



# Social Value Impact Report 2024/25

# Contents

1. Foreword – Jason Knight	3
2. Summary	4–5
3. What is EverCare and CSR?	6
4. TOMS Framework (Themes, Outcomes and Measures)	7
5. Our Impact:	
5.1. Jobs (Promoting Local Skills and Employment)	8–15
5.2. Growth (Supporting Growth of Responsible Regional Business)	16–18
5.3. Social (Healthier, Safer and More Resilient Communities)	19–25
5.4. Environment (Decarbonising and Safeguarding Our World)	26–30
6. Summary against our targets	31–32
7. Next Years Targets	33

# Foreword

I'm proud to be part of a company that is genuinely committed to being a force for good. At Ground Control, our success is measured not just in financial terms, but by the positive social and environmental impact we create. Through EverCare and our broader Corporate Social Responsibility (CSR) efforts, we continue to embed purpose into everything we do.

I'm delighted to present our Year End Social Impact Report for 2024/25, a comprehensive reflection of our milestones, achievements, and unwavering commitment to sustainable growth, community impact, and organisational excellence.

This year, we achieved a remarkable **£962,351 in total social value**, a **485% increase** from last year's total of £164,448. This is a truly notable achievement and one we are **extremely proud of**, underscoring our growing impact and collective drive across the organisation, suppliers and partners.

We are also making significant strides on our journey to **Net Zero by 2038**, achieving a **15% reduction in CO<sub>2</sub> emissions** this year alone, **despite considerable business growth**. This speaks volumes about our determination to lead by example and deliver meaningful environmental outcomes.

Ground Control has made progress across all areas of sustainability and social impact during FY24/25. Highlights include expanded volunteering programmes, increased donations and match funding, enhanced training and wellbeing initiatives, and of course, more tree planting and habitat restoration.

Our values are the foundation of everything we do. They inform our decisions, strengthen our environmental commitments, and inspire initiatives that benefit both our business and the wider world. At Ground Control, we believe in **Human Nature at Its Best**, and our work in communities and the environment reflects that belief in action.

I want to thank everyone involved in delivering these outcomes. Your passion, dedication, and drive are making a tangible difference every day, and we are deeply grateful for your ongoing support.

Let's continue to move forward together, **using business as a force for good**, guided by our shared values and our commitment to **leave the world in a better place than we found it**.



Jason Knights,  
CEO

Our Year in Numbers



£962,351  
**Social Value**  
(+485% vs last year)



130,000  
**TREES PLANTED**



385 hours  
**Equality, Diversity  
& Inclusion Training**

£63,297

**Invested in  
Modern Slavery  
Prevention**

(supply chain initiatives & training)



100%  
**Employees Paid  
Real Living Wage**



1,534 hrs  
**Volunteering**



97%  
**Fleet Electric**



15% cut  
**in CO<sub>2</sub> emissions**



£28,468  
**Matched Giving  
& Donations**

# EverCare and Our CSR Approach

At Ground Control, Corporate Social Responsibility (CSR) is more than a set of obligations, it's a core part of who we are and how we operate. CSR today means actively contributing to the wellbeing of our communities, the environment, and the people we work with, while holding ourselves accountable to higher standards of purpose-driven business.

Our approach is guided by the **triple bottom line: people, planet, and profit**. This means we measure success not just by financial performance, but also by the positive social and environmental outcomes we deliver. From reducing carbon emissions to supporting communities through volunteering and donations, we believe business can and should, be a force for good.

**EverCare** is the heart of our CSR activity. It brings together a wide range of initiatives focused on sustainability, wellbeing, equity, and community support, amplifying our impact far beyond business as usual.

We're proud to share the progress we've made over the past year, and even more excited about what lies ahead as we continue building a better future, together.



# Our Approach to Social Value: The TOMs Framework

To ensure our social impact is measurable, transparent, and aligned with national best practice, we use the **TOMs framework**, which stands for **Themes, Outcomes, and Measures**. This widely recognised model provides a structured approach to capturing and quantifying social value, particularly in public and private sector supply chains.

- **Themes** represent high-level social impact areas such as jobs, growth, community, environment, and innovation.
- **Outcomes** define the positive changes we aim to achieve within each theme, like improved employability or reduced carbon emissions.
- **Measures** are the specific actions we take to deliver those outcomes, such as apprenticeships, volunteering hours, or CO<sub>2</sub> reduction.

We used the TOMs framework again this year to measure the full scope of our social value activities across the organisation. We are proud to report a total social value contribution of £962,351 for 2024/25, a significant increase from last year's £164,448. This result reflects the real-world difference we're making through community investment, environmental stewardship, inclusive employment, and ongoing support for local causes.

The TOMs model not only strengthens how we plan and deliver our initiatives, it also ensures our impact is meaningful, evidence-based, and aligned with our values as a purpose-driven organisation.

Savings in CO2e emissions achieved through de-carbonisation	£20,548
No. hours volunteering time provided to support local community project	£27,988
Total Value YTD Donations or in-kind contributions to local community projects (£ & materials)	£28,468
Equality, diversity and inclusion training provided both for employees and supply chain employees	£38,582
Car miles driven using low or no emission employees vehicles as a result of a green transport programme	£65,393
No. of employees who have access to comprehensive and multidimensional wellbeing programmes	£134,359
No. of weeks of training opportunities that have either been completed during the year, or that will be supported by the organisation until completion in the following year	£315,277

Total Social Value

£962,351



Last year's value

£164,448

485% Growth



# Our Impact by Theme

## 5.1 Jobs (Promoting Local Skills and Employment)

### Our People

#### Embedding the Right Culture from the Inside Out

This year, we worked collaboratively to ensure our culture, people, and skills fully reflect the values we promote externally. Through workshops and team sessions, colleagues from across Ground Control helped redefine our core values, aligning them with our strategic goals and aspirations.

