

**CONSOLIDATED INCOME STATEMENT**

for the year ended 31 December 2023

	Notes	2023 £m	2022 £m
<b>Revenue</b>	4	<b>11,797.1</b>	12,039.5
<b>Operating profit</b>	4	<b>789.1</b>	701.6
Finance income	6	60.4	22.3
Finance expense	6	(150.9)	(90.2)
Disposal of business	10	–	0.9
<b>Profit before income tax</b>		<b>698.6</b>	634.6
Income tax	7	(172.4)	(160.2)
<b>Profit for the year attributable to the Company's equity holders</b>		<b>526.2</b>	474.4
<b>Earnings per share attributable to the Company's equity holders</b>			
Basic	8	<b>157.1p</b>	141.7p
Diluted	8	<b>156.0p</b>	140.7p

**Alternative performance measures†**

<b>Operating profit</b>	4	<b>789.1</b>	701.6
Adjusted for:			
Customer relationships, brands and technology amortisation	4	135.6	128.4
Acquisition related items	4	19.5	55.9
<b>Adjusted operating profit</b>		<b>944.2</b>	885.9
Finance income	6	60.4	22.3
Finance expense	6	(150.9)	(90.2)
<b>Adjusted profit before income tax</b>		<b>853.7</b>	818.0
Tax on adjusted profit	7	(213.4)	(201.2)
<b>Adjusted profit for the year</b>		<b>640.3</b>	616.8
<b>Adjusted earnings per share</b>	8	<b>191.1p</b>	184.3p

† See Note 3 on page 160 for further details of the alternative performance measures.

The Accounting policies and other Notes on pages 154 to 188 form part of these consolidated financial statements.

**CONSOLIDATED STATEMENT OF COMPREHENSIVE INCOME**

for the year ended 31 December 2023

	Notes	2023 £m	2022 £m
<b>Profit for the year</b>		<b>526.2</b>	474.4
<b>Other comprehensive income/(expense)</b>			
Items that will not be reclassified to profit or loss:			
Actuarial gain on defined benefit pension schemes	25	2.9	6.9
(Loss)/gain recognised in cash flow hedge reserve		(2.3)	10.3
Tax on items that will not be reclassified to profit or loss	7	0.5	(4.0)
<b>Total items that will not be reclassified to profit or loss</b>		<b>1.1</b>	13.2
Items that may be reclassified subsequently to profit or loss:			
Foreign currency translation differences on foreign operations		(126.9)	232.9
Gain/(loss) taken to equity as a result of effective net investment hedges		31.4	(38.2)
Tax on items that may be reclassified to profit or loss	7	(0.5)	0.3
<b>Total items that may be reclassified subsequently to profit or loss</b>		<b>(96.0)</b>	195.0
<b>Other comprehensive (expense)/income for the year</b>		<b>(94.9)</b>	208.2
<b>Total comprehensive income attributable to the Company's equity holders</b>		<b>431.3</b>	682.6

**CONSOLIDATED BALANCE SHEET**

at 31 December 2023

	Notes	2023 £m	2022 £m
<b>Assets</b>			
Property, plant and equipment	11	159.4	137.2
Right-of-use assets	12	616.3	529.6
Intangible assets	13	3,242.1	3,093.9
Defined benefit pension assets	25	69.0	60.5
Derivative financial assets		0.1	–
Deferred tax assets	20	14.2	4.0
<b>Total non-current assets</b>		<b>4,101.1</b>	3,825.2
Inventories	15	1,621.1	1,748.6
Trade and other receivables	16	1,578.5	1,557.4
Income tax receivable		8.7	12.6
Derivative financial assets		11.7	19.0
Cash and cash equivalents	28	1,426.1	1,504.0
<b>Total current assets</b>		<b>4,646.1</b>	4,841.6
<b>Total assets</b>		<b>8,747.2</b>	8,666.8

	Notes	2023 £m	2022 £m
<b>Equity</b>			
Share capital	21	108.6	108.5
Share premium		205.2	199.4
Translation reserve		(170.2)	(74.2)
Other reserves		16.7	17.7
Retained earnings		2,806.0	2,469.5
<b>Total equity attributable to the Company's equity holders</b>		<b>2,966.3</b>	2,720.9
<b>Liabilities</b>			
Interest bearing loans and borrowings	28	1,417.1	1,574.0
Defined benefit pension liabilities	25	19.6	20.6
Other payables	17	176.1	117.2
Income tax payable		0.5	1.1
Provisions	19	75.8	50.5
Lease liabilities	27	512.4	424.0
Derivative financial liabilities		78.7	100.5
Deferred tax liabilities	20	190.1	192.7
<b>Total non-current liabilities</b>		<b>2,470.3</b>	2,480.6
Bank overdrafts	28	874.2	825.9
Interest bearing loans and borrowings	28	130.0	161.0
Trade and other payables	17	2,071.6	2,249.4
Income tax payable		47.0	40.6
Provisions	19	10.0	24.2
Lease liabilities	27	152.1	145.9
Derivative financial liabilities		25.7	18.3
<b>Total current liabilities</b>		<b>3,310.6</b>	3,465.3
<b>Total liabilities</b>		<b>5,780.9</b>	5,945.9
<b>Total equity and liabilities</b>		<b>8,747.2</b>	8,666.8

Approved by the Board of directors of Bunzl plc (Company registration number 358948) on 26 February 2024 and signed on its behalf by Frank van Zanten, Chief Executive Officer and Richard Howes, Chief Financial Officer.

**CONSOLIDATED STATEMENT OF CHANGES IN EQUITY**

for the year ended 31 December 2023

	Share capital £m	Share premium £m	Translation reserve £m	Other reserves			Retained earnings		Total equity £m
				Merger £m	Capital redemption £m	Cash flow hedge £m	Own shares £m	Earnings £m	
<b>At 1 January 2023</b>	<b>108.5</b>	<b>199.4</b>	<b>(74.2)</b>	<b>2.5</b>	<b>16.1</b>	<b>(0.9)</b>	<b>(63.4)</b>	<b>2,532.9</b>	<b>2,720.9</b>
<b>Profit for the year</b>								<b>526.2</b>	<b>526.2</b>
Actuarial gain on defined benefit pension schemes								<b>2.9</b>	<b>2.9</b>
Foreign currency translation differences on foreign operations			<b>(126.9)</b>						<b>(126.9)</b>
Gain taken to equity as a result of effective net investment hedges			<b>31.4</b>						<b>31.4</b>
Loss recognised in cash flow hedge reserve						<b>(2.3)</b>			<b>(2.3)</b>
Income tax charge on other comprehensive expense			<b>(0.5)</b>			<b>0.6</b>		<b>(0.1)</b>	<b>-</b>
<b>Total comprehensive income</b>			<b>(96.0)</b>			<b>(1.7)</b>		<b>529.0</b>	<b>431.3</b>
2022 interim dividend								<b>(57.9)</b>	<b>(57.9)</b>
2022 final dividend								<b>(151.8)</b>	<b>(151.8)</b>
Movement from cash flow hedge reserve to inventory (net of tax)						<b>0.7</b>			<b>0.7</b>
Hyperinflation accounting adjustments <sup>1</sup>								<b>21.6</b>	<b>21.6</b>
Issue of share capital	<b>0.1</b>	<b>5.8</b>							<b>5.9</b>
Employee trust shares							<b>(25.2)</b>		<b>(25.2)</b>
Movement on own share reserves							<b>17.7</b>	<b>(17.7)</b>	<b>-</b>
Share based payments (net of tax)								<b>20.8</b>	<b>20.8</b>
<b>At 31 December 2023</b>	<b>108.6</b>	<b>205.2</b>	<b>(170.2)</b>	<b>2.5</b>	<b>16.1</b>	<b>(1.9)</b>	<b>(70.9)</b>	<b>2,876.9</b>	<b>2,966.3</b>
At 31 December 2021	108.4	194.2	(269.2)	2.5	16.1	0.4	(52.9)	2,204.4	2,203.9
Adjustment to 2021 closing equity in respect of hyperinflation in Turkey <sup>1</sup>								12.6	12.6
Restated equity at 1 January 2022	108.4	194.2	(269.2)	2.5	16.1	0.4	(52.9)	2,217.0	2,216.5
Profit for the year								474.4	474.4
Actuarial gain on defined benefit pension schemes								6.9	6.9
Foreign currency translation differences on foreign operations			232.9						232.9
Loss taken to equity as a result of effective net investment hedges			(38.2)						(38.2)
Gain recognised in cash flow hedge reserve						10.3			10.3
Income tax charge on other comprehensive income			0.3			(2.6)		(1.4)	(3.7)
Total comprehensive income			195.0			7.7		479.9	682.6
2021 interim dividend								(54.3)	(54.3)
2021 final dividend								(136.2)	(136.2)
Movement from cash flow hedge reserve to inventory (net of tax)						(9.0)			(9.0)
Hyperinflation accounting adjustments <sup>1</sup>								34.9	34.9
Issue of share capital	0.1	5.2							5.3
Employee trust shares							(34.2)		(34.2)
Movement on own share reserves							23.7	(23.7)	-
Share based payments (net of tax)								15.3	15.3
At 31 December 2022	108.5	199.4	(74.2)	2.5	16.1	(0.9)	(63.4)	2,532.9	2,720.9

1. During 2022, IAS 29 'Financial Reporting in Hyperinflationary Economies' became applicable for entities with a functional currency of the Turkish Lira. Following this, the results of the Group's businesses in Turkey, along with its business in Argentina which has been subject to hyperinflation accounting since 2018, have been adjusted for the effects of inflation in accordance with IAS 29. See Note 1 for further details.

**CONSOLIDATED CASH FLOW STATEMENT**

for the year ended 31 December 2023

	Notes	2023 £m	2022 £m
<b>Cash flow from operating activities</b>			
Profit before income tax		698.6	634.6
Adjusted for:			
net finance expense	6	90.5	67.9
customer relationships, brands and technology amortisation	13	135.6	128.4
acquisition related items	4	19.5	55.9
disposal of business	10	–	(0.9)
Adjusted operating profit		944.2	885.9
Adjustments:			
depreciation and software amortisation	30	207.2	189.5
other non-cash items	30	6.5	15.9
working capital movement	30	(28.4)	54.5
<b>Cash generated from operations before acquisition related items</b>		1,129.5	1,145.8
Cash outflow from acquisition related items	9	(36.9)	(20.6)
Income tax paid		(188.6)	(173.6)
<b>Cash inflow from operating activities</b>		904.0	951.6
<b>Cash flow from investing activities</b>			
Interest received		54.4	16.2
Purchase of property, plant and equipment and software	11,13	(58.3)	(46.7)
Sale of property, plant and equipment		2.1	1.0
Purchase of businesses	9	(337.7)	(243.6)
Disposal of business	10	–	49.9
<b>Cash outflow from investing activities</b>		(339.5)	(223.2)
<b>Cash flow from financing activities</b>			
Interest paid excluding interest on lease liabilities		(107.6)	(61.9)
Dividends paid	22	(209.7)	(190.5)
Increase in borrowings		–	346.4
Repayment of borrowings		(159.5)	(131.8)
Receipts/(payments) on settlement of foreign exchange contracts		21.6	(86.2)
Payment of lease liabilities – principal	27	(159.4)	(153.1)
Payment of lease liabilities – interest	27	(28.6)	(22.0)
Proceeds from issue of ordinary shares to settle share options		5.9	5.3
Proceeds from exercise of market purchase share options		46.8	36.8
Purchase of employee trust shares		(76.4)	(74.0)
<b>Cash outflow from financing activities</b>		(666.9)	(331.0)
<b>(Decrease)/increase in cash, cash equivalents and overdrafts</b>		(102.4)	397.4

	Notes	2023 £m	2022 £m
Cash, cash equivalents and overdrafts at start of year		678.1	225.3
(Decrease)/increase in cash, cash equivalents and overdrafts		(102.4)	397.4
Currency translation		(23.8)	55.4
<b>Cash, cash equivalents and overdrafts at end of year</b>	28	551.9	678.1

**Alternative performance measures<sup>†</sup>**

<b>Cash generated from operations before acquisition related items</b>		1,129.5	1,145.8
Purchase of property, plant and equipment and software		(58.3)	(46.7)
Sale of property, plant and equipment		2.1	1.0
Payment of lease liabilities	27	(188.0)	(175.1)
<b>Operating cash flow</b>		885.3	925.0
<b>Adjusted operating profit</b>		944.2	885.9
Add back depreciation of right-of-use assets	12	166.1	151.1
Deduct payment of lease liabilities	27	(188.0)	(175.1)
<b>Lease adjusted operating profit</b>		922.3	861.9
<b>Cash conversion (operating cash flow as a percentage of lease adjusted operating profit)</b>		96%	107%
<b>Operating cash flow</b>		885.3	925.0
Net interest paid excluding interest on lease liabilities		(53.2)	(45.7)
Income tax paid		(188.6)	(173.6)
<b>Free cash flow</b>		643.5	705.7

<sup>†</sup> See Note 3 on page 160 for further details of the alternative performance measures.

## NOTES

### 1 Basis of preparation

Bunzl plc (the 'Company') is a public company, which is limited by shares and is listed on the London Stock Exchange. The Company is incorporated and domiciled in the United Kingdom and is registered in England and Wales.

#### a. Basis of accounting

The consolidated financial statements for the year ended 31 December 2023 have been approved by the Board of directors of Bunzl plc. They are prepared in accordance with UK-adopted International Accounting Standards ('IASs') in conformity with the requirements of the Companies Act 2006 and the applicable legal requirements of the Companies Act 2006. The consolidated financial statements also comply fully with International Financial Reporting Standards ('IFRSs') as issued by the International Accounting Standards Board ('IASB'). They are prepared under the historical cost convention with the exception of certain items which are measured at fair value as described in the accounting policies below.

#### (i) Going concern

The directors, having reassessed the principal risks and uncertainties, consider it appropriate to adopt the going concern basis of accounting in the preparation of the financial statements.

In reaching this conclusion, the directors noted the Group's strong operating cash flow performance in the year and the substantial funding available to the Group as described in the Financial review. The directors also considered a range of different forecast scenarios for the 18 month period from the date of these financial statements to the end of June 2025 starting with a base case projection derived from the Group's 2024 Budget excluding any non-committed acquisition spend or changes in funding. The resilience of the Group to a range of severe but plausible downside scenarios was factored into the directors' considerations through two levels of stress testing against the base case projection.

These severe but plausible downside scenarios included the following assumptions:

- A 15% reduction in adjusted operating profit from the potential for adverse impacts from the crystallisation of the principal strategic and operational risks to the Group's organic growth and a 10% increase in working capital
- A 25% reduction in adjusted operating profit from a more severe impact from the crystallisation of the principal strategic and operational risks to the Group's organic growth and a 20% increase in working capital

In addition, the Group has carried out reverse stress tests against the base case to determine the level of performance that would result in a breach of financial covenants. In order for a breach of covenants to occur during the 18 month period to the end of June 2025 the Group would need to experience a reduction in EBITDA of over 65% compared to the base case.

In the first two stress tests it was found that the Group was resilient and in particular it remained in compliance with the relevant financial covenants. The conditions required to create the reverse stress test scenario were so severe that they were considered to be implausible. The directors are therefore satisfied that the Group's forecasts, which take into account reasonably possible changes in trading performance, show that there are no material uncertainties over going concern, including no anticipated breach of covenants, and therefore the going concern basis of preparation continues to be appropriate.

#### (ii) Impact of Hyperinflation on the financial statements at 31 December 2023

The Group's financial statements include the results and financial position of its Turkish and Argentinian operations restated to the measuring unit current at the end of the year, with hyperinflationary gains and losses in respect of monetary items being reported in finance expense. Comparative amounts presented in the financial statements have not been restated. The inflation rates used by the Group are the official rates published by the Turkish Statistical Institute and the Argentine Federation of Professional Councils of Economic Sciences. The movement in the publicly available official price index for the year ended 31 December 2023 was an increase of 65% (2022: increase of 64%) in Turkey and an increase of 210% (2022: increase of 95%) in Argentina.

IAS 29 requires that the income statement is adjusted for inflation in the year and translated at the year end foreign exchange rates and that non-monetary assets and liabilities on the balance sheet are inflated to reflect the change in purchasing power caused by inflation from the date of initial recognition. For the year ended 31 December 2023, this resulted in an increase in goodwill of £8.4m (2022: £16.4m) and a net increase in other intangibles of £0.4m (2022: £12.3m before impairment charges). The impacts on other non-monetary assets and liabilities were immaterial. The impact to retained earnings during the year was a gain of £21.6m (2022: gain of £47.5m). The total impact to the Consolidated income statement during the year was a charge of £11.0m (2022: £21.2m) to profit after tax from hyperinflation accounting adjustments, comprising a £9.5m adverse impact (2022: £18.7m adverse impact) on adjusted profit before tax, increased customer relationships amortisation of £0.2m (2022: £1.8m) and an increased tax charge of £1.3m (2022: £0.7m).

When applying IAS 29 on an ongoing basis, comparatives in a stable currency are not restated with the translation effect presented within other comprehensive income during the year, and the effect of inflating opening balances to the measuring unit current at the end of the reporting period presented as a change in equity.

#### b. Newly adopted accounting policies

There are no new standards or amendments to existing standards that are effective that have had a material impact on the Group, nor does the Group anticipate any new or revised standards and interpretations that are effective from 1 January 2024 and beyond to have a material impact on its consolidated results or financial position.

**NOTES** continued**2 Accounting policies**

The accounting policies set out below have, unless otherwise stated, been applied consistently to all years presented in the consolidated financial statements.

**a. Basis of consolidation****(i) Subsidiaries**

Subsidiaries are entities controlled by the Group. Control exists when the Group is either exposed or has rights to variable returns from its involvement with the entity and has the ability to affect those returns through its power over the entity. Subsidiaries are included in the consolidated financial statements from the date that control commences until the date that control ceases. A list of all of the Company's subsidiary undertakings is included in the Related undertakings note in the Shareholder information section on pages 202 to 207 and is subject to audit. The results of all of the subsidiary undertakings are included in full in these consolidated financial statements.

The following UK subsidiaries are exempt from the requirements under the Companies Act 2006 relating to the audit of individual financial statements by virtue of section 479A of the Act.

Company Name	Registered number
Bunzl American Holdings (No. 1) Limited	02865710
Bunzl American Holdings (No. 2) Limited	05286676
Bunzl Holding GTL Limited	0685352
Bunzl Holding LCE Limited	0970892
Bunzl Mexico Holdings 1 Limited	13558260
Bunzl Mexico Holdings 2 Limited	13558193
Bunzl Overseas Holdings Limited	02865701
Bunzl Overseas Holdings (No. 2) Limited	02090880
Bunzl Overseas Holdings (No. 3) Limited	08224950
Henares Limited	06387342
Yorse No. 1 Limited	04373660
Yorse No. 3 Limited	02317609
Selectuser Limited	03829908

**(ii) Business combinations**

The acquisition method of accounting is used to account for the acquisition of subsidiaries. Identifiable assets acquired and liabilities and contingent liabilities assumed in a business combination are measured initially at fair value at the acquisition date. The consideration paid or payable in respect of acquisitions comprises amounts paid on completion and deferred consideration, excluding payments which are contingent on the continued employment of former owners of businesses acquired. The excess of the consideration over the fair value of the identifiable net assets acquired is recorded as goodwill. Payments that are contingent on future employment and transaction costs and expenses such as professional fees are charged to the income statement.

When less than 100% of the issued share capital of a subsidiary is acquired and the acquisition includes an option to purchase the remaining share capital of the subsidiary, the anticipated acquisition method is applied, where judged appropriate to do so based on the risks and rewards associated with the option to purchase, meaning that no non-controlling interest is recognised. A liability is carried on the balance sheet equal to the fair value of the option and this is revised to fair value at each reporting date with differences being recorded in acquisition related items in the income statement.

