



BREAKING DOWN BARRIERS

IMPACT REPORT



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THIS IS PURPOSE

Curtins

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FOREWORDS

Forewords

0.1 Rt Hon Justine Greening, Former Secretary of State for Education and Chair of the Purpose Coalition

Weak social mobility continues to be one of the biggest challenges facing the UK today. To tackle this, we need organisations that are willing to take responsibility, drive change, and break down the barriers to opportunity. Curtins is one of those organisations, and this report demonstrates the vital role that businesses can play in addressing these issues head-on.

Curtins’ commitment to social impact is clear through its actions. As an Employee-Owned Trust, it has placed its people at the centre of everything it does, fostering an inclusive environment where every colleague has a voice and the opportunity to thrive. The organisation’s dedication to creating fair career pathways and nurturing diverse talent is paving the way for others in the industry. Initiatives like the Step Ahead Programme and Academy Programme showcase Curtins’ proactive approach to developing a varied and skilled talent pipeline, while its focus on fair career progression ensures that people from all backgrounds can access opportunities for growth.



Through its engagement in The Purpose Coalition and our Breaking Down Barriers Commission, Curtins has shown how businesses can leverage their influence to create positive change beyond their own walls. The reverse mentoring programme is a powerful example of how Curtins is breaking down barriers within its own structure, enabling diverse voices to be heard and acted upon. This forward-thinking approach not only benefits individuals but strengthens the business as a whole.

The achievements outlined in this report are a testament to Curtins’ unwavering commitment to purpose-driven leadership and social responsibility. By aligning its values with its business operations, Curtins is not only delivering excellence in engineering but is also playing a crucial role in enhancing social mobility and building a more equitable society.

This report stands as an inspiring example of how businesses can embrace purpose to deliver meaningful change. I am proud to see Curtins’ ongoing commitment to making a difference, and I look forward to seeing their continued impact in driving social mobility, sustainability, and opportunity across the UK.

“This forward-thinking approach not only benefits individuals but strengthens the business as a whole.”

The UK Government’s new mission-led approach represents a pivotal opportunity to address longstanding challenges around weak social mobility. The fifth mission – breaking down barriers to opportunity – is particularly crucial, as it directly addresses the persistent inequalities that prevent many people from reaching their potential. Achieving this mission will require an unprecedented level of collaboration between government, businesses, and communities.

Curtins is a prime example of how businesses can work alongside government to tackle these issues through tangible, on-the-ground initiatives. As this report highlights, Curtins is taking a leadership role in shaping a future where opportunity is genuinely accessible to all.

The commitment to developing social value and promoting inclusivity across all its operations demonstrates how employers like Curtins can support the Government’s broader agenda. This report not only celebrates Curtins’ achievements but also provides a compelling case for how businesses can lead on social mobility. By aligning its purpose with government priorities, Curtins is playing a pivotal role in creating a fairer society for future generations.



The journey outlined in this report is one of shared ambition and partnership. It’s about recognising that breaking down barriers is not just a government responsibility but something that requires collective action. Curtins’ work within the Breaking Down Barriers Commission reflects the power of collaboration in driving sustainable change. I look forward to seeing Curtins continue to push the boundaries of what businesses can achieve and to support their efforts as a key partner in driving social mobility and opportunity for all.

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0.2 Rob Melling, CEO of Curtins

Having joined Curtins as an apprentice technician in 1981, I have had the immense privilege of witnessing and being part of its growth and evolution over the past four decades. From those early days, working out of our Rodney Street office in Liverpool, to now leading an employee-owned business with 14 offices across the UK, it has been an extraordinary journey. When I first started, we were a smaller company with a simple ambition: to deliver exceptional engineering solutions and build a culture that valued people above all else.

Becoming CEO in 2004 was one of the proudest moments of my life. At the time, I was excited to guide a business I felt so deeply connected to, and together, we navigated through numerous challenges from economic downturns to a global pandemic, emerging stronger each time. But for me, the true measure of Curtins’ success is not found in the obstacles we’ve overcome or the accolades we’ve collected. It’s the enduring ethos of collaboration, support, and shared purpose that has kept Curtins thriving for more than 60 years.

What makes me most proud is seeing how our people have taken the principles laid down by Bill Curtin and carried them forward with such passion. Watching colleagues grow, develop, and lead within the business has been the highlight of my career. Many joined us straight out of school or university and are now at the helm of their respective fields. Our investment in nurturing talent, our commitment to sustainability, and our dedication to breaking down barriers to opportunity are all testament to Curtins’ enduring legacy.

As I step back, I am thrilled to see Curtins as a key partner in The Purpose Coalition and its Breaking Down Barriers Commission. This partnership



reflects our commitment to making a positive social impact and ensuring that we continue to foster a culture of inclusion and opportunity for everyone. Seeing Curtins’ efforts benchmarked against the Purpose Goals fills me with immense pride because it demonstrates that we are not only delivering excellence in engineering but also striving to leave a lasting positive impact on the communities we serve.

I am confident that Curtins, under the leadership of Neil Parkinson and our dedicated Board, will continue to flourish and build on the foundations we have set. Neil, with his exemplary balance of determination and compassion, is the perfect custodian to take this business into its next chapter.

I want to express my heartfelt thanks to everyone at Curtins past and present, who have contributed to making it the remarkable organisation it is today. I look forward to watching Curtins continue to grow, innovate, and break down barriers in ways that truly make a difference for all.

0.4 Neil Parkinson, Director and Incoming CEO, Curtins



I am immensely proud to introduce this Breaking Down Barriers Impact Report as the incoming CEO of Curtins. This report is a testament to our commitment to creating a more equitable, inclusive, and sustainable business. As a long-standing member of The Purpose Coalition, we have strived to contribute meaningfully across the Purpose Goals, addressing barriers to opportunity within our organisation and the communities we touch.

This report showcases our ongoing efforts to create lasting change. Whether through our focus on nurturing talent, enhancing community engagement, or setting new sustainability benchmarks, we are proud to be leading by example. With this report, we reaffirm our dedication to breaking down barriers and ensuring that Curtins remains a force for positive social impact.

As we move forward, I look forward to building on the work outlined within this report while embracing new opportunities to support our people, clients, and communities. It is an exciting time for Curtins, and I look forward to leading our journey in this new chapter.


0.5 Rhiannon Carss, Marketing & Communications Director, Curtins



As Marketing & Communications Director at Curtins, I am thrilled to present our Breaking Down Barriers Impact Report produced in partnership with The Purpose Coalition. This report not only highlights Curtins’ achievements but also reflects our commitment as an employee-owned trust to foster an inclusive and supportive environment. Being an Employee-Owned Trust means that our people are at the heart of everything we do, and their voices shape the direction of our business.

