



CEN Group Holdings

Sustainability Report

2024



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Embedding Sustainability

Why Sustainability Matters

A message from the CEO

At CEN, we recognise the importance of leading by example and aim to conduct ourselves in a sustainable manner, doing all that we can for our people, planet and community. In an ever-changing ESG landscape, we have continued to adapt to changing regulation, partnering with organisations across various sectors and continually aiming to improve our clients' sustainability performance. Our actions help clients to meet their stakeholder expectations, remain compliant with regulation and stay ahead of emerging trends by integrating sustainable practices into their operations.

The achievements we have made during 2024 are a testament to the hard work and passion of our team which are evidenced by the satisfaction our employees feel in the environment we have created. This year CEN became a certified 'Great Place to Work'. We strive to create a positive work environment where employees feel engaged and empowered and this achievement reflects the work we have done to ensure that this culture is upheld.

The remainder of this report highlights the work we have done between 01 August 2023 and 31 July 2024, as well as outlining our goals for the future. Although we strive for a positive impact, we recognise that there is always more that can be done and so we will continue to push for change to create a more sustainable future.



About CEN Group Holdings

CEN Group Holdings (CEN) is a fast-growing consultancy with a financial focus and data-led approach to maximising stakeholder value. There are three underlying businesses within the Group:

- Our Investor Relations business is the UK's leading independent investor relations and board advisory practice, advising and supporting companies in navigating financial markets and enhancing value.
- Our award-winning Sustainability Consultancy helps companies to maximise their ESG potential, improving performance and disclosures. We are committed to delivering measurable results and making a positive impact on the planet and society.
- Our ESG Data business provides data and research solutions, to enhance understanding of exposures and management of ESG risk, with unrivalled coverage of UK small and mid-cap companies.

Our material topics

In 2023, we undertook a materiality assessment to identify the key sustainability issues which impact CEN's ability to deliver against its obligations, and which influence the decisions of its stakeholders.

Based on our materiality assessment, the following topics were deemed the most material to CEN:

- 1. Ethical Behaviour**
- 2. Culture of Quality**
- 3. Talent Attraction & Retention**
- 4. Diversity, Equality and Inclusion**
- 5. Data Privacy/Cybersecurity**

These are the issues on which we report externally and which we manage our exposures and internally. Each topic is associated by metrics and KPIs that we use to measure and monitor our performance on an ongoing basis. We have also set performance targets based on these material topics. These remain standing agenda items in the Advisory Panel and our monthly leadership meetings.

Whilst Environmental Management & Climate Change was not deemed to be material, based on our company mission, we also believe it is appropriate to set a target and track an impact metric for climate change. We will report on our scope 1 & 2 emissions and ambition to be Net Zero by 2040.

Our People

At CEN, our people are at the heart of everything we do. We are committed to fostering a supportive, engaging, and inclusive environment that prioritises employee wellbeing, professional growth, and meaningful community impact.

Diversity and Inclusion

CEN is fully committed to providing equal opportunities for all employees and to eliminating unlawful and unfair discrimination. We aim to create a culture that encourages and values diversity, and that appoints, rewards and promotes staff based on merit. Accordingly, we will not unlawfully discriminate against any employee, worker or job applicant based on age, disability, gender/gender reassignment, marriage or civil partnership status, pregnancy, maternity, race (including colour, nationality and ethnic or national origin), religion or belief, political opinion, sex, sexual orientation or any other protected characteristic.

To foster an inclusive culture, all CEN employees need to understand the expectations for their interactions with fellow team members. Therefore, it is mandatory for all employees to complete training on diversity, equality, and inclusion, as well as on bullying and harassment. This training helps ensure that everyone recognises the potential impact of their words and actions on their colleagues and provides them with the necessary skills for effective communication, aiming to prevent any individual from feeling victimised or discriminated against in the workplace. Furthermore, CEN's leadership team actively monitors diversity and inclusion issues as part of regular people reviews, ensuring that fostering respect and inclusivity remains a consistent and ongoing priority at all levels of the organisation.