A new value was introduced: "If it's to be, it's up to me" a call to accountability, ownership, and empowerment. These values are now embedded into our appraisal processes, reward frameworks, and everyday decision-making, creating an environment where talent is nurtured, voices are heard, and opportunities for growth are accessible to all.

This commitment also reflects Sustainable Development Goal (SDG) 8 – Decent Work and Economic Growth, as we strive to provide fair employment, skills development, and long-term career progression for everyone in our workforce.

#### Celebrating Our Values in Action

In July 2024, we hosted our first Annual Values Awards Ceremony, bringing together more than 120 colleagues from across the business and our field teams. These awards recognised individuals who consistently live our values in their work, strengthening our culture and inspiring others to follow their lead.

#### Listening to Our People

Our most recent employee engagement survey achieved an impressive 91% response rate, showing the willingness of our workforce to share their views. Acting on feedback, we delivered several improvements:

- Performance-Related Reward Policy revised, giving clarity on how achievement is recognised.
- Hay Grading Structure introduced following external salary benchmarking, providing transparency on roles, responsibilities, and progression.
- Pension platform updated with greater flexibility and reduced fees.
- Enhanced benefits, including fleet packages, parental policies, and life assurance.



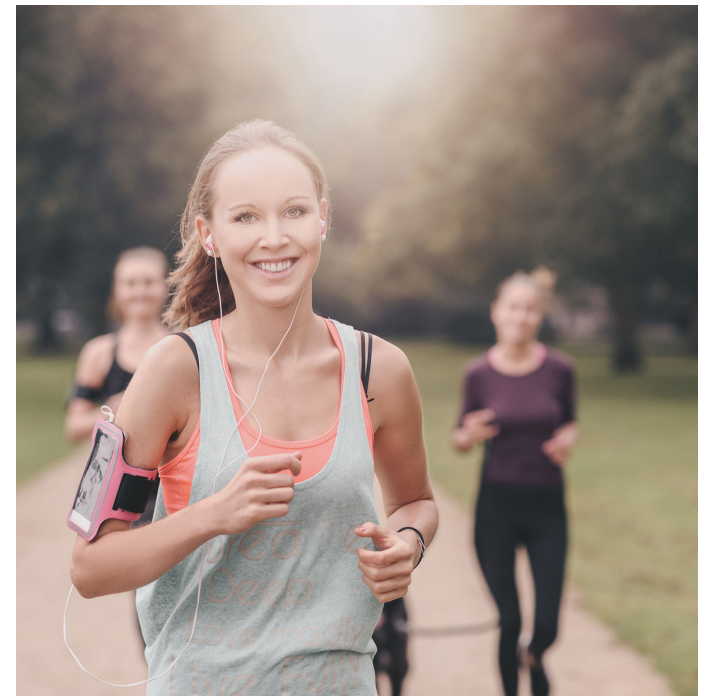
#### Health, Wellbeing & Fair Pay

Every one of our 1,032 colleagues has access to a comprehensive wellbeing programme. Designed through consultation and aligned to the TOMs framework, our offer includes:

- Employee Assistance Programme (EAP) – confidential support for mental, emotional, and financial wellbeing.
- Calm Partnership – tackling mental health stigma and raising awareness, particularly around male suicide.
- Discounted Gym Memberships – encouraging physical health.
- GP24 – 24/7 access to medical advice.
- Wellbeing Days – workshops, seminars, and team activities.
- Mental Health First Aiders – trained employees across the organisation offering frontline support.

We are also proud to remain a Real Living Wage accredited employer, with 100% of employees paid at or above the benchmark. In 2024, we updated our performance-related reward policy to ensure transparency and fairness in recognition.

Alongside fair pay, we are committed to advancing gender equality (SDG 5). We regularly monitor gender pay gaps through remuneration cycles, attrition, and promotions, and are working hard to achieve gender equity in access to training and development programmes.







## Learning and Development

At Ground Control, investing in our people's growth is a key part of our social value. Through Ground Control University, we provide learning for every stage of a career, ensuring that whether someone joins in their first role or as a senior leader, they have a clear path to progress. Our on-demand learning tools and in-house programmes mean skills can be developed anytime, anywhere, empowering our teams to work safely, deliver excellence for clients, and take ownership of their careers.

In the last year, over 200 colleagues have taken part in our GC Academy programmes, building confidence, capability, and leadership skills that benefit both them and the communities we serve. Initiatives like GC Grow apprenticeships, our Graduate Scheme, and Growth Coaches are creating employment pathways, supporting early careers, and unlocking opportunities for underrepresented groups.

### Apprenticeships & Early Careers:

We currently have six early careers apprentices, with another three starting in September. Since December 2024, three apprentices have successfully completed their qualifications including Level 3 Business Administration, Level 3 Safety, Health & Environment Technician, and Level 2 Accounts/Finance Assistant. One of these achievers, Oliver Smith, has progressed from Level 2 to starting his Level 3 Assistant Accountant, demonstrating the clear progression pathways we create six apprentices are currently enrolled, with three new starters in September. Three have already successfully qualified since December 2024, including in Business Administration, Safety & Environment, and Finance.



## Case Studies



### Grady Egington

**Level 4 Arboriculturist apprentice recognised for resilience and dedication.**

Grady joined Ground Control as an Operations Graduate with no prior arboriculture experience and is now excelling in his Level 4 Arboriculturist apprenticeship. His dedication was recognised when he received a Recognition of Achievement Award for Resilience in the Face of Challenges, nominated by his tutor who said: "Grady has a fantastic attitude to learning and will achieve greatness."

