

THE MULTIPLIER EFFECT

Welcome to our Impact Book

Our Sustainability and Society strategy—**The Multiplier Effect**—represents our commitment to deliver impact that has a bigger effect beyond Sage and into the wider tech sector and society. Our strategy is guided by the recognition that sustainability issues are interconnected and require a holistic approach that considers the intersection of societal, planetary, and economic aspects.

Through this Impact Book, we have evolved the way in which we tell the stories of the people, and organisations we have collaborated with over the past year. We believe that by doing so, we have captured the human element of sustainability that is often hidden behind the numbers.

The Impact Book was created to be an interactive document for readers to engage with. This document is a flat pdf version. For the full experience, access our interactive Impact Book [here](#).

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Can data be a force for change?

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Uplifting our communities

Is empathy the superpower behind resilient leadership?

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Bold questions for uncertain times

In this book, we pose big questions that connect to our strategy pillars—Protect the Planet, Tech for Good, and Human by Design—and address the topics that present the greatest challenges and opportunities for our stakeholders. We answer these questions through our **feature stories**.

1. Can we embrace AI while reducing the climate threat?

2. Can data be a force for change?

3. What happens when we invest in possibility?

4. Is empathy the superpower behind resilient leadership?

Each feature story and strategic pillar is supported by a collection of **shorter stories** recognising the interconnected nature of sustainability topics. These are projects from across our business regions that illustrate the breadth and variety of our impact. Our colleagues deliver a wide range of impactful programmes across the globe—too many to feature in this book alone.

We have selected the stories that most deeply embody the intentions of The Multiplier Effect. They are strategic, impact-led, and wide-reaching.



Leadership reflections

The opportunity for sustainability to create value for organisations is as real as ever, despite the changing external environment. In fact, this landscape enables us to think about new ways to build more robust and adaptive organisations. It is an opportunity to think more strategically about sustainability, ensuring it is more than a pledge but a driver of real value for the company and its stakeholders.

As the Board member with oversight of Sustainability at Sage, I see this moment as a pivotal opportunity to demonstrate the strength and relevance of our strategy. Creating a fairer and more sustainable world has never been more urgent. Yet, SMBs often face disproportionate challenges—such as bias, limited access to capital and technology, and a lack of know how to drive change. Our strategy, The Multiplier Effect—is designed to create value for all of our stakeholders, knocking down barriers and establishing a level playing field.

This Impact Book captures the stories, voices, and initiatives that bring Sage’s Multiplier Effect to life. In a world facing complex, interconnected challenges, this Book reflects our commitment to navigate these with purpose. It is a testament to how our strategy is embedded across the business and how we continue to amplify impact through collaboration, innovation, and integrity. As a Board, we remain deeply committed to ensuring that our sustainability journey is authentic, ambitious, and aligned with our values and stakeholders.



Maggie Chan Jones

Non-executive Director and Board Sponsor for ESG, Sage





Leadership reflections continued

This Impact Book has been created to showcase the stories of impact generated both within Sage and through our **Multiplier Effect** strategy.

Steve Hare is CEO at Sage, and Allie Burns was CEO at Village Capital from 2016-2025. Village Capital is a non-profit organisation that partners with us on our Impact Entrepreneurship Programme to elevate purpose-led startups. Steve and Allie shared the stage at the Sage Future event in early 2025, and in this Q&A, they share their perspectives on harnessing AI to tackle real-world challenges, the changing role of business, and what defines true leadership.



Steve Hare
Chief Executive Officer, Sage



Allie Burns
Chief Executive Officer, Village Capital
(2016-2025)

How would you describe the **state of the world in 2025?**

What's your view on **AI's role in addressing challenges facing society and the environment?**

What's the **biggest missed opportunity** when it comes to how we use (or don't use) data?

What does **investing in possibility** mean for you?

What does **true leadership** look like for you?

What gives you **optimism for the future** amidst global uncertainty?



How would you describe the state of the world in 2025?



There's no easy answer to encapsulate this moment. Many people are experiencing hardships and whilst progress isn't absent, it's uneven. Adversity and uncertainty fuel innovation, and entrepreneurs have always responded to challenging times with resilience, creativity, and determination.

I believe one of the most powerful starting points to creating sustainable solutions is focusing on communities. These communities don't lack ideas, they lack access, so we have a responsibility to put resources and decision-making power in their hands. It takes a strong web of support, including mentors, networks, capital and visibility for people with bold ideas, to move from intention to impact.

At Village Capital, we focus on unlocking social and financial capital for those building local-led solutions and believe that people closest to a problem often have the best understanding and ideas to solve it.



The world in 2025 is defined by both challenge and opportunity. Geopolitical uncertainty, economic pressures, rapid advances in AI, and the urgency of climate change are all reshaping how we live and work. But I'm also seeing incredible resilience from entrepreneurs and small businesses.

For me, the real story is how businesses are adapting, not just to grow, but to grow responsibly, with purpose. At Sage, we see our role as helping them to do that.

So while the world feels complex, it's also full of possibility. By combining innovation with fairness and transparency, businesses can not only thrive but drive positive change—proving that growth and purpose can go hand in hand.



What's your view on AI's role in addressing challenges facing society and the environment?



The growth of AI feels seismic, similar to the mass adoption of technologies such as the World Wide Web, mobile phones, and social media—but with even greater transformational potential.

Village Capital recognises both the transformational power and the risks of the technology. We see great promise for AI, particularly in the hands of talented entrepreneurs dedicated to solving community and global problems in new ways and at scale. Our mission is to ensure that those entrepreneurs, their workers, customers, and communities aren't left behind, but instead gain access to the social and financial capital they need to prosper.

We are strategically integrating AI to automate suitable tasks while preserving and enhancing human strengths. This includes developing bias evaluation frameworks and internal AI governance policies—resources we plan to share with our broader ecosystem.



AI has huge potential to help address the challenges facing society and the environment. It can drive efficiency, unlock insights, and support businesses in making more informed, sustainable decisions.

At Sage, we focus on human-centred AI that delivers real impact.

For 44 years, we've worked alongside small businesses and accountants, listening to their challenges. Our approach to AI has always been practical: it's not about hype or novelty, it's about solving real problems for the businesses that drive the economy. It's a philosophy we call Authentic Intelligence—AI rooted in lived experience, trained on experience and insight, not just the internet.

Trust is fundamental. That's why we created the AI Trust Label—an initiative designed to provide a clear, transparent view of how our AI works, how data is protected, and the safeguards we've built in. It's about accountability, explainability, and safety by design.

Working with our cloud partners, we continue invest and operate in energy-efficient infrastructure and responsible AI design, making sure our technology aligns with our climate commitments. Ultimately, AI should be a tool for good to help businesses grow, make smarter decisions, and reduce their environmental impact.



What's the biggest missed opportunity when it comes to how we use (or don't use) data?



In the world of impact innovation, data is a critical tool for understanding challenges—and how to address them. We often work with entrepreneurs who have experience or proximity to the challenge they're solving, but a key additional ingredient in their solutions is high-quality data to validate their analysis of the problem and solution.

We can't build an inclusive, data-driven world without transparency and we can't discuss leveraging data without mentioning AI. Being data-driven in the AI age means that an organisation's ability to generate actionable insights from data, often in real-time, is of the highest strategic importance.

Of course, there are risks associated with sharing data with the few large companies that power some of the most innovative AI business tools. Businesses will need to be vigilant and develop safeguards, policies, and practices that protect intellectual property, ensure data security and privacy for customers, and fight bias and hallucinations in AI tools.



Data can drive better decisions, unlock new opportunities, and help organisations create positive impact—but only if it's used ethically and inclusively. The opportunity with data is lost when its potential isn't fully realised in a responsible way.

At Sage, we focus on turning insight into action. Responsible use of data builds trust, drives meaningful change, and ensures that technology benefits the masses, not just a few.

We also see opportunity in widening access to technology and skills, helping more people participate in and benefit from the digital economy. Using data responsibly isn't just good business practice—it's central to our purpose of knocking down barriers so everyone can thrive.

What does investing in possibility mean for you?



Our organisation's story of origin involved a bold bet: that entrepreneurs are often better judges of high-potential ideas than investors, especially when they've lived with the problem themselves.

In our early days, we tested what would happen if entrepreneurs had a voice in deciding who gets funding. We pioneered peer selection, where founders evaluate each other based on a set of parameters and it worked. The companies selected by peers often outperformed those picked by traditional investors.

Today, peer due diligence and peer selection remain central to our model, but we've evolved alongside the impact investing space. We invest in possibility by offering a broader range of support to help impact-creating entrepreneurs access the social and financial capital they need to grow and succeed.



It means supporting people and ideas that have the potential to make a real difference. It's about helping businesses and entrepreneurs grow, innovate, and navigate challenges with confidence.

At Sage, that means providing the tools, guidance, and support that enables organisations to succeed—whether through access to finance, technology, or knowledge.

Investing in possibility isn't just about individual success; it's about creating an environment where businesses can thrive, communities benefit, and ideas that drive progress have the space to flourish.



What does true leadership look like for you?



Over the course of my career I've had the privilege of working alongside some of the most passionate, talented, and mission-driven communities and individuals I've ever met, with many impacted by economic, social, and environmental challenges.

As leaders, we need to bring humanity to the centre, in an authentic and non-buzzwordy way. We can't lead as if we are working in a vacuum. If we're serious about working to create powerful change, we must create space for our team members' humanity, vulnerability, and lived experiences—and bring our own, too.



True leadership is about enabling others and being conscious of the impact you have. Leaders can multiply anxiety or multiply optimism, so it's essential to guide people with honesty and transparency, creating space for others to contribute and lead.

Leadership also requires courage—being willing to experiment, take risks, and navigate change without losing sight of your values. High performance comes from effort, resilience, and supporting others to thrive.

Ultimately, leadership is about creating the conditions for people and organisations to succeed, fostering innovation, inclusivity, and positive, sustainable impact.

What gives you optimism for the future amidst global uncertainty?



My answer to this question hasn't changed since I started supporting locally-led, impactful entrepreneurs more than two decades ago.

I continue to be inspired by the ingenuity and creativity of the startups we have the chance to support. Times have certainly changed substantially over the last decade alone, but the resourcefulness and acuity of entrepreneurs have remained constant. New challenges arise, and entrepreneurs rise with thoughtful solutions—they know what it means to have lived experience to inform and guide solutions to some of the most urgent challenges facing our communities and world.



For me, it starts with the small and mid-sized businesses we serve. They're resilient, innovative, and uniquely positioned to drive economic growth and positive change—from embracing new technologies to advancing sustainability. Seeing them adapt and thrive in challenging times is truly inspiring.

I'm also encouraged by our colleagues at Sage and how the impact we create extends beyond our teams. When organisations act with purpose, that positive ripple spreads across communities and stakeholders—what we call the Multiplier Effect.



Leadership reflections continued

The Multiplier Effect is Sage's Sustainability and Society strategy, designed to deliver on our purpose to knock down barriers so everyone can thrive.

From small businesses to underserved communities, it is built on the belief that small actions can spark wider change, creating ripple effects across society, the economy, and the planet. In this video, Amy and Elisa discuss real life examples of how our strategy translates into how we scale our impact through our people, products, and partnerships.



Amy Lawson

Chief Brand and Corporate Affairs Officer, Sage



Elisa Moscolin

Executive Vice President, Sustainability and Foundation, Sage





Introduction continued

Our stories

Feature story 1

Can we embrace AI while **reducing the climate threat?**



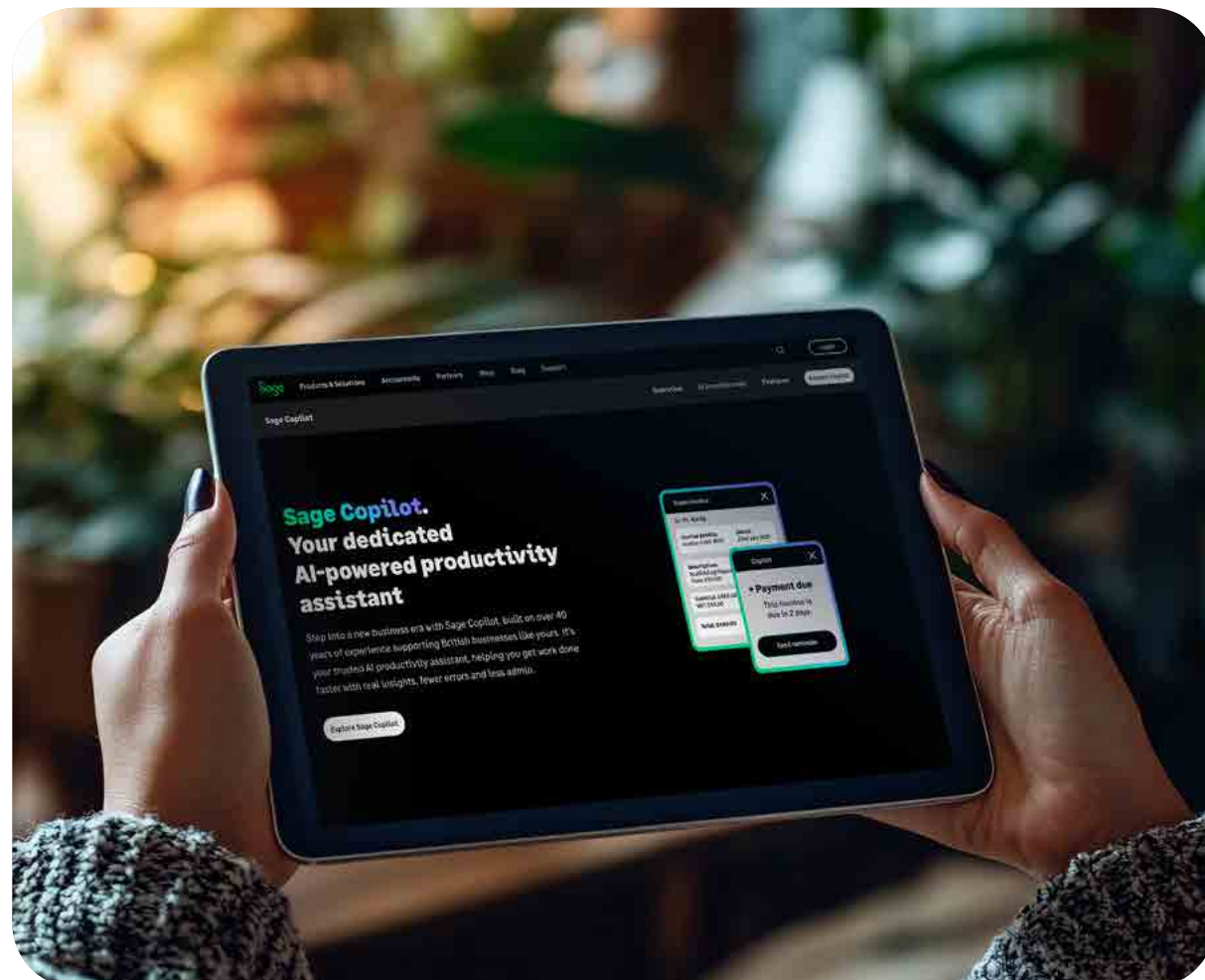
Feature story 3

What happens when we **invest in possibility?**



Feature story 2

Can data be a **force for change?**



Feature story 4

Is empathy the superpower behind **resilient leadership?**



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Feature story 1 / Strategic pillars: Protect the Planet and Tech for Good

CAN WE EMBRACE AI WHILE **REDUCING** **THE CLIMATE THREAT?**



Feature story 1 continued / Strategic pillars: Protect the Planet and Tech for Good

Is AI driving emission increases—what needs to change?

Some emission sources are easily identified. The fumes from a car's exhaust; the smell of petrol hanging over the tarmac at the airport; the towers of a power station. But these obvious polluters are only the tip of the iceberg. What about the energy-based emissions released every time you ask a tool like Sage Copilot a question?

“Be rude to AI, the planet will thank you.”

