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## Sustainability Audit

Aquaspersions

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Alasdair Marks

**Director**

Simply Sustainable

Tel: 07534 445617

Email: [alasdair.marks@simply-sustainable.co.uk](mailto:alasdair.marks@simply-sustainable.co.uk)

[www.simply-sustainable.co.uk](http://www.simply-sustainable.co.uk)

Sabrina Chiaretti

**Consultant**

Simply Sustainable

Tel: 07496 235756

Email: [sabrina.chiaretti@simply-sustainable.co.uk](mailto:sabrina.chiaretti@simply-sustainable.co.uk)

[www.simply-sustainable.co.uk](http://www.simply-sustainable.co.uk)

SIMPLY SUSTAINABLE LIMITED

Suite 12 George House, 64 High Street, Tring, Hertfordshire, HP23 4AF  
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## Overview

In February 2019, Simply Sustainable was commissioned to conduct a sustainability audit of Aquaspersions. The company was interested in assessing the sustainability of its operations and the strengths and weaknesses of its current approach, with a view to improving its performance and demonstrating its commitment, particularly in relation to customers, employees and suppliers.

This document contains the results of our audit. It is based on a half-day session where a member of the Simply Sustainable team interviewed the CEO and Managing Director of Aquaspersions, to collect details around the sustainability approach and performance of the business. No detailed tour of the site was conducted during the day.

When assessing your sustainability proposition and developing recommendations to improve and leverage this, we have taken into account the very particular nature of your operations and the size of your business.

## About Aquaspersions

Established in 1974, Aquaspersions is a world leader in the manufacture of aqueous colloidal dispersions and emulsions.

The business is privately owned and has a manufacturing site in Halifax (England), from which it serves Europe, and one in Kuala Lumpur (Malaysia), from which it serves South East Asia and the Pacific rim countries. For the purpose of this audit, we have taken into account solely the UK site and operations of the business.

Michael Richardson is the CEO of Aquaspersions, overseeing the strategic direction of the global business; Dr Alan Bewsher is the Managing Director, overseeing the UK business.

In the UK, Aquaspersions employs around 40 people, the majority of which work in the warehouse, with the remainder office-based staff. The business has around 40 suppliers (both multinational corporations and small companies) and serves approximately 120 customers.

The business is certified ISO14001 (environmental management) and ISO9001 (quality management).

## Sustainability at Aquaspersions

Although not viewed as a frontline priority, the business has a number of sustainability measures and practices in place, which together resemble a “sustainability proposition or programme”. For instance, Aquaspersions supports local charities, community projects and events; it procures energy through green energy contracts, and is working with partners to assess the commercial and technical feasibility of innovative compostable and biodegradable materials.

For a company of your size to have such a range of practices already in place is a positive platform to build from. This is clearly influenced by your customers and partners but also the culture of the business, and by the willingness of the business, particularly the senior leadership team, to “do the right thing”. Broadly, we recommend that you identify and develop your approach around the areas of sustainability that matter most to your business and your stakeholders, going above and beyond compliance because you recognise and understand the business benefits of doing so.

Here, where we have identified gaps and areas for improvement, we have made recommendations to take your approach to the next level – going beyond compliance or standard practice to reflect what is good or best practice for a company of your size and sector.

Further, we recommend that you better leverage your sustainability commitments and plans, for example using your new website as a platform to communicate and showcase the positive impact that you are having on the environment, your customers, suppliers, employees and local communities. This will serve your reputation well, contribute to competitive advantage and help maintain engagement and momentum.

## Methodology

To conduct the audit and assess the strengths and weaknesses of your current approach, we utilised our audit tool, which captures and scores information according to a series of questions related to different areas of sustainability as follows:

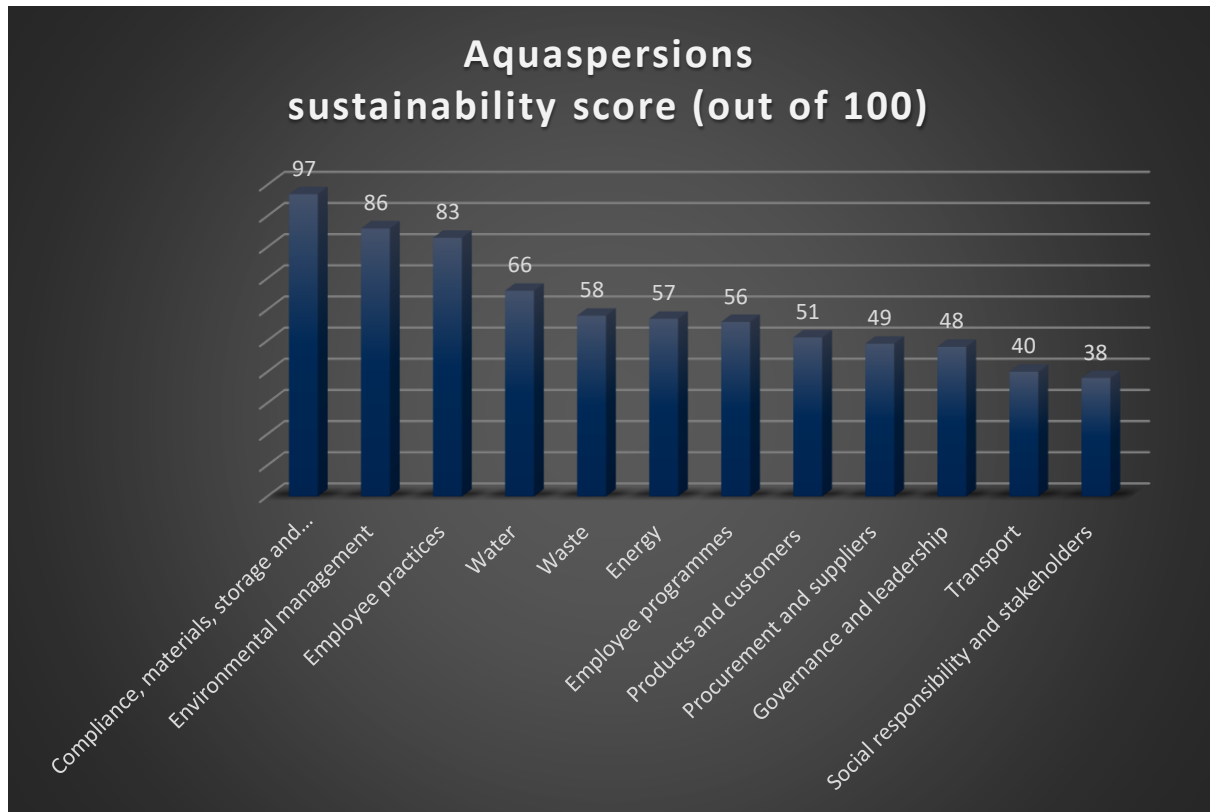
1. Governance and Leadership
2. Environmental Management
3. Energy
4. Water
5. Waste
6. Procurement and Suppliers
7. Compliance Storage and Materials
8. Transport
9. Products and Customers
10. Social and Stakeholders
11. Employee programmes
12. Employee practices

After inputting and assessing the detail we collect, we allocate a score to each question (1-5) based on the strength of what the business currently has in place. For each area, we display the results graphically using a matrix (radar diagram). Separately, each question is applied a weighting which takes into account the nature and size of your business and operations.

Based on the scores and the weightings, you are then given an overall weighted average from 0-100 indicating the strength of your approach to each sustainability area.

Specific strengths and gaps are highlighted by way of the scoring, and the matrix. Based on these, we provide a series of recommendations with an indication of how these might be prioritised by the business. Our recommendations are intended to give you a set of concrete actions to take forward and develop into a plan that will address gaps and enhance your sustainability approach and performance.

The following figure summarises how Aquaspersions performs against each of the sustainability areas highlighted above.



In the following sections, we summarise our key findings and recommendations for each area.



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# Key Findings and Recommendations



## 1. Governance and Leadership (48/100)

The business has a number of ad-hoc commitments around sustainability, and informal processes are in place to discuss and address these. Limited resources are allocated to some areas related to sustainability, but the company lacks formal processes and structures to truly leverage its environmental and social commitment, and to maximise its value to the business.



Using current commitments and initiatives as a basis, we advise that the business develops and formalises a sustainability plan. The plan should define and articulate your sustainability priorities, related commitments (what you're currently doing but also what you're committing to in the future) and allocating resources, roles and responsibilities for managing these – this should include the role of leadership in overseeing and monitoring progress.

Clearly outlining your approach will enable senior management to regularly communicate and advocate your commitments internally and externally. This could include a sustainability policy statement and principles, narrative around your sustainability plan for inclusion on your website, regular updates to staff, and conversations with customers and partners.

Focus area	Key recommendations	Priority
Resources	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Clearly identify and articulate your sustainability priorities and allocate resources for initiatives based on these</li> </ul>	Short-term
Mission, vision & values	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Develop a statement and narrative around your sustainability priorities - why they're important to the business - that aligns with your mission, vision and values</li> </ul>	Short-term
Commitments	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Develop a sustainability plan that includes key commitments and forward-looking goals related to your sustainability priorities</li> <li>Communicate your plan internally and externally</li> </ul>	Short-term
Leadership accountability	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Formalise the role and responsibilities of the senior management team in overseeing the management of sustainability and achievement of commitments</li> <li>Formalise sustainability discussions and the monitoring of progress at senior management meetings</li> </ul>	Short-term
Structure	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Continue to proactively use your management systems to drive continuous improvement and embed environmental (and social) considerations into decision-making</li> <li>Clearly identify roles and responsibilities related to the management of environmental and social priorities</li> </ul>	Medium-term
Advocacy	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Formalise sustainability updates - related to your priorities and commitments - as part of quarterly whole staff update meetings</li> <li>Publish your sustainability priorities and commitments on your website and ensure that senior management are encouraged and equipped to talk about these to customers and suppliers when and where appropriate</li> </ul>	Medium-term

## 2. Environmental Management (86/100)

The commitment of the business to the environment is currently focused on compliance, cost control and reduction. The business delivers awareness training and aims to ensure all employees are aware of and minimise the environmental impacts of their operations. The business has a strong environmental policy, in line with its ISO14001 accredited, and this could be leveraged to serve business reputation and drive continuous improvement.

