



Social Value Report

Explain Market Research





Social value 2025/26
Let us Explain...



At Explain, being socially conscious is embedded in how we work and who we are. Through the nationally recognised TOMS framework, we have built a clear, evidence-based understanding of the positive impact we create across our three pillars: contributing to inclusive economic growth, strengthening our communities, and operating in a more environmentally responsible way.

Our baseline measurements reflect how we support local employment and diverse supply chains, how our people invest time, skills and resources into community projects and future talent, and how we are beginning to map and manage our environmental footprint across emissions, travel and internal business practices.

This year, we have created a Socially Conscious working group and we now have the insight needed to drive meaningful progress. Our focus moving forward is to turn measurement into action, ensuring Explain continues to create lasting, measurable impact across the economic, social and environmental pillars that underpin our socially conscious strategy.

We are... explain



Data Team

We have an in-house team of data analysts who ensure the delivery of understandable, insightful, and actionable results which are underpinned by high-quality and reliable data. The team has expertise in SQL, Python, VBA, statistical analysis and data modelling and visualisation, including PowerBI.



Explain

Explain is a full-service research agency with specialism across quantitative, qualitative and digital methodologies and has been delivering insight since the 90s. We are based in the Northeast of England and deliver projects nationally. We have a client satisfaction score of 4.7/5 and constantly strive to surpass client expectation. 90% of our business is repeat, a testament to the quality and value we deliver.



Annual Growth

We are growing, year on year. We were recognised as one of the Fastest 50 growing companies in the Northeast of England in 2023.



MRS Company Partner

We are a Market Research Society (MRS) company partner, upholding the integrity of our industry, and ensuring a best practice approach to all client delivery.



Social Value

Social value is a pillar of our business strategy. We are committed to delivering social value through project delivery, and work to the principles of the TOMS national framework.



Insight Hub

We have an in-house Insight Hub of over 40 CATI telephone agents and insight agents. This team deliver over 2,700 outbound research telephone interviews per week, as well as supporting the project team across project administration and delivery.



Ethical Best Practice & Quality Assurance

We are committed to ethical best practice and quality assurance and hold a range of accreditations, such as ISO9001, Cyber Essentials and ICO Membership, and are Crown Commercial Services Suppliers. As a business, we are proud to be Living Wage Employers.



Qualitative Researchers & Facilitators

Our project team comprises of our own in-house team of qualitative researchers. Our qualitative team have strong research backgrounds with vast experience of facilitating qualitative research with customers, stakeholders, and seldom heard groups, covering topics that are complex, technical, and sensitive in nature.



Online Communities

We have a purpose-built and insight-led online community platform which was first pioneered in 2009. The community platform enables our clients to engage with their customers, stakeholders, and other groups of interest in a secure online space. Our online community is owned, developed, managed and moderated by Explain.



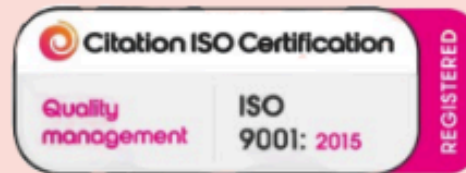
Organisational Structure

All projects are Partner led. We have a clear organisational structure, with a skilled and expert team of over 25 researchers and analysts. Our team specialises in the design of research programmes that lead to the delivery of actionable insight for our cross-sector clients.

Our accreditations



Certifications &
Compliance



Certificate No 189512021



Crown
Commercial
Service
Supplier



Professional
Memberships



The
Consultation
Institute



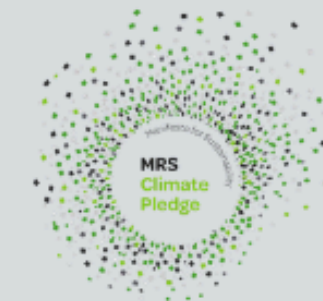
Evidence
Matters™
Company Partner



Fair
Data™



Social responsibility &
Workplace Standards



The Explain socially conscious team



Holly



I'm accountable for delivering our socially conscious strategy and sharing the positive impact Explain has on society, through the people we employ, the work we do and the way we do it.

