

Sustainability Report

2023



THE COLLECTIVE

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Lucy Abraham, Founder

A message from our founder

Here we are, our first-ever impact report — a document we will create at the end of each year to share with the world our efforts, vision, and objectives. It serves as a testament to how we have chosen to channel our time, energy, and resources into positive initiatives.....

After nine years of growth, we're thrilled to present this report, driven by a sincere commitment to transparency and engagement with our vibrant design community. We acknowledge the ongoing tug-of-war in the ever-evolving landscape of construction and interior design. Specifiers yearn for positive change through the transformative power of design and specification.

However, this pursuit faces constant challenges, from the barrage of 'green' claims and certifications to the endless considerations of cost and value engineering—a relentless struggle that often overshadows well-intentioned efforts. Amidst this dynamic backdrop, our excitement for the industry's potential remains undiminished.

We're navigating these challenges with a fresh perspective, recognising the delicate balance required to usher in meaningful change. As we embark on this journey, we invite you to explore the insights shared in this report, which not only journals our initiatives and achievements but also expresses the ambitious goals we continue to pursue.

Internally, this year has been about laying a robust foundation for the future. We delved into the science of carbon, learning various measurement methods to understand our environmental impact.

Our report highlights these initiatives, celebrates achievements, and outlines the goals we're working towards. We're not just sharing our successes; we're inviting you to be part of the conversation. Your suggestions, feedback, or assistance are invaluable.

We're transparent about our challenges, and we'd be grateful for your input if you believe you can help us overcome them. This report is a collective effort, and we're thrilled to have you join us on this journey.

Summary

The Collective drives incremental change through its three key pillars — Community, Innovation, and Optimisation — spotlighting tangible actions toward a better future.



Community

Innovation

Optimisation

Sustainability is...
‘meeting the needs of
the present without
compromising the ability
of future generations to
meet their own needs’.

United Nations Brundtland Commission, 1987¹

In 2023...

Launched 'Take-Back' Scheme

Initiated a 'take-back' scheme to recycle end-of-life PET acoustic materials from any UK supplier.

Launched Re.Wrap Fabric Panel

Re.Wrap, an award-winning Class-A fabric stretch acoustic panel crafted from offcuts generated during our manufacturing process.

Staff Training on Embodied Carbon

Educated all staff on the concept of embodied carbon, its implications on project design, and its broader environmental impact.

Factory Waste Recycling

Invested in a new chipper machine to recycle our factory waste.

'No-Glue' Installation System

Investing in R&D of a 'no-glue' installation system, eliminating adhesive from our panel installations.

Carbon Footprint Assessments

Conducted comprehensive Life Cycle Assessments and Business Cycle Assessments to calculate the embodied carbon of all our products.

TCA Emission Trends

36% reduction in emissions compared to 2022.

Transport Emission Reduction

Successfully reduced emissions from transportation by 42% compared to the previous year.

Community



Social Enrichment

We found a meaningful purpose for our old Swell prototypes and pre-manufacturing test panels. These were repurposed and donated to [Fetcher Dog Rescue](#) in Ashford, a shelter facing closure amid noise complaints.

The installation of these prototypes effectively reduced the sound emissions from barking dogs by approximately 10dB, creating a more tranquil environment for the dogs and fostering harmony with their neighbours.

We repurposed our discontinued Balance tiles by donating and installing them at a domestic violence support charity in Kent, an organisation that assists women and children experiencing domestic abuse. In doing so, we helped them combat reverberation issues in their counselling rooms.



In spring 2023, the Folkestone HQ team spent a day helping [White Cliffs Countryside Partnership](#). Together, we worked on rebuilding steps leading down the cliff edge to The Warren, a serene cove and nature reserve just beyond Folkestone. This collective effort was aimed at enhancing accessibility for everyone who enjoys the natural beauty of the area.



In November 2023 Kasia, our Production Manager, used her charity days to travel to Rwanda with 11 other volunteers along with 15 suitcases full of donations to help at local schools, feed children and carry out house and hospital visits, demonstrating our commitment to making a positive impact beyond borders.



Triodos Bank

Triodos Bank's mission is to help create a society that protects and promotes quality of life and human dignity for all. As a bank, they only finance companies focused on people, the environment or culture. We were pleased to be accepted as a banking client by Triodos this year.



