focussed on the benefit that women can bring to organisations and how to create a truly gender equal workforce. Holly Fey, Head of Resourcing at Burges Salmon shared what they have been doing as a business to support women to be able to fulfill their potential and how being a charter signatory is contributing towards this goal. Jaya Chakrabarti MBE spoke about women who are unable to fulfill their potential due to family/caring responsibilities and as a result of the menopause which can inhibit and contribute to a lack of confidence to progress within the workplace. Sue Cohen and Diane Bunyan (The Women's commission - Economy task group leads) spoke about the economic impact of not supporting the untapped talent of women during their working circle, with a focus on caring responsibilities and the current economic crisis. In our breakout groups, we asked attendees to make a Pledge - what one thing would they take away and do differently moving forwards?



We rounded off 2022 by discussing **How to Keep Women Moving in their Careers**. Elle Wintersgill – Head of Dept (Health/Education/Care) and Zahid Gill - Head of Dept of Higher Education, City of Bristol College and Serrie Chapman - The Women's Tech Hub shared what they are doing to provide their staff with opportunities for continuous improvement and ongoing career progression.

Finally, at our February 2023 event we had the **Launch of the Peer 2 Peer Mentoring Programme**. More about this on page 32.

All our events are available to view online at www.bristolwomeninbusinesscharter.org.



FUTURE PLANS

Peer to Peer Support Programme

Based on demand from signatories for a more formal way to share best practice and mentoring within the charter, in February 23 we held an online event to launch our peer to peer support programme - pilot. The programme is designed to match signatories looking to progress in a particular goal with a signatory that has achieved success in the same goal. This allows sharing of best practice which creates efficiencies, knowledge transfer and personal development.

We designed a mentoring style programme of support, which is focused on the programme members identifying areas of improvement, drafting SMART goals and then starting monthly review sessions with their peer supporter. We launched the pilot with xx businesses and xx people, who attended a training session to walk through the process and supporting documentation.

We will be reviewing progress at three months, in May 23 and also at the end of the six month pilot. Once we have time to gain feedback, reflect and make any improvements, we plan to more widely launch the programme across all signatories.





In May 2022 the Charter was invited to join the ***BSI National Committee on the ISO PC 337 / 53800 Gender Equality Standard***. We have worked with the national and international teams to review the draft standards, provide challenge and feedback and we are working towards a final set of standards that is expected to be released to businesses in 2024. Gender equality means the achievement of equal rights, responsibilities and opportunities of women and men and girls and boys, such that no one is disadvantaged. This ISO standard focuses on the inequality resulting from the hierarchical organisation of the gender-specific roles assigned to women and men, girls and boys. In three key areas;

1. Guidance on how to promote and implement gender equality and women's empowerment
2. Guidelines for organisations to develop the capabilities to achieve a culture of gender equality and women's empowerment
3. Framework, resources, policies, tools and good practices enabling contextualization, promotion and implementation of gender equality

All public and private organisations will be able to use the future ISO 53800: companies, whether SMEs or large, governmental bodies at national, regional or local level. The standard will encourage them to make progress in terms of gender equality in their operations and activities on a continuous basis, setting their own new challenges periodically.

The final draft of the standard has been submitted for review and once approved, our focus will move to the framework and good practices, providing case studies and examples.

Consultancy expertise from the Charter

Some signatories have asked within their progress reports for additional expertise from the Charter team, to be able to achieve their goals. Some of this can be provided in the newly launched Peer to Peer programme, however we have additional expertise within our charter team and ambassadors that we could look to introduce, to expand the services we offer, depending on the needs of our signatories.

Additionally we have connections to many organisations across Bristol who, like us, are working to implement equality, we are happy to make recommendations from within our network to meet specific needs.



Sharing best practice

Our signatories are always asking us to share case studies, data, local/national news, research, other organisation case studies, we will continue to share case studies and resources through our impact report, regular events and social media platforms. However we would like to assess the demand in 2023/2024 for a signatory resource, if they would be interested in more specific tools and guidance. We will survey our signatories to assess demand and also review the digital options to support a platform to host signatory resources.

