

FY26



Social Value Annual Report

Maximising impact, diversifying
talent, community-led action.

hippodigital.co.uk

Following the launch of our social value strategy in 2023, I'm delighted to share the progress we have made this past year (FY26). It's been made possible thanks to the support of our fantastic Hippos and our dedicated social value team.

Being clear on our Social Value Strategy

has helped us to:

- match our capabilities and expertise with our client's priorities
- meet the needs of our local communities
- Make progress towards the challenge of delivering £100m of social impact by 2030

A year of Social Value highlights and progress

In FY26 we delivered a further £18.2m towards our goal of £100m social impact by 2030, with the total achieved to date reaching nearly £68m. We are extremely proud of our progress over the last 3 years towards this ambition.

We continue to use Thrive and the Impact Evaluation Standard (IES) to measure, monitor and report on the social value we have enabled at Hippo through our projects. The independent IES converts our social value activities, like creating new jobs and supporting small and medium businesses, into a monetary value. This allows us to effectively track our progress year on year.

During FY26 we:

- created 90 new full-time equivalent (FTE) permanent employment opportunities with over 50% of those in the North or in Scotland
- expanded our support for T-Levels and apprenticeships
- achieved Disability Confident Leader status as part of the Government's Disability Confident Scheme
- continued to work with organisations in local communities supporting them to deliver local initiatives

As we look forward to FY27 we plan to expand our regional footprint further in the North of England and continue to build and grow our regional social value initiatives.

Lara Longhurst

Lara Longhurst, COO



Our Social Value Strategy

We are committed to maximising social value to increase the positive impact we have on our communities. We want to empower our team to use their expertise and diverse backgrounds to make a difference. By embedding social value into everything we do at Hippo, we believe we can enhance the societal impact already created by the digital services we design.

What Social Value means at Hippo

Social value is the additional economic, environmental and social change our operations have on our people, clients and local communities.

Our Social Value Strategy for 2023 – 2030 consists of the following 5 themes:



Environmental responsibility



Sustainable procurement



Health and wellbeing



Diversity, inclusion and belonging



Social equity

Hippo's 5 themes align with the themes and priority outcomes of the Government's Social Value Model and support 6 of the UN's Sustainable Development Goals. By drawing on the experiences and expertise of our people, we are helping to tackle some of the biggest challenges faced by our sector and people within our communities.



Our approach



During FY26, we continued to measure our social impact using the Thrive social value measurement platform; a platform designed to help organisations track, audit and report on all of their social value and broader ESG activities. Thrive is underpinned by the independent Impact Evaluation Standard (IES), which translates our social value activities into financial terms. The IES is a collection of over 130 metrics and supporting guidance which has been developed by industry experts in accordance with the UK government’s Green Book Guidance and which aligns directly to and builds upon, the UK government’s Social Value Model.

Progress against our targets

Following the third year of delivery against our social value strategy, we are pleased to report the following progress against our target:

Year 1

£25.7m

Social Value enabled

Year 2

£23.8m

Social Value enabled

Year 3

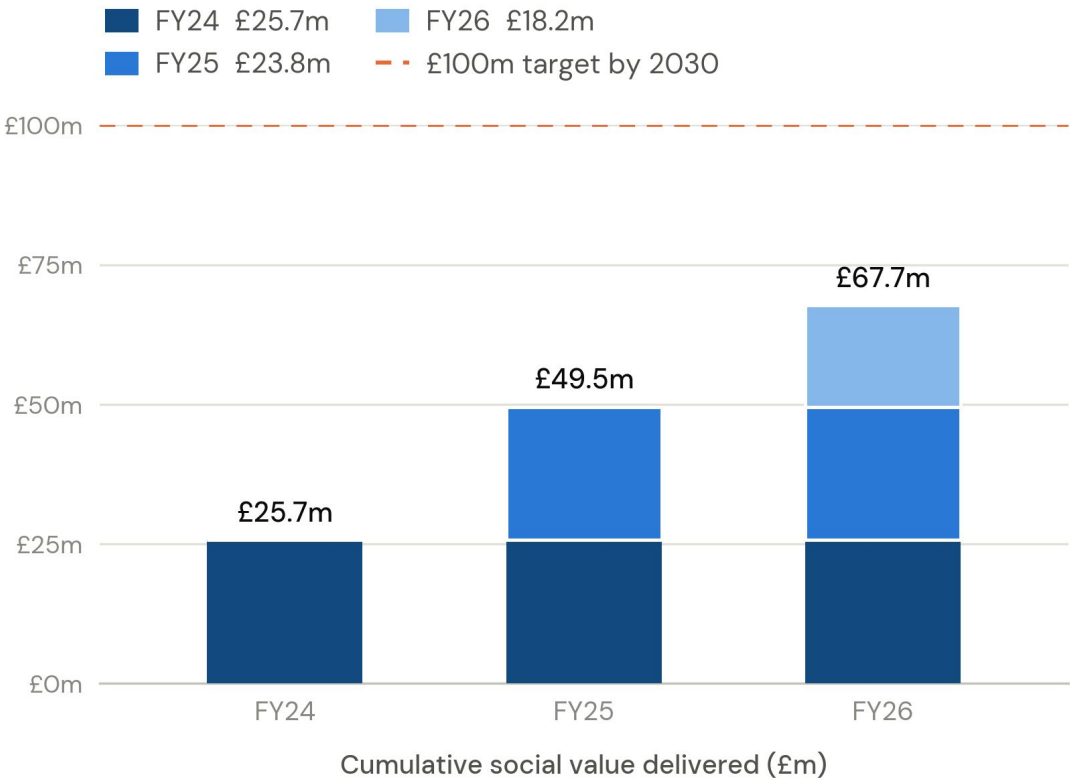
£18.2m

Social Value enabled

Total

£67.7m

Total Social Value enabled
against our **Target of £100m by 2030.**



How we deliver social value



Lara Longhurst
Chief Operating Officer and Board
Sponsor

Social value is intrinsic to our operations as a business, with accountability at Board level.



Holly Onstenk
ESG and Social Value Lead

Responsible for the strategic direction of social value at Hippo, supporting to develop our relationships with clients. Works alongside our DI&B Lead in our People team.



