



Connecting with people, places and our planet

Sigma Connected **2023 Impact Report**

When we founded Sigma Connected in 2011, our main aim was to create a business that was different. We wanted to build something with heart and soul. Something that wasn't solely about chasing the next £, but doing right by our employees, clients, their customers and our communities.

Being 'human centred' is our thing. It permeates everything we do, inside our organisation and out. Our whole approach to customer services is about keeping the human touch and treating customers with empathy and understanding.

While we will purposefully never become so big we lose sight of what we believe in, over the last decade we've certainly grown. The number of our employees and of our contracts have both increased significantly. And we take the responsibilities that go hand in hand with that growth very seriously. Responsibilities to our people, the places in which we operate and the planet. The majority of our efforts, initiatives and reporting, are focused around these three 'pillars'.

Some of these activities are naturally built in from the way we conceived our business, with an ethical, thoughtful approach and inclusive culture. Some we've always 'just done' – our charitable activities for example. Some have been part of our everyday for a good few years now, such as Impact Sourcing and our flexible working and location strategy.

All of the existing activities and approaches we practice have always had purpose and goals. But, because of our growth, and our overarching mission to 'improve everything always', we need to measure more accurately what we do. That way, we can set our targets for 2030 and be accountable for them.

Over the last couple of years, we've worked hard to do just that, improve everything always – and this, our first ever CSR impact report, is a big part of that.



Gary Gilburd and Mike Harfield,
Co-founders of Sigma Connected



Here are just some of the highlights from last year:



Our first ever carbon footprint measurement

While this was certainly a challenge, across two countries, we're committed to measuring, reducing and mitigating the size of our carbon footprint with the goal of being carbon neutral by 2030.



Over 450 graduates from Shadow Careers

As the founding partner of Shadow Careers, an Impact Sourcing initiative in Cape Town, South Africa – we were delighted to be part of two key milestones: their 500th graduate and 1,000th graduate both found careers at Sigma Connected.



Our location strategy

National WFH in the UK so anyone can work for us. Plus, in South Africa, we were the first BPO to open a contact centre in a township in the Western Cape. Mitchells Plain, Cape Town, is a neighbourhood where many of our employees live.



Employee net promoter score (eNPS) of +41

Across the UK and South Africa, and voted by our employees as one of the UK's top employers in The Sunday Times Best Places to Work survey.



CSR Strategy

Improve everything always

1

Connecting
with people

Enabling colleagues to become
the best they can be



2

Connecting
with places

Supporting the wider communities
in which we operate



3

Connecting
with our planet

Creating a sustainable business



PILLAR

1

Connecting with people

Enabling people to become the best they can be

Our core values:

Always Together | Always Learning | Always Adapting | Always Better

We're a big company, with a family business ethic. While many businesses promote 'people first', we truly mean it. We couldn't be more proud to be voted by our employees as one of the UK's top employers in [The Sunday Times Best Places to Work survey](#), and the only BPO on that list.

Impact Sourcing

Empowering marginalised communities through genuine career opportunities

Impact Sourcing – actively recruiting, training and employing socio-economically disadvantaged individuals – plays an important part of our recruitment strategy both in the UK and in Cape Town, South Africa.

10% of UK employees
60% of SA employees

recruited
through Impact
Sourcing

**Shadow
Careers**

500th graduate and 1,000th graduate
both found careers at Sigma Connected

In the UK:

We partner with organisations such as BMet, PeoplePlus, and Back2Work, that support the long term unemployed to get back into work, as well as run our own community recruitment programmes. Around 10% of our new employees in the UK are recruited this way.

In South Africa:

We work in partnership with Shadow Careers, a national job creation initiative, and were their very first partner. We also work with Youth Employment Services (Yes). Through these partnerships, and through directly reaching out to communities, over 60% of our South African workforce is recruited through Impact Sourcing.

We have established a global Impact Sourcing charter to define and set targets going forward. We are still collating data to benchmark our starting position so some targets still need to be set.



It is challenging, being a young mum at 21, juggling a new role and a new baby. But Sigma Connected has been so supportive ... I don't even have to worry about commuting as they provide transport. And, unlike many women, I know my career will not be held back because I'm a mum.



