



Using supply chains for social change

Buy Social Corporate Challenge
Annual Report Summer 2026



Headline figures

£864m

Total spend with social enterprises by corporate partners (2016-2025)

2,583

Approximate number of social enterprises supplying Buy Social Corporate Challenge partners (2016-2025)

£78m



Profit reinvested into social missions from trade with Buy Social Corporate Challenge partners (2016-2025)



1,349

Approximate number of social enterprises supplying Buy Social Corporate Challenge partners in 2025

**7,863
JOBS**



Created at social enterprises from trade with Buy Social Corporate Challenge partners (2016-2025)

36



High-profile companies buying from social enterprises

£209m

Total spend with social enterprises by corporate partners (2025)



Executive Summary

In 2016, Social Enterprise UK launched the Buy Social Corporate Challenge – a groundbreaking initiative with an ambitious goal.

A group of high-profile businesses is aiming to collectively spend £1 billion with social enterprises through their procurement.

It was intended as an eye-catching target to capture the imagination and encourage bold thinking, but we were unsure as to how realistic or achievable the target was.

We are proud to report that we are now very close to reaching that ambitious target. Our group of corporate partners spent an estimated £209,321,415 with social enterprise suppliers in 2025, bringing the total collective spend figure for 2016-2025 to £864,417,746.

This report summarises the progress that Buy Social Corporate Challenge partners have made in the latest 12 months and across the programme so far since its launch in 2016.

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It comes at a challenging time for business leaders, and particularly the procurement function. Economic growth remains slow and markedly lower than the global trend of growth over recent decades. Geopolitical uncertainties and global supply chain shocks are generating headlines and headaches across the business community.

Despite this, a growing number of companies see that their fortunes are inextricably linked with broader societal and environmental outcomes and are choosing to drive a positive impact through their procurement by trading with social enterprises.

Social enterprises are businesses which trade for a social or environmental purpose. Like any other business, they sell a service or product, but how they operate, who they employ, where they work and how they use their profits is transforming lives and communities across the UK and around the world.



Right The staff of Hey Girls, which supplies sanitary products and fights period poverty

We see these first ten years as just the beginning and phase two will have targets which are even more ambitious.

We estimate that 2,583 social enterprises have traded with Buy Social Corporate Challenge partners since the programme launched in 2016, securing revenue which helps them to enhance their financial sustainability and scale up their impact.

These social enterprises have reinvested a total of £78 million into their social and environmental missions over the lifetime of the programme so far – see the table on page 10 for a breakdown of how these social enterprises deliver impact.

For many social enterprises, the mission is to generate employment opportunities for those who face barriers to the labour market, and we estimate that 7,863 jobs have been created because of the above trade with our corporate partners.

The opportunity to contribute to this impact is a strong reason for companies to get involved in the social procurement market, but we also see a wide range of commercial drivers. See page 8 for a breakdown of the business benefits of social procurement as reported by our corporate partners.

It is worth highlighting one specific factor – the increasing influence of social value on public and private sector supply chains.

The focus of procurement has shifted in recent years from cost to value, and it is increasingly seen as a strategic function which can positively contribute to the company's bottom line.

Social value is increasingly the differentiator as more and more contracts, across both public sector and private sector, are awarded on tenders with a social value weighting.

One of the explicit aims of the Procurement Act (which went live in February 2025) is to maximise social value in public sector procurement. Private sector suppliers to the UK government face increasing requirements to report on how much of their subcontracting spend goes to small businesses and social enterprises.



Social enterprises are experts at delivering social value – it is at the very core of the social enterprise business model – which means that the Buy Social Corporate Challenge is helping our corporate partners to gain competitive advantage and win new business.

The future: BSCC v2.0

Our goal is to achieve the £1 billion spend milestone by the end of 2026 – our 2027 report will reveal whether or not we have been successful. In the meantime, we are making preparations to launch phase two of the Buy Social Corporate Challenge. We see these first ten years as just the beginning and phase two will have targets which are even more ambitious.

