

THE  
EDWIN  
GROUP



# Environmental, Social and Governance Report

1<sup>st</sup> September 2020– 31<sup>st</sup> August 2021

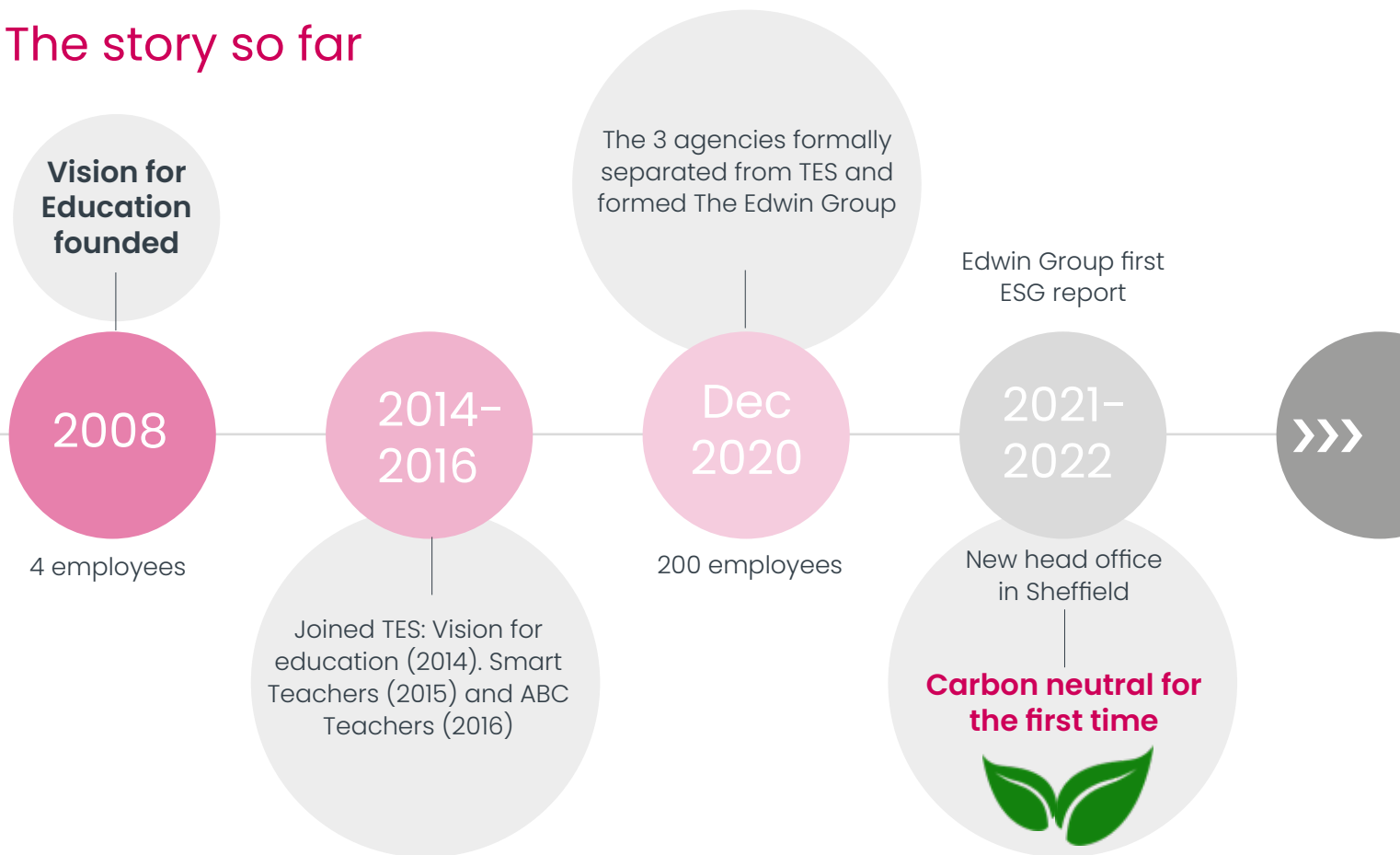


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# About us

## The story so far



## Our Values

### Passionate about learners

Making a difference in education. Proudly putting children and young people at the heart of everything we do and providing opportunities to enhance their learning and experiences.

### Collaborative and responsive

Working in partnership with schools to provide a high-quality service. Being flexible and responsive to changes in their needs and the educational landscape.

### Responsible and fair

Providing a value-for-money, open and fair service. Establishing trust and retaining long-standing relationships with schools and teachers.

### Well-informed and focused

Understanding the current educational climate and challenges that schools and teachers face, to help us deliver a service which meets needs.

### Respectful and open-minded

Treating people as we would like to be treated ourselves – with dignity and courtesy. Welcoming and encouraging everyone who wants to contribute to our business and the world of education.



