



Taking responsibility report 2023

for the environment, supporting
our communities and the
impacts we have





Andy Hughes
Chief Executive

"Let's all Be Wiser On Water, to reduce waste, carbon emissions and make what we all use - and have access to - go much further"

The content of this report has been endorsed by the Chairman of the Board

Our second Environment and CSR Report shows the range of community activities and our continued data gathering on the carbon emissions linked to us, as a business, over the last year.

We've taken a number of additional steps this year and are proud to be on our journey. It's just the beginning of our increased actions to reduce our environmental impact, along with continuing our efforts to encourage others to do the same.

Engaging organisations more with their water, through our work and our 'Be Wise on Water' awareness messaging is delivering for businesses, the public sector and communities. It focuses on water-saving and energy saving, as well as helping with budgeting during the year.

In 2023, we continued our Green World Ambassadorship, that started 2022, to highlight action that can help with water efficiency and protecting this natural resource for the future. We're also proud to be amongst just 30 organisations from the UK that were recognised in the Green World Awards 2023, with a Global Gold for Water Management.

Our teams continue to raise awareness on the importance of taking regular water meter readings. It helps organisations to budget, reduce estimated bills and spot issues earlier, such as a hidden leak.

We saw a significant increase in online, customer provided, meter readings in 2022, and we're now in the top 4 water retailers (out of 11 with 5,000 or more customer supply points), for meter reading market performance, for the year running to March 2023.

In 2022, we launched Volunteering Days for all employees to get involved in. There's been a range of activities around charity fundraising and work to support local communities undertaken. We've also continued to highlight water and energy-saving messages to colleagues, as part of what we do as a business.

Achieving more for the environment, including reductions in carbon emissions and better ways of engaging with natural resources in sustainable ways, involves teamwork, so we continue our work with suppliers and others to achieve more.

At Water Plus, we believe that finding smarter ways with water, along with being more water efficient, is a crucial part of delivering a better environment for everyone.

Our ambition on Net Zero, and the actions we're taking, align with the UN SDGs including: Goal 6, 11, 13, 14 and 15 – and our actions with communities align with Goal 3, 4, 5, 8, 10 and 12.



Action for 2022

Establish additional carbon impact data and work to close data gaps, by encouraging updates each year from supply chain.

Funding 500 more UK trees.
Supporting 3 renewable energy projects preventing CO2 emissions through Carbon Footprint.



Cycle to work scheme introduced.



Engaging with our partners to encourage more action and decarbonisation.



2022

Action for 2023

Reduce carbon by 45% across direct operation .

Funding 225 more UK trees for communities.
Supporting 4 renewable energy projects preventing CO2 emissions, through Carbon Footprint.



Suppliers and customers: Continue engagement and sustainable procurement approach, encouraging annual reporting on carbon linked to what we're supplied.



2023

Action for 2024

Reduce carbon by 30% across direct operation .

Suppliers and customers: Continue engagement and sustainable procurement approach, encouraging annual reporting on carbon linked to what we're supplied.



2024

Goal 1

Achieve Net Zero across our operation (by end of 2025) for Scope 1 and Scope 2.

Goal 2

Explore power from 100% renewables.

Goal 3

Continually reduce impact from staff travel and support alternative modes of transport.

Goal 4

Wholesalers have committed to Net Zero by 2030, under water industry approach (Water UK) and 2040 for Scottish Water.



Electric car scheme to reduce impacts on the environment from staff travel and encourage more sustainable transport use.

Travel booking system calculates carbon impact.



Certified 100% renewable electricity at our main office. Exploring gas reduction with landlords.



We'll reduce water use by 60% in our main office.



Encourage sustainable transport use and electric vehicle use.

E-vehicle charging at main office.



Employee engagement to reduce impacts we can all have at work and outside work.



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Employee engagement to reduce impacts we can all have at work and outside work.

Our ambition on Net Zero and the actions we're taking also align with the UN SDGs including: SDG 6, which is all about clean water, including water efficiency and protecting it for the future; Goal 14 Life Below Water, along with Goal 11 Sustainable Cities and Communities, Goal 15 Life on Land and Goal 13 Climate Action. See our section on what we're doing with communities, later in this report, for details on the other SDGs we're supporting.