Being certified to ISO14001 is a notable achievement. However, it shouldn't be seen a tick-box. You should leverage your EMS strategically and proactively, to drive continuous improvement

and systematically embed significant environmental factors into core business decisions. For instance, the system provides a framework for setting and reviewing objectives and targets, engaging with staff at all levels to review and improve environmental performance across the business and spot opportunities to make managerial and operational improvements. Used well, it ensures you review environmental risks and impacts annually, that you have robust plans in place to manage the most significant ones and that you have a plan to communicate and advocate on environmental issues effectively.

Elsewhere, ensure that you are reviewing and refreshing your policy and training at least annually to ensure they keep pace with changes and periodically test the knowledge and adherence of your staff.



Focus area	Key recommendations	Priority
Risk & opportunity assessment	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Ensure that there are robust plans in place to manage your most significant risks and impacts</li> <li>Review and update your risk and opportunity assessment on an annual basis</li> </ul>	Short-term
Policy	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Review and update the policy annually to ensure it remains relevant to the business, evolving stakeholder expectations and reflects good practice</li> </ul>	Short-term
Awareness	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Ensure the policy is clearly displayed in a communal area</li> <li>Test employees knowledge of the policy at least annually</li> </ul>	Medium-term
Training	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Provide mandatory environmental awareness training annually</li> <li>Refresh and update the content of the training annually to ensure it reflects any changes (regulatory or otherwise) and good practice</li> <li>Ensure the content of the training is relevant to all staff i.e. in both warehouse and office roles</li> </ul>	Medium-term
EMS	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Ensure you are using your environmental management system proactively to drive continuous improvement and embed environmental considerations into decision-making.</li> </ul>	Medium-term

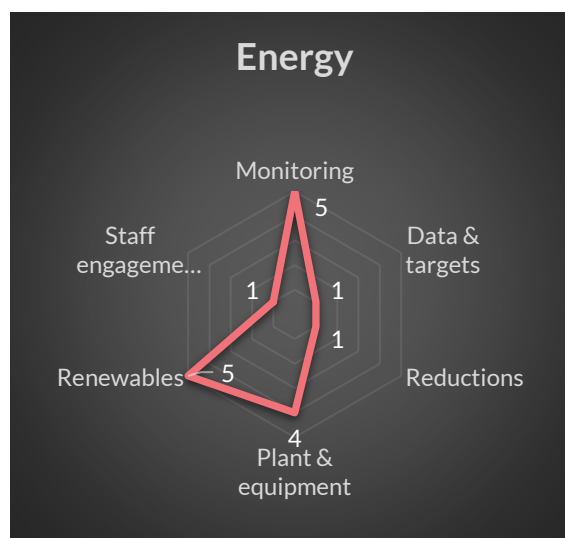


### 3. Energy (57/100)

The business monitors energy consumption regularly and trains all employees on working efficiently. Energy is sourced through green energy contracts that the business has committed to, despite being more expensive. Some cost-effective solutions are in place such as LED lighting and the business considers energy efficiency when sourcing new equipment. The focus to date has been on the warehouse and technical operations, with less emphasis on the office. There are no set targets or plans in place to reduce energy use.

To address this, we recommend that the business undertakes an energy efficiency audit to better understand any significant current inefficiencies and identify further cost-effective solutions to reduce energy use. Based on the results of this, we suggest you set realistic and achievable energy reduction targets, with a clear plan in place to achieve these. This would enable you to move away from simply monitoring your usage and more reactive, ad-hoc initiatives towards longer-term opportunities for improvements and cost savings.

Proactively involving your employees in adopting sustainable working behaviour will also support energy efficiency across the business and help meet your targets. Ongoing and permanent reminders to switch off lights and equipment when not in use are relatively easy and non-time consuming measures to implement, and will help to build a company culture that cares about its environmental impacts.