Kevin Slezacek, Head of Arboriculture and Ecology, added:

"We are immensely proud of Grady coming into the industry with no Arboriculture knowledge and taking on the might of a L4 apprenticeship. We have no doubt he will make an excellent consultant in future."

Grady's story demonstrates how commitment, the right learning environment, and tailored support can unlock talent, building the skilled consultants of tomorrow.



### Ben Paterson

**Level 2 Horticulture apprentice, gaining confidence and technical skills.**

Ben works in our Grounds Maintenance team and is studying for his Level 2 Horticulture Operative apprenticeship. His training covers a range of practical skills, from establishing and maintaining soft landscapes to operating tools, equipment, and machinery, all while following strict health and safety guidance.

Reflecting on his journey so far, Ben recalls a standout moment:

"One that stands out I guess is when we were nearing the end of a grass cut and we'd done it perfectly without any mistake, it just felt good in a way."

Ben has also built confidence using equipment, explaining:

"I started last year on the mower for the first time, but now it feels like second nature to use and navigate around the base without forgetting the route."

His advice for new apprentices is simple but powerful: "Be talkative and confident."

Ben's progress shows how apprenticeships can build not just technical skills but also confidence and pride in a job well done.





### Charlotte Lock

Charlotte is undertaking a Level 6 Project Management apprenticeship, building high-level skills in strategic planning, project delivery, and risk management. Her role involves developing detailed project plans, setting objectives, defining milestones, and applying risk controls to keep projects on track.

One of Charlotte's biggest takeaways so far has been seeing how theory connects with practice:

"Since starting my apprenticeship, the thing I have found most surprising is how beneficial I have found learning a piece of theory, or writing a report, on a topic and then a few weeks/months later seeing how that plays out in a real-life situation. For me, this has had a real impact and understanding of why and how things are done, and also how they are adapted to fit real working scenarios."

The experience has also given her clarity about her future career:

"My apprenticeship has allowed me to understand how Project Management works in Ground Control, specifically the IT department, but also how that might differ from my peers who work in other industries or sectors. I've had the chance to learn from other people, and leaders from other industries as well as internally at Ground Control."

Her advice to others considering the apprenticeship route is simple:

"Be organised and give it your all. The more you engage in the learning, the more beneficial it will be to you and your role."

Charlotte's journey shows how advanced apprenticeships can develop leadership skills, industry insight, and confidence, all while delivering real value to our projects.



## Championing Diversity and Inclusion

We invested **385 hours in Equality, Diversity & Inclusion (EDI) training** in 2024/25, strengthening awareness and skills across our teams.

A key highlight was the launch of our **Neurodiversity Network**, set up by a group of employees to create a safe, open space for colleagues to connect, share experiences, and drive positive change. During Neurodiversity Week, colleagues led workshops, guest sessions, and awareness campaigns that have already led to tangible improvements:

- Tailored risk assessments for neurodiverse field employees.
- Workplace adjustments and technology aids to remove barriers.
- Safer, more inclusive working environments.

Aaron Haydon, Senior Technical Support Analyst and one of the network's creators, shared:

"Technology can be a real game-changer for neurodivergent people. The right app, AI software, or workflow tweak can remove barriers and give someone the confidence to thrive."

These efforts were recognised externally, with Ground Control being **Highly Commended for Wellbeing Campaign of the Year at the National Highways Northwest Region Health & Safety Awards**.



## Encouraging Underrepresented Groups into Careers

We are committed to breaking down barriers and inspiring young people from underrepresented groups to explore careers they may not have previously considered.

A standout example this year was our involvement in the Basildon Tech Festival 2025, where our Tech and Talent colleagues Hannah Neal, Arabela Silva, Charlotte, and Ruth Havis hosted an engaging session aimed at inspiring young women to consider careers in IT. Through interactive discussions, hands-on demonstrations, and relatable career stories, we helped attendees see the diverse range of roles within technology and the positive impact women can have in shaping the future of the industry.

This initiative not only generated positive PR in the local area but also supported our future IT talent pipeline, reinforcing our ambition to create a workforce that better reflects the communities we serve. By connecting directly with young women in a technology setting, we challenged stereotypes, sparked curiosity, and planted the seeds for future STEM careers.



# Championing Inclusive Employment for Individuals with Special Needs

## Inclusive Employment for SEND Young People Roy Candlin, Account Director, Maintenance Division

In 2017, Roy Candlin recognised the barriers facing young people with Special Educational Needs and Disabilities (SEND), with only 6% entering employment nationally. With Ground Control's support, he partnered with Employeesordshire College to create a hands-on, person-centred employability programme.

### Building Skills Through Practice

The programme replaces classroom learning with practical, sensory-led training, from plant identification to machinery handling. It builds confidence, capability, and qualifications.

Wayne – once excluded from mainstream classrooms, now manages an 84-acre commercial site.

Kenny – struggled to stay in class for 15 minutes, but now a qualified apprentice and mobile team member.

### Safeguarding and Protection

The programme embeds daily check-ins, tailored training, and mentoring to safeguard participants, who face higher risks of exploitation.

Accessible modern slavery training ensures learners can recognise risks, understand rights, and stay safe.

Adjusted systems and welfare support reduce vulnerability and build resilience.

### Beyond Employment

Participants also gain life skills, hygiene, travel independence, financial literacy, and communication, supported by active engagement with parents and guardians.

### Scaling Impact

The programme is expanding, with new intakes planned and growing engagement from the Department for Work and Pensions, SEND schools, and community partners.

Roy regularly delivers school outreach sessions, raising awareness and opening up employment pathways.

