



ESG Report

FY 2023/2024





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Introduction

The events industry is one that is inherently resource intensive. From international travel and food and drink to the production of exhibition stands and merchandise, every decision we make has an impact.

At First Event, we have made it our mission to reduce our own environmental footprint and support our clients in making their events more sustainable, all while operating responsibly and giving back to the communities where we work.

We see it as our collective responsibility to make sustainable practices the norm.

We want to become a leading voice of sustainability within the industry, pushing for meaningful, lasting, and sustainable change wherever possible.

Our impact in 2023

2023 has been a pivotal year in our continuous journey to doing better for our people, our community and our society. We couldn't be prouder of what we have achieved, but we know this is just the beginning.



We became Real Living Wage accredited



24 hours

dedicated to environmental volunteering

Three icons representing community support: a person with a hand raised, a heart with a hand inside, and a person with a hand raised.

£15,000+

raised for community causes in 2023

52 trees



planted to offset the CO2 emissions generated by our website



THE SUNDAY TIMES
T Best Places to Work 2023

MEDIUM COMPANY

Times Top 100 Place to Work

MD letter of commitment

Here at First Event, doing better business is in our DNA. We care about each other, our clients and our suppliers. We believe in good business.

We believe in environmental sustainability because we care about the planet, the impact we are having and the legacy we leave behind.

We believe in equality because we care about giving everyone a fair chance, improving the lives of people from all backgrounds and harnessing and honing the greatest talent in our sector.

We believe in good governance because we have a responsibility to do the right thing for our people and the future of our business.

Our world is facing growing environmental challenges. Extreme weather events, such as flooding, droughts, wildfires and record breaking temperatures have dominated news headlines, emphasising the need for urgent action.

These things matter, not only to us, but to the people we work with. We have a responsibility to push the boundaries of what is possible to make sure we not only avoid making things worse, but actively work to make things better.

We are working to do better within our own business and to do better for our clients, creating sustainable events and using our influence to encourage clients to think differently.

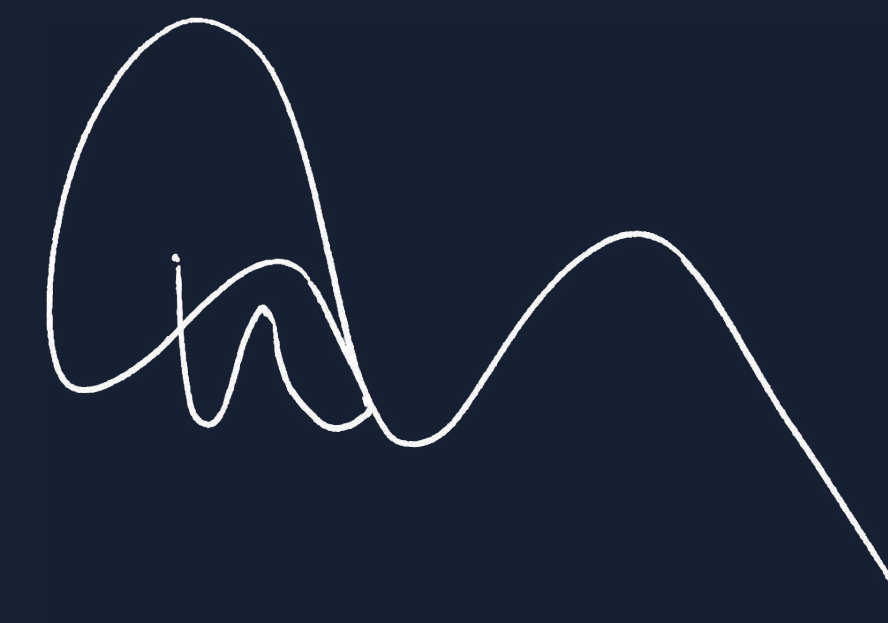
We have assessed our sustainable business efforts against the United Nations Sustainable Development Goals and are proud to be contributing to these inspiring global ambitions.

This is just the beginning of First Event's sustainable business journey. While we have had a focus on doing good for a long time, this is the first time we have formalised our ambitions and set out our goals in a single document. Our one year target is to establish our benchmarks so we can really understand our starting point and measure the impact we are making. We are setting ourselves tough targets and we are committed to hitting them.



Richard Murphy

Managing Director



Introducing: Our Green Team

Not satisfied with doing what we think is right and hoping for the best, we have created a dedicated Green Team.

