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Explosive Learning Solutions

Social Value Report

25-26

Summary

Explosive Learning Solutions outlines training , community partnerships , and environmental initiatives.

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Company Overview

Explosive Learning Solutions (ELS) is an Oxfordshire-based training consultancy and assessment provider delivering professional programmes designed to support individuals, employers and organisations to develop skills and achieve career progression. Founded in 2005, ELS is ‘big enough to deliver but small enough to care’. ELS recognises that training and development providers play a significant role in the creation of social value.

This report marks ELS’s first formal Social Value report, covering all social value activities undertaken in the financial year 2025–2026. Data presented in this report has been collected through internal monitoring systems, including stakeholder feedback, activity logs, training records and social value reporting. During this time, the amount of social value work ELS has undertaken has significantly increased, with this report presenting a clear summary of the outcomes and impact across the whole business.

Orginasational Commitment

ELS prioritises measurable social, economic, and environmental impact across all core operations, embedding public sector procurement standards alongside corporate responsibility.

300+	66%	550	-16%
Students Engaged at Career Events	Female Directors	Volunteering Hours	Total Carbon Emissions



Social Value Strategy

ELS's approach to social value is driven by both organisational values and the requirements of the Cabinet Office's Social Value Model, which sets out how public sector procurement should account for additional social, economic and environmental benefits alongside the delivery of core services.

ELS primarily contributes to social value through:

- Improving access to education and skills, particularly for those who face barriers
- Supporting individuals into employment
- Partnering with community organisations and employers
- Promoting inclusion and improving access to opportunities for underrepresented
- groups
- Supporting local communities through fundraising, volunteering and charitable
- partnerships
- Environmental responsibility supported by a Carbon Reduction Plan

Explosive Learning Solutions Ltd contributes to the outcomes identified within the Social Value Model, summarised across five themes below.

Economic Inequality

Tackling economic inequality by supporting people into employment.

Training and employability programmes; structured work placements providing real employer exposure; apprenticeship programmes spanning Level 3 to Level 7; individuals progressed into permanent full-time employment during the reporting period.

Equal Opportunity

Providing equal opportunities by reducing barriers to opportunities.

Inclusive access to training and professional development; 66% of ELS directors are female; Disability Confident Level 2 Employer accreditation, with Level 3 Leader status being actively pursued; design work aligned to the Web Content Accessibility Guidelines (WCAG); inclusive recruitment, onboarding and management processes; mandatory equality, diversity and inclusion (EDI) training at onboarding; sponsorship of the local girls' cricket community.

Wellbeing

Promoting wellbeing by improving health and wellbeing.

Skills development and career progression supporting long-term employability; 3 qualified Mental Health First Aiders delivering quarterly whole-staff wellbeing sessions; approximately 4 team events held across the year; staff volunteering and fundraising contributing to personal and community wellbeing.

Supporting Local Communities

Supporting local communities by strengthening community resilience and charitable impact.

Fundraising and volunteering at community events across Oxfordshire and the wider UK, including Glastonbury Festival; partnerships with Play2Give and Didcot Powerhouse Fund; participation in local charity and community initiatives.

Fighting Climate Change

Fighting Climate Change by Promoting Environmental Sustainability.

Carbon Reduction Plan aligned to PPN 06/21; Scope 1 and 2 emissions reduced by 9% and 8% respectively in 2024–25; introduction of segregated waste streams and bi-weekly waste weighing; digital-first delivery reducing unnecessary travel; management systems aligned to ISO 14001.

Monitoring and Reporting Social Value

ELS is committed to ensuring that social value activities are effectively monitored, measured and reported. This approach enables the organisation to track outcomes and continually improve how social value is delivered across all areas of the business.

Social value performance is monitored through a combination of operational data, stakeholder feedback and internal reviews. Information is collected throughout the year and reviewed monthly to assess progress against social value commitments and priorities.

