

Contents

Foreword	3
Introduction	4
COVID-19 recovery	6
Tackling economic inequality	10
Fighting Climate Change	13
Equal Opportunity	18
Wellbeing	22



Darren Jackson, Managing Director, Ecorys UK

Foreword

I'm proud to present our first annual Ecorys UK Social Value report.

The report gives a snapshot of the Social Value activity we've carried out at Ecorys over the past year. It covers what we have achieved as a company; some of the things our team members have accomplished whilst at work; and some of the social benefit generated in communities by contracts we deliver on behalf of clients.

With offices in Birmingham, London, and Leeds, we are not a company affiliated to a particular local community. The world is our community. Our approach to social value reflects that: we want our work to generate social impact locally, nationally, and internationally.

Social Value is not a new concept for us. At Ecorys, we've always aimed to make a positive impact on society through our work by tackling the issues that affect communities around the world. We strive to fulfil this by delivering relevant services to our clients that help them make decisions, build capacity, and implement and communicate change. Our vision motivates us to make a significant and long-lasting difference to the communities that we engage with through our contracts and work.

In 2021, we aligned the various strands of our social impact work with the UK government's "New Social Value" model. This covers five strategic themes - reflecting UK government priorities - so we have presented our Social Value work in this report under those headings.

We're proud of our achievements in 2021 and we're looking ahead to doing even more in our plan for 2022 and beyond.

Introduction

Our vision motivates us to make a significant and long-lasting difference to the communities that we engage with through our work.

Our Vision

Our vision is to be a leading international research and consultancy company, addressing society's key challenges

Our Mission

Our mission is to help our clients make decisions, build capacity to implement and communicate change, and deliver bespoke services

Drawing on the progress achieved through our **Corporate Social Responsibility (CSR)** efforts, we have readdressed our social impact strategies and aligned them with the UK government's approach to Social Value. The Public Services (Social Value) Act was introduced in 2012, requiring businesses that are seeking to win UK government work to set out how they can secure wider social, economic, and environmental benefits. The New Social Value Model launched by government came into effect on 1st January 2021 and is designed to be used by central government departments, executive agencies, and non-departmental public bodies in the way they procure contracts and services. The government's model establishes policy outcomes and objectives for social value and covers five strategic themes¹ which reflect on agreed cross-government priorities.

We are very proud of our CSR efforts and achievements to date, and we have translated those into Ecorys' Social Value. Our Business Conduct, Ethics and Social Value Policy² is also a vital element of our work, covering core areas such as regulatory compliance, equality and inclusion, environmental issues, and safeguarding.

2021 was full of significant improvements that we were able to achieve through many great initiatives and activities which delivered our social value goals. We would like to highlight the outstanding work delivered by our **Carbon Neutral Task Force**. As a company, we committed to become carbon neutral by 2030 and the first milestone on this journey was obtaining **ISO14001 certification**. As a result of great effort from our Carbon Neutral Task Force, we reached this milestone and gained the certification in December 2021. Building on the work of our **Gender Task Force** that has been running for over two years, we set up the **Equality, Diversity and Inclusion (EDI) Task Force** which will coordinate EDI initiatives and action plans across the business. In December, we also established our Race and Ethnicity Task Force which is currently developing its own action plan. Our **UK Charity of the Year initiative** was in the last couple of years the key element of our efforts supporting Covid-19 recovery, as we partnered with <u>FareShare</u> - the UK's national network of charitable food redistributors. We are proud to announce that we allocate 0.8% of our UK annual profit to FareShare, along with a further 0.2 % to our international charity Care 4 Kids in Zambia.

 ⁽¹⁾ Supporting COVID-19 recovery, including helping local communities manage and recover from the impact of COVID;
 (2) Tackling economic inequality, including creating new businesses, jobs, and skills, as well as increasing supply chain resilience;
 (3) Fighting climate change and reducing waste;