Working across First Event, our Green Team are our sustainability experts. It's their job to always ask "can we do that better". They are our challengers, our trailblazers, and our bench-markers. Our Green Team works across First Event and with clients to make sure everything we do has sustainable business at its heart.



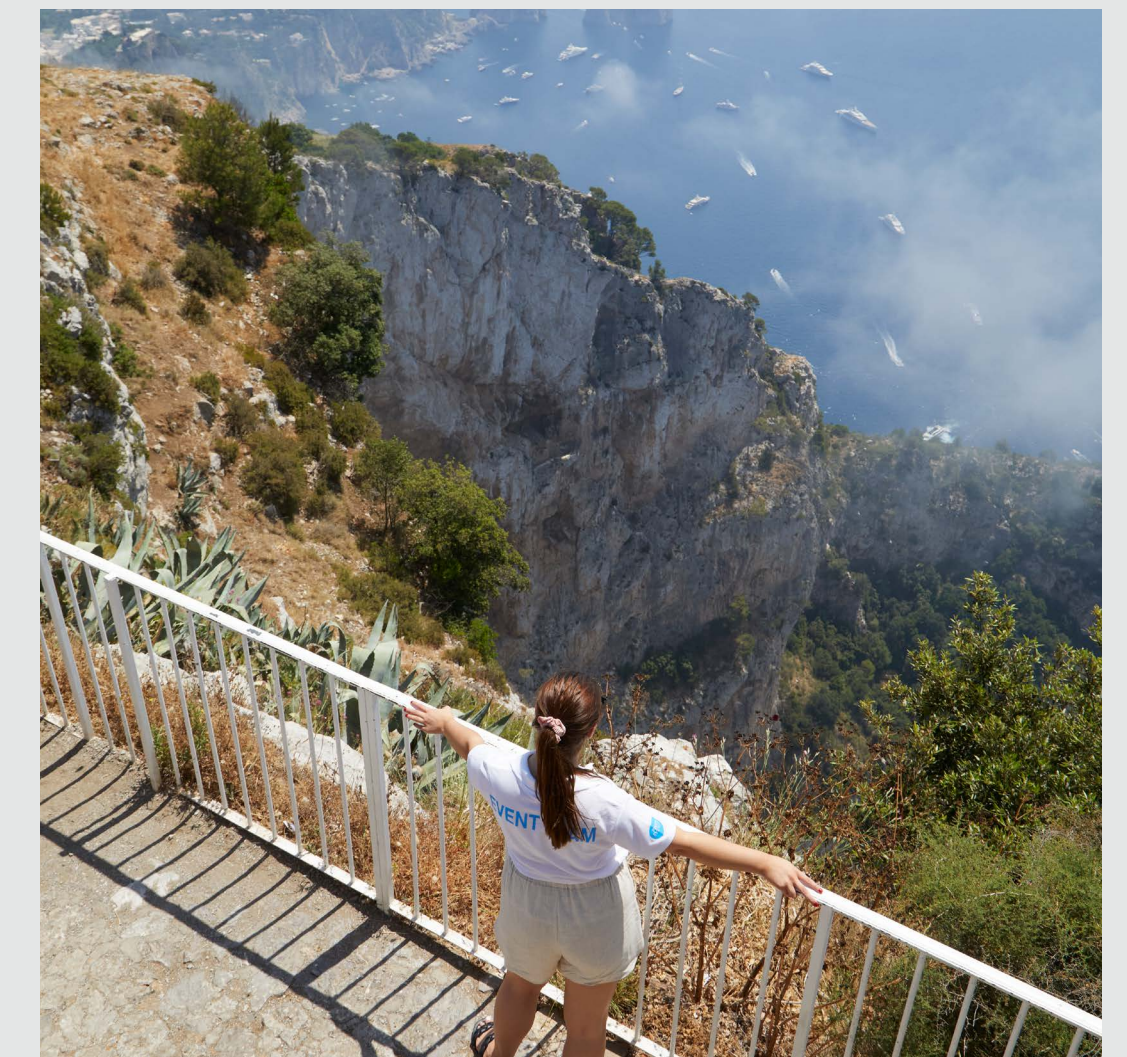
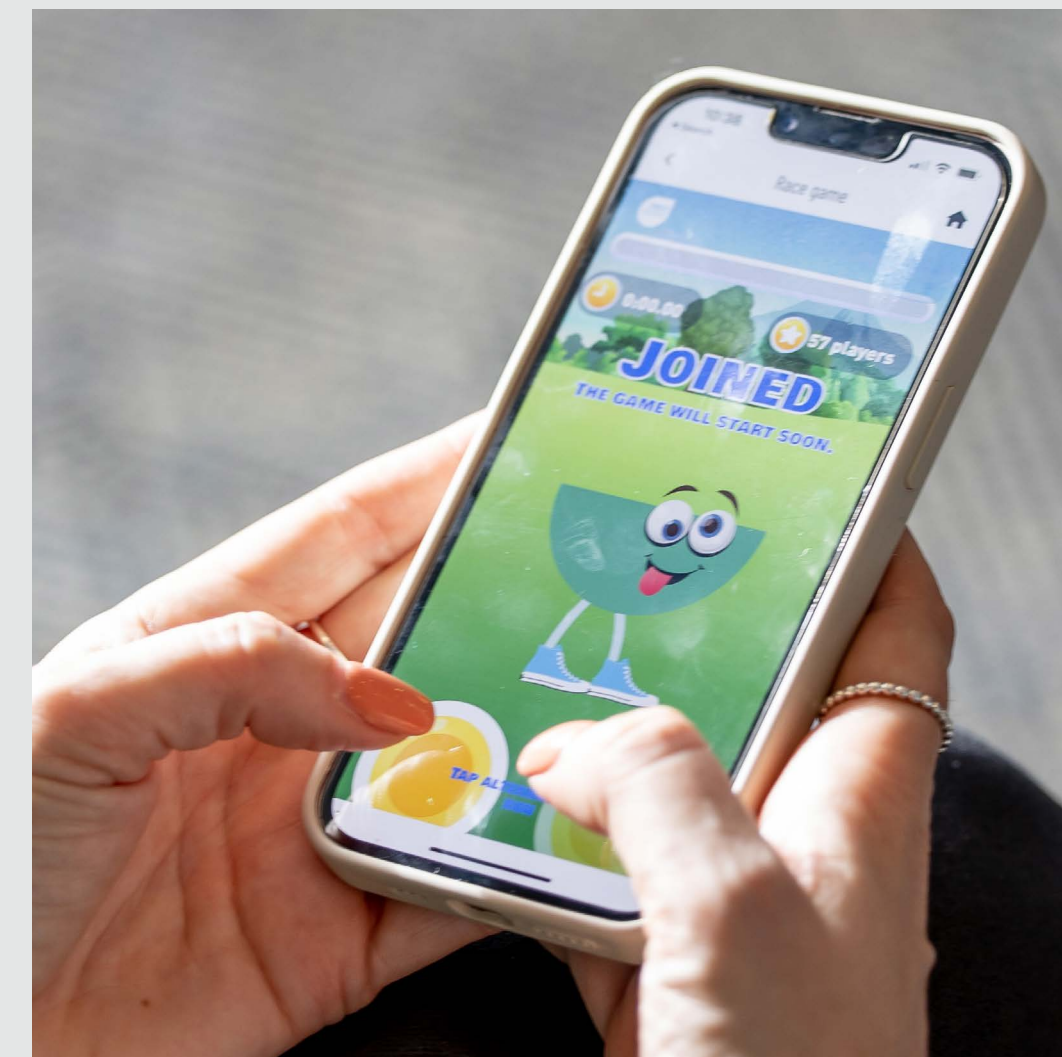
Our approach to events

