



2023/2024 Impact Report

arken

creators of award winning p-o-p

Certified



Corporation

A note from our MD



“

At arken, we've always tried to leave things better than we found them. The last year has seen us operate in an economy and environment that's remained challenging—for our business, our people, our clients and suppliers, and communities across the UK. Climate change issues, global conflict, and the cost of living crisis have all had a significant impact on our operations, the individual and financial wellbeing of our people, and the retail industry at large.

I'm proud that in a year like no other, we never lost sight of our purpose, vision and values. We looked after our people and delivered another year of progress.

I speak for myself and the arken board of directors when I say we are immensely proud to have been certified as a B Corp. It's all part of our commitment to balancing profit and purpose, reducing inequality, and creating a positive impact for employees, the community, and the environment. We believe that B Corp certification will help us to double down on our goals and values and to make an even bigger impact as we continue to lead the way and prove to other businesses in our industry that you can do well while doing good. Every member of the arken team welcomed the challenge of certifying against the high standards required of running responsible business and the entire senior leadership team will continue to actively engage in enabling continuous improvement across our business in line with our committed to B Corp.

Achieving B Corp status was just the beginning of what is an incredibly important journey—not the destination. Over the last twelve months, we have continued to make significant steps in progressing as a business that leads with a responsible-first mindset, and we remain motivated by the positive impact we can make both now and, in the future. As we reflect on our first year in a community of

likeminded businesses, who share our belief that profit should be driven through purpose, we celebrate our achievements and set both short- and long-term goals for the future, ensuring that we are best placed to make a sustained and positive impact.

We have continued to keep our displays on budget whilst meeting our sustainability objectives, as well as those that our clients set for themselves, through innovative design and development and an ongoing focus on reuse, recycling, and closing the loop for displays at 'end of life'. Our B Impact Assessment journey helped to reaffirm the many great things that we as a business were doing. It enabled the implementation of processes across our business to ensure we were collating and sharing information throughout the business and is enabling us to work more cohesively. But it also highlighted areas for improvement. We have continued to embrace change throughout the history of arken, and now will be no different.

We're constantly asking ourselves how we can do more and make a greater impact—and that starts by reimagining everything that a company and industry can be. We want to demonstrate that a business can scale while doing good in the world—without charging a premium for it. And we've learned that it takes creativity, empathy, and innovation to achieve that goal.

In a year of uncertainty, we have put our focus on minimising our environmental impact, improving our employees' wellbeing, how we work with suppliers, and our wider impact on the community. It's all part of our aim to do as much as good as we can—one day, and one retail display at a time.

Welcome to our 2023/24 Impact Report!

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Tracy Scutt - Managing Director

arken **ESG** Business Pillars

People

We support the people who make up team arken, our clients, our supply chain and the wider community.

- People friendly policies
- Environmental Council
- Supporting Mental Wellbeing
- Financial Wellbeing Training and Support
- Charitable Partnerships
- Stringent Health and Safety policies, processes and education
- Cycle to Work Scheme
- EV Charging Points



Projects

We ensure sustainability is implemented throughout the lifecycle of a project.

- arken Sustainability Design Matrix
- Delivering Sustainable Design
- Display end of life recycling and ease of disassembly
- Sourcing Sustainable Materials
- Use of POPAI Sustain Tool



Production

Our experience and robust production processes means we are well equipped to reduce the impact of manufacturing.

- Optimal Material Usage
- Never over processing or unnecessarily over engineering
- Efficient use of labour
- Produced with low energy consumption.
- Manufactured in house.



Premises

Everything happens at our UK factory and facilities; we ensure our premises exceed environmental legislation and provide a safe working environment.

- Increasing Energy efficiency
- Maintaining High Standards
- Zero Waste to Landfill
- Industry Environmental Standards
- Robust Supply Chain, 95% UK based
- Carbon measuring



Our Journey to **B Corp** Certification

Why we decided to become a B Corp

We embarked on B Corp certification to align our company strategy. For many years, we have been doing amazing things but often the stories, learnings and benefits were limited to just individual departments, rather than being shared (and having a positive impact) companywide. B Corp represented an opportunity to unify our approach and to clarify internally and externally our achievements and goals.

How B Corp is supporting a shift in our aims, strategy and culture

The B Corp approach resonated with our business values of integrity, respect, and fairness, and our company mission to be the best we can be for our people, in our work and projects, and the planet. Becoming a B Corp has allowed us to meet strategic goals in these areas and map out future plans—honestly and with clarity.