Implementing 6 monthly progress check ins with signatories

The Charter is continually looking for ways we can support our signatories on their chosen goals, we are also available as a soundboard in relation to helping to guide them towards making progress.

We have received feedback that more regular progress check-ins would be welcomed from a member of our team. For the coming year, we will be implementing a mid-way check in review meeting with our signatories, to discuss progress, challenges, and opportunities to date, as well as sharing ideas on how to deliver their chosen goals.

INCREASING AWARENESS OF THE WORK OF THE CHARTER



The Bristol Women in Business Charter CIC was created 2 weeks after the nation went into lockdown in April 2020, where we saw a big pivot in the world of work and the knock-on impact on women and gender equality in the workplace, and the subsequent decline in the focus of this work as businesses struggled to exist in the pandemic era. 2022, saw the slow rebuilding and refocus on gender equality on the table and the re-introduction of businesses having to report on their gender pay gap.

The challenges faced by all elements of equality (EDI) and the protected characteristic, can result in the shifting of focus and attention of which one(s) need priority. The current move to ensuring organisations are supporting and understanding Neurodiversity has moved the dial in some areas around gender.

Now is a great time to increase awareness of the work of the charter, it is not just about supporting women (gender), but all aspects that intersect and impact the inequalities felt by women who work in Bristol.

Although we are proud of the number of organisations who are part of our community there are so many other businesses and the women who work for them that would benefit from a collaborative approach to making impactful change.

During the next 12 months we will be creating an awareness campaign that will be supported by our stakeholders and utilising all media channels to increase our visibility and reach.

DEVELOPING AN INTERSECTIONAL APPROACH



As previously stated, we recognise that it is the voices of the most marginalised that are often silenced. It is therefore critical that the work of the charter considers issues of intersectionality.

We made the decision last year to start to move the dial on the level of reporting to start to reflect progress that includes all aspects of intersectionality.

It is important the charter supports the progression towards a gender balanced workplace for everyone who identifies as a woman. This explicitly includes women who are also classified from one of the protected characteristics. We had made the decision not to include an eighth goal that incorporates the diversity of women who work within businesses. This only adds to the segregation and 'othering' of those women, and we are striving for an inclusive, gender workplace where all women are involved in all their diversities, and we are seeing the whole person.

After a successful event at the end 2021, which provided many of our signatories with an opportunity to look at diversity and gender equality through a different lens and consider the approach they are using within their own organisations. We requested in the progress reports for our signatories to be more explicit in providing us detail around the makeup of those women where progress has been made. The level of information received is still limited and we are aware in some cases businesses do not record this level of explicit data and therefore struggle to provide it to us.

Intersectional reporting is something that is not undertaken, we therefore need to work with all our signatories during the coming year to understand how best to achieve this aim, as well as conduct some research to see what is available to be able to support our businesses.



COLLABORATING WITH THE WOMEN'S ECONOMY TASK GROUP

The Commission on a Gender-Equal Economy led by the Women's Budget Group with input across the UK from gender budgeting experts, organisations working on poverty/discrimination, grassroots activists and local decision makers - developed an economic vision, with strategies, to further equality between women and men. The Commission's final report defines the vision as "A Caring Economy" which:

- Has the wellbeing of individuals, communities and the planet at its centre
- Values the care that nurtures us all - paid and unpaid
- Ensures that no one faces discrimination, violence, or poverty.

Bristol Women's Commission has picked up the mantle along with their sponsors -City of Bristol College, Fair Play Southwest - the Women's Equality Network, Bristol Women's Voice and the University of Bristol.

To create '**The Caring Economy Manifesto Bristol Women's Commission'**

What is the caring economy?

An economy with care at its heart investing in people of all ages.

- Investing in wellbeing, early years development, life chances, longer healthy life expectancies for all.
- Investing in public services, levelling up in disadvantaged areas, reducing poverty nationwide.
- Creating new employment and training opportunities, with childcare and social care support, thus enabling women of all ages to further the green economy.
- More high-quality jobs in care with investment in local care providers rather than offshore private equity firms.
- Growth policies enabling women to increase their hours and move to better-paid jobs. Improved productivity with childcare adult care, skills development and flexible working policies

What are they calling for?