“Be rude to AI, the planet will thank you,” says one computing magazine. It's referring to OpenAI CEO Sam Altman's comment that the extra energy-processing cost of saying “please” and “thank you” to generative AI could be “tens of millions of dollars” and extra emissions in the current electricity system. In very simple terms, emissions from computing are released at several points in the process, from manufacture to end use, and by reducing unnecessary politeness in AI, our interactions could help lower those emissions.



Fast facts

1.5%

The amount of the world's electricity consumption data centres accounted for in 2024²

Up to 4%

the amount of energy data centres consume in large economies³

100,000

equivalent number of households that an advanced data centre could use in energy, annually⁴

**Jeremiah Edwards**

AI and Data Governance Team, Sage

Expert view:

Jeremiah Edwards explains what AI is and how it powers our products.

How would you explain AI to someone with no technical background?

The computer science that led to the AI we know today began in the 1950s. Broadly, it's a system that mimics human intelligence to perform tasks, identify patterns, and solve problems very quickly with vast amounts of data. It's closely related to machine learning, which is where computers learn from their mistakes to increase the accuracy of their output. With more practice and human input, AI learns and improves, and delivers real-time insights to enable better decision making.

Can you give examples of how this shows up in daily life?

AI has been part of everyday life for some time: automatic product recommendations online, predictive text, facial recognition, and fraud detection are all types of AI. However, in recent years AI capabilities have grown rapidly and its presence in our lives is ever increasing.

How do you use AI in Sage's products and services?

At Sage, our team of domain specialists has been building AI-powered solutions for our Small, Medium and Accountant product suites since 2016.

Can you tell me more about the benefits of integrating AI into your products and services?

Sure. We use AI to eliminate the most common customer pains and automate workflows, with software designed by accounting experts. Our products save small and medium-sized businesses (SMBs) hours of accounting and invoicing time. For example, Sage customers are using AI to cut their supplier invoice processing time by over 50%, saving them up to 1 day a week. And they're getting paid 7 days faster using Sage Copilot to chase unpaid customer invoices.

Sage AI, and our generative AI productivity assistant Sage Copilot are a critical part of our strategy at Sage. We are aiming to create the world's most trusted network for SMBs, so every business can thrive. This is part of our wider ethos of breaking down barriers and working towards equality of opportunity for every entrepreneur.

Business owners can automate their routine accounting tasks with our products, freeing them up to focus on the meaningful, creative and strategic work they want to do.

Are there any technologies or innovations on the horizon that excite you?

Agentic AI is Sage's next frontier and will provide tools that manage multi-step tasks, surface strategic recommendations, and streamline decisions, while remaining trustworthy and human-centered. It will set goals, predict likely outcomes and generate appropriate responses, which is especially useful for accounting and financial management. We have set a roadmap for the next era of AI technologies, building on our heritage of generative AI and adopting the use of Agentic AI.

Concerns about AI include the risk of bias, inaccuracy, and data security and ethics issues. What is your response to this?

At Sage, we are creating fantastic tech for our customers, guided at all times by our Values and purpose. What that means is we have transparent and compliant data ethics and privacy policies. As AI evolves, we maintain our strong commitment to harness its potential responsibly by prioritising ethical practices and minimising risk.

We have developed a robust set of guiding principles that make our models ethical and trustworthy. We take care with the datasets we train our AI with to remove bias and discrimination. Our data science team continuously works to improve accuracy and prevent hallucinations, and our customers can choose the level of AI and automation they want to use in our products.

Thanks for your time, Jeremiah!



Feature story 1 continued / Strategic pillars: Protect the Planet and Tech for Good

A growing concern— is AI sustainable?

As of March 2025, over 11,800 data centres were registered worldwide, with the US accounting for nearly half of them⁴. Between 2010 and 2020, data centre numbers increased steadily at around 4% annually.

However, during the same period the total electricity demand remained static as energy efficiency advancements continued to be made. Technology, and more specifically AI, if used wisely, can be an important tool in the energy transition and in tackling the climate crisis more widely. For example, it can optimise renewable energy use by forecasting demand to ensure grid stability; it can automate energy discharge from storage; and it can predict weather events so protective measures can be put in place.

AI can also elevate human work by automating and speeding up some tasks, and, when used responsibly, can be seen as a companion that improves efficiency. For these capabilities to continue improving, data centre expansion is required—but it has to be done ethically, to balance the economic, social and environmental impacts.

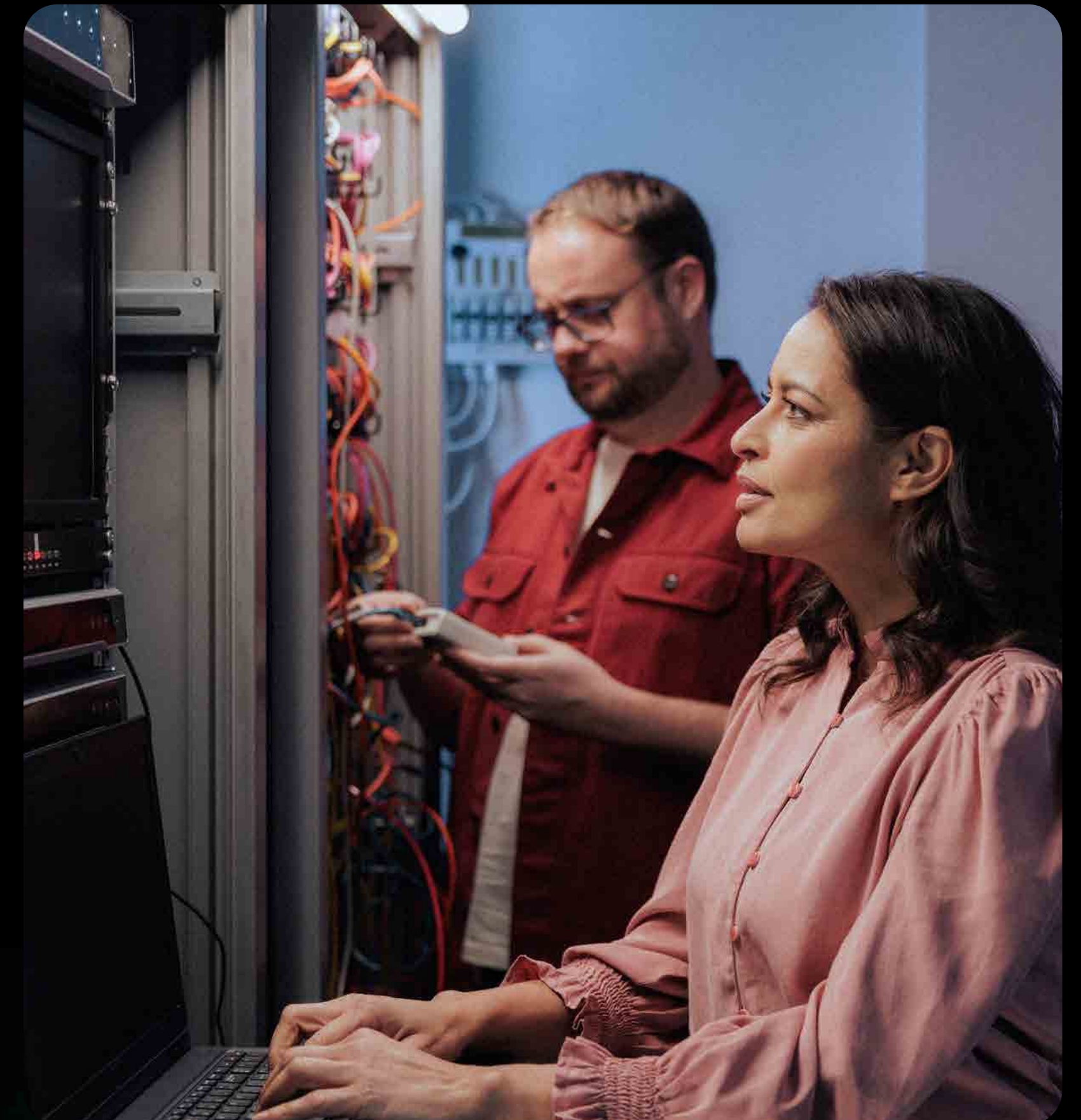
AI and the associated growth in data centres are changing the energy demand and carbon emissions impact globally. In 2024, data centres used about 1.5% of the world's electricity, totalling 415 terawatt-hours (TWh).⁵ The United States was the biggest user, responsible for 45% of

this, followed by China (25%) and Europe (15%). Data centres are very geographically concentrated, both globally and within certain localised regions. Almost one third of electricity demand in Ireland is expected to come from data centres in 2026.⁵ A supersized, AI-focused data centre could use as much electricity as 100,000 households do every year.⁶

As a result of the significant energy demand, data centres emit large amounts of heat. This can cause thermal pollution to the surrounding environment if it isn't captured and redirected to heat, for example, a building. Huge amounts of water are also used to cool data centres, with 100 million more litres of water being used to sustain their operation than in 2015.⁷

Being transparent about our environmental impact is key to meaningful climate action. At Sage, we rely heavily on data centres and digital services to run our software and support everyday work for colleagues and customers, so understanding and mitigating these impacts is essential to reducing our environmental footprint and driving sustainable innovation.

As a global organisation, this includes both direct use of cloud providers and co-located infrastructure, as well as indirect use through platforms like software-as-a-service and digital media. These services now contribute up to 50% of our supply chain emissions, with around 10% coming from data centres. This emphasises the need for Sage to understand and address the environmental and social impacts of these services.





AI facts

1,000,000

The rise of AI has huge implications for energy use. AI model training and use takes place in large data centres, with global investment in these facilities doubling since 2022. Some of the largest datacentres can consume as much electricity as 1,000,000 households.⁹

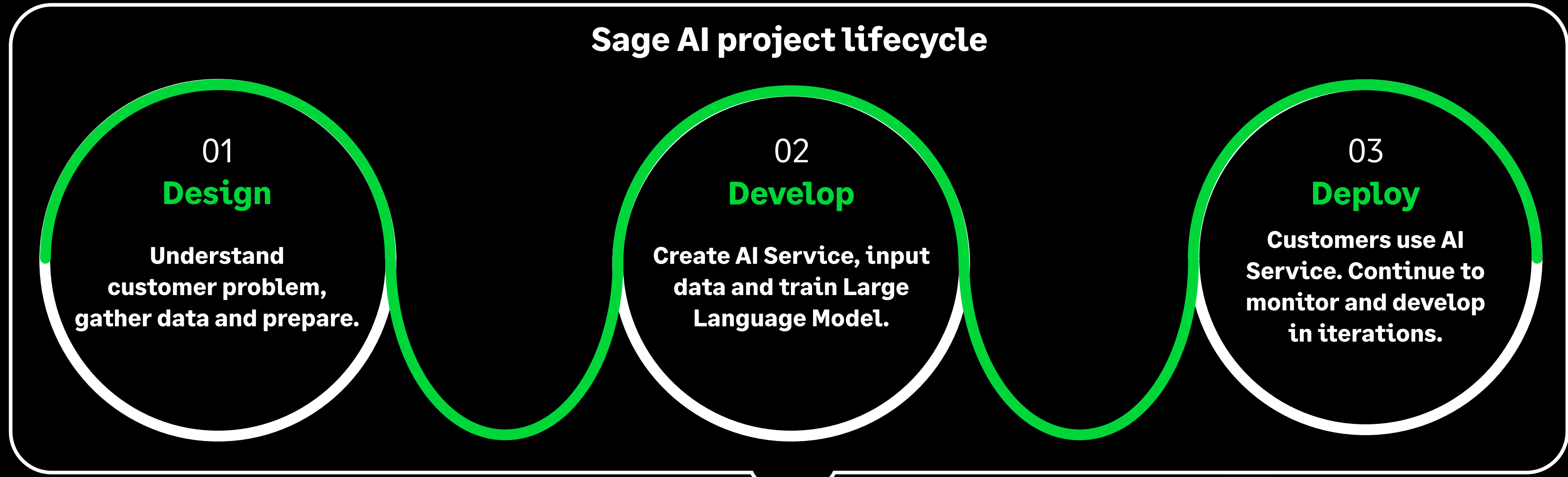
80% of emissions

The use (inference) phase of AI has emerged as the most significant, accounting for circa 80% of emissions across the AI lifecycle.¹⁰

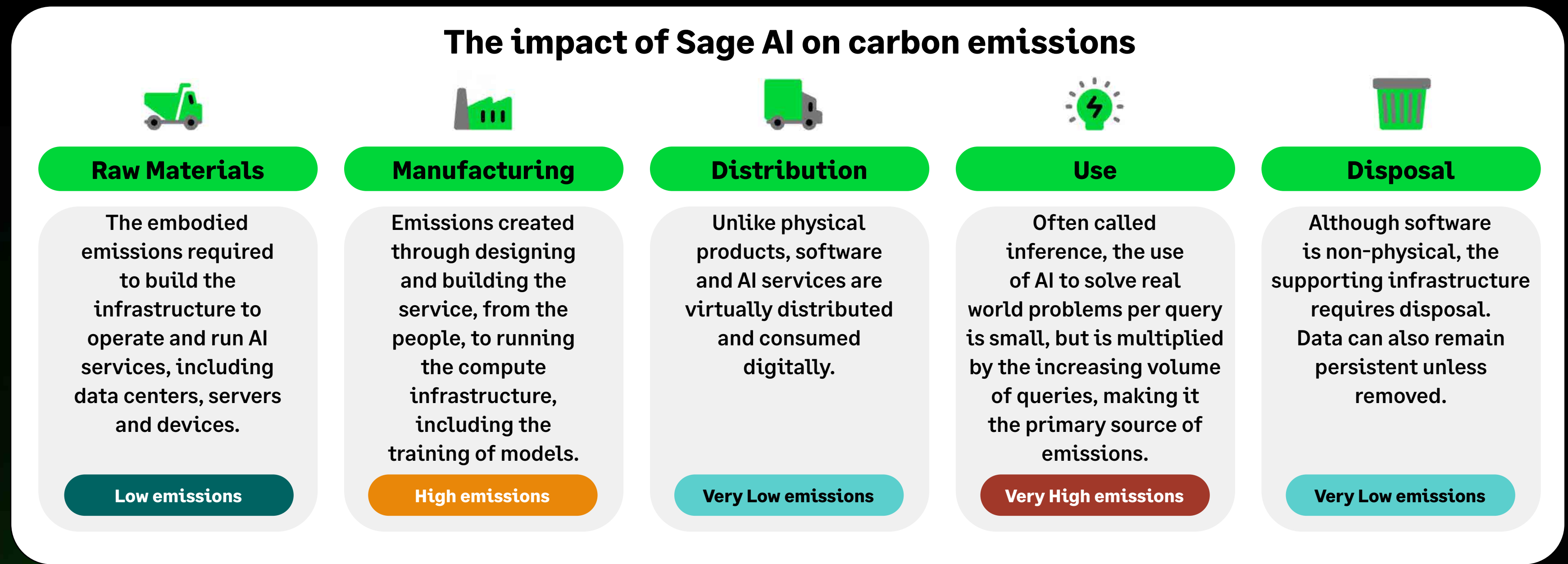
0.24 (Wh)

An average prompt can use 0.24 watt-hours (Wh) of energy, equivalent to watching TV for 9 seconds. ChatCPT alone handles over 2.5 billion prompts per day in 2025.¹¹

Sage AI project lifecycle



The impact of Sage AI on carbon emissions





Feature story 1 continued / Strategic pillars: Protect the Planet and Tech for Good

Pushing for transparency



If we want to build sustainable technology, we need to focus on understanding and reducing its environmental impact. That means tackling the challenges of a complex tech supply chain, where missing or incomplete environmental data often limits transparency. By working more closely with suppliers, using lifecycle assessments, and adopting new tools to track and cut carbon emissions, we can design products that are not only effective, but also aligned with global sustainability goals. In line with our **Multiplier Effect** strategy, we are advocating for greater supply chain transparency through the Scope 3 for Software Coalition, working with tech and IT partners to improve how software and AI emissions are measured across the full product lifecycle—from model development and training, to end use.