**(iii) Disposal of businesses**

Where a subsidiary undertaking is sold, the profit or loss on disposal is calculated as the difference between the aggregate of the fair value of the consideration received and the carrying amount of the assets and liabilities of the subsidiary on the date of disposal less any transaction costs relating to the disposal. On the disposal of a subsidiary with assets and liabilities denominated in foreign currency, the cumulative translation difference associated with that subsidiary in the translation reserve is credited or debited to the profit or loss on disposal recognised in the income statement. Cash received on disposal of businesses is shown within investing activities in the Consolidated cash flow statement, net of cash, cash equivalents and overdrafts disposed of and transaction costs paid.

**(iv) Transactions eliminated on consolidation**

Intragroup balances and any unrealised gains and losses or income and expenses arising from intragroup transactions are eliminated in preparing the consolidated financial statements.

**b. Foreign currency**

Transactions in foreign currencies are recorded at the rate of exchange at the date of the transaction. Monetary assets and liabilities denominated in foreign currencies at the balance sheet date are translated at the exchange rate prevailing at that date. Foreign exchange differences arising on translation are recognised in the income statement, unless they qualify for cash flow or net investment hedge accounting treatment, in which case the effective portion is recognised directly in other comprehensive income.

Assets and liabilities of foreign operations are translated at the exchange rate prevailing at the balance sheet date. Income and expenses of foreign operations are translated at average exchange rates with the exception of subsidiaries in hyperinflationary economies that are translated at the closing rate at the end of the year. All resulting exchange differences, including exchange differences arising from the translation of borrowings and other financial instruments designated as hedges of such balances, are recognised directly in other comprehensive income and accumulated in the translation reserve. Differences that have arisen since 1 January 2004, the date of transition to IFRS, are presented in this separate component of equity.

**c. Revenue**

The Group is principally engaged in the delivery of goods to customers representing a single performance obligation which is satisfied upon delivery of the relevant goods. Revenue related to the provision of services is recognised when the service is provided, which for the majority of the Group's service revenue represents a single performance obligation. Revenue is not recognised if there is significant uncertainty regarding recovery of the consideration due.

Revenue is valued at invoiced amounts, excluding sales taxes and including estimates for variable consideration where relevant, such as returns and discounts, for which a liability is recognised as required. Returns and early settlement discount liabilities are based on experience over an appropriate period whereas volume discount liabilities are based on agreements with customers and expected volumes.

**d. Cost of goods sold**

Cost of goods sold consists of the cost of the inventories sold or disposed of in the period where the cost of inventories is net of supplier rebate income related to those inventories.

**e. Supplier rebates**

The Group has various rebate arrangements with a number of suppliers. Some of these arrangements are based on the volume of products purchased and others are based on the volume of products sold. Supplier rebate income is recognised in cost of goods sold concurrent with the sale of the inventories to which it relates and is calculated by reference to the expected consideration receivable from each rebate arrangement. Substantially all supplier rebate income is unconditional and non-judgemental. Supplier

**NOTES** continued**2 Accounting policies** continued

rebate income is not recognised if there is significant uncertainty regarding recovery of the amount due. Supplier rebate income accrued but not yet received is included in other receivables.

**f. Share based payments**

The Group operates a number of equity settled share based payment compensation plans. Details of these plans are outlined in Note 21 and the Directors' remuneration report. The total expected expense is based on the fair value of options and other share based incentives on the grant date, calculated using a valuation model, and is spread over the expected vesting period with a corresponding credit to equity.

**g. Leases**

The Group recognises a right-of-use asset and a lease liability at the lease commencement date. The right-of-use asset is initially measured at cost, comprising the initial amount of the lease liability plus any initial direct costs incurred and any lease payments made at or before the lease commencement date, less any lease incentives received. The right-of-use asset is subsequently depreciated using the straight line method from the commencement date to the earlier of the end of the useful life of the asset or the end of the lease term. The lease liability is initially measured at the present value of the lease payments that are not paid at the commencement date, discounted using the interest rate implicit in the lease. If that rate cannot readily be determined, as is the case in the vast majority of the leasing activities of the Group, the lessee's incremental borrowing rate is used, being the rate that the lessee would have to pay to borrow the funds necessary to obtain an asset in a similar economic environment with similar terms and conditions. The lease liability is subsequently measured at amortised cost using the effective interest method. It is remeasured when there is a change in future lease payments arising from a change in an index/rate or a change in the Group's assessment of whether it will exercise an extension or termination option. When the lease liability is remeasured, a corresponding adjustment is made to the right-of-use asset.

Judgements are involved in determining the lease term, particularly because termination options are included in a number of property leases across the Group to facilitate operational flexibility. The majority of termination options held are exercisable only by the Group and not by the respective lessor. In determining the lease term, management considers all facts and circumstances that create an economic incentive to exercise a termination option. Periods after the date of a termination option are only included in the lease term if it is reasonably certain that the lease will not be terminated. The assessment of the lease term is reviewed if a significant event or a significant change in circumstances occurs that is within the control of the Group.

Payments associated with short term leases and leases of low value assets are recognised on a straight line basis as an expense in profit or loss. Short term leases are leases with a lease term of 12 months or less. Low value assets are assets with a value of less than £5,000 when new, typically small items of IT equipment, office equipment and office furniture.

**h. Income tax**

Income tax in the income statement comprises current and deferred tax. Income tax is recognised in the income statement except to the extent that it relates to items recognised directly in equity or other comprehensive income.

Current tax is the expected tax payable or recoverable on the taxable income or loss for the year using tax rates enacted or substantively enacted at the balance sheet date and any adjustments in respect of prior years. Current tax payable is recognised when it is probable that the Group will be required to settle the obligation. The Group's policy for accounting for current tax payable or receivable where it is uncertain is described in more detail in Note 2y – Sources of estimation uncertainty – Taxation.

Deferred tax is provided using the balance sheet liability method providing for temporary differences arising between tax bases and carrying amounts in the consolidated financial statements. Deferred tax is measured at the tax rates that are expected to be applied to temporary differences when they reverse, based on the laws that have been enacted or substantively enacted at the balance sheet date.

Deferred tax is not recognised for the following temporary differences: goodwill not deductible for tax purposes, the initial recognition of assets and liabilities that affect neither accounting nor taxable profits and differences relating to investments in subsidiaries to the extent that they will probably not reverse in the foreseeable future and where the Company controls the timing of the reversal. A deferred tax asset is recognised only to the extent that it is probable that future taxable profit will be available against which the temporary difference can be utilised.

**i. Property, plant and equipment**

Property, plant and equipment is stated at historical cost less accumulated depreciation and any impairment losses. The carrying values of property, plant and equipment are periodically reviewed for impairment when events or changes in circumstances indicate that the carrying values may not be recoverable. Where parts of an item of property, plant and equipment have different useful lives, they are accounted for as separate items.

**j. Depreciation**

Depreciation is charged to the income statement on a straight line basis to write off cost less estimated residual value over the assets' estimated remaining useful lives. The estimated useful lives are as follows:

Buildings	50 years (or depreciated over life of lease if shorter than 50 years)
Plant and machinery	3 to 12 years
Fixtures, fittings and equipment	3 to 12 years
Freehold land	Not depreciated

Assets' residual values, useful lives and depreciation methods are reviewed, and adjusted if appropriate, at each balance sheet date.

**k. Intangible assets****(i) Goodwill**

Acquisitions are accounted for using the acquisition method. As permitted by IFRS 1 'First-time Adoption of International Financial Reporting Standards', the Group chose to apply IFRS 3 'Business Combinations' from 1 January 2004 and elected not to restate previous business combinations. For acquisitions made before 1 January 2004, goodwill represents the amount previously recorded under UK Generally Accepted Accounting Practice ('UK GAAP'). For acquisitions that occurred between 1 January 2004 and 31 December 2009, goodwill represents the cost of the business combination in excess of the fair value of the identifiable assets, liabilities and contingent liabilities acquired. For acquisitions that have occurred on or after 1 January 2010, goodwill represents the cost of the business combination (excluding payments contingent on future employment and transaction costs and expenses) in excess of the fair value of the identifiable assets, liabilities and contingent liabilities acquired. Goodwill is allocated to cash generating units ('CGUs') and is tested annually for impairment. Negative goodwill arising on acquisition is recognised immediately in the income statement.

**(ii) Customer relationships, brands and technology**

Customer relationships, brands and technology intangible assets acquired in a business combination are recognised on acquisition and recorded at fair value. Subsequent to initial recognition, customer relationships, brands and technology intangible assets are stated at cost less accumulated amortisation and any impairment losses. Amortisation is charged to the income statement on a straight line basis over the estimated useful economic lives which range from 3 to 19 years.

**NOTES** continued**2 Accounting policies** continued**(iii) Software**

Software is stated at historical cost less accumulated amortisation and any impairment losses. The carrying values of software are periodically reviewed for impairment when events or changes in circumstances indicate that the carrying values may not be recoverable. Amortisation is charged to the income statement on a straight line basis over the estimated useful economic lives which range from 3 to 10 years.

**l. Impairment**

The carrying amounts of the Group's assets are reviewed annually to determine if there is any indication of impairment. If any such indication exists, the assets' recoverable amounts are estimated. The recoverable amounts of assets carried at amortised cost are calculated as the present value of estimated future cash flows, discounted at appropriate pre-tax discount rates. The recoverable amounts of other assets are the greater of their fair value less the costs of disposal and the value in use. In assessing the value in use, the estimated future cash flows are discounted to their present values using appropriate pre-tax discount rates. Impairment losses are recognised when the carrying amount of an asset or CGU exceeds its recoverable amount, with impairment losses being recognised in the income statement.

**m. Inventories**

Inventories are valued at the lower of cost and net realisable value. The cost of inventories is based on the first-in first-out principle and comprises the purchase price, net of any related supplier volume rebates, plus import duties and other taxes, inbound freight and haulage costs and other related costs incurred to bring the product to its present location and condition. Net realisable value is the estimated selling price in the ordinary course of business, less the estimated cost of completion and estimated cost necessary to make the sale. Provision is made for obsolete, slow moving or defective items and market price movements where appropriate.

**n. Trade and other receivables**

Trade and other receivables are initially measured at fair value, which for trade receivables is equal to the consideration expected to be received from the satisfaction of performance obligations, plus any directly attributable transaction costs. Subsequent to initial recognition these assets are measured at amortised cost less any provision for impairment losses including expected credit losses. In accordance with IFRS 9 'Financial Instruments' the Group applies the simplified approach to measuring expected credit losses which uses a lifetime expected loss allowance for all trade receivables. To measure the expected credit losses, trade receivables have been grouped based on shared credit risk characteristics such as the ageing of the debt and the credit risk of the customers. An historical credit loss rate is then calculated for each group and adjusted to reflect expectations about future credit losses. Inputs and assumptions used for expected credit loss provisions are based on local operating company historical experience and expectations about future credit losses. The Group does not have any significant contract assets.

**o. Trade and other payables**

Trade and other payables are initially measured at fair value including any directly attributable transaction costs. Subsequent to initial recognition these liabilities are measured at amortised cost. The Group has contract liabilities in the form of deferred income which arises from consideration received in advance of the satisfaction of performance obligations.

**p. Financial instruments****Classification and measurement**

Under IFRS 9, financial instruments are initially measured at fair value with subsequent measurement depending upon the classification of the instrument. IFRS 13 'Fair Value Measurement' defines fair value as the price that would be received to sell an asset or paid to transfer a liability in an orderly transaction between market participants at the measurement date.

All non-derivative financial assets and liabilities are subsequently held at amortised cost unless they are in a fair value hedge relationship, with the exception of money market funds which are held at fair value. Financial assets and liabilities held in a fair value hedge relationship are held at amortised cost with a fair value adjustment with subsequent changes in this fair value adjustment recorded in the income statement.

**Derivatives and hedging activities**

Derivatives are initially recognised at fair value on the date a derivative contract is entered into and are subsequently remeasured to their fair value at the end of each reporting period. The accounting for subsequent changes in fair value depends on whether the derivative is designated as a hedging instrument and, if so, the nature of the item being hedged. The Group designates certain derivatives as either:

- a hedge of the fair value of recognised assets or liabilities or a firm commitment ('fair value hedge');
- a hedge of a particular risk associated with the cash flows of recognised assets and liabilities and highly probable forecast transactions ('cash flow hedge'); or
- a hedge of a net investment in a foreign operation ('net investment hedge').

The Group documents its risk management objectives and strategy for undertaking its hedge transactions. At inception of hedge relationships, the Group documents the economic relationship between the hedging instruments and the hedged items.

The fair value of a hedging derivative is classified as a non-current asset or liability when the remaining maturity of the hedged item is more than 12 months and as a current asset or liability when the remaining maturity of the hedged item is 12 months or less.

**(i) Fair value hedge**

Where a derivative instrument is designated and qualifies as a hedge of a recognised asset or liability, all changes in the fair value of the derivative are recognised immediately in the income statement within finance expense. The carrying value of the hedged item is adjusted by the change in fair value that is attributable to the risk being hedged with changes recognised in the income statement, also within finance expense. The gain or loss relating to any ineffective portion of the hedging arrangement is recognised immediately in the income statement.

If the hedge relationship is de-designated, then from the point of de-designation there is no further fair valuing of the hedged item. Any previous adjustment to the carrying amount of the hedged item is amortised over the remaining maturity of the hedged item.

**(ii) Cash flow hedge**

The effective portion of changes in the fair value of derivatives that are designated and qualify as cash flow hedges is recognised in the cash flow hedge reserve within equity. The gain or loss relating to any ineffective portion is recognised immediately in the income statement.

Where a derivative instrument is designated and qualifies as a hedge of a forecast transaction, only the change in fair value of the forward contract related to the spot component is designated as the hedging instrument. Gains or losses relating to the effective portion of the change in the spot component of the forward contract are initially recognised in the cash flow hedge reserve within equity. The change in the forward element of the contract that relates to the hedged item is recognised in the income statement.

Gains or losses accumulated in equity are reclassified to the income statement when the hedged item affects profit or loss. When the hedged item results in the recognition of a non-financial asset, the gains or losses accumulated in equity are transferred from equity and included in the carrying amount of the non-financial asset, with the deferred gains or losses ultimately being recognised in the income statement as the non-financial asset affects profit or loss. This transfer is not a reclassification adjustment.



**NOTES** continued**2 Accounting policies** continued**p. Financial instruments** continued

When a hedging instrument expires, any cumulative deferred gain/loss in equity relating to that instrument remains in equity until the forecast transaction occurs at which point it is reclassified to the income statement. When the forecast transaction is no longer expected to occur, the cumulative deferred gain/loss recorded in equity is immediately reclassified to the income statement.

**(iii) Net investment hedge**

Foreign currency differences arising on the retranslation of a financial liability designated as a hedge of a net investment in foreign operations are recognised directly in equity to the extent the hedge is effective and are accumulated in a separate reserve within equity. To the extent that the hedge is ineffective such differences are recognised in the income statement.

**(iv) Other derivative instruments**

Certain derivative instruments do not qualify for hedge accounting. Changes in the fair value of any derivative instrument that does not qualify for hedge accounting are recognised immediately in the income statement.

**q. Cash, cash equivalents and overdrafts**

Cash and cash equivalents, as reported in the balance sheet, comprises cash at bank and in hand and money market funds. Cash at bank and in hand includes cash balances and short term deposits with maturities of three months or less from the date the deposit is made.

Cash, cash equivalents and overdrafts, as reported in the cash flow statement, comprises cash at bank and in hand, money market funds and bank overdrafts.

**r. Net debt**

Net debt is defined as interest bearing loans and borrowings adjusted for the fair value of interest rate swaps on fixed interest rate borrowings and other derivatives managing the interest rate risk and currency profile less cash, cash equivalents and overdrafts.

**s. Provisions**

A provision is recognised in the balance sheet when the Group has a present legal or constructive obligation as a result of a past event that can be reliably measured and it is probable that an outflow of economic benefits will be required to settle the obligation. If the effect is material, provisions are determined by discounting the expected future cash flows at a pre-tax rate that reflects risks specific to the liability.

**t. Investment in own shares**

The cost of shares held either directly (treasury shares) or indirectly (employee benefit trust shares) is deducted from equity. Repurchased shares are classified as treasury shares and are presented as a deduction from total equity. When treasury shares are subsequently sold or reissued, the amount received is recognised as an increase in equity and the resulting surplus or deficit on the transaction is recognised in retained earnings.

At each reporting date the Group remeasures the value of the shares held in the employee benefit trust to present them in the own shares reserve at the market value of those shares at the reporting date. This is done through a reclassification from retained earnings to the own shares reserve. This movement has no effect on the actual numbers of shares held by the employee benefit trust.

**u. Retirement benefits****(i) Defined contribution pension schemes**

A defined contribution pension scheme is a post-employment benefit scheme under which the Company pays fixed contributions into a separate fund and will have no legal or constructive obligation to pay further contributions if the fund does not hold sufficient assets to pay all employee benefits relating to employee service in the current and prior periods. Obligations for contributions to defined contribution pension schemes are recognised as an expense in the income statement in the periods during which services are rendered by employees.

**(ii) Defined benefit pension schemes**

A defined benefit pension scheme is a post-employment benefit plan other than a defined contribution pension scheme. Defined benefit pension schemes are recognised on the balance sheet as a defined benefit pension asset or a defined benefit pension liability based on the difference between the fair value of pension scheme assets and the present value of pension scheme liabilities.

The present value of pension scheme liabilities is calculated by a qualified actuary using the projected unit method by estimating the amount of future benefit that employees have earned in return for their service in the current and prior periods, discounted using the rate applicable to AA rated corporate bonds that have a similar maturity and currency to the pension scheme liabilities. The fair value of any pension scheme assets (at bid price) is deducted from the present value of pension scheme liabilities to determine the net deficit or surplus of each scheme. Remeasurements arising from defined benefit pension schemes comprise actuarial gains and losses on pension scheme liabilities and the actual return on pension scheme assets excluding amounts already included in net interest. The net actuarial gain or loss for the year is recorded in full in the statement of comprehensive income.

Current service cost, past service cost or gain and gains and losses on any settlements and curtailments are credited or charged to the income statement. Past service cost is recognised immediately to the extent benefits are already vested. Net interest on the net defined benefit pension liability or asset is calculated by applying the discount rate used to measure the defined benefit pension scheme deficit or surplus at the beginning of the year to the net defined benefit pension liability or asset at the beginning of the year. Net interest is recorded within finance expense or finance income in the income statement.

When the valuation of a defined benefit pension scheme results in a surplus, the recognised defined benefit pension asset is limited to the present value of benefits available in the form of any future refunds from the pension scheme or reductions in future contributions and takes into account the adverse effect of any minimum funding requirements.

**v. Dividends**

The interim dividend is recognised in the statement of changes in equity in the period in which it is paid and the final dividend in the period in which it is approved by shareholders at the Annual General Meeting.

**w. Hyperinflationary economies**

Where the Group has operations in countries to which hyperinflation accounting applies, the financial statements of the business concerned are accounted for under IAS 29 'Financial Reporting in Hyperinflationary Economies'. See Note 1a(ii) for details on the impact of hyperinflation accounting in the current year.

## NOTES continued

**2 Accounting policies continued****x. Judgements made in applying the Group's accounting policies**

In the course of preparing the financial statements, other than judgements involved in determining lease terms under the application of IFRS 16 'Leases' and in determining estimates and assumptions (see Note 2y below), no other judgements have been made in the process of applying the Group's accounting policies that have had a significant effect on the amounts recognised in the financial statements.

In measuring its right-of-use assets and lease liabilities, management is required to make judgements, particularly in relation to lease termination options. Periods after the date of a termination option are only included in the lease term if it is reasonably certain that the lease will not be terminated. While management determine lease terms across the Group on a case-by-case basis, if different judgements were applied relating to a number of leases, it could have a significant effect on the overall amounts recognised in the financial statements.