2022 highlights



Greener transport options rolled out to employees

Electric Vehicle Salary Sacrifice and Cycle to Work Salary Sacrifice schemes launched in 2022, with 4.4% uptake of greener transport options.

502

tonnes of CO₂e prevented

By supporting UK-based Carbon Footprint verified renewable energy projects, including solar, wind and hydropower. Carbon Footprint Ltd retired Verified Carbon Standard credits for the projects, which meet BSi's PAS 2060 guidance on carbon neutrality requirements.



More meter readings saving water

We increased customer provided water meter readings and engagement with their water during the year. A survey found this helped with budgeting, saved water and saved energy.



36% water-saving delivered

Work, including installing water efficiency devices, saved a rugby club 36% in peak time water use. A pilot project, in partnership with United Utilities, fixed leaks and improved water efficiency in 23 schools saving an average 9,655 litres of water a day in each school.



6 national awards for work on water with organisations

Four Green Apple Environment Awards, including Gold for Water Management. Two National Sustainability Awards, including Water Reduction. Green Business of the Year in the British Chambers of Commerce Business Awards, Midlands, Planet Saver category.



525 UK native trees - plus new partnerships

Increasing green canopies for communities and supporting biodiversity. Includes 30 trees for the Birmingham EcoPark, which works with six city schools for pupil visits, plus a school in Cumbria and one in Glasgow. 25 NHS Forest trees were also supported providing benefits for human health and wellbeing.

Additional 2022 highlights

Linlithgow Rugby Club has reduced running costs and cut water use by over 35% by installing water-saving devices, thanks to working with Water Plus.

Water use has dropped by 600 litres on peak use days, from 1.7 cubic metres to 1.08 cubic metres a day.

The club now monitor their water use more regularly to spot issues early and to find other water efficiency steps to take.

Ken Richardson, Club Secretary, said: "There's been a noticeable reduction in water use for the showers and tap areas, adding up to savings on water costs. The funds we would have spent on water bills we can now invest in the club and our facilities.

"More efficient showers, taps and urinals, using less water, is definitely making a difference to ongoing running costs. We're more aware of the water we use and where we use it – and we're looking at how we can recycle water for different uses at the club."

"The support – and water saving advice from Water Plus - has been really helpful, particularly having the water-saving devices installed quickly, efficiently and safely at the club."

Ken Richardson, Club Secretary,
Linlithgow Rugby Club

2023 highlights so far



Sustainability Days delivered at a range of industrial and public sector sites highlighting water efficiency and how better ways with water can save energy and reduce carbon emissions too. Our Key Account Managers have been visiting sites to help customers with bespoke water management plans, highlighting additional water tracking and efficiency opportunities.



25 more NHS Forest trees, supported in 2023, to help support biodiversity - along with providing benefits for human health and wellbeing by providing green spaces.



900+ tonnes of CO₂e prevented in 2023 by supporting Carbon Footprint Ltd verified renewable energy projects, including solar, wind and hydropower, plus projects gaining power from wastewater and drinking water wells in two countries. Carbon Footprint retired Verified Carbon Standard credits for the projects, which meet BSi's PAS 2060 guidance on carbon neutrality requirements. We've also supported Carbon Footprint's prize fund in 2022 and 2023 for the first carbon-free London to New York commercial flight, powered by 100% renewable energy.



A new partnership with the Scottish Association for Marine Science (SAMS) to maximise their work on blue carbon to create a pioneering science-based system for verifying the effectiveness of seaweed in marine carbon capture. We are the first sign-up to their new Corporate Supporter programme in April 2023.



Continuing work with the Food and Drink Federation (FDF). We're supporting the Environmental Leadership category in the FDF Awards 2023, along with sharing water efficiency expertise with FDF members.



Finalists in the Water Industry Awards 2023, for Water Efficiency Project of the Year and Water Retailer of the Year. Our work with developing our people and work with organisations around their water, saw us named Finalists for Customer Initiative of the Year.

We're the only water retailer to be shortlisted in three Water Industry Awards categories in 2023, after being the only water retailer to be shortlisted in three categories in the Water Industry Awards 2022.