The majority of our emissions remain in Scope 3, with 84% being attributed to suppliers and emissions from hosting and operating our software. Scope 3 emissions have seen an increase in the last year despite suppliers' efforts to reduce waste by reusing components, building data centres from lower carbon materials, reusing more water, and investing in renewable energy expansion.

Together with other software providers, we continue working across the industry to engage global cloud providers, and push for greater ambition and transparency in their decarbonisation and sustainability roadmaps.

We prioritise suppliers that are transparent about their emissions and net zero pathway, and when we engage a new supplier they're required to agree to our **Supplier Code of Conduct**.



David Harrop
Climate Change Director at Sage

Expert view:

Meet David Harrop, Climate Change Director at Sage, who explains how awareness of AI's impact is vital to use it strategically and ethically.

Beyond data centres, what other environmental impacts of AI should we be aware of?

We need to assess the environmental impact of AI across its entire lifecycle—from the time and effort it takes to design, build, and deploy new tools, to the people and software infrastructure that enable them.

While training large language models and generative AI is widely recognised as energy and compute intensive, the broader environmental footprint extends well beyond data centres. Across the lifecycle, significant embodied carbon arises from the extraction and processing of raw materials, the manufacture and transport of hardware, and even the people-related emissions involved in building and maintaining software. In the use phase, we must also consider increased network traffic and the emissions associated with end-user devices such as laptops, monitors, and peripherals.

**David Harrop**

Climate Change Director at Sage

Expert view continued:

Let's look at how a user might prompt AI. If I ask a really complex question, it will take more energy for AI to figure it out. For example, using Sage Copilot in Analyst mode creates more emissions than just doing a quick search. The more complex the question, the harder AI has to work to answer it. When a user asks something detailed or technical, the AI needs to run more complex calculations, which means tapping into more computing power. That extra effort uses more electricity and generates more heat, so cooling systems also need to operate.

All of this adds up to a bigger environmental footprint. In summary, deeper or more demanding queries tend to be more carbon-intensive than simple ones.

Can you give an example of how query complexity affects AI's environmental impact?

If you ask an AI model a very simple question, such as "What is the Capital of France? Paris", it doesn't need to do a huge, complex set of queries. But if you ask it something more detailed, like "What are the carbon emissions of Sage Copilot?", it requires multi-stage reasoning, as the model must "simulate" analysis across many parameters—such as defining the scope of the question, estimating energy based on numerous inputs, and comparing scenarios. There are also cost implications: the unit costs of an AI search can be considerably higher than those of a traditional search.

To address this, many AI companies are now exploring ways to rightsize the response—meaning they optimise the level of processing to match the complexity of the query, using techniques such as caching.

How can users be guided towards more energy-efficient AI use?

By being thoughtful about when and how you use AI, you can help reduce its energy footprint. Keeping queries simple and focused means the system doesn't need to run large, power-hungry models unnecessarily. Even small changes in how we interact with AI can make a meaningful difference—especially when scaled across your teams or organisation.

What initiatives is Sage taking to build AI awareness among its teams?

Our learning team have developed several AI learning opportunities where colleagues can learn, act and share. This provides them with information about the importance of AI and data ethics through our personalised eLearning module which ensures they "Do the right thing".

The training aligns with Sage's Values and challenges colleagues to base their AI and data ethics decisions on four key questions, namely "Is it good for our customers, colleagues, wider society, and the planet?".



Short story collection

Emissions fall, impact grows

Measuring carbon emissions is just one part of the journey to net zero. We know why we have to do it, but do our colleagues and customers have the knowledge, tools, and time to incorporate it into their workflows?

Not all SMBs understand the specifics of carbon accounting, nor do they have the time to undertake in-depth carbon literacy training, so it's important to provide them with a simple solution.

Within our own business, we are striving to expand our colleagues' knowledge of their carbon footprint in ways that inspires them and makes learning enjoyable.



Sage Earth: seamless carbon accounting



Creating a culture of climate action



High-impact, low-carbon spaces



Sage Earth: seamless carbon accounting

SMBs are the engine of the economy, making up 99% of the business population.¹² But when it comes to carbon emissions, they can struggle to calculate them for several reasons: a lack of expertise on methodologies; a confusing array of regulatory frameworks; and not knowing where to find a reliable and user-friendly carbon accounting tool.

We want to make SMBs' decarbonisation journey easier, and Sage Earth is our solution. Feedback from our SMB partners revealed that standalone carbon accounting solutions can get forgotten or not used to their full potential. At Sage, to combat this, we decided to make emissions data collection a part of everyday workflows.

Another roadblock for SMBs was that there are no defined reporting outputs, making it difficult for users to benchmark their emissions, set targets, or know how and what to report against once they have collected their data. This resulted in us making changes. We integrated Sage Earth directly into the Sage for Small Business suite, embedding carbon tracking into existing workflows.

We gave users clearer guidance by creating a structured reporting framework based on PPN 06/21—a UK government procurement policy that requires suppliers to have a carbon reduction plan. This framework helped our teams and customers understand what to aim for and how to communicate it.

By September 2025, we had bundled carbon accounting into all tiers of the Sage for Small Business and Sage for Accountants suites, unlocking instant access to hundreds of thousands of UK SMBs.

We also added industry average carbon footprinting to Sage Intacct, helping users identify where their carbon impact is likely to be and where to take action first. With the upcoming Sage 50 integration, our reach will grow even further. Building

these integrations required collaboration with new stakeholders and learning new approaches. To support these changes, we engaged engineering expertise to streamline the process.

Although many reporting frameworks exist, most don't suit small businesses. PPN 06/21 is the most practical choice for now, but we're already working with the SMB community to create a new standard. Thanks to the Sage Earth integration, users can tailor their reporting outputs to everything from compliance to funding bids.

There's no reason for SMBs to be left behind when it comes to decarbonisation. We have shown it can be simple, actionable, and part of business as usual.

What is PPN 06/21?

PPN 06/21 stands for Procurement Policy Note 06/21, issued by the UK Cabinet Office. It requires suppliers bidding for government and NHS contracts worth over £5 million to publish a Carbon Reduction Plan. This plan must show how the supplier is measuring and reducing its greenhouse gas emissions, aligning with the UK's net zero target by 2050.



Creating a culture of climate action

We're proud that our sustainability journey is powered by our people. It's not just a corporate initiative—it's our colleagues who turn ambition into action, making real progress happen. Their desire to learn more about the actions the business is taking, and how they could personally contribute both at work and home, reinforces the need for a culture of sustainability at Sage.

We have launched global colleague initiatives designed to embed sustainability across the full colleague experience. We worked with our Learning and Development, Talent, Reward, and Communications teams to look at how we could hardwire sustainability into key policies and processes. We also thought about how it could show up in internal storytelling in a softer, more informal way, to show that it isn't just about numbers and emissions, but consistent awareness of impact in everything we do.

We have delivered Climate Fresk sessions, a learning opportunity to help colleagues understand more about climate change in a collaborative and interactive way. These sessions are presented in multiple languages, and specifically tailored for our Legal, Marketing, and Procurement teams.

At the end of FY25, colleagues reported an 86% confidence level in applying the concepts introduced through our sustainability learning programme and awarded an overall eSAT (employee satisfaction) score of 96% across multiple learning experiences. To help colleagues take action at home and work, we have introduced benefits like Liftshare in the UK and Ireland, North America, Spain, Portugal, France, Germany, and India to help them find carpool buddies. At present, 276 colleagues are using Liftshare, representing a saving of 7.1 tonnes CO₂. Colleagues can also complete carbon-saving quizzes and challenges on the Deedster app, where we currently have 724 active users and 26,590 actions taken, representing a 137-tonne CO₂ saving. Between engagement in Liftshare and Deedster, colleagues have saved roughly the same amount of carbon that could be absorbed by 14,000 trees per year.

Culture change has to be rooted in real action. Without tangible opportunities to get involved, there's no culture to engage with. By making it fun and accessible, we hope our colleagues' passion for sustainability will continue outside of the workplace.

“Using the Deedster app was a great experience. Some of the things I knew, but others were new knowledge for me. The main benefit was having discussions with my teammates about the facts and a bit of healthy competition amongst us, too.”

Johnathan Benson
L&D Business Partner, Sage



High-impact, Low-carbon spaces

In February 2026, we'll move our London operations into **TBC.London**, a cutting-edge, low-carbon office development on London's South Bank.

When we were searching for new premises, energy efficiency was a top priority. Sage will be occupying two floors of the all-electric building, which avoids fossil fuels entirely, using renewable power from on-site solar panels and external sources including wind and biomass. Our new office space is also a **Living Wage Building**, where every worker connected to the building, including cleaners, security staff, and other third-party contractors, is paid at least the real Living Wage, as defined by the Living Wage Foundation. This wage is independently calculated based on the actual cost of living and is voluntarily adopted by employers to ensure fair pay.

Smart building technologies like heat pumps and intelligent management systems help cut energy use even further. The building is net zero carbon in operation, hitting 31.5 kWh/m² energy use intensity, which makes it almost 2025 "Paris proof", one of the only buildings in London to be future-proofed in this manner. TBC.London is on track to achieve top-tier environmental standards: EPC A, BREEAM Outstanding, and a 5.0-star NABERS rating for energy performance.

As well as being kinder to the planet, there are top facilities for colleagues, too. Cycling storage and changing rooms for pedal-powered commuters have a dedicated entrance, while a rooftop terrace with river views provides a calming space to take a break.

“The exceptional sustainability credentials of **TBC.London** were a significant factor in the decision on our new London home. It moves us close to the local community and presents excellent opportunities for building social cohesion. We are confident it will be a responsible, dynamic, energised, and super-connected environment.”

Neil Usher
VP Places, Sage



Introduction

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Feature story 2 / Strategic pillar: Tech for Good

CAN DATA BE A FORCE FOR CHANGE?



Feature story 2 continued / Strategic pillar: Tech for Good

Joining the data dots

What does “data-driven” actually mean? You might have seen it on a company’s online bio, in a job description, or in a LinkedIn post. Sometimes it really does refer to an action plan that’s based on insights, trends and stories in data, but often it’s a buzzword meaning little more than performance tracking. At Sage, we think data can do far more than that.

The Sage Small Business Tracker analyses anonymised Sage Accounting and Payroll data of over 130,000 UK SMBs and looks at how they are performing in real terms in the current economic climate. Some of that data tells us how much money SMBs are owed in late payments, and how long overdue their invoices are. The numbers were shocking, and we immediately saw a need to speak up for the businesses in late payment limbo.

Before we delve into what we found, we need to understand how our Tracker fits into the wider business and data landscape. By examining other available research and datasets from government and NGO sources, we can see how our data on SMBs’ financial health fits into the bigger picture.

The UK government commissioned the Business Data Survey in 2022¹³ to assess data’s role in driving the economy. It found that just 17% of all the businesses surveyed shared data outside their organisation (although the larger the organisation was, the more likely it was to share data). Of the respondents that shared data, 34% shared it with public bodies like government departments. The types of data that businesses might share varied from sensitive information about customers and service users, to performance metrics and financial data.

There is a wealth of insights in that survey, too numerous to describe here, but a top-level takeaway is that under a fifth of UK businesses are sharing data outside of their organisation. We believe there is a strong case for making data public if it can contribute to positive social change, and strive to lead by example with our Small Business Tracker.

This principle is in line with the UN Agenda for Sustainable Development,¹⁴ which seeks to achieve its SDGs by 2030 and monitor the progress of over 200 performance metrics. Steve MacFeely, Chief Statistician at UNCTAD, wrote in an [op-ed for the World Economic Forum](#) that the ability of government bodies to collect the volume of data required by the Agenda varies hugely between countries, with some of the metrics not currently included in the scope of official statistics. That means gaps can be plugged by other organisations, including the private sector.

UK SMBs contribute:¹⁵

£2.8 trillion to the UK economy

51% of private sector turnover

60% private sector employees

Average SMB profits grew 8.3% in 2025 compared to 2024, according to Sage’s Small Business Tracker for Q1 2025.



Will Taggart

Product Manager Data for Good team, Sage

Expert view:

Will Taggart is a Product Manager in Sage’s Data for Good team. He explains what Data for Good is about and his work on the Small Business Tracker.

Hi Will! I hear you’ve been busy working on Sage’s Data for Good Programme. Can you tell me what it is?

I’d be happy to! Data for Good is our programme to help small and medium businesses thrive using anonymised insights from our data and enabling better decision making by stakeholders.

That sounds like a great project! What about your goal; what is the programme trying to achieve?

Good question. It’s all about aggregating anonymised SMB data into a centralised warehouse that helps organisations, researchers, and policy makers to uncover trends, optimise decision making, and create meaningful change.



“In the four years I was in the role of Small Business Commissioner, I was grateful to all the organisations that gathered and were happy to share their payments data. By that, I mean whether invoices were paid by the agreed date, the average days firms took to pay suppliers, and how delayed beyond agreed terms payments were on average.

Sage has been one of those companies producing invaluable payments data. The Small Business tracker in particular was indispensable when it came to shedding light on customer payment behaviour. Sage helped the team at the Office of the Small Business Commissioner with insights that contributed to an overall picture of the problem we were trying to solve.”



Liz Barclay
Small Business Commissioner 2021–2025



Will Taggart
Product Manager Data for Good team, Sage

Expert view continued:

How is Sage using data and insights to help policy makers understand the economic benefits of digital technology?

In 2024, we conducted [research](#) which demonstrates how e-invoicing can revolutionise small business efficiency and enhance cash flow. E-invoicing replaces outdated invoice processes like PDF and paper with structured data. Our research found it can lead to significant productivity gains for SMBs whilst also paving the way for the rapid digitalisation of the economy and wider AI adoption. These benefits have been recognised by the UK government and were referenced in its recent strategy, [“Backing your Business: Our Plan for Small and Medium Sized Businesses”](#), as evidence for how e-invoicing could be transformational for UK SMBs.

I’ve heard about your Small Business Tracker. What’s that? And how does it fit in?

Our Small Business Tracker provides a quarterly financial analysis of anonymised data from up to 130,000 businesses in the UK. The data contains helpful insights for policy makers on the challenges and opportunities facing SMBs.

That’s cool! So, because you were getting all of this data from your customers, you decided to do something positive with it, and use it to help SMBs?

That’s exactly right. I believe that, by improving access to the data that we collect, we can identify seemingly hidden challenges that SMBs are facing. So, we are using our data for good—to identify and address the problems many SMBs face every day.

Data privacy is super important. How do you anonymise the data and protect the privacy of SMBs?

We take this very seriously. That’s why we establish robust processes to prevent de-anonymisation. Only anonymised and aggregated data is made available, ensuring privacy and commercial confidentiality are fully protected.

Thanks for the chat, Will. Keep using your data for good!



Feature story 2 continued / Strategic pillar: Tech for Good

SMBs in limbo

The money owed to SMBs is often late due to roadblocks in the payment framework. Invoices filled in incorrectly, missed reminders, and manual systems that work differently from one business to another mean that unpaid invoices often end up at the bottom of the clients' priorities, while the SMB waits to be paid. By implementing an e-invoicing system, these blockers could be eliminated, taking SMBs out of payment limbo and into a more efficient operational landscape.

Our research suggests that processing of invoices in a structured, machine-readable format would reduce late payments by as much as 20% and would bring the UK in line with other European countries, as well as Japan and Singapore, that are introducing e-invoicing.

The wider economic context is an indicator that growing a business is challenging in the current climate, and that is especially true for SMBs. For some, the amount owed in late payments is equal to their cash holdings, putting them in a precarious situation.

We wanted to make our data accessible, so we launched an external-facing Data for Good hub on www.sage.com, allowing stakeholders to access reports, sign up for updates, and explore new research as it becomes available. Every quarter, reports are sent directly to stakeholders across government and industry.

See more datasets on our [Data for Good hub](#) and receive updates on our research.