Chante – Team Manager, Sigma Connected,
recruited through Shadow Careers

MEASURES OF SUCCESS

	Current position	Target
Partner Placement (Advisor)	SA - 10% / UK - 20%	20%
Direct Placement (Advisor)	SA - 60% (disadvantaged backgrounds) UK - Unknown	Initial target - maintain SA, understand UK
Niche Partners	0	2 - one per country
Niche Placements	0	TBC
Promotions	SA - 99% (disadvantaged backgrounds) UK - Unknown	Initial target - maintain SA, understand UK
Engagement Scores / Variation	Unknown / Need to assess	No variation
Retention Stats / Variation	Unknown / Need to assess	No variation

We were the first outsourcing business in Western Cape to open a contact centre in a township community. Our call centre in Mitchells Plain is right next door to Shadow Careers. Its location cuts down on the need for costly travel for our employees, improves their work-life balance and enables us to support the community where many of our employees live.

The whole experience, from Shadow Careers to now, has given me a sense of pride and achievement. Sigma Connected has helped me see my potential and there are always opportunities here to keep on learning and to grow your career.

Ashley – Real Time Analyst, Sigma Connected,
recruited through Shadow Careers



Diversity, equality and inclusion (DE&I)

Our inclusive approach starts with recruitment. Nothing is a barrier when it comes to attracting the right talent – then encouraging and guiding their career to ensure they flourish in their chosen path. We want our diverse workforce, in the UK and South Africa, to feel empowered and supported in bringing their authentic selves to work.

All our UK agents **work with us remotely**, so location is never a problem. Everyone has the same opportunities for promotion and learning and everyone is fully supported by our team managers.

In South Africa, we opened our new contact centre in the Mitchells Plain township in Cape Town, where more than 60% of our employees live. Taking jobs to the people is an important and ground-breaking part of our strategy. It cuts down on costly travel, improves work-life balance and enables us to support the community where many of our employees live.

With a workforce in two countries, we have specific schemes in place such as our 'One Me, One Sigma' programme, which brings together colleagues across the UK and South Africa to collaborate on projects with a focus on diversity, equality and inclusion.



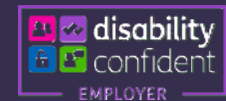
Recent highlights include:

- One Me, One Sigma group established
- New Employee Assistance Programme launched
- **Gender pay gap** consistently reduced over the last 3 years
- New partnerships/accreditations – including Impact Sourcing partnerships, Mental Health Charter, Disability Confident Employer
- Highest colleague engagement scores ever
- Voted by employees as a top employer in The Sunday Times Best Places to Work.

We are platinum members of the **Mental Health Charter**



We are a **Disability Confident employer**



Targets have been set against our success measures where we have been able to benchmark current performance. We are still collating data to benchmark our starting position so some targets still need to be set.

MEASURES & INDICATORS OF SUCCESS		
	Current	Target
Engagement Stats / Variation	Small data pool indicates lower eNPS for trans/non-binary/ prefer not to say	No variation
Retention Stats / Variation	Unknown / Need to assess	No variation
DI&E Specific Question Responses	Group +31% SA- +19% UK- +45%	5% points increase across all
Gender Pay Gap Reporting	Mean - 16.9% Median - 3.3%	Maintain / Reduce
DI&E Demographic Stats	Fair representaion	Initial - understand what good equality index looks like
DI&E Activity Levels of Engagement	Unknown / Need to assess	To be defined
EAP UK - App Sign-UP	37%	60%

Career development

Everyone at Sigma Connected is on a career path to be where they want to be. We want to change preconceptions about BPOs and contact centre working, and we want to help people to have rewarding and meaningful careers. Above all, we want people to feel valued and to enjoy working within the Sigma Connected community.

Recent highlights include:

- Always Improving Performance Framework launched – a more positive and people-centric reframing of performance reviews, with regular firesides and look ahead sessions
- A new People Leadership Development programme created across UK and South Africa
- A new Career Development Hive training course launched.

Voted by
employees
as

**The Sunday
Times' Best
Places to Work**

THE SUNDAY TIMES
**Best Places
to Work 2023**
BIG COMPANY

We help people be in a better place. Everyone with us is on a journey, whether that's developing with us – moving either through the ranks or moving to an area of the business that really excites them – or giving them the confidence to go and do their own thing.

Mike Harfield – COO, Sigma Connected

eNPS of +41



I think we have a unique culture and a unique community here. There's kindness, and there's no tough or aggressive culture, no politics, no backstabbing and no blame. Everyone's always encouraged to be what they want to be.