Communication and mentorship have always been central to our approach, ensuring that everyone at Curtins has the opportunity to reach their full potential. We’ve seen the positive outcomes of initiatives like our reverse mentoring programme, where diverse perspectives are brought to the forefront, and I’m proud to see how these efforts contribute to breaking down barriers at all levels.

This report is a celebration of how our culture of openness and empowerment extends beyond our projects to drive meaningful social impact. As we continue to evolve, we remain dedicated to being a place where everyone can thrive, knowing that by supporting our people, we are better equipped to support our clients and communities.



BENCHMARKING CURTINS' ACTIVITY AGAINST THE PURPOSE GOALS

1. An Introduction to Curtins and its approach to Breaking Down Barriers

1.1. Background

For over 60 years, Curtins has been at the forefront of developing new and sustainable engineering solutions designed to improve the world around us and deliver lasting benefits to the people and communities they serve.

The organisation specialises in civil and structural engineering, which has been at the core of its business since its founding. Curtins’ specialised services cover every stage of the development process, from feasibility studies through to the maintenance of existing structures.

Curtins collaborates closely with clients, architects, contractors, and mechanical and electrical engineers to deliver solutions that meet the requirements of all projects – big or small, complex or simple. Committed to sustainability within the industry, it also continues to innovate with practical and environmentally responsible solutions.

On top of civil and structural engineering, Curtins offers expertise in transport and planning, sustainability, infrastructure,

geotechnical engineering, and conservation and heritage projects.

The company was founded by Bill Curtin, who began his career on site. He later became a lecturer in building and design at Brixton College in London and subsequently at the College of Knowledge in Liverpool. His desire not only to create and share knowledge but also to put theory into practice led him to establish W. G. Curtin & Partners in 1960. Initially working from his back bedroom, he, along with some of his former students, set up their first office on Rodney Street, Liverpool.

Bill Curtin was passionate about his work and the industry. His fundamental principles were to share knowledge and to nurture and support his staff to reach their full potential.

Several of the present directors and senior members of staff worked with Bill and still carry these values with them. His legacy continues through the team and across the 14 offices that Curtins operates today.

“On top of civil and structural engineering, Curtins offers expertise in transport and planning, sustainability, infrastructure, geotechnical engineering, and conservation and heritage projects.”

1.2. Curtins’ Purpose

Curtins is a proudly independent, 100% employee-owned company with a rich history spanning over 60 years. At the heart of Curtins’ purpose is a commitment to deliver solutions that enrich the communities it serves.

It is underpinned by the belief that the true value of its work is defined by the positive difference it makes in the lives of real people.

Critically, it also acknowledges that this work cannot be delivered without its people. By valuing its employees above all else, Curtins fosters a supportive and collaborative environment where individuals are encouraged to become the best versions of themselves.

This enables Curtins colleagues to do the right thing, not only for clients but also for the communities and environments in which they operate.

Curtins recognises that breaking down barriers to opportunity involves creating a culture where everyone can contribute meaningfully. Through ensuring the happiness and wellbeing of its people, it inspires them to deliver innovative and sustainable work that brings joy to clients and has a lasting positive impact on the world.

As a company with the resources of a large business but the agility of a small one, Curtins is able to manage straightforward tasks exceptionally well and tackle complex challenges in a straightforward manner.

This responsiveness and imagination allow it to address barriers to opportunity by providing tailored solutions that meet the unique needs of each project and community.

Sustainability is also a key focus for Curtins and is a fundamental aspect of its operations. It is committed to reducing the average embodied carbon in its projects from 340 kgCO₂e/m² to 295 kgCO₂e/m² by 2030.

Curtins also actively collaborates with national bodies and partners to advocate for industry-wide changes:

- Membership in the Institution of Structural Engineers’ Climate Change Task Group
- Participation in the Association of Consulting Engineers’ Net Zero Advocacy Group
- Involvement with the Institution of Civil Engineers
- Commitment to the Yorkshire & Humber Climate Action Pledge

Working with these organisations, Curtins aims to influence government policy, promote new legislation – including the UK Net Zero Buildings Standard and Part Z of the Building Regulations – and drive systemic change within the industry.

Its collaborations also extend to partnerships with organisations like the Met Office for climate science, carbon consultancies like Akerlof and Construction Carbon, and companies specialising in sustainable materials, such as PCE Ltd and EMR/Cleveland Steel. Through these partnerships, Curtins seeks to maximise its impact on sustainability and break down the barriers to increased adoption of greener practices.

1.3. Breaking Down Britain's Barriers

The Purpose Coalition measures organisations against a set of sector-relevant social impact criteria. The Purpose Goals outline 15 interconnected impact barriers to opportunity. By drawing on expertise provided by academia and business, the Goals are designed to specifically address some of the unique challenges facing the UK.

The Coalition's cross-party work brings together the UK's most innovative leaders, parliamentarians and businesses to innovate, share best practice, and develop solutions for improving the role that organisations can play for their customers, colleagues and communities by breaking down barriers to opportunity.

The Purpose Coalition is chaired by Rt Hon Justine Greening, the UK's former Secretary of State for Education, Transport and International Development; and led by Nick Forbes CBE, who recently served in Sir Keir Starmer's Shadow Cabinet, who leads the Purpose Coalition's work with the Labour Party; Rt Hon Anne Milton, former Minister for Apprenticeships and a Minister in the Department for Health and Social Care; and Lord Walney, former No 10 Senior Advisor to Gordon Brown and Labour Member of Parliament for Barrow and Furness.

The Goals were designed following Justine Greening's experience – as Secretary of State for International Development – leading the UK's delegation to the convention of the United Nations (UN) that established the 2015 UN Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs). The Purpose Goals apply the SDGs in a UK context.

The SDGs as interlinked goals emphasised the interdependent environmental, social, and economic aspects of development and centralised the role of sustainability. At the time, Justine recognised how transformative a common set of accessible but ambitious goals could be in galvanising action to effect change. After leaving Government in 2019, Justine established the Purpose Coalition and Social Mobility Pledge with the intention of galvanising UK economic and social actors to improve social mobility in the UK.

The Purpose Goals focus on key life stages and highlight the main issues that need to be resolved to break down barriers to opportunity in the UK. The Goals are intended to guide ambition, provoke action, and measure progress.

Curtins is active across all 15 Purpose Goals but is specifically focused on showcasing best practice and upscaling its social impact in key areas of strategic expertise as identified in this Impact Report.

“The Purpose Goals focus on key life stages and highlight the main issues that need to be resolved to break down barriers to opportunity in the UK.”