Becca



I lead on company culture, looking for ways to positively contribute to the health and happiness of our team. I joined the social value working group to extend this work into our local communities.

Laura



I help Holly with the delivery of our socially conscious strategy, providing admin support and demonstrating the work we've done through the development of our social value report.

Graeme



Joining a socially conscious team extends my HR focus and allows me to put people, wellbeing and the local community impact at the heart of what we are aiming through the lens of social value and Explains commitment to it.

Pauline



I joined the socially conscious group because I am passionate about sustainability and the environment and I want to do my part in both my personal and professional life.

Stanley



I joined the working group because I'm passionate about making a difference beyond our usual day-to-day work and I'm keen to be a part of our positive contributions to the community.

Kelly



I joined to be a part of our social value team as it means more than just doing a job; it's about collective action to drive community impact and ethical progress. Focusing on broader benefits such as economic, environmental and social impacts rather than just profit.

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What is social value?



Impactful

Social value refers to the wider non-financial impacts of our work on communities, the environment, and society.



Varied

Social value includes economic, social, and environmental benefits.



Creating change

Social value goes beyond profit. It's about creating positive change through responsible business practices.

Social value is about the positive difference our business makes beyond just financial performance. It's about how we contribute to society — through supporting local communities, reducing environmental impact, and promoting fair and ethical practices.

Why it matters?



Our clients and partners expect us to deliver more than just excellent research — they want to see meaningful social impact. Demonstrating social value differentiates us in competitive tenders and positions us as a responsible, trusted agency. It also helps us create a positive workplace where people want to work.

Our Socially Conscious areas of focus

Socially Conscious Group Objective



Economic



Local people employed or retained, spend with local companies and SMEs in the supply chain



Social



Support for local community projects through volunteering (pro bono projects and charitable giving).

Support for students at local education institutions.



Environmental



Reductions in scope 1 & 2 CO2 emissions through decarbonisation.

Reductions in car miles from a green transport programme.

Reductions in plastics used

To make a positive impact on society—economic, social, and environmental—through the people we employ, the work we do, and how we do it.



Why we chose the TOMs model



Converts social value activity into financial metrics

TOMS assigns financial proxy values to social, environmental and economic activity. This allows organisations to express social value in financial terms.



A standard framework for measuring social value

The TOMS model provides a national, standardised approach for organisations to measure, quantify, and validate the social value they create. It does this through a structured set of Themes, Outcomes and Measures.



Widely adopted and interoperable across public sector frameworks

Developed with UK local authorities, the TOMS model is now a widely used and trusted model for procurement, contract management, and organisational measurement. It is designed to align seamlessly with major frameworks helping ensure integrity, and comparability.



Our Social Value Measures





Summary of social
value measures for
2025/26

Economic	Local people employed or retained
	Spend with local companies in the supply chain
	Spend with local SMEs in the supply chain
Social	Support for local community projects through volunteering (pro bono projects) Support for VCSEs through volunteering (pro bono projects)
	Support for local community projects through donations (charitable giving) Support for VCSEs through volunteering (charitable giving)
	Support for students at local education institutions (university talks, etc)
Environment	Reductions in scope 1 & 2 CO2 emissions through decarbonisation
	Reductions in car miles from a green transport programme
	Reductions in plastics used



TOMs Theme:
Economic

At Explain we are committed to supporting the economic growth of the communities we live and work in. In our baseline year of measuring economic social value, we can demonstrate that we have delivered real, measurable value to the local economy.

By championing local employment, we've supported **50 full-time equivalent roles**, generating **£2,286,100** in economic value for our region.

Alongside this, we're actively strengthening resilient, diverse supply chains through local spend:

£7,959.54 with local suppliers, creating **£8,668.28** in social value, and **£274,176.43** with local SMEs, unlocking a further **£300,769.69** in impact.