Our partners in purpose

Working with **Smart Data Foundry (SDF)** and the **Centre for Economics and Business Research (CEBR)**, we began building the infrastructure to securely and ethically share anonymised data about how small businesses are performing in the real economy.

The Tracker itself is a quarterly report offering real-time insight into the health of UK SMBs. It includes key metrics such as revenue, productivity, and—crucially—late payments. The data is regionalised, too, helping stakeholders understand local challenges. For Sage's hometown in the North East of England, this visibility has proven especially impactful and has drawn the interest of local leaders.





“As a small business owner, you don’t have the voice, but if Sage is acting on behalf of small businesses around the UK and is able to do this research and understand the size of the problem, that really helps businesses like ours.”



Claire Burnet
Founder, Chococo

“We needed to take action to address late payment, and we knew that access to credible, current data would be the key to doing it in a meaningful way.”



Natasha Thomas
VP, Public Affairs &
Stakeholder Relations,
Sage

“Financial data holds untapped potential to understand the realities of UK economic wellbeing. Our mission is to unlock that data —responsibly— for researchers, NGOs, policy makers and others.”



Dogie Robb
CEO, Smart Data Foundry

“It’s clear that too many small businesses continue to be held back by outdated systems and slow payments, but this is a fixable problem. Digital tools are already helping businesses get paid faster, reduce admin, and unlock cash to invest in growth, but it is imperative that policy in the UK continues to enable them further. With AI assistants such as Sage Copilot and e-invoicing, businesses have the opportunity to drive better cash flow, improve efficiency and fuel growth.”



Derk Bleeker
Chief Commercial Officer,
Sage



Feature story 2 continued / Strategic pillar: Tech for Good

Data-driven policy change



In May 2025, we joined forces with [Enterprise Nation](#) and the [Federation of Small Business](#) to host an event at the House of Commons, where we presented the findings gathered by the Small Business Tracker to industry leaders and policy makers, including Jonathan Reynolds, Secretary of State for Business and Trade. This data has helped to convince policy makers of the need to take action to support the millions of small businesses and entrepreneurs in the UK, with the government currently exploring technological solutions to overcome the barriers that stop business from flowing.

One significant change under consultation is e-invoicing — where an invoice is digitally sent directly between financial systems, even if different frameworks are used by supplier and client. This removes the need for manual processing, meaning payments happen on time, small businesses' stability is ensured, and the economy becomes healthier.

Spurred on by the impact of this project, we want to continue using the data we hold, and are able to share, for causes that benefit society and the environment. We believe in the power of data and advocacy being recognised as a force for good and we sincerely hope that other businesses will join us in using their data to identify problems, propose solutions, and share their findings in the name of progress.

“Research from Sage shows that small businesses are owed billions in late payments and unpaid invoices. This isn't just an inconvenience—it's holding back 5.5 million SMEs, which are the backbone of the UK economy.”



Jonathan Reynolds
Secretary of State for
Business and Trade

“We have seen what's possible when companies like Sage commit to sharing data responsibly. It's not just a win for business—it's a win for society.”



Rui Cardoso
Head of Sector Engagement,
Smart Data Foundry



Short story collection

Restoring trust in tech

AI adoption should never come down to blind trust. Businesses deserve to know how the technology works, how their data is used, and what safeguards are in place.

Sage's AI Trust Label is important because it recognises the need for transparency. Our research shows a direct correlation between trust and adoption. Of the 30% of respondents who are already using AI, 94% of them report seeing benefits, whilst the majority of respondents—70%—have yet to fully adopt the technology.



AI and data ethics

[Read more](#)



Our AI Trust Label

[Read more](#)



AI and data ethics

Just because you can, it doesn't mean you should. This is the ethos we have adopted when it comes to AI and data use at Sage, because we believe technological innovation should be guided by ethics as much as possible.

To put this into practice and encourage this mindset across the business, we have introduced AI and Data Ethics training, a 25-minute e-learning course for colleagues, developed by Sage's AI and Data Governance team in collaboration with our Learning and Development team.

The training is a practical guide to help colleagues navigate the ethical dilemmas that technology can present. It's designed to encourage them to make ethical considerations an everyday part of their working practice, and they are led through the course by "Nav", a friendly digital moral compass. At the end of the course, colleagues are asked to attest to the following statements:

- I will always ask myself what I should do, not just what I can do.
- I will make a considered effort to leverage AI and data for good—to help find and fix problems facing customers, colleagues and society.
- I will contact our Ethics team if I need help making the right choices.
- I will champion ethics at Sage by encouraging others to do the same.

The training was built to be simple, clear, and accessible to everyone, regardless of how familiar they are with AI. Feedback has been overwhelmingly positive: colleagues have found it easy to understand, focused, and highly relevant to their day-to-day roles. Some have requested that we go deeper into the topic with additional sessions on scenarios they might face.

We have introduced further training courses, the first in a trilogy of trust-based training, with Data Privacy and Data Security modules having been launched. The former is mandatory for all colleagues, teaching them how to handle personal data in line with regulations. The latter is highly recommended for all to increase their understanding of the digital footprint we all leave online, and how to increase personal digital security.



Our AI Trust Label

If you've been on social media lately, you've likely come across posts that either celebrate AI's potential to automate human roles in the workplace, or express concern over its flaws—such as generating inaccurate information, fabricating scientific references, or eroding the value of critical thinking.

Our purpose is to knock down barriers. AI will create huge productivity gains, but our **research** shows that trust is critical for AI use, and that concerns about accuracy, privacy and security are a top barrier to adoption.

Among those who trust AI, 85% say they actively use it in their business but usage drops to just 48% among those who do not trust it.

This year, we announced the development of our AI Trust Label at Sage Future, our annual stakeholder event. The Trust Label gives customers key information about compliance, accuracy, reliability, safety, transparency, and ethical use. It is specifically designed to narrow that gap by making AI behaviour understandable, and accountable.

The Sage AI Trust Label will be rolled out in late 2025 in the UK and US, followed by Europe, and will be available in a select number of Sage product interfaces. It will be developed based on feedback from SMBs, customers and accountants, in response to the trust indicators that matter to them, and will align with key AI standards and regulations.

“We are not just building a label for Sage. We are building a model for how AI can earn trust across the business software sector. If we want AI to truly empower SMBs, this kind of transparency isn't optional, it's essential.”

Aaron Harris
Chief Technology Officer, Sage

A 2025 KPMG and University of Melbourne study¹⁶ surveyed 48,000 participants from 47 countries about their trust, attitudes and use of artificial intelligence:

66%
of people use AI regularly

83%
believe in the benefits of AI

46%
of people say they trust AI

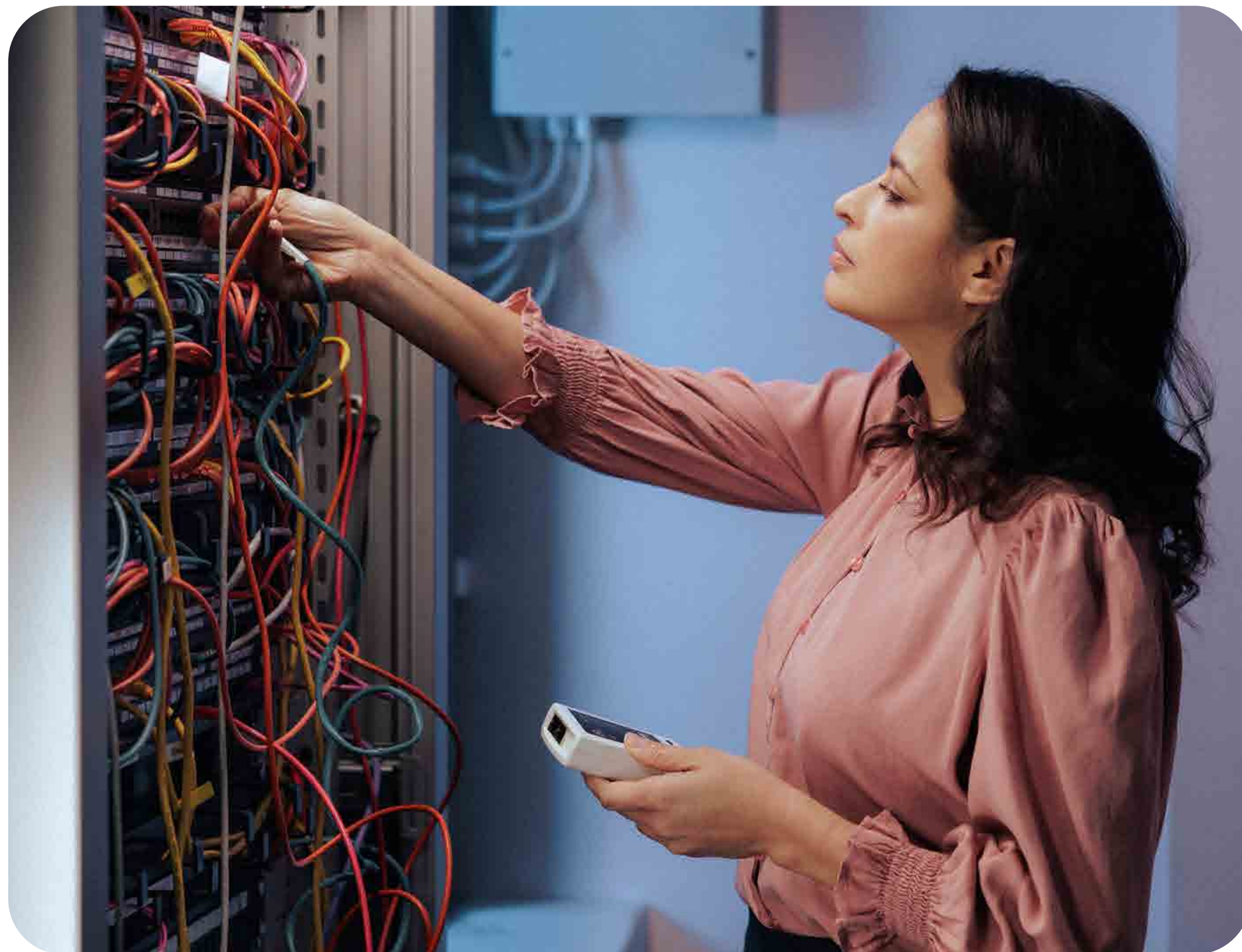
66%
don't evaluate the accuracy of AI

57%
want more regulation around the use of AI



Short story collection

Nurturing the future tech workforce



The technology industry in all its forms continues to grow, but it is not attracting diverse job applicants. There are a multitude of reasons for this: systemic bias; overly prescriptive requirements on job adverts, and a lack of awareness among people from underserved demographics on how to enter the industry.

Programmes that help underrepresented groups discover their aptitude for a career in the technology or cyber security sector are vital. That's why we support several such initiatives, so that anyone with the right skills can be a part of the future workforce.

Fast facts

25%

of the global cyber security workforce are women¹⁷

In the UK:

17% of the tech workforce are women

12% of those in senior roles in the UK are women

9% of those in senior roles in the UK are from an ethnic minority background¹⁸

Fast facts

In the US:

35% of tech jobs are held by women¹⁹

In India:

32% of the tech workforce are women²⁰

Fast facts

In Germany:

18% of the tech workforce are women²¹

In Spain:

Under 20% of the tech workforce are women²²



Short story collection



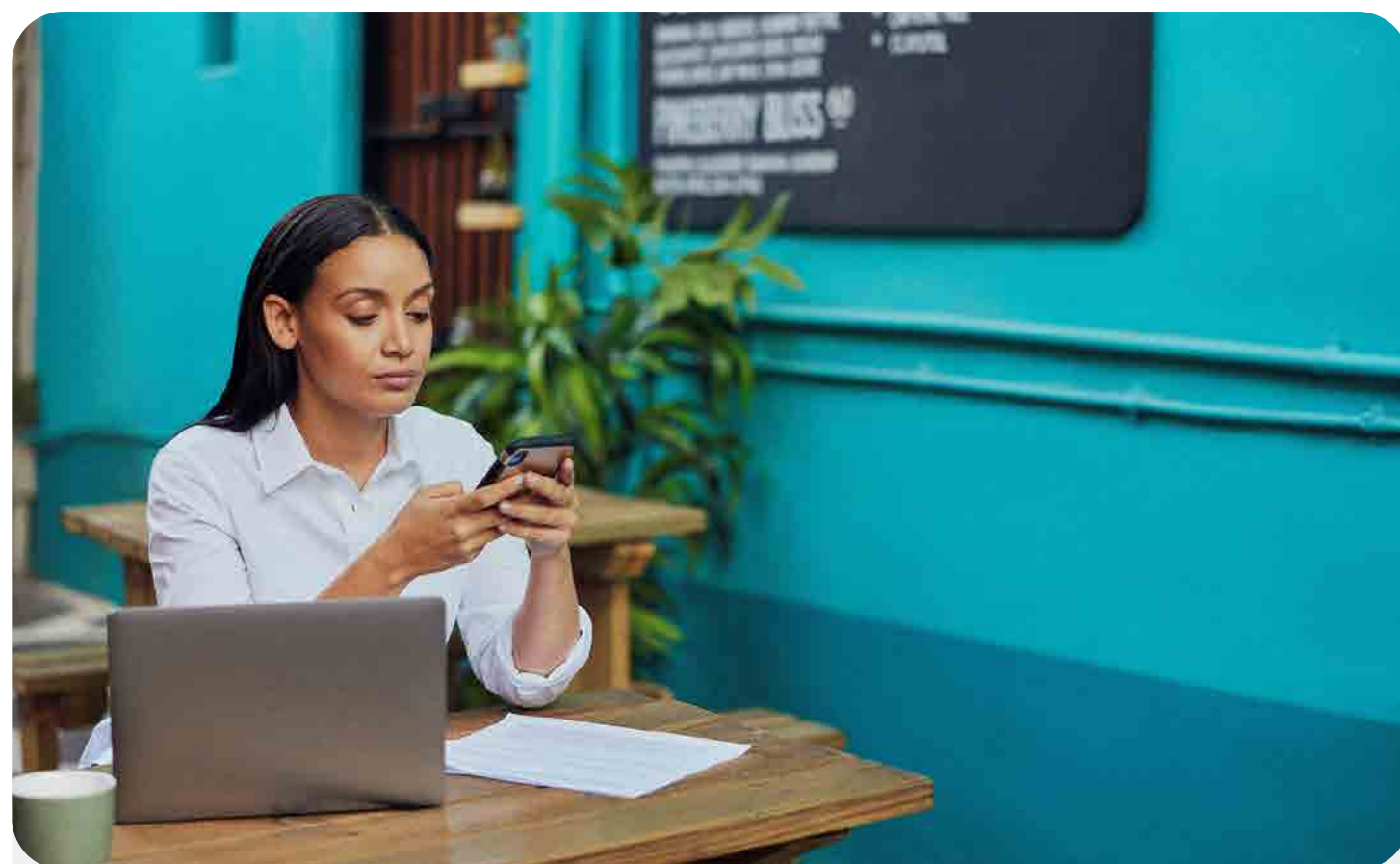
Demystifying tech careers



Cyber's future is female



Connecting talent to opportunity



Access to AI



Tech training for all



Discovering the leader within



Demystifying tech careers

If you're unfamiliar with a particular industry, especially a high-growth one like tech, it can be difficult to envisage what career opportunities exist within it. Our partnership with the Newcastle United Foundation (NUF) aims to demystify the future of work for young people across the North East.

We realised that there was a gap to close between education and readiness for a STEM career for students at schools throughout the area. Many young people lacked exposure to emerging sectors and the rapidly evolving array of jobs within them, so we joined forces with the NUF's NU Futures programme. The programme offers career coaching, CV and interview preparation, and sector-specific training.

The training also includes functional skills training in literacy, numeracy, and digital competencies, and integrates VR headsets and tablets to provide immersive career experiences. The immersive sessions help demystify tech careers and make abstract concepts tangible through exposure to real-world work environments, which in turn boosts aspiration and confidence.