Tracking impacts:

Emissions linked to our organisation and action taken

Scope emissions			Carbon Dioxide			Kilowatt hours			Action taken
			Tonnes	per £1m of revenue	per employee	kWh	per £1m of revenue	per employee	
Scope 1	Emissions from gas used at office site		We continue to work towards gaining better data around utility use for our Staffordshire office.						We continue to explore with our landlord options around reducing gas used at office site. Our Scotland office has no gas use.
Scope 2	Emissions from electricity purchase	2021	74	0.10	0.14	322,179	445.87	616	100% certified renewable electricity confirmed through site owners at new office location in Staffordshire.
		2022	182	0.24	0.35	858,212	1,142.98	1,647	
		2023	166	0.23	0.33	857,196	1,172.14	1,691	
Scope 3	Emissions from fuel combustion from staff work travel mileage claims	2020	105	0.12	0.19	400,257	470.00	707	Electric Vehicle initiative launched 2022 to encourage greener transport options by employees, with vehicles arriving with employees during 2023. Communications underway, to increase uptake and engage employees.
		2021	6	0.01	0.01	22,763	31.50	44	
		2022	11	0.01	0.01	25,791	34.35	50	
		2023	18	0.02	0.04	43,539	59.54	86	
	Water wholesalers	2021	79,975 tonnes of CO2e (assuming 95% Return to Sewer on the 196,307,641 m3 water volume supplied Jan 2021 to Dec 2021)						Water wholesalers are working towards targets they have announced around Net Zero. Net Zero Hub due to be established by one wholesaler by Autumn 2023 to reduce operational emissions around water on network infrastructure.
		2022	83,607 tonnes of CO2e (assuming 95% Return to Sewer on the 205,221,721 m3 water volume supplied Jan 2022 to Dec 2022).						

•Of 130 people answering a poll at our All People Update on Teams (10th November, 2022), 56.1% were doing more to limit impacts on the environment (every day) at work and at home (like recycling more, using reusable drinks bottles and cups more etc) and 13.8% were planning to do more for the environment in 2022 and 2023 (like recycling more, using reusable drinks bottles and cups more etc).

Notes on data: Relevant UK energy use includes electricity usage for our England and Scotland offices. In addition, car fuel usage has been calculated from mileage expenses paid, multiplied by the average Conversion Factor for the fuel used. Tonnes of CO2 were converted into kWh using government Conversion Factors for 2022, 2021 and 2020, where relevant. Mileage increased in 22/23 responding to customer needs and requests and more site visits, through Key Account Managers, to help with bespoke water management plans.

Business travel, where staff travel during work as part of their roles, comes under Scope 3 emissions, under the Greenhouse Gas Protocols, as Water Plus do not own a fleet of vehicles. Our baseline year for car mileage and emissions during work travel is 2019/2020. Employee commuting to work also comes under Scope 3 and we're continuing to gather data on this.

Data for use of electricity for the company offices was prepared using estimates of kWh per square foot, converted into CO2 using government Conversion Factors. Data on office site emissions is dependent on what information is provided, as we rent our offices in Glasgow and Staffordshire. 2023 continues to be a data gathering year to help track progress. The numbers in the data table are for the financial year, unless stated otherwise.

Water Plus works to cut down on water waste – and make water that's used go further amongst organisations each year. From 1 January 2022 to 31 December 2022, estimated water loss totalling 976 million litres of water, equalling around equalling 397 tonnes of CO2e, has now been stopped due to Water Plus engagement with organisations, including installing data loggers on water meters (statistic based on water meter readings for water loss). There are 1,000 litres in a cubic metre of water. Estimate based on water loss running for 12 months.

Note: Achieving decarbonisation and Net Zero, which would include Scope 3, is reliant each year on regular data provision on carbon impacts on products and services provided through supply chain to Water Plus along with the various targets committed to and announced by suppliers. See also Water Plus published Group Accounts.



Supporting our communities

At Water Plus, we're a down to earth, straightforward lot, with a passion for providing excellent customer service and making a difference in our community too.

In 2022 we launched a Volunteering programme for employees, so they can choose to do one volunteering day each year.

In 2022, some joined a Careers' insights and workplace skills day for young people in Staffordshire, while others decorated rooms at local mental health charity North Staffs Mind, our employees' chosen Charity of the Year, 2022.