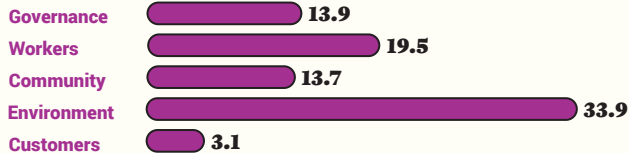
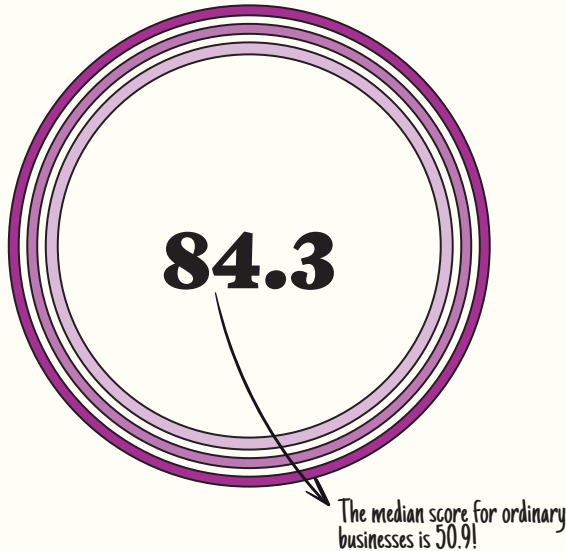
The impact of B Corp on our business

The impact of becoming a B Corp has been felt by all. Throughout the business employees feel immense pride at our collective achievement and acknowledge our legal commitment to protect them. B Corp certification has helped us to establish ways of working and internal systems providing clear communication. It has also allowed for us to quantitatively demonstrate what we are doing and how we are mitigating our impact. It has unified our approach bringing together business pillars that operated separately in a more holistic approach to ESG and CSR.



Our B Corp Score

We secured an overall score of 84.3 in our B Impact Assessment, with a company needing to score a minimum of 80 points on the assessment to become a B Corp. Our total score was based on our individual Impact Area Scores in the areas of Environment, Workers, Community, Customers, and Governance.



Governance

Governance evaluates a company's overall mission, engagement around its social/environmental impact, ethics, and transparency. This section also evaluates the ability of a company to protect their mission and formally consider stakeholders in decision making through their corporate structure (e.g. benefit corporation) or corporate governing documents.

Workers

Workers evaluates a company's contribution to its employees' financial security, health & safety, wellness, career development, and engagement & satisfaction. In addition, this section recognises business models designed to benefit workers.

Community

Community evaluates a company's engagement with and impact on the communities in which it operates, hires from, and sources from. Topics include diversity, equity & inclusion, economic impact, civic engagement, charitable giving, and supply chain management. In addition, this section recognizes business models that are designed to address specific community-oriented problems, such as poverty alleviation through fair trade sourcing or distribution via microenterprises, producer cooperative models, locally focused economic development, and formal charitable giving commitments.

Environment

Environment evaluates a company's overall environmental management practices as well as its impact on the air, climate, water, land, and biodiversity. This includes the direct impact of a company's operations and, when applicable its supply chain and distribution channels. This section also recognizes companies with environmentally innovative production processes and those that sell products or services that have a positive environmental impact. Some examples might include products and services that create renewable energy, reduce consumption or waste, conserve land or wildlife, provide less toxic alternatives to the market, or educate people about environmental problems.

Customers

Customers evaluates a company's stewardship of its customers through the quality of its products and services, ethical marketing, data privacy and security, and feedback channels. In addition, this section recognizes products or services that are designed to address a particular social problem for or through its customers, such as health or educational products, arts & media products, serving underserved customers/clients, and services that improve the social impact of other businesses or organizations.

Impact Area Plans & Progress

Governance

Workers

Community

Environment

Customers

Governance

What we do:

Ethics and transparency are important to us; we seek to live these values by doing business in a way that does good and leading with integrity—not just externally but internally as well. arken's management regularly assesses the effectiveness of its policies, both internally and with third-party assistance, and makes changes as needed.

Ultimately, we understand the importance of setting the right tone at the top and establishing a strong culture of compliance. We believe that it is everyone's responsibility at arken to live and execute on our core values and our mission.

To make it easy for everyone to do the right thing, we have robust people-friendly policies and we have enhanced our employee handbook and our extensive new starter training. These explain what's expected of everyone who works for arken, how they can live our core values, and how we will hold ourselves accountable.

Prioritising the wellbeing of our people, we provide continuous education, ensuring a committed culture of safety at arken. We also promote openness and transparency, with our people updated monthly on business financial performance, enabling them to 'own' the successes (and challenges) as we continue to grow.