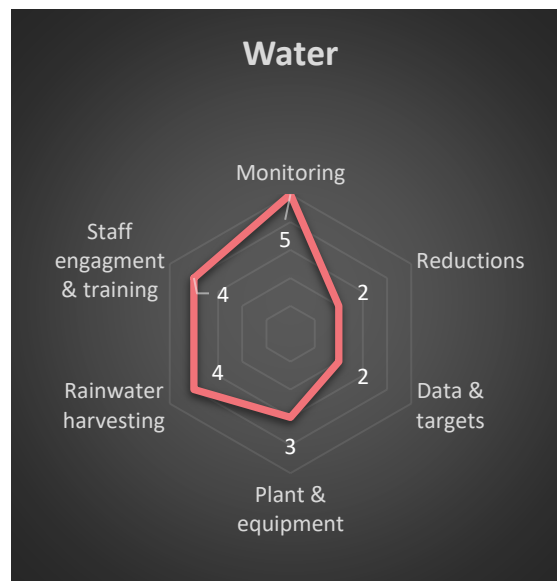
Focus area	Key recommendations	Priority
Monitoring	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Consider displaying data on your energy consumption in a communal area and proactively communicate to staff, to initiate discussions and facilitate involvement in behaviour change initiatives</li> </ul>	Short-term
Data & targets	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Set realistic forward-looking targets to reduce energy use in the business</li> </ul>	Short-term
Reductions	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Undertake an audit to understand any current inefficiencies e.g. in lighting, heating, metering, ventilation, air-conditioning, energy-saving modes not enabled on machines etc.</li> <li>Use the audit to consider other cost effective solutions/technologies that would help the business to reduce its energy use e.g. improved insulation, smarter lighting systems/controls, radiant heaters, minimising use of large access doors</li> </ul>	Short-term
Staff engagement & training	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Develop a plan to involve and encourage your employees to adopt sustainable working behaviours (e.g. turning off lights, computers, printers and machines when not in use/out of hours) - consider a small working group with passionate employees</li> </ul>	Short-term
Plant & equipment	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Formalise energy efficiency as a key criteria when researching/sourcing equipment</li> <li>Communicate this commitment to all staff via your environment policy</li> </ul>	Medium-term
Renewables	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Communicate your commitment to source energy through green energy contracts internally and externally where appropriate</li> </ul>	Longer-term



## 4. Water (66/100)

Water is critical to the operations of Aquaspersions and a significant impact. The business monitors and reviews its water consumption and discharge regularly. Effluent water is monitored and reported regularly. In particular, the business measures the kilos of effluent per tons of products produced. Although there are few opportunities to reduce water use in products, staff are trained to minimise water use in the warehouse. However, there are no targets or formal plans in place to reduce water use, either in the warehouse or in the office.

To address this, we recommend undertaking a water survey to understand your water use fully. This would help to identify inefficiencies and how the business could benefit from technologies that would enable and encourage sustainable water use. This would also enable the business to set realistic forward-looking reduction targets, with a clear plan in place to achieve these.



Included in this plan should be the involvement of your staff in minimising water use through sustainable working behaviours, across the business. Even seemingly small actions like reducing water usage in the canteen and in bathrooms are relatively inexpensive and easy to implement but they demonstrate that the business is committed and will help ensure buy-in from your staff in achieving your reduction goals.

Focus area	Key recommendations	Priority
Reductions	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Consider undertaking a survey to fully understand water use, patterns of use and effluent discharges</li> <li>Develop a plan to tackle inefficiencies and take advantage of technologies that will enable and encourage sustainable water use</li> </ul>	Short-term
Data & targets	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Use the findings from the survey to consider setting realistic forward-looking targets to reduce water consumption</li> </ul>	Medium-term
Plant & equipment	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Use the findings from the survey to consider what place water efficient plant or equipment will play in the future</li> <li>Ensure that water efficiency is a key criteria (where relevant) when identifying new plant or equipment</li> </ul>	Medium-term
Staff engagement & training	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Ensure that training and measures to encourage staff to minimise water use through sustainable working behaviours are applied consistently through the business</li> <li>Regular communication and highlighting achievements will reinforce commitments and help maintain momentum</li> </ul>	Medium-term

## 5. Waste (58/100)

The business strives to recycle, with a particular focus on cardboard, wood and metal, which are reprocessed. The production process is very strict and it is felt there is little opportunity to minimise waste in some areas of the business. Staff are trained to work clean and smart. More could be done around setting targets to reduce waste, reuse or recycle office equipment, materials and food waste.



We recommend that you involve staff – for example through a small working group – to review opportunities to minimise waste and product use across the business and adopt sustainable behaviours that minimise waste. Working more closely with your waste providers to better understand different waste streams and where these end up would also help to focus the business on addressing difficult to process waste streams, change procurement patterns or find new ways to recycle or reuse certain waste streams to reduce your overall waste impact.