**y. Sources of estimation uncertainty**

In applying the Group's accounting policies various transactions and balances are valued using estimates or assumptions. Should these estimates or assumptions prove incorrect, there may be an impact on the following year's financial statements. As at 31 December 2023, sources of estimation uncertainty where there was a significant risk of material adjustment to the carrying amounts of assets and liabilities within the next financial year was limited to the following item:

**Defined benefit pension schemes**

The measurement of the present value of defined benefit pension scheme liabilities involves the use of various actuarial assumptions. The Group uses independent actuarial experts to assist with the estimation of the discount rates, inflation rates and longevity assumptions used for the measurement of defined benefit pension scheme liabilities but the actual liabilities could be materially different. The main risks to which the Group is exposed in relation to the valuation of the defined benefit pension schemes are described in Note 25. The Group's net pension asset balance as at 31 December 2023 was £46.6m (2022: £39.9m).

While not expected to result in a material change in the carrying value of assets or liabilities in the next 12 months the following estimates or assumptions were also used in applying the Group's accounting policies:

**Accounting for business combinations**

Part of the Company's strategy is to grow through acquisitions. Acquisitions are accounted for using the acquisition method as described in the business combinations accounting policy, Note 2a(ii), and the goodwill accounting policy, Note 2k(i). This includes the determination of fair values for assets and liabilities acquired, including the separate identification of intangible assets, which use assumptions and estimates and are therefore subjective. The Group has developed a process to meet the requirements of IFRS 3 including the separate identification of customer relationships, brands and technology intangible assets based on estimated future performance and customer attrition rates. This formal process is applied to each acquisition and involves an assessment of the assets acquired and liabilities assumed with assistance provided by external valuation specialists where appropriate. Until this assessment is complete, the allocation period remains open up to a maximum of 12 months from the relevant acquisition date. The process applied is described in Note 9.

**y. Sources of estimation uncertainty continued****Recoverability of goodwill, customer relationships, brands and technology intangible assets**

As noted above, part of the Company's strategy is to grow through acquisitions which has led to material goodwill, customer relationships, brands and technology intangible assets being recognised on the balance sheet. Goodwill, which is allocated across CGUs, is tested annually to determine if there is any indication of impairment by comparing the carrying amount of the goodwill to the recoverable amount of the CGU to which it has been allocated. Assumptions and estimates are used to determine the recoverable amount of each CGU, principally based on the present value of estimated future cash flows. Actual performance may differ from management's expectations. The estimates and assumptions used in performing impairment testing are described in Note 13. Customer relationships, brands and technology intangible assets are also reviewed annually for indicators of impairment and if an indicator of impairment exists then similar recoverability testing, involving the use of estimates and assumptions, is performed for the business to which the customer relationships, brands and technology intangible assets relate. The useful economic lives of customer relationships, brands and technology intangible assets are also reviewed at least annually, with any revisions to the original estimated useful economic lives accounted for prospectively. As at 31 December 2023 the goodwill balance was £2,008.9m (2022: £1,931.6m), the amount of customer relationships intangible assets was £1,150.8m (2022: £1,090.9m), the amount of brands intangible assets was £41.1m (2022: £34.9m) and the amount of technology intangible assets was £7.5m (2022: £9.1m).

**Trade receivables and inventory provisions**

Due to the uncertainty created by the Covid-19 pandemic and the continuing challenging economic conditions, trade receivables and inventory provisions are considered to be a source of estimation uncertainty. In 2020 and 2021, the Group saw increases in provisions for expected credit losses on trade receivables and slow moving inventory provisions, and additional provisions were made as a result of market price deflation on certain Covid-19 products. During 2023, the Group has seen a net utilisation of approximately £25m in trade receivables and slow moving inventory provisions (2022: net utilisation of approximately £5m), and also some utilisation of the residual provisions set up in the prior year for market price movements on certain Covid-19 products; the remaining market price risk on these products is no longer significant. As at 31 December 2023, the Group carried trade receivables provisions of £34.5m (2022: £29.1m) and provisions for slow moving, obsolete or defective inventories and market price movements of £154.2m (2022: £179.9m).

**Taxation**

The Group operates in many countries and is therefore subject to tax laws in a number of different tax jurisdictions. The amount of tax payable or receivable on profits or losses for any period is subject to the agreement of the tax authority in each respective jurisdiction and the tax liability or asset position is open to review for several years after the relevant accounting period ends. In determining the provisions for income taxes, management is required to make assumptions based on interpretations of tax statute and case law, which it does after taking account of professional advice and prior experience.

The majority of the Group's tax payable balance of £47.5m (2022: £41.7m) relates to provisions for uncertain tax matters. Uncertainties in respect of enquiries and additional tax assessments raised by tax authorities are measured by management according to the guidance provided by IFRIC 23 'Uncertainty over Income Tax Treatments' but the amounts ultimately payable or receivable may differ from the amounts of any provisions recognised in the consolidated financial statements as a result of the estimates and assumptions used.

Management does not consider there to be any significant risks of material adjustment within the next financial year because tax provisions cover a range of matters across multiple tax jurisdictions with a variety of timescales before such matters are expected to be concluded.

## NOTES continued

**3 Alternative performance measures**

In addition to the various performance measures defined under IFRS, the Group reports a number of other measures that are designed to assist with the understanding of the underlying performance of the Group and its businesses. These measures are not defined under IFRS and, as a result, do not comply with Generally Accepted Accounting Practice ('GAAP') and are therefore known as 'alternative performance measures'. Accordingly, these measures, which are not designed to be a substitute for any of the IFRS measures of performance, may not be directly comparable with other companies' alternative performance measures. The principal alternative performance measures used within the consolidated financial statements and the location of the reconciliation to equivalent IFRS measures are shown and defined in the table below:

<b>Underlying revenue growth</b>	Revenue excluding the incremental impact of acquisitions and disposals compared to revenue in prior years at constant exchange, adjusted for differences in trading days between years and adjusted to exclude growth in excess of 26% per annum in hyperinflationary economies (reconciled in the Financial Review)
<b>Adjusted operating profit</b>	Operating profit before customer relationships, brands and technology amortisation, acquisition related items, non-recurring pension scheme charges and profit or loss on disposal of businesses (reconciled in the following tables and in the Consolidated income statement)
<b>Operating margin</b>	Adjusted operating profit as a percentage of revenue
<b>Adjusted profit before income tax</b>	Profit before income tax, customer relationships, brands and technology amortisation, acquisition related items, non-recurring pension scheme charges and profit or loss on disposal of businesses (reconciled in the following tables)
<b>Adjusted profit for the year</b>	Profit for the year before customer relationships, brands and technology amortisation, acquisition related items, non-recurring pension scheme charges, profit or loss on disposal of businesses and the associated tax (reconciled in the following tables)
<b>Effective tax rate</b>	Tax on adjusted profit before income tax as a percentage of adjusted profit before income tax (reconciled in Note 7)
<b>Adjusted earnings per share</b>	Adjusted profit for the year divided by the weighted average number of ordinary shares in issue (reconciled in the following tables and in Note 8)
<b>Adjusted diluted earnings per share</b>	Adjusted profit for the year divided by the diluted weighted average number of ordinary shares (reconciled in Note 8)
<b>Operating cash flow</b>	Cash generated from operations before acquisition related items after deducting purchases of property, plant and equipment and software and adding back the proceeds from the sale of property, plant and equipment and software and deducting the payment of lease liabilities (as shown in the Consolidated cash flow statement)
<b>Free cash flow</b>	Operating cash flow after deducting payments for income tax and net interest excluding interest on lease liabilities (as shown in the Consolidated cash flow statement)
<b>Lease adjusted operating profit</b>	Adjusted operating profit after adding back the depreciation of right-of-use assets and deducting the payment of lease liabilities (as shown in the Consolidated cash flow statement)
<b>Cash conversion</b>	Operating cash flow as a percentage of lease adjusted operating profit (as shown in the Consolidated cash flow statement)
<b>Working capital</b>	Inventories and trade and other receivables less trade and other payables, excluding non-operating related receivables, non-operating related payables (including those relating to acquisition payments) and dividends payable (reconciled in Note 14)

<b>Return on average operating capital</b>	The ratio of adjusted operating profit to the average of the month end operating capital employed (being property, plant and equipment, right-of-use assets, software, inventories and trade and other receivables less trade and other payables)
<b>Return on invested capital</b>	The ratio of adjusted operating profit to the average of the month end invested capital (being equity after adding back net debt, lease liabilities, net defined benefit pension scheme liabilities, cumulative customer relationships, brands and technology amortisation, acquisition related items and amounts written off goodwill, net of the associated tax)
<b>Dividend cover</b>	The ratio of adjusted earnings per share to the total dividend per share
<b>EBITDA</b>	Adjusted operating profit on a historical GAAP basis, before depreciation of property, plant and equipment and software amortisation and after adjustments as permitted by the Group's debt covenants, principally to exclude share option charges and to annualise for the effect of acquisitions and disposal of businesses
<b>Net debt excluding lease liabilities</b>	Net debt excluding the carrying value of lease liabilities (reconciled in Note 28)
<b>Constant exchange rates</b>	Growth rates at constant exchange rates are calculated by retranslating the results for prior years at the average rates for the year ended 31 December 2023 so that they can be compared without the distorting impact of changes caused by foreign exchange translation. The principal exchange rates used for 2023 and 2022 can be found in the Financial review on page 80

The definition of 'Dividend cover' has been added to the list of alternative performance measures in the year. All other alternative performance measures have been calculated consistently with the methods applied in the consolidated financial statements for the year ended 31 December 2022. The amendments to the list of alternative performance measures and an assessment of the relevance of the existing alternative performance measures, were agreed with the Audit Committee.

A number of the alternative performance measures listed above exclude the charge for customer relationships, brands and technology amortisation, acquisition related items, non-recurring pension scheme charges, profit or loss on disposal of businesses and any associated tax, where relevant.

Acquisition related items comprise deferred consideration payments relating to the retention of former owners of businesses acquired, transaction costs and expenses, adjustments to previously estimated earn outs, customer relationships asset impairment charges, goodwill impairment charges and interest on acquisition related income tax. Customer relationships, brands and technology amortisation, acquisition related items and any associated tax are considered by management to form part of the total spend on acquisitions or are non-cash items resulting from acquisitions. The non-recurring pension scheme charges relate to non-recurring charges arising from the Group's participation in a number of defined benefit pension schemes. In the year ended 31 December 2023 and the year ended 31 December 2022 there were no non-recurring pension scheme charges. Disposal of business relates to the profit on disposal of the Group's UK Healthcare division in the year ended 31 December 2022. None of these items relate to the trading performance of the business. Accordingly, these items are not taken into account by management when assessing the results of the business and are removed in calculating the profitability measures by which management assesses the performance of the Group. However, it should be noted that they do exclude charges that nevertheless do impact the Group's cash flow and GAAP financial performance.

Other alternative performance measures, including the Group's key performance indicators which are set out and defined on pages 40 and 41, are used to monitor the performance of the Group and a number of these are based on, or derived from, the alternative performance measures noted above.

## NOTES continued

## 3 Alternative performance measures continued

## Reconciliation of alternative performance measures to IFRS measures

The principal profit related alternative performance measures, being adjusted operating profit, adjusted profit before income tax, adjusted profit for the year and adjusted earnings per share, are reconciled to the most directly reconcilable statutory measures in the tables below:

## Year ended 31 December 2023

	Alternative performance measures £m	Adjusting items			Statutory measures £m	
		Customer relationships, brands and technology amortisation £m	Acquisition related items £m	Disposal of business £m		
<b>Adjusted operating profit</b>	<b>944.2</b>	<b>(135.6)</b>	<b>(19.5)</b>		<b>789.1</b>	<b>Operating profit</b>
Finance income	60.4				60.4	Finance income
Finance expense	(150.9)				(150.9)	Finance expense
<b>Adjusted profit before income tax</b>	<b>853.7</b>	<b>(135.6)</b>	<b>(19.5)</b>	-	<b>698.6</b>	<b>Profit before income tax</b>
Tax on adjusted profit	(213.4)	36.7	4.3	-	(172.4)	Income tax
<b>Adjusted profit for the year</b>	<b>640.3</b>	<b>(98.9)</b>	<b>(15.2)</b>	-	<b>526.2</b>	<b>Profit for the year</b>
<b>Adjusted earnings per share</b>	<b>191.1p</b>	<b>(29.5)p</b>	<b>(4.5)p</b>	-	<b>157.1p</b>	<b>Basic earnings per share</b>

## Year ended 31 December 2022

	Alternative performance measures £m	Adjusting items			Statutory measures £m	
		Customer relationships, brands and technology amortisation £m	Acquisition related items £m	Disposal of business £m		
Adjusted operating profit	885.9	(128.4)	(55.9)		701.6	Operating profit
Finance income	22.3				22.3	Finance income
Finance expense	(90.2)				(90.2)	Finance expense
Disposal of business	-			0.9	0.9	Disposal of business
Adjusted profit before income tax	818.0	(128.4)	(55.9)	0.9	634.6	Profit before income tax
Tax on adjusted profit	(201.2)	34.7	6.3	-	(160.2)	Income tax
Adjusted profit for the year	616.8	(93.7)	(49.6)	0.9	474.4	Profit for the year
Adjusted earnings per share	184.3p	(28.0)p	(14.8)p	0.2p	141.7p	Basic earnings per share

## NOTES continued

## 4 Segment analysis

The Group results are reported as four business areas based on geographical regions which are reviewed regularly by the Company's chief operating decision maker, the Board of directors. The principal results reviewed for each business area are revenue and adjusted operating profit.

## Year ended 31 December 2023

	North America £m	Continental Europe £m	UK & Ireland £m	Rest of the World £m	Corporate £m	Total £m
Revenue	6,973.5	2,354.9	1,365.5	1,103.2		11,797.1
Adjusted operating profit/(loss)	528.0	224.7	103.4	119.6	(31.5)	944.2
Customer relationships, brands and technology amortisation	(57.1)	(43.7)	(11.1)	(23.7)		(135.6)
Acquisition related items	(5.5)	(0.3)	(3.1)	(10.6)		(19.5)
Operating profit/(loss)	465.4	180.7	89.2	85.3	(31.5)	789.1
Finance income						60.4
Finance expense						(150.9)
Disposal of business						-
Profit before income tax						698.6
Adjusted profit before income tax						853.7
Income tax						(172.4)
Profit for the year						526.2
Operating margin	7.6%	9.5%	7.6%	10.8%		8.0%
Return on average operating capital	49.6%	45.4%	65.5%	35.5%		46.1%
Purchase of property, plant and equipment	12.3	13.5	8.7	8.1	0.2	42.8
Depreciation of property, plant and equipment	12.0	10.3	4.7	4.6	0.1	31.7
Additions to right-of-use assets	34.0	41.5	42.4	18.8	-	136.7
Depreciation of right-of-use assets	83.4	38.9	24.3	18.8	0.7	166.1
Purchase of software	3.1	8.7	2.4	1.0	0.3	15.5
Software amortisation	3.4	2.7	2.1	0.9	0.3	9.4

## Year ended 31 December 2022

	North America £m	Continental Europe £m	UK & Ireland £m	Rest of the World £m	Corporate £m	Total £m
Revenue	7,366.0	2,173.4	1,442.5	1,057.6		12,039.5
Adjusted operating profit/(loss)	511.5	195.1	95.3	111.7	(27.7)	885.9
Customer relationships, brands and technology amortisation	(57.3)	(40.6)	(11.0)	(19.5)		(128.4)
Acquisition related items	(15.8)	(27.5)	(7.4)	(5.2)		(55.9)
Operating profit/(loss)	438.4	127.0	76.9	87.0	(27.7)	701.6
Finance income						22.3
Finance expense						(90.2)
Disposal of business						0.9
Profit before income tax						634.6
Adjusted profit before income tax						818.0
Income tax						(160.2)
Profit for the year						474.4
Operating margin	6.9%	9.0%	6.6%	10.6%		7.4%
Return on average operating capital	45.4%	43.7%	52.2%	35.3%		43.0%
Purchase of property, plant and equipment	13.0	9.7	5.9	5.8	0.3	34.7
Depreciation of property, plant and equipment	11.3	9.1	4.8	4.3	0.1	29.6
Additions to right-of-use assets	65.8	15.3	18.9	23.3	-	123.3
Depreciation of right-of-use assets	74.7	33.6	23.8	18.4	0.6	151.1
Purchase of software	3.1	5.2	2.6	0.9	0.2	12.0
Software amortisation	3.7	2.2	1.6	1.1	0.2	8.8

## NOTES continued

## 4 Segment analysis continued

Acquisition related items	2023 £m	2022 £m
Deferred consideration payments relating to the retention of former owners of businesses acquired	37.3	24.9
Transaction costs and expenses	18.1	10.9
Adjustments to previously estimated earn outs	(35.9)	7.1
	19.5	42.9
Customer relationships impairment charges (Note 13)	-	13.0
	19.5	55.9

Reportable segments are determined based on quantitative thresholds in accordance with IFRS 8 'Operating Segments'. The three business areas of North America, Continental Europe and UK & Ireland are operating segments that meet the quantitative thresholds for reportable segments and are therefore disclosed separately above. The Rest of the World business area contains businesses in Latin America and Asia Pacific which individually do not meet the quantitative thresholds for separate disclosure as reportable segments. Rest of the World is therefore an 'other' segment that is disclosed above as a reportable segment as this information is considered to be useful to users of the financial statements and it also helps to reconcile the results of the reportable segments to the Group's consolidated results.

The revenue presented relates to external customers. Sales between the business areas are not material. Each of the business areas supplies a range of products to customers operating primarily in the grocery, foodservice, safety, cleaning & hygiene, retail and healthcare market sectors but results are not monitored on this basis. The performance of the four business areas is assessed by reference to adjusted operating profit and this measure also represents the segment results for the purposes of reporting in accordance with IFRS 8. Debt and associated interest is managed at a Group level and therefore has not been allocated across the business areas.

In the year ended 31 December 2023 the Group had no customer that represented 10% or more of total Group revenue (2022: no customers).

As noted above, the businesses within each operating segment operate in a number of different countries and sell products across a range of market sectors, with the vast majority of revenue generated from the delivery of goods to customers. The following table provides a breakdown of revenue by market sector. The other category covers a wide range of market sectors, none of which is sufficiently material to warrant separate disclosure.

Revenue by market sector	2023 £m	2022 £m
Foodservice	3,383.4	3,592.9
Grocery	3,136.6	3,139.3
Safety	1,835.7	1,786.8
Retail	1,032.8	1,153.7
Cleaning & Hygiene	1,218.6	1,124.5
Healthcare	679.6	839.0
Other	510.4	403.3
	11,797.1	12,039.5

Revenue attributable to the UK, the parent company's country of domicile, for the year ended 31 December 2023 was £1,270.3m, representing 11% of the Group's total (2022: £1,354.5m, representing 11% of the Group's total). Revenue attributable to foreign countries in total was £10,526.8m, representing 89% of the Group's total (2022: £10,685.0m, representing 89% of the Group's total). Six foreign countries account for the majority of the revenue attributable to foreign countries, these being USA, Canada, France, the Netherlands, Australia and Brazil. These six foreign countries account for 73% of the Group's revenue (2022: 74%).

Non-current assets attributable to the UK, the parent company's country of domicile, for the year ended 31 December 2023 were £508.7m, representing 13% of the Group's total (2022 restated: £486.6m, representing 13% of the Group's total). Non-current assets attributable to foreign countries in total were £3,509.2m, representing 87% of the Group's total (2022 restated: £3,274.1m, representing 87% of the Group's total). Six foreign countries account for the majority of the non-current assets attributable to foreign countries, these being USA, Canada, France, the Netherlands, Australia and Brazil. These six foreign countries account for 66% of the Group's total non-current assets (2022 restated: 65%). The 2022 comparatives have been restated to exclude non-current assets of £64.5m related to defined benefit pension schemes and deferred tax in accordance with IFRS 8 'Operating Segments'.

The table below reconciles segment assets and liabilities to the Group's total assets and total liabilities. Unallocated assets and liabilities include corporate assets and liabilities, tax assets and liabilities, cash at bank and in hand, bank overdrafts, interest bearing loans and borrowings, derivative financial assets and liabilities and defined benefit pension assets and liabilities.

