

Responsible Publishing Report

Striving to create a truly
equitable publishing
environment.




emerald.com/publishing



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Against the backdrop of growing political and social pressures on equality, sustainability, and academic freedom, 2025 was a year to act decisively, not to step back. At a time when many organisations are staying silent, we chose to take action, demonstrating that principled publishing earns trust and strengthens the research community.

Emerald is committed to publishing research that is accessible and relevant to real-world challenges. We advocate for underrepresented voices and perspectives, champion the free exchange of ideas, and actively resist censorship. We support initiatives that promote democratic access to information, and we're dedicated to advancing equity and inclusion in scholarly publishing.

A defining strand of our work in 2025 was our support for #DefendResearch. We became the first publisher to sign the declaration calling for the protection of academic freedom and against the censorship of research. We backed this public stance with action, issuing a publisher's note in all 313 journals, launching a dedicated web page to help our communities get involved, partnering with the EveryLibrary Institute to deliver practical webinars for academic librarians in the US, and running a focused week of action in May to amplify shared voices. This was a call to action for the community to speak up and support academic freedom.

We also convened conversations across the sector, including a live panel with Scholarly Social in Leeds and workshops at major library conferences.

During 2025, we continued our commitment to responsible publishing through our dedication to the UN Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs) and our work across the 3Ps: Planet, People, and Prosperity. This meant prioritising inclusion and wellbeing, reducing the environmental impact of how we work, and widening access to knowledge through partnerships, open access, and community engagement.



This report summarises our actions and outcomes from 2025 as we continue to work towards a fairer, sustainable, and impactful research ecosystem.

Our 3Ps



Planet

As a founding member of the SDG Publishers Compact and a signatory of Publishing Declares, we're taking decisive action to reduce our environmental impact. In 2025, our Planet Team led initiatives that matter like continuing ongoing environment focused education and awareness campaigns, collecting emissions data to inform real change, and supporting biodiversity through hands-on volunteering. These efforts aren't just pledges; they're proof that publishing can lead the way in protecting our planet for future generations.



People

We put people first and this has been recognised externally. In 2025, we were named in The Times Top 50 Employers for Gender Equality for the second year running and recognised among the Global Top 100 Inspiring Workplaces. We offer flexible working as standard, strong learning and wellbeing support, and an inclusive culture built with and for our colleagues.



Prosperity

We build long-term partnerships that help children, young people and communities thrive. Through fundraising, volunteering and local initiatives, we work with organisations like Chapter One, BookTrust, Zarach and local schools to widen access to reading and learning. By investing time and skills, colleagues support early literacy and strengthen communities worldwide.

Our 2025 highlights

Awarded Times Top 50 Employer for Gender Equality for the second year running.

Recognised as a Global Top 100 Inspiring Workplace.

Shortlisted as Academic Publisher of the Year at the British Book Awards.

Became the first publisher to sign the #DefendResearch declaration to protect academic freedom in the US.

Ranked among the Top 50 Inspiring Workplaces in the UK and Ireland.

Raised more than £22,000 for BookTrust, a UK charity dedicated to getting children reading.



Launched The Open Lab to investigate and trial sustainable open access models.

Acquired new publishers, adding the Foundations & Trends® programme and strengthening Business, Economics, Computer Science and Engineering portfolios.

Vicky Williams, Chief Executive Officer, Emerald Publishing

“Emerald’s purpose remains clear: to publish research that makes a real-world difference by creating an inclusive and equitable environment where every voice is heard. Since 1967, this mission has driven us forward, and we know that achieving it demands more than words, it requires action and accountability. That’s why we’ve set clear standards to deliver the change we aspire to and why we champion initiatives like #DefendResearch, standing firm for the integrity and freedom of scholarly work.