Key Monitoring and Reporting Mechanisms:

1

Community engagement & partnerships

Tracking community engagement activities and partnerships

2

Social value log

A log of all social value activities ELS undertakes as a business

3

Management reporting

Frequent reporting on progress against social value commitments, presented to the management team

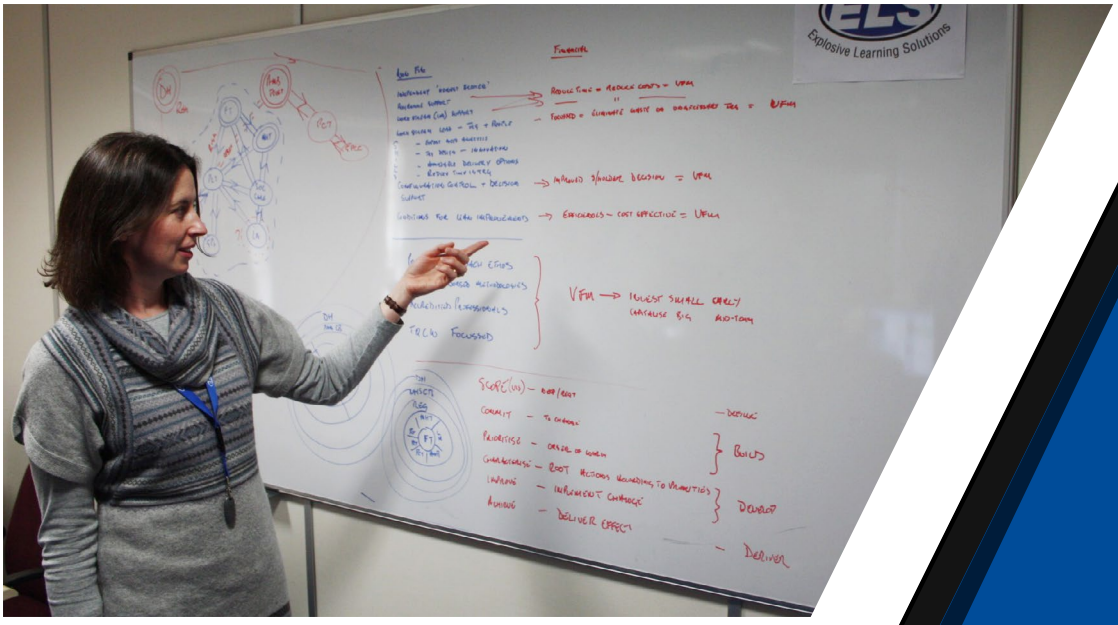
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Report in Context

As this is the organisation's first Social Value Report, some data sets are still being developed.

Continuous Improvement

ELS is committed to improving data capture and measurement in future reporting periods.



Governance and Compliance

Explosive Learning Solutions delivers a proportion of its services within the public sector. As such, the organisation's approach to social value is driven not only by organisational values, but also by government policy and procurement requirements, including those set out under the Public Contracts Regulations 2015 and evolving requirements under the Procurement Act 2023.

Compliance Alignment

- A Carbon Reduction Plan (in line with Procurement Policy Note (PPN) 06/21)
- Modern Slavery Act obligations, supported by government guidance
- Additional Social Value commitments within public sector contracts
- Prompt Payment compliance within supply chains, aligned to PPN 08/21, supporting the resilience of ELS's small and medium-sized enterprise (SME) supply chain

As a result, social value delivery at ELS is compliance-led as well as strategic, supported by internal governance, monitoring and reporting processes including:

- Management systems aligned to ISO 9001 (Quality Management)
- Management systems aligned to ISO 14001 (Environmental Management)
- Embedding equality, diversity and inclusion principles throughout its employee lifecycle.

ELS is fully compliant with the ISO standards listed above, and is committed to maintaining this compliance through a continuous improvement approach.

ISO 9001:2015

ISO 14001:2015

Delivery and Impact — Tackling Economic Inequality

This section sets out how ELS supports people into employment, the central focus of the Tackling Economic Inequality theme. ELS's activity spans four distinct stages of engagement — careers event engagement, work placements, progression into employment and equality, diversity and inclusion — each of which is described below.



These stages represent different forms of contribution rather than a guaranteed pipeline for any individual: a student engaging with ELS at a careers event in Year 8, for example, may not enter employment for several years, but the engagement itself remains a valuable and reportable outcome.

Stage: Careers Event Engagement

During the reporting period, ELS supported 8 careers events across local schools and colleges, engaging with over 300 students. ELS colleagues delivered hands-on sessions covering topics such as bid writing, marketing, apprenticeships and career planning, giving students direct exposure to the type of work ELS does day to day.

These events focused on raising awareness of professional training pathways and broadening students' understanding of career opportunities within professional and digital sectors. Two students who attended careers events subsequently progressed into work placements with ELS, demonstrating the value of this engagement in opening up further opportunities.