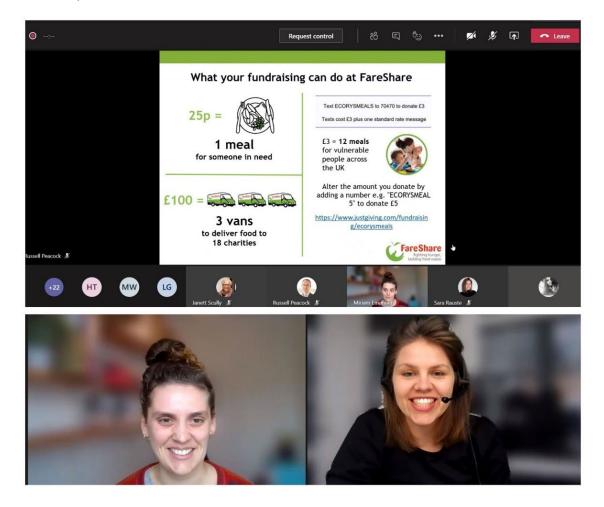
⁽⁴⁾ Driving equal opportunity, including reducing the disability employment gap and tackling workforce inequality, (5) Improving health and wellbeing and community integration.

The policy also refers to a set of our additional policies including Equality and Diversity Policy, Modern Slavery and Human Trafficking Policy, Safeguarding Children and Vulnerable Adults Policy, Environmental Policy, etc. and forms part of the Ecorys Governance Manual which is adopted by all employees.

COVID-19 recovery

Contributing to COVID-19 recovery, through supporting our staff as well as helping local communities manage and recover from the impact of COVID-19 was one of our priorities of 2021.

At the beginning of the pandemic, Ecorys UK developed a **COVID-19 Risk Assessment**, a working document of COVID-19 risks for business continuity, alongside recommended contingency measures, ensuring the safety of staff choosing to work from our offices. Throughout 2021, we developed and updated the document on a regular basis. Throughout the year working from our offices remained voluntary. This was supported by our global **hybrid working policy** giving our employees a balance of working at home on tasks that require concentration and collaborating with colleagues in the office. We remodelled some of our office spaces to allow this flexibility.



As part of our commitment to help local communities manage and recover from the impact of Covid 19, Ecorys UK has been working with our UK Charity of the Year "FareShare". FareShare is the UK's national network of charitable food redistributors, made up of 18 independent organisations. Together, they take good quality surplus food from across the food industry and get it to more than 10,500 frontline charities and community groups. The food they redistribute is nutritious and good to eat. It reaches charities across the UK, including school breakfast clubs, older people's lunch clubs, homeless shelters, and community cafes. Every week they provide enough food to create almost a million meals for vulnerable people. We committed to share 1% of our UK profits with FareShare (to support their work in the UK) and with the Care 4 Kids educational facility in Zambia.



"I am very pleased to announce that FareShare is our new UK Charity of the Year 2021-22, having been chosen by our own staff.

At Ecorys we are driven by the desire to help address key social and economic challenges across the world and believe that partnering with FareShare for the next two years is a really good way for us to help fight hunger and tackle food waste across the UK."

Darren Jackson, Ecorys UK, Managing Director



"A huge thank you from FareShare to everyone at Ecorys who raises money and donates. Every £5 can help FareShare distribute up to 20 meals to vulnerable people – so every pound really can make a difference.

As the UK's biggest charity fighting food waste and hunger, the work of FareShare and its 11,000-strong network of charities depends on the generosity of others – including staff at Ecorys."

Lindsay Boswell, FareShare, CEO

Client projects that made a difference

Grants Monitoring Partner for London Community Response Fund, City Bridge Trust

In 2021 our Programme Management Unit (PMU) conducted monitoring of grants awarded in three waves of the London Community Response Fund (1,262 projects totalling £25 million). The fund was a collaboration between 60 London funders established to help charities, voluntary sector organisations and other community organisations to respond immediately to the COVID-19 pandemic. It was administered by the City Bridge Trust. Our role was post-grant monitoring and data collection on behalf of City Bridge Trust. Working with our Survey Team, an online and telephone survey established how each grant was spent. Our social value contribution includes creating a flexible and supportive reporting process, so that small organisations could respond quickly and easily during difficult times away from their office base. Our project data reports have helped the City Bridge Trust to refine their future project planning and monitoring processes.

Transaction Technical Assistance COVID-19 Active Response and Expenditure Support (TRTA-CARES) Programme, Asian Development Bank (ADB)

In July 2020, Ecorys mobilised the 17-month, ADB-funded USD\$624k Transaction Technical Assistance COVID-19 Active Response and Expenditure Support (TRTA-CARES) Programme. TRTA-CARES facilitates the implementation of the ADB's overarching USD500mln CARES programme, which supports the Government of Bangladesh to expand and strengthen its social safety net for vulnerable groups including women, in response to the ongoing global COVID-19 pandemic. The programme has five core objectives: (i) building local capacity to develop social security for vulnerable people as a pandemic response; (ii) supporting the delivery of services to the most vulnerable through the existing Social Safety Net (SSN) programmes; (iii) introducing new tools and solutions to improve poverty/gender targeting and service delivery, including digital financial services; (iv) developing a gender-responsive plan to improve the SSN programs in the country; and (v) improving monitoring and evaluation (M&E) capacity and data collection.