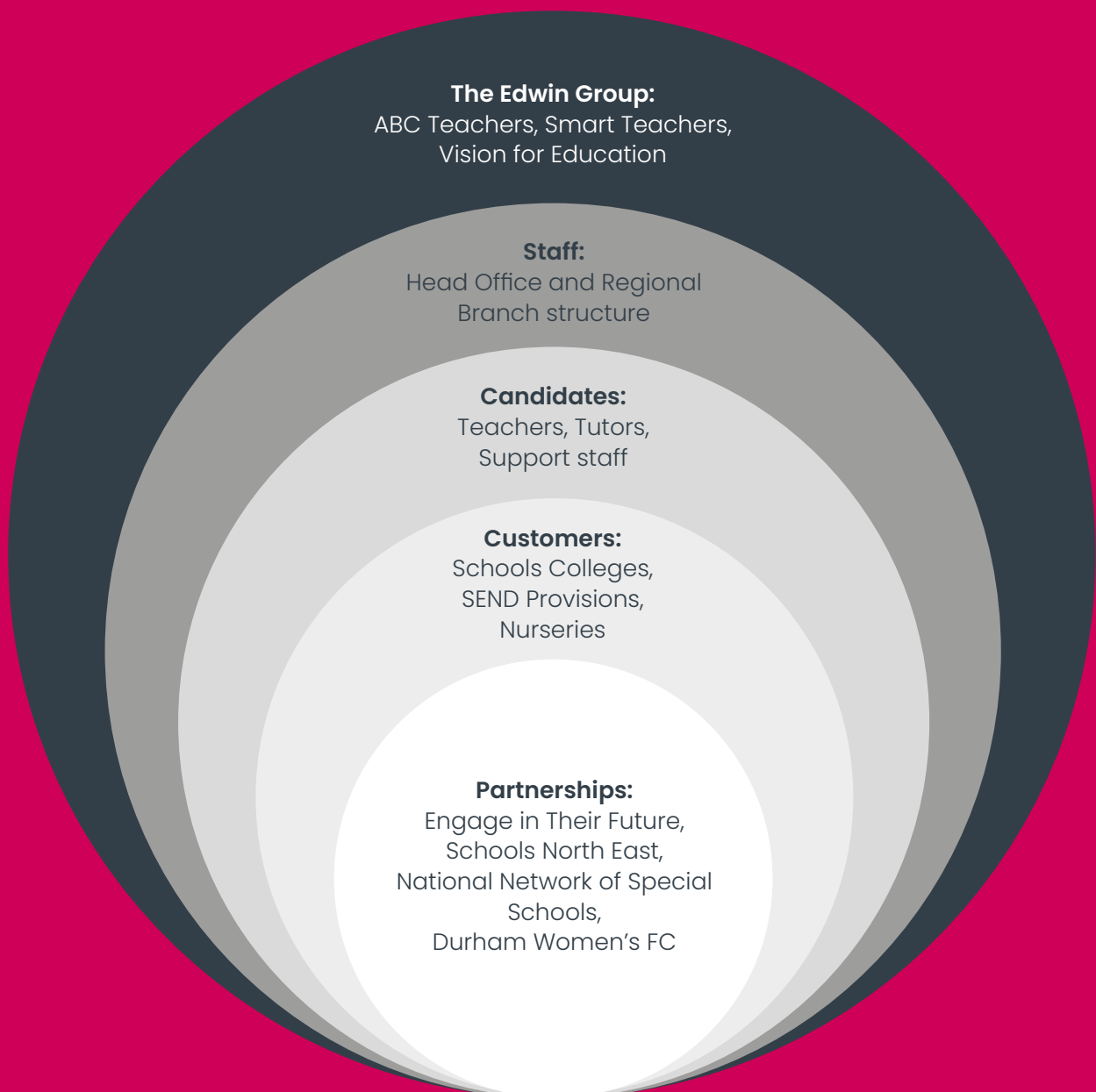
# Stakeholders

First and foremost, our most important stakeholders are the people that work hard for The Edwin Group, day in, day out. In our report we refer to our employees as staff, and the individuals we place on a contract within an education establishment, we refer to as candidates.

We work with a multitude of different education providers, from mainstream primary and secondary schools to Special Educational Needs and Disabilities learning institutions. We recruit the best teachers, teaching assistants, higher level teaching assistants, cover supervisors and other support staff for:

- emergency supply cover,
- short and long-term placements, and
- permanent roles.

We also have many established partnerships that enable us to be a highly professional and forward-thinking company. Partners include training partners that provide specialist knowledge to upskill our candidates and staff and specialist sector groups.



# Message from the CEO

The Edwin Group's individual companies have always sought to contribute to and enhance the communities in which they serve. We have a strong culture focussed on social responsibility and throughout our organisations history we have always taken that responsibility very seriously. Whether that be funding food hampers for children most in need, subsidising school trips, or committing to guaranteed pay contracts to provide stability for our temporary workers. It is our strong sense of community, with a cultural focus on social responsibility, that underpins who we are.

We understand that our strong culture, focussed on social projects, is undermined if the environment and world in which we work is becoming more dangerous, less sustainable, and potentially verging on an existential crisis. We actively seek technological solutions to limit the impact of operations on the environment. We strongly encourage and commit to recycling operations, and are forging ahead with campaigns to mitigate our impact on the environment. We believe carbon neutrality will become the rule, not the exception.

Of course, we know we can do better. Whilst our carbon footprint is relatively low, we nonetheless are determined to ensure that we are carbon neutral in the years to come. We are determined to strengthen Corporate Governance, with the creation of an ESG committee, overseeing this crucial work within The Edwin Group.

Our ESG committee will oversee internal campaigns to further educate and encourage our workforce to make the right environmental choices, not just at work but also at home. It will cement existing strong environmental practice within branches and will particularly look at our supply chain to encourage our partners to do so also.

At the heart of what we do is Education. We will not only look inward to internal improvements but will look outward to the future generation who are, after all, most impacted by the climate crisis. Given our unique position, platform and reputation in schools and educational provisions nationally, we will run campaigns and incentives for schools and young people to encourage the best environmental practice. We see this as a fundamental part of our commitment to support Character Education in schools across the UK.

We have a strong foundation, which will be built upon in the years to come, to play our part in securing a fairer, more sustainable future for ourselves and the next generation we play a part in nurturing.

Liam Roberts

EDWIN GROUP CEO



*"It is our strong sense of community, with a cultural focus on social responsibility, that underpins who we are."*

# Key Statistics



**18**  
Branches

**4,729**  
Servicing Client Schools  
and Colleges

Delivered training to  
**2,700+**  
candidates

**6,937**  
Registered Teachers  
and Support Staff



# ESG Objectives

As we begin on our ESG journey we set out to be transparent and accountable in delivering our ESG commitments throughout the coming year. For a long time, we have conducted our business decisions, not on a basis of arbitrary targets and improving the bottom line, but because it is the right thing to do. Pulling all this together in an ESG report for the first time draws on that ethos that runs through the heart of our business and puts The Edwin Group in a strong position to lead the education supply agency sector.

## Environment

There is no mistaking the important focus on businesses to reduce carbon emissions and to evaluate environmental practices. While our company does not manufacture a product or have a huge environmental footprint, we do have a responsibility to limit the harm we cause to the planet and to be ambassadors for our community partners.

As we grow as a business, we want to do it with an environmentally sound mindset that safeguards the planet, not only through carbon reduction, but through waste management, good recycling practices and continual awareness raising.

We have specifically set ourselves the target to collect more detailed data that helps us create a fuller picture on environmental impact. Additionally, in the coming year we will also raise environmental issues more widely internally, through energy saving campaigns and green driving initiatives.