Andrew Law – CFO, Sigma Connected

MEASURES OF SUCCESS

	Current	Target
Firesides	UK - 60% SA - Unknown	85% Completion
Look Aheads (Sept)	UK - 57% SA - Unknown	85% Completion
Your Year (Mar)	Launching March	85% Completion
People Leadership Dev Programme (modules)	7 modules (2023)	8 planned / 4 proactive
People Leadership Dev Programme (attendance)	1440 training hours delivered (but attendance % not fully accurate)	80% attendance
Apprenticeships & Learnerships (non-Agent)	Apprenticeships - 2% Learnerships - 5%	Apprenticeships - 10% Learnerships - 20%
Leadership Programmes	Aspire enrolments: UK - 70 SA- 91	100% of leaders enrolled or completed

I take great pride in watching our people grow. We want them to blossom and deliver their best here, without restriction. My job is to facilitate an environment where people can go and deliver the best of themselves.

Gary Gilburd – CEO, Sigma Connected

Connecting with places

We're committed to supporting and giving back to the communities where we operate. We embed this into the way we work, through practices such as Impact Sourcing, and we also have a central Sigma Connected Community Foundation Fund.

Through this fund, our employees can nominate local charities in their community to receive a donation. Each quarter, up to three local charities both in the UK and in Cape Town, South Africa will benefit from a donation.

UK

In 2023 we supported:



Safeline



Street Teams



Rape and Sexual
Violence Project



Traveller Movement



Mummy's Star



War Child

South Africa

In 2023 we supported:



Tiny Owls Baby Home



Home from Home



Safeline



Heaven's Nest



Blood donations



Soup kitchens



School uniform
donations

All UK-based employees can also make a personal donation directly from their salaries to our nominated charity – currently The Trussell Trust. We also support Birmingham Children's Hospital with a monthly donation.





“*The monthly donation pledge from Mike and his colleagues is a huge boost for our iMRI appeal, which is all about investing in state-of-the-art neuro-surgery technology which can treat brain tumours and epilepsy.*”

Matt Mangan – Director of Philanthropy and Partnerships at Birmingham Women’s and Children’s Hospital Charity



We are overwhelmed at the generosity of everyone at Sigma Connected and thank them from the bottom of our hearts. They have shown a huge interest in what we do and the impact we try to make, so we truly are grateful. It is already making a difference.



Kim Allen – Founder of Tiny Owls Baby Home, safety care for orphaned and relinquished babies in South Africa

For the second year running, instead of client Christmas gifts, we gave over 30 families, who our ReachOut service had connected with, supermarket vouchers to help with the cost of Christmas.

ReachOut is an award-winning service developed by Sigma Connected to help our clients engage with, and support, their hard-to-reach customers with problem debt. It’s a third party, totally safe, non-judgemental and confidential space, for customers to talk. We can then offer support and guide them towards taking the first achievable steps. It’s never about the payment – it’s to reassure customers and guide them to whichever organisation is best placed to help.

reachout
BY SIGMA CONNECTED

PILLAR

3

Connecting with our planet

Sigma Connected is firmly committed to environmental sustainability and aims to be carbon neutral before the end of 2030. As part of this goal, we have undertaken our first carbon footprint report across our operations in both the UK and South Africa.

This report highlights areas where we can reduce our footprint and acts as a baseline from which we can measure the results of our actions going forward. In those areas where we can't reduce our emissions, we're looking at ways to mitigate them.

Overall, for a company our size, with multiple locations in Cape Town, our carbon footprint is considered reasonably low at 10,064 tCO₂e.

- **Scope 1 emissions:** 69.4 tCO₂e
- **Scope 2 emissions:** 1,808.3 tCO₂e
- **Scope 3 emissions:** 8,185.9 tCO₂e

Our emissions are the equivalent of:

- **1,877 homes'** electricity use for one year
- **22,307 barrels** of oil consumed
- **947,407 gallons** of diesel consumed
- **24,724,403 miles** driven by an average gasoline-powered passenger vehicle

We know we have work to do. Measuring our emissions is only the start. Now, our focus is on ways to reduce and mitigate them.



Reforestation and sustainability

In partnership with environmental charity Treedom, we gift a tree to farmers in Tanzania, Ecuador and Madagascar every time a new team member passes their probation. Our employees plant their own virtual tree in the 'Sigma Connected Forest' and can follow the progress of the project it belongs to.



Our link up with Treedom is an important part of our corporate responsibility programme and it's brilliant to reach 4,800 trees being planted in just two years.

It also comes at an important time as we reach a total of 5,000 people across the whole Group. That is a huge milestone for us too, but we don't forget that for every person joining means one more tree in the ground.



Gary Gilburd – CEO, Sigma Connected

Where people



with people



www.sigmaconnected.com