Knowledge is powerful. It bridges divides, sparks progress and transforms lives. Impact doesn’t happen overnight, and while our industry often measures success in numbers, we believe in a broader, more progressive view of what meaningful impact looks like. Collaborating with authors, editors, and partners, we work hard to ensure research reaches the audiences who can use it to make a difference. As a global publisher, we share these ideas across hundreds of journals and thousands of books, amplifying voices that matter.

This ethos goes beyond publishing; it shapes how we support our people, our communities, and our planet through our 3Ps: Planet, People, and Prosperity. There’s more to do, but this report shows the strides we’re making and our determination to keep pushing for progress.”

Our approach to responsible publishing

In 2025, our publishing strategy was focused and deliberate: enable impact aligned to the UN SDGs, challenge narrow research assessment, and widen participation.

This year, we:

- Launched key missions across our five goal areas
- Reaffirmed our commitment to academic freedom and global participation, championing the #DefendResearch stance through public events and editorial outreach and partnered with EveryLibrary to help librarians navigate the challenges they're currently facing
- Improved platform performance and accessibility with faster page loads which reduces carbon usage, clearer navigation, and split-view reading on Emerald Insight.
- The European Accessibility Act and the Americans with Disabilities Act have driven significant changes to our publishing workflows, ensuring content is fully compatible with assistive technologies. This includes implementing alt text for images and enhancing document structure, reflecting Emerald's commitment to accessibility and responsible publishing.



Responsible publishing is built into what we do and reflected in our role as a founding signatory of the UN SDG Publisher Compact.

"We're in an era where showing up for libraries is essential and in academia, libraries have a large role to play in issues impacting researchers and their institutions. This partnership demonstrates Emerald's support for the work being done in academia, the future of research, and the role of library professionals, along with a continued desire to better inform the scholarly community writ large."

John Chrastka,
Executive Director,
Everylibrary



#DefendResearch

#DefendResearch is a global advocacy initiative created in response to growing threats to academic freedom, including censorship and restrictions on research topics.

It calls on scholars, publishers, and institutions to unite against government interference, protect intellectual freedom, and promote equitable access to knowledge. The campaign encourages signing a public declaration, raising awareness, and taking action to safeguard research integrity and diversity in scholarly communication.

“Academic freedom is the foundation of progress. When censorship creeps into research, it silences voices, stifles innovation, and undermines trust in knowledge. Defending research means defending truth, equity, and the ability of scholars to tackle society’s most urgent challenges without fear. We owe it to future generations to keep inquiry open and ideas flowing.”

Terri Teleen,
President Americas,
Emerald Publishing

Emerald Goals

[Fairer society](#)

[Healthier lives](#)

[Responsible management](#)

[Quality education for all](#)

[Sustainable structures and infrastructures](#)

Emerald’s five goals: Fairer society, Healthier lives, Responsible management, Quality education for all, and Sustainable structures and infrastructures guide how we publish with purpose.

In 2025, our Mission campaigns were focused on urgent global challenges. Each campaign commissions content and sparks conversation through open access research, author insights, and multimedia formats.

Dedicated goal pages bring together blogs, podcasts, infographics, and webinars to make research more discoverable and engaging. Tailored outreach helps us reach beyond academia and invite broader participation.

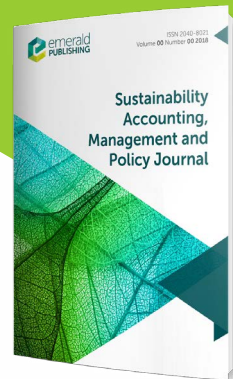
Our goals are a framework for action, helping connect research to change. For example, our Fairer Society mission, “Should Billionaires Exist?” explores this complex and provocative question in a world striving for equity, sustainability, and social justice.