He also serves as a governor at a specialist SEND college, supporting employability outcomes for over 200 learners annually.

Senior leadership remain strong advocates: Darren Daley, Grounds Maintenance and Client Services Director, personally presented apprenticeship certificates to graduates, underscoring Ground Control's commitment.

### Lasting Change

By focusing on strengths, safeguarding, and wraparound support, the programme is unlocking potential, reducing risk, and creating sustainable futures for SEND young people.

"One of our mottos is investing in people... they're some of the best people I've ever worked with." – Roy Candlin

In recognition of his tireless commitment and the transformative impact of this programme, Roy received the Chairman's Award at our Annual Values Awards Ceremony, the organisation's highest honour, celebrating the difference his vision and dedication continues to make.



It's been great to help and support individuals diagnosed with the likes of autism, ADHD or any other form of learning difficulty. It can seem like society was against them, but I am proud to have helped give them career opportunities with Ground Control.  
– Roy Candlin

# Engagement in Schools and Inspiring Young People

Inspiring the next generation is a core part of our social value delivery. Our people regularly volunteer their time to connect with young people, share their experiences, and provide practical insight into different career paths.

• **Beauchamp School** – speed networking. Hannah Neal our Talent Acquisition Business Partner delivered small group presentations to students, providing a personal and informal space for them to ask questions and explore career possibilities. This approach builds trust, encourages open conversation, and helps students see the real-life pathways available to them across our head office and operational teams.

• **Askham Bryan College** – Mock interview support. James Dudding our Senior Contract Manager for our Infrastructure business represented Ground Control as part of our commitment to National Highways, engaging with young people in the areas where we work. These sessions not only fulfil our client obligations but also strengthen community ties and create awareness of career opportunities in infrastructure, environmental services, and related sectors.

Through these activities, we are building connections, opening minds to new career possibilities, and laying the groundwork for a skilled, motivated, and locally rooted workforce.

## IMPACT SUMMARY







# Our Impact by Theme

## 5.2. Growth (Supporting Growth of Responsible Regional Business)

At Ground Control, growth goes hand in hand with responsibility. We measure success not only by the contracts we deliver but by the standards we uphold, protecting people, strengthening our supply chain, and building trust with every partner. Under the TOMs framework, this commitment sits within "Growth, Supporting Responsible Regional Business", ensuring that as we grow, we create shared value for our communities, clients, and supply partners.

### Strengthening Governance Through Accreditation

In 2024/25, we successfully recertified our ISO 9001 (Quality Management), ISO 14001 (Environmental Management), and ISO 45001 (Occupational Health & Safety) standards. These globally recognised accreditations reaffirm our commitment to quality, sustainability, and safe operations.

We also passed our Arboricultural Association annual audit, demonstrating industry-leading practices and ethical standards. Together, these audits and certifications reinforce operational integrity, strengthen client confidence, and ensure Ground Control remains a trusted partner of choice.



## Case Study: Strengthening Our Modern Slavery Response

### Investing in Modern Slavery Prevention in our Supply Chain

Building on the progress of 2023, we invested £63,297 in initiatives to strengthen modern slavery prevention across both our local and global supply chains. This included:

- Supply chain mapping and enhanced contract management
- Targeted training for employees and field teams
- New requirements for every supplier to sign our Supplier Code of Conduct or demonstrate their own equivalent

As a result, 97% of employees and 85% of field teams have now completed modern slavery training.

### Partnership and Recognition

A cornerstone of our approach is our ongoing partnership with Unseen UK, a leading charity dedicated to eradicating modern slavery. Together, we deliver training that equips colleagues to spot risks, escalate concerns, and create safer working environments.



Our commitment has been recognised externally, with Ground Control shortlisted for two categories at the 2024 Unseen Business Impact Awards, including an individual nomination for our People Director, Claire Amison, for her leadership in driving meaningful change.

### Embedding Safeguards Across the Supply Chain

- In 2024/25, we expanded protections by:
- Training managers, supervisors, and frontline teams to recognise red flags
  - Establishing accessible reporting channels for employees and suppliers
  - Strengthening due diligence and ongoing supplier monitoring
  - Strengthen our risk assessment and audit processes.

This ensures modern slavery considerations are embedded in everyday decision-making, safeguarding both our people and partners.

In 2024, Ground Control expanded operations into the Republic of Ireland, extending our modern slavery risk management strategy to this new region. Partnering with Sodexo through the Ireland Modern Slavery Council, we are committing to uphold the highest standards, aiming to set a benchmark for ethical practices across the country.





Real-World Impact

Our training and engagement are already shifting supplier conversations from simple compliance to genuine collaboration on ethical practices. Teams feel more confident in identifying risks, creating a culture of accountability and vigilance.

Looking Ahead

We will continue to:

- Deepen partnerships with expert organisations
- Enhance supplier engagement and reporting mechanisms
- Invest in long-term initiatives that raise industry standards

Through consistent action, collaboration, and investment, Ground Control is playing an active role in tackling modern slavery and protecting vulnerable individuals across the communities and industries we serve.

Building Client Trust – World-Class NPS

- Our commitment to ethical growth goes beyond compliance. In 2024/25, our Net Promoter Scores (NPS) ranked world-class, proving that responsible business practices are not only the right thing to do but also build loyalty, trust, and long-term partnerships.