Further plans for 2022

Due to ongoing restrictions, we could not volunteer in FareShare warehouses in 2021 as we hoped, but we look forward to doing so in 2022 as well as exploring where we can offer "pro-bono" support in other areas. In 2021 we committed 1% of our UK profits to Fare Share and to a new international charity following our three-year partnership with Care 4 Kids in Zambia coming to an end. In spring 2022 we will be able to announce how much our donation to Fare Share will be for 2021, as well as the name of our new international charity partner.

Tackling economic inequality

Ecorys UK is committed to supporting economic equality and this is integral in the development of our policies and initiatives. We have been working on increasing the resilience and capacity of our supply chain and creating new employment and training opportunities.

One of our commitments in 2021 was to strengthen our supply chain by developing a **Supplier Selection** and **Management Policy**. Our aim is to encourage a more diverse range of organisations including SMEs/VCSEs to be part of our supply chain for contract delivery. This policy aligns with a 2015 UN Global Compact (UNGC) report 'Support Your SME Suppliers', which advocates supply-chain diversification to promote human rights and economic development. Ecorys UK is also a UNGC signatory. Although we are not signed up to the government voluntary prompt payment code (PPC), we monitor the government approach and we already meet and even go beyond the government requirements³ as our payment terms are 30 days from the invoice date, and we honour this with all our suppliers.

Our aim is to attract workforce talents from a variety of backgrounds. This year, we expanded the pool of universities and colleges that we advertise our graduate and other opportunities with. Alongside universities and colleges near to our offices, in 2021 we also advertised with the University of Manchester, University of Sheffield, University of Edinburgh, University of Exeter, University of East Anglia any many others. We have provided two paid intern opportunities within our creative team and 15 graduate entry opportunities within our Policy and Research team. We have offered accredited training courses for our staff. Looking ahead we are interested in using the **Apprenticeship Levy Scheme** to create more apprenticeship opportunities in our business.

Ecorys UK gained **Real Living Wage** accreditation in 2020 ensuring all our employees and people in our supply chain are paid a fair wage. We are dedicated to maintaining this commitment by conducting annual reviews to ensure we continue to meet the real living wage criteria.

Client projects that made a difference

Business Assistance Facility (BAF), World Bank Group

In Laos, we are managing the Business Assistance Facility (BAF) for the World Bank, to support private sector companies and SMEs to build their skills and expertise so that they can become locally, regionally, and internationally competitive. Our project has been praised by stakeholders for stepping-up efforts to help small businesses adapt and respond to the challenges onset by the COVID-19 pandemic. The project has particular emphasis on women's economic empowerment where (to date) 65% of companies that received business advisory support and matching grants are womenled enterprises.

From 1 April 2022, suppliers bidding for central government contracts worth more than £5m per annum, will need to demonstrate that they pay at least 90% of their invoices to suppliers within 60 days. We pay 93.5% of all invoices in 30 days going up to 99% within 60 days.

Evaluation of the Building Better Opportunities Programme, The National Lottery Community Fund (TNLCF)

TNLCF is matching funds from the EU's European Social Fund 2014-2023 to invest in local projects tackling the root causes of poverty, promoting social inclusion, and driving local jobs and growth. The funding is supporting a variety of projects, ranging from those improving employability for the most disadvantaged, helping those with multiple and complex needs, to improving financial literacy. Through a learning strand connected to the evaluation, we are sharing findings more widely on what works to tackle economic inequality and for whom. In 2021 we produced an annual evaluation report and delivered two learning events, all with a focus of continuing project delivery and achieving employment outcomes during the COVID-19 pandemic.

Further plans for 2022

Looking ahead, our goal is to continue strengthening the resilience and capacity of our supply chain by creating meaningful opportunities for new businesses and entrepreneurs, start-ups, SMEs and VCSEs to participate in delivery across our contracts. We will do this by sharing sub-contracting opportunities and developing our outreach work. Currently we are working on creating a new contract database, which we hope will allow us to accurately track diversity in our supply chain. Additionally, we would like to explore possibilities to create more apprenticeship and paid internship opportunities across the company, especially for those who might be facing barriers to employment.