In the second phase of the Buy Social Corporate Challenge, we intend to work more actively with government, the investment community, and our corporate partners to stimulate increased provision across the social enterprise sector.

Whilst we celebrate the fact that social enterprises have traded to a value of over £850 million with our corporate partners, we are also impatient to see many more mature business-to-business (B2B) social enterprises across the market which can deliver at scale. See page 11 for a sneak preview of our future plans.

We are keen to welcome many more buying organisations and social enterprises onboard. If your company is not yet trading to its full potential within the social procurement market, please get in touch at socialprocurement@socialenterprise.org.uk to discuss how we can support you.

What is the Buy Social Corporate Challenge?

Led by Social Enterprise UK in partnership with the Department for Culture, Media & Sport, the Buy Social Corporate Challenge is the world's largest commitment to social procurement.

Launched by Social Enterprise UK in 2016, it brings together a group of high-profile businesses collectively aiming to spend £1 billion with social enterprises through their procurement.

More than 60% of social enterprises in the UK trade with the private sector, so this is a significant pool of potential suppliers for buying organisations looking to embed social value into their core operations.

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We deliver a comprehensive package of support to our corporate partners.

The support delivered includes:

- Supply chain diagnostics
- Training sessions
- Senior leadership roundtables
- Peer-to-peer collaboration sessions
- Premium access to our online Social Enterprise Directory
- Meet The Social Enterprise Supplier pitching events
- In-person Meet The Buyer events
- Buyer-supplier matching and connections
- Bespoke support to facilitate collaboration between corporate partners and social enterprises

Meet Jential



After being referred by [Mencap](#) and [Beam](#), Jential joined soap company [Amplify Goods](#) (which supplies several BSCC partners) alongside his friend Taylor, feeling anxious about communication and travelling independently.

With gentle support, he has built confidence, learned practical skills, and gradually gained the independence to travel on his own.

In a patient, welcoming environment, Jential has flourished – finding routine, purpose and belonging. Now more job confident and self-assured, he takes pride in his work and feels valued as part of the team.

Which companies are signed up?

The Buy Social Corporate Challenge began with seven corporate partners in 2016 and now has 36, representing a wide range of industries.

Founding partners

Johnson & Johnson



Wates



Partners

Amey



beazley

BDO



CBRE



Deloitte.