In addition to our equality policy, we strive to acknowledge the challenges faced by new parents and provide comprehensive support for parents at CEN. This includes offering maternity and paternity packages that exceed statutory requirements, featuring enhanced leave and pay during this important period. We also offer a hybrid work model, allowing employees to better manage their work-life balance.

Employee diversity data – as of 31 July 2024

Type of employees

Type of employee	Count
Salaried Full time	31
Salaried Part time	5
Contractors	1
Placement students	1

Gender diversity

Gender identified	Count	%
Male	26	72.2%
Female	10	27.8%
Total	36	100%

Diversity by employment level

Employment level	Male	Female	% female
Consultant	5	1	16.7%
Senior Consultant	6	2	25.0%
Principal Consultant	4	2	33.3%
Director	11	3	21.4%
Executive Assistant	0	2	100.0%

Ethnic diversity

Ethnic Group	Count	%
White (White British, White Other)	29	80.6%
Asian (Chinese, Indian, Bangladeshi, Pakistani, Other Asian)	3	8.3%
Black/African/Caribbean/Black British	1	2.8%
Mixed/Multiple ethnic groups	3	5.6%

Talent and Career Management

CEN prides itself on creating a positive work environment that encourages the personal development of employees and fosters collaborative working across all levels of the business.

CEN is dedicated to the continuous development of our employees' skills, supporting their professional growth and fostering talent progression. Training and development at CEN occur in many forms, with a strong emphasis on "on-the-job" learning. Employees gain valuable experience and insights by working as part of client teams, learning directly from more experienced colleagues and applying their knowledge in real-world scenarios.

To provide a structured approach, we monitor the development of employees through mid- and full-year performance reviews, where employees are assessed against a formalised competency framework. This framework is communicated to all employees to ensure they are aware of the requirements of their current position and what is needed to be considered for promotion.

To facilitate the successful integration of new team members, we also have a formal onboarding process, helping them transition smoothly into their roles.

In FY24, we launched Subject Matter Expert (SME) teams to deepen individual expertise in specific areas. These groups allow individuals to focus on a particular area and enhance their knowledge through additional research and training.

Recognising the rapidly evolving nature of ESG reporting, we emphasise continuous learning and adaptation. Our bi-weekly knowledge-sharing sessions allow team members to present their research on various topics, promoting collective education. Employees are encouraged to identify knowledge gaps and pursue further learning, either independently or by discussing training needs with their line managers.

Additionally, to support the ongoing development of our team, CEN has implemented a policy for funding external training programs. Employees who identify training or educational opportunities they believe would enhance their roles can present these to management. If deemed appropriate, CEN may provide funding for the training.

In line with our commitment to fostering talent, CEN annually welcomes placement students from The University of Bath. Students spend 13-months working as part of the team, engaged in client

projects and learning about the evolving landscape of ESG. We are proud to offer this important first step in their careers and have successfully welcomed many of them back as graduates.

Case Study – CEN sponsored Masters

As part of CEN's commitment to employee development, one of our employees is currently undertaking a Masters in Sustainability at Cranfield University. This course fosters both the personal and professional growth of a committed team member while enhancing our company's understanding of integrating sustainability into business practices. It combines technical skills in areas such as circular supply chains and environmental innovation with management skills for leading and implementing organisational changes that improve sustainability performance.

"The course has helped me to better understand the trade-offs and challenges CEN clients typically face when allocating resources to drive their sustainability goals. It is useful in my business development role because it has made it easier to put myself in clients' shoes to see what sustainability means in their daily operations, how they go about prioritising the most impactful areas for sustainability as well as juggling their stakeholder reporting requirements." – Ade Roberts, Principal Consultant.

Community Partnerships

As a socially responsible business, CEN is committed to acting as a force for good within the wider community. We aim to provide employees with the incentive to make a positive impact which is why we have developed a company-wide volunteering policy. The policy entitles each employee to up to two paid volunteering days each year.

In addition to this, CEN has demonstrated its commitment to the wider community through its partnership with the charity My Life Films.