Together, these outputs reinforce that our operational choices are positively driving economic growth and support our overall strategy objective of making a positive impact on society (economic, social and environmental) through the people we employ, the work we do and the way we do it.





Outcomes and Measures:
Economic

Theme	Outcome	Reference	Measure	Unit	Proxy	Delivered	Value delivered (£)	Date
Economic	Creating local employment opportunities	NT1	Local people employed or retained	no. of people FTE	£45,722.00	44.31	2,025,941.82	April 25- Mar 26
Economic	Building diverse and sustainable supply chains	NT18	Spend with local companies in the supply chain	£	£1.09	12,944	14,097.42	April 25- Dec 25
Economic	Building diverse and sustainable supply chains	NT19	Spend with local SMEs in the supply chain	£	£1.10	372,915.69	372,915.69	April 25- Dec 25





TOMs Theme:
Social

Our commitment to strengthening communities continues to generate meaningful, measurable impact.

The latest TOMS-aligned outcomes demonstrates that through targeted investment in local initiatives, we contributed **£6,937.59 directly into community projects**, helping build resilience where it matters most.

Alongside this, our people dedicated **60 volunteer hours**, creating **£1,048.80 in social value** supporting the organisations that hold our communities together.

We also invested in the future workforce by providing **13 hours of skills-based support** to local students, **generating £227.24 in value** and helping young people gain confidence, insight and experience that will shape their career pathways.





Outcomes and Measures:
Social

Theme	Outcome	Reference	Measure	Unit	Proxy	Delivered	Value delivered (£)
Social	Building resilient communities	NT28	Support for local community projects through donations	£ invested	£1.00	6937.59	£6,937.59
Social	Building resilient communities	NT29	Support for local community projects through volunteering	no. staff volunteering hours	£17.48	60	£1,048.80
Social	Developing skills and experience for future work	NT8	Support for students at local educational institutions	no. staff volunteering hours	£17.48	13	£227.24



TOMs Theme: Environment

As part of our Socially Conscious Working Group, the Environmental Subgroup has set out a clear ambition: to fully understand, calculate and ultimately reduce Explain's environmental footprint across our people, operations and supply chain. This year represents the beginning of that journey.

Our priority has been to build a robust, evidence-based environmental baseline, to support this assessment, we have adopted the TOMS Environmental Measures as our framework for understanding the areas where our activity contributes environmental value. Central to this is the establishment of our carbon emissions baseline across scopes 1, 2 and 3. Our total emissions for the year stand at 35,900 kgCO₂e, made up of:

Scope	Emissions (kgCO ₂ e)
Scope 1	0
Scope 2	500
Scope 3	35,400
Total	35,900

Using the TOMS environmental measures as our structure, our baseline spans key areas of future impact:

- Decarbonisation (NT31 & NT31a): Establishing baseline data for scope 1, 2 and 3 emissions, enabling us to build targeted reduction pathways
- Sustainable Transport (NT32): Mapping current car-mile usage so future savings through green transport initiatives
- Plastic Reduction (NT87): Measuring current plastic consumption levels to inform reduction strategies aligned





Toms Theme:
Environment

Alongside carbon emissions, we have assessed our travel behaviours to support future measurement under NT32. As part of our Sustainable Travel Plan, we conducted a staff travel survey in September 2025 to understand commuting habits and opportunities for reducing transport-related emissions.

The survey showed that most colleagues travel to work by metro or on foot, with buses and trains also well used. Car travel remains the third most common commuting method, and this insight has informed a focused effort to reduce reliance on personal vehicles. To support this, Explain introduced a Corporate Nexus Metro Pass scheme, enabling employees to save on metro travel while encouraging greener, lower-carbon commuting choices. Approximately one third of the team also have the option to work from home, reducing commuting emissions further and supporting a more flexible, sustainable approach to working.

Although there is no improvement to report yet, with this being our baseline year, the work undertaken now is key. It ensures that future reductions are traceable and evidence based.