Pink Sisters & Misters is our employees' chosen charity for 2023. Activities to support this will run to the end of March 2024.

As a leading business in the Staffordshire area, we aim to help prepare and support young and unemployed people from the local area to move into, or return to, the world of work. We'll do this by helping them to develop a range of skills and provide experiences which improve their confidence and prospects of employability for the future.

Supporting early and future careers

We are part of a Careers Hub in Staffordshire and a Careers Enterprise Programme, to encourage people into work in the future. Since May 2022, we've welcomed regular pupil visits from Christ Church Academy, in Stone, Staffordshire, visiting our main South Court office in Stoke-on-Trent. They've heard from employees, from different areas and roles, about their careers and tips to consider.

In June 2022, eight staff from Water Plus took part in a Careers Day, delivering sessions to Year 7s on their skills, what's inspired them, why they chose their careers, along with what their roles involve and what their department does.

More on our fundraising and volunteering activities, can be seen on our business social media channels. Plus, we have more information on our website for those looking to join our multi award-winning team:
water-plus.co.uk/about-us/careers.

2022-23 Highlights



In 2022, we received a Workforce Developer Award, for Commitment to People, in the British Chambers of Commerce Business Awards, for the West Midlands region. It recognised our learning resources and approach to growing the skills of our colleagues for the future.

28 Apprentices

2022 was the first full year for our customer service excellence programme, providing National Qualifications in Customer Service for all our Team Leaders and Customer Advisors.

As of June 2023, we have 28 people on apprenticeships, including new apprenticeships in Marketing and IT, Finance and Regulation teams, which started in the previous 12 months.

2022-23 Highlights

In the last year, we set out additional commitments to local communities, where our offices are, and took more steps to support charities by working with our employees. Along with volunteers from Water Plus joining Stoke-on-Trent Pride, highlights include:

Care packs for cancer treatment

A 'Giving Back at Christmas' drive in 2022, to collect items for care packs that Pink Sisters & Misters give to people receiving cancer treatment, was extended to the whole of the charity's fundraising time with us.

Donated items included heat packs, lip balms, hot water bottles, eye brow pencils and other items the charity identify as most needed by people having cancer treatment. Volunteers at Water Plus put together 40 care packs, in July 2023, at Pink Sisters & Misters' offices.

As well as fundraising for Pink Sisters & Misters, we're raising employee awareness on the importance of regular self checks and the routine screening available, while highlighting NHS information and the wellbeing resources we have for all staff. Pink Sisters & Misters will also hold awareness sessions at our offices in 2023.

We have Mental Health First Aiders and, in 2023, all people managers completed Mental Health Awareness and Menopause Awareness training, including approaches to conversations.

Over 130 pupils visit Water Plus

Over 130 Year 8 school pupils have visited our Stoke-on-Trent office, since May 2022, as part of a Careers Hub. Pupils have met staff from areas including IT, Customer Service, Commercial and the Executive team, including the Chief Executive.

We've shared water-saving tips during the visits, such as turning off taps while brushing teeth, to reduce water waste, and reduce the carbon emissions linked to providing water.

Mrs Claire Thomas, Associate Assistant Principal at Christ Church Academy, said: "Pupils who visited Water Plus found it very helpful to learn about different job roles and what it's like to work in a company that has customers all across England and Scotland. It's brilliant that Water Plus have joined the Careers Hub to deliver workshops and visits. It builds interest and curiosity around the world of work that helps young people for the future.

"Most pupils also said they were much more aware of the importance of saving water."

A helping hand for North Staffs Mind

More people received mental health services and support from North Staffs Mind, after our employee efforts last year.

Activities included a raffle, mindful-miles challenge and decorating rooms used for mental health counselling services. We also helped North Staffs Mind with water efficiency tips to reduce utility costs.

Kate Boundy, Chief Executive of North Staffs Mind, said: "Water Plus' support has been invaluable over the last year. It has allowed us to reach out to support many people, of all ages, from across Staffordshire, through our group and 1:1 services. In the last financial year, we supported over 10,000 people – which we couldn't have achieved without the support of organisations, including Water Plus.

"We were delighted Water Plus picked us as their Charity of the Year. Not only did the team get involved in a range of fundraising activities, but our counselling rooms are lighter, brighter and more welcoming as a result of their fantastic work."