"A young person who has four or more encounters with an employer is 86% less likely to be unemployed."

- Ridgeway Academy, Head of Work Experience, drawing on the Gatsby Benchmarks



Stage: Work Placements

ELS hosted 7 students for work placements during the financial year, totalling 6 weeks of combined placement delivery across students aged approximately 14 to 20 — spanning Year 8 pupils through to graduates. This range reflects ELS's support for graduate employment alongside its work with younger students, both of which are current national priorities.

This represents the highest number of work placements ELS has undertaken in a single financial year, reflecting a growing organisational commitment to supporting young people into the workplace. Placements were structured to provide students with meaningful, hands-on experience across a range of professional functions.

After completing their placement, students produce a short reflective piece on their time at ELS, capturing what they did and what they learned. A selection of recent reflections includes:

> *"I found working at Explosive Learning Solutions helpful and very fun. I was taught very useful real-life skills like organisation, time management and communication."*

> *"It was really interesting learning from the team at ELS, some aspects applied what I had been taught in school, which made me appreciate the link to academic courses."*

> *"After my experience at Explosive Learning Solutions, I can confidently say I am even more interested in IT, specifically graphic design, and would like to pursue a career down that road. I believe by exploring more paths within the digital world, I am more knowledgeable and more confident in my choice."*

Stage: Employment Opportunities

ELS actively invests in its own workforce through apprenticeships, currently employing apprentices on programmes ranging from Level 3 to Level 7. During the reporting period, individuals completed their Level 3 Business Administration apprenticeship and were subsequently offered permanent full-time roles at ELS - a direct result of the talent developed through the programme.

This stage refers specifically to individuals who have moved into full-time employment with ELS, either by progressing from an apprenticeship into a permanent role, or by being brought on for a specific project. Additionally, two of ELS's current managers came directly through apprenticeship programmes with ELS, both having held their management roles for approximately 2 years.



Stage: Equality, Diversity and Inclusion

Sitting within ELS's wider approach to supporting people into employment, ELS is committed to fostering an inclusive workplace where gender, disability and background are not barriers to progression, participation or leadership.

- 66% of ELS directors are female
- ELS is committed to inclusive recruitment practices
- ELS holds Disability Confident Level 3 Leader status
- Design and digital content is aligned to the Web Content Accessibility Guidelines (WCAG)
- ELS embeds EDI principles throughout its employee lifecycle
- ELS sponsors the local girls' cricket community, supporting participation in sport among young women in the area

Approximately 50% of students engaged across careers events during the reporting period were female, and 2 of ELS's current apprentices are female.



Social Value Impact Summary 2025–2026

In line with the agreed approach, the impact summary has been broken down into separate tables aligned to each Social Value theme, rather than a single combined table. This ensures activities are clearly attributed to one theme only, avoiding double-counting.

Tackling Economic Inequality — Supporting People into Employment

Activity	Output	Outcome
Careers Event Engagement	8 events; 300+ students engaged across local schools and colleges	Increased awareness of professional career pathways; progression into work placements for selected students
Work Placements	7 students; 6 weeks combined; ages approximately 14–20 (Year 8 to graduate)	Improved employability, career confidence and real-world transferable skills
Employment Opportunities	Apprentices progressed into permanent full-time roles following Level 3 Business Administration; 2 current managers home-grown via ELS apprenticeship routes	Sustained employment; economic growth; home-grown talent pipeline
Apprenticeship Programmes	Apprentices employed across programmes from Level 3 to Level 7	Skills development across multiple levels; long-term career progression

Equal Opportunity

Activity	Output	Outcome
Gender Representation	66% of ELS directors are female; approximately 50% of students engaged at careers events were female; 2 current apprentices are female	A workplace where gender is not a barrier to progression or participation
Disability Confident Accreditation	Level 3 Leader status	Reduced barriers for disabled applicants; inclusive recruitment and working environment
Accessibility	Design and digital content aligned to the Web Content Accessibility Guidelines (WCAG)	Improved accessibility of ELS materials for all audiences, including those with dyslexia and other access needs
Girls’ Cricket Sponsorship	Sponsorship of the local girls' cricket community	Increased participation opportunities for young women in local sport