## At 31 December 2023

	North America £m	Continental Europe £m	UK & Ireland £m	Rest of the World £m	Unallocated £m	Total £m
Segment assets	3,129.1	2,043.5	942.2	1,080.3		7,195.1
Unallocated assets					1,552.1	1,552.1
<b>Total assets</b>	<b>3,129.1</b>	<b>2,043.5</b>	<b>942.2</b>	<b>1,080.3</b>	<b>1,552.1</b>	<b>8,747.2</b>
Segment liabilities	1,284.4	763.8	522.7	342.0		2,912.9
Unallocated liabilities					2,868.0	2,868.0
<b>Total liabilities</b>	<b>1,284.4</b>	<b>763.8</b>	<b>522.7</b>	<b>342.0</b>	<b>2,868.0</b>	<b>5,780.9</b>

## At 31 December 2022

	North America £m	Continental Europe £m	UK & Ireland £m	Rest of the World £m	Unallocated £m	Total £m
Segment assets	3,268.8	1,956.5	939.2	878.8		7,043.3
Unallocated assets					1,623.5	1,623.5
<b>Total assets</b>	<b>3,268.8</b>	<b>1,956.5</b>	<b>939.2</b>	<b>878.8</b>	<b>1,623.5</b>	<b>8,666.8</b>
Segment liabilities	1,363.1	768.9	516.8	279.5		2,928.3
Unallocated liabilities					3,017.6	3,017.6
<b>Total liabilities</b>	<b>1,363.1</b>	<b>768.9</b>	<b>516.8</b>	<b>279.5</b>	<b>3,017.6</b>	<b>5,945.9</b>

## NOTES continued

## 5 Analysis of operating income and expenses

	2023 £m	2022 £m
Cost of goods sold	8,609.2	9,015.0
Employee costs (Note 26)	1,149.8	1,085.1
Depreciation of property, plant and equipment (Note 11)	31.7	29.6
Depreciation of right-of-use assets (Note 12)	166.1	151.1
Customer relationships, brands and technology amortisation (Note 13)	135.6	128.4
Amortisation of software (Note 13)	9.4	8.8
Acquisition related items (Note 4)	19.5	55.9
Net impairment losses on trade receivables (Note 16)	2.6	3.7
Profit on disposal of property, plant and equipment	(0.6)	(0.4)
Expense relating to short term leases and low value assets	4.6	5.2
Lease and sublease income	(4.1)	(3.2)
Other operating expenses	884.2	858.7
<b>Net operating expenses</b>	<b>11,008.0</b>	<b>11,337.9</b>

Cost of goods sold consists of the cost of the inventories sold or disposed of in the year where the cost of inventories is net of supplier rebate income related to those inventories.

	2023			2022		
	UK £m	Overseas £m	Total £m	UK £m	Overseas £m	Total £m
<b>Auditors' remuneration</b>						
Audit of these financial statements	1.0	–	1.0	0.8	–	0.8
Amounts receivable by the Company's auditors* in respect of:						
audit of financial statements of subsidiaries of the Company	0.4	4.2	4.6	0.5	3.6	4.1
audit related assurance services	0.1	–	0.1	0.1	–	0.1
all other services	0.3	–	0.3	0.3	–	0.3
<b>Total auditors' remuneration</b>	<b>1.8</b>	<b>4.2</b>	<b>6.0</b>	<b>1.7</b>	<b>3.6</b>	<b>5.3</b>

\* Including their associates.

Audit related assurance services comprise the review of the half yearly financial report for the six months ended 30 June. All other services comprise other non-audit work which was permissible in accordance with the Company's policy and the prevailing regulations concerning the provision of non-audit services by the Company's external auditors. It is the Company's policy to assess the non-audit services to be performed by the Company's auditors on a case-by-case basis to ensure adherence to the prevailing ethical standards and regulations. Other firms are normally used by the Company to provide non-audit services. However, if the provision of a service by the Company's auditors is permitted and adequate safeguards are in place, it is sometimes appropriate for this additional work to be carried out by the Company's auditors.

The Audit Committee, which consists entirely of independent non-executive directors, reviews and approves the level and type of non-audit work which the external auditors perform, including the fees paid for such work, to ensure that the auditors' objectivity and independence are not compromised. Further information is set out in the Audit Committee's report on pages 112 to 121.

## 6 Finance income/(expense)

	2023 £m	2022 £m
Interest on cash and cash equivalents	40.3	10.5
Interest income from foreign exchange contracts	16.0	9.2
Net interest income on defined benefit pension schemes in surplus	3.2	1.2
Other finance income	0.9	1.4
<b>Finance income</b>	<b>60.4</b>	<b>22.3</b>
Interest on loans and overdrafts	(106.7)	(58.5)
Lease interest expense	(28.6)	(22.0)
Interest expense from foreign exchange contracts	(1.5)	(0.8)
Net interest expense on defined benefit pension schemes in deficit	(1.0)	(0.8)
Fair value (loss)/gain on US private placement notes and senior bond in a hedge relationship	(24.4)	83.2
Fair value gain/(loss) on interest rate swaps in a hedge relationship	21.8	(79.2)
Foreign exchange (loss)/gain on intercompany funding	(41.1)	126.7
Foreign exchange gain/(loss) on external debt and foreign exchange forward contracts	40.5	(126.7)
Interest related to income tax	(0.1)	(0.5)
Monetary loss from hyperinflation accounting <sup>1</sup>	(7.2)	(10.7)
Other finance expense	(2.6)	(0.9)
<b>Finance expense</b>	<b>(150.9)</b>	<b>(90.2)</b>
<b>Net finance expense</b>	<b>(90.5)</b>	<b>(67.9)</b>

1. See Note 1 for further details.

The foreign exchange loss on intercompany funding arises as a result of the retranslation of foreign currency intercompany loans. This loss on intercompany funding is substantially matched by the foreign exchange gain on external debt and foreign exchange forward contracts not in a hedge relationship which minimises the foreign currency exposure in the income statement.

## NOTES continued

## 7 Income tax

	2023 £m	2022 £m
Current tax on profit		
current year	199.0	172.7
adjustments in respect of prior years	(6.9)	(9.2)
	192.1	163.5
Deferred tax on profit		
current year	(19.6)	(4.8)
adjustments in respect of prior years	(0.1)	1.5
	(19.7)	(3.3)
<b>Income tax on profit</b>	<b>172.4</b>	<b>160.2</b>
In assessing the underlying performance of the Group, management uses adjusted profit before income tax. The tax effect of the adjusting items (see Note 3) is excluded in monitoring the effective tax rate (being the tax rate on adjusted profit before income tax) which is shown in the table below.		
	2023 £m	2022 £m
Income tax on profit	172.4	160.2
Tax associated with adjusting items	41.0	41.0
<b>Tax on adjusted profit</b>	<b>213.4</b>	<b>201.2</b>
Profit before income tax	698.6	634.6
Adjusting items	155.1	183.4
<b>Adjusted profit before income tax</b>	<b>853.7</b>	<b>818.0</b>
Reported tax rate	24.7%	25.2%
Effective tax rate	25.0%	24.6%

Tax on other comprehensive income/ (expense) and equity	2023			2022		
	Gross £m	Tax (charge)/ credit £m	Net £m	Gross £m	Tax (charge)/ credit £m	Net £m
Actuarial gain on defined benefit pension schemes	2.9	(0.1)	2.8	6.9	(1.4)	5.5
Foreign currency translation differences on foreign operations	(126.9)	(0.5)	(127.4)	232.9	0.3	233.2
Gain/(loss) taken to equity as a result of effective net investment hedges	31.4	-	31.4	(38.2)	-	(38.2)
(Loss)/gain recognised in cash flow hedge reserve	(2.3)	0.6	(1.7)	10.3	(2.6)	7.7
<b>Other comprehensive (expense)/income</b>	<b>(94.9)</b>	<b>-</b>	<b>(94.9)</b>	<b>211.9</b>	<b>(3.7)</b>	<b>208.2</b>
Dividends	(209.7)	-	(209.7)	(190.5)	-	(190.5)
Movement from cash flow hedge reserve to inventory	1.0	(0.3)	0.7	(12.0)	3.0	(9.0)
Hyperinflation accounting adjustments	21.6	-	21.6	36.7	(1.8)	34.9
Issue of share capital	5.9	-	5.9	5.3	-	5.3
Employee trust shares	(25.2)	-	(25.2)	(34.2)	-	(34.2)
Share based payments	15.4	5.4	20.8	14.1	1.2	15.3
<b>Other comprehensive income/(expense) and equity</b>	<b>(285.9)</b>	<b>5.1</b>	<b>(280.8)</b>	<b>31.3</b>	<b>(1.3)</b>	<b>30.0</b>



## NOTES continued

## 7 Income tax continued

## Factors affecting the tax charge for the year

The Group operates in many countries and is subject to different rates of income tax in those countries. The expected tax rate is calculated as a weighted average of the tax rates in the tax jurisdictions in which the Group operates, most of which are higher than the UK statutory rate for the year of 23.5% (2022: 19.0%). The adjustments to the tax charge at the weighted average rate to determine the income tax on profit are as follows:

	2023 £m	2022 £m
Profit before income tax	698.6	634.6
Tax charge at weighted average rate (2023: 25.2%; 2022: 24.6%)	176.0	156.1
Effects of:		
non-deductible expenditure	0.5	8.9
impact of intercompany finance	1.2	(2.0)
change in tax rates	(0.7)	0.4
hyperinflation accounting adjustments	3.8	4.7
prior year adjustments	(7.0)	(7.7)
other current year items	(1.4)	(0.2)
<b>Income tax on profit</b>	<b>172.4</b>	<b>160.2</b>

## Deferred tax in the income statement

	2023 £m	2022 £m
Property, plant and equipment	1.0	1.2
Defined benefit pension schemes	1.6	(0.1)
Goodwill, customer relationships, brands and technology	(20.2)	(17.4)
Provisions and accruals	(3.6)	–
Inventories	7.4	10.5
Leases	(1.1)	0.7
Other	(4.8)	1.8
<b>Deferred tax on profit</b>	<b>(19.7)</b>	<b>(3.3)</b>

The Group is within the scope of the OECD Pillar Two model rules which impose a minimum tax expense in each country. Pillar Two legislation has been enacted in the UK, the country of tax residence of the ultimate parent of the Group, as well as in several other countries in which the Group operates. The earliest legislation is effective from 1 January 2024. Since the Pillar Two legislation was not effective during the year ended 31 December 2023, the Group has no related current tax exposure at the balance sheet date. The Group applies the exception to recognising and disclosing information about deferred tax assets and liabilities related to Pillar Two income taxes, as provided in the amendments to IAS 12 issued in May 2023.

The legislation imposes a top-up tax to the extent that in any country the effective tax rate according to the Pillar Two methodology is below the 15% minimum rate. Most countries in which the Group operates are expected to report an effective tax rate in excess of 15% and therefore to qualify for a safe harbour exemption such that no top-up tax should apply. In countries where this is not the case there is the potential for Pillar Two taxes to apply, but these are not expected to be material. The Group continues to refine this assessment and analyse the future consequences of these rules.

## 8 Earnings per share

	2023 £m	2022 £m
<b>Profit for the year</b>	<b>526.2</b>	474.4
Adjusted for:		
customer relationships, brands and technology amortisation	135.6	128.4
acquisition related items	19.5	55.9
profit on disposal of business	–	(0.9)
tax credit on adjusting items	(41.0)	(41.0)
<b>Adjusted profit for the year</b>	<b>640.3</b>	616.8
	2023	2022
Basic weighted average number of ordinary shares in issue (million)	335.0	334.7
Dilutive effect of employee share plans (million)	2.2	2.5
Diluted weighted average number of ordinary shares (million)	337.2	337.2
<b>Basic earnings per share</b>	<b>157.1p</b>	141.7p
Adjustment	34.0p	42.6p
<b>Adjusted earnings per share</b>	<b>191.1p</b>	184.3p
Diluted basic earnings per share	156.0p	140.7p
Adjustment	33.9p	42.2p
<b>Adjusted diluted earnings per share</b>	<b>189.9p</b>	182.9p

## NOTES continued

## 9 Acquisitions

Acquisitions involving the purchase of the acquiree's share capital or, as the case may be, the relevant assets of the businesses acquired, have been accounted for under the acquisition method of accounting. A key part of the Group's strategy is to grow through acquisition. The Group has developed a process to assist with the identification of the fair values of the assets acquired and liabilities assumed, including the separate identification of intangible assets in accordance with IFRS 3 'Business Combinations' as revised. This formal process is applied to each acquisition and involves an assessment of the assets acquired and liabilities assumed with assistance provided by external valuation specialists where appropriate. Until this assessment is complete, the allocation period remains open up to a maximum of 12 months from the relevant acquisition date. At 31 December 2023 the allocation period for all acquisitions completed since 1 January 2023 remained open and accordingly the fair values presented are provisional.

Adjustments are made to the assets acquired and liabilities assumed during the allocation period to the extent that further information and knowledge come to light that more accurately reflect conditions at the acquisition date. Adjustments are made to the value of assets acquired to reflect more accurately the estimated realisable or settlement value. Similarly, adjustments are made to acquired liabilities to record onerous commitments or other commitments existing at the acquisition date but not recognised by the acquiree. Adjustments are also made to reflect the associated tax effects. During the year ended 31 December 2023 adjustments have been recognised to the fair value of assets and liabilities acquired related to acquisitions made in the prior year, resulting in a net increase to goodwill of £0.8m (2022: net decrease to goodwill of £3.4m). Given the immaterial amounts involved the fair value of assets and liabilities acquired as reported in the prior year have not been restated.

The consideration paid or payable in respect of acquisitions comprises amounts paid on completion, deferred consideration and payments which are contingent on the retention of former owners of businesses acquired. Any payments that are contingent on future employment, including payments which are contingent on the retention of former owners of businesses acquired, are charged to the income statement. All other consideration has been allocated against the identified net assets, with the balance recorded as goodwill. Transaction costs and expenses such as professional fees are charged to the income statement. The acquisitions provide opportunities for further development of the Group's activities and to create enhanced returns. Such opportunities and the workforces inherent in each of the acquired businesses do not translate to separately identifiable intangible assets but do represent much of the assessed value that supports the recognised goodwill.

For each of the businesses acquired and announced during the year, the name of the business, the market sector served, its location and date of acquisition, as well as the estimated annualised revenue it would have contributed to the Group for the year if such acquisitions had been made at the beginning of the year, are separately disclosed. The remaining disclosures required by IFRS 3 are provided separately for those individual acquisitions that are considered to be material and in aggregate for individually immaterial acquisitions. An acquisition would generally be considered individually material if the impact on the Group's revenue or profit measures (on an annualised basis) or the relevant amounts on the balance sheet is greater than 5%. Management also applies judgement in considering whether there are any material qualitative differences from other acquisitions made.

## 2023

Summary details of the businesses acquired during the year ended 31 December 2023 are shown in the table below:

Business	Sector	Country	Acquisition date 2023	Percentage of share capital acquired	Annualised revenue £m
GRC	Healthcare	Australia	1 January	100%	4.4
Capital Paper	Foodservice	Canada	31 January	100%	16.0
Arbeitsschutz-Express	Safety	Germany	3 April	66%	33.1
Dimasa	Cleaning & Hygiene	Spain	28 April	100%	3.1
Irudek	Safety	Spain	28 April	75%	16.7
EHM	Safety	UK	5 June	100%	19.5
La Cartuja Complementos Hostelería	Foodservice	Spain	30 June	100%	4.4
EcoTools.nl	Other	Netherlands	31 July	100%	17.8
Leal Equipamentos de Proteção	Safety	Brazil	1 August	100%	33.1
PackPro	Foodservice	Canada	10 August	85%	20.1
Groveko	Cleaning & Hygiene	Netherlands	11 August	93.75%	21.0
Pittman Traffic & Safety Equipment*	Safety	Ireland	28 August	100%	6.2
FlexPost	Safety	USA	31 October	100%	3.0
Grupo Lanlimp	Cleaning & Hygiene	Brazil	1 November	70%	37.8
Melbourne Cleaning Supplies	Cleaning & Hygiene	Australia	6 November	100%	9.7
Safety First	Safety	Poland	30 November	65%	24.9
Miracle Sanitation Supply	Cleaning & Hygiene	Canada	1 December	100%	7.6
CT Group	Healthcare	Brazil	1 December	100%	47.8
Others**				100%	3.3
<b>Acquisitions completed in the current year</b>					<b>329.5</b>
GRC	Healthcare	Australia	1 January	100%	(4.4)
<b>Acquisitions agreed in the current year</b>					<b>325.1</b>

\* The acquisition supports the expansion of our North America based McCue business and is therefore reported as part of the North America business area.

\*\* Others includes two small acquisitions agreed in 2023.

## NOTES continued

## 9 Acquisitions continued

There were no individually significant acquisitions in 2023. A summary of the effect of acquisitions in 2023 and 2022 is shown below:

	2023 £m	2022 £m
Customer relationships	229.5	107.7
Brands	10.6	11.6
Technology	–	9.1
Property, plant and equipment and software	16.6	4.8
Right-of-use assets	16.2	21.5
Inventories	44.7	44.9
Trade and other receivables	57.0	27.0
Trade and other payables	(40.5)	(30.9)
Net cash/(overdrafts)	19.8	(6.8)
Provisions	(26.2)	(7.9)
Lease liabilities	(16.2)	(21.5)
Derivative assets	–	0.4
Income tax payable and deferred tax liabilities	(29.6)	(31.3)
Fair value of net assets acquired	281.9	128.6
Goodwill	130.6	106.6
Consideration	412.5	235.2
Satisfied by:		
cash consideration	343.0	180.6
deferred consideration	69.5	54.6
	412.5	235.2
Contingent payments relating to retention of former owners	59.5	66.4
Net (cash)/overdrafts acquired	(19.8)	6.8
Transaction costs and expenses	18.1	10.9
<b>Total committed spend in respect of acquisitions completed in the year</b>	<b>470.3</b>	<b>319.3</b>
Spend on acquisitions committed but not completed at the year end	–	2.9
Spend on acquisitions committed at prior year end but completed in the current year	(2.8)	–
<b>Total committed spend in respect of acquisitions agreed in the year</b>	<b>467.5</b>	<b>322.2</b>

The net cash outflow in the year in respect of acquisitions comprised:

	2023 £m	2022 £m
Cash consideration	343.0	180.6
Net (cash)/overdrafts acquired	(19.8)	6.8
Deferred consideration payments	14.5	56.2
<b>Net cash outflow on purchase of businesses</b>	<b>337.7</b>	<b>243.6</b>
Transaction costs and expenses paid	18.1	11.0
Payments relating to retention of former owners	18.8	9.6
<b>Cash outflow from acquisition related items</b>	<b>36.9</b>	<b>20.6</b>
<b>Total cash outflow in respect of acquisitions</b>	<b>374.6</b>	<b>264.2</b>

Acquisitions completed in the year ended 31 December 2023 contributed £120.5m (2022: £115.8m) to the Group's revenue, £16.1m (2022: £9.5m) to the Group's adjusted operating profit and £8.7m (2022: £5.9m) to the Group's operating profit for the year ended 31 December 2023.

The estimated contributions from acquisitions completed and agreed during the year to the results of the Group for the year if such acquisitions had been made at the beginning of the year, are as follows:

	2023 £m	2022 £m
Revenue	325.1	299.0
Adjusted operating profit	51.4	29.3

The total amount of goodwill expected to be deductible for tax purposes in relation to acquisitions completed during the year is £49.1m (2022: £6.8m).

**Deferred consideration**

The table below gives further details of the Group's deferred consideration liabilities.

	2023 £m	2022 £m
Minority options	124.7	92.4
Earn outs	36.9	39.3
<b>Deferred consideration held at fair value</b>	<b>161.6</b>	<b>131.7</b>
Other	14.0	8.2
<b>Total deferred consideration</b>	<b>175.6</b>	<b>139.9</b>
Current	32.3	42.0
Non-current	143.3	97.9
<b>Total deferred consideration</b>	<b>175.6</b>	<b>139.9</b>

Including expected future payments which are contingent on the continued retention of former owners of businesses acquired of £83.2m (2022: £76.3m), total deferred and contingent consideration at 31 December 2023 is £258.8m (2022: £216.2m).