With our baseline now in place, we're ready to move from understanding to action and to measurable, meaningful environmental impact.





Our Outcomes and Measures:
Environment

Theme	Outcome	Reference	Measure	Unit	Proxy	Delivered	Value delivered (£)	Date
Environment	Restoring our climate and improving air quality through decarbonisation	NT31	Reductions in scope 1 & 2 CO2e emissions through decarbonisation	tCO2e	£252.11			
Environment	Restoring our climate and improving air quality through decarbonisation	NT31a	Reductions in scope 3 CO2e emissions through decarbonisation	tCO2e	£252.11			
Environment	Restoring our climate and improving air quality through transport	NT32	Reductions in car miles from a green transport programme	Miles saved	£0.07			
Environment	Transitioning to a regenerative economy	NT87	Reduction in plastics used	kg	116.52			





Summary of social value Themes, Outcomes and Measures (TOMs) for 2025/26

Theme	Outcome	Reference	Measure	Unit	Proxy	Delivered	Value delivered (£)	Date	
Economic	Creating local employment opportunities	NT1	Local people employed or retained	no. of people FTE	£45,722.00	44.31	£2,025,941.82	April 25- Mar 26	
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Environment	Transitioning to a regenerative economy	NT87	Reduction in plastics used	kg	116.52				£2,603,751.60

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Our Social Value Journey and Ambitions



Our big moments

2025/2026

White Ribbon Bake Sale



Team Huddle



Celebrated Pride



Seven Stories



Newcastle Eagles W Club



Three Peaks



Our big moments

2025/2026

Kielder Half Marathon



Breast Cancer Awareness



NUFC Foundation



1% profits distributed to charities



MRS Inclusivity Pledge



Blue Monday



2025-2026

Culture Club

Events, charitable donations and pro bono work

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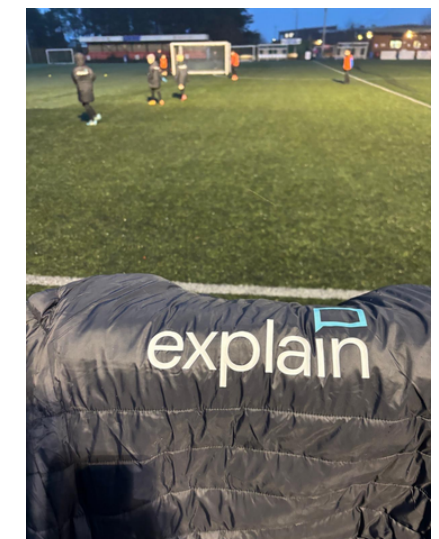
seven stories
National Centre for Children's Books

community association

st. anthony's
here for you



James' Place
PREVENTING SUICIDE. PROVIDING HOPE.





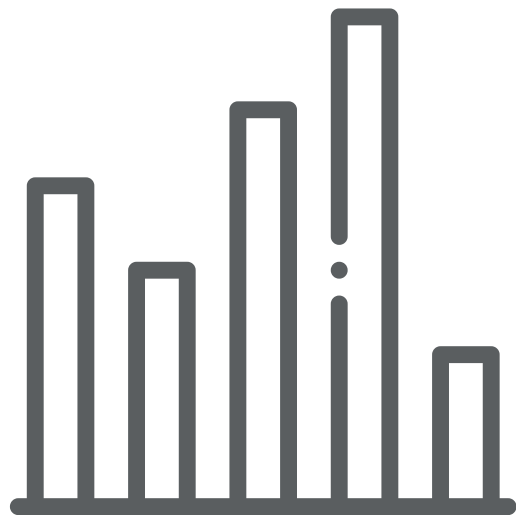
Our Social Value

Internal impact





Key employee survey stats



Overall stats

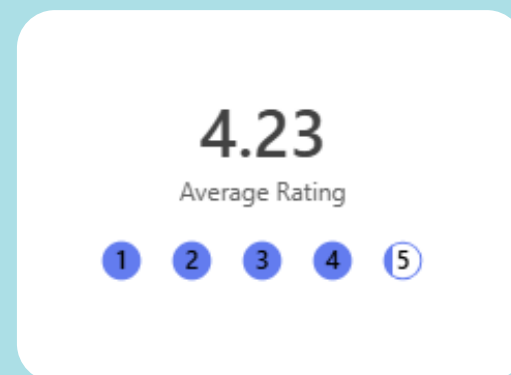
Employees feel they have received enough training to undertake their role, and have the equipment / resources needed to do their job well (4.1)