Case Study – My Life Films

My Life Films is an organisation made up of passionate film makers, providing services to improve the mental health and wellbeing of people living with dementia. In FY24 CEN began working with My Life Films to produce their first social impact report, with a focus on building out their impact measurement framework. Part of this included leading a 'Theory of Change' workshop for the organisation, to help them more clearly define the outcomes of their interventions and prove the importance of their work. Overall, participants said CEN ran the workshop well and they found the session to be helpful in developing their work and mission.

'We covered a great deal, in a very short time and I believe it was successful..., creating a shared base level of relevant knowledge, identified some key areas to drill down into and explore further and will give us a strong foundation to build and refine from.' – My Life Films, Theory of Change workshop participant.

Case Study – Community engagement with local school

At the beginning of 2024, employee representatives along with our CEO Chris Dyett, attended a local school to talk to students about careers in both the ESG and investor relations landscapes. This opportunity not only developed students learning but also allowed CEN to engage with young people just beginning to consider their future career paths. Discussions ranged from the general premise of ESG as well as links to their current course content to improve their understanding of how ESG fits into wider business applications.

Responsible Sourcing

We aim to incorporate sustainability considerations into all the decisions we make as a business. As such, CEN has developed a Sustainable Procurement policy which gives consideration to goods and services offered by independent woman or minority-owned, ethical suppliers located within 50 miles of our location in Central London wherever possible. The aim of this policy is to both reduce travel miles within our supply chain, while also supporting the local economy.

Wellbeing

At CEN, the wellbeing of our staff is a top priority. We offer employees a flexible working model with hybrid remote/office working for all employees to allow for a healthy work-life balance. While flexibility is key, we encourage our team to work in the office regularly where possible to foster team spirit, collaboration, and ongoing learning.

To foster healthy lifestyles among our employees, we have implemented several supportive programs:

- All employees are covered by our comprehensive life insurance policy.
- We offer an opt-in health insurance plan through Vitality, enhancing access to healthcare.
- Our cycle scheme enables employees to save on bicycle purchases, encouraging physical activity.
- Employees enrolled in Vitality health insurance can benefit from a range of programs, including discounted gym memberships, mental wellbeing resources, and counselling services.

Health and Safety

The Employee Handbook outlines CEN's commitment to providing a safe and healthy work environment for all employees, providing appropriate training where necessary. All staff undertake annual health and safety training, and employees are actively encouraged to report any health and safety concerns.

The Health and Safety Policy outlines our commitment to the maintenance of a positive health and safety culture with overall responsibility lying with the People Director.

Engagement

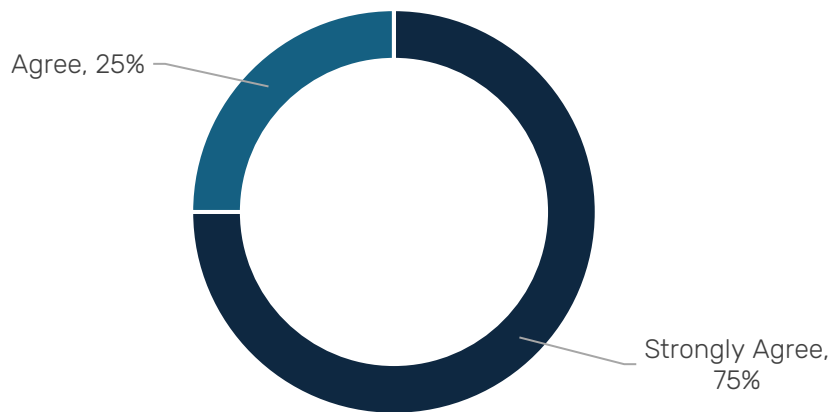
At CEN, we believe that strong engagement with both our customers and employees is essential to our success and sustainability. By maintaining open lines of communication, we continuously work to enhance our services and workplace environment, driving both satisfaction and growth.

Customer Engagement

We have ongoing communication and dialogue with our clients to ensure we have full awareness of the success and impact of our services. We conduct an annual Group-wide customer survey to provide clients with the opportunity to provide feedback on the services they have received from CEN. This allows us to ensure we are providing the best service possible as well as identifying potential areas for improvement.