## NOTES continued

## 9 Acquisitions continued

	2023			2022		
	Deferred consideration held at fair value £m	Other £m	Total deferred consideration £m	Deferred consideration held at fair value £m	Other £m	Total deferred consideration £m
Beginning of year	131.7	8.2	139.9	99.6	8.2	107.8
Acquisitions	63.2	6.3	69.5	52.9	1.7	54.6
Charges related to the retention of former owners	30.2	4.3	34.5	19.3	3.8	23.1
Adjustments to previously estimated earn outs	(35.9)	–	(35.9)	7.1	–	7.1
Deferred consideration and retention payments	(25.5)	(4.5)	(30.0)	(55.1)	(5.8)	(60.9)
Foreign exchange	(2.1)	(0.3)	(2.4)	7.9	0.3	8.2
<b>End of year</b>	<b>161.6</b>	<b>14.0</b>	<b>175.6</b>	<b>131.7</b>	<b>8.2</b>	<b>139.9</b>

## 2022

Summary details of the businesses acquired during the year ended 31 December 2022 are shown in the table below:

Business	Sector	Country	Acquisition date 2022	Percentage of share capital acquired	Annualised revenue £m
USL	Healthcare	New Zealand	31 May	90%	56.0
Hygi.de	Cleaning & Hygiene	Germany	11 July	75%	94.3
AFL Groep	Other	Netherlands	20 July	90%	18.1
London Catering & Hygiene Solutions	Cleaning & Hygiene	United Kingdom	29 July	100%	5.4
Containit	Safety	Australia	1 August	80%	12.9
Corsul Group	Safety	Brazil	2 September	100%	42.3
Enviropack	Foodservice	United Kingdom	13 October	85%	6.9
VM Footwear	Safety	Czech Republic	31 October	70%	14.2
PM Pack	Foodservice	Denmark	30 November	70%	16.3
Toomac Ophthalmic & Solutions	Healthcare	New Zealand	2 December	100%	6.6
Grupo R. Queralto	Healthcare	Spain	21 December	85%	23.3
Acquisitions completed in the current year					296.3
GRC	Healthcare	Australia	1 January 2023	100%	2.7
Acquisitions agreed in the current year					299.0

## 10 Disposal of business

The Group did not dispose of any businesses during the year ended 31 December 2023. Disposal of business in the year ended 31 December 2022 related to the UK Healthcare division, a business that was no longer considered to be a strategic fit within the portfolio of the Group's businesses. The disposal was completed on 19 December 2022.

During the year ended 31 December 2022, the net assets of the Group increased by £0.9m representing the profit on disposal of £0.9m. The profit on disposal reflects the cash consideration received of £63.7m, offset by the net book value of the assets disposed of £53.0m, including the associated customer relationships intangible assets of £2.2m and the carrying value of allocated goodwill of £17.0m, less the associated transaction costs.

The net cash inflow in the year in respect of disposal of business comprised:

	2022 £m
<b>Cash flow from disposal of business</b>	
Cash consideration received	63.7
Cash and cash equivalents disposed	(10.2)
<b>Net cash proceeds</b>	<b>53.5</b>
Transaction costs paid	(3.6)
<b>Net cash inflow</b>	<b>49.9</b>

## NOTES continued

## 11 Property, plant and equipment

	Land and buildings £m	Plant and machinery £m	Fixtures, fittings and equipment £m	Total £m
<b>2023</b>				
<b>Cost</b>				
Beginning of year	98.9	201.6	117.2	417.7
Acquisitions (Note 9)	3.6	8.6	3.1	15.3
Additions	4.6	20.7	17.5	42.8
Disposals	(2.5)	(14.9)	(8.7)	(26.1)
Currency translation	(0.6)	(7.5)	(2.5)	(10.6)
End of year	104.0	208.5	126.6	439.1
<b>Accumulated depreciation</b>				
Beginning of year	56.6	138.5	85.4	280.5
Charge in year	5.3	16.0	10.4	31.7
Disposals	(2.3)	(14.4)	(7.9)	(24.6)
Currency translation	(0.4)	(5.8)	(1.7)	(7.9)
End of year	59.2	134.3	86.2	279.7
<b>Net book value at 31 December 2023</b>	<b>44.8</b>	<b>74.2</b>	<b>40.4</b>	<b>159.4</b>
<b>2022</b>				
<b>Cost</b>				
Beginning of year	91.5	167.6	110.5	369.6
Acquisitions (Note 9)	–	3.2	0.9	4.1
Disposal of business (Note 10)	(2.6)	(1.7)	(3.6)	(7.9)
Additions	5.3	19.0	10.4	34.7
Disposals	(1.8)	(2.7)	(6.5)	(11.0)
Currency translation	6.5	16.2	5.5	28.2
End of year	98.9	201.6	117.2	417.7
<b>Accumulated depreciation</b>				
Beginning of year	50.6	116.8	81.3	248.7
Charge in year	5.2	15.1	9.3	29.6
Disposal of business (Note 10)	(1.3)	(1.7)	(3.0)	(6.0)
Disposals	(1.8)	(2.3)	(6.3)	(10.4)
Currency translation	3.9	10.6	4.1	18.6
End of year	56.6	138.5	85.4	280.5
<b>Net book value at 31 December 2022</b>	<b>42.3</b>	<b>63.1</b>	<b>31.8</b>	<b>137.2</b>

## 12 Right-of-use assets

	Property £m	Motor vehicles £m	Equipment £m	Total £m
<b>2023</b>				
Net book value at beginning of year	439.6	63.3	26.7	529.6
Acquisitions (Note 9)	15.9	0.3	–	16.2
Additions	87.5	37.1	12.1	136.7
Depreciation charge in the year	(125.1)	(30.0)	(11.0)	(166.1)
Remeasurement adjustments	118.6	0.4	0.8	119.8
Currency translation	(16.5)	(2.3)	(1.1)	(19.9)
<b>Net book value at 31 December 2023</b>	<b>520.0</b>	<b>68.8</b>	<b>27.5</b>	<b>616.3</b>
<b>2022</b>				
Net book value at beginning of year	366.4	57.8	24.1	448.3
Acquisitions (Note 9)	20.9	0.3	0.3	21.5
Disposal of business (Note 10)	(1.5)	(0.2)	–	(1.7)
Additions	84.2	28.1	11.0	123.3
Depreciation charge in the year	(111.7)	(28.6)	(10.8)	(151.1)
Remeasurement adjustments	54.7	1.9	–	56.6
Currency translation	26.6	4.0	2.1	32.7
<b>Net book value at 31 December 2023</b>	<b>439.6</b>	<b>63.3</b>	<b>26.7</b>	<b>529.6</b>

## NOTES continued

## 13 Intangible assets

2023	Goodwill £m	Customer relationships £m	Brands £m	Technology £m	Software £m	Total £m
<b>Cost</b>						
Beginning of year	1,944.4	2,349.0	39.7	9.5	107.4	4,450.0
Acquisitions (Note 9)	130.6	229.5	10.6	–	1.3	372.0
Adjustment for hyperinflation accounting <sup>1</sup>	8.4	1.6	–	–	–	10.0
Additions					15.5	15.5
Disposals					(4.6)	(4.6)
Currency translation	(62.7)	(85.6)	(1.8)	(0.2)	(2.8)	(153.1)
<b>End of year</b>	<b>2,020.7</b>	<b>2,494.5</b>	<b>48.5</b>	<b>9.3</b>	<b>116.8</b>	<b>4,689.8</b>
<b>Accumulated amortisation and impairment</b>						
Beginning of year	12.8	1,258.1	4.8	0.4	80.0	1,356.1
Amortisation charge in the year		130.2	4.0	1.4	9.4	145.0
Adjustment for hyperinflation accounting <sup>1</sup>	–	1.2	–	–	–	1.2
Disposals					(4.6)	(4.6)
Currency translation	(1.0)	(45.8)	(1.4)	–	(1.8)	(50.0)
<b>End of year</b>	<b>11.8</b>	<b>1,343.7</b>	<b>7.4</b>	<b>1.8</b>	<b>83.0</b>	<b>1,447.7</b>
<b>Net book value at 31 December 2023</b>	<b>2,008.9</b>	<b>1,150.8</b>	<b>41.1</b>	<b>7.5</b>	<b>33.8</b>	<b>3,242.1</b>

<sup>1</sup> See Note 1 for further details.

2022	Goodwill £m	Customer relationships £m	Brands £m	Technology £m	Software £m	Total £m
<b>Cost</b>						
At 31 December 2021	1,710.9	2,055.2	25.0	–	90.2	3,881.3
Adjustment to opening balances in respect of hyperinflation in Turkey <sup>1</sup>	6.7	10.0	–	–	–	16.7
Restated as at 1 January 2022	1,717.6	2,065.2	25.0	–	90.2	3,898.0
Acquisitions (Note 9)	106.6	107.7	11.6	9.1	0.7	235.7
Disposal of business (Note 10)	(17.0)	(5.1)	–	–	(0.8)	(22.9)
Adjustment for hyperinflation accounting <sup>1</sup>	9.7	13.5	–	–	–	23.2
Additions					12.0	12.0
Disposals					(3.4)	(3.4)
Currency translation	127.5	167.7	3.1	0.4	8.7	307.4
<b>End of year</b>	<b>1,944.4</b>	<b>2,349.0</b>	<b>39.7</b>	<b>9.5</b>	<b>107.4</b>	<b>4,450.0</b>
<b>Accumulated amortisation and impairment</b>						
At 31 December 2021	12.4	1,033.2	1.0	–	67.9	1,114.5
Adjustment to opening balances in respect of hyperinflation in Turkey <sup>1</sup>	–	4.4	–	–	–	4.4
Restated as at 1 January 2022	12.4	1,037.6	1.0	–	67.9	1,118.9
Amortisation charge in the year		124.8	3.2	0.4	8.8	137.2
Impairment charge in the year	–	13.0	–	–	–	13.0
Disposal of business (Note 10)	–	(2.9)	–	–	(0.6)	(3.5)
Adjustment for hyperinflation accounting <sup>1</sup>	–	6.8	–	–	–	6.8
Disposals					(3.4)	(3.4)
Currency translation	0.4	78.8	0.6	–	7.3	87.1
<b>End of year</b>	<b>12.8</b>	<b>1,258.1</b>	<b>4.8</b>	<b>0.4</b>	<b>80.0</b>	<b>1,356.1</b>
<b>Net book value at 31 December 2022</b>	<b>1,931.6</b>	<b>1,090.9</b>	<b>34.9</b>	<b>9.1</b>	<b>27.4</b>	<b>3,093.9</b>

<sup>1</sup> See Note 1 for further details.

**NOTES** continued**13 Intangible assets continued**

Goodwill, customer relationships, brands and technology intangible assets have been acquired as part of business combinations. Further details of acquisitions made in the year are set out in Note 9.

Customer relationships include three businesses with individually significant customer relationships assets, McCue Corporation acquired in October 2021 and based in North America, MCR Safety acquired in September 2020 and based in North America and Hedis acquired in 2017 and based in France. The net book value of customer relationships in McCue Corporation as at 31 December 2023 was £98.9m (2022: £113.1m) with a remaining useful economic life of 12.7 years (2022: 13.7 years). The net book value of customer relationships in MCR Safety as at 31 December 2023 was £82.7m (2022: £94.2m) with a remaining useful economic life of 11.7 years (2022: 12.7 years). The net book value of customer relationships in Hedis as at 31 December 2023 was £76.8m (2022: £86.9m) with a remaining useful economic life of 9.9 years (2022: 10.9 years).

**Impairment testing**

The carrying amount of goodwill is allocated across CGUs and is tested annually for impairment by comparing the recoverable amount of each CGU with its carrying value.

A description of the Group's principal activities is set out in the Chief Executive Officer's review. There is no significant difference in the nature of activities across different geographies. The identification of CGUs reflects the way the business is managed and monitored on a geographical basis, taking into account the generation of cash flows and the sharing of synergies. Given the similar nature of the activities of each CGU, a consistent methodology is applied across the Group in assessing CGU recoverable amounts. The recoverable amount is the higher of the value in use and the fair value less the costs of disposal. The value in use is the present value of the cash flows expected to be generated by the CGU over a projection period together with a terminal value. The projection period is the time period over which future cash flows are predicted. The Group's methodology is to use a projection period of five years consisting of detailed cash flow forecasts for the first two years and CGU specific growth assumptions for years three, four and five. For periods after this five year period, the methodology applies a long term growth rate specific to the CGU to derive a terminal value. Cash flow expectations exclude any future cash flows that may arise from restructuring or other enhancements to the cash generating activities of the CGU and reflect management's expectations of the range of economic conditions that may exist over the projection period.

The value in use calculations are principally sensitive to revenue growth, including any significant changes to the customer base, achievability of future profit margins and the discount rates used in the present value calculation. The information used for valuation purposes takes into consideration past experience and the current economic environment with regard to customer attrition rates and additions to the customer base, the ability to introduce price increases and new products and experience in controlling the underlying cost base. This information is used to determine a long term growth rate which is consistent with the geographic segments in which the Group operates and management's assessment of future operating performance and market share movements. The discount rates used are determined with assistance provided by external valuation specialists.

The Group allocates goodwill across seven CGUs (2022: seven). Based on our impairment testing, no impairments were identified to the carrying value of goodwill within the Group.

As at 31 December 2023, North America, UK & Ireland, France and Rest of Continental Europe carried a significant amount of goodwill in comparison with the total value of the Group's goodwill. At 31 December 2023 the carrying value of goodwill in respect of North America was £700.0m (2022: £722.7m), UK & Ireland was £317.3m (2022: £314.7m), France was £253.5m (2022: £258.0m) and Rest of Continental Europe was £307.1m (2022: £276.8m). As at 31 December 2023 the aggregate amount of goodwill attributable to the Group's CGUs, excluding North America, UK & Ireland, France and Rest of Continental Europe, was £431.0m (2022: £359.4m), none of which is individually significant.

For North America, UK & Ireland, France and Rest of Continental Europe, the weighted average long term growth rate used in 2023 was in the range of 2.5%–3.3% (2022: 2.5%–4.0%) reflecting anticipated revenue and profit growth. A pre-tax discount rate in the range of 9%–11% (2022: 8%–11%) has been applied to the value in use calculations reflecting market assessments of the time value of money at the balance sheet date. Similar assumptions have been applied to the other CGUs but where appropriate the directors have considered alternative market risk assumptions to reflect the specific conditions arising in individual CGUs with long term growth rates ranging from 2.5%–5.5% (2022: 2.5%–5.4%) and discount rates ranging from 9%–15% (2022: 7%–15%).

As part of the annual impairment testing for goodwill, the Group also considered whether there were any indicators that individual customer relationships and brands intangible assets were impaired. As for the impairment testing for the Group's CGUs noted above, value in use calculations were prepared based on management's latest expectations of the performance of the relevant business over a five year projection period and appropriate long term growth and discount rates. Based on our impairment testing, no impairments were identified to the carrying value of customer relationships, brands and technology intangible assets within the Group.

**Sensitivity to changes in key assumptions**

Impairment testing is dependent on management's estimates and judgements, particularly as they relate to the forecasting of future cash flows, expected long term growth rates and the discount rates selected. Key assumptions on which value in use calculations are dependent relate to the discount rates used and revenue growth including the impact of changes to the underlying customer base from customer attrition and the rate at which new customer relationships are introduced and established.

As part of the annual impairment testing, management performed sensitivity analysis by modelling the impact of higher discount rates, and reviewing the combination of discount rates and long term growth rates which would bring the value in use to the net book value or below. From this sensitivity testing management has concluded that no reasonably possible change in key assumptions would result in a material change to the carrying amounts of any of the Group's intangible assets in the next 12 months.

The Group has also considered whether climate change would have a significant impact on the approach taken to the annual impairment testing. As part of this the Group has assessed three alternative climate change scenarios up to 2050. Two of our scenarios align with the global warming trajectory of between 1°C to 2°C by 2100 but differ in the speed and extent of global decarbonisation over the next 30 years (orderly and disorderly). Our final scenario assessed the potential impacts of a world in which global warming exceeds 3°C by 2100 (hothouse world scenario). Having assessed these scenarios the Group has concluded that, although climate change is a principal risk, it does not warrant any amendment to the assumptions used in the Group's impairment testing, and would not have a material impact on the results of the impairment testing.

## NOTES continued

## 14 Working capital

	2023 £m	2022 £m
Inventories (Note 15)	1,621.1	1,748.6
Trade and other receivables (Note 16)	1,578.5	1,557.4
Trade and other payables – current (Note 17)	(2,071.6)	(2,249.4)
Add back net non-trading related receivables and payables	30.1	40.0
	1,158.1	1,096.6

See Note 30 for the cash flow impact of movements in working capital which exclude the impact from foreign exchange movements, acquisitions and the disposal of business.

## 15 Inventories

	2023 £m	2022 £m
Goods for resale	1,621.1	1,748.6

During the year £11.9m (2022: £10.8m) was written off directly from inventories due to obsolescence or damage. Inventory provisions, including provisions for slow moving, obsolete or defective inventories and market price movements, as at 31 December 2023 were £154.2m (2022: £179.9m). During the year, the Group saw a net utilisation of approximately £25m on provisions for slow moving inventory (2022: net utilisation of approximately £4m), as well as some utilisation of the residual provisions related to market price movements on Covid-19 related products; the remaining market price risk on these products is no longer significant.

## 16 Trade and other receivables

	2023 £m	2022 £m
Trade receivables	1,287.3	1,266.0
Prepayments	84.4	87.9
Other receivables	206.8	203.5
	1,578.5	1,557.4

The Group does not have any significant contract assets.

The ageing of trade receivables at 31 December was:

	2023		2022	
	Gross £m	Provision £m	Gross £m	Provision £m
Current	1,058.6	5.7	1,037.5	6.0
0–30 days overdue	186.1	2.6	174.1	2.3
31–90 days overdue	49.6	3.0	48.3	2.7
Over 90 days overdue	27.5	23.2	35.2	18.1
	1,321.8	34.5	1,295.1	29.1

The trade receivables provision includes provisions for expected credit losses and credit notes to be issued. The movement in the provision during the year was as follows:

	2023 £m	2022 £m
Beginning of year	29.1	27.4
Acquisitions	4.3	0.8
Disposal of business	–	(0.6)
Charge	6.3	8.5
Released	(3.7)	(4.8)
Utilised	(1.0)	(4.3)
Currency translation	(0.5)	2.1
End of year	34.5	29.1

## 17 Trade and other payables

## Current

	2023 £m	2022 £m
Trade payables	1,290.1	1,440.9
Other tax and social security contributions	35.2	31.2
Other payables	249.6	245.3
Accruals and contract liabilities	496.7	532.0
	2,071.6	2,249.4

Other payables includes £32.3m (2022: £42.0m) related to deferred consideration on acquisitions.

The Group's contract liabilities are limited to deferred income of £7.1m (2022: £10.4m). This arises from contracts with customers in the form of consideration that has been received in advance of the satisfaction of performance obligations.

## Non-current

Other payables greater than one year of £176.1m (2022: £117.2m) includes £143.3m (2022: £97.9m) related to deferred consideration on acquisitions.



**NOTES continued****18 Risk management and financial instruments****Capital management**

The Group's policy is to maintain a strong capital base so as to maintain investor, creditor and market confidence and to sustain future development of the business. The Group monitors the return on average operating capital employed and the return on invested capital (as defined in Note 3) as well as the level of total shareholders' equity and sets the amount of dividends paid to ordinary shareholders.