Spotlight on content

From Intent to Impact: The New Blueprint for Inclusion
by Asif Sadiq



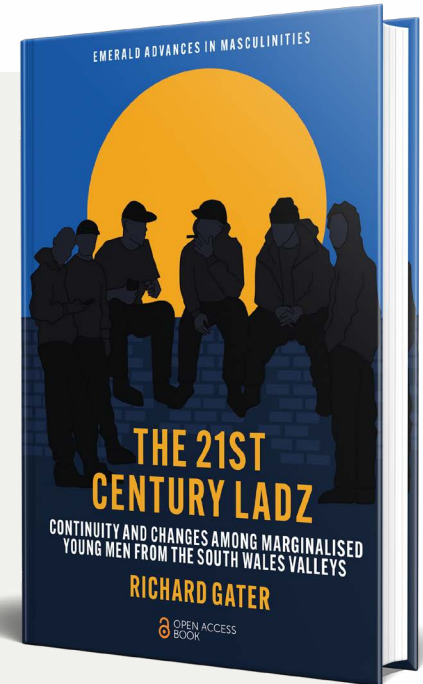
Sustainability Accounting, Management and Policy Journal



So far, Emerald Publishing has...

- Launched more than 50 missions that span Emerald's five goal areas, driving research impact and advocacy
- Published more than 250 free-to-access blogs aligned with SDGs, offering practical insights and thought leadership
- Hosted 15 free-to-access webinars, engaging global audiences on sustainability and equity themes
- Provided free access to 400+ articles and 200+ book chapters, supporting inclusive knowledge sharing
- Aligned 90% of books' frontlist titles to the SDGs, from monographs to dedicated book series
- Created more than 120 podcast episodes, featuring academic and industry experts discussing SDG-related challenges and solutions

In 2025, Emerald supported the Centre for Social Justice Foundation's Lost Boys initiative by partnering on the Leeds Big Listen, hosting an internal briefing with CSJ researchers, and creating a resource hub. Through social media and editorial features, we amplified the campaign and equipped colleagues to engage meaningfully.



"Emerald's support of the CSJ Foundation's Big Listen Leeds 2025, facilitated discussions between a hundred key regional voices on the pressing issue of Lost Boys. This partnership ensured that grassroots organisations, businesses, philanthropists, and other key stakeholders could come together to directly shape recommendations which in turn will be presented to government, specifically on harnessing the power of mentoring and coaching for young people. The support of Emerald ensured the CSJ Foundation are connecting the 'Backstreets of Britain, with the corridors of power,' and has pushed forward much needed change for Lost Boys."

Nathan Gamester,
Managing Director, the CSJ Foundation

In 2025, we were named in the Times Top 50 Employers for Gender Equality for the second year running.



We expanded pay gap reporting beyond gender and ethnicity to include disability.

We're committed to inclusion and amplifying diverse voices in academic publishing.

As an early signatory of the Joint Commitment for Action on Inclusion & Diversity in Publishing, we continue to challenge inequities through global inclusivity reporting and the co-creation of practical industry guidance working with peers.

In 2025, we were named in the Times Top 50 Employers for Gender Equality for the second year running and expanded pay gap reporting beyond gender and ethnicity to include disability.

We're strengthening representation across Emerald Goal Advisors, editorial boards, reviewer pools, authorship, and case protagonists, so our content better reflects the communities it serves. Our support for initiatives such as the Hidden REF continued, and we introduced a publisher's note as part of #DefendResearch to champion equitable research culture.

Through our Men's Inclusivity network and partnerships like the CSJ Lost Boys series, we created new spaces for dialogue and grew our on-demand ED&I resource, helping colleagues turn intent into action.

HIDDEN REF **#DefendResearch**



We're committed to increasing female and non-binary representation across editorial boards and authorship by 2030.

Open to all

We're committed to widening participation in research and to building a fairer, more accessible publishing culture. In 2025, we continued to remove barriers by expanding open routes, improving discoverability, and sharing what we learn with the community.

All Emerald and ICE Publishing hybrid journals support open access articles. Our Gold OA portfolio is growing across SDG-aligned areas so applied, interdisciplinary work can reach the widest audiences. In 2025, more than 33% of journal articles will align to the SDGs.