The FY24 Group-wide customer survey provided valuable insights into the impact and satisfaction of our services. We received responses from a diverse range of clients, with results demonstrating high level of satisfaction. Overall, 75% of respondents strongly agreed, and 25% agreed, that they were satisfied with the services provided by CEN Group. This met our annual customer satisfaction target for a second consecutive year.

To what extent do you agree with the following statement?:
"Overall, you are satisfied with the services provided by CEN Group."



Clients consistently praised our professionalism, expertise, and impact, with specific mentions of our sustainability consultancy business for their assistance in emissions calculations and support in navigating new complex topics. This feedback underscores our commitment to delivering high-quality, impactful solutions that meet the evolving needs of our clients.

Employee Engagement

At CEN, we place a strong emphasis on employee engagement, recognising that a motivated and satisfied workforce is key to our success.

Case Study – Great Place to Work Certification



In 2024, CEN became a certified 'Great Place to Work' and ranked 93rd for "The 2024 Best Workplaces for Wellbeing" for small companies.

The Great Place to Work Certification is based on anonymous employee surveys and acknowledges companies that promote a positive employee experience and high levels of satisfaction. This accomplishment highlights our commitment to nurturing a supportive work environment, and we are proud to have our efforts validated by our dedicated team members.

We earned our certification by conducting an engagement survey, distributed to all employees. Overall, results showed high levels of satisfaction across various aspects, particularly with regards to cooperation between colleagues, fair treatment and communication with management. The survey also highlighted opportunities for improvement at CEN. Employees expressed a desire to celebrate our achievements more, leading us to launch the STAR Award initiative, where team members can nominate a colleague each month who has gone above and beyond in their role, to receive special recognition.

Additionally, we recognised lower scores around training and development as an area for improvement. In response, we have begun enhancing our training programs, including hosting external training sessions focused on presentation and communication skills, ensuring all employees have the tools they need to grow, thrive, and excel in their roles.

The certification is an annual initiative that we are in the process of renewing. By conducting employee engagement surveys each year, we not only reapply for the Great Place to Work Certification but also continually assess how well we have addressed employee suggestions and identify areas that still need improvement.

97% of employees agree that, taking everything into account, this is a great place to work.

Employee turnover

Employees at 31 July 2024	36
Leavers in FY24	1
Attrition rate	2.8%

Note: These calculations do not include contractors or any employees on fixed-term contracts.

Environmental Leadership

As a small organisation, CEN understands that, whilst our individual environmental impact may be limited, our responsibility to operate sustainably remains a core value. We believe that every organisation, no matter it's size, has a responsibility to contribute to addressing global environmental issues.

Our commitment is to:

- continuously improve environmental performance and integrate environmental best practice.
- reduce consumption and improve efficiency of resources.
- measure and take action to reduce our carbon footprint to meet objectives and targets.
- work alongside our office landlord to manage waste (including e-waste).
- ensure sustainable procurement of goods and services.

CEN has reported no environmental fines or penalties for FY24.

Energy and Greenhouse Gas Emissions

Although our operational footprint is comparatively small, CEN is committed in contributing to the global effort to mitigate climate change. We are proud to have set both near-term and long-term emissions reduction targets, validated by the Science Based Targets initiative (SBTi), which demonstrate our commitment to achieve Net Zero emissions by 2040. By aligning with internationally recognised standards and managing our Scope 1, 2, and 3 emissions transparently, we aim to demonstrate that smaller companies can also lead in driving meaningful change.

Our near-term target:

- CEN commits to reduce Scope 1 and Scope 2 GHG emissions 42% by 2030 from a 2023 base year.

Our long-term targets:

- CEN commits to reach Net Zero by 2040. This includes our commitment to reduce Scope 1, Scope 2 and Scope 3 emissions 100% by 2040 from a 2023 base year.

We used the GHG Protocol Corporate Accounting and Reporting Standard (GHG Protocol) to calculate our emissions and applied an operational control approach, with no material omissions from within the organisational boundary of the Group. All Scope 1 and 2 emissions are derived from our shared tenancy office with data provided to us by our landlords.