Education

Staff Knowledge

In June 2023, we trained our entire team on Embodied Carbon and whole-building assessments, to ensure we are all equipped with the knowledge and understanding to discuss and tackle carbon discussion and decision-making action.

Support and Mentorship – Ravensbourne University Partnership

Since 2022, we've partnered with Ravensbourne University to mentor new designers creating sustainable products from our waste panels, supporting them throughout 2023.

Support and Experience – Work Placements

We continue our commitment to local schools by offering work experience to GCSE students. Next year, we're welcoming two more students, providing valuable learning opportunities.

Support and Encouragement – Apprenticeships

At The Collective, we firmly believe in nurturing the next generation. In 2021, La'Tia completed her apprenticeship and is now an integral part of our Shoreditch office as a Sales Assistant.

Following this success, in 2022, Beth joined us as an apprentice, quickly finding her niche while assisting our Production Manager, Kasia. Beth is set to complete her apprenticeship this year, marking another achievement in our ongoing support for young talent.

Diversity

At The Collective, diversity is integral to our identity. Founded in 2014 by Lucy, we now proudly employ:

22
staff

63.6% female

36.4% male

Length of service

5 employees have been with us for over 3 years, 12 for 1-2 years, and 5 for under 1 year.

These statistics reflect our commitment to fostering an inclusive and diverse workplace, ensuring equal opportunities and representation at every level.



Location

Our head office is located in a shared office space at The Glassworks, Folkestone, Kent.

In September 2023, we expanded by opening our London Showroom and office. Housed in a converted button factory in Shoreditch, London, this new location marks a significant step in our growth and presence in the design community.



Innovation



Design out Waste

Re.Wrap, our latest innovation—a 100% recyclable acoustic panel crafted from over 96% recycled fabric and utilising off-cut and waste PET panels.

This transformative product not only bestows a new, functional purpose on discarded materials but also stands as a testament to low carbon emissions and exceptional acoustic qualities.

In our commitment to sustainability, we are actively researching methods to eliminate glue from our panel installations. This strategic move aims to enhance recyclability at the End of Life (EOL), enabling us to recycle more of each panel.

Additionally, the ability to reuse fixings reduces the carbon footprint of our products and installations, contributing to an estimated annual reduction of approximately 28.6 TonnesCO².





Take Back Programme

At The Collective, our Take Back programme is a recent initiative aimed at responsible product lifecycle management.

However, we face challenges in its implementation, particularly in integrating it into demolition specifications. We seek active support and collaboration from the design community to overcome this hurdle.

A major obstacle we've identified is the existing method of installation. Traditional adhesive methods contaminate panels, making reclamation difficult. In response, a significant part of our 2023 R&D focused on developing adhesive-free installation methods, which are now in the final stages of testing and are due to be released for general use in January 2024.

Our Take Back programme holds great potential, and with the collective effort of the design community, we can navigate these challenges, paving the way for a more sustainable future in design practices.