Our Green open access route allows all Emerald journal and book-chapter authors to make their work immediately open on publication, with no payment and no embargo.



Emerald's Open Lab operates as an OA incubator, running short, theme-based design sprints with external stakeholders to prototype sustainable OA models, for example, participation in OA, alternatives to APCs, access-to-research outcomes. In 2025 it shared early findings, including insights on green OA usage patterns and Low and Middle Income Countries (LMIC) participation.

We champion open research principles and align with community standards, ensuring openness is backed by quality, integrity, and transparency.

What has the Open Lab learned this year?

Emerald's Open Lab operates as an OA incubator, running short, theme-based design sprints with external stakeholders to prototype sustainable OA models.



As part of International Open Access Week in October 2025, we shared our 'findings so far' from The Open Lab. The work has found that industry professionals want clarity, accessibility, and impact, not inaccessible language, and academic prestige among a host of other lessons.

[What has the Open Lab learned this year?](#)

"At a time when research faces unprecedented pressures, Emerald stands firm in support of our communities. We'll continue to defend academic freedom, dismantle barriers to access, and champion equity across research and publishing. Our Open Lab explores practical solutions for sustainable open access, and our new platform ensures trusted knowledge is easier to find and share."

Tony Roche,
Chief Officer,
Publishing and Strategic
Relationships,
Emerald
Publishing



Protecting our planet

As a founding member of the SDG Publishers Compact and a signatory of Publishing Declares, we continue to take measurable actions that make a real difference for our planet.

[Read more about our commitment to sustainability](#)

Under our 3Ps framework, the Planet Team, a growing group of volunteers from across Emerald, drives our sustainability strategy, monitors progress and maximises the engagement of our global colleagues. In 2025, the team focused on understanding and reducing emissions, implementing and supporting projects focused on operating sustainably and supporting biodiversity through hands-on education and volunteering. We also integrated lower impact design into the new Emerald Insight platform and shared insights from our Open Lab on greener publishing models.

Our goal is to work collaboratively and innovatively to address the climate challenge and help create a more sustainable future for research and society.

Our head office in Leeds, UK uses 100% renewable energy.

“Being part of our Planet Team is really meaningful to me because it aligns with my values and passion for sustainability. Working on carbon reduction projects gives me a tangible way to contribute to the fight against climate change and help build a more resilient future. I value the collaboration, innovation, and shared purpose within our team that’s more than just solving work challenges. Every project feels like a step toward a healthier planet, and being surrounded by people who care just as deeply makes the work even more rewarding.”

James Booth, Risk and Compliance Lead,
Emerald Publishing

Our progress so far

Our Planet Team drove initiatives in 2025 like:

Continued to work to embed our internally developed Our Planet e-learning pathway to engage colleagues worldwide and help drive actionable change.

Expanded our collection of Scope 1, 2 and 3 emissions data to inform meaningful reduction plans.

Refreshed our internal resources and events calendar to maximise colleague engagement and awareness.

Improved our UK based recycling options to include soft plastics, batteries, e-waste and food waste.

Launched internal initiatives like our Green Conferencing principles and our sustainable swap-shop.

To encourage individual action, we sustained participation in the Net Zero challenge, enabling colleagues to track positive environmental practices.

Integrated lower-impact design principles into the new Emerald Insight platform.

Shared insights from our Open Lab on greener publishing models, ensuring sustainability is embedded in both our operations and our products.