Fighting Climate Change

Ecorys UK is committed to running its business in an environmentally sound and sustainable manner. We strive to become a carbon neutral company by 2030 while working towards lowering the business impact on the environment.

To achieve our goal of becoming a carbon neutral company by 2030 and lower our impact on the environment we took a course of actions in 2021. We set up our **Climate Neutral Task Force** in April, composed of a project manager, a board representative and other group members supporting with the broader delivery of the initiative. Our initial objective was to obtain the **ISO14001 environmental certificate** in 2021. The Climate Neutral Task Force developed **Ecorys UK's Environmental Policy**. Our task force collected data on Ecorys environmental performance for all our business activities (e.g., number of journeys carried out by employees, electricity usage in our offices etc.) and identified Key Performance Indicators (KPIs) allowing us to monitor, measure and evaluate progress against our long-term objectives. We also calculated our emissions for 2019 and 2020 to act as a benchmark to contextualise Ecorys environmental performance. In the meantime, the team also analysed the business strengths, opportunities, and risks regarding the environmental actions, as well as the external factors impacting our company. **The Environmental Management System** manual collects the core analyses determining our actions. The team also developed a **carbon calculator to determine and track our CO2 emissions** across business activity. This allows us to target and reduce the emissions by applying specific actions like limiting travel, shifting to greener suppliers, and embracing greener practices to support our carbon reduction plans.



We promoted sustainability and behavioural change by **raising awareness within and outside our company**. We promoted local volunteering activities related to environment preservation via our annual volunteering day. Sustainable travel was encouraged. Travel by bike was promoted via our Bike Purchase scheme and our London office organised lunchtime bike tours. A calendar of environmental days, quizzes, information sheets for raising awareness and templates for sustainable travel were developed and circulated among all Ecorys UK employees.

We are thrilled to announce that Ecorys UK was granted the ISO14001 certificate in December 2021, after successfully passing the external audits.

Client projects that made a difference

Evaluation of Natural Environment Investment Readiness Fund, Department for Environment, Food & Rural Affairs (DEFRA)

Ecorys is contracted by DEFRA to lead on the evaluation of <u>The Natural Environment Investment Readiness Fund (NEIRF)</u>. NEIRF is a fund of up to £10 million to provide grants of up to £100,000 for investment readiness support to projects in England. It is designed to address the capacity and capability gaps in the natural environment investment market, by supporting grantees to develop innovative business models that can protect and enhance natural capital, generate revenue, and operate on private sector investment. These focus on generating revenue from ecosystem services or developing codes to regulate the sale of ecosystem services. The methodology for the process, impact and Value for Money evaluations includes an annual online survey of successful and unsuccessful applicants, longitudinal interviews with grantees, 'snapshot interviews' with successful and unsuccessful applicants to explore specific themes (e.g. M&E, investment readiness), as well as MI data analysis, including applications, reports and self-assessment tools mapping projects' journeys towards investment readiness or developing codes.

Integrated National Parks Management II and III (NamParks V), Ministry of Environment, Forestry and Tourism (MEFT) in Namibia

A consortium led by Ecorys is implementing KfW⁴ funding to the Ministry of Environment, Forestry and Tourism (MEFT) in Namibia. The four-year project is delivering EURO €15m of support to ensure that Namibia's coastal parks are sustainably managed with fair access to their natural resources contributing to biodiversity conservation and improved living conditions for neighbouring communities. The COVID-19 Pandemic saw the near total collapse of the tourism industry in 2020. The total tourist arrivals figure of 169,565 received in 2020 revealed a massive 89.4% decline in comparison to the 1,595,973 tourists of the previous year. This has had a major impact on the national fiscus and communities dependent on ecotourism at a time when the economy was already under pressure. In 2021, to assist address this challenge the German Government channelled an additional EURO €4m emergency funding though the Namibia Parks project implemented by Ecorys. This was to support the MEFT in keeping park operations running especially in park management and anti-poaching. This will be ongoing during 2022 with an additional EURO €6m funding anticipated which will hopefully be bolstered by a return of tourists as the pandemic eases. The Ecorys led consortium is managing this funding and working with MEFT to identify priorities for support.