BENCHMARKING CURTINS' ACTIVITY AGAINST THE PURPOSE GOALS

2. Benchmarking Curtins' Activity Against the Purpose Goals



2.1. Purpose Goal 3 – Positive Destinations Post 16+

2.1.1. STEM Outreach

Curtins actively engages in STEM outreach to inspire students and provide insights into engineering careers, helping to support their choices after the age of 16.

For over seven years, the business has partnered with Inspire, a charity dedicated to offering work experience opportunities linked to social value commitments. Through this collaboration, Curtins provides students with practical experiences, and some students return for longer placements, indicating sustained interest and engagement.

A wide range of employees conduct outreach across its locations, involving multiple departments within Curtins to give students a well-rounded experience. The sessions expose students to various aspects of the engineering field – ensuring they gain comprehensive insights into potential career paths.

Critically, it tailors STEM activities to align with school curriculums, enhancing the relevance and engagement of its programmes.

This approach has received positive feedback from teachers, as activities that complement classroom learning make the experience more

meaningful for students. Recognising the importance of adapting to educational needs, Curtins aims to make its outreach as beneficial as possible for both students and schools.

There is also an ambition to expand outreach to further education colleges, particularly in the London area, to reach a wider range of students. Through extending its programmes to include older students, Curtins seeks to support individuals at critical decision-making stages regarding their future careers.

Despite this vital work by Curtins employees, initiating contact with schools and securing staff participation remain challenges. Despite these obstacles, Curtins recognises the importance of early engagement and is working to enhance STEM involvement at the primary school level.

This approach seeks to bridge the gap between education and industry, ensuring that students are better prepared for the realities of engineering careers. Through provoking interest and providing practical insights, Curtins contributes to developing the next generation of engineers and supports the overall growth of the industry.

2.1.2. A Varied Talent Pipeline

Curtins places significant emphasis on developing a varied talent pipeline to support the future of the engineering industry and Britain's skilled workforce.

One critical initiative is the Insight Programme, which was created during the COVID-19 pandemic to offer virtual work experience opportunities. This programme provided placements for 40 students, including online software training, workshops on employability skills, and sessions with both internal and external speakers.

Offering practical experience and exposure to the engineering field, Curtins helps students make informed decisions about their future careers.

In addition to engaging with students, Curtins invests in the professional development of graduates through the Academy Programme.

This structured development plan has expanded from 14 to 19 modules over four years and focuses on both technical and professional skills. The programme supports graduates in achieving professional chartership, with Curtins covering the subscription fees for up to five years to assist them in reaching this milestone.

Sustainability is a core component of Curtins' talent development. Through the Curtins Academy training programme, all graduates – representing around 20% of the company's employees – complete a module on Sustainability in Construction.



This commitment ensures that graduates understand their professional responsibilities towards climate action and sustainability in construction. They engage in 100 hours of graduate development within sustainability each year, equipping them with the knowledge and skills to contribute positively to environmental goals.

Curtins combines practical experience, professional development, and a strong emphasis on sustainability – aiming to establish a diverse and skilled talent pipeline.

Its initiatives not only benefit the individuals involved but also strengthen the engineering industry by preparing the next generation of professionals to meet current and future challenges.

“Offering practical experience and exposure to the engineering field, Curtins helps students make informed decisions about their future careers.”

2.1.3. Case Study – Rob Melling

Rob's journey from apprentice technician to CEO illustrates Curtins' commitment to social impact.

The organisations supportive culture enabled him to advance based on merit and dedication.

Rob began his career with Curtins in 1981, entering the company as an apprentice technician during a time of economic recession and limited job opportunities. Initially drawn to technical drawing, he recognised the potential within the engineering field despite facing academic challenges in his O-level exams.

Seeking to advance his qualifications, Rob pursued further education at the University of Sheffield, one of the few institutions accepting OMC HNC qualifications at the time.

While studying, he maintained his connection with Curtins by working during holidays, reinforcing his relationship with the company. After graduating in 1986, Rob returned to Curtins, where a supportive environment facilitated his professional growth. By 1990, he had achieved chartered engineer status, a progression made possible through the company's encouragement and resources dedicated to developing its staff.

Rob's career trajectory at Curtins is marked by steady advancement and increasing responsibility. He became a team leader in Liverpool and later took on the challenge of establishing a new office in Edinburgh. Under his leadership, the Edinburgh office grew into a significant part of the business within six years.

In 1998, he joined the Curtins board as the director responsible for Scotland, and by 2004, he had assumed the role of CEO. Throughout his tenure, Rob emphasised the importance of Curtins' organic growth and strong company culture – attributes that have sustained the business for over 60 years.

During his leadership, Curtins faced several significant challenges, including the financial crisis of 2008, an industry contraction in 2018, the COVID-19 pandemic, and the cost of living crisis. These events required the company to adapt and evolve.

Rob expresses pride in Curtins' achievements in promoting diversity and inclusion within the workplace. Under his guidance, the organisation has made efforts to create an inclusive environment that values different perspectives and backgrounds. Initiatives have been recognised through various accolades and awards. These efforts contribute to a more diverse workforce and encourage a culture of respect and collaboration.



2.2. Purpose Goal 6 – Fair Career Progression

2.2.1. Step Ahead Programme

Curtins' plays a crucial role in supporting the career progression of its colleagues by providing structured development opportunities tailored to the evolving demands of the engineering profession.

Their programmes offer a clear and comprehensive pathway for graduates as well as managers, ensuring that all employees have access to the tools and training necessary for their professional growth.

For graduates, the Curtins Academy programme provides a structured development plan. It includes modules on key areas such as sustainability and digital delivery, which reflect the changing landscape of the engineering industry.

The in-house training scheme is approved by the Engineering Council, ensuring that it aligns with the highest professional standards and prepares graduates for achieving professional chartership.

On top of supporting graduates, Curtins has designed the Step Ahead programme to address the specific needs of managers. The programme covers essential topics including effective management, communication, and mental health awareness, equipping managers with the skills they need to lead their teams effectively.



Recent updates to the programme have introduced modules on managing mental health and dignity at work – ensuring that managers are prepared to foster a supportive and inclusive work environment.

Through investing in the development of both its graduates and managers, Curtins demonstrates a commitment to career development and of upholding a nurturing work culture. The Step Ahead programme not only helps individuals advance within the company but also contributes to the overall success of the business.

2.2.2. Case Study – Laura Rodriguez

Laura Rodriguez joined Curtins in 2017 as an engineer, bringing with her a background in architecture from Seville, Spain. She was promoted to senior engineer in 2018, a progression that coincided with significant personal milestones, including getting married and starting a family.