Focus area	Key recommendations	Priority
Staff engagement & training	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Review and involve staff in opportunities to minimise waste in the production process</li> <li>Develop a plan to engage and encourage your employees to adopt sustainable working behaviours to minimise waste and increase recycling (e.g. use less paper, print only when necessary) in the office, communal areas and in the warehouse - consider a small working group with passionate individuals</li> </ul>	Short-term
Waste hierarchy	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Review product use in the warehouse and office (e.g. furniture, machines, PPE, stationary etc.) to identify those that can be reused or recycled at end of life/when replacements are sought</li> </ul>	Medium-term
Recycling	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Work with your waste management provider(s) to supply reliable data on waste streams and understand how different materials are processed after collection</li> <li>Identify further opportunities to segregate recyclable materials or reduce the use of hard to process materials</li> </ul>	Medium-term
Waste outcomes	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>(As above) Work with your waste management providers to better understand where different materials end up and how they are processed after collection</li> </ul>	Medium-term
Food waste	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Segregate your food waste. Aim to identify and work with a local food waste management provider so you can segregate your food waste and ensure it is composted and reprocessed</li> </ul>	Longer-term
Data & targets	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Working with your waste management provider to supply reliable data, consider establishing realistic forward-looking targets to reduce waste and increase recycling in relevant waste streams</li> </ul>	Longer-term

## 6. Procurement and Suppliers (49/100)

The business strives to work with suppliers that do not harm the environment and do not violate human rights. However, no structured procedures or policies are in place that formalise this commitment, or that state the terms under which Aquaspersions may refuse to work with certain suppliers. The business does not actively consider the recycling and re-use potential of the goods it purchases. The business closely monitors the fulfilment of its payment terms to its suppliers.

Your informal commitments towards respecting human rights and preserving the environment through your supply chain is a strength that should be built on. We strongly advise you to develop a more structured approach to selecting, working with and auditing suppliers. This could be achieved through a risk assessment of your suppliers which identifies where environmental and social risks may lie, allowing you to focus your efforts on the areas of highest risk.

We also recommend developing and communicating a policy that outlines the standards you expect suppliers to follow when working with you and which formalises your commitment to work with suppliers that demonstrate strong environmental and social performance credentials and how this is enforced.



Focus area	Key recommendations	Priority
Ethical suppliers	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Conduct a risk assessment of your suppliers to identify and assess where environmental and social risks may lie</li> <li>Consider developing a policy which formalises your commitment to work with those that can demonstrate a strong commitment to social and environmental responsibility</li> </ul>	Short-term
Human rights	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Use the risk assessment to identify where there may be human rights risks in your supply chain and formalise your commitment and approach to auditing smaller/riskier suppliers. Review this annually.</li> <li>Ensure that human rights and social issues are included in your policy</li> </ul>	Short-term
Local sourcing	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Review the main products/services that you source and use across the business and identify those that could be cost-effectively sourced locally</li> <li>Ensure that locality is a criteria when sourcing new products/services or when changing suppliers</li> </ul>	Medium-term
Packaging	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Continue to engage with your suppliers to minimise packaging and changing the form of products where possible</li> </ul>	Medium-term
Re-use & recycling	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Review the products you purchase to assess their re-use and recycling potential</li> <li>Ensure that the potential for re-use and recycling is formalised as a criteria when sourcing goods</li> </ul>	Medium-term
Prompt payment	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Continue to monitor supplier payment on a monthly basis</li> </ul>	Medium-term
Ethical products & services	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Develop a survey for your suppliers to assess how ethical the goods and services you purchase are</li> <li>Formalise your commitment to purchase ethical products, where possible</li> </ul>	Longer-term

## 7. Compliance, Storage and Materials (97/100)

*Compliance is a strength of the business. All operations and the site are managed to the highest level of compliance and standards, and staff are trained regularly on health and safety measures.*

If not already in place, incident response plans and training could be strengthened by identifying and working through different scenarios related to the specific nature of the business e.g. on-site spillages in different areas, developing procedures that outline clearly how risks and incidents can be prevented and managed.

Training should be refreshed and updated annually, with all staff tested to ensure their adherence to procedures and understanding of what to do in case of incidents.



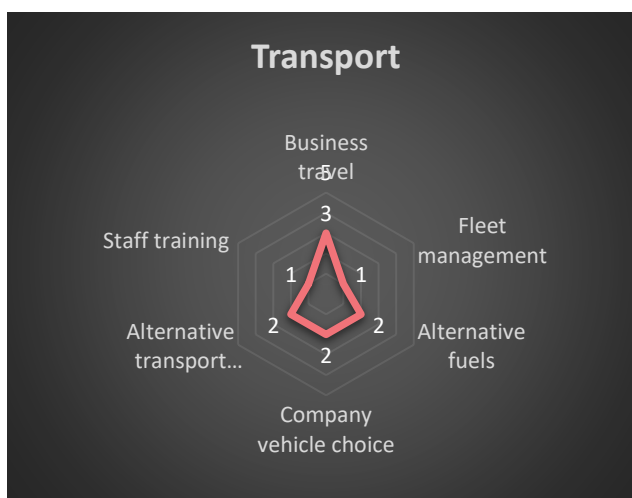
Focus area	Key recommendations	Priority
Incident response plan	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Develop a procedure that outlines and communicates what to do in case of particular scenarios, if this is not currently in place</li> </ul>	Short-term
Incident response training	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Conduct incident response training annually and ensure staff are tested to check their understanding</li> </ul>	Medium-term
License and permits	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Manage the site to highest standards to ensure compliance with standards and permits</li> <li>Ensure that relevant members of staff are trained on and aware of new regulations when relevant</li> </ul>	Medium-term
Staff training	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Conduct training at least annually and ensure staff are tested to check their understanding</li> </ul>	Medium-term