Jodie Price
Social Value Consultant

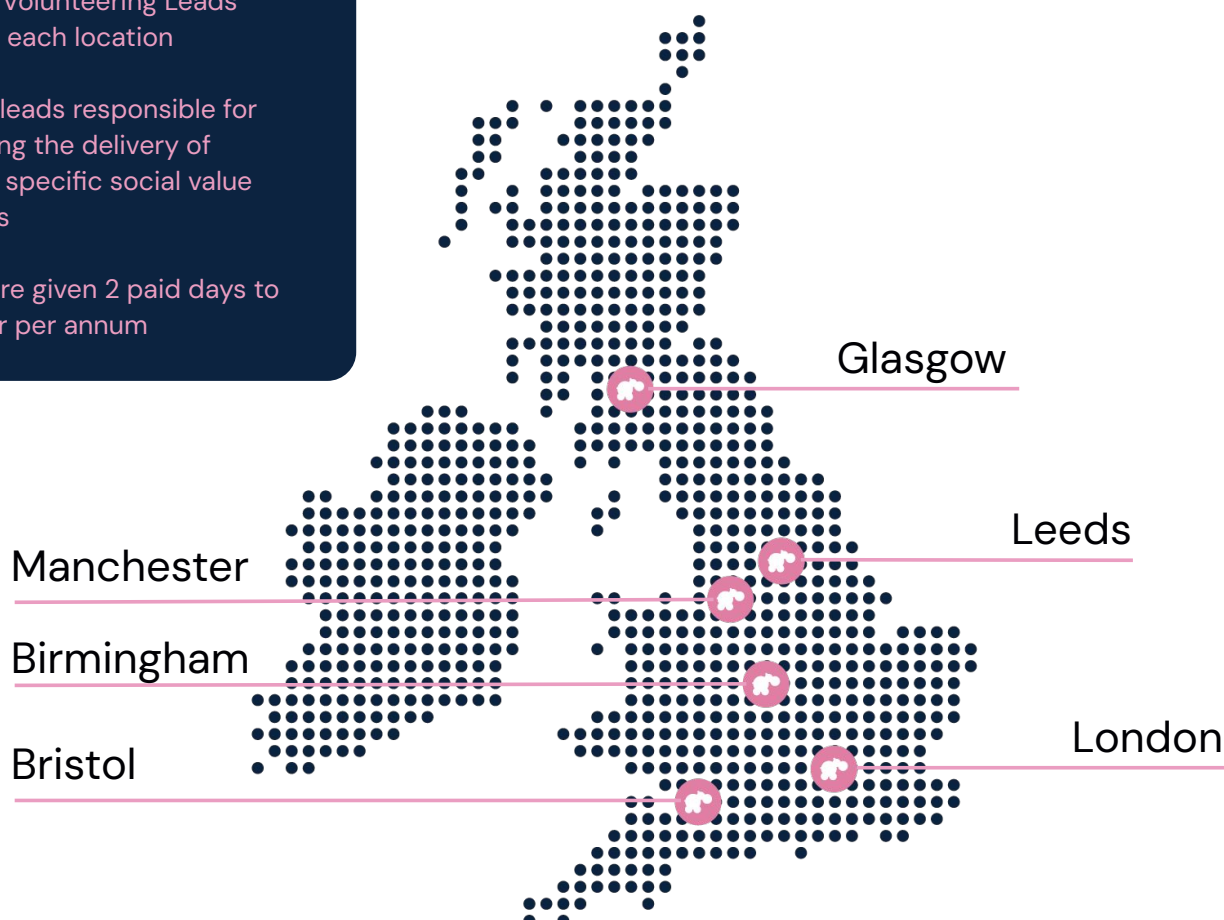
Supporting the growth of our charity and delivery partnerships.

Supporting Social Value

Regional Volunteering Leads based at each location

Projects leads responsible for supporting the delivery of contract specific social value initiatives

Hippos are given 2 paid days to volunteer per annum



Key achievements

1. Environmental Responsibility

Carbon Reduction: In FY26 we started the process of setting Science Based Targets. Our FY26 CRP shows a **reduction of 58.1%** in Scope 1, 2 and 3 emissions from our FY24 footprint. [Read our FY26 Carbon Reduction Plan.](#)

69%
of our electricity
consumption came from
renewable supplies.



100%
of our footprint has been
offset through Gold
Standard and Carbon
Standard Verified schemes.

Environmental
Responsibility
Social Value
enabled:



£28,643

72

Number of person-hours
spent on activities to raise
environmental awareness.

264

Number of person-hours
spent on environmental
training and education.

368

Number of person-hours
spent on environmental
volunteering.



2. Sustainable Procurement

£8,533,792

was spent with local businesses that directly supported the delivery of our contracts, creating more jobs and training opportunities for local people.



84%

of this spend went to Small & Medium Enterprises (SMEs) and Charities, Social Enterprises & Voluntary Organisations.

Local Economic Benefit
£11,947,309



£13,840,377

Sustainable Procurement
Social Value enabled.

We work with Shine for our catering in Leeds. Shine are is award-winning Social Enterprise that supports female founders, the local community, and women's health. They are based in Harehills, one of the most deprived areas in Leeds.