During her time as a senior engineer, Laura contributed to various projects while balancing her professional responsibilities with her role as a mother.

Laura’s career at Curtins exemplifies the organisation’s commitment to fair career progression and support for its employees’ personal and professional development.

After returning from maternity leave, she observed changes within the Manchester office and set her sights on advancing her career. With determination and encouragement from Curtins, she achieved a promotion to senior engineer earlier than she had anticipated.

However, juggling the demands of a senior engineering role with the responsibilities of raising two young children prompted Laura to reassess her career path. She contemplated various options, including teaching and project management, to find a role that better suited her circumstances. An opportunity arose when she discovered a newly created position for a Technical Learning and Development Specialist at Curtins.

Despite initial hesitation about leaving her engineering role, Laura pursued the opportunity. She engaged in discussions with the recruitment team and the CEO, even contributing to the development of the job description. Her transition was supported by her colleagues, who, while reluctant to lose her from the engineering team, understood her desire for a role that offered a better balance.

In her new position, Laura has been instrumental in developing e-learning content across various engineering disciplines, such as structural, civil, transport, and geotechnical engineering. She launched programmes to support technicians and engineers in becoming chartered professionals, including a 10-week course and mentoring schemes. Her technical expertise has been invaluable in creating accessible and effective training materials.

Laura has also been an active participant in a women’s group within the Manchester office, where employees discuss matters related to maternity policies and career advancement. She noted improvements in Curtins’ maternity policy over time, highlighting the company’s improved support for parents. The policy now offers six months of full pay, followed by statutory pay.

Through her role in learning and development, Laura contributes to addressing industry-wide challenges related to professional growth and skills development. Through creating comprehensive e-learning modules and support programmes, she supports colleagues in achieving professional accreditation.

“Through her role in learning and development, Laura contributes to addressing industry-wide challenges related to professional growth and skills development.”



2.3. Purpose Goal 12 – Building Sustainable Communities

2.3.1. Reducing Emissions

Curtins is dedicated to reducing the carbon emissions of its projects. The organisation has developed industry-leading sophisticated tools to help engineers calculate the embodied carbon in their projects, allowing for design comparisons and informed decision-making aimed at lowering environmental impact.

A carbon database, now containing data from over 350 projects, tracks emissions and helps Curtins maintain its ambitious goal of reducing carbon output by 15% by 2030. This reduction is supported by a live dashboard that monitors progress and ensures accountability across the business.



Central to these efforts is early client engagement. Curtins, led by , conducts carbon studies at the start of projects to highlight the potential for reducing emissions, particularly in areas like demolition. Through presenting clients with sustainable design options that reduce waste and materials usage, Curtins is able to influence the direction of projects and encourage environmentally positive decisions from the outset.

Innovation is another key aspect of Curtins’ approach. The organisation is exploring the reuse of materials from demolished sites as a way to further reduce emissions. Successful projects in Cardiff and North Yorkshire have already used steel reclaimed from demolished buildings, reducing the carbon footprint associated with sourcing new materials. This approach contributes to a circular economy, and Curtins is committed to expanding the reuse of materials in future projects to enhance sustainability over the long-term.

Curtins is also fostering a culture of sustainability within its workforce. While graduates and newer engineers often show high enthusiasm for sustainability initiatives, the organisation has focused on encouraging more engagement from mid-level employees.

Training and seminars have been introduced to emphasise the importance of sustainability, and Curtins has appointed sustainability champions in each office. Events including Impact Week showcase the business’ projects and promote community involvement – reinforcing the role of sustainability in everyday work.

Curtins has adopted a realistic approach to reducing emissions, believing that setting achievable targets has a greater long-term impact than committing to idealistic, unachievable goals.

The organisation has set a realistic reduction target to lower its current project carbon impact from 340 kgCO₂e/m² (SCORS Rating E) to 295 kgCO₂e/m² (SCORS Rating D) by 2030, equating to a 2% reduction year-on-year.

Curtins aims to reach zero carbon by 2050, with these reduction goals being continually reviewed as innovation, regulation, and new technology advance within the industry. Importantly, Curtins sees carbon offsetting as a last resort, focusing instead on real, measurable improvements.

Recognising that achieving zero carbon will require industry-wide collaboration, Curtins is committed to working with partners across the construction and design process to drive significant changes. Its goal is to ensure that reductions in emissions are both realistic and impactful, leading the way towards a more sustainable future in construction.



2.3.2. Embodied Carbon Database

Curtins launched its Embodied Carbon Database in July 2022, providing a comprehensive tool to track and analyse live carbon data from structural design projects.

In just four months, Curtins exceeded its initial goal of uploading data from 100 projects, and the database has since grown rapidly. This expanding resource provides increasingly high-quality samples of carbon data, allowing the company to refine its strategies for reducing embodied carbon in its projects.

The database currently focuses on structural design projects at the construction stage, which typically account for around 74% of a building's average embodied carbon.

The captured data represents 'upfront carbon', which includes emissions from the manufacture of materials, their transport to site, and any emissions associated with construction activities. Industry standard embodied carbon factors are used in the calculations, with project-specific Environmental Product Declarations (EPDs) being applied where possible to ensure accuracy.

Curtins uses the data from its Embodied Carbon Database to set meaningful carbon reduction targets and benchmark its performance against industry standards.

Through analysing this data, the company can better understand the carbon impact of its projects and work towards reducing it, helping to drive more sustainable practices within the construction industry. The next phase of the database's development will include adding civil engineering data, further broadening its scope and impact.



2.3.3. Carbon Calculator

Curtins has developed an innovative carbon design calculator to proactively manage and reduce the carbon impact of its projects through design. This tool is used by all of Curtins' specialist teams and enables the organisation to assess and reduce embodied carbon in building components at various stages of a project.

The calculator works by automatically calculating the embodied carbon content of individual building components, using intelligent attributes within the design model.

It provides a detailed breakdown of the total embodied carbon content for the structure, segmented by key life stages: transport, construction, use stage, and end of life. Through assessing different structural solutions, the calculator allows engineers to compare the embodied carbon content of various design options and use this as a key factor when selecting materials.

The tool also identifies the specific components within civil and structural elements that drive embodied carbon, helping to focus efforts on the most carbon-intensive areas. A visual representation of the emissions breakdown is provided through pie charts, illustrating the carbon impact of different design options and enabling a more informed decision-making process.

What makes this calculator particularly powerful is its integration within Curtins' Revit Models, where it visually highlights carbon hot spots. This feature allows engineers to pinpoint areas where further reductions can be made, particularly during the critical design phases.

Embedding carbon awareness directly into the design process, Curtins empowers its teams to actively reduce carbon emissions and enhance sustainability from the earliest stages of a project.