## 8. Transport (40/100)

The business has made some informal commitments to reducing business travel when possible and offers a bike to work scheme to its employees. However, there are no formal processes or commitments in place to minimise its negative externalities from transport.

There are relatively simple measures the business could take to strengthen its performance in this area such as proactively promoting your bike-to-work scheme, encouraging and facilitating car-sharing amongst employees and raising awareness of fuel-efficient driving techniques – all the while recognising and communicating success along the way.



We also recommend that the business develops a system to monitor and regularly review business travel, with a view to formalising a commitment to minimising this. This should include a policy which asks staff to consider whether travel is necessary (prioritising alternatives such as calls or video-conferencing where possible), in addition to considering the mode of transport to minimise impacts.

Focus area	Key recommendations	Priority
Alternative transport options	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Promote the bike to work scheme appropriately to current and potential employees</li> <li>Encourage and facilitate car sharing among employees, for daily commuting and meetings</li> </ul>	Short-term
Staff training	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Consider training (or at least raising awareness amongst) relevant employees on fuel efficient driving techniques</li> <li>Encourage any suppliers that are responsible for your deliveries to train their staff on fuel efficient driving</li> </ul>	Short-term
Company vehicle choice	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Consider fuel as a deciding factor when hiring or purchasing new vehicles</li> </ul>	Medium-term
Business travel	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Develop a formal system to measure and monitor business travel</li> <li>Consider making a formal commitment by asking employees to avoid business travel when possible and highlighting alternative options</li> </ul>	Medium-term
Fleet management	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Consider adopting a formal system that reduces mileage as your fleet grows</li> </ul>	Longer-term
Alternative fuels	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Undertake a review into the feasibility of adopting and using vehicles which run on alternative fuels/powertrains</li> </ul>	Longer-term

## 9. Products and Customers (51/100)

R&D is a notable strength and the business is developing innovative, sustainable products, for example those that use biodegradable, compostable materials. This is something to build on and communicate more prominently. A system is in place to collect and address complaints from its customers, but it lacks processes to collect and monitor customer satisfaction and feedback more broadly.

The business should continue to prioritise the commercial and financial feasibility of sustainable materials and alternatives for its products, systematically working with customers to understand how products are used and developing/influencing the market for sustainable alternatives. There is an opportunity to formalise these commitments through the allocation of budgets towards sustainable innovation and the systematic integration of sustainability factors as a key consideration in the R&D process, with the upskilling of teams where necessary. Proactively communicating your sustainability priorities and commitments to customers whilst ensuring that senior management and commercial teams can confidently discuss what you're doing, will help customers to see that you are 'walking the talk'.

Elsewhere, consider developing a formal system – an annual or post-transaction survey or similar – to capture and monitor customer satisfaction and feedback, in order that this can be used in the continual improvement of your products and services.



Focus area	Key recommendations	Priority
Lifecycle assessment	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Work with customers to understand how products are used and disposed of to develop plans and measures to maximise the recyclability and re-use potential of new and existing products</li> </ul>	Short-term
Sustainable design		Short-term
Customer information	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Publish your sustainability commitments through your website and ensure that senior management (and ultimately all employees) are encouraged and equipped to talk about this with your customers and suppliers, where appropriate</li> </ul>	Short-term
Customer feedback	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Consider developing a formal, proactive process e.g. surveying to capture customer feedback and monitoring satisfaction</li> <li>Use feedback in the pursuit of continuous improvement in products and services and communicate success internally and externally</li> </ul>	Short-term
Customer satisfaction		
Marketing & customer influence	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Have a clear plan to use established relationships and conversations with customers to create the market for the new, more sustainable products you are developing - by educating, influencing and exciting them about their benefits</li> </ul>	Short-term
Sustainable products/services	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Ensure that key sustainability factors are systematically embedded into the R&amp;D process, with appropriate training given to R&amp;D colleagues where required</li> <li>Allocate a dedicated budget to finance the R&amp;D of sustainable</li> </ul>	Medium-term

	products and materials, and to continue investigating their commercial feasibility	
Customer policies	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Develop a policy on the fair treatment of your customers, and advocate for this internally and externally</li> <li>• Review and update the policy annually to ensure it remains relevant to the business, evolving stakeholder expectations and reflects good practice</li> </ul>	Medium-term
Carbon footprinting	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Develop plans to better understand the carbon footprint of your products, as your portfolio and the size of your business grows</li> </ul>	Longer-term

## 10. Social Responsibility and Stakeholders (38/100)

The business supports some local charities and initiatives on an ad-hoc basis. This is a great ethos to have with opportunities to develop this into a more formal programme.

