

# PROGRESS REPORT ON THE SOCIAL VALUE QUALITY MARK SILVER AWARD

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## Focus

This report provides an update on progress against the 2023/24 social value pledges and Key Value Indicators (KVIIs), and sets the 2024/25 revised pledges and KVIIs.

It provides an overview of the organisation, to set the context for the pledges and organisational priorities, and sets out what the positive and negative outputs and impact have been.

The report also sets out who our stakeholders are and how we've engaged with them throughout the whole process.

It looks at the learning that the organisation has had over the last 18 months while we've been working through this process and finally, it sets out our commitments to becoming net carbon zero.

# Our organisation

NHS Arden and Greater East Midlands Commissioning Support Unit (Arden & GEM) is an NHS organisation tasked with offering services to other organisations – mainly other NHS organisations, although we are able to support other partner organisations as well.



Image shows key organisational facts and information about Arden & GEM

Arden & GEM is a Commissioning Support Unit (CSU). CSUs were established in 2013 following the Health and Social Care Act 2012, widely referred to as the Lansley Reforms. They were originally hosted by the NHS Commissioning Board and intended to become independent businesses in 2016. They were designed to provide external commissioning support, primarily to Clinical Commissioning Groups (CCGs) which, in turn, were planned to be small, agile commissioning units, with a small workforce. There were initially plans for 23 CSUs but over time this has reduced to just four. CSUs currently remain a part of NHS England and an NHS organisation.

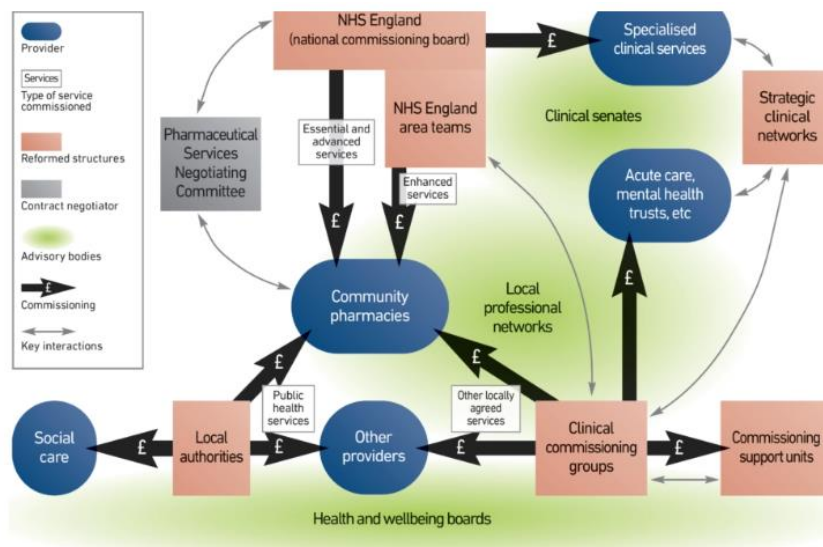


Image shows health and care sector working framework following 2012 reforms

Arden & GEM’s core services are detailed below:

Our core services	Description	Our credentials
<b>Data and Business Intelligence</b>	Our team specialises in data management, data integration with business intelligence products that enable better decision making.	Designated DSCRO, we host data platforms on behalf of ICBs and NHS England, Controlled Environment for Finance (CEff) and Accredited Safe Haven. Information Governance toolkit Level 2 status. Over 300 staff, providing services to 6 ICBs.
<b>Information Technology</b>	A high performing service that provides service desk, procurement, digital automation transformation, cyber security assurance.	Service Desk Institute accredited. Shortlisted for the SDI Service Desk of the Year Award 2023. Provide IT support to 25,000 users.
<b>Flexible Resourcing</b>	We work closely with systems and individual teams to find and mobilise high quality, non-permanent resources and multi-disciplinary teams for priority projects and programmes.	We currently have over 150 colleagues supporting a wide range of customer assignments, across a number of business and skill areas, including finance, analytics, PMO, HR& OD.
<b>Procurement</b>	Highly experienced award winning clinical services and corporate support procurement. Enabling value and quality across NHS and independent sector provision of NHS clinical services	Our 50+ procurement specialists, award winning end to end procurement support - specialists in spend analytics & contract management. Delivered 324 procurements.
<b>Human Resources</b>	Human Resources business partnering services. Including recruitment, training, development, mediation, payroll support workforce redesign.	Our skilled business partners hold a range of professional qualifications ranging from Business Administration and Payroll management to CIPD level 3 to 7, with all SHRPB's and higher are level 3 and above.
<b>Finance solutions</b>	Full financial services including transactional, ledger, governance and management accounting. Financial system implementation. Finance advisory and transformation support	Project Managing ISFE2 Finance Ledger implementation for 14 ICBs. Exception free Service Auditor Report for Finance controls four years in a row. Towards Excellence Level 2 Accredited.
<b>Clinical Consulting and Performance Improvement</b>	Leadership and organisation development, medicines management, public health advice, performance, productivity improvement, transformation, change management and evaluation.	Our qualified change management practitioners combines the skills of multi-disciplinary teams spanning our broad portfolio of service lines to deliver change programmes aligned to NHS priorities.

*Image shows core services provided by Arden & GEM*

We adopted a new vision in December 2021, signalling a significant shift towards being a partnering, innovation and transformation enabling organisation.

**Our vision**



To add value when anticipating and meeting our customers' needs.


**Our objectives**



**Growing our support**  
Sustain our level of business with NHSE and ICBs, and grow our support of providers, provider collaboratives and primary care to help improve productivity, efficiency and effectiveness of ICSS, with the CSU income levels reflecting this growth.



**Innovation and service transformation**  
Working as a partner of choice with our customers, delivering innovative, transformational and integrated solutions that meet their needs and support delivery of the Triple Aim.



**People and workplace**  
As an organisation with a positive cycle of continuous improvement, always putting the wellbeing and development of our people first to ensure Arden & GEM continues to be a great place to work, achieving a wide range of accreditation that cements our position as a leading healthcare support organisation.



**Measuring and delivering value**  
Leading by example, driving best practice throughout the organisation, by reducing overheads and increasing internal efficiency in 24/5 and 25/6. Measuring and delivering system wide productivity, innovation and value for customers.

**Our mission**



To work as the partner of choice with our customers, delivering **innovative** and **transformational** solutions that support the Triple Aim of better health and wellbeing for everyone, better quality of health services for all individuals, and **sustainability of resources**.

*Image shows Arden & GEM’s priorities from our Corporate Plan 2024/25*

## Our pledges and Key Value Indicators 2023/24

Arden & GEM committed to applying to achieve Level One (Bronze) of the Social Value Quality Mark in November 2022. This saw us commit to delivering on a series of pledges, headed up by senior leads across the organisation.

There are four levels to the Social Value Quality Mark, and each one is an opportunity to reinforce the commitment to delivering social value across all that the CSU does. This is a process that is based on organisational commitment and delivery of that commitment, through a series of pledges aligned to the mandatory areas of:

- Economic
- Education and skills
- Employment and volunteering
- Environmental
- Health and wellbeing.

There are additional areas that the CSU could draw up pledges to deliver on, including:

- Leadership
- Social and community
- Crime and justice
- Housing.

The CSU committed to delivering the five mandatory pledges, together with an additional area of Leadership.

A copy of the original pledges and KVIs for 2023-24 and their nominated lead can be accessed below, for information.



Social value roadmap  
and pledges.pdf

Our progress against our priorities has been excellent. We have managed to achieve all the KVIs that we set out. The full pledge tracker is included on page 8, but some key highlights include:

- Becoming a menopause friendly organisation
- Producing our first Social Value Strategy
- Developing our first Carbon Reduction Plan and baselining
- Producing our first ever Volunteering Policy
- Introducing a cycle to work scheme
- Building closer relationships with suppliers.

## Assurance process

An Assurance Group was established, comprised of all the identified leads to ensure we were progressing against our commitments. Each member was asked to complete a highlight report in order to measure progress, highlight any issues and mitigate them.