The EmPowerCyber event is one example of the type of career events delivered through this partnership. Sage volunteers are involved in everything from logistics, running interactive sessions, delivering a keynote speech, participating in speed networking, and career insight talks. The EmPowerCyber event is for school students but apprentices are encouraged to participate, not just at the big events, but throughout the programme year, sharing their journeys and inspiring the next generation of Sage colleagues.



Cyber's future is female

Sage, born and headquartered in the North East of England, is proud to partner with the NUF to serve our local community (read more about this partnership [here](#)). To help address the gender gap in tech, for the third year Sage co-hosted an EmPowerCyber event in Newcastle with the NUF, bringing 1,200 girls from 17 schools together to discover opportunities in STEM.

By connecting with young women at a pivotal point in their lives when they are starting to think about their future careers, we demonstrate the opportunities that exist in cyber security and other tech careers. We do this by role modelling women in the industry, and having open conversations about our experiences and the positive impact they have had on our lives, debunking any myths about tech/cyber being a male-only field.

The cyber security industry is set to keep growing, but women are a surprisingly small part of it: In 2022, women made up 25% of cybersecurity jobs worldwide, rising from 20% in 2019 and about 10% in 2013.²³ Driving the inclusion of women in cybersecurity is vital for bringing diverse perspectives, driving innovation, and helping to close the industry's critical skills gap.

We have partnered with the NUF since 2021 as its strategic Technology Partner, supporting youth development and digital inclusion across the North East of England, multiplying our impact across the community. With the EmPowerCyber event, we introduced the idea of a career in cyber security to girls approaching their GCSEs.

The event featured over 40 companies and organisations, including local employers like Newcastle Building Society, Nissan and Northumbrian Water. It also included global names such as the RAF, Palo Alto, Opencast, and GCHQ's CyberFirst team. Together, they delivered immersive, hands-on workshops, including codebreaking, hacker training, programming, escape rooms, and crisis response simulations. Our aim is to scale efforts even further by expanding EmPowerCyber and reaching more girls across the region.



Connecting talent to opportunity

Seidea is a career development platform with a strong social mission that connects Black, Asian, and minority ethnicity women with job opportunities in cyber security, as well as hosting skills bootcamps, webinars, and workshops. Through our partnership with Seidea, we are helping to build a more inclusive cyber ecosystem—one bootcamp, one mentor, one role model at a time.

In the UK, there is an undeniable lack of diversity in cyber security. People from ethnic minority backgrounds make up 15% of the workforce, and an even smaller 9% when it comes to senior roles. Women account for 17% of the workforce and 12% of senior roles.²⁴ The same report found that 44% of businesses have a skills gap, so there is a clear need for knowledgeable cyber security professionals. That's why we support Seidea, to give women from non-white backgrounds the guidance to hone their skills and find the roles that need them.

Since 2022, we have supported initiatives like the CompTIA Security+ and Cloud Security bootcamps, and worked with churches, schools, and youth centres across South London to host career talks and skills sessions for students who may not otherwise have considered cyber security as a career path. As well as opening doors for people who might not discover the industry or know anyone who works in it, we also believe that recruitment should be more inclusive, and consider skills and experience gained in a variety of ways.

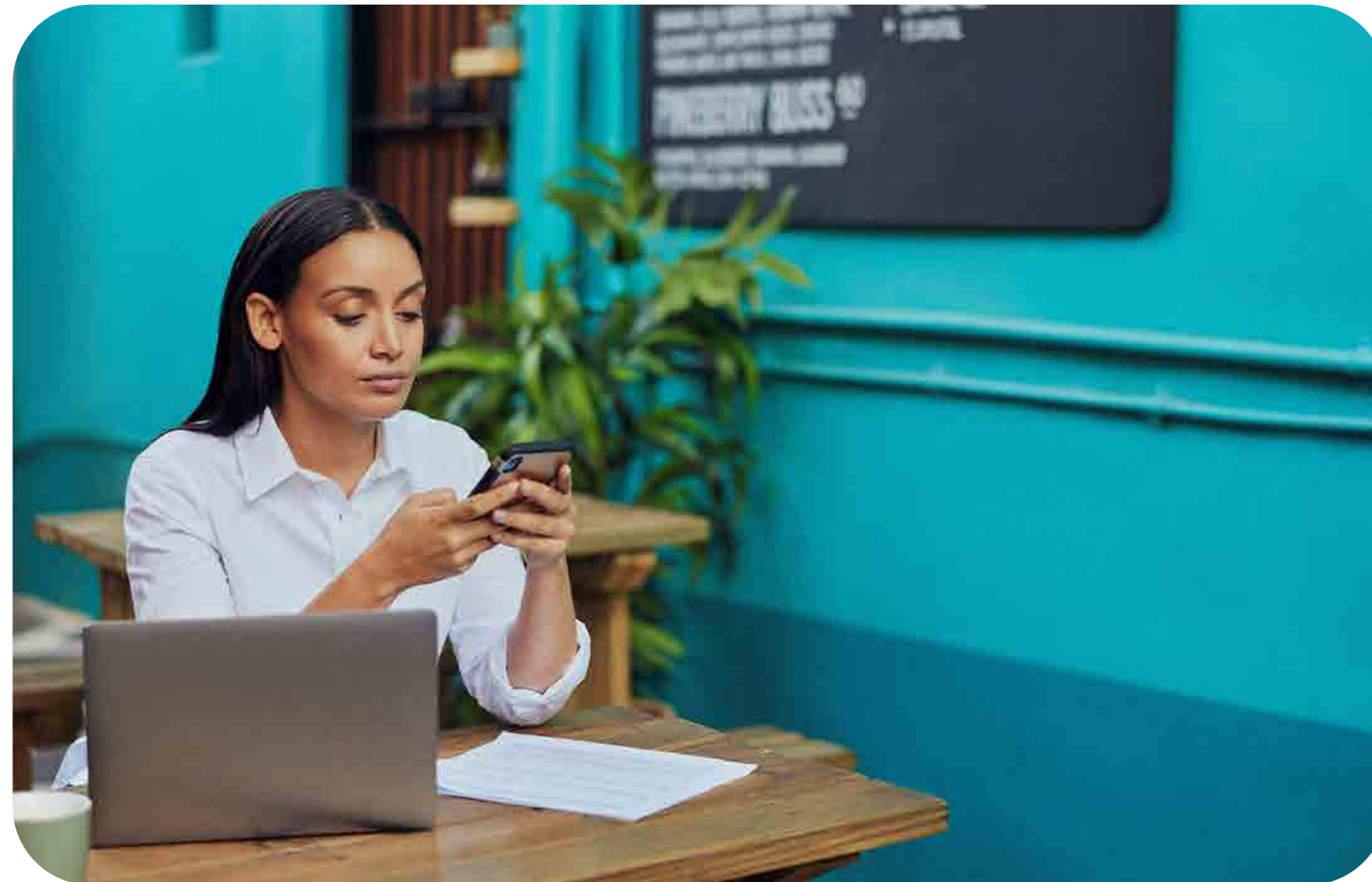
“The Seidea bootcamp was an enriching experience. I first discovered it through an internal post on Your Sage, which sparked my curiosity, and I decided to take the plunge.

The programme was well-structured, hands-on, and designed to give realworld skills that can be immediately applied to our work. The instructors were not only knowledgeable but also incredibly supportive, creating an engaging learning environment where I felt comfortable asking questions and exploring new concepts.

I walked away with a deeper understanding of cloud technologies, and I'm excited to leverage this new expertise in my role. I highly recommend this bootcamp to anyone looking to grow their technical skillset and stay ahead in today's rapidly evolving digital lands.”

Tafadzwa Saburi

Senior Data and Business Analyst, Sage



Access to AI

At Sage, we believe that digital and AI skills are the new literacy—essential tools for navigating and shaping the future. Through strategic partnerships and targeted programmes, Sage Foundation is helping underserved communities across the globe access transformative learning opportunities, from foundational digital literacy to more advanced software development.

The Sage AI Training Pathways, developed in partnership with the **Somos F5 Foundation**, is a three-year initiative designed to empower vulnerable communities in Spain through free, inclusive AI education. Delivered in Madrid and online nationwide, the programme offers three progressive levels of training:

- AI Acculturation Workshops (structured learning experience designed to help individuals build a foundational understanding in using AI).
- An 80-hour pre-qualification module.
- A nine-month intensive AI software development bootcamp.

Targeting women, immigrants, refugees, youth, and people with disabilities, the programme is supported by volunteer mentors from Sage. On average, **63% of learners** that go through the programme secure employment or pursue further education, demonstrating the model’s effectiveness in driving both AI literacy and economic independence.

“Digital and AI skills are the new literacy—empowering people not just to adapt to the future, but to shape it. Through programmes like the Sage AI Training Pathway, Sage Foundation is opening doors for underserved communities to thrive in a tech-driven world.”



Helen Devanny
VP, Sage Foundation

“Taking part in the AI bootcamp of the “Sage AI Training Pathway” has been a truly life-changing experience. I came from a completely different field, with a strong desire to reinvent myself professionally, and this programme gave me exactly the tools I needed to do so.

I learned how to develop machine learning models, work with large datasets, and understand how AI can create value across different business contexts.

I feel much more prepared to face the challenges of the current job market.”



Angela Kavrecic
Participant in the Sage AI Training project

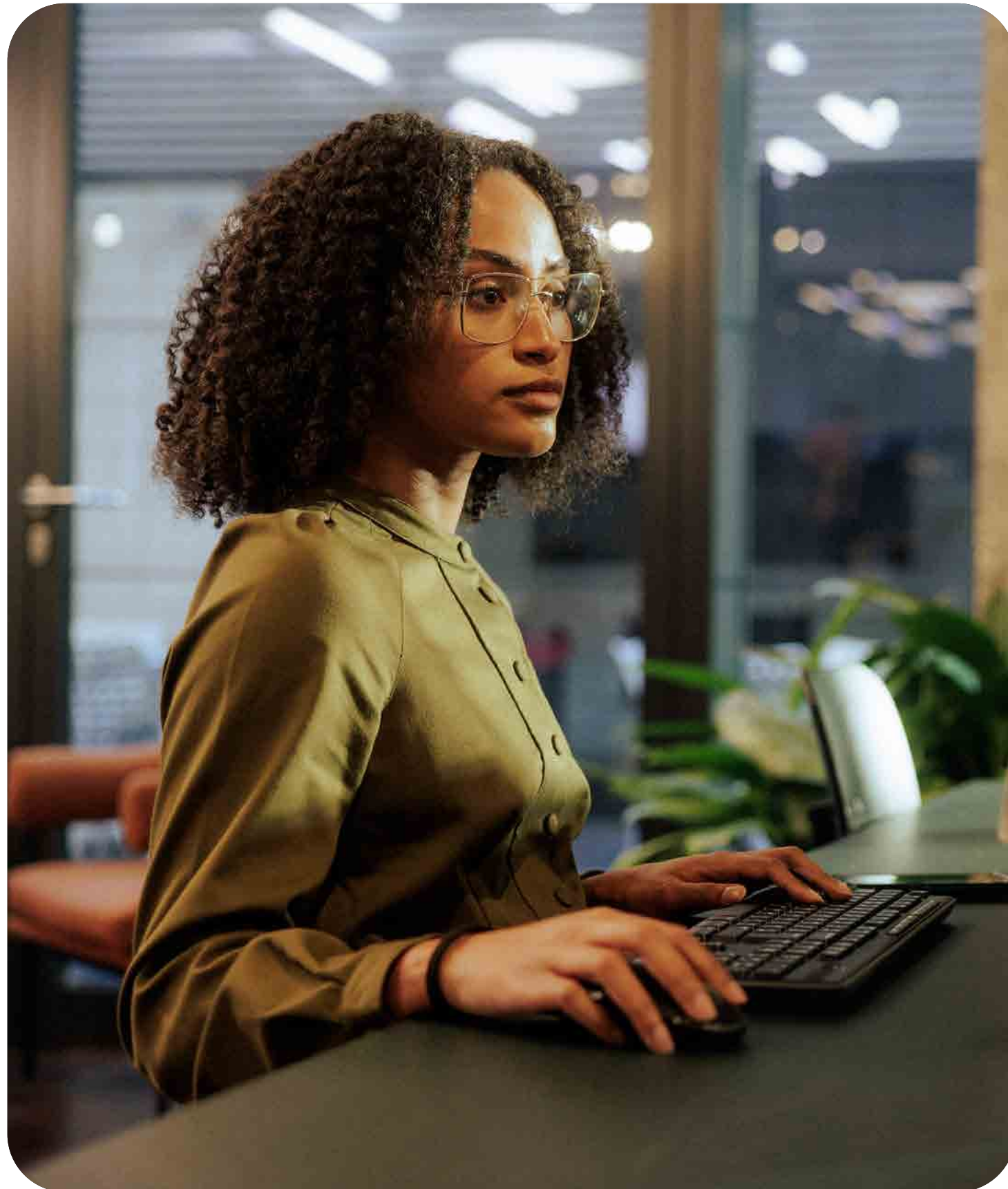


Tech training for all

In the US, Sage has partnered with **Per Scholas Atlanta** to offer tuition-free, full-time IT training to underserved communities.

Launched in November 2024, this three year partnership supports 18 students annually, providing tech certifications, career coaching, and access to potential careers at Sage through our hiring pathway with Per Scholas.

Colleagues at Sage's Lawrenceville office have played a vital role, volunteering as career coaches and mentors since the programme's pilot programme in 2023. Over the next two years, the initiative will continue to open doors for individuals who might otherwise lack access to careers in technology.



Discovering the Leader within

Empowering You is a third-party leadership programme designed to uplift the next generation of women in cyber security across London, the South West, and the North East.

The Empowering You programme delivers blended learning and development journeys that empower leaders to realise their potential. The programme aims to build an empowered community of diverse and confident leaders who can inspire a meaningful, sustainable cultural shift that benefits their organisation, wider industry, and society at large.

One of Sage's participants, Kaye Johnson, Associate Security Specialist, Cyber Defence Operations at Sage, joined over 60 aspiring leaders for a series of interactive workshops covering everything from authentic leadership to building influence and connection. Kaye said the biggest lesson for her was "pushing myself out of my comfort zone, as that's where real growth happens."

We are proud to have continued supporting Empowering You in 2025, championing inclusive programmes that are committed to creating a more diverse workforce in cyber security.

“It's been a game changer for me. I've learnt to vocalise my values, built confidence, and discovered that networking isn't nearly as intimidating as I once thought. The programme didn't just build technical know-how: it encouraged personal growth and leadership development.”



Kaye Johnson

Associate Security Specialist, Cyber Defence Operations at Sage



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Feature story 3 / Strategic pillar: Tech for Good and Human by Design

WHAT HAPPENS WHEN WE INVEST IN POSSIBILITY?



Feature story 3 continued / Strategic pillar: Tech for Good and Human by Design

Empowering purpose-driven entrepreneurs

Small businesses are the catalyst for transformational change. At Sage, we believe their bold ideas and relentless drive hold the power to solve some of the world's most urgent challenges. Through the Sage Impact Entrepreneurs (SIE) programme, we champion their potential to shape a more inclusive, sustainable future—one innovation at a time.

The journey of an entrepreneur can be challenging for many reasons, such as geographical constraints or access to investment and coaching. We are committed to removing the barriers entrepreneurs face and multiplying their positive impacts. After a decade of growth and learning, Sage Foundation was poised to create a new programme that aligned our social impact goals with our company goals.

Fast fact

6%

of UK SMBs are led by someone from a minority ethnicity²⁵

Through research, we identified the barriers that underrepresented entrepreneurs face, and with this knowledge, developed a programme that brought together three key things: **Desirability**—understanding the obstacles faced by entrepreneurs; **Feasibility**—knowing what unique resources Sage has available to address the obstacles of entrepreneurs; and **Viability**—being clear on the social impact Sage is looking to make. And so the SIE programme was born.

SIE is a multi-year programme to support entrepreneurs across the UK, Southern Europe, and the US, who are building solutions at the forefront of sustainability and social impact-focused innovation. The programme is grounded in the following guiding principles:

Rooted in Rigour: The programme is built on deep research and insight, ensuring every decision is grounded in evidence and relevance.