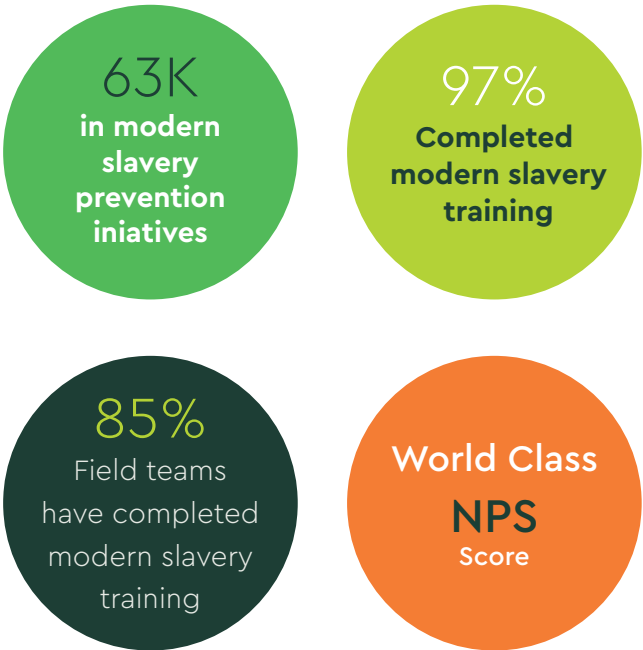
Why This Matters

These outcomes show what responsible growth looks like in practice:

- Safety prioritised every day by our people.
- Ethical working standards embedded across our supply chain.
- Environmental sustainability integrated into governance.
- Client trust earned through consistent delivery of excellence.

By combining internationally recognised standards, ethical safeguards, and stakeholder trust, Ground Control continues to grow as a responsible business, creating long-term value for people, partners, and communities.

IMPACT SUMMARY



Our Impact by Theme

5.3. Social (Healthier, Safer and More Resilient Communities)

Volunteering Hours

As part of our EverCare commitment, every employee is given two dedicated volunteering days each year to make a difference in their local communities. In 2024/25, we set ourselves the ambitious goal of doubling our volunteering efforts — and we exceeded it. Together, our people dedicated 1,534 hours to a wide range of causes, including:



Nature & Conservation – tree planting at Wildfell, Devana, and schools nationwide; bumblebee surveys and training with the Bumblebee Conservation Trust; habitat restoration with Essex Wildlife Trust, St Nicks Nature Reserve, and the Chalkstreams Project.

Community & Social Impact – volunteering at foodbanks (Billericay, Collier Row), rehabilitation centres, community gardens, and schools; supporting children's charities such as 4Louis (memory boxes), YMCA, and local sports clubs.

Education & Outreach – careers talks in schools, Girlguiding and VE Day celebrations, supporting college green weeks, and stewarding events such as the King's Garden Party.

Special Projects – Crisis at Christmas, creative tech events, supporting military veteran employment initiatives (Project RECCE), and fundraising at community festivals.

Supporting the RNLI – beach cleans, fundraising walks, charity collections, and volunteering days across the UK.

These hours reflect our team's dedication to making a difference in our communities, supporting a range of activities from environmental conservation to social support services



# Case Study: RNLI

## Honouring Simon Wiggins through Fundraising for the RNLI

In 2024, our Maintenance Division embarked on a year-long campaign in memory of colleague, Simon Wiggins, who sadly passed away. To celebrate his life and honour his wishes, the whole division united in fundraising and volunteering for the Royal National Lifeboat Institution (RNLI), a charity Simon himself chose before his passing, inspired by their lifesaving mission and his cherished seaside holidays with his sons, Lewis and Lucas.

## Nationwide Fundraising & Volunteering

Colleagues across Ground Control came together in extraordinary ways, taking on monthly challenges and local events that combined fun, fitness, and community spirit. Their efforts raised over £25,000, which was pound-for-pound match funded by Ground Control, bringing the total contribution to over £50,000 for the RNLI.

### Highlights included:

- National hikes and walks, stopping at RNLI lifeboat stations.
- Physical challenges such as a 126-mile indoor cycle, a 50km rowing challenge, and a run equivalent to the length of the M25.
- Local fundraising events ranging from car washes and quiz nights to sponsored silences and bingo sessions.
- Volunteering at various events, supported by Ground Control's initiative giving colleagues two paid days each year to take part in volunteering activities of their choice.

Alongside raising funds, these efforts spread awareness of the RNLI's vital work and strengthened bonds across teams.

## A Lasting Legacy

Simon's legacy has been honoured in lasting and meaningful ways. His family, colleagues, and the Wells-next-the-Sea RNLI crew gathered for the unveiling of a plaque in his memory, and Ground Control made a donation to Exmouth's Launch a Memory lifeboat, where Simon's and his sons' names are proudly displayed.

As Katherine Smith, who led the initiative, reflected:

"When Simon nominated the RNLI as our Charity of the Year, he gave us a way to keep his spirit alive. Over the past year, it has been both an honour and a privilege to fundraise, volunteer, and unite behind a cause that meant so much to him. It has shown us what's possible when colleagues come together to do good."

Through this campaign, we honoured a colleague, supported a life-saving charity, and demonstrated the power of community at Ground Control.



# Match funding

## Match funding & Donations

This year, Ground Control deepened our commitment to community impact, supporting over **20 charities, community groups, and employee-led initiatives** through donations, match funding, and sponsorship. Together, we contributed **£28,468.29** in matched funding and donations amplifying the difference our people make in the causes that matter most.