3. Social Equity

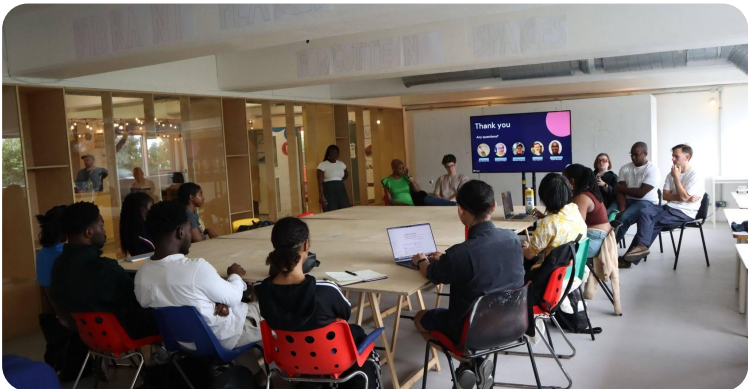


New employment opportunities created

90

Number of new* full-time equivalent (FTE) permanent employment opportunities created.

*Does not include replacement hires/churn



Locations of new perm jobs

Birmingham	10%
Bristol	18.9%
Glasgow	4.4%
Leeds	34.4%
London	17.8%
Manchester	14.4%

7% of jobs filled by people declaring a disability.

44% of new FTE opportunities filled by people under-represented in tech (gender, ethnicity, sexuality, ex-military, socio-economic background).





Apprenticeships, T-Levels & Educational Engagement

1 new internal apprenticeship started in FY26, and through this and our existing ongoing apprentices **we delivered 192 weeks of apprenticeships** throughout the year. FY26 T-Level students are set to join us as apprentices in FY27.

4 T-Level student opportunities were created. 2 from UTC Leeds and 2 from the Manchester Digital T-Connect Programme.

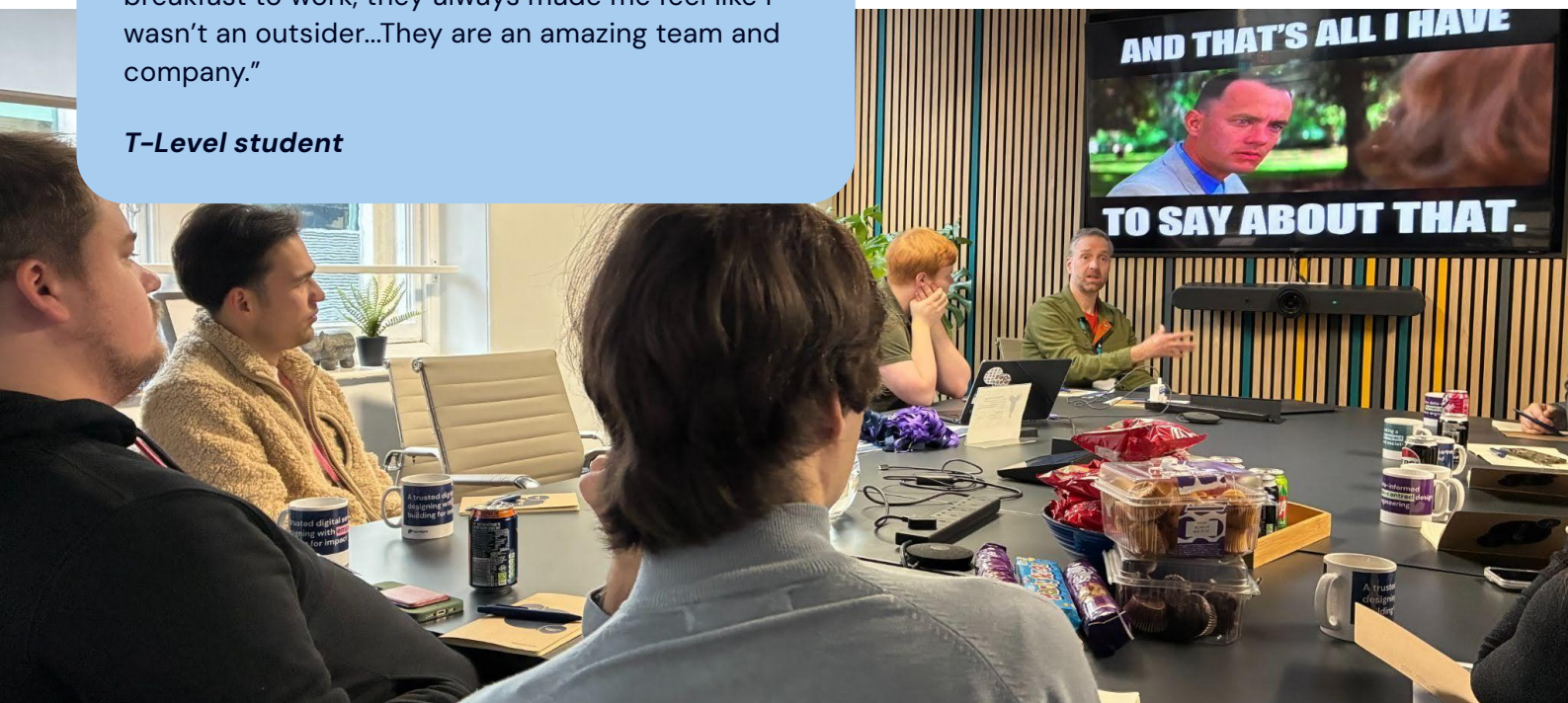
We visited schools, colleges and universities in Leeds, Manchester, Birmingham and London, delivering 395 person-hours of digital skills training, mock assessments and career advice.