DIAGEO



FRESHFIELDS



Ingka Group
An IKEA retailer

Kingfisher



Linklaters



SIEMENS



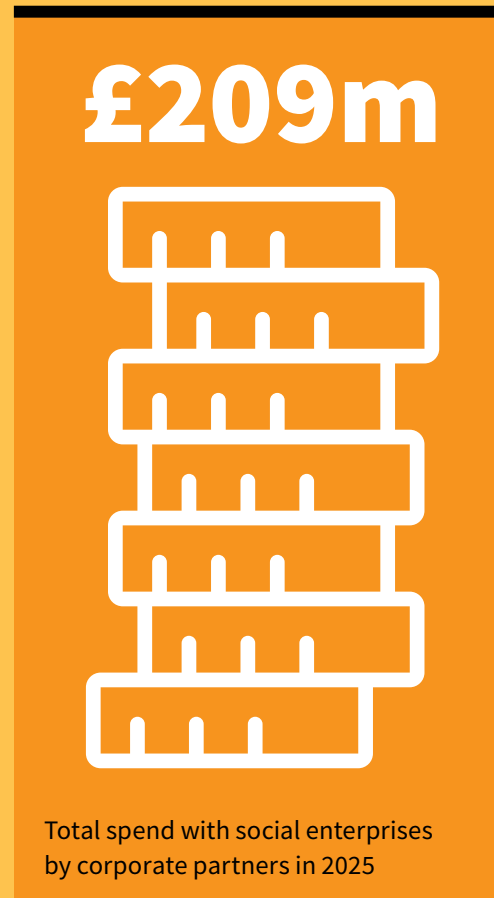
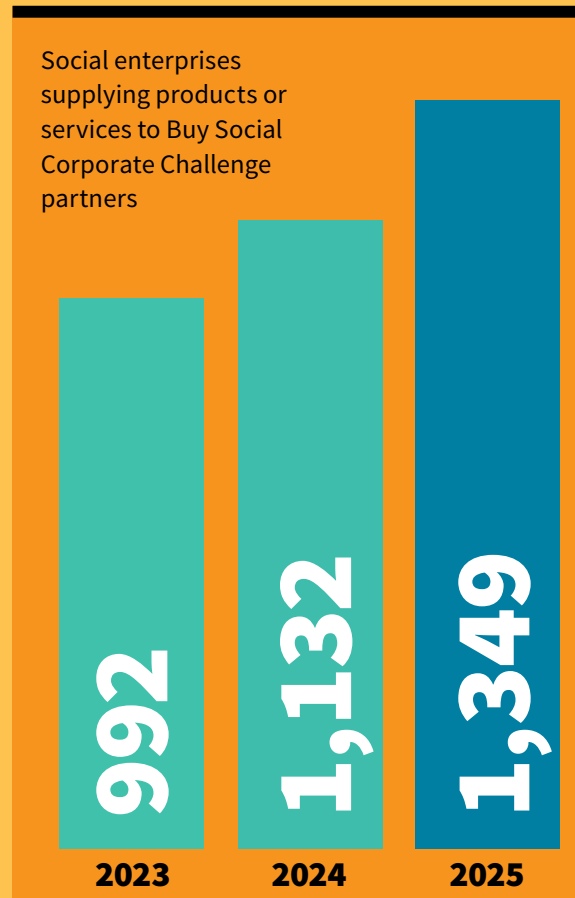
How much trade is there between corporate partners and social enterprise suppliers?

Our Buy Social Corporate Challenge partners are now very close to achieving our long-term goal of £1 billion of procurement spend going to social enterprises.

This latest year saw a healthy level of trade between social enterprise suppliers and Buy Social Corporate Challenge buyers, despite the challenging economic backdrop.

In 2025, an estimated 1,349 social enterprises supplied products or services to Buy Social Corporate Challenge partners. This represents a 19% increase on the corresponding number of social enterprises from 2024 (1,132). Altogether, we estimate that 2,583 social enterprises have traded with the corporate partners since the programme launched in 2016.

In 2025, 20 social enterprise suppliers had at least one contract with a Buy Social Corporate Challenge partner with an annual value of over £1 million. 21 social enterprise suppliers had contracts with 10 or more Buy Social Corporate Challenge partners.



Total collective spend figure for 2016-2025

£864.4m

What Buy Social Corporate Challenge partners think about sourcing from social enterprises

74%



told us it has created external recognition

87%

believe it has increased supplier diversity

56%

thought it had enhanced engagement within the procurement team

68%

told us it has brought innovation into the supplier base



61%

said it has improved environmental sustainability in their supplier base

65%

believe it has helped the company to win new business



87%

said it has supported business values and purpose

What products and services do social enterprises supply to the corporate partners?

There are an estimated 100,000 social enterprises across the UK.

More than 60% of these companies operate in the business-to-business (B2B) market.

In 2025, social enterprises delivered a wide range of products and services to Buy Social Corporate Challenge partners.



Category Area	2025 Contracts	Percentage
Consultancy and business support	403	16.3%
Education and skills development	348	14.1%
HR and employee wellbeing	317	12.8%
Research	240	9.7%
Employment and career services	191	7.7%
Healthcare	184	7.4%
Facilities management	171	6.9%
Community services	140	5.7%
Food and beverages	126	5.1%
Events	122	4.9%
Other	106	4.3%
Hospitality	36	1.5%
Merchandise and corporate gifts	35	1.4%
IT and digital services	32	1.3%
Creative industries	24	1.0%
Total	2475	100.0%

How does this trade generate a positive social and environmental impact?