2.3.4. Transport and Planning

Curtins provides expert transport planning and engineering services, guiding projects from the initial concept stage through to detailed design and implementation. With a focus on delivering innovative and cost-effective transport solutions, Curtins supports both private and public sector developments, offering services that include due diligence, accessibility planning, strategic regeneration initiatives, town centre studies, and masterplanning.

- Curtins' Transport Planning Core Services include:
- Development Planning
- Transport Assessments and Statements
- Accessibility Planning
- Travel Planning
- Access Studies
- Operational Site Waste Management Plans
- Public Inquiries & Expert Witness Services
- Regeneration and Masterplanning
- Section 38/106/278 Agreements (England & Wales)
- Section 48/75 Agreements (Scotland)
- Car Park Studies and Design

With extensive experience in early-stage strategic thinking, Curtins identifies key transport issues and risks while offering the capability to resolve complex challenges. The organisation has built a strong reputation for successfully delivering transport solutions that meet the needs of their clients.

A significant aspect of Curtins' work involves supporting sustainable transport solutions that align with local and national planning policies. Its team has considerable expertise in guiding transport-related documents through the planning application process, including public consultations, exhibitions, and planning appeals.

Curtins also understands the transport impact of developments on both the local area and wider community. To address these impacts, the team actively collaborates with key stakeholders such as Council Highways Officers, National Highways, public transport operators, and design teams to develop practical and effective transport solutions.

After obtaining planning approval, Curtins supports clients in discharging planning and highway conditions by providing servicing strategies, car park management plans, and progressing the detailed design of associated highway infrastructure improvements. The organisation's infrastructure team manages the entire process, ensuring that highway designs are seamlessly integrated into the overall development.

Curtins has a proven track record in leading negotiations with local highways authorities over S106 contributions, often securing significant savings for their clients. In the delivery phase, they assist clients and contractors with highway licence applications, temporary highway works designs to support construction, stopping up orders, temporary traffic regulation orders, road closures, and construction logistics support.

Curtins also offers a national accessibility planning resource that provides an evidence-based approach to optimise development masterplans. Using specialist software to analyse geo-demographic data, it delivers key performance indicators such as travel time, cost, and distance. This data-driven approach supports site promotion, informs transport infrastructure design, evaluates travel planning initiatives, and creates graphical representations of accessibility for stakeholders.

“Curtins also understands the transport impact of developments on both the local area and wider community.”



2.3.5. Conservation

Curtins is deeply committed to the conservation and restoration of heritage structures, ensuring that their historical significance is preserved for future generations.

With a focus on being sympathetic to Grade 1, 2* and 2 listed buildings, Curtins designs, redevelops, and regenerates historically significant structures with great care and precision.

This approach is rooted in a deep respect for the heritage fabric of communities, working to ensure that these structures continue to tell their stories.

Curtins collaborates closely with respected public bodies including the Civic Society and Historic England, playing an active role in the maintenance and restoration of buildings with historical value. These partnerships allow Curtins to preserve the heritage and architectural integrity of significant buildings, contributing to the cultural and historical preservation of communities.

Recognising that heritage structures require a unique approach, Curtins prioritises the use of traditional materials and craftsmanship wherever possible. Its conservation projects follow a meticulous, seven-step process to ensure that every aspect of the building's restoration is carefully considered and executed:

1. Comprehensive Review - Curtins conducts a thorough examination of all available information to fully understand the building's historical significance and context.
2. Visual Inspection - The team performs a detailed visual inspection to assess the structure's current condition and identify its specific needs.
3. Pre-Design Checks - Curtins identifies the need for any pre-design assessments and selects the least intrusive methods for exploratory investigations. Non-destructive techniques are prioritised whenever feasible to minimise impact on the structure.
4. Design Validation - Every design element is rigorously checked and validated to ensure structural integrity and compliance with conservation principles.
5. Load Testing - For structural elements that may seem insufficient but have withstood the test of time, Curtins may conduct full-scale load tests to assess their strength and viability.
6. Collaboration with Authorities - Curtins works closely with Local Authority planning departments, Conservation Officers, and Historic England to ensure that all proposed works are appropriate and receive the necessary approvals.
7. Sympathetic Repairs - The ultimate goal is to carry out repairs that are sympathetic to the original fabric of the building, conserving its unique character and heritage as much as possible.

2.3.6. Case Study - Green Infrastructure in Wales

Curtins is playing a key role in advancing green infrastructure in Wales, aligning its business strategies with the Wellbeing of Future Generations Act, a legislative framework designed to improve social, economic, environmental, and cultural well-being.

The Act emphasises core principles including creating a prosperous, resilient, and healthier Wales, contributing to more equal and cohesive communities, promoting a vibrant culture, supporting the Welsh language, and contributing to global responsibility.

Curtins' Cardiff office has fully integrated these principles into its operations, with a particular focus on sustainable development and active community engagement.

A major part of Curtins' contribution is through its green infrastructure initiatives, which aim to improve urban environments by integrating natural elements and sustainable systems.

The organisation designs sustainable drainage systems that not only manage water effectively but also improve public spaces by incorporating green areas into urban landscapes. These spaces offer environmental benefits and contribute to the health and wellbeing of the local community by providing cleaner air, reducing urban heat, and promoting biodiversity.

Curtins also supports net-zero school designs in Wales, incorporating energy-efficient building practices that minimise carbon emissions. These designs benefit the environment while also serving as educational tools for students, fostering early awareness of sustainability and encouraging future generations to consider the importance of environmental stewardship.

In addition to its technical work, Curtins recognises the importance of local supply chain engagement to support regional economies. Through working with local businesses and suppliers, including modular construction companies and promoting the use of Welsh Timber in projects, Curtins helps retain specialist skills within Wales, contributing to both economic growth and sustainability.

Curtins' commitment to community is evident through its participation in initiatives like the Cardiff Commitment, which offers work placements, community volunteering, and tree planting activities. These efforts not only strengthen ties with the local community but also highlight Curtins' dedication to social responsibility and long-term environmental care.

Through its ongoing work in green infrastructure, Curtins is actively contributing to the creation of healthier, more resilient communities in Wales, demonstrating a strong commitment to sustainable development and the wellbeing of future generations.

"Curtins' commitment to community is evident through its participation in initiatives like the Cardiff Commitment, which offers work placements, community volunteering, and tree planting activities."



2.4. Purpose Goal 14 – Achieving Equity through Diversity and Inclusion

2.4.1. Reverse Mentoring

Curtins' reverse mentoring programme is a key initiative that has significantly boosted inclusion and diversity across the organisation.