Further plans for 2022

Achieving the environmental standard certification is only one step on our journey in tackling climate change. Our **climate change action plan** for 2022 includes further actions, such as: promoting sustainable travel, improving the sustainability of our supply chain, promoting sustainable pensions options, and a review of offsetting options, coupled with annual reporting.

We are committed to continuously working on new opportunities for limiting our negative impact as a company and integrating our environmental policy goals into our core business activity.

Ecorys UK aims to become a carbon neutral company by 2030

Offset

It will not be possible to decrease all emissions to zero (e.g. gas consumption), thus Ecorys will need to offset some of CO2 emissions.

Measure

Identify and calculate Ecorys carbon footprint based on all aspects of the business

Determine annual CO2 emissions

Develop monitoring tools and practices to measure CO2 emissions per business activity.

Reduce

Reduce CO2 emissions of in-house operations Change to greener suppliers Change employees' and clients' behaviour towards more environmental practices.

Equal Opportunity

Ecorys aims to make a positive difference to society through the work we do and our values. We are committed to creating an inclusive and diverse culture where every person feels respected and empowered to reach their potential

We updated and expanded our Equality, Diversity and Inclusion Commitment and Policy in 2021, as well as established an Equality, Diversity, and Inclusion (EDI) Task Force. The EDI Task Force which aims to create an inclusive and diverse culture where each employee feels respected and empowered to reach their potential. As part of this initiative a Race and Ethnicity Task Force was established in December 2021. The purpose and scope of this task force are currently being developed, with the aim to develop its own action plan for the next two years. One of the initial tasks to be included in the action plan is to review the Ecorys UK ethnicity pay gap analysis which was undertaken for the first time using the last year's data. Additionally, the EDI Task Force also oversees our Gender Task Force which continued to deliver activities to explore and address gender equality at work as part of a two-year action plan covering 2020 and 2021. The 2021 Gender Pay Gap report was delivered showing that women are under-represented in the top quartile in Ecorys UK's payroll, and the action plan focused on improving this, although many of the actions link to global initiatives and are beneficial to all staff. Key initiatives included: input into company policies, running an annual survey for female staff on gender equality, running health campaigns to promote wellbeing at work for both women and men, and supporting the successful Women's Network. A special focus on menopause at work led to Ecorys UK signing the Workplace Menopause Pledge for World Menopause Day. The Task Force is made up of representatives from all UK Business Units and will continue its work in 2022.



Ecorys also recognises that some of our colleagues have responsibilities outside of work which involve providing care to others. We also understand that this can have a long-term impact on a person's ability to work, as a loss of skills, knowledge, experience and or confidence resulting from taking periods of time off can make returning to work and balancing caring responsibilities a challenge. Therefore, to further tackle workforce inequality, we developed a new **Carers Policy**. The Carers Policy outlines our approach in providing support and flexibility to carers in Ecorys UK. Line managers also play a key role in supporting employee carers, therefore there is a detailed section in the policy on how they can effectively do this. We hope that this policy will help alleviate some of the pressures that staff may face at work and that it encourages people to reach out for support when they need it.

Client projects that made a difference

Turing Scheme, Department for Education

Ecorys UK, with our partner The British Council was proud to launch the Turing Scheme in February 2021 on behalf of the UK Government, supporting £98.5 million of grant funding in its inaugural year for education providers to send students, learners and pupils on life-changing study and work placements around the globe. A key aim of the Turing Scheme was to improve the opportunity and take up of such opportunities among those from disadvantaged backgrounds and with special educational needs and disabilities (SEND). Of a projected 41,024 placements supported by the approved funding for the 2021-22 academic year, some 48 percent, or 19,713, were identified as being for participants from disadvantaged backgrounds. Progress of approved projects will be monitored throughout the academic year, with two projects including participants with special educational needs already available on our website; The New Bridge School will create life-changing opportunities in the tech sector, and the Eat That Frog case study shows how young people will boost their independent living skills.