## Social

The social element of our ESG report centres on putting people at the heart of what we do. Whether it is supporting local schools, training and equipping our staff to deliver quality services or measuring our client satisfaction; everything we do in this area is intentionally and carefully thought through to ensure we are delivering the best for our communities.

The COVID-19 pandemic has challenged the education sector in profound and far-reaching ways. Our social practices meant that The Edwin Group of agencies were on the front line ready to offer candidates to the many schools feeling the pressure of absent teachers; but it is more than that, we supported in every way possible through well-being gifts, fast turnaround times, offering a supportive

ear and even supplying community packages for families in need.

For the coming year we will invest in the well-being of our staff to a greater depth. We are creating internal well-being champions who will be reducing stigma around mental health and working with HR to roll out well-being initiatives. We are also going to improve the tracking and monitoring of some of our social programmes. Specifically, we are going to determine a larger set of diversity demographics of our workforce to help us determine the make-up of the organisation.

## Governance

Our strong governance procedures guide us in delivering the best possible outcomes for the education sector. We continually strive to build on these robust practices and make sure we set the best foundations in good corporate governance, for our staff and candidates who deliver front-line services. In this report we set out our transparent practices and how we endeavour to be leading the sector in high standards of recruitment, safeguarding and due diligence.

As we embed better ESG practices in our organisation, we will set up an ESG Committee who will oversee ESG through our corporate strategy, ensuring we meet targets and commitments. We will start tracking more robust streams of data through the strands of ESG which allows us to benchmark ourselves against other organisations and investigate ways to improve and take action.



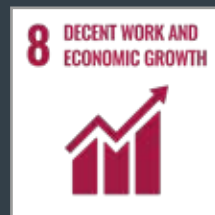
# Contributing to the United Nations Sustainable Development Goals

The United Nations 17 Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs) are our world's call to action on the most pressing challenges and opportunities facing humanity and the natural world. We have carefully considered our business operations and strategy and have aligned to the following 6 goals.



## Goal 3: Good health and well-being

- Ensure healthy lives and promote well-being for all at all ages.
- Through Continued Professional Development training The Edwin Group promotes a holistic approach to caring for children in educational settings and supporting their well-being.



## Goal 8: Decent Work and Economic Growth

- Promote sustained, inclusive and sustainable economic growth, full and productive employment and decent work for all.
- The Edwin Group are supporting all candidate staff through policies and practices to ensure fair pay, regular work and ongoing job support.



## Goal 4: Quality Education

- Ensure inclusive and equitable quality education and promote lifelong learning opportunities for all.
- This is core to The Edwin Groups sole purpose.



## Goal 10: Reduced Inequalities

- Reducing inequalities within countries via income, age, gender, ability, race or ethnicity.
- A significant amount of focus is on supporting SEND children and those with the most barriers to learning through the education system.



## Goal 5: Gender Equality

- Achieve gender Equality and empower all women and girls.
- The Edwin Group supports this goal through equal pay for employees, and through partnerships to raise girls' self-esteem.



## Goal 13: Climate Action

- Take urgent action to combat climate change and its impacts.
- The Edwin Group will prioritise reducing our carbon emissions and raising awareness on how our employees can contribute to our carbon reduction targets.



# Environment

Due to the nature of our business and industry, we can keep our environmental footprint to a minimal level. That said, managing our carbon emissions, disposing of waste responsibly and ensuring our suppliers are aligned to our environmental commitments is high on the agenda for The Edwin Group. Whilst our core focus is to provide first class supply and recruitment services for the education sector; we are highly aware of the influence we can impart by demonstrating our commitment to environmental practices.

The Department for Education has recently established a Sustainability and Climate Change Unit to co-ordinate and drive activity across the sector and is currently preparing a Sustainability and Climate Change Strategy to be published in April 2022. This will be the starting point of a programme of change in guidance, policy and communications to lead and coordinate the education sector towards net zero targets.





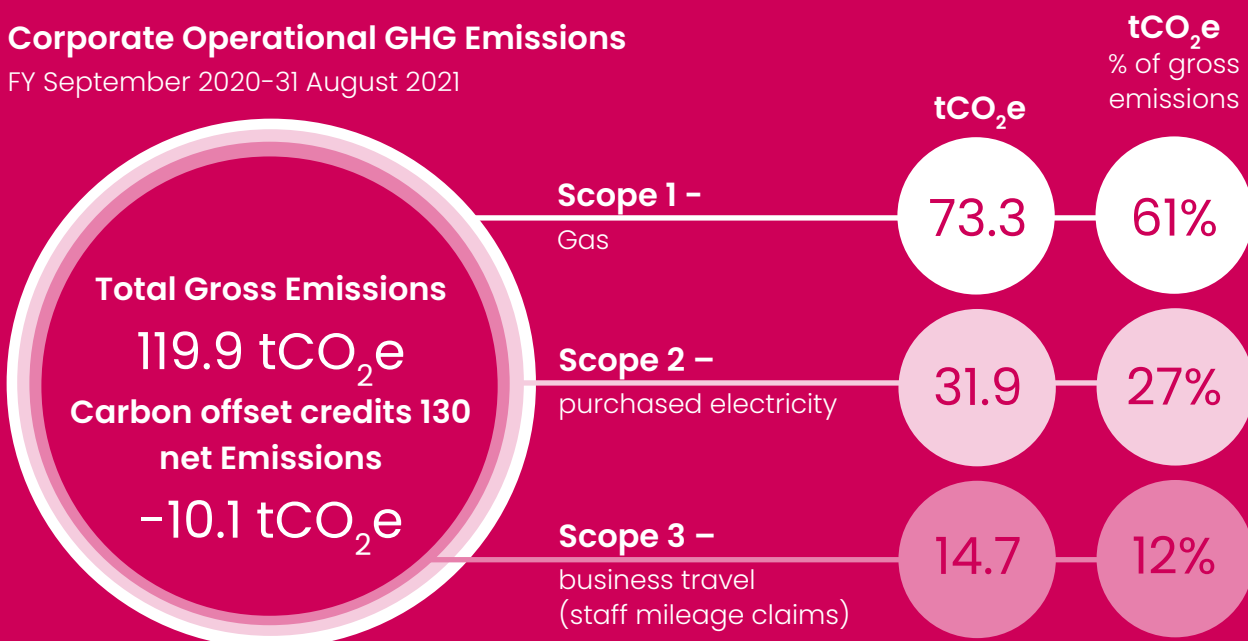
## Getting to Net Zero

As part of our inaugural ESG report, we have calculated our carbon footprint and can now look to develop a carbon reduction plan with clear targets to reduce the direct emissions we produce. In line with the Greenhouse Gas (GHG) protocol we have examined our scope 1, 2 and partial scope 3 emissions. To achieve carbon neutrality for our operational emissions, we have agreed to offset our carbon emissions by investing in avoidance projects which prevent carbon that would have