While we work hard to make our own day-to-day business more environmentally and socially responsible, we are conscious that our biggest impact is through the events we create for our clients.

We continuously look for new and innovative ways to reduce the footprint of client events. This all starts with the event planning process. At every decision-making point, at every turn, sustainability is the most important factor taken into account as we plan each element of the event.

We have dedicated sustainability champions who have had sustainability consultancy training to make sure they can provide the best possible advice and solutions to our clients. Our Green Team is tasked with staying ahead of innovations in sustainable events so we can be sure we're providing relevant, timely consultancy to our clients.

As well as having sustainability champions on all project teams, we report on the carbon footprint of every event we create. Furthermore, as a testament to our commitment to both environmental responsibility and the value we place on our prospects' time, we plant a tree for every minute spent with them, regardless of whether or not we win their business.



Driving meaningful change with our clients

Our challenge when we set out to scope any event is to make it as sustainable as possible, guiding our clients through the various options that will help them reduce their resource footprint and helping them offset the resources they do use. The only way we can achieve this is by working in partnership with our clients.

For every project we work on, we put sustainability front and centre of the decision making process, using transparent financial and resource costing to demonstrate the available options and enabling our clients to make the decisions that are right for them.

We recently worked with [BMF – the Builders Merchants Federation](#) – who set us the challenge of making the 2023 BMF All Industry Conference in Istanbul the most sustainable overseas event they had ever held. We helped them achieve this objective by actively reducing or mitigating CO2 emissions in several areas.



We started by creating a benchmark report on the anticipated impact of the proposed conference. Working with [event:decisions](#) we created a report which outlined the carbon costs of the event – 450 people in Istanbul for 3 days with travel, accommodation, catering, materials and waste all accounted for. This was one target we definitely didn't want to hit, so we set about reducing it.

Starting with accommodation, we worked with BMF to select a hotel provider that had taken significant strides on its own sustainability journey. Swissôtel The Bosphorus Istanbul used 100% renewable energy and grey water. The hotel also avoids the use of single-use plastics for packaging hotel amenities and toiletries in guest rooms and ensures rubbish bags, coffee capsules, etc are biodegradable.

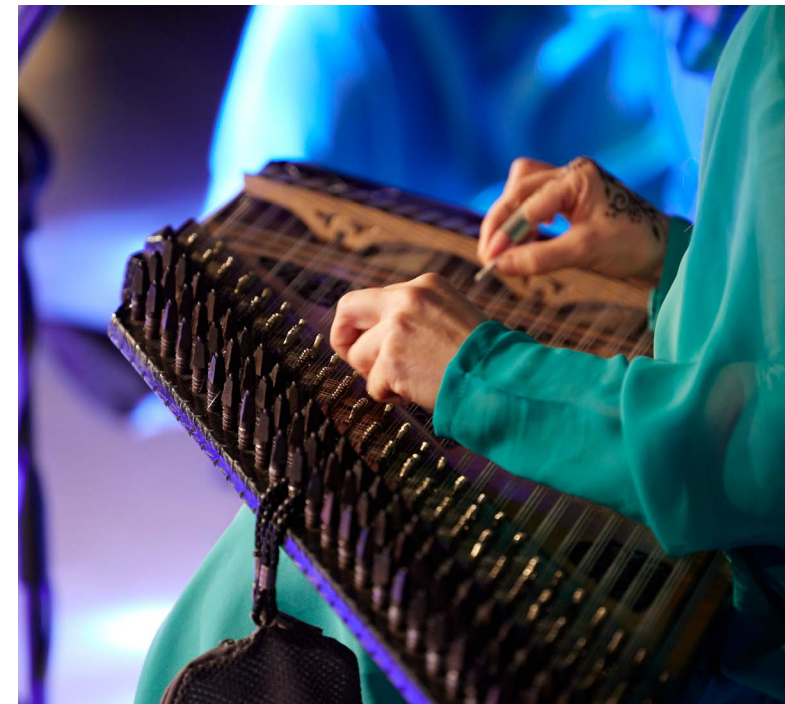


34.1%

reduction
in carbon
footprint

100%

renewable energy
and grey water at
Swissotel Istanbul



CO²

176.37

tonnes of CO² saved

Driving meaningful change with our clients

Continued

For each item we produced for the conference, from pull up banners to lanyards, we provided environmentally sustainable options. We halved the number of pull-up banners, using digital signage as much as possible, used lanyards made from recycled PET and left off the year so they can be used again.

Following the event we produced a pos-event report with event:decisions. The report showed, we had been able to reduce the carbon footprint of the event by more than a third (34.1%), saving a total of 176.37 tonnes of CO² based on the baseline and actual CO² emissions.

Key to the sustainability success of the event was delegate behaviour. We provided the option of group airport transfers to reduce the number of single journeys and offered everyone a vegetarian meal option for the gala dinner.



Supporting the UN Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs)

The UN's Sustainable Development Goals are a set of 17 aspirations that people and organisations around the world are contributing to with the collective ambition of reducing inequality and increasing quality of life for everyone.