What's changed:

- Increased our number of company directors listed with Companies House.
- Regular companywide training on our code of ethics, including anti-corruption and whistleblowing.
- Social and environmental issues reported at board level monthly.
- Company Wide MD and Chairman Talks continued.

A few things we're doing:

- Increasing the number of managerial job titles that include environmental and social goals in their job descriptions.
- Continue expanding our ethics and transparency policies.
- Continue expanding our monitoring, training and reporting.
- Further training on our Anti-Slavery Policy and on the confidential whistleblowing procedure and support services, that are in place for all workers.



Workers

What we do:

Ground-up change (and sustained success) starts with people. We want arken to be the best employer in our industry. If that's going to happen, we must create an even more inclusive environment where they feel safe to turn up and be themselves every day.

We're growing in a way that prioritises developing a team that's engaged, productive, well-rounded and challenged—and to make sure everyone feels respected, valued, included and supported. This is not a passive task. It demands a culture in which people can think big, have fun, drive scale and innovation, achieve personal growth, and engage with their community.

We take care of our people by advancing access to fair wages, promoting wellness, and driving inclusion, equity, and diversity. Due to the cost of living crisis, there's more pressure than ever on people to make ends meet. We understand how this is impacting on our staff. That's why we took the decision to introduce pay rises, in line with inflation, for all our hourly paid staff.

With anxiety, stress and depression on the rise, it's essential that our people have access to support and tools to help them thrive. Our Employee Assistance Programme (EAP) is designed to support the wellbeing of our people, enabling them to discuss, manage and overcome any problems – whether physical or mental health or issues with emotional wellbeing – they may be experiencing in both work and life. After all, a happier, healthier workforce who feel valued and supported will benefit us all.

Ensuring our people have the knowledge and skills they need to thrive in their roles requires deliberate and continuous learning and practice from each of us, which is why we embed comprehensive training and refresher courses into ongoing development. From forklift and machinery training to vital First Aid training.

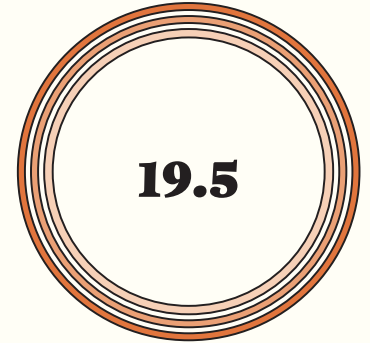
We have also introduced our Employee Introduction Fee Scheme. Employees who recommend someone for a permanent role at arken (not hourly paid roles) will receive a £1,000 introduction fee paid once the new starter has successfully completed their probation period.

What's changed:

- Introduced pay rises, in line with inflation, for all our hourly paid staff.
- Expanded company training and education.
- Reaffirmed commitment to counselling service for employees to support mental wellbeing.
- Introduced Employee Introduction Fee Scheme.

A few things we're doing:

- Expanding our EAP offering over the next 12 months to include legal and financial advice as well as GP services.
- Introducing a confidential Employee Satisfaction Survey to gather feedback, data and ideas across the business.



Community

What we do:

We believe that social change comes in all forms. From years-long partnerships with trusted suppliers to matching workers donations to charities.

Supporting other British businesses is important to us. It's why over 95% of our supply chain is UK-based. It's also why our entire supply chain undergoes annual internal audits, ensuring reliability and accountability.

As part our commitment to support the people that our people want to support, we pledge to match workers' donations to charities, causes, organisations and projects which have great ideas but not enough resources.

We also want to ensure future generations can enjoy positive careers in the industry. This has seen us engage with educational institutions and partner with POPAI, the trade association for the marketing at retail industry, to recognise new talent through its annual Student Award.

We also partner with charities, including donating products to Smart Works, a UK charity that exists to give women the confidence they need to reach their full potential, secure employment and change the trajectory of their lives.

What's changed:

- The launch of the arken Environmental Council.
- Engaged with educational institutions to build knowledge, skills and support new talent entering the industry through the POPAI student award.
- Our Managing Director now sits on the POPAI Sustainability Council to actively engage with competitors and wider industry.

A few things we're doing:

- Exploring ways to achieve greater engagement with our local community.



Environment

What we do:

We are committed to proving that creating award-winning displays doesn't have to mean ignoring our responsibility to the planet. When we began, the world was a very different place. But over the years, arken has grown more committed to an environmentally sustainable future.