been released into the atmosphere. This could include renewable energy development or social impact projects which benefits the communities in the vicinity of offset projects, providing employment opportunities, biodiversity and biological habitat conservation, energy access, and access to community health and education services.

### Corporate Operational GHG Emissions

FY September 2020-31 August 2021



## Gas and Electricity Emissions

We have just over 200 staff across our 14 leased office sites, and our utilities of electricity, gas, and water are included in our annual service charges. As tenants we have limited scope to influence the management of our electricity supplies and distribution, as these are managed as a whole site and not split per company within the building. However, where we can make a difference, we encourage staff to be mindful of their energy use in the offices.

Being in multiple tenanted sites means we receive our billing without specific usage data, and we do not know if the electricity we use is renewable or not. In these incidences it is difficult for companies like ours to have accurate and timely data that can be used to calculate precise emissions.

Therefore, applying DEFRA's guidance<sup>1</sup>, to calculate our footprint, we used the gas and electricity data we do have for certain sites and have extrapolated that information against the footprint for each site.

<sup>1</sup>[https://assets.publishing.service.gov.uk/government/uploads/system/uploads/attachment\\_data/file/69282/pb13309-ghg-guidance-0909011.pdf](https://assets.publishing.service.gov.uk/government/uploads/system/uploads/attachment_data/file/69282/pb13309-ghg-guidance-0909011.pdf)



## Transport Emissions

Travelling around schools and education settings is something our consultants do on a regular basis; therefore, staff mileage would ordinarily be a significant contributor to our carbon footprint. However, due to the COVID-19 pandemic, in this reporting period there was significantly less travel as meetings and calls were conducted online.

Looking forward however, we are aware of the need to report on more categories from Scope 3 and will go beyond disclosing staff business mileage to include the emissions produced by all staff and candidates commuting to and from their places of work each day.

14.7 tCO<sub>2</sub>e produced from our staff mileage – which represents 12% of our overall carbon footprint

# Carbon Neutral

Whilst eliminating emissions entirely before the government's 2050 deadline should be the ultimate aim for every business, the first step for us is a commitment to achieving net-zero. This means eliminating carbon emissions as far as possible and then balancing any remaining ones by buying carbon credits to make up the difference.

Our company activities led to the emission of around 120 tonnes of greenhouse gases during the year 2020–2021, however, we will look to offset 130 tonnes to become a carbon negative company, meaning we will remove more carbon from the atmosphere than we put in.

We are working with Sustainable Advantage and South Pole to guide us and facilitate our carbon offsetting initiative. With more than 700 directly owned projects, South Pole delivers measurable certifiable benefits aligned with the aims of the Paris Agreement and the UN Sustainable Development Goals. These projects are certified by third-party organisations such as Gold Standard the Verified Carbon Standard (VCS) to ensure that projects are actually reducing CO<sub>2</sub> emissions, as well as supporting sustainable development.

We have chosen to invest in the Musi River Hydro project in Indonesia, this run-of-river hydroelectricity project harnesses the flow of the Musi River to generate clean energy for the grid. The project supports local jobs, new income streams, and has funded infrastructure improvements – as well as a reforestation program.

## The Project

This grid-connected, run-of-river hydroelectricity plant is built on the upper banks of the Musi River near Sumatra's port city of Bengkulu. By harnessing the kinetic energy of powerful running water, the Musi River Hydro plant has a total-installed capacity of 210 MW and delivers over 765,000 MWh to Sumatra's grid every year – that's enough to meet the demands of over 700,000 Indonesians on average each year!

## The Benefits

This project addresses issues in rural Sumatra such as poor electricity access and the lack of quality employment opportunities – as well as fostering sustainable economic development. The Musi River Hydro plant has created quality jobs and upskilling opportunities for locals in what has been traditionally a farming community. A portion of project revenue is reinvested in the local community, building an orphanage, constructing new roads, bridges, and a traditional marketplace – giving local farmers better access to their rice paddies and the opportunity to pursue additional income. A reforestation program has also been established in the surrounding catchment area to safeguard the natural landscape.



**Gold Standard**

**VCS** | VERIFIED  
CARBON  
STANDARD  
A Global Benchmark for Carbon



## Carbon reduction targets and initiatives for the next financial year:

### Tracking and awareness raising

- Over the coming year we aim to create a companywide environmental policy. The aim of this is to outline our commitment to reduce our impact on the environment. It will provide a framework for tracking consumption levels and set objectives and targets to improve year on year.
- We will start monitoring and measuring specific business activities to understand our actual environmental impact. There are two specific areas where we are going to do this:
  - We will issue a questionnaire to our landlords requesting information about building facilities and utilities to help us gain greater knowledge about the building we operate from i.e. we will ask landlord if electricity supplies are renewable or not.
  - We will also request that staff specify whether their car is diesel or petrol when submitting a mileage claim so we can have more granular detail on our emissions via scope 3 transport data.
- As a large proportion of our staff and candidates travel by car each day, we will roll out a “greener driving” campaign. This will promote effective behavioural practices and tips to save fuel, money and help fight climate change.

## Waste management

Our waste is minimal because we provide a service and do not physically produce a product. The waste we do generate is managed for us as part of our service charges in all our offices, which are multiple tenanted, so we are not able to specifically measure our own waste disposal. However, we are responsible for, and conscious of, waste generation.