Our commitment to communities – and what's ahead

Our CSR activities align closely with the United Nations Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs)

Key ones include Goal 3 - Good Health & Wellbeing, Goal 4 - Quality Education, Goal 5 - Gender Equality, Goal 8 – Decent Work and Economic Growth, Goal 10 - Reduced Inequalities, Goal 11 – Sustainable Cities & Communities and Goal 12 - Responsible Consumption and Production.

We have 18 commitments, which also cover reducing the environmental impact we can all have – and the action we're taking on these commitments is included in this Taking Responsibility report.

Supporting our colleagues

We want all colleagues to enjoy life at work with the flexibility to manage their home, family, and hobbies.

Everyone gets a Birthday day off each year, on us – as well as 25 days' holiday, plus bank holidays. We also provide flexible working arrangements.

We believe health and wellbeing isn't just a nice to have – it's a must have. So, we provide:

- Health Plan and substantial pay if you do become unwell – which grows with your time here.
- Employee Assistance Programme to access 24/7 with support, advice and extra information.
- Free access to fitness training and personal development and wellbeing tools.
- Save when our employees spend with discounts and money back on everyday purchases - plus freebies, including coffee and food items.

See more details and our vacancies at: water-plus.co.uk/about-us/careers.

Recognition for our work with employees and others

Quality & Customer
Experience Forum

Quality & Improvement Team of the Year
Winner 2023



In April 2023, our people development won a Team of the Year award, in The Forum Quality and Customer Experience Awards.

We were shortlisted in 2023 for seven Better Society Awards for our approach with employees, including National Commitment to Skills and Learning, Commitment to Local Community, the Communication and Education Award and the Environment Award.

We were also finalists for three CCA Global Excellence Awards 2023, including Excellence in Skills, Learning and Development and Innovation in Customer Service.

Our approach is also about keeping colleagues connected

We have regular events, quizzes and get togethers so colleagues can connect and get to know each other more.










We are committed to developing our people and provide a range of different learning resources and development opportunities. Plus, we recognise our star performers each month, every quarter - and each year too.

On top of all of this, in October 2021 we received accreditation for one of our training programmes, so our customer service teams now receive a National Qualification in Customer Service. The training is accredited by best practice leaders, The Institute of Customer Service.



Tracking progress against our commitments to the community

 = the commitment is live, or just launched

Environmental		Status
Minimising our impact on the environment	1 Working towards Net Zero (developing a road map and decarbonisation strategy) for our business.	
	2 Promote the use of electric vehicles and greener transport with suppliers and our colleagues including providing a salary sacrifice schemes for cars and bikes.	
	3 Raise awareness of the carbon impact on water and increase water efficiency at Water Plus, and with our customers.	In progress
	4 Continue to work with suppliers to reduce their impact on the environment.	
	5 Reduce single use plastics within our business.	In progress
	6 Reduce waste and adopt zero waste to landfill.	In progress - Our offices are zero to landfill
Social and community		Status
Supporting our local community and helping young people and unemployed into work	1 Eliminate the gender pay gap and increase Diversity & Inclusion in Water Plus and our supply chain.	In progress
	2 Pay the real living wage to our colleagues.	
	3 Promote health and wellbeing for colleagues.	
	4 Provide colleagues with a minimum of one hour a month for learning and development.	
	5 Provide colleagues with the opportunity to volunteer for up to one day per year for our centrally coordinated Water Plus activities.	
	6 Support unemployed and young people into work.	In progress
Business ethics		Status
Process for decision making, reporting and ethical behaviour	1 Eliminate the risk of modern-day slavery from our business and supply chain.	In progress
	2 Mitigate the risk of unconscious bias in our recruitment processes.	In progress
	3 Eliminate discrimination on any grounds and promote equality of opportunity in the supply chain.	In progress
	4 Adhere to regulatory and ethical commitments within our decisions and actions.	
	5 Continued transparency in our tax arrangements and dealings.	
	6 Introduce procurement practices that promote sustainability and ethical purchasing decisions.	In progress



Thank you for reading our report.
See water-plus.co.uk and #WaterPlusUK, on
our social channels, for updates on what we're
doing throughout each year to help reduce
impacts on the environment and to support
communities.

Waterplus

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