

# Saving and enhancing lives

## Health, safety and wellbeing



### Why does it matter?

Keeping our employees, customers, and suppliers safe is our number one priority. Ensuring that our employees work in a safe environment and can return home to their loved ones at the end of their working day is of paramount importance.

### What have we achieved in 2024?

In 2023, we introduced a regional health and safety organisational structure to allow the Group health and safety resources to be closer to individual operating companies within their region, and to better support the Managing Directors and the wider health and safety community. This structure was further strengthened with the introduction of our two regional Group Presidents during 2024, who provide senior level oversight and champion the Group health and safety agenda.

In July 2024, the Group successfully launched a Group wide incident management system. The new system makes it easy for all employees to report accidents in real time, and also encourages the reporting of leading indicators such as near misses, unsafe acts or conditions. In the second half of the year, we relaunched the Group's Nine Life Saving Rules, with poster campaigns and briefings to all operating companies, enhancing the focus on accident prevention rather than reaction to accidents. Significant focus was placed on fork lift truck safety in the latter part of the year and will continue throughout 2025 with the introduction of various pedestrian detection systems, electronic key control and vehicle impact systems to prevent personal injuries. The UK Galvanizing division has also introduced remote dipping to remove people from the highest risk areas surrounding the galvanizing baths, and significant investment has been made on vehicle trailers with additional safety features such as drop sides, additional nets, and hammocks to improve load security and road safety.

During the year we have sought feedback on operational and facility improvements through our employee forums, which include health and safety as a key discussion topic. To complement this and obtain a comprehensive view from all employees, we conducted a Group-wide employee safety culture survey in September 2024. This indicated there is a high level of understanding of internal health and safety expectations and employee responsibilities.

### Our targets

Measure	2024 actual	2023 actual	2025 target	2030 target
Lost time incident rate	0.33	0.43	0.275	0.1

While we still have work to do in the area, these efforts have led to a 23% reduction in our Lost Time Incident Rate ('LTIR') to 0.33 in 2024 (2023: 0.43). All lost time incidents were investigated by health and safety managers alongside members of the local operational teams. Managing Directors were requested to present the investigation findings to the Group Presidents and Executive Committee members to demonstrate elevated involvement in the process. Learnings from all incidents are shared with the wider organisation, reinforcing the importance of keeping our people safe and communicating corrective actions.

### Our 2025 focus areas

Our aim continues to be to reduce the number of health and safety incidents throughout our organisation along with minimising the severity of lost time incidents.

To support this objective, we will:

- Continue to focus on leading indicators, such as near miss reporting and safety observations, rather than lagging indicators
- Continue to drive campaigns focusing on those areas that represent major risks for the Group's operating companies
- Elevate our focus on employee behaviours and accountability
- Enhance the delivery of safety training for our people
- Continue to drive campaigns focusing on those areas that represent major risks for the Group's operating companies.

### How will we measure progress?

We use Lost Time Incident Rate as the key indicator to track and monitor our progress in health and safety.

### Our targets

Given the progress made in 2024, we have revised our LTIR targets to 0.275 for 2025 (previously 0.75) and to 0.1 for 2030 (previously 0.25).

## Talent, development and engagement



### Why does it matter?

Talented people are fundamental to the success of our autonomous business model and help deliver our purpose and growth ambitions. We need a highly engaged and capable workforce within our operating companies, and this can only be done by attracting, developing, supporting, and retaining the right people. Positive employee engagement and offering great careers for people increase our productivity, enhance our reputation, and deliver our growth plans.

### What have we achieved in 2024?

In 2024, we have continued our focus on senior level succession, the development of high potential individuals within our operating companies, and manager and supervisor training and development. Within our Managing Director population, we have had four internal promotions in 2024 which reflects the focus being placed on internal succession planning. We also launched our senior talent development programme which included 14 participants based in the US, UK and India.

We ran our annual employee engagement survey in September 2024, with a high participation rate of 83%. While employee engagement for the overall Group remained static at 56% in 2024 (2023: 56%), the survey results highlighted that there is some variation in the engagement levels across our operating companies. Our aspiration is for every company to increase their employee engagement level every year. To achieve this, we know that local action plans will be most meaningful and will have the biggest impact.

We have continued to use apprenticeships as a way of attracting and developing early career talent. In the UK, 11 new apprentices joined in 2024, with 33 existing employees enrolling onto an apprenticeship as a way of upskilling themselves. In November 2024, we held our annual apprenticeship event in Manchester where we celebrated the achievements of our brilliant UK apprentices.

In response to the UK Corporate Governance Code requirement to have a workforce engagement mechanism, we continued with our Employee Forums in 2024, holding one face-to-face session in the US in April and one in the UK in May. We complemented this with virtual sessions in December. Topics included health and safety, employee engagement, executive remuneration and employee benefits. We gained valuable feedback and insights from the process and shared the output of the forums with our Managing Directors.

### Our 2025 focus areas

Understanding the importance of highly engaged people, our Managing Directors have developed local action plans to address the areas identified for improvement in the recent engagement survey. These plans are being overseen by our Group Presidents to ensure that our employees continue to have regular feedback on progress being made and to enable employees to give feedback during the year. Our HR teams have held sessions to share best practice with the aim of assisting all companies to increase their engagement levels in 2025.

We will continue to develop our supervisors and managers, with development programmes planned for 2025. We are tracking progress that our supervisors and managers make after completing the programme. We will complete the pilot talent programme and review effectiveness of this to inform approach and content for future programmes. We will continue to provide development for our newer Managing Directors and will be refreshing our succession plans.