In our FY24 reporting, we have restated some Scope 3 category 1, 3, 4 and 6 emissions from our FY23 emissions to reflect improvements in our calculation methodology and data quality. These updates include enhanced data collection processes, better alignment with industry best practices, and the integration of more precise emission factors. Additionally, we have addressed data gaps and inconsistencies identified in prior reports to provide a more accurate and comprehensive representation of our carbon footprint. This restatement ensures transparency and reinforces our commitment to robust environmental reporting standards, enabling stakeholders to track our progress with greater confidence.

CEN's relevant Scope 3 categories:



1). Purchased Goods & Services



3). Fuel & Energy Related Activities



4). Upstream Transportation & Distribution



6). Business Travel



7). Employee Commuting

Our combined Scope 1 & 2 emissions (both location and market based), decreased by 8.8% and 71.3%, respectively, from our FY23 baseline. Our Scope 1 emissions decreased by 45.3% due building efficiency improvements and building renovations lowering the gas consumption apportioned to our floor. This year, we are reporting on our Scope 2 market based emissions for the first time for both FY23 and FY24. In FY24, our landlord procured 100% renewable electricity, supported by Renewable Energy Certificates (REC's), for our operations.

As a result of the switch to 100% renewable electricity across our operations, we have met and exceeded our near-term Scope 1 and 2 emissions reduction target. This transition enabled us to achieve a 71.3% year-on-year reduction in emissions from FY23 to FY24, significantly surpassing our target of a 42% reduction. We will continue to look to reduce our emissions footprint and investigate more permanent reduction solutions over time, both in our premises and ways of working.

Our Scope 3 emissions represent a significant portion of our footprint and increased by 5.5% between FY23 and FY24. Of total Scope 1, 2 and 3 emissions (market based), 75% are attributable to purchased goods & services. This category recorded a significant increase of 38.8% between FY23 and FY24. While we experienced a moderate increase across our expenses during FY24, relative to FY23, the substantial difference is largely down to updated emissions factors and restating the previous year figure. Using updated emissions factors led to a higher level of emissions associated with our external consulting fees and rental expense, and restating our FY23 figure to adjust for inflation resulted in a 15% decrease in last year's calculation.

Regarding our fuel and energy-related activities, the significant reduction compared to last year (-80.3%) is attributable to our transition to 100% renewable electricity for all our consumption this year. Emissions from upstream transportation & distribution also decreased sharply by 83% which can be attributed to slower workforce growth reducing the need for new electronic equipment. Throughout FY24, we aimed for a reduction in international travel for business related services, resulting in considerably lower business travel emissions.

The increase in employee commuting emissions can be linked to the 25% growth of our workforce, which aligns closely with the annual change. Additionally, we have also included emissions from remote work in this calculation to reflect our flexible work culture.

GHG Emissions

Emissions Category			
	2023	2024	Annual % Change
Scope 1: Direct emissions (tCO ₂ e)	6.4	3.5	-45.3%
Scope 2: Indirect emissions from purchased electricity (location based) (tCO ₂ e)	6.1	7.9	29.5%
Scope 2: Indirect emissions from purchased electricity (market based) (tCO ₂ e)	5.8	0	-100%
Total Scope 1 & 2 (location based)	12.5	11.4	-8.8%
Total Scope 1 & 2 (market based)	12.2	3.5	-71.3%
Scope 3: Corporate Value Chain (tCO ₂ e)			
Category 1: Purchased Goods & Services	83.4 ¹	115.8	38.8%
Category 3: Fuel & Energy related activities	3.1 ¹	0.6	-80.6%
Category 4: Upstream Transportation & Distribution	<0.1 ¹	<0.1	-83.1%
Category 6: Business Travel	44.5 ¹	19.5	-56.2%
Category 7: Employee Commuting (Incl. working from home)	11.6	14.6	25.9%
Total Scope 3	142.6	150.5	5.5%
Total Scope 1, Scope 2 (location based) and Scope 3 emissions	155.1	161.9	4.3%
Total Scope 1, Scope 2 (market based) and Scope 3 emissions	154.8	154	-0.5%
Total operational energy consumption (kWh)	64,605	57,616	-10.8%

Water Consumption

Given the nature of our operations, CEN does not have a significant impact in regards to water consumption. Despite this, we are committed to regularly monitoring and recording water usage. For our leased asset, the data is collected by the property manager then proportioned to each tenant by floor space. Due to recent building renovations, water consumption apportioned to our floor has decreased by 19%.