The first highlight report from June 2023 is below which highlights good progress against targets. The most recent report, from March 2024 is also embedded below, which again demonstrates the progress that's being made across the organisation.

Initially, this Group met quarterly but this has moved to bi-annually. The main focus of the Group over the last few months has been preparing for the Silver audit and the majority of the interaction has been one-on-one meetings and via email to collate the information needed. The Group will meet again following the result of the audit to determine next steps that the organisation needs to take, both in terms of the result but also in how we move this work forwards within a new operating model. What is pleasing is the level of work that has taken place to ensure we are continuing to embed this work across all that we do, with clear examples across a breadth of areas, showing the positive impact the CSU is having on employees and also local communities.



Social%20value%20highlight%20report%20



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Slide deck (1).pptx

## Our pledges and KVIs for 2024/25

As part of assessing our progress against our 23/24 KVIs, we updated and refreshed them for 2024/25. The biggest shift as part of this process was the commitment to join the Social Value Portal and develop our own Themes, Outcomes and Measures (TOMs). This has been a long process but we are now in a position to be finalising our TOMs and then start the next phase of collecting the data.

Through this process, we are able to align our pledges to the adopted TOMs, which will give us clear evidence, in % and £, as to how our pledges are being delivered as part of our wider TOMs.

All of our pledges and KVIs are mandatory and the document below is a progress tracker, setting out the specific outcomes for each KVI and there's also a separate document setting out the 2024/25 pledges and KVIs, for ease.



26 Pledge progress  
2023-34.xlsx



Social Value Pledges  
and KVIs 2024-25 .do

### The positive and negative outcomes and impacts of our pledges and KVIs

Our pledges and KVIs have enabled us to embed social value principles and actions across all the work that we do. The process has enabled us to bring pieces of work together under a collective framework, which has helped with delivery and also to change the culture and behaviours of the organisation to one where social value is considered through all that we do, rather than a standalone area.

From a negative perspective, the focus on employing locally is harder to achieve since COVID-19, as so many people now work from home so the geographical footprint is wide. However, this is also a positive as it has meant less travel and is therefore helping to reduce our carbon footprint.

The process of reviewing the impact of our pledges has proved to be very difficult as some of the information required isn't captured by the organisation. For example, we don't collect data on the financial impact of our pledges, due to the nature of our organisation. Similarly, we also don't collect or produce academic pieces or details from our supply chain, so are also unable to demonstrate that.

However, the process itself has been a very positive one and we have partnered with Social Value Quality Mark to initially create the Social Value in Health Award and more recently, the Social Value in Health Excellence Award, and the Social Value Portal are also a partner in this. The reason for this was because a number of questions in the process are not suitable for an NHS organisation and this new programme is designed to encourage more NHS



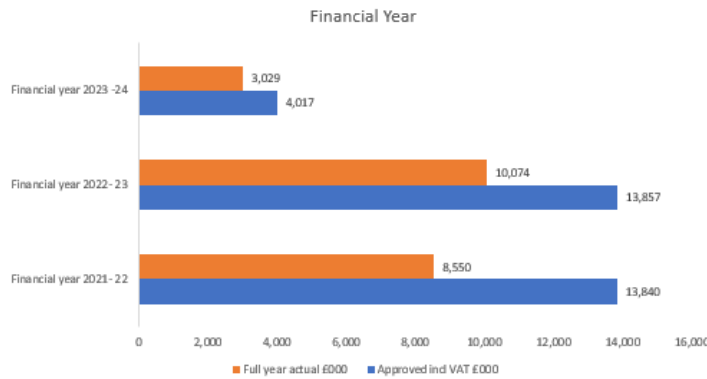
organisations to get involved and in doing so, increase the spread of social value across the country.

**Specific examples of social value delivered**

As an organisation we have delivered a great deal of social value through our services. The below image shows where services have been offered at a reduced cost, as part of delivering our social value.