The revenue and profit earned from corporate clients directly supports the core missions of B2B social enterprises.

When a social enterprise makes a profit, it reinvests the majority of that profit to benefit society and/or the environment. We estimate that a total of £78 million of profit has been reinvested into social and environmental missions as a result of trade with Buy Social Corporate Challenge clients since the programme launched in 2016.

This profit was invested into a wide range of social and environmental missions. According to the latest State of Social Enterprise report, the top ten causes addressed by UK social enterprises are listed in the box on the right.

One impact metric we track each year relates to the creation of employment opportunities. We estimate that 7,863 jobs have been directly or indirectly created as a result of social enterprises trading with Buy Social Corporate Challenge partners between 2016 and 2025. As these are jobs at social enterprises, they very often go to individuals who face specific barriers to the labour market.

Social/environmental causes addressed by UK social enterprises:

- 1 Improving physical health, mental health and wellbeing
- 2 Supporting vulnerable people
- 3 Benefitting a particular local community
- 4 Supporting other social enterprises/organisations
- 5 Addressing social exclusion
- 6 Creating employment opportunities
- 7 Supporting disabled, neurodiverse and health-affected individuals
- 8 Addressing the climate emergency
- 9 Promoting education and literacy
- 10 Supporting access to arts, leisure, heritage and sports



7,863

jobs have been created as a result of social enterprises trading with Buy Social Corporate Challenge partners

Beyond £1bn – our plans for 2027 onwards

In spring 2027, we will be reporting on progress throughout the Buy Social Corporate Challenge for 2016 – 2026. At that point, we are confident that we will be able to announce that we have collectively achieved our goal of £1 billion spend with social enterprises.

Phase one of the programme has shown that large corporations and social enterprises can successfully trade with each other across a broad range of product and service areas, but we know that there is significant untapped potential across the social procurement market due to gaps in provision on the supply side.

Phase two of the Buy Social Corporate Challenge will launch in spring 2027. We will work much more closely with government and investors to address these supply-side issues head on, and our aim will be to help facilitate a significantly higher level of trade between private sector buyers and social enterprise suppliers.

Phase two will also use ambitious targets to accelerate growth across the social procurement market.

There are many factors at play in strengthening the business case for social procurement. In the UK, this includes recent legislative changes and one of the core aims of the Procurement Act is to maximise social value.

The guidance to contracting authorities in the accompanying [National Procurement Policy Statement](#) (applicable across local government and central government) shows the importance that the government attaches to social enterprises in achieving this:

Nancy Park, Partner at PwC, summarised how this approach has filtered through to the private sector in her opening address to the Social Value Leaders' Summit 2026, stating that

“Social value is no longer a footnote, it is a differentiator.”

£1bn

“Small businesses and social enterprises are more likely to generate diverse and thriving local economies, creating jobs and economic growth. Increasing procurement spend with these suppliers is a national priority to drive economic growth. This Government wants to maximise every opportunity for these suppliers by opening up competition in public contracts and removing the barriers to participation they face.”

Many of our Buy Social Corporate Challenge partners are suppliers to government and in phase two of the programme we intend to go further in supporting a joined-up approach to driving social value across public and private sector supply chains. In phase two, we will:

- expand our advocacy work to reach many more buyers and suppliers across the market
- work more closely with our corporate partners, government and social investors to tackle social enterprise barriers to scale more holistically

- do more to support the scale-up of high-growth-potential social enterprises, especially where corporate demand for products/services currently goes unfulfilled
- bring our corporate partners and government partners together to support the development of mutually beneficial solutions in key policy areas
- provide a platform for our corporate partners to offer financial and non-financial support to social enterprises to help them to reach scale and/or pivot into new product/service areas

We will reveal more details of our plans for the next phase of the programme soon.

Please get in touch at socialprocurement@socialenterprise.org.uk if you have any questions about our work or would like to discuss opportunities for social procurement at your company.