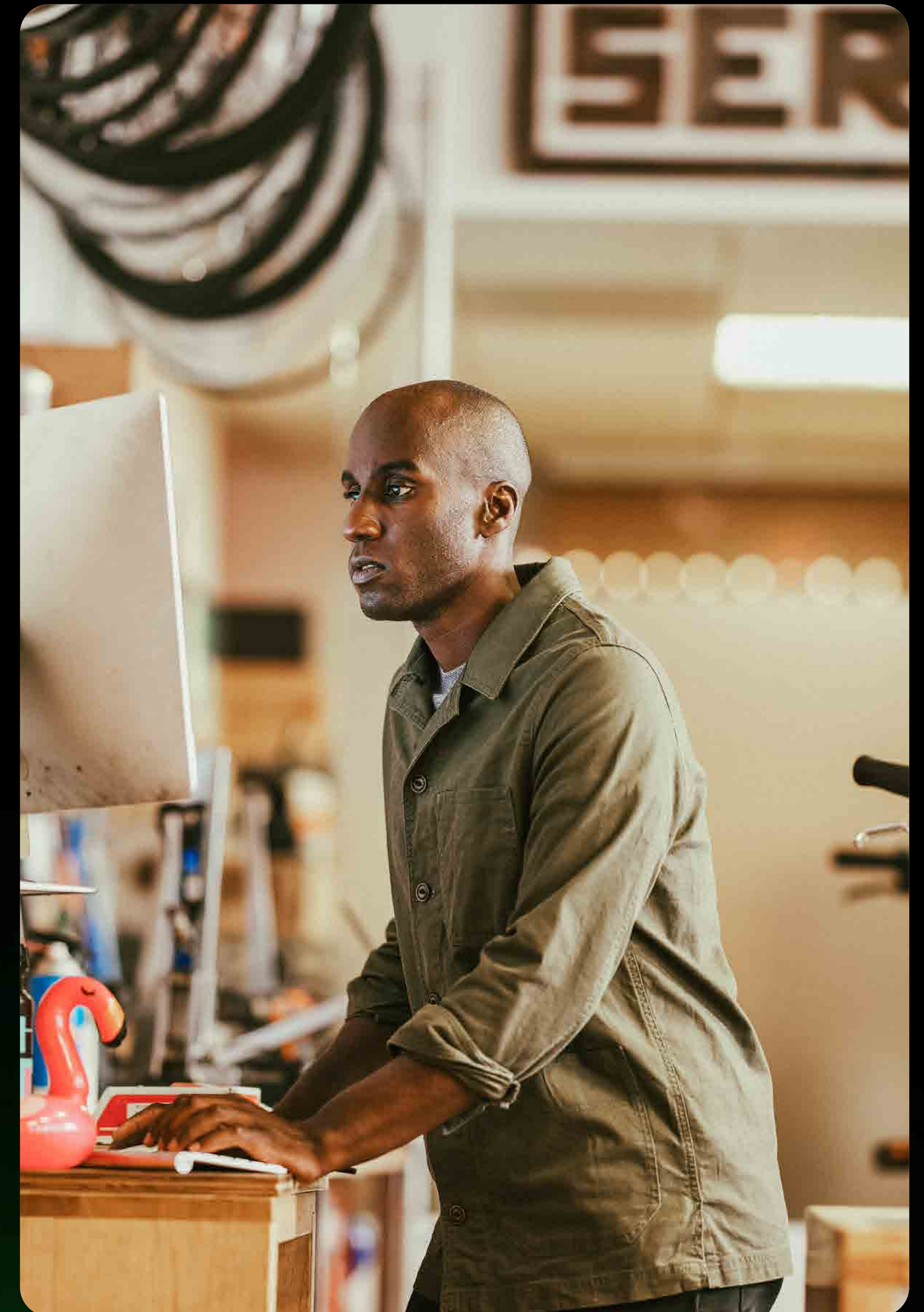
Co-Created with Purpose: Designed collaboratively with trusted partners and input from across the business, it reflects a shared commitment to meaningful change.

Methodologies that Matter: Every process follows strict, proven methodologies—because we believe social impact demands the same, if not greater, rigour than traditional business strategy.

Connecting Our Strengths: We're aligning our most valuable assets—volunteering, senior leadership, products, and expertise—to amplify the programme's reach and effectiveness.

Powered by Sage: It leverages Sage's core strengths—technology, deep understanding of SMBs, and the passion of our people—to create lasting value.

Built for lasting change: This is not a one-off initiative. Our focus is on deep, transformative impact—enabling and multiplying the positive effects that small and medium businesses have on their communities and the world.





Feature story 3 continued / Strategic pillar: Tech for Good and Human by Design

Problems shared

Our research showed that the situation in each region we assessed was influenced by location-specific cultural and historic factors. The spectres of an unequal past still loom over a few geographies, which has led to gaps in access to education and social networks. Black and minority ethnicity entrepreneurs are still subject to inequality, saying it marred their attempts to access funding. Women, migrants, and disabled people were held back by prejudice too and found it difficult to find mentors and social networks.

It was clear that, even with the locational differences taken into account, underserved entrepreneurs in the US, UK, Europe, and South Africa all faced barriers that fell into the categories identified. This was the starting point for working out where Sage Foundation fitted in: how could we use our assets, like capital, products, and colleague skills and expertise, to start breaking those barriers down.



The UK picture

Our [research](#) identified several underserved groups in the UK: Black, Asian, and other entrepreneurs from minority ethnicities; women; young people; and LGBTQIA+ business people.

In response to questions about accessing funding, 53% of Black respondents reported experiencing racism when trying to access financial capital, and 36% of LGBTQIA+ respondents felt that they weren't taken seriously. A further 9% said they were denied funding because of their identity. Women reported bias and discrimination when accessing funding and professional networks.

When people didn't see themselves reflected in senior leadership, they tended to have a less developed professional network and were unsure where to find opportunities for mentoring and support.



The US picture

Our [report](#) highlighted a stark gulf in opportunity between white, Latinx, and Black-owned businesses in the US, particularly in Atlanta and California. Black entrepreneurs' ability to access funding and support, leads to a marked difference in longer-term business success.

In Atlanta, for example, the average Black-owned business is valued at \$58,085, while the average white-owned business is worth \$658,264.

Women in Georgia are more likely to struggle to access capital due to a lack of credit history, and Black and Latina women have far lower business revenues. Migrants, disabled people, and members of the LGBTQIA+ community found it difficult to find the information and support needed to start businesses, and came up against bias and exclusion when trying to expand their networks.



The South African picture

For many entrepreneurs in South Africa, starting a business wasn't a choice—it was a necessity, as they lacked other sources of income. The frameworks to support them to start, run, and grow businesses, though, are scant.

This is especially true for Black South Africans (only 4.3% of whom are entrepreneurs, compared with 13.2% of white people) and LGBTQIA+ people. Both groups face obstacles, making it more difficult to access funding and support.

Over a third of entrepreneurs run the risk of violating the law by not using formal business bank accounts, due to a lack of support on how to manage their finances. Socioeconomic divides and a history of inequality mean that access to education and the skills to become entrepreneurs is not equitable.

Feature story 3 continued / Strategic pillar: Tech for Good and Human by Design

A partner in purpose

Once we had identified the problems we wanted to tackle, we began a rigorous process to onboard the right non-profit partner who shared our ambition and vision for creating change through purpose-driven entrepreneurship. This is the largest social impact project that Sage Foundation has ever embarked on, and we wanted a partner with expertise in elevating purpose-led startups that address the issues we face today.

Enter Village Capital, an Atlanta-founded non-profit that was established in 2009 with a mission to challenge the conventions of the investment landscape. A McKinsey-Harvard prize-winner, Village Capital invests in global grassroots startups that genuinely meet a need in the region in which they operate. A unique aspect of our partnership is to focus on longer-term support—we will offer three years of support to each of the 165 purpose-driven businesses, through three annual cohorts.

Our focus is on early-stage startups in the UK, Europe, and the US that are working on business-focused solutions to address some of the most pressing social and environmental issues of our time. We launched the first programme in November 2024, with entrepreneurs able to apply through Village Capital’s website until January 2025.

The quality and talent were immediately obvious as entries rolled in. Entrepreneurs with a true diversity of backgrounds and life experiences pitched their tech-enabled ideas, with implementations ranging from biodiversity protection to electric vehicle infrastructure. The programme drew strong interest from a diverse range of industries, reinforcing the idea that **entrepreneurial impact multiplies** when shared across sectors. We received applications from the UK, Europe, and the US, with almost half of the UK businesses and over 60% of US businesses having a woman founder or C-Suite member. Selecting the initial group of entrepreneurs to join the first cohort was no easy feat with so many worthy entrants to choose from. We selected the first cohort by looking at how closely their mission aligned with the mission statement that we issued, how they aligned with the UN SDGs, and utilising Village Capital’s assessment criteria for spotting the right factors for business growth.

We supported the programme’s impact by creating an Advisory Board to sponsor the success of the programme and the entrepreneurs—this was composed of senior Sage Leaders along with Advisory Board members from the investment and social impact sectors from Village Capital’s impressive and extensive network.

“Partnering with Sage has been a powerful alignment of purpose and expertise. Sage’s commitment to social impact, combined with Village Capital’s experience supporting early-stage entrepreneurs, has created a programme that truly meets founders where they are—providing the capital, mentorship, and visibility they need to grow sustainably.”



Allie Burns
CEO of Village Capital, 2016–2025

Fast fact

SIE in numbers

165

value-driven businesses supported over three years

Fast fact

SIE in numbers

\$170,000

in grants awarded to 6 businesses in 2025



Sage in South Africa

For the first year, the SIE programme with Village Capital focused on businesses in the UK, Europe, and the US, but our valuable research insights on South Africa haven't gone to waste.

For several years, Sage has worked with business growth consultancy **Aurik** to fund South African business and technology entrepreneurs. We decided to expand our partnership with Aurik via Sage Foundation to include a social impact stream, where we provided support to a business working on solutions to current social issues. Tik'iBox is an app designed to provide financial freedom to the unbanked and banked population by allowing users to effortlessly transfer small amounts of money to anyone, anywhere, using a unique identity pin or QR code. Tik'iBox will receive two years of support from Sage and Aurik to include R1.5 million in funding, Sage product, business training, and skills-based support from Sage volunteers.

As part of this programme, we are supporting **X Spark**, a software development company, to scale up Tik'iBox. This is a lifeline for the unbanked individuals who often find themselves marginalised from traditional banking services.

At the outset of the programme, Tik'iBox set 10 goals to be achieved, including hiring a new sales manager, increasing profits, and becoming investor ready. These goals are monitored monthly by Aurik, and to date 98% of the goals have been achieved.



Feature story 3 continued / Strategic pillar: Tech for Good and Human by Design

The tech-human connection

We knew we wanted to use Sage’s technology products and services to upskill and assist our entrepreneurs. All entrepreneurs can benefit from two years of free product to support their business growth.

This is alongside credits to access online learning programmes from Village Capital, ongoing advice and mentoring from Sage employees who’ve volunteered to offer their support, and monthly office hours sessions facilitated by Village Capital to continue to support the changing business needs.

“As I reviewed the entries for the first Sage Impact Entrepreneurship programme, I reflected on the magnitude of the gap between having an idea and bringing it to market. Countless hours of creative thinking and hard graft —I’m in awe of those who do it, especially when the aim is to solve pressing existential challenges. This programme will allow Sage to multiply its positive impact like a ripple effect for communities and the planet, through our financial and advisory support for these impressive startups.”



Amy Lawson

Chief Brand and Corporate Affairs Officer, Sage

Hear from one of our entrepreneurs



Big ideas, big rewards



During our Sage Future event held in June 2025, we celebrated the graduation of our first core cohort.

Showcasing the real-world impact they are delivering, the entrepreneurs were asked to prepare and present their 90-second pitch. These were presented live to our Sage Future audience, who voted for the best pitches to win two audience award surprise grants. This additional funding was awarded in recognition of Sage Foundation's 10th-anniversary celebrations. The audience award winners joined the four peer-selected winners, who had been carefully assessed across the whole programme journey for their progress and potential as part of Village Capital's hallmark democratic peer selection process. Based on this, two \$50,000 grants, two \$25,000 grants, and two surprise \$10,000 grants were awarded. Our winners were:

- Mi Terro
- Cellsense
- Witching Hour
- Supercycle
- Climate-i
- Future Greens



Measuring our impact

100%

The businesses of all 56 entrepreneurs on the programme, align with the UN SDGs.

54%

Thirty out of 56 businesses on the programme are women-led.

54%

Thirty out of 56 businesses on the programme are led by person of colour.

91%

Forty seven out of the 52 entrepreneurs who responded, reported feeling more confident in scaling their business.

83%

of entrepreneurs who responded reported business growth in revenue or capital raised.



Feature story 3 continued / Strategic pillar: Tech for Good and Human by Design

Meet our **core cohort**



Rim Tehraoui
Founder/CEO
ARYAM



Yasmine Abdu
Founder
CarbonTrac



Elinor Wakefield
Founder/CEO
Climate-i



Bruno Dominguez García
Founder/CEO
Coolx



Rim Tehraoui
Founder/CEO
ARYAM



Ankita Dwivedi
Founder/CEO
Firstplanit



Gabrielė Barteškaitė
Founder/COO
Future Greens



Kristen Tapping
Founder/CPO
GoRolloe



Ben Francis
Founder
Krellian



Alexander Griekspoor
Founder
LandOS



James Webb
Founder
Omma



Ryan Atkins
Founder/CEO
Supercycle



Johann Sammy
Founder/ CEO
Carbix Corporation



Aradhita Parasrampuria
Founder/CEO
Cellsense



Sajith Kumar
Founder/CEO
Chargerzilla



Raha Saremi
Founder/CEO
EcoaTEX



Gigi Gouraige
Founder/CEO
FoodChain Technologies



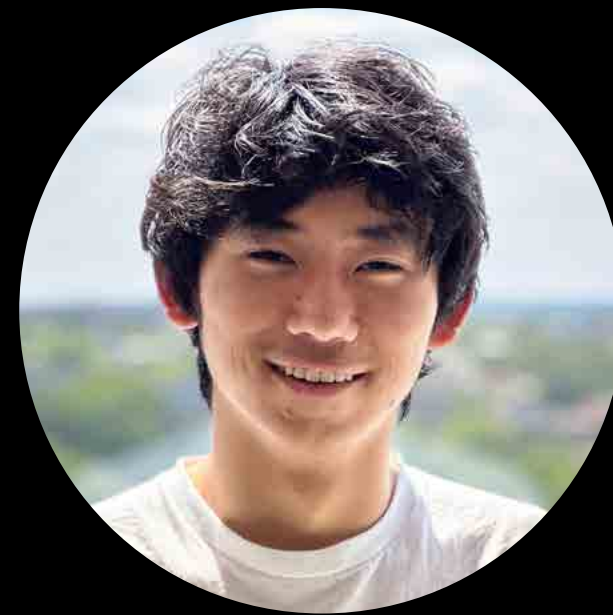
Alex Edquist
Founder/CEO
Good Agriculture



Jake Sweed
Founder
Integrated Dynamics



Robert Luo
Founder/CEO
Mi Terro



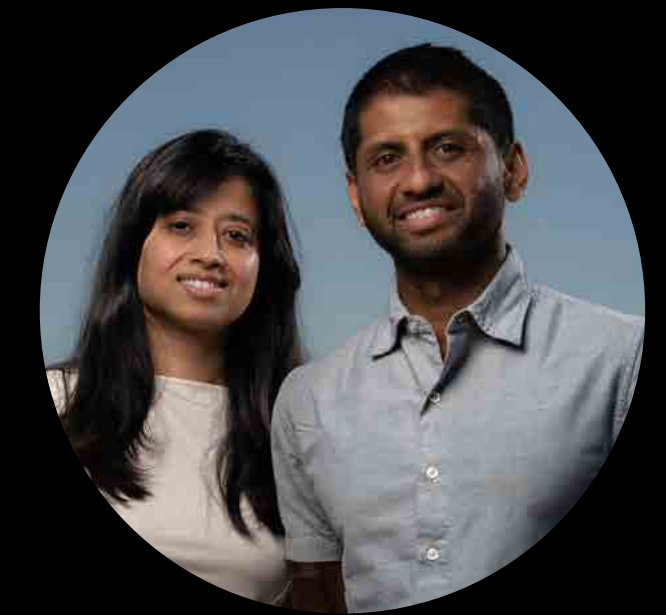
Ivan Zou
Founder
Raccoon Eyes



Drea Burbank, MD
Founder
Savimbo



Noel Myers
Founder/CEO
Sunereum Labs



**Sashti Balasundaram
and Jui Khopkar**
Founder/CEO
WeRadiate



Lance Adler
Founder/CEO
Witching Hour



Sage Foundation short story collection

A decade of making a difference

Over the past 10 years, Sage Foundation has raised **\$5 million** and facilitated **1.4 million hours of volunteering** for causes crucial to the regions Sage operates in—from Vancouver, Canada and Cape Town, South Africa to Madrid, Spain and Bengaluru, India. Access to opportunities is not always equal, and Sage Foundation has been at the heart of our purpose to knock down barriers for the past 10 years. We support global and regional non-profit programmes to create the landscape we want to see for entrepreneurs especially those from underserved communities—and future generations.