Some specific examples of benefits delivered are:

Years	Approved incl. VAT £000	Full year actual £000
Financial year 2021- 22	13,840	8,550
Financial year 2022- 23	13,857	10,074
Financial year 2023 -24	4,017	3,029



Some recent examples of where reduced prices have been offered as part of our social value approach include:

**Funded price reductions April to August 2024**

£

Non specified collaboration organisation	12,479
Non specified Trust	24,971
Non specified ICB	<u>3,300</u>
	<u>40,750</u>

Names have been anonymised due to confidentiality reasons but amounts and organisation areas are included. This demonstrates the financial outcomes of our commitments as well as the ongoing, trusted relationships provided.

These are just two examples of many more that take place across Arden & GEM.

## Our commitment to net zero

Arden & GEM is committed to delivering net zero and recognises the negative impacts on society that high emission levels can cause. Our draft Green Plan sets out in more detail what our commitments are and our Carbon Reduction Plan and tracker give the specific details. As an NHS organisation, the CSU is committed to achieving net carbon zero by 2045 for scopes 1, 2 and 3.

In recent years, we have been able to reduce our carbon footprint and are well on the way to achieving our targets (below). By 2025, it is expected that the CSU will have decreased its emissions to 1,198 tCO<sub>2</sub>e, which is a reduction of 32% from 2020's figures. We have already decreased our emissions by 30.84%, based on 21/22 figures.

scope	Activity	tCO <sub>2</sub> e	Notes
scope 1	Gas consumption	161	
	Fleet transport	66	Includes salary sacrifice
scope 2	Electricity consumption	88	
scope 3	Upstream transportation and distribution	51	Gas well-to-tank Electricity T&D losses Electricity well-to-tank Business travel well-to-tank Electric vehicle T&D losses
	Waste	1	
	Business travel	64	
	Employee commuting	24	Estimated using 2019-20 annual travel survey with 90% reduction to reflect COVID-19/WFH
	Downstream transportation and distribution		
<b>Totals</b>			
	Scope 1	227	
	Scope 2	88	
	Scope 3	140	
	<b>Total</b>	<b>454</b>	

Image shows our emissions per scope

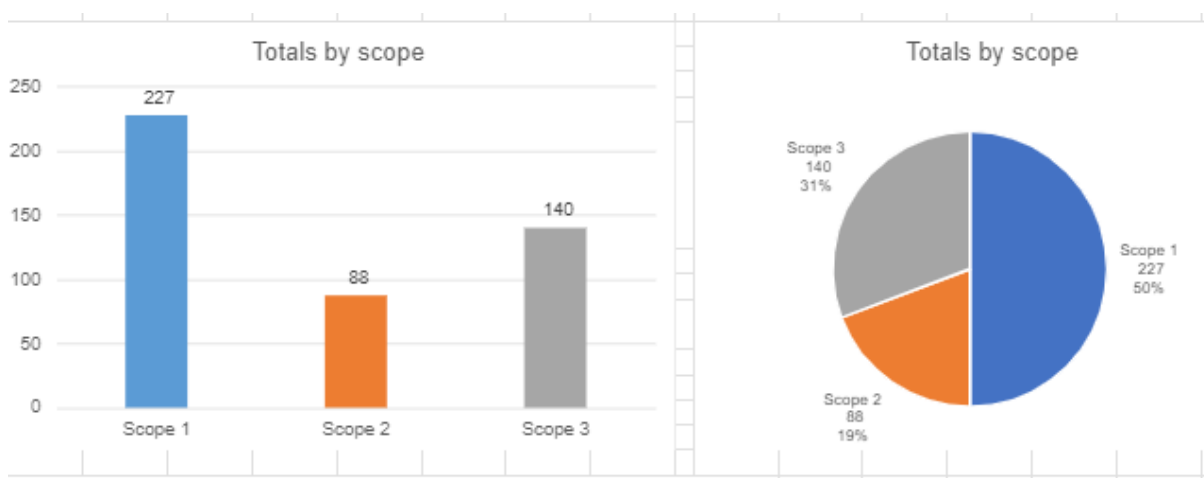
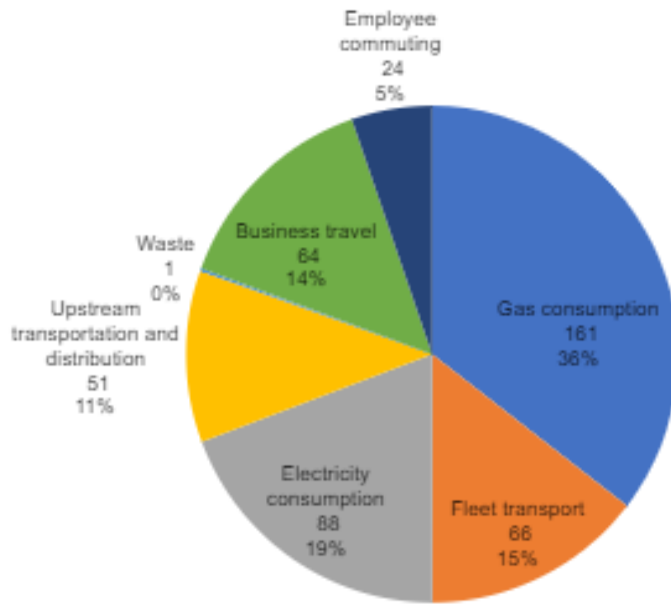