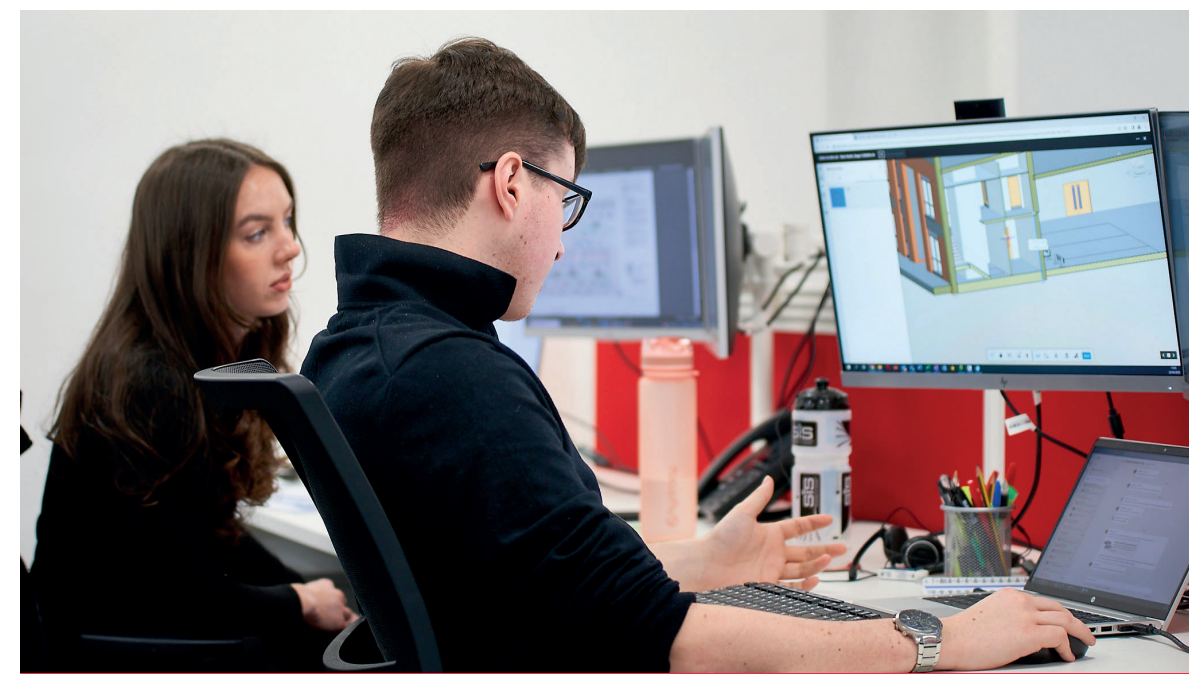
This programme facilitates open dialogue between junior staff and senior leadership, offering a platform where younger professionals mentor senior directors.

Through providing fresh perspectives, the programme helps to future-proof the business and ensures that issues, which might have otherwise been overlooked, are brought to the attention of senior management.

The reverse mentoring initiative has empowered young professionals by giving them confidence and a voice within the company, fostering a more inclusive environment where diverse viewpoints are heard and valued.

This programme has led to meaningful change at the board level, with decisions increasingly reflecting a broader range of perspectives. By involving HR, the policy team, and external consultants, Curtins has maximised the programme's impact, ensuring that a wide variety of expertise is leveraged to improve inclusivity.

Through this initiative, Curtins is creating a more open and collaborative workplace where employees at all levels contribute to shaping the future of the organisation.





2.4.2. Dignity at Work

Curtins has made dignity at work a central focus of its colleague offering, implementing a pilot programme that emphasises inclusive behaviours and the responsibilities of managers in fostering a respectful and supportive workplace.

This programme forms part of the company's wider Learning and Development initiatives, which aim to build an environment where all employees feel valued and respected.

The dignity at work training is designed to equip managers and staff with the skills and awareness needed to address non-inclusive behaviours, ensuring that inappropriate comments and conduct are swiftly and effectively dealt with.

Through focusing on creating an inclusive and respectful atmosphere, Curtins is proactively preparing its workforce for upcoming legislative changes, including those relating to sexual harassment, demonstrating its commitment to maintaining a safe and equitable workplace.

The pilot programme is set to be expanded across the company, with plans to roll out the training to all line managers and staff. This will ensure that inclusive behaviours are embedded at every level of the organisation.

Curtins has also introduced mentoring programmes, including reverse mentoring and the 'success for all' mentoring scheme, aimed at supporting individuals who identify as a minority within the business. These initiatives offer guidance and support, helping to ensure that everyone at Curtins has the opportunity to thrive.

Through its dignity at work agenda, Curtins is actively contributing to a more equitable and inclusive workplace, where diversity is celebrated, and all employees can contribute to the company's success. This approach not only fosters a positive work culture but also aligns with Curtins' commitment to promoting diversity, equity, and inclusion across all areas of the business.

2.4.3. Leading Gender Support across the Industry

Curtins is leading the way in gender support within the construction industry through its pioneering menstruation campaign, which directly addresses key issues of equity, diversity, and inclusion.

The campaign was launched after personal experiences shared by difficulties women face on construction sites, including the absence of sanitary bins and poor hygiene conditions in women's toilets. These challenges, exacerbated by a general lack of awareness among line managers and colleagues, brought to light the need for immediate action.

Research conducted during the campaign revealed that only a small number of companies, like Nestlé, had specific policies in place to address menstruation, and there was a notable absence of government policies in this area. Recognising this gap, Curtins focused its efforts on raising awareness rather than implementing leave policies, ensuring that these issues were addressed head-on.

Curtins held a training session for approximately 90 line managers, followed by a company-wide session with 100–200 employees. An external

consultant was brought in to lead these sessions, covering topics such as understanding symptoms, providing appropriate support, offering flexible working arrangements, and ensuring that suitable site facilities for women were available.

To further support women in the workplace, Curtins made sanitary products available in offices and even in pool cars, making it easier for women to discreetly access what they need.

The reception to the campaign has been overwhelmingly positive. Employees across the company expressed that they felt seen and supported, particularly those who had previously faced these challenges in silence. By raising awareness among staff and fostering a more inclusive workplace culture, Curtins has demonstrated a strong commitment to supporting women in the construction industry.

Curtins is committed to setting an important example for other companies to follow. It has not only addressed a critical gap in workplace support for women but has also created a more informed and compassionate environment where such issues are openly discussed and resolved.

“Curtins is leading the way in gender support within the construction industry through its pioneering menstruation campaign, which directly addresses key issues of equity, diversity, and inclusion.”