The principal financial covenant limits are net debt to EBITDA, calculated at average exchange rates and in accordance with the Group's external debt covenants, of no more than 3.5 times and interest cover of no less than 3.0 times. Sensitivity analyses using various scenarios are applied to forecasts to assess their impact on covenants and net debt. Additionally, compliance with the Group's biannual debt covenants is monitored on a monthly basis and formally tested at 30 June and 31 December. During 2023 all covenants have been complied with and based on current forecasts it is expected that such covenants will continue to be complied with for the foreseeable future. Debt covenants are based on historical accounting standards. The US private placement notes ('USPPs') issued in March 2022 contain a clause whereby upon maturity of the previously issued USPPs, the latest maturity being in 2028, the principal financial covenants referred to above will no longer apply. In addition, the principle financial covenants were removed from the Group's committed bank facilities in 2022.

The Group funds its operations through a mixture of shareholders' equity and bank and capital market borrowings. All of the borrowings are managed by a central treasury function and funds raised are lent onward to operating subsidiaries as required. The overall objective is to manage the funding to ensure the borrowings have a range of maturities, are competitively priced and meet the demands of the business over time and, in order to do so, the Group arranges a mixture of borrowings from different sources with a variety of maturity dates.

The Group's businesses provide a high and consistent level of cash generation which helps fund future development and growth. The Group seeks to maintain an appropriate balance between the higher returns that might be possible with higher levels of borrowings and the advantages and security afforded by a sound capital position.

There were no changes to the Group's approach to capital management during the year and the Group is not subject to any externally imposed capital requirements.

**Treasury policies and controls**

The Group has a centralised treasury department to control external borrowings and manage liquidity, interest rate, foreign currency and credit risks. Treasury policies have been approved by the Board and cover the nature of the exposure to be hedged, the types of financial instruments that may be employed and the criteria for investing and borrowing cash. The Group uses derivatives to manage its foreign currency and interest rate risks arising from underlying business activities. No transactions of a speculative nature are undertaken. The treasury department is subject to periodic independent review by the internal audit department. Underlying policy assumptions and activities are periodically reviewed by the Board. Controls over exposure changes and transaction authenticity are in place.

**Derivatives and hedge accounting**

The Group designates derivatives which qualify as hedges for accounting purposes as either (a) a hedge of the fair value of a recognised asset or liability; (b) a hedge of the cash flow risk resulting from changes in interest rates or foreign exchange rates; or (c) a hedge of a net investment in a foreign operation. The accounting treatment for hedges and derivatives is set out in the financial instruments accounting policy in Note 2p. The Group tests the effectiveness of hedges on a prospective basis to ensure compliance with IFRS 9. Information about the methods and assumptions used in determining the fair value of derivatives is provided under the Financial instruments section on page 179.

**Hedge effectiveness**

For hedges of foreign currency purchases and sales, the Group enters into cash flow hedge relationships where the critical terms of the hedging instrument are similar to those of the hedged item, such as notional amount, expected maturity date and currency. Hedge ineffectiveness may arise if the timing of the forecast transaction changes from what was originally estimated. The Group therefore performs a quantitative hedge effectiveness assessment to calculate any ineffectiveness during the period.

Part of the Group's fixed rate debt portfolio is swapped to floating rates using interest rate swaps where the hedged items are individual tranches of fixed rate debt. These interest rate swaps are held in fair value hedges with critical terms exactly matching those of the underlying hedged items, such as notional amounts, payment dates, reset dates, maturity dates and currencies. As all critical terms matched during the year, the economic relationship was 100% effective. The Group therefore performs a qualitative assessment of effectiveness. If changes in circumstances affect the terms of the hedged item such that the critical terms no longer match exactly with the critical terms of the hedging instrument, the Group will perform a quantitative assessment of effectiveness. Hedge ineffectiveness may arise due to a change in credit risk of the counterparty or if there is a change in timings or amounts of the hedged cash flows.

There was no material ineffectiveness during 2023 in relation to the interest rate swaps or the forward currency contracts.

**Risk management****(a) Liquidity risk**

Liquidity risk is the risk that the Group will not be able to meet its financial obligations as they fall due. The Group continually monitors net debt and forecast cash flows to ensure that sufficient facilities are in place to meet the Group's requirements in the short, medium and long term and, in order to do so, arranges borrowings from a variety of sources.

The Group has substantial funding available comprising multi-currency credit facilities from the Group's banks, US private placement notes and senior bonds. During 2023, £365m of bank facilities were signed with maturities between 2026 to 2028. The Group expects to sign and extend bank facilities during 2024.

During the year, the Group's USD interest rate swaps and committed USD bank facility, which previously referenced the discontinued USD LIBOR, have been renegotiated to reference SOFR, the new USD benchmark. This has not had an impact on the financial results for the year ended 31 December 2023.

## NOTES continued

## 18 Risk management and financial instruments continued

## Loans, borrowings and net debt

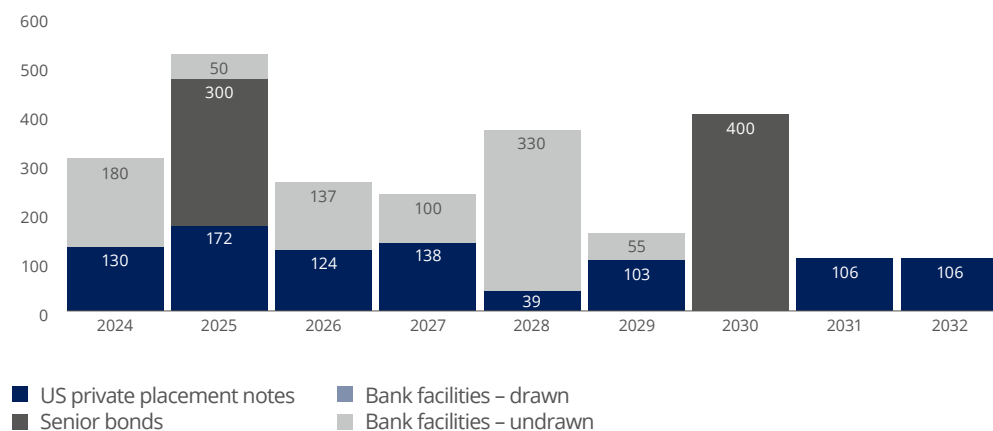
	2023 £m	2022 £m
Bank overdrafts	(874.2)	(825.9)
Bank loans	(0.1)	-
US private placement notes	(129.9)	(161.0)
<b>Borrowings due within one year</b>	<b>(1,004.2)</b>	<b>(986.9)</b>
US private placement notes	(795.2)	(975.7)
Senior bonds	(621.9)	(598.3)
<b>Borrowings due after one year</b>	<b>(1,417.1)</b>	<b>(1,574.0)</b>
Derivatives managing the interest rate risk and currency profile of the debt	(90.3)	(103.2)
<b>Gross debt</b>	<b>(2,511.6)</b>	<b>(2,664.1)</b>
Cash and cash equivalents	1,426.1	1,504.0
<b>Net debt excluding lease liabilities</b>	<b>(1,085.5)</b>	<b>(1,160.1)</b>
Lease liabilities	(664.5)	(569.9)
<b>Net debt including lease liabilities</b>	<b>(1,750.0)</b>	<b>(1,730.0)</b>

Further information on the movement in net debt and lease liabilities is shown in Note 29.

The total available committed funding at 31 December 2023 was £2,470.0m (2022: £2,790.0m).

The committed funding maturity profile at 31 December 2023 is set out in the chart below:

## Committed funding maturity profile by year (£m)



The undrawn committed bank facilities available at 31 December were as follows:

	2023 £m	2022 £m
Expiring within one year	179.8	84.1
Expiring after one year but within two years	50.0	205.4
Expiring after two years	622.8	674.1
	<b>852.6</b>	<b>963.6</b>

In addition, the Group maintains overdraft and uncommitted facilities to provide short term flexibility. As at 31 December 2023 there were no loans secured by fixed charges on property (2022: none).

## Contractual maturity profile

The contractual maturity profile of the Group's financial liabilities at 31 December is set out in the tables below. The amounts disclosed are the contractual undiscounted cash flows and therefore include interest cash flows (forecast using SONIA and SOFR interest rates at 31 December in the case of floating rate financial assets and liabilities). Derivative assets and liabilities have been included within the tables since they predominantly relate to derivatives which are used to manage the interest cash flows on the Group's debt. Bank loans have been drawn under committed facilities and can be refinanced on maturity from these same facilities. Accordingly, they have been aged based on the maturity dates of the underlying facilities. Foreign currency cash flows have been translated using spot rates as at 31 December.

	Total contractual cash flows £m	Contractual cash (outflows)/inflows			
		Within one year £m	After one year but within two years £m	After two years but within five years £m	After five years £m
<b>2023</b>					
<b>Financial liabilities</b>					
Bank overdrafts	(874.2)	(874.2)			
Bank loans	(0.1)	(0.1)			
US private placement notes	(1,068.8)	(163.4)	(199.6)	(357.2)	(348.6)
Senior bonds	(755.6)	(12.8)	(312.8)	(18.0)	(412.0)
Lease payments	(788.1)	(180.5)	(159.4)	(318.4)	(129.8)
Trade and other payables	(2,205.4)	(2,029.3)	(63.6)	(102.8)	(9.7)
	<b>(5,692.2)</b>	<b>(3,260.3)</b>	<b>(735.4)</b>	<b>(796.4)</b>	<b>(900.1)</b>
<b>Derivative financial instruments</b>					
Net settled:					
Interest rate swaps	(151.9)	(22.8)	(22.8)	(65.9)	(40.4)
Gross settled:					
Foreign exchange inflows	2,539.0	2,539.0	-	-	-
Foreign exchange outflows	(2,549.2)	(2,549.2)	-	-	-
	<b>(162.1)</b>	<b>(33.0)</b>	<b>(22.8)</b>	<b>(65.9)</b>	<b>(40.4)</b>
<b>Total</b>	<b>(5,854.3)</b>	<b>(3,293.3)</b>	<b>(758.2)</b>	<b>(862.3)</b>	<b>(940.5)</b>

## NOTES continued

## 18 Risk management and financial instruments continued

	Contractual cash (outflows)/inflows				
	Total contractual cash flows £m	Within one year £m	After one year but within two years £m	After two years but within five years £m	After five years £m
<b>2022</b>					
Financial liabilities					
Bank overdrafts	(825.9)	(825.9)			
Bank loans	–	–			
US private placement notes	(1,325.9)	(200.8)	(172.7)	(527.1)	(425.3)
Senior bonds	(768.4)	(12.8)	(12.8)	(324.8)	(418.0)
Lease payments	(706.6)	(167.6)	(136.0)	(263.3)	(139.7)
Trade and other payables	(2,325.0)	(2,207.8)	(117.2)	–	–
	(5,951.8)	(3,414.9)	(438.7)	(1,115.2)	(983.0)
Derivative financial instruments					
Net settled:					
Interest rate swaps	(115.7)	(15.2)	(15.2)	(44.7)	(40.6)
Gross settled:					
Foreign exchange inflows	1,831.6	1,829.8	1.8		
Foreign exchange outflows	(1,830.0)	(1,828.2)	(1.8)		
	(114.1)	(13.6)	(15.2)	(44.7)	(40.6)
<b>Total</b>	<b>(6,065.9)</b>	<b>(3,428.5)</b>	<b>(453.9)</b>	<b>(1,159.9)</b>	<b>(1,023.6)</b>

**(b) Interest rate risk**

The Group is funded by a mixture of fixed and floating rate debt with the Group's main interest rate risk arising on its floating rate debt. Interest rate swaps and interest rate caps are used to manage the interest rate risk profile.

The table below shows the fixed/floating rate debt mix after interest rate swaps. Of the US private placement notes of £925.1m (2022: £1,136.7m), there are US dollar denominated amounts totalling £90.6m (2022: £94.6m), with maturities ranging from 2026 to 2028, which have been swapped to floating rates using interest rate swaps which reprice daily. Of the senior bonds of £621.9m (2022: £598.3m), an amount totalling £322.4m (2022: £299.2m), with a maturity of 2030, has been swapped to floating rates using interest rate swaps which reprice daily.

The US private placement notes of £925.1m include a fair value adjustment of £12.4m (2022: £16.6m) related to interest rate swaps terminated in previous years. The terminations resulted in discontinuation of a number of fair value hedge relationships. At the date of de-designation, there was a fair value adjustment on the US private placement notes which will be amortised to the income statement across the remaining life of the debt. The amortisation of the fair value adjustment in 2023 was a credit to the income statement of £4.2m (2022: £4.2m).

The interest rate risk on the floating rate liability is managed using interest rate options. The strike rates of these options are based on EURIBOR and are repriced every three months.

Bank loans are drawn for periods up to one month at interest rates linked to SONIA.

**Fixed vs floating interest rate table**

	2023 £m	2022 £m
<b>Fixed rate debt</b>		
US private placement notes	(925.1)	(1,136.7)
Senior bonds	(621.9)	(598.3)
Total fixed rate debt	(1,547.0)	(1,735.0)
Interest rate swaps (fixed leg)	413.0	393.8
Fixed rate liability	(1,134.0)	(1,341.2)
<b>Floating rate debt</b>		
Bank overdrafts	(874.2)	(825.9)
Bank loans	(0.1)	–
Total floating rate debt	(874.3)	(825.9)
Interest rate swaps (floating leg)	(413.0)	(393.8)
Floating rate liability	(1,287.3)	(1,219.7)
Derivatives managing the interest rate risk and currency profile of the debt	(90.3)	(103.2)
<b>Gross debt</b>	<b>(2,511.6)</b>	<b>(2,664.1)</b>

## NOTES continued

**18 Risk management and financial instruments continued****Effects of hedge accounting on the financial position and performance**

The effects of the interest rate swaps on the Group's financial position and performance are as follows:

	2023	2022
<b>Interest rate swaps</b>		
Net carrying amount liability (£m)	(78.7)	(100.5)
Notional amount (£m)	494.5	500.0
Maturity date range	2026–2030	2026–2030
Hedge ratio	1:1	1:1
Fair value (loss)/gain on US private placement notes and senior bond in a hedge relationship (£m)	(24.4)	83.2
Fair value gain/(loss) on interest rate swaps in a hedge relationship (£m)	21.8	(79.2)

**Sensitivity to movements in interest rates**

After taking account of hedge relationships, a change of 1% in the interest rate forward curves on 31 December would have affected profit before income tax for the year and equity as at the year end as a result of changes in the fair values of derivative assets and liabilities at that date by the amounts shown below:

	Impact on profit before tax		Impact on equity	
	+1% £m	-1% £m	+1% £m	-1% £m
2023	0.2	(0.1)	0.2	(0.1)
2022	1.5	(1.4)	1.5	(1.4)

**(c) Foreign currency risk**

The majority of the Group's sales are made and income is earned in US dollars, euros and other foreign currencies. The Group does not hedge the impact of exchange rate movements arising on translation of earnings into sterling at average exchange rates.

The following significant exchange rates applied during the year:

	Average rate		Closing rate	
	2023	2022	2023	2022
US dollar	1.24	1.24	1.27	1.20
Euro	1.15	1.17	1.15	1.13

The majority of the Group's transactions are carried out in the respective functional currencies of the Group's operations and so transaction exposures are usually relatively limited. Where they do occur the Group's policy is to hedge exposures of highly probable forecast transactions using forward foreign exchange contracts and these are designated as cash flow hedges. During the year the Group hedged highly probable forecast transactions for periods of up to 21 months. However, the economic impact of foreign exchange on the value of uncommitted future purchases and sales is not hedged. As a result, sudden and significant movements in foreign exchange rates can impact profit margins where there is a delay in passing the resulting price increases on to customers.

For the year ended 31 December 2023, all foreign exchange cash flow hedges were effective with a cumulative pre-tax loss of £2.5m (2022: cumulative pre-tax loss of £1.2m) recognised in equity at the end of the year and this will affect the income statement during 2024.

**Effects of hedge accounting on the financial position and performance**

	2023	2022
<b>Forward foreign currency hedges in relation to inventory purchases</b>		
Net carrying amount liability (£m)	(2.5)	(1.2)
Notional amount at 31 December (£m)	135.3	169.0
Maturity date range	2024	2023–2024
Hedge ratio	1:1	1:1
Change in value of hedged items since 1 January (£m)	1.3	1.7
Change in fair value of outstanding foreign currency forward contracts since 1 January (£m)	(1.3)	(1.7)

The majority of the Group's borrowings are effectively denominated in US dollars, sterling and euros, aligning them to the respective functional currencies of the component parts of the Group's EBITDA. This currency profile is achieved using short term foreign exchange contracts and foreign currency debt which are designated as hedging instruments to achieve net investment hedge accounting at a Group level. This currency composition minimises the impact of movements in foreign exchange rates on the ratio of net debt to EBITDA. No ineffectiveness was recorded from net investments in foreign entity hedges.

The currency profile of the Group's net debt excluding lease liabilities at 31 December is set out in the table below:

	2023 £m	2022 £m
US dollar	438.6	475.9
Sterling	91.8	48.9
Euro	573.9	551.6
Other	(18.8)	83.7
	1,085.5	1,160.1

The Group also enters into foreign currency derivatives to hedge intercompany loans economically although these do not qualify for hedge accounting and therefore gains and losses are recorded in the income statement. These currency derivatives are subject to the same risk management policies as all other derivative contracts.

## NOTES continued

**18 Risk management and financial instruments** continued**Sensitivity to movements in foreign exchange rates**

For the year ended 31 December 2023, a movement of one cent in the US dollar and euro average exchange rates would have changed profit before income tax by £3.0m and £1.0m respectively (2022: £2.7m and £0.9m) and adjusted profit before income tax by £3.4m and £1.5m respectively (2022: £3.2m and £1.2m).

If a 10% strengthening or weakening of sterling had taken place on 31 December it would have increased/ (decreased) profit before income tax and (decreased)/increased equity for the year by the amounts shown below. The impact of this translation is much greater on equity than it is on profit before income tax since equity is translated using the closing exchange rates at the year end and profit before income tax is translated using the average exchange rates for the year. As a result, the value of equity is more sensitive than the value of profit before income tax to a movement in exchange rates on 31 December and the resulting movement in profit before income tax is due solely to the translation effect on monetary items. This analysis assumes that all other variables, in particular interest rates, remain constant.

	Impact on profit before tax		Impact on equity	
	+10% £m	-10% £m	+10% £m	-10% £m
2023	0.4	(0.5)	(228.8)	308.2
2022	0.2	(0.2)	(211.1)	277.9

**(d) Credit risk**

Credit risk is the risk of loss in relation to a financial asset due to non-payment by the relevant counterparty. The Group's objective is to reduce its exposure to counterparty default by restricting the type of counterparty it deals with and by employing an appropriate policy in relation to the collection of financial assets.

The Group's financial assets are cash at bank and in hand, derivative financial instruments and trade and other receivables which represent the Group's maximum exposure to credit risk in relation to financial assets. The maximum exposure to credit risk for cash at bank and in hand, derivative financial assets (see page 179) and trade and other receivables (see Note 16) is their respective carrying amounts.

Dealings are restricted to those banks with the relevant combination of geographic presence and suitable credit rating. The Group continually monitors the credit ratings of its counterparties and the credit exposure to each counterparty.

For trade and other receivables, the amounts represented in the balance sheet are net of any impairment losses measured using the expected credit loss model. Note 16 sets out an analysis of trade and other receivables and the provision for doubtful debts in respect of trade receivables.

At the balance sheet date there were no significant concentrations of credit risk (2022: none).