Line managers provide the necessary support to succeed in roles, as well as colleagues being helpful and supportive (4.3)

Employees feel explain actively supports diversity, equality and inclusion initiatives (4.1)

Culture Club

Overall, how much do you value the contributions of culture club in making Explain a positive work environment (1 not at all valuable to 5- very valuable)



Most common theme: keep doing what you're doing!

Our team

"I have loved working for Explain over the years and its feels like a family and a great team vibe. I am proud to work for Explain. It is amazing to see how far the company has come over the years and how much we have grown. Thank you Kim, Holly, Becca and Emma for all you do for us and leading by example and being excellent role models. (You four are my inspirational woman) ."

"I really appreciate Explain's flexibility in supporting me to work in a way that suits me and my personal circumstances, and being given opportunities without feeling under pressure."

"I feel valued and well supported by manager. I also think this updates on company performance shared by Kim are really helpful. I think Explain are forward thinking and try and provide the best for us employees. "

"I am very happy working at Explain. I feel valued and supported at all times. Being an employee at Explain has given me the opportunity to have a great balance in my personal life outside of work."

"I think Explain has a pro-active approach to supporting its Employees, certainly compared to previous places I have worked, I think being a Living Wage employer is really important. I think the new IH structure has been really important. "

"I have been here many years and intend to be many more (as long as you will have me). Great team, management are lovely, approachable and supportive both work related and personal. Feels like a family."





Explain agreed to be part of the Nexus Corporate Scheme. These tickets are provided as a benefit to support employees' daily commuting needs, allowing financial savings while also encouraging the use of public transportation and thus reducing carbon emissions.

NEXUS Corporate Scheme

"The Nexus scheme has been a great addition for me. Work takes care of the payment through my wages and I no longer have to worry about remembering to buy a weekly ticket. It's very easy to use and I haven't had a single issue with it"

"I went on the Nexus travel scheme because I use the metro to commute into work daily, so in 2025 I paid for the regular yearly season ticket. I became aware of the nexus travel scheme during this time, so when my regular POP card expired, I moved onto the nexus travel scheme as it works out cheaper for me in the long run– looking at the website it costs £904 overall for the regular 3 Zone POP card and £710 for the corporate 3 zone POP card – saving me £194 by the end of the year"

"For me, the corporate metro ticket just makes life easier. It's handy to have and saves me from missing the metro when topping up my own pop card. Now I don't have to worry about how much I have left on my card, I just know it's there to use. And it saves me money!"



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Our Social Value External impact