Market Study and Positioning Strategy for Lebanese Women Entrepreneurs, World Bank Group

In 2021 Ecorys-led research has contributed evidence to help advance gender equality among for female business owners in Lebanon. Ecorys led a market study of female entrepreneurship in Lebanon in consortium with Lebanon-based partners Beyond Group. This study formed part of the activities of the WBG's Mashreq Gender Facility (MGF), which is a wider collaboration of the WBG with the Governments of Lebanon, Iraq, and Jordan to close economic gender gaps. The study examined woman-owned and led businesses (WOLBs) experience accessing and growing their share of export markets for their Lebanese-produced goods and/or services. The study resulted took a participatory approach that included oversight from an advisory group of female business owners to ensure the study design captured the views of WOLBs. The data collection also ensured WOLB experiences and views were channelled into our findings through survey of 227 WOLBs, key informant interviews with female business owners, and five in-depth case studies with WOLBs that were successfully exporting. The results were reported to the World Bank via an analytical report and findings were used to inform a long list of proposed actions for the next phase of MGF programming (which will run from 2021 to 2024) as well as other donors and entrepreneur ecosystem actors (i.e. funders, business incubators).

Further plans for 2022

The EDI Task Force aim to further develop our initiatives around disability employment and establish a separate task force that would address the disability employment gap. As mentioned before, the newly established Race and Ethnicity Taskforce will outline an action plan for 2022 and review the ethnicity pay gap report.

Wellbeing

Ecorys actively prioritises the health and wellbeing of all personnel including employees, contractors, suppliers, and participants. As caring is one of the key values of our business, we also prioritise communities that we are operating with, and we strive to improve community integration.

With the global pandemic creating enormous pressure on people's mental health, the wellbeing and health of our staff has been one of our top priorities. Our new **HR strategy (2021-2025)** includes a dedicated chapter on the development of employee wellbeing where we introduce initiatives that promote positive physical, mental, social, and financial wellbeing.



Source: Surveys on Ecorys UK Employees' Stress, conducted by the Wellbeing Team.

Ecorys is proud to have an active **Wellbeing Task Force** with representatives in all offices who seek to promote, enhance, and encourage awareness of colleagues' wellbeing. Our Wellbeing Taskforce comprises Wellbeing Ambassadors who are trained in mental health first to provide support to those at risk of or experiencing mental health issues by providing a listening ear and signposting to relevant support including our **Employee Assistance Programme** provided by **Validium**. It provides free access to information and counselling services

24 hours a day, 365 days a year to all our employees. The service is completely confidential and can provide support on physical, mental, social, and financial wellbeing. Our Wellbeing Ambassadors delivered a series of mental health awareness campaigns including Mental Health Awareness Week in May (including wellbeing activities e.g., yoga, meditation, webinars), Healthy Eating week in June, and National Stress Awareness Day in November. Additionally, they organised a variety of wellbeing activities for our employees including a Return to the Office Webinar (July 2021) and regular e-coffee breaks.

To support our employee's physical health, we also offer a **Cycle to Work Scheme**, and free eye tests. We run regular physical activity sessions online that staff can attend during office hours, including exercise sessions and yoga – all available on **Ecorys Extra**. Additionally, we proactively raise awareness on women's and men's health issues – our Gender Taskforce ran two health campaigns for UK staff in 2021 (i.e. **Women's Health October 2021** linked to World Menopause Day on 18 October and Men's health November 2021 linked to **Movember Men's Health Month**).

Client projects that made a difference

Evaluation of Core Market Programmes, Sport England

Sport England's core market funding is focused on maintaining the sporting habits of those who are already active but may be at risk of reducing their participation or dropping out altogether. In 2021 we finalised our independent evaluation of the Core Market Programmes including £238 million for 49 sport Nation Governing Bodies (NGBs), and a further £6 million for the 'Life Changes' open fund, distributed to a range of organisations to test new approaches in helping people to stay active who are experiencing life transitions. Through social outcomes evaluation we helped the client to understand how their funding helps improve the lives of people across lots of areas, like mental wellbeing, social and community development, individual development. Learn more about our evaluation work covering Sport and Physical Activity here.

Evaluation of Summer of Fun Programme, Welsh Government

The Welsh Government commissioned Ecorys to evaluate the Summer of Fun programme - a national offer for children and young people aged 0-25 to participate in free play activities over summer 2021. The programme was one element of the Welsh Government's commitment to supporting children and young people to recover from the COVID-19 pandemic. This mixed-method process evaluation helped the client to understand programme implementation and perceived outcomes for local areas and participants. Additionally, we developed a set of recommendations for future holiday provision policy and practice. Read more on the findings and key recommendations here.

Further plans for 2022

We want to build on our good work and hold new company-wide talks around health and wellbeing at key intervals. Our Wellbeing Task Force will continue promoting and delivering key wellbeing events throughout the year and will introduce a new wellbeing strategy in 2022, enhancing employee engagement across all our business units.



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