**(e) Financial instruments****Financial assets and liabilities**

	2023 £m	2022 £m
<b>Financial assets held at amortised cost</b>		
Cash at bank and in hand	1,377.1	1,504.0
Trade and other receivables	1,494.1	1,469.5
<b>Financial assets held at fair value</b>		
Money market funds	49.0	–
Foreign exchange derivatives in cash flow hedges	0.3	1.5
Foreign exchange derivatives in net investment hedges	9.8	8.3
Other foreign exchange and interest rate derivatives	1.7	9.2
<b>Total financial assets</b>	<b>2,932.0</b>	<b>2,992.5</b>
<b>Financial liabilities held at amortised cost</b>		
Bank overdrafts	(874.2)	(825.9)
Bank loans	(0.1)	–
US private placement notes	(925.1)	(1,136.7)
Senior bonds	(621.9)	(598.3)
Lease liabilities	(664.5)	(569.9)
Trade and other payables	(2,043.8)	(2,193.3)
<b>Financial liabilities held at fair value</b>		
Interest rate derivatives in fair value hedges	(78.7)	(100.5)
Foreign exchange derivatives in cash flow hedges	(2.8)	(2.7)
Foreign exchange derivatives in net investment hedges	(16.6)	(5.7)
Other foreign exchange derivatives	(6.3)	(9.9)
Other payables	(161.6)	(131.7)
<b>Total financial liabilities</b>	<b>(5,395.6)</b>	<b>(5,574.6)</b>

## NOTES continued

## 18 Risk management and financial instruments continued

Financial assets and liabilities stated as being measured at fair value in the tables above (including all derivative financial instruments), with the exception of money market funds and other payables, have carrying amounts where the fair value is, and has been throughout the year, a level two fair value measurement. Level two fair value measurements use inputs other than quoted prices that are observable for the relevant asset or liability, either directly or indirectly. The fair values of financial assets and liabilities stated at level two fair value have been determined by discounting expected future cash flows, translated at the appropriate balance sheet date exchange rates and adjusted for counterparty or own credit risk as applicable. Money market funds have a fair value which is a level one fair value measurement, as this is determined by utilising unadjusted quoted prices in active markets as at the balance sheet date. Other payables measured at fair value relate to earn outs and options on businesses acquired. This is a level three fair value which is initially measured based on the expected future profitability of the businesses acquired at the acquisition date and subsequently reassessed at each reporting date based on the most recent data available on the expected profitability of the businesses acquired. These balances are sensitive to a change in the expected profitability of the businesses acquired. A 1% increase in the expected profitability of the relevant businesses acquired would result in an increase to other payables of £3.4m (2022: £2.5m) and 1% decrease in the expected profitability would result in a decrease of £3.4m (2022: 3.0m).

There were no transfers between levels for recurring fair value measurements during the year.

As at 31 December 2023 the fair values, based on unadjusted market data, of the US private placement notes was £875.9m (2022: £1,063.4m) and of the senior bonds was £615.8m (2022: £572.7m).

For other financial assets and financial liabilities not measured at fair value, including cash at bank and in hand, bank loans and overdrafts, trade and other receivables and trade and other payables, their carrying amount is a reasonable approximation of fair value due to their short term nature. Bank loans are priced based on floating interest rates and the credit spread has not changed since the inception of the loan.

## Offsetting of financial assets and liabilities

The following table sets out the Group's derivative financial assets and liabilities that are subject to counterparty offsetting or master netting agreements.

	Gross amounts £m	Gross amounts offset in the balance sheet £m	Net amounts recognised in the balance sheet £m	Amounts not offset in the balance sheet £m	Net amounts £m
<b>2023</b>					
Derivative financial assets	11.8	–	11.8	(10.2)	1.6
Derivative financial liabilities	(104.4)	–	(104.4)	10.2	(94.2)
<b>2022</b>					
Derivative financial assets	19.0	–	19.0	(10.9)	8.1
Derivative financial liabilities	(118.8)	–	(118.8)	10.9	(107.9)

## 19 Provisions

	2023 £m	2022 £m
Current	10.0	24.2
Non-current	75.8	50.5
	85.8	74.7

	2023				2022			
	Properties £m	MEPP withdrawal £m	Other £m	Total £m	Properties £m	MEPP withdrawal £m	Other £m	Total £m
Beginning of year	25.3	13.8	35.6	74.7	25.2	12.3	27.3	64.8
Charge	2.6	–	1.3	3.9	2.0	–	12.5	14.5
Acquisitions	2.2	–	24.0	26.2	1.4	–	6.5	7.9
Disposal of business	–	–	–	–	(1.3)	–	–	(1.3)
Utilised or released	(3.3)	(9.1)	(5.0)	(17.4)	(2.2)	–	(13.7)	(15.9)
Currency translation	(0.4)	(0.5)	(0.7)	(1.6)	0.2	1.5	3.0	4.7
<b>End of year</b>	<b>26.4</b>	<b>4.2</b>	<b>55.2</b>	<b>85.8</b>	25.3	13.8	35.6	74.7

The Properties provision includes provisions for repairs and dilapidations. These provisions cover the relevant periods of the lease agreements, which typically extend from one to 10 years, up to the expected termination date.

The MEPP withdrawal provision relates to the withdrawal liability on multi-employer pension plans in North America. See Note 25 for further details.

Group companies are, from time to time, subject to certain claims and litigation incidental to their operations and arising in the ordinary course of business including, but not limited to, those relating to the products and services that they supply, contractual and commercial disputes, environmental claims, employment related disputes and indirect and payroll taxes. Other provisions include management's best estimate of the liabilities for such claims and litigation at the balance sheet date, determined by reference to known factors and past experience of similar items. Provision is made if, on the basis of current information and professional advice, liabilities are considered likely to arise. Management expects these matters to be settled within the next one to five years. While any dispute has an element of uncertainty, management does not expect that the actual outcome of any such claims and litigation, either individually or in the aggregate, will be materially different to the amounts provided. In the case of unfavourable outcomes, the Group may benefit from applicable insurance protection. There are no individually significant provisions included within the other category.

## NOTES continued

## 20 Deferred tax

	2023			2022		
	Asset £m	Liability £m	Net £m	Asset £m	Liability £m	Net £m
Property, plant and equipment	0.5	(11.5)	(11.0)	1.0	(11.6)	(10.6)
Defined benefit pension schemes	5.4	(16.4)	(11.0)	5.2	(14.8)	(9.6)
Goodwill, customer relationships, brands and technology	6.9	(232.5)	(225.6)	5.9	(226.2)	(220.3)
Share based payments	15.1	–	15.1	11.7	–	11.7
Leases	7.8	(0.2)	7.6	6.7	(0.1)	6.6
Provisions and accruals	51.6	(4.2)	47.4	42.6	(3.4)	39.2
Inventories	13.6	(21.8)	(8.2)	12.2	(21.6)	(9.4)
Other	14.7	(4.9)	9.8	8.6	(4.9)	3.7
Deferred tax asset/(liability)	115.6	(291.5)	(175.9)	93.9	(282.6)	(188.7)
Set-off of tax	(101.4)	101.4	–	(89.9)	89.9	–
<b>Net deferred tax asset/(liability)</b>	<b>14.2</b>	<b>(190.1)</b>	<b>(175.9)</b>	<b>4.0</b>	<b>(192.7)</b>	<b>(188.7)</b>

Except as noted below, deferred tax is calculated in full on temporary differences under the liability method using the tax rate of the country of operation.

The Company is able to control the dividend policy of its subsidiaries and, therefore, the timing of the remittance of the undistributed earnings of overseas subsidiaries. In general, the Company has determined either that such earnings will not be distributed in the foreseeable future or, where there are plans to remit those earnings, no tax liability is expected to arise except for a liability of £1.4m (2022: £1.4m) which has been provided for.

Deferred tax assets in respect of temporary differences have only been recognised in respect of tax losses and other temporary differences where it is probable that these assets will be realised. No deferred tax asset has been recognised in respect of unutilised tax losses of £11.9m (2022: £8.6m).

No deferred tax has been recognised in respect of unutilised capital losses of £86.9m (2022: £87.2m) as it is not considered probable that there will be suitable future taxable profits against which they can be utilised.

The movement in the net deferred tax liability is shown below:

	2023 £m	2022 £m
Beginning of year	188.7	148.2
Acquisitions	20.3	26.9
Credit to income statement	(19.7)	(3.3)
Recognised in other comprehensive income and equity	(1.2)	3.0
Reclassified (to)/from current tax	(4.1)	0.3
Currency translation	(8.1)	13.6
<b>End of year</b>	<b>175.9</b>	<b>188.7</b>

## 21 Share capital and share based payments

	2023 £m	2022 £m
<b>Issued and fully paid ordinary shares of 32½p each</b>	<b>108.6</b>	108.5
<b>Number of ordinary shares in issue and fully paid</b>	<b>2023</b>	<b>2022</b>
Beginning of year	337,667,846	337,398,796
Issued – option exercises	353,231	269,050
<b>End of year</b>	<b>338,021,077</b>	337,667,846

The Company operates a number of share plans for the benefit of employees of the Company and its subsidiaries. Further details of the share plans as they relate to the directors of the Company are set out in the Directors' remuneration report.

**Sharesave Scheme, International Sharesave Plan and Irish Sharesave Plan**

For many years, the Company has operated all employee savings related share option schemes. The existing scheme in the UK, the Bunzl plc Sharesave Scheme, was approved by shareholders at the 2011 Annual General Meeting ('AGM') and renewal amendments were approved by shareholders at the 2021 AGM. It is an HMRC tax advantaged scheme and is open to all eligible UK employees, including UK based executive directors.

The Bunzl Irish Sharesave Plan, which is approved by the Irish Revenue Commissioners, and the Bunzl plc International Sharesave Plan, were first introduced in 2006 and have since been extended, most recently following the renewal of the Bunzl plc Sharesave Scheme in 2021.

The Bunzl plc Sharesave Scheme, Bunzl plc International Sharesave Plan and the Bunzl Irish Sharesave Plan operate on a similar basis with options granted to participating employees who have completed at least three months of continuous service at a discount of up to 20% of the market price prevailing shortly before the invitation to apply for the options. Depending on the scheme, options are normally exercisable either three or five years after they have been granted, with employees saving up to £500 (2022: £500) per month (or the equivalent value in other currencies under the Bunzl plc International Sharesave Plan) or €500 per month under the Bunzl Irish Sharesave Plan (the last grant under the Bunzl Irish Sharesave Plan was in 2021).

**Long Term Incentive Plan 2004 ('2004 LTIP') and 2014 ('2014 LTIP')**

The 2004 LTIP was approved by shareholders at the 2004 AGM and expired in May 2014. No further share options or performance share awards have been granted under the 2004 LTIP since that date and there are no 2004 LTIP options outstanding. The 2014 LTIP was approved by shareholders at the 2014 AGM and replaced the 2004 LTIP. The operation of the LTIP is overseen by the Remuneration Committee of the Board and is divided into two parts, being Part A and Part B.

Part A of the 2014 LTIP relates to the grant of market priced executive share options. In normal circumstances, options granted under Part A are only exercisable if the relevant performance condition has been satisfied. The performance condition is based on the Company's adjusted earnings per share growth meeting certain specified targets.

## NOTES continued

**21 Share capital and share based payments continued**

Part B of the 2014 LTIP relates to the grant of performance share awards and restricted share awards, both of which are conditional rights to receive shares in the Company for nil consideration. Performance share awards and restricted share awards will usually vest (i.e. become exercisable) on the third anniversary of their grant. The extent to which a performance share award will vest is usually subject to the extent to which the applicable performance conditions have been satisfied, based partly on the Company's total shareholder return performance, relative to a comparator group of companies over a three year period, and partly subject to the Company's adjusted earnings per share growth meeting certain specified targets. The extent to which a restricted share award will vest is usually subject to the extent to which the applicable underpin condition has been satisfied. There are no set measures or targets in relation to the underpin condition. The basis of assessment is at the absolute discretion of the Remuneration Committee.

**Investment in own shares**

The Company holds a number of its ordinary shares in an employee benefit trust. The principal purpose of this trust is to hold shares in the Company for subsequent transfer to certain senior employees and executive directors in relation to options granted and awards made under the LTIP and the Deferred Annual Share Bonus Scheme ('DASBS') over market purchase shares. Details of these plans are set out above and in the Directors' remuneration report. The assets, liabilities and expenditure of the trust have been incorporated in the consolidated financial statements. Finance expenses and administration charges are included in the income statement on an accruals basis. As at 31 December 2023 the trust held 2,223,988 (2022: 2,298,301) shares, upon which dividends have been waived, with an aggregate nominal value of £0.7m (2022: £0.7m) and market value of £70.9m (2022: £63.4m).

**IFRS 2 disclosures**

Options granted during the year have been valued using a Black Scholes model. The fair value per option granted during the year and the assumptions used in the calculations are as follows:

	2023	2022
Grant date	01.03.23–13.09.23	01.03.22–14.09.22
Share price at grant date (£)	28.04–30.60	28.10–31.03
Exercise price (£)	nil–28.05	nil–28.97
Number of options granted during the year (shares)	2,329,854	2,226,096
Vesting period (years)	3–5	3–5
Expected volatility (%)	19–21	19–21
Option life (years)	3.0–10	3.0–10
Expected life (years)	3.0–6.5	3.0–5.9
Risk free rate of return (%)	3.1–3.6	0.8–1.7
Expected dividends expressed as a dividend yield (%)	0.0–2.1	0.0–1.9
Fair value per option (£)	6.08–25.28	4.77–26.38

The expected volatility is based on historical volatility over the last three to seven years. The expected life is the average expected period to exercise. The risk free rate of return is the yield on zero coupon UK government bonds of a term consistent with the assumed option life.

The weighted average share price for options exercised by employees of the Company and its subsidiaries during the year was £30.45 (2022: £29.53). The total charge for the year relating to share based payments was £15.4m (2022: £14.1m). After tax the total charge was £11.7m (2022: £12.4m).

Details of share options and awards which have been granted and exercised, those which have lapsed during 2023 and those outstanding and available to exercise at 31 December 2023, whether over new issue or market purchase shares, or cash-settled, under the Sharesave Scheme, International Sharesave Plan, Irish Sharesave Plan, the 2004 LTIP Part A and 2014 LTIP Part A and Part B, are set out in the following table:

	Options outstanding at 01.01.23		Grants/awards		Exercises		Lapses* 2023	Options outstanding at 31.12.23		Options available to exercise at 31.12.23
	Number	Number	Price (£)	Number	Price (£)	Number		Number	Price (£)	Number
Sharesave Scheme	623,480	205,387	23.43	195,628	15.28–23.43	75,741	557,498	23.43	15.28–23.43	2,809
International Sharesave Plan	246,734	76,701	23.43	69,487	15.28	19,377	234,571	23.43	17.81–23.43	–
Irish Sharesave Plan	19,149	–	–	7,067	15.28	483	11,599	17.81	16.38–17.81	–
2004 LTIP Part A	92,600	–	–	92,600	13.56–13.75	–	–	–	16.38–17.81	–
2014 LTIP Part A	9,357,989	1,792,961	28.05	2,125,894	16.41–28.97	211,891	8,813,165	28.97	16.38–28.97	4,058,086
2014 LTIP Part B	1,213,424	254,805	nil	341,281	nil	38,785	1,088,163	nil	16.38–28.97	150,802
	11,553,376	2,329,854		2,831,957		346,277	10,704,996			4,211,697

\* Share option lapses relate to those which have either been forfeited or have expired during the year.

For the options outstanding at 31 December 2023, the weighted average fair values and the weighted average remaining contractual lives (being the time period from 31 December 2023 until the lapse date of each share option) are set out below:

	Weighted average fair value of options outstanding (£)	Weighted average remaining contractual life (years)
Sharesave Scheme	6.86	1.96
International Sharesave Plan	7.02	1.74
Irish Sharesave Plan	5.18	0.84
2014 LTIP Part A	4.05	6.57
2014 LTIP Part B	22.04	3.89

The outstanding share options and performance share awards are exercisable at various dates up to September 2033.



## NOTES continued

**22 Dividends**

Total dividends for the years in which they are recognised are:

	2023 £m	2022 £m
2021 interim		54.3
2021 final		136.2
2022 interim	57.9	
2022 final	151.8	
<b>Total</b>	<b>209.7</b>	190.5

Total dividends per share for the year to which they relate are:

	Per share	
	2023	2022
Interim	18.2p	17.3p
Final	50.1p	45.4p
<b>Total</b>	<b>68.3p</b>	62.7p

The 2023 interim dividend of 18.2p per share was paid on 3 January 2024 and comprised £61.0m of cash. The 2023 final dividend of 50.1p per share will be paid on 2 July 2024 to shareholders on the register at the close of business on 17 May 2024. The 2023 final dividend will comprise approximately £168m of cash.

**23 Contingent liabilities**

	2023 £m	2022 £m
Bank guarantees	2.0	1.8

**24 Directors' ordinary share interests**

The interests of the directors, and their connected persons, in the share capital of the Company at 31 December were:

	2023	2022
Peter Ventress	2,608	2,608
Frank van Zanten	225,612	180,751
Richard Howes	76,333	43,996
Vanda Murray	3,000	3,000
Lloyd Pitchford	4,000	4,000
Pam Kirby	1,800	1,800
Stephan Nanninga	-	-
Vin Murria	-	-
Jacky Simmonds	-	-
	<b>313,353</b>	236,155

Details of the directors' options and awards over ordinary shares made under the 2014 LTIP, Sharesave Scheme, International Sharesave plan and DASBS are set out in the Directors' remuneration report. No changes to the directors' ordinary share interests shown in this Note and the Directors' remuneration report have taken place between 31 December 2023 and 26 February 2024.

**25 Retirement benefits**

The Group operates a number of defined benefit and defined contribution retirement benefit schemes in the US, the UK and elsewhere in Europe (including France, the Netherlands and the Republic of Ireland). The funds of the principal defined benefit schemes are administered by trustees and are held independently from the Group. Pension costs of defined benefit schemes are assessed in accordance with the advice of independent professionally qualified actuaries. Contributions to all schemes are determined in line with actuarial advice and local conditions and practices. Scheme assets for the purpose of IAS 19 'Employee Benefits' are stated at their bid value.

**Characteristics of defined benefit pension schemes****UK**

The UK defined benefit scheme is a contributory defined benefit pension scheme providing benefits based on final pensionable pay. The scheme has been closed to new members since 2003. The valuation of the UK defined benefit pension scheme has been updated to 31 December 2023 by the Group's actuaries.

The UK scheme is an HMRC registered pension scheme and is subject to standard UK pensions and tax law. This means that the payment of contributions and benefits are subject to the appropriate tax treatments and restrictions and the scheme is subject to the scheme funding requirements outlined in section 224 of the Pensions Act 2004.

In accordance with UK trust and pensions law, the pension scheme has a corporate trustee. Although the Company bears the financial cost of the scheme, the responsibility for the management and governance of the scheme lies with the trustee, which has a duty to act in the best interest of members at all times. The assets of the scheme are held in trust by the trustee who consults with the Company on investment strategy decisions.

## NOTES continued

**25 Retirement benefits continued**

The trustee, in agreement with the Company, has hedging in place to reduce the impact of inflation and interest rate movements on the funding of the plan.

The last full triennial valuation on the UK defined benefit pension scheme was carried out by a qualified actuary as at 5 April 2021 and showed that there was a surplus on the agreed funding basis. During the year, a further contribution of £5.0m was made in respect of the 2022 calendar year. A revised schedule of contributions was agreed with the Trustee such that no further annual contributions will be paid in 2024 or 2025.

**US**

The principal US defined benefit pension scheme is a non-contributory defined benefit pension scheme providing benefits based on final pensionable pay. The scheme has been closed to new members since 2003. The valuation of the US defined benefit pension scheme has been updated to 31 December 2023 by the Group's actuaries.

The US scheme is a qualified pension scheme and is subject to standard regulations under the Employee Retirement Income Security Act of 1974, the Pension Protection Act of 2006 and the Department of Labor and Internal Revenue reporting requirements. The scheme pays annual premiums to the Pension Benefit Guaranty Corporation to insure the benefits of the scheme.

The assets of the scheme are held in trust by an independent custodian. The Company has established a Retirement Scheme Investment Committee. The members of the Committee are the scheme fiduciaries and, as such, are ultimately responsible for the management of the scheme assets. The Committee performs the oversight function and delegates the day-to-day management process to appropriate staff. A registered investment adviser advises the Committee regarding the investment of scheme assets.

A de-risking strategy has been agreed for the scheme to reduce the mismatch between the assets and liabilities, whereby investments are switched from return seeking assets to liability matching assets as the funding improves, based on pre-agreed triggers.