Optimisation

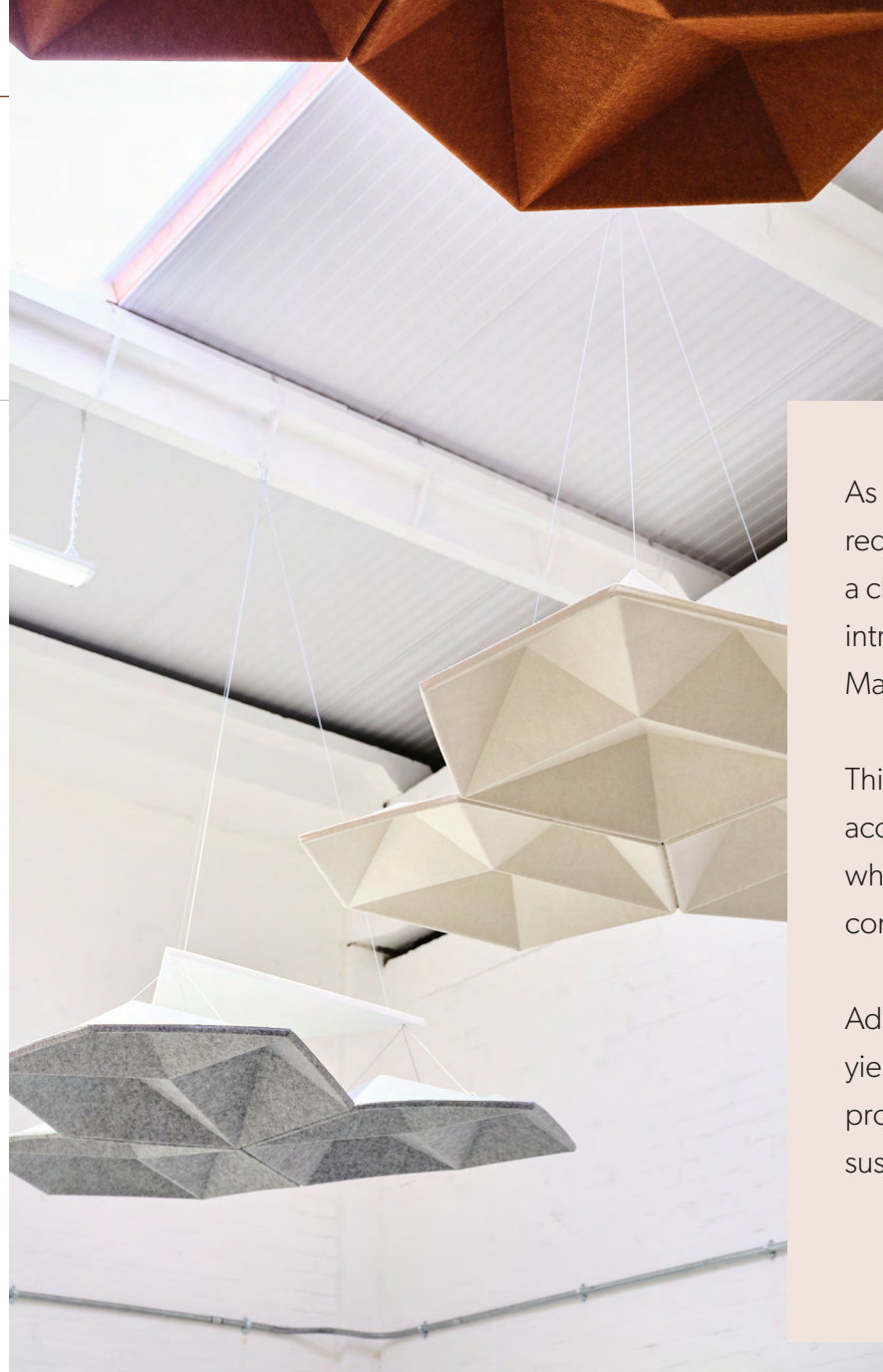


Resource strategies

To pinpoint areas for reduction, we first need to understand our current resource consumption, encompassing everything from adhesives and transportation to energy providers and heating.

To achieve this, we maintain a comprehensive document detailing every item consumed by the company at each location. With this information, we actively seek more carbon-neutral alternatives, ranging from printers to dishwashers and energy suppliers.

The carbon footprint of each item is meticulously recorded, along with the environmental impact, highlighting potential savings through replacement or re-sourcing.



As highlighted earlier, our commitment to reducing carbon emissions and fostering a climate-positive impact led to the introduction of the Take-Back scheme in March 2023.

This initiative applies to all PET-based acoustic panel materials, regardless of whether they are produced by TCA or other companies, at the end of their lifecycle.

Additionally, we focus on increasing material yields for new products, thereby minimising production waste and fostering a more sustainable approach to manufacturing.

Supply chain

We actively contribute to the education of our existing supply chain, leveraging our commitments and knowledge.

By inquiring about companies' carbon commitments and conducting product life cycle assessments, we choose suppliers with the best environmental performance.

All new suppliers are required to complete our 'new supplier form,' including questions about their sustainability and environmental commitments.

Whenever feasible, we prioritize sourcing from UK suppliers, selecting those who excel in their field and are geographically close to our factory to minimise transport impacts.



Reduce Carbon Emissions

In August 2021, we transitioned from overseas cable suppliers to a local supplier in Sheffield, reducing manufacturing and transport carbon emissions while supporting UK manufacturing.

Carbon Neutral

For our deliveries, we partnered responsibly with a local business, that offset all carbon emissions from their vehicles through traceable offsetting schemes run by Carbon Neutral Britain.