"During my time at Hippo Digital, it has been utterly amazing, all the staff were friendly and I made quite a lot of friends and colleagues that I knew I could go to for help...The entire Hippo team is amazing and even throughout the times that I was there in person, they always made me feel as if I was a proper adult and treated me professionally and looked out for me too from breakfast to work, they always made me feel like I wasn't an outsider...They are an amazing team and company."

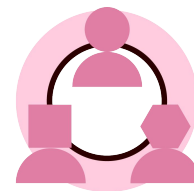
T-Level student

£4,027,784

Social Equity Social Value enabled.



4. Diversity, inclusion and belonging



The **DI&B forum** continues to drive Diversity, Inclusion and Belonging throughout Hippo. Its mission is:

"To be a role model in the tech and local community, where individuals from diverse backgrounds feel welcome and included. To develop diverse talent and provide broader opportunities for all, empowering every Hippo to become an advocate for DI&B."

Our **DI&B Strategy** has the following objectives:

- **Recruit and develop diverse teams** (both demographic and cognitive) that are more representative of society and the end user of the services we design and build.
- **Nurture a working environment** (both within Hippo and with our clients) that creates a sense of belonging and enables everyone to bring their authentic selves to work.
- **Ensure equity of opportunity for growth**, progression and promotion irrespective of any defined diversity characteristics.
- **Foster a greater understanding of diversity** characteristics, how people can support one another and build an inclusive environment within Hippo, ensuring everyone is treated with respect.
- Where our teams may not reflect certain consumers or sections of society (e.g. pensioners), work towards a **greater awareness of the challenges** faced across diverse characteristics.



44.5% of our workforce are women and non-binary (increasing from 41.2% in FY25).

9.6% of our workforce identify as disabled (increasing from 7.4% in FY25).

22.8% of our workforce are neurodivergent (increasing from 20.3% in FY25).

11.1% of our workforce identify as Lesbian, Gay and Bisexual (increasing from 10.3% in FY25).

17.6% of our workforce are from an ethnic minority (decreasing from 18.3% in FY25).

25.4% of our workforce identified as having a faith (decreasing from 28.3% in FY25).

1.7% of our workforce are aged 16 – 24 (increasing from 1.6% in FY25).

9.1% of our workforce are aged 50 – 64 (increasing from 8.8% in FY25).