We are proud to be supporting several of the SDGs:



3 GOOD HEALTH AND WELL-BEING

Good Health and Wellbeing

By being a good employer

4 QUALITY EDUCATION

Quality Education

By investing in the next generation through work experience and training

5 GENDER EQUALITY

Gender Equality

By prioritising equality in our own company and through our supply chain



8 DECENT WORK AND ECONOMIC GROWTH

Decent Work and Economy

By providing jobs at Real Living Wage



10 REDUCED INEQUALITIES

Reducing inequalities

By investing our time in community projects and our charitable giving



12 RESPONSIBLE CONSUMPTION AND PRODUCTION

Responsible Consumption and Production

By working towards more sustainable events

13 CLIMATE ACTION

Climate Action

By using renewable energy ourselves and reducing the carbon footprint of the events we create



Making Progress: Environment

Under environmental sustainability, we consider our use of natural resources. From energy and water to the amount of waste we produce, the number of miles we travel and our form of transport, we prioritise measuring our own impact.

Environment



Here are just some of the steps we are taking to minimise our Environmental impact at First Event HQ.

Plastic Free Office

Therefore we use items in our office such as biodegradable bin bags, plastic free cleaning products and refillable hand soap.



Low Energy Lighting

Across the office we use LED/low energy lightbulbs.



Generator

Currently the generator uses marine grade fuel which means it doesn't need to be replenished or refilled.



First Event Forest

Offsetting CO2 emissions by planting trees across the globe via the FE Forest. We have used this for offsetting travel to pitches and to maintain a net-zero FE website.



Clean Energy

The office energy provider is Eon who have confirmed all their customer's homes/businesses uses 100% renewable energy.



First Event Servers

All WP Engine servers that we use are carbon neutral.



Environment

We have four primary environmental projects that will support us in achieving our goals.

Carbon Neutral by 2026:

Our Green Team is leading this work. Throughout 2023 we are gathering baseline data with a company that specialises in carbon evaluations and offsetting. In the coming years, we will take the steps recommended in their report to ensure we achieve carbon neutral by 2026. We're already there with our website, which is carbon neutral through Tree Nation's Net Zero Website smart label.

25 days of environmental projects:

We have a workforce of 70 and a commitment to the communities we work in. Our Green Team is responsible for coordinating how we use our paid time to contribute to local environmental projects. In 2023, 6 of our team took part in a beach clean at Flamborough Beach through the British Wildlife Trust. We spent 4 hours and filled 6 bin bags with rubbish that had been left on – or found its way onto – the beach. In 2024, our Green Team will coordinate at least 25 days of environmental volunteering and our colleagues won't need to take leave to participate.

Redistributing excess food with Olio:

In 2023 we established a partnership with Olio, to enable us to redistribute surplus food. Olio provides local volunteers to collect food from our events and make sure it reaches those in need, throughout 2024 we will be offering this service to all clients for UK based events.



ISO 14001 accreditation by 2026:

ISO 14001 is the certification that shows an organisational commitment to the environment and a more efficient, conscious use of the earth's resources. Our Management Team, Employee Council and Green Team are working together to define the improvements and proof points needed to meet the accreditation goals. We will submit our report in February 2026 and hope to gain accreditation as a result. In our 2026 sustainable business update, we will update our audiences on our ISO 14001 status, targets and actions.

Making Progress: Social

Our social priorities reflect the way we do business for good and how we treat our people. By supporting local communities and good causes, extending our influence to the next generation through training and education, promoting and prioritising equality and diversity and ensuring our supply chain reflects our vision and values, we aspire to be a first choice employer in the events industry.



Social

We're proud of how far we have already come, including:

Paying all colleagues the Real Living Wage for people aged 23 or over and working towards becoming a Real Living Wage accredited employer.

Preparing to launch our enhanced parental leave policy which will see us offer three months of shared parental leave to either parent employed by First Event at their full rate of pay.



Our employees already rate us pretty highly, but we want to do even better by them.

Improve employee happiness:

Our current employee net promoter score (ENPS) is 80%, which puts us firmly in the "excellence" category. But excellence isn't good enough. We're working towards "outstanding" with the aim of achieving a score of 88% or more by 2026. We're doing this by enhancing our offer further through wellness initiatives, significant investment in training and by prioritising giving back to our local communities.



Work experience in West Yorkshire:

We don't mean bringing in the occasional high school student to make the teas for a week. We mean providing bespoke training to engaged young people to enable them to really explore what a career in events involves. Each department provides valuable experience and our work experience students get sessions and workshops on things like marketing, design, AV and tech. At the end of the week, they work on presentations together. They finish the week with valuable, transferable skills to take into their future careers.