### Key Highlights

- **Health & Research** – Supporting Essex & Herts Air Ambulance, Cancer Research, Action Medical Research, Crohn's & Colitis UK, and Young Lives vs Cancer.
  - **Youth & Local Groups** – Sponsorship of Tree Council programmes, 1st Great & Little Plumstead Scouts fireworks display, **Basildon Striders**, and Tingley Athletic FC.
  - **Community & Social Impact** – Contributions to **Billericay Foodbank**, Tesco Health fundraising, Re-Engage (supporting elderly groups), New Hope (homelessness support), and the London City Mission Christmas Appeal.
  - **Major Campaigns** – Over **£50,000 raised for RNLI** as our Charity of the Year, alongside ongoing sponsorship through the Tree Council. (see case study)
  - **Employee Fundraising Support** – Match funding marathons, cycling challenges, charity boxing, half marathons, abseils, and more — backing colleagues' personal fundraising journeys.
- These efforts reflect more than financial support, they represent our commitment to **health, equality, the environment, and local resilience**, strengthening the communities where we live and work.





## Case Study: Supporting Billericay Food Bank

At Christmas 2024, our L&D Team and Reception joined forces to make a real difference in our local community. Using their volunteering days, the team supported the Billericay Food Bank, helping to bring some much-needed relief during the festive season.

Through a Head Office-wide campaign, colleagues donated over 50 bags of food, which were collected and distributed by the Food Bank Manager to families in need across the local area.

To maximise impact, we also utilised our Match Funding Scheme, contributing an additional £1,000 donation to support the charity's ongoing work.

This initiative demonstrated the power of teamwork, generosity, and our EverCare spirit in action.

### IMPACT SUMMARY



## Case Study: Our Partnerships

### Partnerships Creating Impact for Communities, Nature, and Our People

At Ground Control, we believe the strongest impact comes from working in partnership. By collaborating with leading environmental and community organisations, we not only support nature recovery and local resilience but also give our people meaningful opportunities to get directly involved.

### Partnering with The Tree Council

As one of the first companies to join the Tree Council's Tree Partner Programme, we've been at the heart of projects that connect people with nature. Over the past year, Ground Control together with other fellow Tree Council Partners have:

Supported the planting and care of 3,375 fruit trees and hedgerows in 57 schools through the Orchards for Schools programme.

Helped 26 community groups and schools plant and care for 812 trees and 6,017 hedgerow whips, engaging 595 volunteers to nurture them for years to come.

Contributed to the planting and care of over 10,200 trees and hedgerows, with more than 2,000 volunteers getting hands-on in their local communities.

Dedicated 1,200+ employee volunteering hours through Tree Council initiatives.

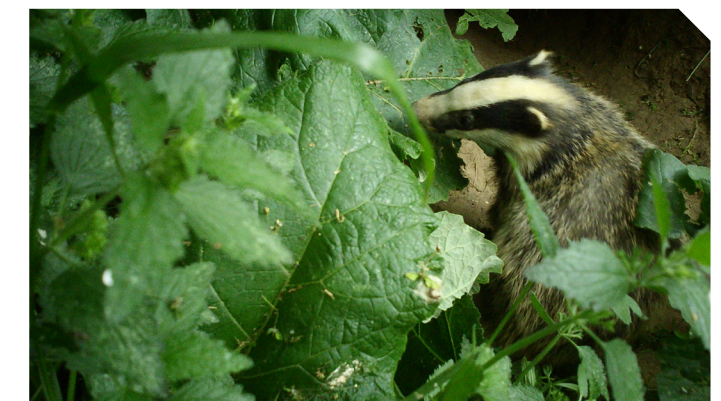
These projects don't just leave a lasting legacy for the environment – they create opportunities for our people to connect with nature, give back, and build stronger ties with the communities where they live and work.

\*stats taken from Tree council 2024/25 impact report

### Partnering with Essex Wildlife Trust

We are proud to have achieved Platinum Membership with Essex Wildlife Trust, a recognition of our ongoing commitment to protecting wildlife and habitats. This partnership provides our employees with opportunities to volunteer at nature reserves and discovery parks, helping to preserve local biodiversity while learning new skills and deepening their connection to the natural world.

Through these partnerships, we are proving that responsible business is not just about what we give, but about how we engage our people to be part of the change. Together, we're supporting communities, protecting ecosystems, and inspiring our colleagues to play an active role in creating a more sustainable future.







# Case Studies

## Volunteering with Essex Wildlife Trust

As part of our Wildlife Corporate Membership, a team of Ground Control employees used their EverCare volunteering days to support habitat management at the Langdon Nature Discovery Park.

Over a dozen colleagues from across the business spent the day cutting back trees, brambles, and hedges to create a scallop — a semi-circular clearing that allows scrub, herbs, and grasses to regenerate. This simple but effective conservation technique creates a more varied woodland edge, boosting biodiversity and supporting local wildlife to thrive.

This partnership not only enhances local habitats but also provides our people with hands-on opportunities to learn, connect with nature, and contribute directly to conservation outcomes.



## Case Study: Bumblebee Conservation at Wildfell

In 2024, Ground Control partnered with the Bumblebee Conservation Trust to host a training day at our Wildfell site in North Essex. Led by expert Clare Alley, the session combined indoor workshops on bumblebee ecology and identification with practical fieldwork, where colleagues applied their skills through the BeeWalk survey methodology.

The event equipped our people with the knowledge to recognise and record species, contributing to national monitoring efforts. It also built confidence and awareness around the importance of pollinators in supporting biodiversity and climate resilience.

By working with specialist partners like BBCT, we create opportunities for our people to learn, volunteer, and actively protect nature, strengthening both our impact on the environment and our connection to it.



## IMPACT SUMMARY



- 1,534 volunteering hours dedicated to conservation, community, education, and social impact projects.
- £28,468.29 in matched funding and donations to charities, community groups, and employee-led fundraising.
- 20+ charities supported, spanning health, equality, environment, and local resilience.
- £50,000 raised for RNLI, our Charity of the Year, in memory of colleague Simon Wiggins.
- Hundreds of employees involved in foodbank support, tree planting, bumblebee surveys, careers talks, sports sponsorships, and creative fundraising.