Alongside these efforts, we:

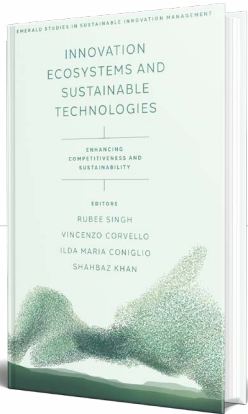


Jo Jones,
Publishing Development Manager,
Emerald Publishing

“Being part of Emerald’s Planet Team has been a deeply meaningful experience, both professionally and personally. As someone who has long championed responsible management and holds a deep appreciation for the natural world, contributing to this initiative felt like a natural extension of that passion. From the outset, our goal was ambitious: to embed environmental considerations into every corner of our business thinking. What’s made it truly powerful, though, is the team — a remarkable group of colleagues driving change with energy, insight, and collaboration. It’s been a privilege to play a part in such a dynamic, purpose-led movement.”

Spotlight on content

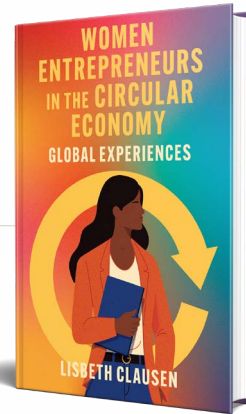
Innovation Ecosystems and Sustainable Technologies



The Emerald Handbook of Sustainable Energy Transition and Social Justice



Women Entrepreneurs in the Circular Economy: Global Experiences



Rethinking our role: from consumer to food citizen

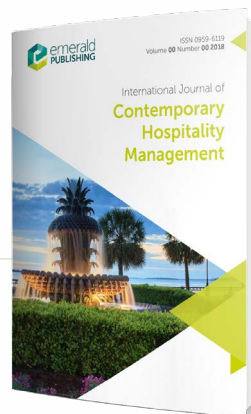


Smart cities, old foundations: the future of urban

International Journal of Innovation Science



International Journal of Contemporary Hospitality Management



International Journal of Operations and Production Management



The future is self-directed: rethinking how we learn



Putting people first

At Emerald, our strength lies in the diversity of our people and the inclusivity of our culture. With colleagues across the globe, we see every day how varied perspectives fuel innovation and enrich the publishing experience for our communities.

We know the world is evolving rapidly, and so must we. That's why we continually challenge ourselves to create an environment where everyone feels they belong and is empowered to thrive.

**Diversity is our strength.
Inclusion is our commitment.
Equity is our shared responsibility.**

We're dedicated to fostering a workplace that celebrates individuality, values different viewpoints, and cultivates belonging. Our team brings together unique talents and experiences, and we're proud that opportunities at Emerald are open to all.

"Being part of the Neuroinclusive Publishing project has been one of my favourite parts of working at Emerald as it feels like I can have a real impact on improving the experiences of neurodivergent academics. I can take the small part of the publishing process that I'm an expert in and make it more inclusive by removing barriers to publishing. I've been inspired by the feedback I've received on this project from industry experts, and it's great to see Emerald being a thought leader who puts their missions into practice."

Lucy Threadgold, Peer Review Editor Lead, Emerald Publishing

Our Inclusion Network

Throughout 2025, our Inclusion Network has run campaigns and events, invited speakers to fireside chats, and shared resources with our communities. We also introduced confidential listening circles to create safe spaces for conversation and feedback.

One of our focus areas was psychological safety and belonging. We launched 'Brave Spaces' through our Men's Inclusion Group and continued monthly sessions for parents and carers of neurodivergent children, empowering families and carers through empathy, education and support. The Neuroinclusive Publishing Group focuses on making publishing processes accessible for neurodivergent authors and editors, projects include improving peer review accessibility and exploring inclusive design and captioning for content.

We brought colleagues together at our remote annual conference in January and through in-person sessions across the year, including an event on openness and transparency with external partners. Our annual engagement survey saw strong participation and steady improvements in communication, collaboration, and social connection, reflecting the impact of our inclusion work.

This year, our Inclusion Network set up a group to work to ensure the five different generations in the workplace are catered for, recognising that people have different wants and needs. We're working to ensure we're set up in the best way possible for now and into the future.

90%

of colleagues feel positively about our management.