We aim to use resources responsibly, reduce waste, and reduce our carbon impact across our operations. This means pushing ourselves to operate efficient manufacturing, to use resources responsibly, to reduce waste, and to limit our carbon footprint.

We have once again maintained our ISO 9001:2015 and ISO 14001: 2015 status.

Using the arken Sustainable Design Matrix, increasing usage of the POPAI Sustain tool by 141% and better training across all PMs and CAD engineers has allowed us to promote better environmental decision making from brief to display end of life. Introducing our Material Procurement Policy has ensured we can better evaluate materials used in our goods, while the introduction of a Materials Register ensures we are capturing environmental innovation in our supply chain and fostering collaboration with our supplier partners. This has led to the increased use of pre-recycled content in our material selection alongside recyclability. Beyond this, we have run client sustainability training workshops with external industry experts.

We have expanded our carbon tracking from scope 1 & 2 to include scope 3. To further improve our carbon scoring, we implemented environmental factory and manufacturing improvements, resulting in less energy usage. With the replacement of the roof panels and sky lights this has allowed more natural light into the building and as a result has allowed us to turn off the lights on bright sunny days. Due to the panels being better insulated, the building will be cooler on warm days and will retain the heat from the gas heaters in the winter months.

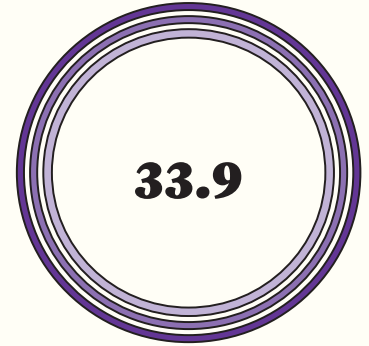
These are just a few examples of how we actively work to reduce our environmental impact through product engineering, recycling partnerships, closed supply loops, and material reuse. But it doesn't stop there, from our Zero Waste To Landfill commitment to installing six electric car charging points to support making electric or hybrid cars a requirement when renewing company vehicles.

What's changed:

- Reduced the impact of our designs during manufacture.
- Greater environmental innovation and solutions across material sourcing and our manufacturing processes.
- Comprehensive sustainability training extended to client and suppliers.
- Carbon measuring (Scope1&2) and Scope 3 procedure implementation.

A few things we're doing:

- Continuing to improve and support colleague awareness of company sustainability initiatives and the steps team members can make in both their professional and personal lives to aid sustainability and to protect the environment.
- Comprehensive review of energy usage across the facilities ensuring maximum efficiencies throughout the business.
- Applying an innovative approach in identifying material or processes changes that will improve our environment impact.
- Undertaking environmental audits of any proposed building works and machinery procurement, to ensure sustainable practices.
- Pivoting our manufacturing processes to embrace increased digitisation as a way of eliminating surplus material usage.



Customers

What we do:

At arken we're in the business of creating consistently exceptional displays, nothing-short-of-amazing retail experiences and tailoring them to the individual customer needs—down to the smallest detail.

Each and every day, our team aims to design high-quality retail display solutions using a truly collaborative approach that helps customers to deliver remarkable experiences that delight and help shoppers.

Our focus on enhancing the entire end-to-end process for creating retail brand experiences is what motivates our team and pushes us toward continuous innovation. This approach applies to all business departments.

arken uses its 3C corrective action process to ensure quality of our displays. Our improved process and reporting by the production team leaders ensures we are delivering excellence for our customers.

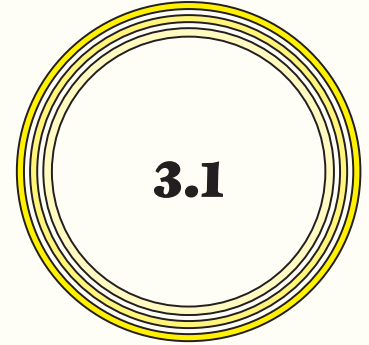
Every display solution we create is dreamed up and manufactured in-house, where our team gathers inspiration, works up designs, selects materials and maps out how displays can be taken from concept to store in the best way possible, all in the name of quality (ISO9001 standard), sustainability and exceeding expected results. But our goal is to also prove that creating award-winning displays can be done while also treating customers with warmth, helpfulness, empathy, and incredible service.

What's changed:

- Expanded Sustainability Training delivered to our clients.
- Delivered incredible service.
- Award-winning projects.

A few things we're doing:

- Comprehensive client training on wide-ranging sustainability issues related to retail displays.
- Running dedicated environmental workshops to improve awareness, understanding and positive action.
- Rolling out Client Surveys to gain valuable insight into arken service levels, and areas for improvement.



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