By supporting communities globally and the present and future entrepreneurs within them, we multiply our impact as they in turn progress, thrive, and pass knowledge on.



Coding for confidence



From student to mentor



Coding for confidence

Since 2018, Sage Foundation has partnered with local non-profit partners in South Africa to bridge the digital divide and empower young women through initiatives like the GirlCoder Club, Career Days, and Mentorship Programmes.

Reaching over 1,800 learners in underserved communities such as Tembisa and Ivory Park, Johannesburg, these programmes build digital skills and open doors to tech careers for young women.

The unemployment rate for women is 30.5%, compared with 27.4% for men.²⁷ This gap begins in schools, where technological and digital skills aren't widely taught, leaving girls and women lacking valuable technical know-how for the modern workplace.



Khomotso's story

For Khomotso Mosima, a participant in the programme, the experience was transformative. Starting with basic coding skills in HTML through GirlCode, she discovered her aptitude for tech and founded the M Mavericks Startup Programme—a tech-focused competition encouraging digital innovation and entrepreneurship in high schools, showcasing a truly multiplying effect.

Khomotso's journey reflects the programme's broader success: not just teaching tech skills, but giving young women confidence, awakening their ambitions, and readying them for career success. A number of the learners have gone on to "pass it on" by mentoring others or creating their own startups. The programmes ensure that learners leave with a solid foundation of skills that have real-world uses and benefit them in the long term.



From student to mentor

WeThinkCode offers rigorous, immersive training experiences for youth that simulate real-world software development environments.

In South Africa, we support WeThinkCode_ to deliver a rigorous 16-month software development programme targeting NEET (Not in Education, Employment, or Training) youth. Delivered at campuses in Cape Town and Johannesburg, the programme offers bachelor's degree-equivalent training and has a projected 80% completion rate.

Graduates are expected to earn R240,000 annually, tripling household income for 60% of students from extreme low-income backgrounds.

In 2021, McQuile Karappen joined the programme in Durban as a sponsored student. Excelling in his studies and showing a real aptitude for coding and development, he progressed to mentoring the next intake of students through their first year of the programme.

After his training, McQuile joined BBD as an intern developer in February 2023, secured a permanent role a few months later, and progressed to Intermediate Software Engineer by January 2025.



Sage Foundation short story collection

Uplifting our communities

SIE is our flagship global programme. However, we know our colleagues can also have huge local impact giving their time and skills through the relationships we hold in the communities in which we operate.

Many of the causes Sage Foundation and individual Sage colleagues support are hyperlocal projects which enhance the community. By supporting and developing the non-profit partners within our communities, we multiply our impact. And by enabling our colleagues to take action, through volunteering and fundraising, we empower them to decide how they will make a difference.



Getting back on track



**Corporate skills,
charitable causes**



Beyond social impact



Getting back on track

Since 2017, we have partnered with **Fundación Exit** in Spain to tackle youth unemployment and early school leaving through the Coach Exit Programme.

With Spain holding the EU's highest youth unemployment rate at 28%²⁸ and second-highest early school leaving rate, this initiative offers targeted career guidance for vulnerable young people aged 16–19 years old.

Through a structured mentoring model, 83 Sage volunteers have supported young people in Spain, contributing over 2,000 volunteer hours. The programme helps youth discover their strengths, build emotional resilience, and develop critical skills like communication and accountability.

The programme ran throughout 2025, helping youth who otherwise may have become another statistic in the unemployment rate rediscover their passion, confidence, and talent.



Corporate skills, charitable causes

Small charities and non-profits are often uniquely placed to impact social and environmental issues, with their local focus and strategies built on lived experience.

But they can lack the resources to raise funds, market themselves, and find professional support and mentorship. That's where Sage Foundation Grow comes in: senior leaders from different functions at Sage are matched with leaders of non-profits with a high growth potential to help them scale up.

Since its pilot launch in Australia in 2021, Sage Foundation Grow has expanded to Vancouver—where three cohorts participated between 2022 and 2024—and to Atlanta, which has hosted three cohorts from 2023 to 2025.

The programme provides capacity development support to non-profit leaders. Last year, two thirds of the participating leaders estimated the monetary value of the programme to be over \$10,000 USD to their organisation.

As for which elements of the programme were most useful, two main themes were clear: developing their pitch deck and communication strategy skills, and the way in which the programme's teachings could be directly applied to real challenges the non-profits faced.

An impressive 100% of respondents said the collaborative element—where non-profit leaders could learn from corporate leaders and vice versa—was a positive, and 67% felt they benefitted from Sage mentors' experience with project management and setting clear deliverables.

We plan to expand Sage Foundation Grow to Spain and the UK in FY26—continuing to multiply the impact of non-profits to enable them to create lasting community impact.



Beyond social impact

Sage Foundation takes a distinctive approach to its partnerships, focusing on long-term integration rather than one-off support. We actively assess how our non-profit collaborations can evolve into deeper, multi-dimensional relationships, where an initial partnership becomes a launchpad for broader impact. Our relationship with HYPE, a non-profit empowering underrepresented girls to become future tech leaders, exemplifies this philosophy.

Our journey with HYPE began in 2023 through the Sage Foundation Grow programme in the US, which pairs senior Sage leaders with non-profits for capacity building and leadership development. Building on this foundation, Sage formalised a strategic three-year partnership in 2024, supporting HYPE's digital skills programme, annual tech conference, and community-led "Pass It On" initiative. In 2025, one of Sage's leaders deepened our commitment by joining HYPE's board and opening our Discovery Center for its staff retreat and student workshops.

As the promoting sponsor of HYPE's inaugural tech conference for high school girls, Sage contributed:

- Programme planning expertise
- On-site volunteer support
- Inspiring speakers and role models working in technology careers at Sage
- Event reception venue at Truist Park via Sage's MLB sponsorship
- Looking ahead to 2026/2027, Sage will continue to support the growth of HYPE beyond programme funding.

Beyond social impact continued

2024

HYPE becomes strategic partner with three-year funded partnership

Sage Input: Capital



2023

HYPE is selected to take part in Sage Foundation Grow programme

Sage Input: Coaching + Connections



Empowering underrepresented girls to become leaders in tech

2025

HYPE hosts first conference supported by:

- Sage speakers
- Sage volunteers
- Sage venue

Sage Input: Coaching + Connections

Sage leader joins HYPE Board + HYPE uses Sage Discovery Center

Sage Input: Coaching + Connections

2026/2027

Sage Foundation will support HYPE to scale and grow

Sage Input: Capital, Coaching + Connections





Introduction

Can we embrace AI while reducing the climate threat?

Can data be a force for change?

What happens when we invest in possibility?

Is empathy the superpower behind resilient leadership?

In closing

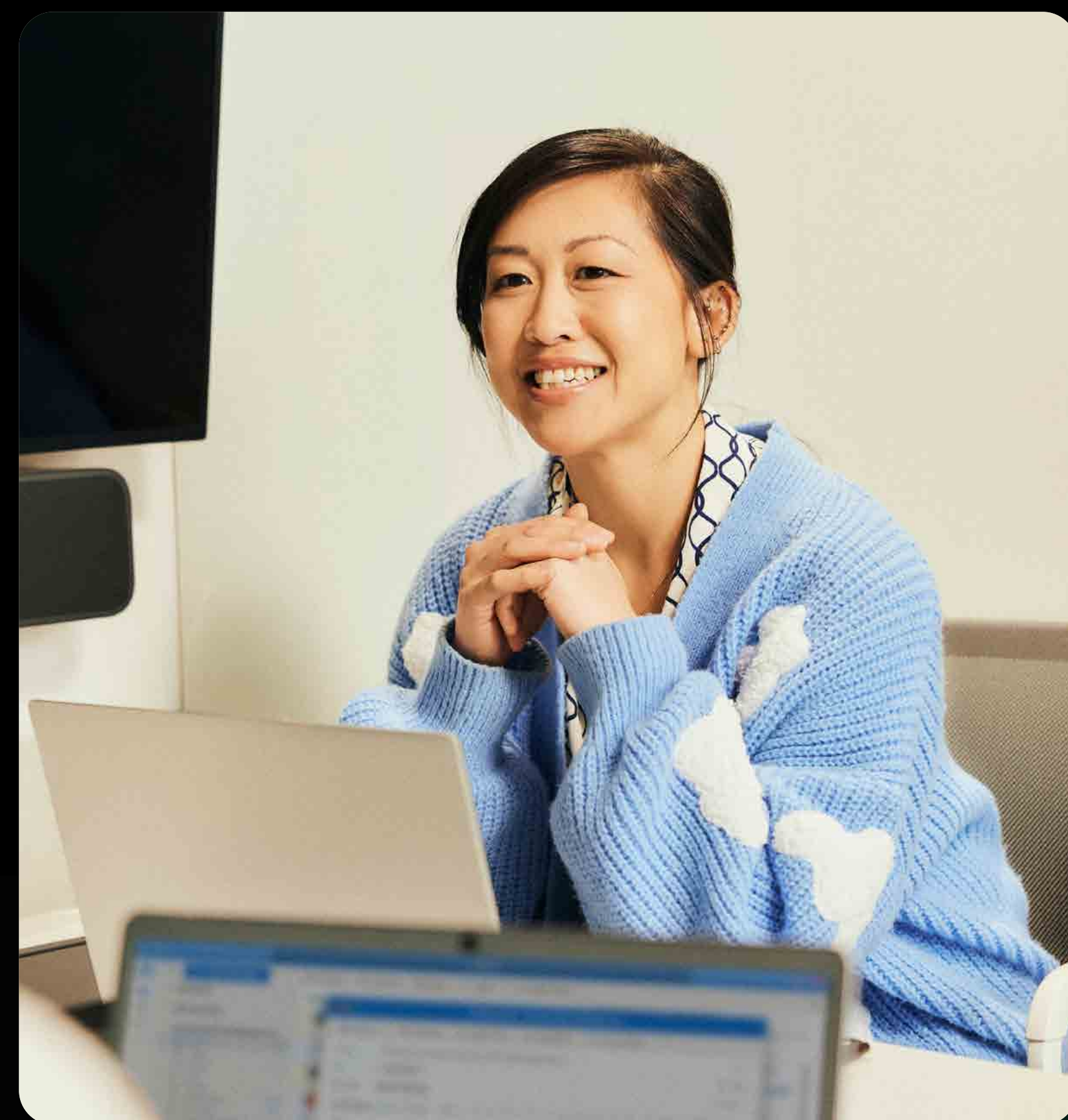
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Feature story 4 / Strategic pillar: Human by Design

IS EMPATHY THE SUPERPOWER BEHIND RESILIENT LEADERSHIP?

Feature story 4 continued / Strategic pillar: Human by Design

There's more to **good leadership** than simply being in charge



When you think about the managers you've had throughout your career, what makes the good ones stand out?

We believe in a holistic approach to leadership that drives improved business results supported by the ability to adapt, think things through, and listen to our stakeholders. Our desire to align leadership training with Sage Values led to the development of the annual Senior Leadership Programme (SLP). Throughout the programme, participants develop a unique set of skills that they can further use at Sage. They work with social enterprises where they can test these skills in unfamiliar environments, go deeper, and be challenged, whilst also giving something back to the communities.

Each cohort begins with a few weeks of socialisation and self-awareness. The immersive nature of the programme means it's more than a passive learning experience—our leaders go beyond theory and into practice. They are exposed to and learn how to tackle real-world problems that demand cultural sensitivity, quick thinking, and open dialogue.

Through coaching, they develop their self-awareness to better understand how their behaviours drive impact. Field exercises help them develop qualitative skills like listening, reflecting, and communicating honestly.

After the initial phase, participants start working with the social enterprises, learning how they operate and the issues they seek to address. Using the skills gained from the programme, they take these back to their day jobs at Sage while continuing to work with non-profit leaders to help them steer their organisations through rough patches.



What do leaders gain from the **SLP**?

- **Self-awareness:** Through structured missions and coaching, the programme encourages participants to deeply examine their mindset, behaviours, and impact.
- **Qualitative skills:** Participants immerse themselves into adaptive challenges, where their technical skills only go so far. A new set of skills such as empathy, listening, learning, and the ability to pause and reflect lead to honesty and vulnerability, and deep communication.
- **Growth and resilience:** Participants develop skills core to leadership in a global fast-paced tech business, including the ability to tackle the unknown with confidence and adjusting quickly as the world changes.



“Adaptive leadership demands the courage to step beyond established boundaries, a commitment to honest self-reflection, and the ability to guide teams through complexity and change with integrity. By cultivating these skills and building a robust network of peers, the colleagues who participate in our Senior Leadership Programme position themselves and Sage for sustained success.”



Vicki Bradin
General Counsel and
SLP Executive Sponsor, Sage

“The SLP programmes are a unique and immersive experience designed to develop the required leadership to drive Sage’s success and role model our culture. Participants have reported a meaningful shift in their leadership approach, contributing to a greater performance and career progression, whilst making a tangible difference for remarkable social enterprises.”



Cora Beghin
VP Learning & Development, Sage

“Our Senior Leadership Programme is a vital investment in our future. It equips our top leaders with the skills, mindset, and collaboration needed to accelerate growth and ensure we are continuously developing strong, capable successors for the year ahead.”



Amy Cosgrove
EVP People, Sage



Hear from our 2025 SLP cohort

Elena Zayakova

Senior Director Sustainability

“Joining the FY25 SLP has been a real privilege professionally and personally. Being exposed to hands-on practical experiences that require a different set of adaptive skills has certainly helped me see and understand the true value of having a growth mindset.”

Raj Thindal

Senior Director, In-life & Customer Success

“The SLP was an incredibly meaningful experience for me. It was truly inspiring to collaborate with colleagues from around the world, not just to grow as professionals, but as individuals, while working together on a purpose-driven challenge that made a real impact. What stood out most was how intentionally and thoughtfully the programme structure was designed; it created space for reflection, connection, and learning every single day. I’m grateful for the journey and the people I shared it with.”

Sonia García Urrea

In-life & Customer Success Director Iberia

“The SLP provided a valuable opportunity to strengthen strategic skills, collaborate with colleagues worldwide, and address meaningful challenges. It emphasised the importance of purposeful leadership, driving sustainable growth, fostering cross-functional collaboration, and creating a measurable positive impact across teams and organisational communities.”

Alex MeinersDirector Commercial Operations
Central Europe

“The SLP is, to me, a powerful expression of trust—in leadership, in growth, and most importantly, in the people behind the role. It wasn’t just a personal journey of development, but the beginning of a network that inspires, empowers, and creates lasting impact.”