To facilitate this, consider bringing together a small working group of employees to develop and drive your approach to fundraising and local community support on an ongoing basis – including identifying, engaging and building relationships with local organisations and initiatives.

Developing policies around charitable giving and volunteering would help to formalise and communicate your commitments, including how staff can get involved.



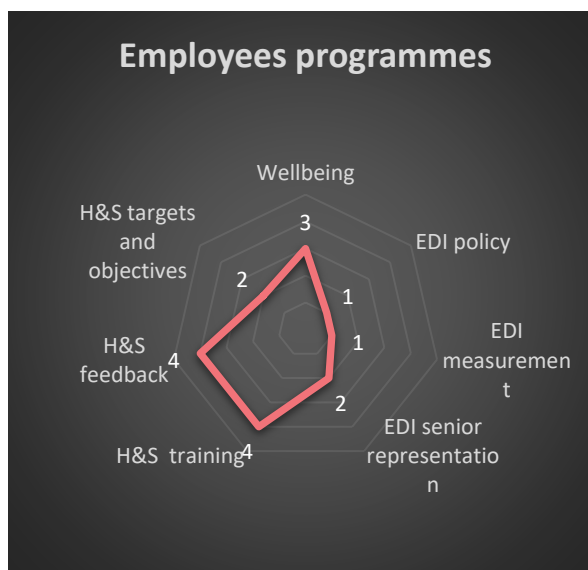
Focus area	Key recommendations	Priority
Reporting	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Publish your sustainability commitment and priorities on your website. Ensure senior management are encouraged and equipped to talk about these to customers, suppliers and employees</li> </ul>	Short-term
Charitable giving	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Consider bringing together a small working group to develop and drive your approach to fundraising and supporting local charities/organisations on an ongoing basis</li> </ul>	Short-term
Stakeholder engagement	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Investigate the feasibility of engaging with local organisations - through surveys, meetings, informal discussions or site visits - to capture their feedback</li> </ul>	Medium-term
Employee volunteering	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Establish and advocate a formal volunteering policy that outlines the boundaries and process through which employees can volunteer for charities and local organisations</li> <li>Consider organising company/team volunteering activities on an annual basis to engage employees and support local communities</li> </ul>	Medium-term
Sponsorship	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Identify and develop longer-term/ongoing relationships with specific local organisations and initiatives - including local schools as part of your community programme</li> </ul>	Medium-term
Local community engagement		Medium-term



## 11. Employee Programmes (56/100)

The business is committed to ensuring the safety of its workforce and has some further benefits in place that could contribute to wellbeing, such as gym membership contributions and a bike to work scheme. However, there is currently a lack of measurement and no proactive positioning or approach to areas such as wellbeing or equality and diversity.

Developing a wellbeing strategy that promotes and facilitates healthy living can be a key differentiator for a small business – reducing absence and increasing talent attraction, employee productivity and retention. Initiatives including employee health checks, ‘lunch and learn’ sessions and raising awareness of key wellbeing issues by leveraging established national days across the calendar year are relatively easy to implement and will help to reinforce your commitments to your workforce.



It is important for any business to commit to equal opportunities and recognise, respect and support individual differences. Proactively taking steps to understand and define what equality and diversity means for your business and why it's important is an important first step. This leads naturally into looking at how you can support, protect and promote this through your recruitment and employment practices.

Your approach to health and safety is robust but could be strengthened through ongoing dialogue and more formal monitoring (including the setting of objectives and targets), particularly encouraging and capturing concerns and near-misses to fully embed a safety culture in the business.