# Our Impact by Theme

## 5.4 Environment (Decarbonising and Safeguarding Our World)

### Feature page: Verified On track to Net Zero by 2038

Ground Control is proud to share its continued progress on the journey to net zero by 2038. Our latest Business Carbon Assessment (BCA), independently verified to BS EN ISO 14064-1 and the GHG Protocol, confirms that in 2024/25 we achieved:

- 15% reduction in total carbon emissions (tCO<sub>2</sub>e)
- 17% decrease in emissions intensity ratio (per £m turnover)
- Achieved despite 74% business growth since our baseline year (2020/21)

This demonstrates that we are successfully decoupling emissions from growth, showing it is possible to scale responsibly while driving down environmental impact.

### How we achieved it

Progress has been delivered through practical actions across all scopes:

- Expanding our electric fleet and rolling out battery-powered tools.
- Holding contractors accountable for sustainable waste management.

- Optimising routes and logistics to reduce fuel use and emissions.
- Embedding sustainability requirements across the supply chain (Scope 3).

### Looking Ahead

Our science-based, verified targets commit us to:

- 90% reduction in Scope 1 & 2 emissions by 2030
- 42% reduction in Scope 3 emissions by 2030
- Net zero across the value chain by 2038
- Sustaining at least a 90% reduction through to 2050

This achievement shows what's possible when sustainability is embedded at every level of a business. By aligning growth with responsibility, Ground Control is proving that purpose and performance can thrive together.



Dr Annaelle Hip Kam M.Sc. PhD, Sustainability Scientist of Tunley Environmental, comments:



It was a real pleasure working with Ground Control on their Business Carbon Assessment. Their active engagement throughout the process reflects a genuine commitment to environmental responsibility and reducing their carbon impact.

### 100% Renewable Power Across All Sites (excluding services offices and rental units)

In 2024/25, we reached a major sustainability milestone: every Ground Control site is now powered entirely by renewable energy.

From our Head Office ("GCHQ") to leased depots, serviced offices, and long-term rented spaces, we have overcome the complexities of different contracts and ownership models to ensure a consistent green energy supply.

This achievement demonstrates our commitment to reducing our carbon footprint and shows what's possible when determination and innovation come together. By making the switch across our whole estate, we are leading by example in the transition to a low-carbon future.



### Passenger and Commercial Fleet – 100% EV by 2030

#### Driving the Transition to Electric

Ground Control is committed to achieving a 100% electric fleet by 2030, and we're well on our way. Today, 97% of our passenger fleet is already electric, with the remaining transition expected in the near term.

While the shift for commercial vehicles is more complex, particularly where longer ranges are required, we continue to expand electric options across the fleet, ensuring our people have the right tools for the job while keeping sustainability at the core.

To support this transition, we've also installed 1978 EV chargers for our customers this year as well as installing new EV charging units at our key sites, Wildfell and Leeds, making it easier for both colleagues and customers to choose greener transport options.

Alongside our own fleet journey, our growing and diversifying Energy Solutions (GCES) business is supporting other organisations on their path to Net Zero by delivering clean energy and charging solutions. This directly contributes to SDG 7 – Affordable and Clean Energy, by enabling wider access to reliable, low-carbon power.

By expanding infrastructure, broadening access, and working in partnership with our customers, we're helping accelerate the wider move towards low-carbon mobility and energy use.





# Tree Planting & Biodiversity Progress

In 2020, we set ourselves ambitious goals to grow our business while making a positive impact on the environment. A central part of this commitment was to plant 1 million trees by 2025. We are proud to share that we surpassed this milestone two years early, and today have planted more than 1.3 million trees.

This year, as part of our next million trees goal, we set a target to plant 200,000 additional trees. While we didn't quite reach that number, we are proud to have planted 130,000 trees in 2024/25, further enhancing biodiversity, supporting carbon capture, and restoring habitats across the UK.

This progress has been made possible through:

- The Evergreen Fund – financing community-led planting projects nationwide.
- Client partnerships – working together to design and deliver greener landscapes.
- Employee volunteering – thousands of hours dedicated to planting trees and shrubs in local communities.

Our work doesn't stop here. We remain committed to driving nature-positive outcomes, supporting innovative projects such as the award-winning Commonwealth Forests, and aligning our efforts with our net zero 2038 target.



In 2020, Ground Control launched the Evergreen Fund, a bold pledge to donate 5% of net profits each year into projects that restore landscapes, enhance biodiversity, and build a sustainable future. Since its establishment, we have invested circa £5.5 million, with additional loan funding to accelerate the creation of our flagship nature recovery centres Wildfell in Essex and Devanna in Cambridgeshire.

Alongside carefully selected investments in businesses aligned to our sustainability mission, the Fund has focused on transforming degraded farmland into thriving biodiverse habitats. Through land management, woodland planting, hedgerow creation, and ongoing ecological monitoring, these sites have become landscapes of recovery for nature and people alike.

## Five-Year Impact Highlights

- 1 million+ trees planted — surpassing our original target two years early.
- 296 acres protected and restored at Wildfell.
- 550+ biodiversity net gain units created across two thriving habitat banks.
- Ongoing carbon sequestration and biodiversity monitoring embedded.
- 15+ strategic partnerships driving long-term ecological and social impact.
- New education centre at Wildfell, inspiring future generations.

Securing the Future: Landmark Conservation Covenant

In 2025, the Evergreen Fund achieved a major milestone: Wildfell Habitat Bank was awarded Conservation Covenant (ConCov) approval, with wildlife charity Plantlife acting as the Responsible Body.

This legally binding agreement ensures permanent ecological protection and management of the site, providing developers purchasing Biodiversity Net Gain (BNG) units with complete confidence in their long-term integrity.