In 2020-21 we implemented an operational change to our candidate services which meant we have significantly reduced the amount of paper produced. On a weekly basis we would print, pack and post invoices, statements, payslips and p60 statements. All of this is now electronically distributed. Previously we produced an excess of 3,500 paper items weekly and close to 180,000 paper items a year, these have now been eliminated from the waste stream.

## Waste reduction targets and initiatives for the next financial year

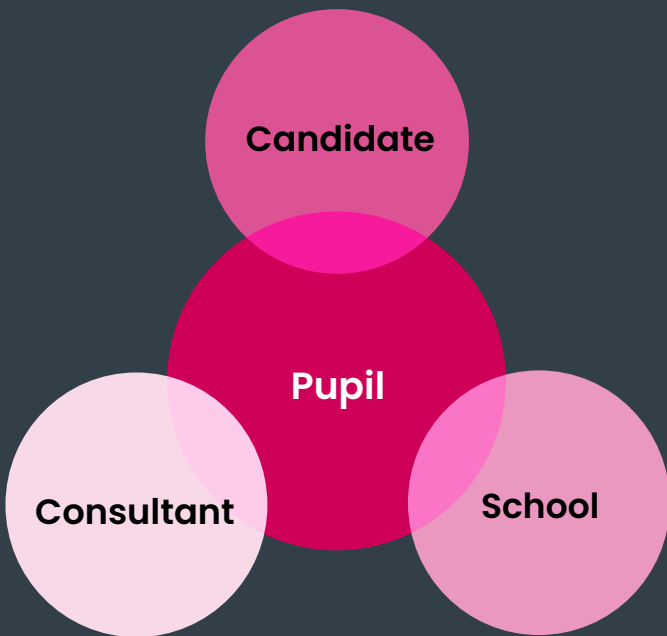
We have identified opportunities to recycle more over the coming year. We will source suppliers to clean and remove old data from our laptops so that we can pass them and other hardware items to our schools to distribute to families and community partners.



# Social

## Supporting our employees and candidates

The 'S' part of an ESG report is paramount at The Edwin Group, as people are at the centre of everything we do. We have built a successful business by ensuring candidates are high quality, fully vetted and appropriately placed in the right position within a school. This is achieved by having a wonderful team of dedicated internal colleagues who screen, engage and nurture our candidates, and who also build personalised long-lasting relationships with schools. This tripartite relationship works well in mutual cohesion.



Many of our consultants have trained as teachers or worked in schools themselves, and we encourage consultants to volunteer in their partner schools throughout the year. This collaborative approach means we really get to know our schools. When we place someone in a school, we are making the best possible match for the candidate and the school, so ultimately the placement is a success.

### Policies and practices that guide us

Through years of developing sector specific experience, we consider the following factors a 'must have' to attract and retain the best employees and candidates. While we like to offer incentives and social celebrations, getting the right principles in place to look after, support and nurture candidates and staff is core to our business.

### • **Guaranteed pay scheme**

We understand that, due to the nature of the job, supply teacher pay can be irregular. We all have bills to pay, so if the flexibility and variety of the job doesn't suit an individual's circumstances, we can give candidates peace of mind through our guaranteed pay scheme.

The guaranteed pay scheme offers an agreed daily rate of pay, even for non-working days, until a suitable placement can be found.

We are proud to offer one of the most comprehensive schemes of this kind in the industry.

### • **Fair rates of pay**

We offer fair rates of pay and candidates are paid weekly by our in-house payroll team using PAYE. There is no umbrella company, no hidden charges, and staff get paid on time. Our support assistants are paid at National Living Wage as a minimum no matter what age they are.

### • **Agency Worker Regulations**

At The Edwin Group, we are always working to ensure our teaching and support staff get the best deal possible.

When the Agency Worker Regulations 2010 (AWR) came into force in October 2011, we adjusted our working practices, not only to meet the regulations, but also to protect our candidate's pay and ensure they continue to receive a good supply of work.

The AWR entitles agency workers to the same pay and other working conditions enjoyed by the school's own workers, after the agency worker has completed 12 weeks of service in an equivalent permanent school role. After the 12-week period, candidates are eligible to benefit in the following areas in line with the hirer's own workers:

- Pay (in the case of teachers, teaching assistants and cover supervisors, this means the agency worker's scale rate, as determined by school's pay policy as if they had been recruited directly and NOT that of the staff member they are covering).
- Duration of working time
- Rest periods
- Access to job vacancies
- Access to on-site facilities, e.g., crèche and childcare facilities, canteen facilities, car parking and the provision of transport services.

# Training and development

At The Edwin Group, we offer free Continual Professional Development (CPD) training courses to support candidates in their teaching career and help them stay at the forefront of developments in the industry.

We deliver free CPD training throughout the year, including over holidays and on relevant topics to education. When The Edwin Group launched this, it was not the norm at all, with most companies charging candidates for CPD. As a sector leader we have been able to influence the market, with most competitors now also having to provide their CPD free of charge.

The sessions are designed to be accessible, offered virtually and at various locations. They include courses such as:

- Introduction to supply
- Team Teach
- Safeguarding
- Moving and handling
- Behaviour management
- Developing personal resilience
- Crisis and anger management
- Communication
- Autism awareness

We provide generalised, but also very niche CPD, that candidates might not ordinarily obtain in a school setting. This is regularly reflected in the feedback we receive from our schools around the depth and breadth of our candidates' knowledge.

A quote from one participant can be found below:

**“The CPD offered provided me with further support on topics and issues within teaching which I would personally like to improve on. I now feel much more prepared for my NQT year after partaking in a range of CPD courses that have been offered to me.”**

## Case Study

### Helping ECTs at the start of their career

As part of The Edwin Group's commitment to helping ECTs (early career teachers) entering the profession, we offered ITT (initial teach training) providers across the country a free training and support package.

The package included employability workshops which covered topics such as work options for ECTs, personal statements dos and don'ts and completing your induction. The sessions also included a Q and A slot with our experienced consultants.

Trainee teachers were given the opportunity to take part in mock interview sessions with head teachers. The sessions were a great opportunity for students to practice their interview skills, identify their strengths and areas for development and network with school leaders.

We also teamed up with education leaders to deliver ten online CPD training courses, including sessions on creating reading culture, assessment and foundation subjects.





“ABC has given us some wonderful staff. Two members of those staff are now permanently working here. One will be having a contract for a year. Very happy!”