Wellbeing

Activity	Output	Outcome
Mental Health First Aiders	3 qualified Mental Health First Aiders delivering quarterly whole-staff wellbeing sessions	Improved mental health awareness across the workforce; reduced stigma; regular structured staff support
Team and Social Events	Approximately 4 team events held across the financial year	Improved staff morale, cohesion and sense of belonging; supports retention and positive workplace culture
Staff Volunteering	Approximately 550 hours of volunteering contributed by ELS staff across the financial year	Personal wellbeing benefits for staff; wider community support

Supporting Local Communities

Activity	Output	Outcome
Community Partnerships	Partnerships with Play2Give and Didcot Powerhouse Fund; ELS is a dual supporter of Didcot Powerhouse Fund	Strengthened local collaboration; sustained support for locally rooted charitable organisations
Charitable Fundraising	Funds raised through community and fundraising events, including activity at Glastonbury Festival, with proceeds contributed to Didcot Powerhouse Fund	Direct financial support to local charitable causes with demonstrable downstream impact
Community Events	Participation in local community events across Oxfordshire and the wider UK	Strengthened community ties and visible local presence

Fighting Climate Change

Activity	Output	Outcome
Carbon Reduction Plan	Carbon Reduction Plan maintained in line with PPN 06/21; Scope 1 and 2 emissions reduced by 9% and 8% respectively in 2024–25	Progress towards the UK's net zero target by 2050; improved environmental data maturity
Waste Management	Segregated waste streams introduced; bi-weekly waste weighing in place	Improved accuracy of waste data; supports future carbon reporting and ISO 14001 compliance
Campus Environmental Infrastructure	Operating from Harwell Science and Innovation Campus, which provides electric vehicle charging points available to all staff and visitors, and operates a self-driving electric shuttle bus	Reflects ELS's location within an environment that actively supports lower-carbon travel

Case Study: Supporting Local Communities

This case study focuses on ELS's contribution to local communities across Oxfordshire and the wider UK during 2025–2026. Through charitable partnerships, fundraising and volunteering ELS raised over £7,500 for various charities across Oxfordshire. Careers and schools engagement is covered in Section 5 and is not repeated here.

Play2Give

Play2Give is a community organisation supporting a range of local charitable causes through events and fundraising activity, including the annual Christmas Market. ELS has supported Play2Give's fundraising activity during the reporting period, contributing to the wider impact achieved across the causes Play2Give itself supports.

"Wow! Not only was Play2Give's second Christmas Market 2025 a fantastic day and another huge success and busy, busy, busy but a total raised beyond my expectations — done it again!"
— Andrew Baker MBE BCAv, Founder of Play2Give

Didcot Powerhouse Fund

ELS is a dual supporter of Didcot Powerhouse Fund, one of Oxfordshire County Council and the district's most recognised local charities. Funds raised by ELS staff during community events — including fundraising activity undertaken at Glastonbury Festival — were contributed to Didcot Powerhouse Fund during the reporting period.

Community and Fundraising Events

ELS staff took part in fundraising and volunteering activity across a number of community events during the reporting period, including activity at Glastonbury Festival, with proceeds contributed to Didcot Powerhouse Fund as outlined above. ELS staff also supported a community event at Milton Park, contributing approximately 8 hours of volunteering through activities such as road safety support and refreshment provision.

Environmental Responsibility and Carbon Reduction

-16%	-8%	2050	ISO
Total Carbon Emissions	Scope 3 Carbon Emissions	Net Zero Target	14001 Accredited

Explosive Learning Solutions recognises the importance of reducing its environmental impact and is committed to supporting the UK's transition to net zero by 2050. The organisation's primary environmental impacts arise from business travel, energy consumption and operational activities.

ELS acknowledges that environmental measurement has historically been an area for development, and this report sets out the steps taken to evidence progress against its commitments, in line with its ISO 14001 (Environmental Management) accreditation.

Carbon Reduction Approach and Monitoring

ELS has developed a Carbon Reduction Plan, aligned to government requirements including PPN 06/21, focusing on three key areas:

- Travel and Delivery — Minimising unnecessary travel through remote training delivery, hybrid working practices and encouraging lower-emission transport options where feasible
- Supply Chain Considerations — Working with partners and suppliers who demonstrate environmentally responsible practices and considering environmental impact when selecting venues and delivery options
- Operational Efficiency — Reduction of paper usage through digital documentation, digital-first delivery, and making efficient use of all office space and available resources

Reducing ELS's environmental impact involves two complementary approaches: directly reducing emissions where possible (for example, choosing rail travel over car journeys), and offsetting remaining emissions through positive environmental action, such as supporting tree planting or hedgerow restoration. ELS is developing its approach to both as part of its commitment to continuous improvement.