In addition, both Wildfell and Devanna have been certified under Plantlife's Standard for Biodiversity Improvement, an annual audit process running for a minimum of 30 years. Together, these achievements provide some of the most robust, high-integrity BNG units in the UK.

As Chris Bawtree, Nature Recovery Director, reflected:

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"This marks a significant milestone in our BNG journey and demonstrates the transformation of these landscapes into connected, thriving ecosystems. Developers can now access competitively priced, legally secured, and ecologically robust biodiversity units with confidence."



Continued from page 29

With new habitat banks in the pipeline and expansion plans across the UK and Ireland, the Evergreen Fund continues to grow as a pioneering model of corporate-led environmental investment.

Five years on, the Fund has delivered real impact for nature, people, and climate resilience. But this is just the beginning, as we scale further, our mission remains clear: to restore habitats, protect biodiversity, and leave the environment in a better place for generations to come.

## Celebrating Excellence in Sustainability & Biodiversity Conservation



### 2024 Pro Landscaper Business Awards Sustainable Company of the Year Ground Control WINNER

Celebrating alongside the best in the landscaping and maintenance industry, Ground Control was awarded 'Sustainable Company of the Year' at the 2024 Prolandscaper Business Awards.

Winning 'Sustainable Company of the Year' reaffirmed our ongoing commitment to sustainability and biodiversity as one of the first 1000 UK B-Corp, and shows the impact of significant developments at the Wildfell Centre for Environmental Recovery.

Ground Control was also highly commended in the 'Design Studio of the Year' category on the back of a Silver-Gilt-winning partnership with the Bumblebee Conservation Trust.



### 2024 Essex Housing Awards Biodiversity & Nature Wildfell WINNER

Ground Control's Wildfell Centre for Environmental Recovery won the "Excellence in Biodiversity Conservation and Enhancement" award at the 2024 Essex Housing Awards. Whilst the awards themselves are well established, the 2024 ceremony was the first time biodiversity and conservation enhancement had been recognised in this way, with Wildfell being the award's inaugural winner.

The Essex Housing Awards recognises high-quality developments, services and individuals from the public, private and voluntary sectors and promotes best practice across the county.

## Achieving our Goals for 2024/25 Driving Even Greater Impact

To ensure we continue making a bigger difference year on year, we set ourselves ambitious goals for 2024/25. Here's what we set out to achieve, and how we performed:

Goal (2024/25)	Target	Result	Outcome
Double Volunteer Hours	1,500 hours	1,534 hours	Target exceeded, colleagues dedicated time to conservation, community and social impact projects across the UK.
Boost Battery Equipment Usage	+20% usage year on year	Achieved	Continued transition to battery-powered tools across sites, reducing emissions and noise while supporting greener operations. Currently circa 40% DE and 26% FT equipment is battery-powered (no increase this year) showing progress but highlighting that there's still work to do
Fully Electric Passenger Fleet	100% EV fleet (where feasible) by March 2025	97% achieved	Near full transition, with remaining vehicles scheduled for replacement significant milestone on track for 2030 100% EV goal.
Enhance Matched Giving	£20,000 matched funding	£28,468	Target exceeded employee fundraising amplified through WeCare, supporting 20+ charities and community causes.
Massive Tree Planting Initiative	200,000 Trees	130,000 trees	Short of target, but significant progress made toward "next million trees" goal, enhancing biodiversity and carbon capture.

By setting stretching goals, we pushed ourselves to go further. We not only surpassed targets in volunteering and matched giving but also made strong progress in our transition to EVs, battery-powered tools, and large-scale tree planting. While not every target was fully met, our achievements demonstrate momentum, commitment, and impact with lessons learned shaping even bolder goals for the years ahead.

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This year has been a landmark for Ground Control. We're on track for net zero by 2038, surpassed our volunteering and giving goals, and delivered real impact from 1,500+ hours in communities and 130,000 new trees planted, to a 97% EV fleet and 100% renewable energy across our sites (excluding services offices and rental units). These achievements show that when purpose drives performance, growth and sustainability go hand in hand. Together, we're building a business that delivers lasting impact for people, nature, and the planet."

Brian Smith, Head of Business Development



# EverCare Team



Amanda Manning



Brian Smith



Cat Benson



Chloe Muirhead



Javier Roig



Philip Trehern



Natasha Kyriakou



Daisy Staff

# Goals for 2025/26

We have made an amazing impact this year, but we aim to achieve even more in the coming year.

Our ambitious targets for 2025/26 include:



**Volunteer Hours:** Increase our volunteer hours to 1750. We believe in the power of giving back, and this increase will allow us to support even more community projects and initiatives.



**Boost Battery Equipment Usage:** Increase the use of battery-held equipment on site by 20% year on year. This transition to more sustainable tools will reduce our carbon footprint and promote eco-friendly practices across our operations.



**Fully Electric Vehicle Fleet:** Achieve a fully electric passenger vehicle fleet wherever feasible by 31st March 2025. We plan to capture this milestone in creative ways, showcasing our commitment to sustainable transportation and inspiring others to follow suit.



**Enhance Matched Giving:** Achieve £30k in matched giving via WeCare this financial year. This increase will amplify the impact of our employees' charitable contributions, allowing us to support more causes and initiatives.



**Massive Tree Planting Initiative:** Plant 100,000 trees as part of our next million-tree goal. This ambitious target, based on trees purchased, reflects our dedication to environmental conservation and our ongoing efforts to combat climate change.

These goals represent our commitment to continuous improvement and our drive to make an even greater impact in the year ahead. Together, we can achieve these targets and further our mission of using business as a force for good.



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