Liz Mountstephens, Deputy Head,  
CHASETOWN COMMUNITY SCHOOL

“I’ve had an amazing experience working with Vision for Education. My main worry was how long I would wait for a role, but I was never out of one! The staff are very friendly and helpful.”

Clare Morgan,  
PRIMARY TEACHING ASSISTANT

## Feedback

Obtaining regular feedback from our schools and candidates is very important to us as it helps us to:

- assess how we are performing as a service provider and employer
- provide positive and constructive feedback to our candidates
- understand and record which candidates are best suited for our schools and
- identify areas for improvement and development.

### School feedback

To maintain our relationship with schools and educational partners we complete the following quality assessment processes:

- Weekly calls to gain feedback on the candidates we have placed in bookings that week
- Termly face-to-face meetings with our schools to discuss our service and candidates’ performance that term
- A termly online Teacher and Support Staff Survey to gain feedback on candidates who are in long-term bookings at the school
- An annual online School, College and Learning Provider Quality Assessment Survey is sent to schools in June to gain their feedback on our service, candidates, systems and internal staff for that academic year.

### Candidate feedback

We complete the following quality assessment processes with our candidates to ensure they are getting the most out of their placement:

- Daily or weekly calls to gain feedback on how their bookings have gone and provide any feedback we have received from the school
- End of term calls with candidates in long-term roles to discuss how the placement has gone and provide any feedback we have received from the school.
- An annual online Teacher and Support Staff Survey is sent to our candidates in June to gain their feedback on our service that academic year.

## COVID-19 response

The COVID-19 pandemic has challenged us to operate differently, across a significantly accelerated demand in the sector. This is not just true in schools, but in the specialist, education centres and partners we serve.

During the initial period of the COVID-19 outbreak we sent regular internal communications to ensure we kept our staff fully informed of changes in the sector and leadership decisions.

At incredibly short notice our staff were required to work from home. We provided the necessary equipment and rolled out systems to facilitate this change. Incoming calls and emails were overwhelming, with candidates concerned about work and income, and trying to navigate the various government support schemes, all of which placed more pressure on internal staff to deal with the incoming queries.

Once schools closed, the business moved quickly in making decisions to use the furlough scheme to support our candidates and our business. This was a rapid moving situation and at times full details of the scheme were slow to come out, however our commitment was in place.

The Edwin Group SLT came together every day throughout this period to understand the requirements from government and how as a company we were going to implement them, if at all, and assess the financial consequences to the business.

The SLT made the decision that all eligible candidates would be furloughed, which as an agency provider we were not obliged to do, but felt it was entirely the right thing to do to support our workforce, their families, and the wider community. Not only did we decide to operate this scheme, but we did not wait for government grants to be released which would have delayed payments, we made the intentional decision to pay candidates without delay.

Through this time, we kept our candidates well-informed with individual email communication, follow up phone calls, added information on the payslip portal and regularly updated the website.

When the time was right for schools to open, we supported our partners and candidate staff by producing guidance on how to work safely and what considerations to make in taking that step back into the workplace.

## Health and well-being

Well-being of all candidates is hugely important to us. We have a strong collaborative culture, and whilst we are highly principled and driven, the company is also patient, understanding and supportive.

By the nature of our work, offering flexible recruitment placements means that our candidates have autonomy and choice over their working patterns. Year on year our survey results state that candidates enjoy the flexibility that supply work offers them, to better manage their own work life balance and well-being.

In addition to this job structure, we have built our organisation on nurturing relationships, this is a key part of the job role of the consultant staff. Much time is spent with candidates talking on the phone, face to face or having regular check-in meetings.

We offer well-being support for our schools as well. As part of a well-being package, rolled out over the COVID-19 pandemic, we offered a variety of initiatives like; schools to nominate colleagues for a night away (with pandemic restrictions allowing), pizza and drinks to enjoy over training sessions and we offered a CPD well-being course for teachers.



# Diversity & Inclusion

The Edwin Group is incredibly proud of all our employees, and we are a company which firmly believes in fairness, equality, and inclusion. We aim to attract and retain a passionate and diverse workforce that reflects the education community we serve.

## Gender Pay report narrative and key figures

We are committed to paying our male and female staff equally for equivalent roles, but analysis shows that a gender pay gap does exist. However, the pay of our candidates is mainly market driven. For example, over half of our placements are those of teaching assistants or other school support staff. The pay for these candidates is significantly lower than that of teachers. The demographic in the support sector is heavily female, which therefore impacts on our gender pay gap, which is a calculated using all our candidates pay, including teachers and teaching assistants.



We have gathered the gender pay information across each agency in The Edwin Group as follows:

<b>Vision for Education</b>	Our mean hourly pay gap has reduced by 1.5% to 13.2%, which is 2.3% below the national average (15.5% per ONS to April 2020). Our pay gaps by pay bands remain low and in the upper quartile we have even achieved parity. The percentage of staff receiving bonuses remains similar year-on-year, but we have seen a 4% drop in the mean bonus pay gap from 59.2% to 54.9%.
<b>ABC</b>	Our mean hourly pay gap has reduced by 7.6% to parity, which is 15.5% below the national average. Our pay gaps by pay bands remain low, with females in our upper quartile being paid a higher hourly average than males. The percentage of staff receiving bonuses remains similar year on year but we have seen a 24% drop in the mean bonus pay gap from 82% to 58%.
<b>Smart Teachers</b>	Our median hourly pay gap has reduced by 9.6% to 15.9%. Our pay gaps by pay bands remain low, with none exceeding 2%. The percentage of staff receiving bonuses remains similar year on year but we have seen a large drop in the median bonus pay gap from 74.7% to just 4.4%.

Overall, we are pleased with our improvement, and we will continue to do all we can to reduce our gender pay gap even further. In particular, we will try to reduce the gaps in our hourly pay rates and bonus payments by ensuring all our staff have the same opportunities to progress, develop and enjoy a rewarding career.

# Supply Chain Management

Supply chains are becoming ever more complex, and every business has a duty to monitor its supply chain interactions. It is important to understand the environmental, social, and economic impacts of our supplier's services to identify potential risks.