While large-scale zero-carbon transport isn't currently viable, offsetting is a meaningful alternative where reductions can't be achieved.

Low Carbon

For all London projects, our sales, project managers, and installation teams utilise public transport for travel.

Looking ahead

As we pioneer new products in our R&D efforts, we're breaking ground by meticulously recording material usage and updating Life Cycle Assessments (LCAs).

This approach empowers us to transparently report on our development stages, setting us apart as the first in our industry, to our knowledge, to embrace such a comprehensive practice.



WE WANT TO MAKE MORE WITH LESS

LUCY ABRAHAM

Carbon Reporting

2022-23



57.7%

Our most significant environmental impact comes from waste, constituting approximately 57.7% of our factory's total emissions.

Carbon reporting

While the Q4 2023 figures are incomplete at the time of writing, early indicators showcase the positive impact of our investments:

Q3 2023 highest emission

Waste: 22.8 TonnesCO²

Q4 2023 highest emission

Waste: 4.4 TonnesCO²

An immediate reduction of 56% highlights our efforts' effectiveness in recycling waste into Re.Wrap panels.

Total carbon emissions to date (Nov) for 2023

Total CO₂ emissions year to date stand at 499.1 TonnesCO₂, with a current carbon intensity of 0.10 kgCO₂/£.

In 2023, the leading emitters are Components, accounting for 116.5 TonnesCO₂, and Staff Travel, contributing 82.1 TonnesCO₂.

Notably, Staff Travel encompasses all forms of travel and represents a significant year-on-year reduction of 52%, down from 171 TonnesCO₂ in 2022.

Since 2017, our intensity has generally declined, from 0.21kgCO₂/£ in 2017 to **0.10kgCO₂/£ in 2023.**

NO.27
THE COLLECTIVE

DEKA

R/
RE.WRAP

W/
WOVEN IMAGE



Charlotte Road Showroom

In September 2023, our new London showroom and offices in Charlotte Road, Shoreditch, opened their doors.

During the design process, we went to great lengths to be as considerate as possible about the materials and choices, from vintage materials and furniture to recycled and durable finishes. View the full guide to our showroom specification can be accessed [here](#).

The comprehensive calculations for the CO² impact of fitting out our showroom encompassed all items within the space, including dishwashers, cutlery, demolition, construction, and fit-out. The total CO² emissions amounted to 26,440 kgCO².

The UK Green Building Council's head office currently holds the record for the lowest-ever recorded refurbishment in the UK at 139 kgCO²/m² (4).*

In contrast, the refurbishment at 27 Charlotte Road yielded a lower figure of **95.8 kgCO²/m².****

*As of the time of writing. **Embossed panels not yet included.



Transparency

We firmly believe that without honesty and transparency, businesses may resort to ‘verifications’ and greenwashing, distorting facts to align with board directors rather than the well-being of future generations.

Our commitment to transparency is evident in the availability of all our sustainability data upon request, following ISO guidance. Notably, we opt against third-party validation.

Being an accredited ISO standards company, we undergo independent external audits every two years, aligning with ISO:9001 & 14001. Our practices also adhere to ISO guidance such as ISO:14064(5), and we eagerly await the release of the forthcoming ISO:14019-1&2 guidance, which we will integrate into our operations.

The standards and guidance we work to in preparing this report are listed under References and Standards. Alongside this report, an in-depth internal report is produced for directors’ review.



Sources of data

Primary Company-Wide Data

We use Sage Earth² to track and quantify every penny of our turnover and gram of CO², including scopes and annual carbon impacts. Sage Earth, a new platform, is continuously evolving.

Collaborating with the development team, we aim to integrate and test new features to enhance data accuracy, enabling us to generate more detailed reports that can be updated every 24 hours.

Primary Data for LCA

We collect, analyse, and calculate our raw data for Life Cycle Assessments (LCAs). In instances where this isn't feasible, we rely on the Department for Food & Rural Affairs GHG spreadsheet, which provides UK averages.

Secondary Data for LCA

We source secondary data from our suppliers' LCAs or EPDs for components and products, subjecting it to thorough scrutiny before inclusion in any TCA data.

Quoted Figures or Texts

All figures and texts quoted in this report are referenced and linked in the References & Standards section.

References & Standards



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