Sarah Hulsey

Customer Success Director

“The SLP was a transformational experience for me. I feel like it not only made me into a better leader, but it made me into a better person with more insight into myself and how we interact with others. The bridges that this programme allowed us to build across the organisation have been invaluable for me already, and are paying dividends for Sage in terms of time to execute on projects and better leadership strategy. I’d do it all over again in a heartbeat!”

Dan Baller

Group Strategic Finance Director

“The SLP programme encouraged us to ‘get comfortable feeling uncomfortable’, helping to create environments where we could experiment, iterate, and own our progress. As senior leaders within Sage it is vital we leverage this experience and embed elements of the framework learned to help drive a culture of growth and create a ‘winning mindset’ within our teams.”

Jason Collum

Acting VP Assurance

“The SLP helped me shift from needing to have all the answers to understanding the power of presence and creating space for others. It’s made me more intentional about the ripple effect of leadership—leading not just for performance, but in ways that lift up others and our communities.”

Helen CockleSenior Sales Director Small Segment UK
and Ireland

“This was a truly transformative leadership programme. It went far beyond techniques—rewiring how I think, approach challenges, and show up every day, both professionally and personally. I left with a renewed sense of purpose, confidence, and clarity as a leader.”

Anne Geraghty

Senior Director, Global Learning Services

“Attending the Senior Leadership Programme has been a game-changer. It provided invaluable strategic and adaptive analysis skills. The privilege of spending time with other great leaders was transformative, as it allowed me to learn through diverse perspectives and different ways of working.”

Liezle WhiteDirector: Retention & Renewals—Payroll HR &
Accounting AME

“Participating in the SLP has been one of the most transformative experiences of my career, impacting me not only professionally, but personally as well. It deepened my understanding that true growth often stems from discomfort, and that embracing this discomfort is an essential part of life’s journey.

The hands-on nature of the programme, coupled with the success of its outcomes, underscored the value of vulnerability, the importance of creating space for others, and the critical role adaptability plays in effective leadership. I’ve come to appreciate that leadership is not about individual achievement, but about cultivating teams that thrive. When teams are empowered and aligned, the results naturally reflect high performance.

Sometimes, striving for perfection can be paralysing. Through this journey, I’ve learned that ‘getting close’ is enough, and that progress, not perfection, is what truly drives impact.”

Feature story 4 continued / Strategic pillar: Human by Design

Our partners in purpose

We deliver the programme in partnership with [The Green Door Project](#), a business psychology consultancy specialising in leadership coaching and meaningful careers. SLP combines an understanding of the science of human behaviour with knowledge of organisational development, to help people and businesses thrive.

Sewing up the strategy



Our 2024 cohort joined [Stitch the Gap](#), an East Dunbartonshire-based community interest company teaching sewing machine skills in the community. Its mission is to give people the skills to repair and repurpose clothes to encourage a more environmentally friendly approach to fashion. It also wants to ensure sewing is not a lost skill, and has a lending library of machines for people without one at home.

Stitch the Gap founder Trish Papworth describes the impact the Sage Leadership Programme participants had on the organisation:

“Working with Stitch the Gap made me realise how transformative it can be to step back from work that is being driven by passion, and work out how to harness it to create a sustainable and purpose-led business that truly transforms people’s lives. I was astonished by the amount that the STG ladies were doing and also recognised where we at Sage could help them. I found that the processes we went through, both as a group and with STG, have led me to be a leader who understands more deeply how to move with purpose, how to adapt in any context and how to use business tools and logic to empower others. This was a transformative week on a personal and professional level, and set the standard for how many of my SLP peers show up at work.”



Sophia Adhami

Product Performance and Execution Director, Sage, FY24 Cohort.

In 2025, the SLP cohort worked with two fantastic social enterprises in Glasgow: [Refuweegee](#) and [R:evolve Recycle](#).

Refuweegee is a community-based charity that welcomes refugees to the city through volunteer-led efforts including events and works with other non-profits across Scotland to distribute welcome packs to schools and support organisations. R:evolve Recycle is a handmade clothing and gift shop just outside Glasgow that also functions as a social enterprise. It invests profits into community initiatives like a swap shop, clothing bank, and volunteering opportunities. As we continue to work with these social enterprises throughout the year, we will include further detail on the impact delivered in our FY26 Impact Book.



Working with Sage to deliver the SLP is a genuine privilege. What always stays with me is how deeply Sage commits to this journey—not just the easy parts, but the stretch, the honesty, the real work of leadership. SLP offers a unique and deep experience that means leaders grow in ways that ripple far beyond their time on the programme. That’s the mark of meaningful development—it changes you, but it also changes what you make possible for others.

One thing we believe strongly in at The Green Door Project is that leadership isn’t about having all the answers. It’s about staying present and grounded, even when things are uncertain. That’s where influence really lives: in how leaders show up when it counts. In these turbulent times, leadership doesn’t protect us from life—it calls us into it, more fully. The most trusted leaders are the ones who’ve faced things, felt things, and kept going with compassion.



Kate Downey-Evans
Business Psychologist,
The Green Door Project

Sewing up the strategy continued

“We were at breaking point and struggling to keep the doors open. My Co-Founder Amanda Stark and I hadn’t been able to take a wage from the organisation in over six months. We couldn’t get funders to understand the difference that we were making in our community—we hadn’t found an effective way to communicate the mental health benefits and environmental impact we were having. We were questioning our worth, our board was divided, and we couldn’t reach a consensus on the best course of action.



With the Sage leaders, we found the clarity and direction we’d been searching for.



“When the Sage leaders walked in, it was the boost we needed to see ourselves through someone else’s eyes. They saw the value in what we do, listened to our problems, and cared about us finding a solution together. When we sat down and looked at the numbers together, we worked out that increasing attendance to 70% of our capacity was the way to solve our cash flow crisis in the short term.

“The results spoke for themselves. Revenue increased by 26% in the financial year 2024/2025 compared with the previous year, and attendance at our classes increased by 37%. We reached 1,218 more people, kept more textiles out of landfill and boosted the mental health of our local community. We vowed to appreciate ourselves and the work we do, and play to our strengths—this new attitude and the motivation it gave us even led to Amanda appearing on Blue Peter!

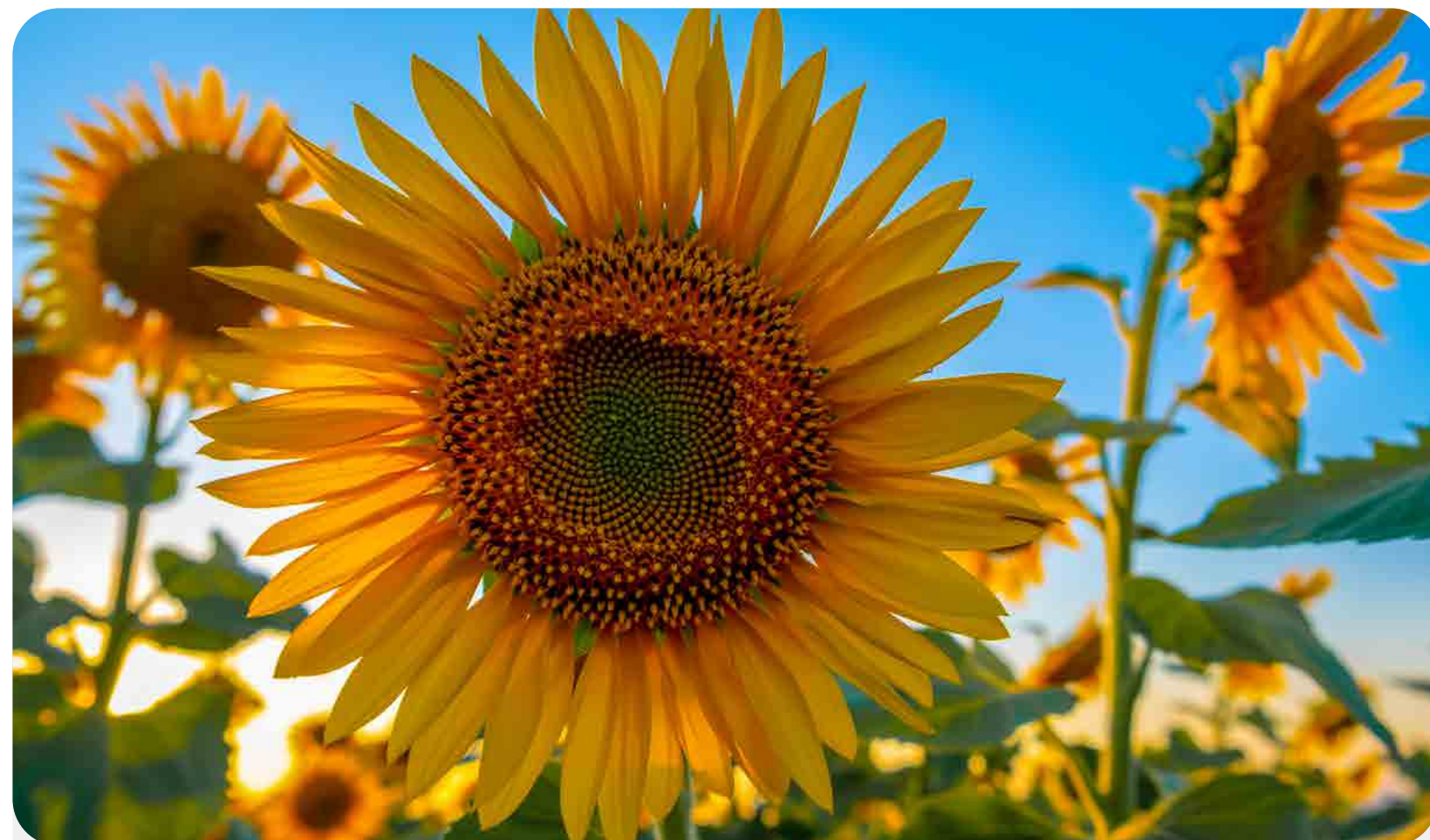
“It’s amazing what an optimistic approach can achieve. We entered the Women Enterprise Scotland awards in 2024 and won the Sustainable Business of the Year award. The accolade caught the attention of potential funders, like the National Lottery, who granted us more funding than we’d initially applied for. We have secured two years of funding from them, we can now take a wage, and we have taken on three new staff members.”



Short story collection

Investing in wellbeing

Creating a workplace where everyone feels seen, supported, and safe is not just a goal for us, it's a responsibility. Sage remains committed to meaningful, consistent action because we know that people thrive when they feel they belong. These stories highlight how our colleagues and partners are creating cultures of empathy, trust, and equity—fostering spaces where everyone has the opportunity to grow, contribute, and be valued.



Empowering disabled colleagues



Mental health matters



All About India



Empowering disabled colleagues

When we heard from colleagues that the Hidden Disabilities Sunflower Scheme (where those with a hidden disability wear a sunflower-patterned lanyard to signify the need for extra consideration) had been a great help to them when they travelled to work-related events, we realised there was an opportunity to improve our company-wide approach to disability inclusion.

With up to 80% of disabilities—including neurodivergence, hearing impairments, mental health conditions, and energy-limiting illnesses—hidden,²⁹ we wanted to ensure our colleagues had the support they needed.

Colleagues told us they were hesitant to disclose a disability to their manager for fear of it impacting their access to opportunities, and managers wanted more information on how to open up such conversations, as well as what adjustments they were able to offer.

We made our commitment to inclusion official by joining the Sunflower Scheme in 2024, and invited colleagues from the UK, Ireland, and South Africa to be part of a three-month pilot. We ran monthly surveys to assess impact and gather opinions from colleagues, and the results were positive. Colleagues felt more empowered to ask for the assistance they needed, so we launched our partnership in all three regions with a promise to keep the awareness activities ongoing.

“I feel there’s a lack of awareness about hidden disabilities and their impact on individuals. Approximately one in six people live with hidden disabilities, ranging from neurodivergence and speech disorders to chronic pain. By raising awareness in the workplace, we can reduce stigma, foster inclusion and culture, and promote empathy.”

Giorgia
Sage colleague

“Many people shared that they often felt unseen or misunderstood, and the sunflower lanyard gave them the confidence to ask for support. What surprised me most was the number of colleagues who said they felt relief knowing this initiative was being introduced—it reinforced just how important these small but meaningful acts of inclusion are.”

Kerry
Sage colleague



Mental health matters

Launched in 2017, our Healthy Mind Coach (HMC) programme empowers colleagues to support each other through mental health challenges.

What began as a small peer-to-peer initiative in the UK and Ireland (Mental Health First Aiders all trained by an externally recognised training provider) has now grown to over 177 healthy mind-trained coaches in many of our business regions, including the UK, Spain, France, Germany, India, and South Africa.

Designed to provide accessible, compassionate support and reduce stigma, the programme trains colleagues to become trusted individuals embedded advocates in the business who can signpost their peers to the right support.

The need for trustworthy, friendly faces became increasingly apparent during the Covid-19 pandemic, when colleagues were working remotely and feeling isolated and uncertain about the future. We introduced a continuous learning model in 2023, with quarterly, scenario-based training, ensuring coaches are confident, informed, and supported. The results speak volumes: increased usage of Sage's Employee Assistance Programme, powerful feedback from colleagues, and a growing network of wellbeing champions, including senior leaders.

Our investment in in-depth training for HMCs has helped normalise talking about mental health at all levels and made our working culture more caring and supportive. One conversation could be all that's needed to change one person's world.

“I was nervous about reaching out, but the coach made it feel safe. It wasn't about fixing everything—it was about feeling supported and not alone.”

Sage colleague

“Being a Healthy Mind Coach has made me a better leader. I feel much more confident having sensitive conversations and supporting my team through challenging moments that matter.”

Sage colleague

“This is one of the best trainings I've ever done. It gave me the skills and confidence to support colleagues in a meaningful way. Sometimes, just being there to listen can make all the difference.”

Sage colleague



All About India

To ensure our efforts to attract a diverse workforce are effective, we collect diversity, equity, and inclusion (DEI) data through our All About Us programme. With over 6,000 colleagues across 11 countries participating, All About Us provides valuable data to inform our DEI strategies and goals, such as tracking our progress against global gender diversity targets.

Our Indian workforce is growing, and currently numbers around 500 colleagues. When we decided to expand All About Us to India, we knew that early collaboration with our colleagues would be critical, as with all new countries, to ensure that we shaped our approach to fit the cultural context.

The first thing we did was rename it All About India for all our regional communications. During launch week in April 2025, we visited our Bangalore and Mohali offices and tailored the way we introduced the DEI strategy and how colleagues could bring this into their day-to-day lives. Indian pop culture references came in very handy and our localised approach exceeded expectations, with colleagues fully supporting the data-informed approach.

We achieved a 69% participation rate in our first campaign in this region.



In closing

As you close this book, we hope we have left you with something more than a collection of stories: a sense of purpose. At Sage, our purpose is knocking down barriers so everyone can thrive, and that includes barriers to opportunity and equality. And while barriers are complex and many, we believe they are not impossible to overcome.

This is why we lead with curiosity and surround ourselves with people and organisations who challenge our thinking. We know that behind every metric is a person—often many—whose lives are touched by what we do every day. Technology has become more than a tool, it is the infrastructure of modern life and the lens through which we solve complex human problems. And the companies that will define the next era are those that **align profit with purpose, data with trust, and speed with sustainability.**

Throughout this book, we have demonstrated how we are connecting the dots between complex issues and delivering value for all of our stakeholders. From advocating for transparency in Scope 3 emissions along the supply chain, to exploring how data can be a force for change, and investing in bold ideas that hold the power to solve some of the world's most urgent challenges. This is what we call **The Multiplier Effect.**

We live in a world shaped by unprecedented technological power and possibility. The tools we once only dreamed of are now in our hands. With them comes a responsibility—**not only to innovate, but to do so with integrity, humility, and a deep sense of humanity.**

The future is not just a destination. It is a reflection of our Values, made real through action. Make it something you are proud to pass on.

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THE MULTIPLIER EFFECT

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