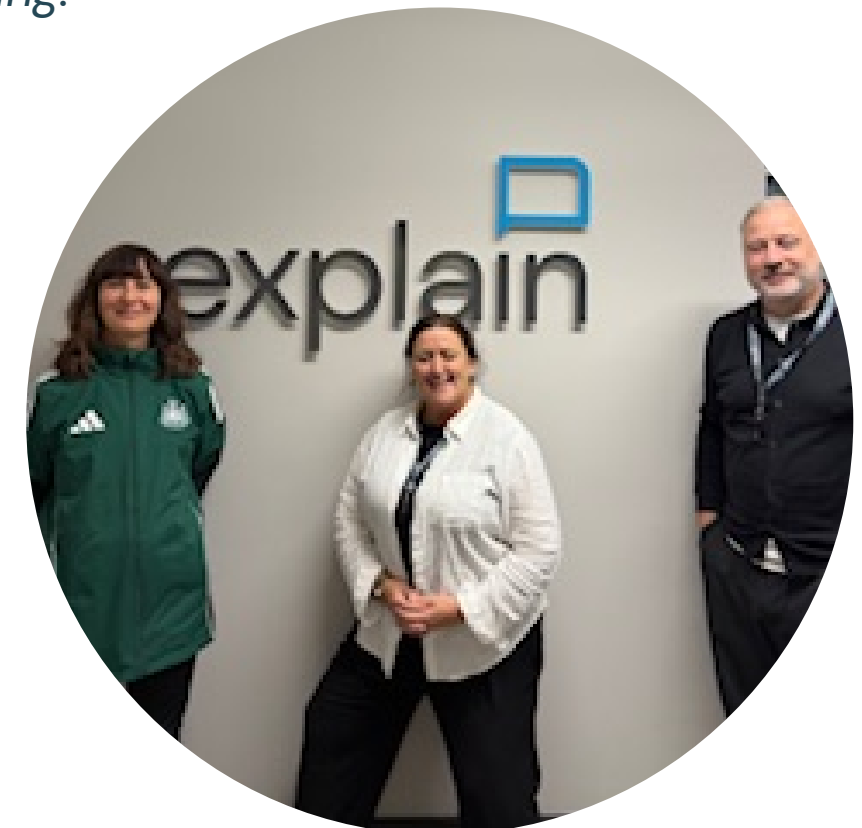


NUFC Foundation

*'The young people left their 'Employability Week' site visit with a much clearer understanding of what market research is and what entry level roles were on offer to them. It was inspiring to hear from Matthew, a former Newcastle United Foundation unemployed young person, who is now thriving in his first job in their contact centre in what he described as a supportive environment. An informative and fun experience for the young people which sparked some interest in working in market research roles. Thanks for the warm welcome into your work place!' **Clare Tucker – NUF Business Network Coordinator.***

'I think the various roles were explained well, and I came out with a good understanding of the jobs in the business along with the different aspects of it. Everyone who spoke was clear and engaging.'

'I enjoyed that it was interactive. I also liked learning about what the company does and the roles that there are.'





Seven stories quote

“Explain undertook the work with professionalism and sensitivity. They translated complex findings into a clear path of action for us which has been instrumental in supporting our decision making of changes that have since been implemented”

seven stories
National Centre for Children's Books





Our 2025–26 Social Value Journey & Ambition for 2026–27



This year has marked a significant step forward in Explain’s commitment to being a socially conscious business. Our strategic aim for the year was to make a positive impact on society (economic, social and environmental) through the people we employ, the work we do and the way we do it.

This year we have created meaningful social value across our economic, social and environmental priorities. Through the TOMS framework, we have built a clear and measurable understanding of the impact we deliver, both within our organisation and across the communities we work and live in. Economically, we strengthened local prosperity by supporting 50 full-time equivalent local roles and directing spend into diverse, resilient local supply chains. Our investment not only created employment opportunities but generated financial value that stays within our region, supporting long-term inclusive economic growth.

Socially, we continued to deepen our contribution to the communities around us. Through donations, volunteering and skills development, we delivered tangible benefits to local people, community projects and future workforces. These activities reinforced our commitment to building stronger, more connected and more resilient communities where opportunity is accessible to all.

Environmentally, this was our baseline year for measurements. We established our first full baseline across Scopes 1, 2 and 3, mapped our resource use, assessed travel behaviours and embedded the TOMS Environmental Measures to guide our future work. This baseline now enables us to move confidently towards decarbonisation, reduced resource consumption and more sustainable working practices, underpinned by our Net Zero commitments.

Looking to 2026/27, our ambition is: to build on this year’s foundations with measurable progress across all three pillars. We will strengthen our economic contribution through targeted local investment, expand our social commitments in the communities we are part of, and also develop our environmental reduction plan, to support lower emissions, reduce waste and embed sustainable transport. 2026/27 will be a year where insight becomes actions.

Impactful



Creating
change



Varied