### How will we measure progress?

We will continue to measure progress through our engagement survey against our targets. We will continue to seek further feedback via various communication channels and will act on feedback that we receive from our employees during the year. We will track internal moves at a senior level and for those supervisors and managers who complete our Enterprise-wide development programmes.

### Our targets

Measure	2024 actual	2023 actual	2022 actual	2025 target	2030 target
Engagement score	56%	56%	61%	66%	75%
Movement in pts	—	-5pts	+6pts		

## Case study

## John Foster, Managing Director

### Company: Prolectric

John joined the Group in 2017 as commercial finance business partner and was promoted to Commercial Director for VRS Solutions Group, now known as Hill & Smith Infrastructure, in 2021. During this time, John completed an MBA and qualified with the Institute of Directors to assist with his development goal to be a future leader. In 2023, John was seconded to be Managing Director for Hill & Smith Australia, successfully performing a strategic review of the business. Building on this experience, in 2024, John took on a project director and then interim Managing Director role for Prolectric, our UK off-grid solar business. We are delighted that John was permanently appointed as Managing Director of Prolectric in January 2025.

John was provided with structured development to assist with his transition to Managing Director including attending an executive business course and undergoing psychometric assessments. We are using this approach to assist career progression to Managing Director, recognising that it can be a significant transition in terms of role scope and expectation.

John comments:

"Completing psychometric profiles as part of my transition into a Managing Director role has been greatly beneficial, increasing my self-awareness and understanding of my leadership impact. I also found taking part in strategic planning and budget processes in my early roles in the Group increased my strategic understanding, which is important in a Managing Director role."



**"I have had a fantastic career journey with Hill & Smith to date, and have been able to take advantage of career opportunities in the wider Group. My advice to others who want to develop into Managing Director roles is to embrace professional education and secondment opportunities as they arise."**

## Equity, diversity and inclusion



### Why does it matter?

We aim to employ the best people for the job and help them thrive. We know that we can only do this by considering talented people from the whole community, making our business attractive for them to join and by providing an environment where they can be themselves and give their best. If we can provide attractive opportunities for our people, and ensure we have a workforce that is truly diverse, our business will perform to its absolute potential and achieve our ambitious economic growth plans, as well as deliver individual success.

Everyone is actively encouraged to communicate and share information with colleagues. It is important to us that we create an inclusive culture, where all voices and perspectives have an opportunity to be heard.

### What have we achieved in 2024?

The 2024 employee survey highlighted that 73% of employees agreed that Hill & Smith values diversity. This is a good starting point, but we still have more to do in this area.

The Hill & Smith Women's Network focused on three workstream areas during 2024. These were provision of personal protective equipment ('PPE') specifically designed for females, providing mentors to aid personal development, and providing training and resources to promote inclusive hiring. During the year we joined two external Women's Networks to enable our employees to benefit from access to a wider network, tools and resources. In addition, we ran two internal webinars which received positive feedback and ran a series of focus groups to identify potential priorities for 2025.

We have continued to see improvement in our 2024 Gender Pay Gap, with the median and mean pay gap being slightly in favour of women. We have also reviewed our equal opportunities and diversity policy and our dignity at work policy, which set out clear expectations for all employees.

Our apprenticeship scheme is another method of attracting more diversity into our business.

### Our 2025 focus areas

We will focus locally and at a Group level on increasing levels of diversity, so that we represent the communities that we serve. This will include continuing to provide tools, resources, and information in support of this, as well as taking part in national and international days that celebrate inclusion.

We will roll out equity, diversity and inclusion training in 2025, to further skills and knowledge for our employees. This will cover the benefits of a diverse workplace and how everyone can play a positive role in promoting inclusion in the workplace.

We want to build on the success of our apprenticeship programme, recognising it is an important way of attracting and retaining diverse talent. We will recruit additional apprentices and upskill existing colleagues through apprenticeships where feasible to do so. We will continue to employ interns within our US businesses.

### How will we measure progress?

We will continue to measure gender and ethnic diversity at a senior level and review the engagement survey scores for diversity and inclusion to track progress.

### Our targets

Gender diversity	2024 actual	2023 actual	2025 target	2030 target
PLC Board	38%	29%	40%+	40%+
Executive Committee	33%	40%	40%+	40%+
Senior leaders	22%	19%	20%+	40%+
Ethnic diversity	2024 actual	2023 actual	2025 target	2030 target
PLC Board	13%	14%	10%+	10%+
Executive Committee	0%	20%	10%+	20%+
Senior leaders	15%	10%	10%+	10%+

## Case study

## Lora Stadelman, Corporate Marketing Manager

### Company: V&S Galvanizing

Lora has always had a passion for the steel industry. Starting her career as a welder by trade, she found a natural fit in sales at a local welding supply company and went to the galvanising plant on a sales call. The operations manager offered to give her a tour and she was fascinated by what she saw. They were hiring a sales manager but Lora wasn't looking to move roles. However, the VP of Sales and Marketing called Lora and, following his pitch, she changed her mind about applying and joined in April 2021.

From January 2025, Lora has moved into her new role of Corporate Marketing Manager. This is a natural progression that allows Lora to follow her passion for marketing. Her manager listens to her ideas and lets her try things out, which makes the role even more fulfilling.

Lora is actively involved in the Hill & Smith Women's Network, and the Association of Women in the Metal Industry. Lora has enjoyed seeing the progress made by the Hill & Smith Women's Network. For example, an opportunity was identified for all companies to provide female employees with PPE that is designed for them. Some were doing so already, and they were able to share their contacts and experiences.

The Association of Women in the Metal Industry didn't have a chapter in her area, so she was encouraged to assemble a team and start one. This required great teamwork and the new chapter was given official status in November 2024.



**"Trust and cohesiveness are important. Managers share their knowledge and that helps us all to grow."**