The Edwin Group has a very varied, but relatively small supply chain. Suppliers range from large IT providers to specialised Voluntary Community and Social Enterprises (VCSEs).

It is important for us that we are working with local providers and VCSEs to be supporting community-based specialists in the areas where we work and providing economic advancement for small business owners. For instance, we sometimes employ the services of autism specialists to help with CPD training. The education sector is a mixed nuance of specialisms, and we select well-researched and experienced VCSEs to help us navigate these areas of focus.



## Community support

Our approach to supporting charity and communities isn't done at board level with a ringfenced budget. We believe our consultants are in the best place to offer funds and other support to the schools and community groups they work directly with.

We invest over £200k back into school and community projects each year and here is a mixture of the initiatives our consultants support through this budget:

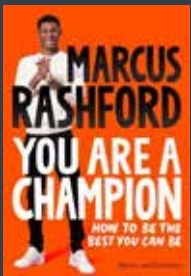
We have a fund called the 'Opportunities Fund' that provides financial support for children to access opportunities that they might be economically prohibited from, including school trips and extracurricular activities.

We offer funds to support attendance, reading and writing initiatives, which schools run to motivate children with rewards and celebrations.

We donate Christmas presents each year to approximately 1,000 children who are most in need. We have even been known to dress up as Father Christmas to deliver them.

We sponsor sports teams, which helps take the pressure off volunteers and families, who run these clubs in their own time, having to do extra fundraising. We will provide financial support to buy new kit, equipment and pay registration fees.

Over the COVID-19 pandemic we recognised that many families were suffering, so to help we donated supplies to foodbanks, donated sanitary products and the children's book "You Are A Champion: How To Be The Best You Can Be" by Marcus Rashford.



# Social targets and initiatives for the next financial year

## Supporting our staff

In the next financial year we are launching a new CRM data base with an accompanying app that will be a one stop shop for all candidate information. Consultants will upload the app with key pieces of information on the candidate's upcoming placement; like contact details, a map, start and end dates. It also has a link to the candidate's pay information, so they have quick and easy access to their personal financial data. Also, to help with two-way communication candidates can enter their availability, so that consultants avoid scheduling in the wrong dates or asking for availability that might clash with a candidate's personal appointments.

## Health and well-being

In the forthcoming year we will be introducing workplace mental health champions. The aim of this initiative is to have an employee led group that will challenge stigma and encourage positive mental health in the organisation. The mental health champions are not intended to replace or duplicate the important role of human resources within the organisation. They work alongside the HR team to create a positive mental health experience at work for everyone and reduce the stigma around this topic.

We are anticipating this will be introduced in December 2021 which will incorporate a well-being committee and champions throughout The Edwin Group.

## Diversity and Inclusion

As we have moved away from our previous conglomerate at TES, we have had quite simplistic HR data management systems. In 2021-2022 we are launching a new HR Information System that means we can add more detail to our employee profiles. As part of this we can seek to better understand the full diversity of our workforce. Currently we can define our employees by gender and age, but we would like to gain a greater understanding of the diversity of our workforce so that we can track recruitment, movement through the organisation, length of tenure, promotions and other key statistic that allow us to manage Diversity and Inclusion fairly and transparently across the company.

## Supply Chain Management

We will create a questionnaire for all new contract agreements across suppliers to request our suppliers

provide evidence of how they implement controls on key human rights issues, like trafficking and slavery and modern slavery. To ascertain if they are taking active steps to manage their own environmental impact and to ultimately create long term value along the supply chain and influence best practice where we can.

We will also start tracking our financial spend with VCSE suppliers so we can leverage our size to bolster local economies and forge innovation.

## Community support

We have always promoted a very open and generous approach to community support, and now we would like to solidify our support for the many community partners we help by formalising our community giving programme. We are going to start tracking volunteering hours and financial donations, and we greatly look forward to sharing this stream of our ESG work with all our stakeholders.



# Governance

Given the nature of our business and our core values of transparency and building trust, it is imperative that we have the right policies and procedures in place to govern us. Our schools and education partners rely on us not just doing the basic checks on candidates, but know we have been thorough, know that we uphold our standards and continually work to build strong partnerships.



The Edwin Group holds the Recruitment and Employment Confederation Gold Standard Award for Safeguarding and general good practice within Education Recruitment. This is something we are extremely proud of and work hard to maintain.

Policies and procedures are periodically reviewed to ensure they comply with current recruitment law and good practice outlined in the REC Code of Practice. We embed them in the organisation through the induction process and regular training.

The REC audit involves evidencing that we comply with the following:

- REC Standards
- REC Code of Conduct
- Conduct of Employment Agencies and Employment Businesses Regulations 2003
- Keeping Children Safe in Education
- Agency Workers Regulation
- CCS Framework Regulations
- Education (Health Standards) (England) Regulations 2003
- Employment Rights Act



## Reference checking

We pride ourselves on both the service we deliver and the amount of attention we take to ensure our candidates are fully vetted. We are committed to safeguarding and promoting the welfare of children and young people and expect all staff to share this commitment.

As a standard, the checks we conduct for every single candidate are:

- Eligibility to work in the UK
- Disclosure and Barring Service (DBS) check
- 10-year work history
- Overseas police check/certificate of good conduct
- Teaching Regulation Agency (TRA) check
- Reference checks
- Letter of professional standing (teachers only)
- Medical check
- Childcare Disqualification Questionnaire (primary school candidates)

## Safeguarding

We take the safety and protection of pupils seriously. Our Safer Recruitment Policy has been produced in line with the Department for Education's (DfE) 'Keeping Children Safe in Education (January 2021) guidance.' It aims to ensure that recruitment and selection processes are always safe and fair.

In line with recent legislation, including the Children Act 2004, and Keeping Children Safe in Education (January 2021) guidance, we take our duty of care for all pupils very seriously.

All candidates are provided with:

- a. The Department for Education's guidance on 'Keeping Children Safe in Education 2020' Part 1 Annex A and Guidance for Safer Working Practice May 2019.
- b. Our 'Code of Conduct', which includes acceptable use policy, staff/pupil relationships and communications, including the use of social media and other related matters.
- c. Safeguarding and Child Protection Policy.
- d. Information regarding the role of the DSL.