That government, the regional mayor, local authority leaders, and employers commit to a culture change, valuing care as economic infrastructure, essential for a thriving, more inclusive economy.

- Include care as infrastructure in industrial strategies.
- Improve working conditions in commissioning contracts, with the real living wage as a minimum, flexible working and paid leave to care.
- Training programmes for under-represented communities should provide childcare, innovative affordable delivery models. Maintain the BTEC Health and Care qualification.
- Ensure training and skills investment focuses on childcare and adult care with improved career progression and pay.

The charter will be working with the Commission and Women in Economy task group to see how we can address the caring inequalities being experienced by women with our signatories in the businesses, including childcare/caring provision, improved flexible and working conditions, and seeing care as key infrastructure strategy.



UPCOMING EVENTS



We will continue to hold our valuable quarterly events for signatories, focusing each time on one of the goals of the Charter. Opportunities to share learning, meet and connect with other signatories has been fed back as a key benefit of signing up to the Charter.

Planned dates for 2023/2024 are:

Spotlight on Goal 1 - The promotion and availability of flexible and part-time working*

Thursday 15th June, Lunchtime (Online Event)

Intersectionality and Recruiting Difference**

Wednesday 20th September, Evening (Face to Face)

Spotlight on Goal 2 - A commitment to increase the numbers of women at senior levels and on the board*

Monday 27th November, Lunchtime (Online Event)

Attracting and Retaining Women in Digital and Tech Roles**

Tuesday 20th February, Breakfast Event (Face to Face)

*Signatory Exclusive Event

**Paid for Event (free for Signatories)



FINANCES

The Charter is managed through charging signatory companies an annual fee. This is dependent on the number of people employed (based on the full-time equivalent number of employees). The fee was increased during this reporting period to between £60 and £900 and is based on a sliding scale to ensure businesses of all sizes can afford to sign up to the Charter and be supported in their progress towards gender equality.

We base the fee on the FTE, rather than the headcount, to ensure companies that have lots of part-time roles available are not penalised. We have a small team who are paid to run the CIC and operate the Charter. The CIC is not for profit, and we aim to ensure that the CIC covers its costs and any surplus income in future will be used to support the Charter's goals.

We continue to operate in a transparent way and are happy to provide full details of how we have spent the income received through signatories' annual fees paid between April 2022-March 2023.

The annual fee will be reviewed on a yearly basis and revised as necessary.

During the reporting report we have managed to increase the amount of revenue received through the increase in the charter fee and by tightening our financial progresses which has reduced the issues we were experiencing with the cash flow. We have worked with our signatories to cover any shortfall experienced through late reporting.

2022/2023	
Revenue	
Renewal/New applications	£9,942.50
Sponsorship	£400.00
Total	£10,342.50
Expenditure	
Salaries (including PAYE)	£5,457.56
Software subscriptions	£317.24
Insurance	£206.96
Professional fees (payroll, accountants, bank fee)	£1,379.73
Director loan repayment	£750.00
Network/Marketing	£906.76
Recognition	£70.50
Total	£9,088.75

Thank you for taking the time to read our Impact report.

CURRENT SIGNATORIES

All About the Cooks	
Avon and Somerset Police	Let Us Grow
Bishop Fleming LLP	Manor Community
Bristol Airport	National Composites Centre
Bristol City Council	OVO Energy Ltd
Burges Salmon	Pelican
Business West	Rin Hamburgh &Co
Chorus	Signature Recruitment Ltd
City of Bristol College	Simitive
Clarke Willmott LLP	Socius-Dev
Forrest brown Limited	Stride Treglown Ltd
Future Leap	TLT
GCP Chartered Architects	Triodos Bank UK
Ghyston	University of Bristol
Great Western Credit Union	UWE Bristol
Hargreaves Lansdown	water2business
Ian Williams	Wessex Water Enterprises Limited
KETS Quantum Security Ltd	Western Global



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