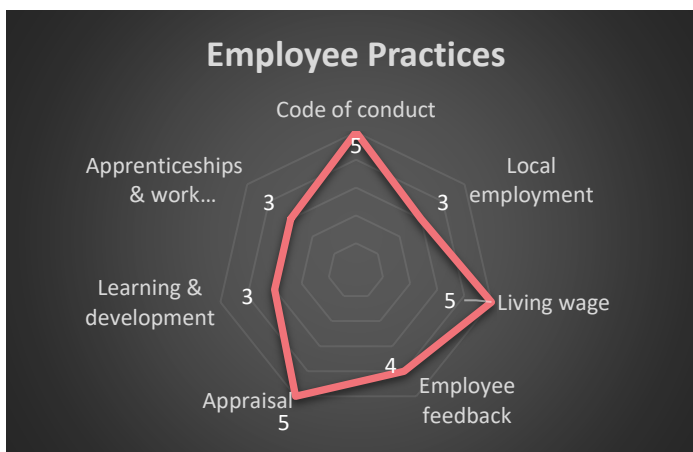
Focus area	Key recommendations	Priority
Wellbeing	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Develop a wellbeing strategy to engage staff and deliver key health messages that considers other initiatives such as employee health checks, promotion of healthy lifestyles and awareness/educational 'lunch and learn' sessions</li> <li>Leverage established national awareness-raising days to show support and raise awareness of wellbeing issues such as mental health</li> </ul>	Short-term
H&S feedback	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Continue to proactively encourage staff to report any safety concerns and near-misses</li> <li>Establish a formal system to record the concerns of staff and document/communicate the actions taken to address these</li> </ul>	Short-term
EDI policy	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Understand and define what equality and diversity means for the business and why it's important</li> <li>Commit to supporting, developing and promoting equality and diversity in employment practices and activities (this could be summarised/communicated through a formal policy)</li> <li>Ensure all levels of management from senior leaders to individual employees understand the company's commitment</li> </ul>	Medium-term
H&S training	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Train all employees annually to the highest H&amp;S standards</li> </ul>	Medium-term
H&S targets and objectives	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Use data captured and recorded to set realistic forward-looking objectives and targets that allow you to track and aim for continuous improvement in H&amp;S; communicate these to all staff and involve them in reviewing them regularly</li> </ul>	Medium-term

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EDI measurement	• Audit existing levels of diversity across different characteristics (e.g. age, gender, race, education/socioeconomic background) and at different levels of seniority to compare and spot areas for opportunity	Longer-term
EDI senior representation		Longer-term

## 12. Employee Practices (83/100)

The business has established a positive and respectful working culture, where employees are listened to and valued. Employees are encouraged to discuss concerns with their line managers during regular meetings and during annual performance reviews. There are commitments in place to offer opportunities to young people, through work experience, graduate and apprenticeship programmes.



Establishing a more formal system to capture, address and ultimately report

back on actions taken to address the suggestions and concerns of employees, would be a great way to build on your success. We also recommend that you formalise your commitment to employee training and development through; allocating and distributing annual training budgets, identifying training needs as part of formal appraisals and including these in the development of personal development plans for all employees.

Identifying and engaging proactively with local schools and colleges – alongside or as part of your approach to local community investment – to develop longer-term relationships, will help to build on the success of your existing youth employment programmes and facilitate opportunities to engage more students. Communicating your commitments and success both internally and externally will help maintain momentum and serve your reputation well.

Focus area	Key recommendations	Priority
Employee feedback	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Establish a formal system to record staff suggestions and comments and (where appropriate) document/communicate the actions taken to address these</li> </ul>	Short-term
Learning & development	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Develop a more formal commitment and approach to staff training and development that allocates and distributes annual training budgets, identifies training needs as part of formal appraisals and the development of personal development plans, offers opportunities to all employees</li> </ul>	Medium-term
Apprenticeships & work experience	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Identify and engage proactively with local schools and colleges to develop longer-term relationships and increase opportunities to engage more students through your existing schemes</li> <li>Set annual targets where possible</li> </ul>	Medium-term
Local employment	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Consider making a commitment to hiring locally where possible and develop local employment strategies, as the size of your business grows</li> </ul>	Longer-term

## Conclusion

Our audit highlighted that although Aquaspersions sustainability approach is at an early stage, for its size, there are some strong measures and initiatives in place. These are already enabling the business to understand and manage its environmental impacts and are having a positive impact on its workforce, customers, suppliers and local communities.

We strongly encourage the business to build on and leverage what is already in place, developing a more structured plan that formalises your commitments and actions in priority areas. Key initiatives should be clearly communicated both internally and externally, particularly through your new website, and with senior management as strong advocates.

Following our recommendations – starting with those highlighted as ‘short-term’ as they represent notable gaps and/or are more straightforward to implement – will enable Aquaspersions to systematically address gaps and improve its sustainability performance. This will in turn contribute positively to business performance, business resilience and enhance your reputation with your customers, employees and suppliers.



## Our services

### Strategy

At Simply Sustainable, we are at the forefront of modern, focused and ambitious corporate sustainability strategies. From stakeholder engagement to materiality assessments, to plastics and resources strategies, we are experts in supporting our clients developing a robust, strategic and practical approach to sustainability.

### Measurement

We work with companies to underpin sustainability through robust target setting and impact measurement. Through environmental and social impact measurement, we help our clients to set meaningful and ambitious targets and measure the return on investment of their sustainability initiatives.

### Integration

We help business integrate sustainable practices into everything they do. From setting up environmental management systems, to developing tailored employee engagement programmes and community investment projects, we are here to embed sustainable thinking into your operations.

### Communication

At Simply Sustainable, we support our clients to deliver credible communication that resonates with stakeholders. Through tailored communications strategies and practical and easy-to-read sustainability reports, we help you bringing your sustainability initiatives to life.