Our Designated Safeguarding Lead (DSL) is supported by deputies who are trained to the same standard. Ultimate lead responsibility for safeguarding and child protection remains with the DSL, whose responsibility cannot be delegated. Our DSL and deputy DSLs complete Advanced Safeguarding for DSLs training every 2 years. Additionally, they complete the following online training at least annually:

- Child Protection in Education Level 2
- Safer Recruitment in Education Level 2 and
- Safeguarding Young People Level 2.

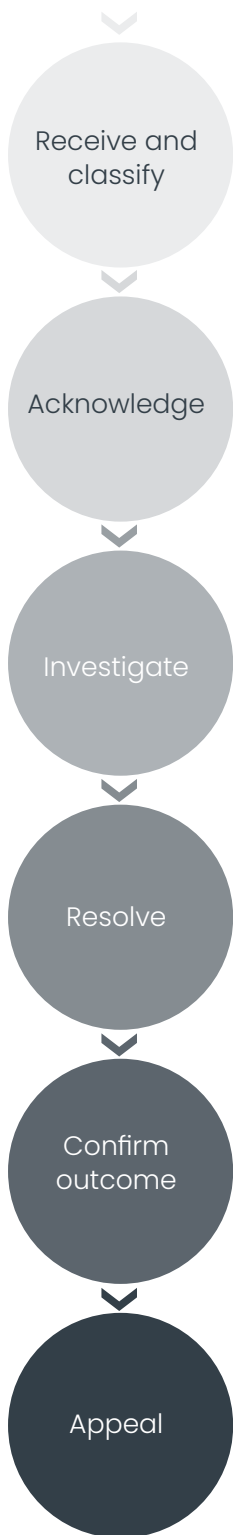
In addition to their formal training, their knowledge and skills are updated via e-bulletins, meeting other DSLs, and taking time to read and digest safeguarding developments at regular intervals, to keep up with any developments relevant to their role.

## Safeguarding during the COVID-19 pandemic

To build upon our existing safeguarding policies we were quick to establish a new policy on safeguarding online over the covid pandemic, where a significant amount of teaching was conducted online. Children and vulnerable adults still face the same risks in an online situation, so our safeguarding controls are still relevant in an online classroom setting. Our teachers, teaching assistants and support workers must still watch for signs of risk, peer-on-peer abuse and follow the procedures to report suspected abuse to the company safeguarding lead.



## Complaints procedure



## Whistleblowing

It is important to the business that any fraud, misconduct or wrongdoing by workers or officers of the organisation is reported and properly dealt with. The organisation therefore encourages all individuals to raise any concerns that they may have about the conduct of others in the business or the way in which the business is run. Our policy - which is publicly available - sets out the way in which individuals may raise any concerns that they have and how those concerns will be dealt with.

## Health and Safety

The Edwin Group is subject to the various regulations under the Health and Safety at Work Act 1974 (Section 2(3)). We have an excellent safety record. We aim to maintain and improve this record, by ensuring all employees are aware of the part they must play to ensure the health and safety of our staff, customers, representatives and visitors.

We are governed in this area by a Health and Safety committee that oversee our management of risks and ensure we are operating good practices.

## Complaint procedure

The Edwin Group is committed to offering the very best in customer service to our supply workers and education partners. We do all we can to try to resolve queries as quickly and efficiently as possible. Should a candidate, school, or anyone we work with have a complaint then we encourage the individual reach out to a consultant to discuss the issue in the first instance, to find a resolution. However, if this does not result in a satisfactory outcome then we have a clear complaint procedure with defined SLAs to reach a solution.

## Modern Slavery Act

We are committed to ensuring that there is no modern slavery or human trafficking within any part of The Edwin Group or in our supply chains. We operate employment policies and procedures that are designed to treat all individuals who work within The Edwin Group with dignity and respect, to reward them fairly for their work and not to exploit them. We comply with all applicable employment legislation, including laws relating to minimum wages and the working time directive.

We only wish to work with organisations that have a similar commitment and are not involved in modern slavery or human trafficking. While it is the obligation of those organisations to operate their own policies and procedures to achieve that objective, we will take reasonable steps to verify compliance where appropriate.

## Privacy policy & Data Protection policy

Due to the nature of our rigorous candidate checks and safeguarding processes we require a lot of personal information about our candidates. We take our candidate's privacy seriously and are committed to keeping their information private.

We have a dedicated hands-on Data Protection Lead and data champions who respond to queries on candidate data. Internal staff complete mandatory training on induction and the Data Protection Lead performs ongoing training and desk drops to ensure all staff are confident on how they deal with candidate and school data and that controls are in place.

## Information Systems and Cyber Security

Our cyber security is guided by the industry-standard Cyber Essentials framework to ensure that all information and information systems on which The Edwin Group depends, are adequately protected from cyber attack. As well as various safeguards within the systems themselves for auditing and data leak prevention, all employees are required to regularly complete cyber awareness training from the market leading Mimecast suite of cyber security products. This learning is then tested with

mock email phishing attempts that offer insights to senior management of the Group's cyber-attack vulnerability. Additionally, all web-facing systems are periodically security tested by third party software and human engineers from S-RM who submit detailed reports with remedial action recommendations upon any vulnerability revealed.

## Committees

We have carefully constructed committees that are in place to guide our leadership, ensure we are transparent and support our corporate strategies. We have placed external members on our committees with the intention to give impartial advice and strong governance across the organisation.

Remuneration committee - The board has a Remuneration Committee to implement its policies and procedures on remuneration, including reviewing and recommending matters relating to the remuneration of board and senior management.

Risk Committee - The Risk Committee is responsible for assisting the leadership in its oversight of risk, reviewing the Group's risk profile and where risk is managed within our policies and practices.

Audit committee - Supporting The Edwin Group's financial cycles, this committee ensure quality audits, that we are managing our financial risks and oversee our internal financial controls.

## Governance initiatives for the coming financial year

### ESG committee

We have a newly formed ESG committee that comprises of key internal stakeholders to drive an ESG focus through our corporate strategies and operations. We will be responsible for keeping targets and initiatives on track to succeed in developing our ESG focus as we develop and grow as a business.



An intelligent approach to energy, waste & sustainability



ESG ACCREDITED 2021

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