25 days of community projects:

In addition to our donated environmental volunteering days each year, we offer colleagues the opportunity to participate in community volunteering projects too. In the last year our team has taken part in local fundraising events including the Dragon Boat Race and Pretty Muddy fun run.



Social

£10,000 for our local community:

As well as our time, we're putting our money where our mouth is and have pledged an annual donation of at least £10,000 to charities that match our values and improve the lives of others around the world. We publicly fundraise for team activities, such as sleep-outs and boat races. Our whole team supports those participating by sharing the fundraising appeals and encouraging our people to take part in fundraising activities, such as running 28 miles in 28 days in February to raise money for Macmillan Cancer Support. The team upped their efforts by running or walking 60 miles in September 2023 in order to raise funds and awareness for Bliss, a UK based charity offering support and resources for families who have babies who are born premature or sick.

We support the team through flexible working, allowing employees to find time during their working hours to contribute to these campaigns, and we share their efforts across our social channels. If our people don't raise £10,000 through their own fundraising, First Event will make up any shortfall, to a total of £10,000 and will prioritise local charities and community projects, such as food banks in the area & Martin House Children's hospice, in order to contribute to those around us in an impactful and meaningful way. We also look further afield, and offer support for those far beyond our local area. We have sponsored a school in Kismia for over 3 years, and in 2023 we sent two members of the FE team over to Kisima to gain an insight into the student's lives and learn how we as a company can help to ensure the students have all they need to succeed.





Making Progress: Governance

To achieve our environmental and social goals and to operate as a responsible business, we need good governance.

As an employee owned company our leaders are held accountable by actions that affect employees by a board of trustees who work on their behalf. The Managing Director and Trustees meet quarterly to evaluate how the business is operating and make financial and operational decisions.

Each one of us is invested in the company's success. From attracting new talent to using our own skills and experience to train one another.

Governance

We've overhauled our colleague offer, to make sure work pays for everyone, introducing unlimited annual leave and uplifting all salaries to at least the real living wage.

Using technology we have developed for use in client events, we've launched a training platform which enables colleagues to share their expertise and everyone to learn from one another. Using our internal resources to train one another ensures consistency, and augments investment in external training.

In the last 12 months, we have recruited 25 new colleagues and promoted 13 of our existing people, demonstrating our commitment to everyone's career development.

Since becoming employee owned, we have committed to paying regular bonuses. We pay a quarterly lump sum of £500 for every employee if we meet our quarterly targets, with an additional £1,500 annual bonus for every employee if we meet our annual targets. In 2022, we were able to pay out record bonuses, after four successive quarters of excellence.

Our financial stability is maintained by highly skilled and ethical finance professionals, who are externally reviewed annually.

Our employee council ensures a high level of transparency of company procedures and decisions at all levels at all times and has focussed so far on how to improve the experience of being a First Event employee.

Modern Slavery: As part of our business ethics policy, First Event recognises that modern slavery is an unquestionable and indefensible violation of an individual's basic human rights. Download our full modern slavery policy [here](#).



Our 2026 Ambition & Strategy

Our Mission

To do better within our own business and to do better for our clients, creating sustainable events and using our influence to encourage clients to think differently.

Our Vision

To become a leading voice of sustainability within the industry, pushing for meaningful, lasting, and sustainable change wherever possible.

Environment

Our mission is to reduce our own environmental footprint and support our clients in making their events more sustainable.

- Responsible Consumption and Production by working towards more sustainable events
- Focus on Climate Action by using renewable energy ourselves and reducing the carbon footprint of the events we create
- Become Carbon neutral by 2026
- Achieve ISO 14001 accreditation



Community

Drive equality to give everyone a fair chance, improving the lives of people from all backgrounds and harnessing and honing the greatest talent in our sector.

- Good Health and Wellbeing – by being a good employer
- Quality Education – by investing in the next generation through work experience and training
- Gender Equality – by prioritising equality in our own company and through our supply chain



Governance

We have a responsibility to do the right thing for our people and the future of our business.

- Decent Work and Economy – by providing jobs at Real Living Wage
- Gender Equality – by prioritising equality in our own company and through our supply chain





**Get in touch
with the team,
and let's build the perfect event
experience for your business.**

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