Water Consumption

	2023	2024	Annual Change %
Freshwater consumption (m ³)	174m ³	140m ³	-19.5%

¹ 2023 data restated

Waste Management

CEN is committed to limiting and reducing waste in its operations wherever possible. We identify and limit sources of waste, promoting recycling in an attempt to avoid landfill, and support wherever possible, the circular economy. For example, when laptops have needed fixing, faulty parts have been returned to the manufacturer of the equipment.

Sustainable Procurement

CEN is committed to paying due regard to any environmental, ethical and social impact that its procurement actions incur, both in the immediate timescale and over the expected life-cycle of the procured goods or services. We encourage our suppliers, as well as their employees, subcontractors and/or agents to conduct their procurement in line with this intention.

We have already limited our use of consumables (such as paper materials e.g. business cards, printer paper, envelopes etc) significantly. Remaining purchases are evaluated according to the following principles: Minimisation, Re-usability, Recyclability, Disposability and Supplier.

CEN aims to work in partnership, seeking out organisations that share our commitment to sound environmental performance and improvement.

Ethics and Compliance

At CEN, we uphold the highest standards of ethics, integrity, and compliance, ensuring 100% of employees are thoroughly trained annually on our Code of Conduct and policies to foster a responsible and transparent workplace.

Modern Slavery

CEN is committed to ensuring there is transparency in our approach to tackling modern slavery throughout our supply chains. We expect the same commitment from all our suppliers, and we expect that our suppliers will hold their own suppliers to the same high standards. Suppliers shall implement appropriate due diligence practices and provide training to their staff to identify the risk of and/or actual instances of human rights and modern slavery.

Whistleblowing

CEN is committed to maintaining the highest standards of integrity and ethics in our business operations. As such, our Whistleblowing Policy provides a framework for all employees to report any suspected malpractice, wrongdoing or dangers in relation to the company's activities. If someone requests that a matter be kept confidential, CEN will honour this request unless legally obligated to do otherwise. While concerns can be reported anonymously, we urge individuals to include their name whenever feasible. CEN is committed to ensuring employees do not suffer any detrimental treatment as a result of raising a genuine concern.

Anti-bribery and Corruption (ABC)

CEN is committed to conducting business with integrity and in compliance with all applicable laws and regulations. Our ABC Policy aims to prevent bribery and corruption in all forms and must be followed by all employees of The Group. We ensure all employees are aware of what is expected of them regarding approaches to bribery and corruption through annual training. There were no breaches of our ABC policy in FY24.

The CEO holds ultimate responsibility for the ABC policy, which is regularly monitored to ensure compliance.

Human Rights

CEN supports the principles set out in the UN Declaration of Human Rights and adheres to relevant international standards. Our Human Rights Policy applies to all our employees and outlines our commitment to upholding and promoting human rights in all areas of our business.

Information Systems and Technology

CEN is committed to ensuring the security of its information systems and the personal information for which it is responsible. In the unlikely event of data being lost or shared inappropriately it is vital that appropriate action is taken to minimise any associated risk as soon as possible. CEN is committed to compliance with all relevant laws and regulations and will ensure that all employees are adequately trained regarding their data protection responsibilities. All employees are subject to regular simulated phishing attacks to monitor their vigilance regarding cybersecurity threats.

Appendix

Materiality Assessment process

A long list of likely material issues for CEN across the environmental, social and governance categories were first identified through peer group benchmarking, relevant framework and standard analysis. A working session with CEN management was then carried out to agree on a short list of ESG topics.

Following this, the short list was then subject to ranking in importance by stakeholders and executive management. Stakeholders included employees, the advisory panel, customers and suppliers. The results were then collated, as outlined in the materiality matrix.