Gender Pay Gap Progress:

In April 2025 we saw significant improvement in our median hourly pay gap, reducing it from 15% to 7.2%. We continue to report on our gender pay and have started to informally measure diversity and disability pay gaps. [Read our Gender Pay Gap.](#)



Hear from NurtureMe



NurtureMe is a mission-driven organisation dedicated to helping ethnic minorities in Leeds and the surrounding areas find their way into tech, especially those who don't follow the traditional route. Born out of our founder's own career transition, we run mentoring cohorts, in-person networking events, and outreach that opens up the industry to people who might otherwise never see themselves in it. At its core, NurtureMe is about showing people that they belong in tech, and giving them the community and guidance to get there.

As NurtureMe, we are grateful for the partnership that has made our in-person networking events possible. By giving us a venue, Hippo has given our community something harder to find than a room, a space where we can come together to share knowledge, swap experience, and support the next people trying to break into the industry, learn from those a few steps ahead of them, in a setting that feels genuinely welcoming.

Having the event space has also helped us run our tech leader sessions, which have been a standout. Hearing directly from people already in leadership positions has shown our members not just what those roles involve, but that they're achievable, that leadership is a realistic goal for them too, not something reserved for others. It's changed how people in the group see their own potential.

Hippo also went a step further and hosted a CV, LinkedIn and interview workshop for our mentees, with recruiters who work in the industry giving one-to-one feedback on their CVs. That feedback carried real weight because it came from the people who actually sit on the other side of the hiring table, our mentees walked away knowing exactly what recruiters look for, where their applications were falling short, and how to fix it. For many of them, it was the first time they'd had that kind of honest, insider guidance, and it's the sort of practical edge that can be the difference between an application being overlooked and getting through the door.

Finally, a heartfelt thank you to the Leeds social value team, Jodie, Holly and Peter. You have been welcoming and accommodating to us at every turn, and that consistency has meant a great deal. Your support has helped me build something that lasts and is needed.

Patience Ndlovu,
Founder of NurtureMe



Hear from Manchester Digital

Hippo Digital have been an outstanding supporting employer partner in our regional T Connect pilot, bringing real thought, care and diligence to creating meaningful industry placement opportunities for young people.

From the outset, Holly and the team were keen to be part of a collective pilot programme focused on widening access, supporting diverse young talent and creating genuine exposure to the digital and tech sector. They paid attention to both the big and small details that help young people feel welcomed, included and supported in a professional environment.



A particular highlight was the insight day hosted by Hippo Digital, which created a valuable opportunity for T Connect talent to be showcased. The team were so impressed by the students that they went on to create an additional placement opportunity as part of our co-located hub model.

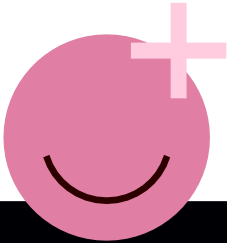
The students have flourished as part of the Hippo Digital team, broadening their experience, confidence and understanding of the sector. Hippo Digital's commitment has helped demonstrate the real impact employers can have when they open up meaningful opportunities and invest in the next generation of diverse digital talent, and Manchester Digital looks forward to working with the Hippo Digital Team on early talent initiatives.

Emma Grant,
Head of
Programmes



5. Health & wellbeing

Our communities



78

Number of employees participating in initiatives to improve physical wellbeing.

13

Number of trained Mental Health First Aiders in the business.

65

Number of employees accessing mental health initiatives within the organisation.



Our people

21

Hours of training received by Hippos on modern slavery risks.

488

Number of hours spent by employees on volunteering schemes.

In FY26 we became members of the Slave-Free Alliance.



SLAVE-FREE ALLIANCE

Working Towards a Slave-free Supply Chain

Donations

Cash & Products

£66,112

Fundraising

£3,832

£197,872

Health and wellbeing Social Value enabled.



Our community partnerships



Leeds Trinity
University





For further information, please
contact our social value team:
social-value@hippodigital.co.uk



[Learn more about Hippo's Social Value Strategy >](#)