Image shows our emissions by scope in bar graph and pie chart

### Totals by category



*Image shows emissions through activity*



## What we have learnt through this process

Over the last 18 months, as we have undertaken this process, Arden & GEM has learnt a great deal. A lot of awareness raising sessions have taken place across the whole organisation, with sessions held with the Exec and each directorate. There was also a Social Value Awareness session that was held in May 2024, as part of our Learning Week event. This was very well attended and has helped to upskill the organisational workforce.

Social value is now understood across the organisation as something that needs to be delivered as part of making Arden & GEM, and the whole NHS, more sustainable entities.

As well as focusing on increasing our own social value, we have established a set of products to help other health focused organisations to increase theirs. This includes the Social Value in Health Excellence Programme, referred to earlier in this report, and also bespoke consultancy and e-learning modules, which were recently accredited by the CPD.

Social value in the wider NHS is usually viewed through the prism of procurement, due to the use of Policy Procurement Notice 06/20, which requires organisations to ask suppliers to demonstrate how they will deliver a minimum of 10% additional social value in the contract. This means that social value is looked at at the end of the process, rather than the beginning. Through the work that we've done at Arden & GEM, we have been able to firmly place social value at the heart of what we do and, through our external products, are now helping other organisations to do the same. The impact of that is huge and extremely positive.



## Our stakeholders and engagement with them

As we have approached this process, we have focused on our internal stakeholders – our colleagues across each directorate – to ensure they have all had a say in setting the pledges and KVIs. This is an extremely important part of embedding our social value commitments. As is having an Executive Lead, who has led this agenda across the organisation, ensuring senior colleagues are up-to-date with what’s happening and, more importantly, supportive of it.

There have been a number of sessions with the Exec, including on 16<sup>th</sup> January 2024 when there was a meeting dedicated to this area, updating the Exec on what we are doing and what our next steps are to ensure there was top level support – which was achieved.

Each directorate had a session as part of their regular team meetings, to ensure everyone was aware of what was happening and to discuss how we can embed social value into their specific pieces of work.

As previously mentioned, there was also a Social Value Awareness session at the Learning Week in May 2024, which was the opportunity for colleagues to join to learn more about social value and what the organisation is doing both internally and externally.

In addition, we have our intranet site, our Social Value Network, our NHS Futures workspace, our external website and we frequently use LinkedIn to let our followers know what we’re doing and promote our successes, as well as invite people to engage with us.

As part of engaging with our suppliers, we asked them all to commit to the principles in our Social Value Charter, which received a very positive response.

Our external social value products are another way of ensuring we work with other health focused organisations to embed social value. Through working with them and supporting them in their delivery, we are engaging with them, supporting them to set and achieve their social value goals and ensuring we embed social value across the country.

Arden & GEM also engages with our customers, the majority of which are other NHS organisations, to ensure they are happy with the services being provided. This is an ongoing process and we report on this on a monthly basis.