Campus Environmental Infrastructure

ELS operates from the Harwell Science and Innovation Campus, an environment that itself takes environmental responsibility seriously. Electric vehicle charging points are available across the campus for use by staff and visitors, and the campus operates a self-driving electric shuttle bus. While these facilities are provided by the campus rather than by ELS directly, they reflect the environmentally engaged context in which ELS operates and supports.

Waste Management

ELS is strengthening its approach to waste management as part of its wider environmental monitoring processes. This includes the introduction of segregated waste streams, separating food, general and recyclable waste, to ensure correct disposal and support more accurate environmental reporting.

ELS has also begun periodically weighing waste outputs on a bi-weekly basis, both to verify correct segregation and to establish a baseline measurement of total waste generated. This data will support future carbon emissions reporting, help identify opportunities for reduction over time, and strengthen ELS's compliance with ISO 14001.

Continuous Improvement and Further Development

- Baseline Development — Establishing a clear baseline year for emissions, capturing all sources of carbon emissions
- Enhanced Data Collection — Improving the tracking of environmental data, including energy usage, travel activity and waste outputs
- Operational Improvements — Further reduction in environmental impact through increased adoption of digital delivery and embedding sustainable practices across day-to-day operations
- Staff Engagement and Awareness — Increasing awareness among all staff to consistently support environmentally responsible behaviours

ELS recognises that its environmental performance is at an early stage of maturity and is committed to strengthening its approach each year through improved data collection, clearer targets and ongoing monitoring.

Future Commitments

Explosive Learning Solutions is committed to strengthening its contribution to social value through a structured approach. The following sets out what ELS is considering for the year ahead. These are areas of focus rather than fixed commitments, reflecting ongoing discussions through ELS›s monthly social value meetings.

Work Placements and Careers Engagement

ELS will continue to deliver structured work placement opportunities where operational capacity allows, ensuring that each placement provides meaningful, high-quality experience for participants. ELS is also considering ways to broaden careers event engagement beyond Didcot, including building relationships with schools and colleges in other areas ELS works with.

Environmental Performance

ELS will continue to develop its carbon reduction approach by improving data collection across various emission sources and considering measurable reduction targets over time, including further exploration of offsetting activities such as tree planting or hedgerow restoration.

Data and Impact Measurement

As this is ELS's first social value report, a key priority is to strengthen data collection and reporting processes. This includes ensuring that all activity recorded in ELS's internal social value log is reflected in future reports, improving the consistency of activity tracking, and developing baseline metrics to support year-on-year comparison.

Embedding Social Value into Business Operations

ELS will continue to integrate social value into organisational planning and decision-making processes, ensuring that social value considerations are reflected across project delivery, partnerships and all other meaningful internal operations.

These goals, and related efforts, support multiple United Nations Sustainable Development Goals (UN SDGs), most notably:

- SDG 4 — Quality Education
- SDG 8 — Decent Work and Economic Growth
- SDG 13 — Climate Action

See the United Nations Sustainable Development Goals website (https://www.un.org/sustainabledevelopment/). The content of this publication has not been approved by the United Nations and does not reflect the views of the United Nations or its officials or Member States.

Our impact at a glance

8
careers events delivered; 300+ students engaged

7
work placements delivered; 6 weeks combined; students aged approximately 14–20

66%
of ELS directors are female

Disability Confident
Level 3 leader status

3
qualified Mental Health First Aiders; quarterly whole-staff sessions

Approximately
550
hours of staff volunteering

-16%
Carbon Emissions

£7,500
Raised for local charities; Partnerships with Play2Give and Didcot Powerhouse Fund

7
Apprentices employed and maintained

ELS
Explosive Learning Solutions

Glossary of Abbreviations

Abbreviation	Meaning
CPD	Continuing Professional Development
EDI	Equality, Diversity and Inclusion
FTE	Full-Time Employment
ISO	International Organization for Standardization
MAC	Model Award Criteria (Social Value Model themes)
OCC	Oxfordshire County Council
OIEP	Oxfordshire Inclusive Economy Partnership
PPN	Procurement Policy Note
SDG	(UN) Sustainable Development Goal
SME	Small and Medium-sized Enterprise
WCAG	Web Content Accessibility Guidelines