2.5. Purpose Goal 15 – Working in Partnership to Tackle Social Challenges

2.5.1. Partnering with Charities

Curtins actively engages in charity partnerships to address social challenges and make a positive impact within the communities it serves. Through collaborations with a number of organisations, Curtins improves its ability to contribute to education, social mobility, and community development.

As mentioned previously, one key partnership is with Inspire, a charity that Curtins works closely with to offer educational opportunities and work experience placements.

The London office plays a vital role in this, participating in local initiatives including the World of Work programme, which aims to provide students with insights into different careers and support their professional development. These initiatives help Curtins tackle social challenges by giving young people the tools and knowledge they need to pursue fulfilling careers, particularly in STEM fields.

The Curtins learning and development team further supports this mission by offering STEM Ambassador training and presentations, empowering Curtins' employees to become role models and engage with students interested in science, technology, engineering, and mathematics. This outreach is part of Curtins' broader goal to expand its community engagement and support education at all levels.

Curtins also uses programmes like Give a Day to connect employees with volunteering opportunities, encouraging staff to get involved in community service and charitable initiatives. This is complemented by an ongoing collaboration with the learning and development team to leverage their expertise and resources in expanding these efforts.

These partnerships allow Curtins to collectively work towards creating a more inclusive, educated, and empowered society.

“These partnerships allow Curtins to collectively work towards creating a more inclusive, educated, and empowered society.”



2.5.2. Collaborating to Build Britain's Sustainable Future

Curtins is actively collaborating with a number of key stakeholders to help build a sustainable Britain – recognising that achieving lasting sustainability requires collective effort and innovation.

A key area of focus for Curtins is regional collaboration. The company is involved in regional discussions and contributes to national frameworks, offering its expertise on resilience and adaptation to climate change.

Curtins works closely with local authorities to help shape policies that address regional sustainability challenges, sharing best practices and engaging in strategic dialogues to ensure that the solutions implemented are both practical and effective.

As part of its commitment to promoting sustainability, Curtins aspires to become a recognised thought leader in ESG practices.

The Cardiff office, in particular, is increasing its engagement with local public bodies, industry peers, and communities to drive innovative approaches to sustainability and social value. This leadership role allows Curtins to influence industry standards and guide other organisations in their sustainability efforts.

Curtins also recognises the importance of building strong relationships with the local supply chain. Although some of these engagements have been ad hoc, there is a clear ambition to formalise and strengthen partnerships with local businesses. By doing so, Curtins aims to support the resilience of local economies, enhance regional development, and contribute to a more sustainable future through collaboration with suppliers who share their sustainability values.



2.5.3. Colleague-led Partnership

Curtins' transition to an Employee-Owned Trust (EOT) has fostered a colleague-led partnership that is instrumental in breaking down internal social challenges and improving staff engagement.

The shift to an EOT, which began during the COVID-19 pandemic, was driven by

the organisation's desire to maintain its independence, preserve employee identities, and formalise existing practices.

Through focus groups and virtual Teams sessions, Curtins ensured that employees were actively involved in the transition, creating a structured platform for ongoing feedback and engagement.

This colleague-led approach has facilitated greater collaboration between Curtins and its employees in addressing key challenges within the organisation. The employee forum plays a central role in this process, enabling staff to influence decision-making and ensuring that company policies reflect collective priorities and concerns. Some of the notable developments that have arisen from this collaborative environment include:

In response to employee feedback, Curtins introduced flexible working arrangements to accommodate diverse needs. These policies promote work-life balance and improve overall well-being, reflecting the company's commitment to supporting its staff holistically.

Curtins has launched a series of well-being programmes focused on mental and physical health. By recognising the importance of addressing both aspects of employee wellbeing, the company fosters a more supportive and inclusive work environment.

Adjustments have been made to better support employees with families, reinforcing Curtins' dedication to inclusivity and understanding the personal responsibilities of its workforce.

In addition to these social policies, the employee forum has been instrumental in influencing other key organisational decisions. These include upgrading the company's intranet to improve internal communication and adopting sustainability practices that align with Curtins' broader ESG responsibilities. Through empowering employees to contribute to the company's strategic direction, Curtins ensures that its policies are aligned with the needs and values of its workforce.

This colleague-led partnership model not only strengthens Curtins' organisational culture but also helps break down internal social challenges by giving employees a voice in shaping the future of the business. It creates a more inclusive and responsive workplace, where employee input directly contributes to meaningful change, ensuring that the company remains adaptive, innovative, and supportive of its people.



ANALYSIS AND SUMMARY

3. Analysis and Summary

This Breaking Down Barriers Impact Report highlights Curtins' exemplary role in addressing the UK's social mobility challenges and advancing sustainable practices across the engineering industry. By focusing on STEM outreach, talent development, and inclusivity, Curtins has shown a robust commitment to promoting equity and opportunity.

Curtins' partnership with The Purpose Coalition has been pivotal in driving its purpose-driven agenda. Benchmarking against the Purpose Goals has allowed Curtins to strategically align its operations with national social mobility and sustainability objectives. This alignment demonstrates how businesses can complement government efforts in breaking down barriers to opportunity, addressing issues such as education, employment, and environmental impact.

Key initiatives, like the Step Ahead Programme and the Embodied Carbon Database, illustrate Curtins' innovative approach to addressing both social and environmental challenges. The company's focus on employee wellbeing, inclusivity, and sustainability has resulted in significant progress toward reducing its carbon footprint and supporting diverse career progression.

The report provides an in-depth evaluation of Curtins' activity against the Purpose Goals, highlighting successes and identifying areas for future growth. It is a comprehensive case study of how businesses can leverage purpose-driven strategies to create meaningful social impact, setting a benchmark for others in the industry.





COMMITMENTS

4. Commitments

4.1. Taking the Next Step in STEM Outreach

Curtins is committed to advancing its STEM Outreach agenda with impactful, achievable steps.

First, Curtins will formalise internal recognition programmes that acknowledge outreach contributions, encouraging wider participation by integrating these efforts into performance and progression discussions. Managers will be encouraged to actively support and facilitate their team members' involvement, helping them balance outreach activities with project commitments.

To ensure sustainability and effectiveness, Curtins will assign dedicated resources to manage social value and outreach initiatives, easing the burden on staff who fit these responsibilities alongside their project schedules.

Curtins will also look to expand its outreach efforts to include local colleges, across the UK, targeting institutions such as NCG and CCCG to engage a broader and more diverse group of students. On top of this, Curtins will strengthen existing partnerships with educational institutions, aligning academic curricula with industry needs to better equip graduates for careers in engineering.

Through these initiatives, Curtins aims to inspire the next generation of STEM professionals while building on its culture of commitment and collaboration across the organisation.