## Our communications process

As a part of keeping the Bronze accreditation and to enable us to apply for the Silver, Arden & GEM committed to having regular comms updates – internally and externally – to enable us to update on progress against our commitments.

An internal webpage was set up so we can demonstrate delivery against these pledges and a filming session took place in Summer 2023 to enable the leads to talk through how they are delivering their commitments. The result of that day's work can be found on our intranet and external website: <https://www.ardengemcsu.nhs.uk/about-us/our-social-value/> which are both updated regularly, as well as our YouTube playlist:

[https://www.youtube.com/playlist?list=PLyClSqc6Yv3fmX7q1\\_uZGWJJKl69OrOJm](https://www.youtube.com/playlist?list=PLyClSqc6Yv3fmX7q1_uZGWJJKl69OrOJm)

Details of our external offer are published on our website:

<https://www.ardengemcsu.nhs.uk/services/social-value/>

In addition, NHS Arden and GEM uses LinkedIn a great deal and a lot of our achievements are published that way: <https://www.linkedin.com/company/arden-&-gem-csu/>

For the Social Value Network, we have a dedicated NHS Futures workspace:

<https://future.nhs.uk/SocialValueNetwork/groupHome>

And a dedicate website which also houses our member resources:

<https://socialvaluenetwork.org/about-svn/>

## Our recommendations for 2025/26

As can be seen in this report, Arden & GEM has truly committed to embedding social value throughout all that it does and the delivery against that commitment is clear.

Our commitment to supporting other organisations is also progressing, through working in partnership with Social Value Quality Mark and Social Value Portal to create a bespoke Award for health focused organisations.

However, the landscape is changing. A Strategic Review of CSUs is currently underway and we are beginning to work much more closely and collaboratively with other CSUs. This is an opportunity for us to take stock and revise where we are to have a fresh set of pledges and KVIs for 2025/26.

Based on this, and the other information provided in this report, the following are the recommendations that Arden & GEM will look to achieve:

- Build a social value team across the four CSUs that can form a new team once a new collaborative operating model is in place. This will ensure that the work not only continues but it grows across a much bigger footprint, enabling more social value to be delivered, in more areas.
- Look to collect data to demonstrate the financial impact of social value. This is happening through the development of the TOMs and the alignment of the pledges and TOMs will be a huge support in providing this information. The TOMs are currently in draft form and only relate to Arden & GEM. As with the previous recommendation, these will also need to be revised to take into consideration the new operating model.
- Arden & GEM currently has an Exec Lead and a programme lead but there should be representatives in each directorate that can pick this up in their day-to-day work, on behalf of their directorate, to ensure social value continues to be embedded across all that we do.
- Once the new operating model is known, there needs to be an Exec session, focused purely on social value, as happened in Arden & GEM in January 2024, to ensure senior leadership buy in from all CSUs.
- In order to help us achieve our net zero commitment, we need to ensure we are a truly flexible workforce that only travels when absolutely necessary and this needs to become a CSU-wide policy.



## Conclusion

Arden & GEM has come a long way in a relatively short time in embedding social value principles into all that we do. There is a greater understanding across the organisation and social value is seen as something positive that can be delivered in all that we do, rather than something specific to one individual.

Our strong engagement with colleagues has led to us being able to ensure the pledges and KVIs are relevant and understood across the organisation. The Social Value Awareness session at Learning Week was very well attended and demonstrated the interest there is to know more about this.

We can always do more though, specifically in capturing the financial data. This will improve as the TOMs work develops and we're able to attach the proxy amounts to our work to evidence the % and £ delivered.

As the new operating model starts to emerge, the Exec Lead and Social Value Programme Lead will need to ensure this work stays at the forefront of the leadership team and is embedded across any new directorates. We need to ensure the pledges and KVIs are reviewed so that they reflect the 2025/26 business planning process and we can continue to deliver this work and then build on it to grow its impact even further.





**Arden&GEM**  
Health and social care systems support

**Get in touch with us at:**

 [www.ardengemcsu.nhs.uk](http://www.ardengemcsu.nhs.uk)

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