86%

of colleagues feel positively about our work and life blend.

92%

of colleagues feel positively about our work in equity, diversity, and inclusion.

90%

of colleagues feel positively about our social connection.



The progress we've made so far

- We've continued our partnerships with B-Radical and RefuAid, reinforcing our commitment to inclusive recruitment and supporting social mobility.
- We remain OpenOrg accredited, demonstrating transparency about who we are, what we offer, and what we don't.
- Our careers website has been updated to provide realistic insights into our ways of working, policies and benefits, and to improve transparency around opportunities and recruitment processes.
- We've embraced full flexible working, removing core hours and enabling colleagues to work from anywhere. Public holidays are rolled into annual leave so they can be taken on days that matter most to individuals.
- We've been accredited by Flexa for the third-year running, achieving a transparency rating of 9.6/10 and ranking among the top 100 flexible companies globally.

Learning and development

At Emerald, we're committed to empowering colleagues to take ownership of their growth and explore diverse career paths. In 2025, we've continued to expand opportunities for development through initiatives such as the Everyday Leader e-learning pathway, reverse mentoring and secondment opportunities. Alongside these, colleagues have access to a wide range of on-demand eLearning pathways, a suite of courses developed internally by our relevant experts, available to help colleagues be the best they can be.

Flexibility

Flexibility remains at the heart of how we work. This year, we've strengthened our approach by maintaining no core hours and enabling colleagues to work from anywhere. Our family-friendly policies continue to evolve, with enhanced parental leave, carer support and a Returnity programme for new parents, complemented by benefits such as Moments that Matter days, sabbaticals and volunteering opportunities.

Wellbeing

The wellbeing of our people remains a top priority. In 2025, we've maintained and expanded initiatives that support a healthy, sustainable work-life balance. Mental Health First Aiders and Menopause Mentors are available across the organisation, and our comprehensive wellbeing programme offers resources for physical, mental, and financial health. Wellbeing is now deeply integrated into our inclusion strategy, ensuring psychological safety and belonging are part of everyday life at Emerald.

Our efforts are
award winning



"At Emerald, learning and development isn't just a box to tick - it's a mindset we champion. From bite-sized eLearning to immersive experiences like Reverse Mentoring or coaching conversations, we offer something for every stage of your squiggly career journey. It's about giving colleagues the tools, confidence and freedom to grow in ways that matter to them."

Jason Richardson,
Talent Development Lead,
Emerald Publishing

Katy Snell,
People Director,
Emerald Publishing



"In 2025, we've deepened our commitment to creating an inclusive and supportive environment where every colleague feels valued and empowered. We've expanded learning and development opportunities, wellbeing programmes to promote balance, and remained committed to our flexible working approach to meet individual needs. Our focus on belonging and growth is reflected in consistently high engagement scores and the recognition we've received through external awards, reaffirming that Emerald is a place where everyone can thrive."

A photograph of three children, two girls and one boy, looking down at a small green plant in a garden bed. They are outdoors, and the background is filled with green foliage and sunlight. The children are wearing casual clothing; one girl is in a green apron. The scene is bright and positive, representing community and education.

Helping our communities prosper

Since Emerald was founded, we've recognised the responsibility and opportunity businesses have to create meaningful change in the communities they serve.

In 2025, our focus is sharper than ever. We're building long-term partnerships with organisations whose missions align with ours and where our actions can deliver the greatest impact. We're committed to advancing education and driving social mobility, ensuring that knowledge is accessible, opportunities are equitable, and our contributions make a lasting difference.

Some of the organizations we support



Our Prosperity Team continues to lead fundraising efforts across the year, focusing on causes that align with our mission to advance education and social mobility. In 2025, we've maintained strong partnerships with BookTrust, Chapter One, and One in a Million, reflecting our commitment to literacy, learning and equitable access to knowledge. We focus on helping children, especially within early education to work towards early intervention to help improve literacy, which in turn helps overall education throughout life.