“Curtins is committed to advancing its STEM Outreach agenda with impactful, achievable steps.”

4.2. Championing Women’s Equality and Menstrual Health

Curtins is dedicated to driving significant improvements in women’s equality and menstrual health across the construction industry, a traditionally predominantly male sector. With a robust track record in addressing gender-specific challenges, Curtins has already led an impactful agenda, including providing sanitary products in offices and pool cars, upgrading site facilities, and offering extensive training sessions to educate managers and employees on menstrual health and menopause.

Building on this progress, Curtins is committed to leading the industry in advocating for structural and policy changes that support menstrual and menopause health and gender equality across all construction sites.

As part of its commitment, Curtins will proactively collaborate with industry peers to establish clear standards for menstrual health provisions on sites, including sanitary facilities and flexible work arrangements for menstrual health needs.

Recognising the power of policy to drive sustainable change, Curtins will also work with regulatory bodies and policymakers to advocate for menstrual health to be formally recognised within industry health and safety standards, ensuring that this aspect of workplace wellbeing becomes a requirement rather than an exception.

Through the Purpose Coalition, Curtins will also share its experiences and best practices through public platforms, conferences, and industry publications to inspire other organisations to adopt similar practices.

In working to champion and achieve an open dialogue on women’s health needs and challenging existing norms, Curtins aims to reduce stigma, increase understanding, and encourage the construction industry to evolve towards a more inclusive future.



4.3. Expanding Employee Networks

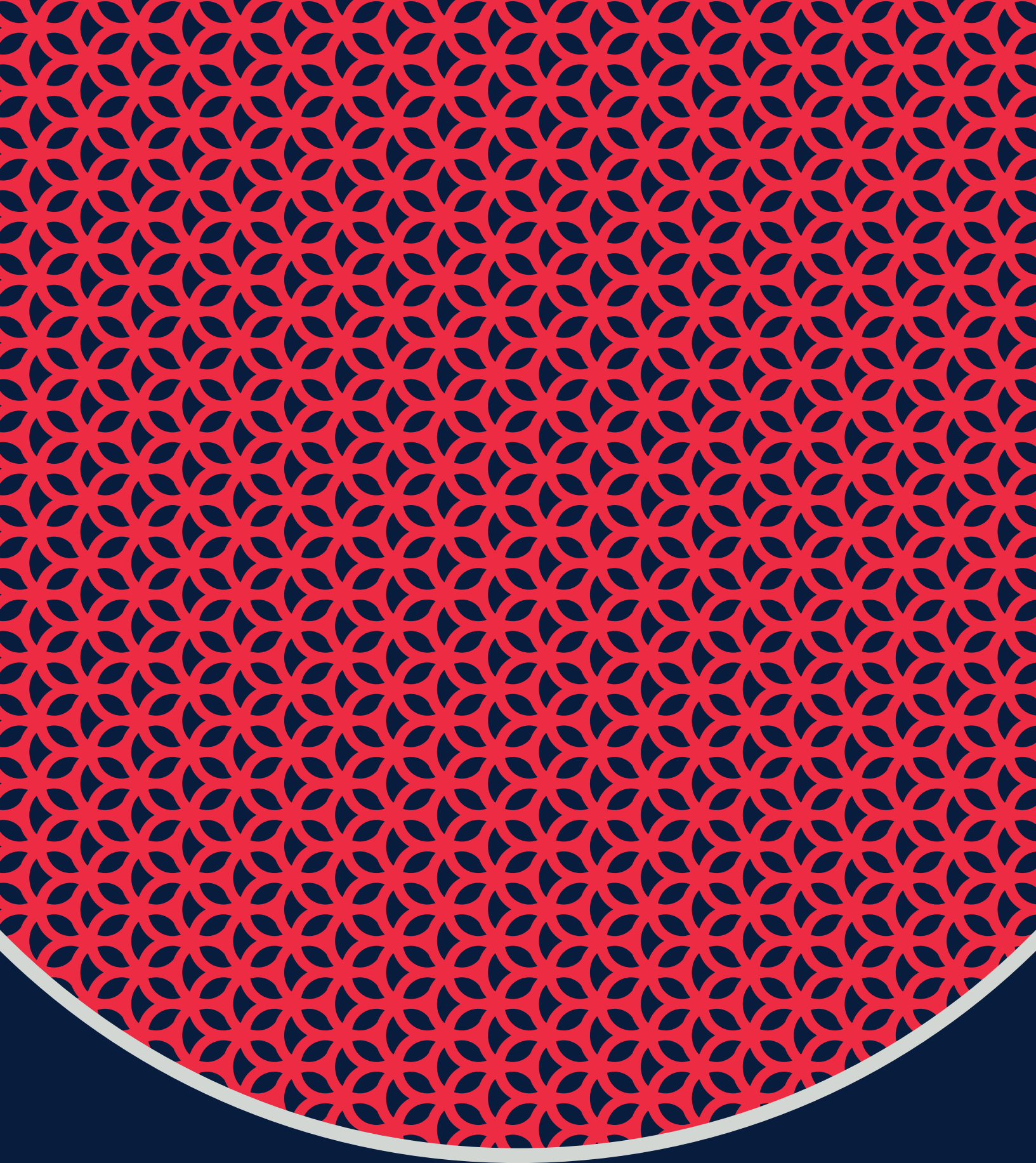
Curtins is committed to pioneering a Workforce Assembly model as part of its dedication to colleague involvement and partnership as an employee-owned trust, reinforcing its core values of inclusivity, collaboration, and social impact. Building on its proven practices in employee engagement, Curtins will build on their employee-forum as part of a structured, open environment where all colleagues can voice their perspectives and directly influence decisions shaping the company.

Through this model, Curtins will draw on the diverse insights of colleagues across departments, roles, and experience levels. In a safe, neutral space, employees will be encouraged to discuss key Purpose Goals, identify barriers, and suggest practical solutions for advancing Curtins’ social impact and workplace inclusion.

These assemblies will ensure Curtins not only listens to its workforce but actively involves them in shaping the company’s direction, enabling colleagues to drive initiatives that directly reflect their lived experiences and aspirations.

As a leader within the Purpose Coalition, Curtins also commits to advocating for broader industry adoption of Workforce Assemblies. Through sharing best practices and collaborating on policy discussions, Curtins will promote employee-led advocacy as a standard across sectors, aiming to set an example of social responsibility and workforce empowerment.

This approach ensures that Curtins’ role as an employee-owned trust is not only about structure but about embedding a culture where every voice contributes to the company’s growth, innovation, and social purpose.



PROUDLY RUN BY
THIS IS PURPOSE

Curtins