Expanding our social procurement work beyond the UK

We have also expanded our social procurement support to global corporations across a much wider geographical region.

Our sister company, **telos**, combines a similar programme with advisory and advocacy to help large companies maximise the impact of their supply chains across the Europe, Middle East and Africa (EMEA) region.

Eight corporate partners (AstraZeneca, CBRE, Johnson & Johnson, SAP, Siemens, Zurich Insurance Group, Pfizer and Bayer) have signed up to work with telos, and they are already engaging with B2B social enterprises across multiple national markets.

Contact

charlie.wigglesworth@telosglobal.org

to find out more.

Corporate partners

AstraZeneca

CBRE

Johnson & Johnson

SAP

SIEMENS

ZURICH

Pfizer

BAYER



How Mediorite works with PwC

PwC became a Mediorite client through the Buy Social Corporate Challenge and that relationship has since opened doors for a young creative filmmaker.

Mediorite is a social enterprise film production company. The professional services business PwC first connected with them through the Buy Social Corporate Challenge, and the two organisations have worked together consistently for a decade, collaborating on a range of film projects including a landmark piece on the digitisation of the NHS.

It was during that NHS project that PwC's Rachel Lovell, asked Mediorite founder Lucy Ferguson if she could connect her with someone she had met through volunteering with the Social Mobility Foundation. This was a young woman named Anike, who had a Politics and International Relations degree, but had spent years accumulating hands-on film production experience as this was her real passion.

Rachel shared Anike's CV and Anike then joined the Mediorite team for a work experience placement, quickly proving herself indispensable and subsequently returning for regular freelance bookings as a production coordinator.

What set Anike apart was not just her technical ability but her commitment to Mediorite's social enterprise values: mentoring young creatives, contributing ideas beyond her brief, and championing the next generation. When a permanent Production Coordinator role became available, Anike applied and, following a competitive process, was appointed.

"The Buy Social Corporate Challenge helped us meet and win PwC as a client. To have this lovely example of how individuals within large organisations can make a massive difference is really joyous. Anike has a job, we've got a fantastic new member of staff, and Rachel and PwC have a lovely story."

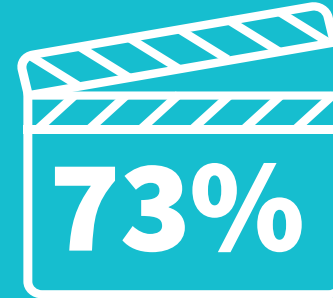
Lucy Ferguson Founder, Mediorite

"Through our sessions it became clear that Anike had excellent skills, judgement and experience, and she just needed the right connections. Lucy and the team at Mediorite rapidly recognised that too. Anike absolutely deserves this role and it's a joy to see her in a place where she can flourish."

Rachel Lovell, Senior Manager, PwC



BREAKING THE CYCLE



Last year, 73% of young people on Mediorite's SHIFT programme moved from being not in employment, education or training (NEET) to EET. More than 1 million people aged 16-24 are NEET in the UK, 1 in 8.



Mediorite founder Lucy Ferguson with Anike on set

"Now I have a permanent role where I can grow and do work I'm proud of."

Anike Adehuwa-Olabode, Mediorite

About Social Enterprise UK

Social Enterprise UK is the national voice for social enterprise.

We're a membership and certification organisation raising awareness and making the case for social enterprise, building markets and influencing government policy.

About the Buy Social Corporate Challenge

The Buy Social Corporate Challenge (BSCC) supports leading businesses to bring social enterprises into their supply chain. A group of these businesses are aiming to collectively spend £1 billion with social enterprises through their procurement.

Corporates spend significant sums on the goods and services they need. The BSCC supports them to do it in a way that helps them meet their ESG goals and make a positive impact on society.

Contact us

socialprocurement@socialenterprise.org.uk

www.socialenterprise.org.uk

Cover image A Corps Security commissionaire. The social enterprise supports veterans adjusting to civilian life and supplies security services to BSCC partners.