This year, we've built on previous successes by introducing new global fundraising challenges alongside our established events.

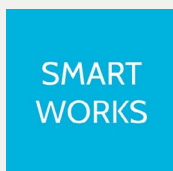
The Big Walk returned with routes across the UK and international locations, and colleagues once again took to the water for the Dragon Boat Race, raising funds and awareness for our charity partners.

BookTrust remains a key beneficiary, supporting children from low-income and vulnerable backgrounds to develop a love of reading during their formative years.



Volunteering

At Emerald, every colleague continues to receive two paid volunteering days annually, which can be used to support one of our partner organisations or a cause of their choice. This policy remains unchanged in 2025 and is part of our commitment to community engagement and social impact. This year we organised two global volunteering days, where colleagues organised group opportunities to volunteer in communities local to them. This included cleaning up local areas, volunteering with schools, working with various social mobility groups, helping reduce waste by getting good food back to communities not landfill, and working with services that help create spaces and play areas for children with additional needs.



Smart Works

We continue to support Smart Works, a UK charity helping women and anyone who identifies as a woman to return to employment through coaching, interview preparation and styling services. In 2025, donations of clothing, shoes and accessories from our Leeds HQ have continued, ensuring candidates feel confident and prepared for interviews.



One in a Million

Our World of Work initiative continues to support Bradford's One in a Million charity by hosting experience days for young people from disadvantaged communities. In 2025, these sessions have introduced participants to publishing, marketing and sales, inspiring them to see that careers in publishing are accessible regardless of background.



"We know that giving children the right support, at the right time, can transform their futures. Through our programme, alongside developing their reading skills, the children gain confidence, feel inspired, and discover that reading can be enjoyable. That sustained, one-to-one relationship with their volunteer makes all the difference. Thanks to Emerald Publishing's support, we're able to reach more children and give them the foundation they need to succeed in school and in life."

Emma Bell,
Chief Executive Officer,
Chapter One



Chapter One

We've sustained our online volunteering programme with Chapter One, enabling colleagues to spend 30 minutes each week reading with a child who may struggle with literacy. This initiative continues to support children in the Keighley and Bradford areas of the UK, helping them build confidence and essential reading skills.

Ian Mawson's Way of the Roses cycling challenge

In September, Emerald colleague Ian Mawson took on the Way of the Roses coast-to-coast cycling challenge from Morecambe to Bridlington, raising funds for BookTrust.

The 170-mile coast-to-coast cycle from Morecambe to Bridlington is known for 8,549 ft of climbing.



Ethics and Compliance

We have a zero-tolerance policy toward bribery, corruption, and unethical conduct. This is clearly set out in our Code of Conduct and Supplier Code of Conduct, and breaches can lead to disciplinary action. We extend these standards to our partners, ensuring that everyone we work with shares our values.

To support this framework, we operate an anonymous whistleblowing channel, giving colleagues the confidence to raise concerns without fear of retaliation.

We're committed to protecting the integrity of the scholarly record. Our Research Integrity policy, updated in October 2025, aligns with COPE best practice and provides clear guidance for editors, reviewers and authors on handling ethics cases.

We've evolved our approach to safeguarding research integrity as technology advances. In 2025, we deployed tools to detect AI-generated content in submitted papers and reviewed our AI guidance for authors. Recognising that AI can enhance efficiency, we developed comprehensive guidelines that clearly explain what is and isn't acceptable. These guidelines ensure transparency and uphold ethical standards while continuing to align with COPE best practice.

We remain committed to reviewing and refining our approach as research methods and tools evolve.

We also apply robust supplier due diligence and publish a Modern Slavery statement outlining the steps we take to prevent exploitation in our supply chain.

Our procurement guide ensures ethical standards are embedded in every buying decision.

Learn more
about our
publishing
ethics [here](#).

Thank you
for reading.



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