Annual actuarial valuations are performed on the US defined benefit pension scheme. The last annual review was carried out by a qualified actuary as at 1 January 2023 and showed that there was a required annual contribution of \$4.5m. Bunzl plans to cover this required contribution using prefunding balance. In 2023, Bunzl also used prefunding balance to cover the required contribution for the 2022 plan year. The annual review as at 1 January 2024 is ongoing.

**Risks**

The main risks to which the Group is exposed in relation to the defined benefit pension schemes are described below:

- Inflation risk – the majority of the UK scheme's liabilities increase in line with inflation and, as a result, if inflation is greater than expected the liabilities will increase. The impact of high inflation is capped each year for the UK scheme's benefits. The US scheme's liabilities are not directly tied to inflationary increases.
- Interest rate risk – a fall in bond yields will increase the value of the schemes' liabilities. A proportion of both the UK and US schemes' assets are invested in liability matching assets to mitigate the interest rate and also the inflation risk.
- Mortality risk – the assumptions adopted by the Group make allowance for future improvements in life expectancy. However, if life expectancy improves at a faster rate than assumed, this would result in greater payments from the schemes and consequently increases in the schemes' liabilities. The mortality assumptions are reviewed on a regular basis to minimise the risk of using an inappropriate assumption.

- Investment risk – the schemes invest in a diversified range of asset classes to mitigate the risk of falls in any one area of the investments. In the UK, the trustee implements partial currency hedging on the overseas assets to mitigate currency risk.

The risks mentioned above could lead to a material change to the deficit or surplus of the pension schemes. Given the long term time horizon of the schemes' cash flows, the assumptions used can lead to volatility in the scheme valuations from year to year. The Company and the trustee of the UK scheme seek to mitigate actively the risks associated with the schemes.

A higher defined benefit obligation could lead to additional funding requirements in future years. Any deficit measured on a funding valuation basis, which may differ from the actuarial valuation under IAS 19, will generally be financed over a period that ensures the contributions are appropriate to the Group and in line with the relevant regulations.

**Financial information**

The amounts included in the consolidated financial statements at 31 December were:

	2023 £m	2022 £m
<b>Amounts included in the income statement</b>		
Defined contribution pension schemes	28.9	26.2
Defined benefit pension schemes		
current service cost (net of contributions by employees)	3.4	4.8
losses on curtailment and settlement	–	0.5
Total included in employee costs	32.3	31.5
<b>Amounts included in finance (income)/expense</b>		
Net interest income on defined benefit pension schemes in surplus	(3.2)	(1.2)
Net interest expense on defined benefit pension schemes in deficit	1.0	0.8
<b>Total charge to the income statement</b>	30.1	31.1
<b>Amounts recognised in the statement of comprehensive income</b>	2023 £m	2022 £m
Actual return less expected return on pension scheme assets	5.2	(179.6)
Experience loss on pension scheme liabilities	(2.2)	(16.3)
Impact of changes in financial assumptions relating to the present value of pension scheme liabilities	(7.7)	205.6
Impact of changes in demographic assumptions relating to the present value of pension scheme liabilities	7.6	(2.8)
<b>Actuarial gain on defined benefit pension schemes</b>	2.9	6.9

The cumulative amount of net actuarial losses arising since 1 January 2004 recognised in the statement of comprehensive income at 31 December 2023 was £32.1m (2022: £35.0m).

## NOTES continued

## 25 Retirement benefits continued

The principal assumptions used by the independent qualified actuaries for the purposes of IAS 19 were:

UK	2023	2022
Longevity at age 65 for current pensioners (years)	21.6	22.1
Longevity at age 65 for future pensioners (years)	22.8	23.4
US		
Longevity at age 65 for current and future pensioners (years)	21.6	21.6

## Financial information continued

	UK			US		
	2023	2022	2021	2023	2022	2021
Rate of increase in salaries	3.5%	3.6%	3.8%	3.0%	3.0%	3.0%
Rate of increase in pensions	2.7%	2.7%	2.8%	-	-	-
Discount rate	4.8%	5.0%	1.8%	4.8%	5.0%	2.6%
Inflation rate	2.7%	2.7%	2.8%	2.3%	2.3%	2.3%

The assumptions used by the actuaries are the best estimates chosen from a range of possible actuarial assumptions which, due to the timescales covered, may not necessarily be borne out in practice.

The increase/(decrease) that would arise on the overall net pension surplus as at 31 December 2023 as a result of reasonably possible changes to key assumptions was:

	Impact of change in longevity		Impact of change in inflation rate		Impact of change in discount rate	
	+1 year £m	-1 year £m	+0.25% £m	-0.25% £m	+0.25% £m	-0.25% £m
UK	(7.5)	7.5	(4.1)	4.3	8.2	(8.6)
US	(2.2)	2.3	-	-	1.9	(2.0)

The market value of pension scheme assets and the present value of retirement benefit obligations at 31 December were:

2023	UK £m	US £m	Other £m	Total £m
Equities	-	25.1	1.4	26.5
Bonds	316.0	47.0	10.4	373.4
Other	0.3	15.0	9.7	25.0
Total market value of pension scheme assets	316.3	87.1	21.5	424.9
Present value of funded obligations	(251.0)	(84.8)	(21.4)	(357.2)
Present value of unfunded obligations	-	(9.3)	(9.0)	(18.3)
Present value of funded and unfunded obligations	(251.0)	(94.1)	(30.4)	(375.5)
Defined benefit pension schemes in deficit	-	(9.3)	(10.3)	(19.6)
Defined benefit pension schemes in surplus	65.3	2.3	1.4	69.0
Total surplus/(deficit) before tax	65.3	(7.0)	(8.9)	49.4
Deferred tax	(16.3)	2.5	2.8	(11.0)
Total surplus/(deficit) after tax	49.0	(4.5)	(6.1)	38.4

2022	UK £m	US £m	Other £m	Total £m
Equities	75.6	38.0	1.2	114.8
Bonds	230.4	38.4	9.9	278.7
Other	0.3	18.4	9.3	28.0
Total market value of pension scheme assets	306.3	94.8	20.4	421.5
Present value of funded obligations	(247.0)	(95.1)	(20.6)	(362.7)
Present value of unfunded obligations	-	(10.0)	(8.9)	(18.9)
Present value of funded and unfunded obligations	(247.0)	(105.1)	(29.5)	(381.6)
Defined benefit pension schemes in deficit	-	(10.3)	(10.3)	(20.6)
Defined benefit pension schemes in surplus	59.3	-	1.2	60.5
Total surplus/(deficit) before tax	59.3	(10.3)	(9.1)	39.9
Deferred tax	(14.8)	2.6	2.6	(9.6)
Total surplus/(deficit) after tax	44.5	(7.7)	(6.5)	30.3

There is a net surplus of £49.0m (£65.3m before deferred tax) (2022: £44.5m (£59.3m before deferred tax)) on the UK scheme, which is recorded as a defined benefit pension asset on the balance sheet. In accordance with IFRIC 14, the surplus on the scheme is recognised as a defined benefit asset because the Group considers that it has an unconditional right to a refund of any surplus from the UK scheme.

Of the pension scheme assets, £400.1m (2022: £397.4m) are valued based on quoted market prices.

Movement in net surplus/(deficit)	2023 £m	2022 £m
Beginning of year	39.9	31.2
Current service cost	(3.4)	(4.8)
Contributions	6.9	9.2
Net interest income	2.2	0.4
Actuarial gain	2.9	6.9
Net impact of benefit obligation settlement	-	(0.5)
Currency translation	0.9	(2.5)
End of year	49.4	39.9

## NOTES continued

## 25 Retirement benefits continued

## Financial information continued

Changes in the present value of defined benefit pension scheme liabilities	2023 £m	2022 £m
Beginning of year	381.6	569.2
Current service cost	3.4	4.8
Interest expense	17.9	10.9
Contributions by employees	0.5	0.4
Benefit obligation attributable to settlement	–	(8.8)
Actuarial loss/(gain)	2.3	(186.5)
Benefits paid	(23.7)	(25.2)
Currency translation	(6.5)	16.8
<b>End of year</b>	<b>375.5</b>	<b>381.6</b>

Changes in the fair value of defined benefit pension scheme assets	2023 £m	2022 £m
Beginning of year	421.5	600.4
Interest income	20.1	11.3
Actuarial gain/(loss)	5.2	(179.6)
Contributions by employer	6.9	9.2
Contributions by employees	0.5	0.4
Benefits paid due to settlement	–	(9.3)
Benefits paid	(23.7)	(25.2)
Currency translation	(5.6)	14.3
<b>End of year</b>	<b>424.9</b>	<b>421.5</b>

The actual return on pension scheme assets was a gain of £25.3m (2022: loss of £168.3m).

The Group expects to pay approximately £1.3m in contributions to the defined benefit pension schemes in the year ending 31 December 2024 (expected as at 31 December 2022 for the year ending 31 December 2023: £6.1m) including none for the UK (expected as at 31 December 2022 for the year ending 31 December 2023: £4.7m).

The weighted average duration of the defined benefit pension scheme liabilities at 31 December 2023 was approximately 14.0 years (2022: 14.5 years) for the UK and 8.2 years (2022: 9.0 years) for the US.

The total defined benefit pension scheme liabilities are divided between active members (£96.5m (2022: £102.6m)), deferred members (£142.7m (2022: £137.3m)) and pensioners (£136.3m (2022: £141.6m)).

## Multi-employer pension plans

The Group participates in a number of multi-employer pensions plans ('MEPPs') in North America. Although these plans are defined benefit plans the Group does not have sufficient information to account for them as defined benefit plans and, therefore, in accordance with IAS 19, accounts for them as defined contribution plans.

For MEPPs, US law requires payment of a withdrawal liability when employers cease contributing to underfunded MEPPs. The liability for withdrawal payments is shared by all members of the group of companies in any particular plan and solvent entities must cover the unfunded liabilities of employers who are unable to pay due to insolvency or bankruptcy. On withdrawal from a plan, an employer's withdrawal liability amount is calculated by reference to the employer's proportionate share of the MEPP's unfunded vested benefits based on the employer's share of all contributions made to the plan over the previous 10 years.

In 2023, the Group paid a lump sum of £9.1m towards the settlement of the liabilities for two of these plans.

The Group continues to participate in three MEPPs and continues to account for these as defined contribution plans with the combined ongoing annual contributions for the three plans in 2024 expected to be no more than £2.0m per annum.

## 26 Directors and employees

Number of employees	Closing		Average	
	2023	2022	2023	2022
North America	8,724	8,697	8,712	8,482
Continental Europe	6,252	5,841	6,032	5,517
UK & Ireland	4,006	3,935	3,995	4,182
Rest of the World	5,462	3,901	4,255	3,628
	24,444	22,374	22,994	21,809
Corporate	84	77	78	74
	24,528	22,451	23,072	21,883

Employee costs	2023 £m	2022 £m
Wages and salaries	991.8	938.9
Social security costs	110.3	100.6
Pension costs	32.3	31.5
Share based payments	15.4	14.1
	1,149.8	1,085.1

## NOTES continued

**26 Directors and employees continued**

In addition to the above, acquisition related items for the year ended 31 December 2023 include deferred consideration payments of £37.3m (2022: £24.9m) relating to the retention of former owners of businesses acquired.

<b>Key management remuneration</b>	2023 £m	2022 £m
Salaries and short term employee benefits	7.6	7.3
Share based payments	2.8	3.1
Retirement benefits	0.5	0.6
	<b>10.9</b>	11.0

The Group considers key management personnel as defined in IAS 24 'Related Party Disclosures' to be the directors of the Company and those members of the Executive Committee and the Managing Directors of the major geographic regions who are not directors of the Company.

<b>Directors' emoluments</b>	2023 £m	2022 £m
Non-executive directors	0.9	0.8
Executive directors:		
remuneration excluding performance related elements	1.9	1.8
annual bonus	1.3	1.3
	<b>4.1</b>	3.9

More detailed information concerning directors' emoluments and long term incentives is set out in the Directors' remuneration report. The aggregate amount of gains made by directors on the exercise of share options during the year was £0.8m (2022: £nil). The aggregate market value of performance share awards exercised by directors under long term incentive schemes during the year was £2.9m (2022: £1.7m). The aggregate market value of share awards exercised by directors under the DASBS was £1.1m (2022: £0.7m).

**27 Lease liabilities**

The Group leases certain property, plant, equipment and vehicles under non-cancellable operating lease agreements. These leases have varying terms and renewal rights. Details of the Group's right-of-use assets recognised under these lease agreements are shown in Note 12.

**Movement in lease liabilities**

	2023 £m	2022 £m
Beginning of year	569.9	488.7
Acquisitions (Note 9)	16.2	21.5
Disposal of business (Note 10)	-	(2.1)
New leases	136.7	123.3
Interest charge in the year	28.6	22.0
Payment of lease liabilities	(188.0)	(175.1)
Remeasurement adjustments	122.1	56.6
Currency translation	(21.0)	35.0
End of year	<b>664.5</b>	569.9
Ageing of lease liabilities:		
Current lease liabilities	152.1	145.9
Non-current lease liabilities	512.4	424.0
End of year	<b>664.5</b>	569.9

As at 31 December 2023, the Group had £11.9m (2022: £44.5m) of leases which had been committed to but which had not yet started. Such leases are not included in the Group's lease liabilities as at 31 December 2023. In relation to leases which are included in lease liabilities, there are potential further future cash flows of £67.8m (2022: £46.3m) if termination options are not exercised and extension options are exercised.

The cash outflow for low value and short term leases was £4.6m for the year ended 31 December 2023 (2022: £5.2m).

## NOTES continued

## 28 Cash, cash equivalents and overdrafts and net debt

	2023 £m	2022 £m
Cash at bank and in hand	1,377.1	1,504.0
Money market funds	49.0	–
<b>Cash and cash equivalents</b>	<b>1,426.1</b>	<b>1,504.0</b>
Bank overdrafts	(874.2)	(825.9)
<b>Cash, cash equivalents and overdrafts</b>	<b>551.9</b>	<b>678.1</b>
Interest bearing loans and borrowings – current liabilities	(130.0)	(161.0)
Interest bearing loans and borrowings – non-current liabilities	(1,417.1)	(1,574.0)
Derivatives managing the interest rate risk and currency profile of the debt	(90.3)	(103.2)
<b>Net debt excluding lease liabilities</b>	<b>(1,085.5)</b>	<b>(1,160.1)</b>
Lease liabilities (Note 27)	(664.5)	(569.9)
<b>Net debt including lease liabilities</b>	<b>(1,750.0)</b>	<b>(1,730.0)</b>

The cash at bank and in hand and bank overdrafts amounts included in the table above include the amounts associated with the Group's cash pool. The cash pool enables the Group to access cash in its subsidiaries to pay down the Group's borrowings. The Group has the legal right of set-off of balances within the cash pool which is an enforceable right. The cash at bank and in hand and bank overdrafts figures net of the amounts in the cash pool are disclosed below for reference:

	2023 £m	2022 £m
Cash at bank and in hand net of amounts in the cash pool	520.8	700.5
Money market funds	49.0	–
Bank overdrafts net of amounts in the cash pool	(17.9)	(22.4)
<b>Cash, cash equivalents and overdrafts</b>	<b>551.9</b>	<b>678.1</b>

## 29 Movement in net debt

	Cash, cash equivalents and overdrafts £m	Interest bearing loans and borrowings £m	Derivatives £m	Net debt £m
<b>2023</b>				
Beginning of year excluding lease liabilities	678.1	(1,735.0)	(103.2)	(1,160.1)
Cash flow excluding movements in other components of net debt	143.1	–	–	143.1
Interest paid excluding interest on lease liabilities	(107.6)	–	–	(107.6)
Repayment of borrowings	(159.5)	159.5	–	–
Receipts on settlement of foreign exchange contracts	21.6	–	(21.6)	–
Net cash (outflow)/inflow	(102.4)	159.5	(21.6)	35.5
Non-cash movement in debt	–	(20.8)	21.5	0.7
Realised gain on foreign exchange contracts	–	–	21.6	21.6
Currency translation	(23.8)	49.2	(8.6)	16.8
<b>End of year excluding lease liabilities</b>	<b>551.9</b>	<b>(1,547.1)</b>	<b>(90.3)</b>	<b>(1,085.5)</b>
Lease liabilities (Note 27)	–	(664.5)	–	(664.5)
<b>End of year including lease liabilities</b>	<b>551.9</b>	<b>(2,211.6)</b>	<b>(90.3)</b>	<b>(1,750.0)</b>

	Cash, cash equivalents and overdrafts £m	Interest bearing loans and borrowings £m	Derivatives £m	Net debt £m
<b>2022</b>				
Beginning of year excluding lease liabilities	225.3	(1,545.6)	(17.1)	(1,337.4)
Cash flow excluding movements in other components of net debt	330.9	–	–	330.9
Interest paid excluding interest on lease liabilities	(61.9)	–	–	(61.9)
Increase in borrowings	346.4	(346.4)	–	–
Repayment of borrowings	(131.8)	131.8	–	–
Payments on settlement of foreign exchange contracts	(86.2)	–	86.2	–
Net cash inflow/(outflow)	397.4	(214.6)	86.2	269.0
Non-cash movement in debt	–	87.4	(79.2)	8.2
Realised losses on foreign exchange contracts	–	–	(86.2)	(86.2)
Currency translation	55.4	(62.2)	(6.9)	(13.7)
<b>End of year excluding lease liabilities</b>	<b>678.1</b>	<b>(1,735.0)</b>	<b>(103.2)</b>	<b>(1,160.1)</b>
Lease liabilities (Note 27)	–	(569.9)	–	(569.9)
<b>End of year including lease liabilities</b>	<b>678.1</b>	<b>(2,304.9)</b>	<b>(103.2)</b>	<b>(1,730.0)</b>

## NOTES continued

**30 Cash flow from operating activities**

The tables below give further details on the adjustments for depreciation and software amortisation, other non-cash items and the working capital movement shown in the Consolidated cash flow statement.

	2023 £m	2022 £m
<b>Depreciation and software amortisation</b>		
Depreciation of right-of-use assets	166.1	151.1
Other depreciation and software amortisation	41.1	38.4
	<b>207.2</b>	189.5
<b>Other non-cash items</b>		
Share based payments	15.4	14.1
Provisions	(13.1)	(3.9)
Retirement benefit obligations	(3.5)	(3.9)
Hyperinflation accounting adjustments	2.1	8.0
Other	5.6	1.6
	<b>6.5</b>	15.9
<b>Working capital movement</b>		
Decrease/(increase) in inventories	108.1	(118.7)
Increase in trade and other receivables	(9.9)	(13.0)
(Decrease)/increase in trade and other payables	(126.6)	186.2
	<b>(28.4)</b>	54.5

**31 Related party disclosures**

The Group has identified the directors of the Company, their close family members, the Group's defined benefit pension schemes and its key management as related parties for the purpose of IAS 24. Details of the relevant relationships with these related parties are disclosed in the Directors' remuneration report, Note 25 and Note 26, respectively. All transactions with subsidiaries are eliminated on consolidation.

**32 Post balance sheet event**

On 26 February 2024, Bunzl signed an agreement to acquire an 80% stake in Nisbets and associated entities for an initial consideration of £339m. The purchase price will be settled in cash. Founded in 1983 by Andrew Nisbet, Nisbets is a highly respected omnichannel distributor of catering equipment and consumables in the UK & Ireland, Northern Europe and Australasia, offering an extensive product range including a wide range of own-brand products to foodservice customers. It has over 1,800 employees and an experienced management team that will remain with the Group post-acquisition, with Andrew Nisbet acting as a non-executive director and the family continuing to hold a minority interest in Nisbets. For the year ended 31 December 2023, Nisbet generated revenue of £498m with a profit before interest, tax, amortisation and exceptional items of £35.5m and total gross assets of £242m, based on unaudited management accounts. An additional earn-out amount may be payable based on Nisbets' financial performance in 2024. The transaction includes put / call options that enable Bunzl to acquire the remaining 20% stake in the future, subject to certain conditions.

**COMPANY BALANCE SHEET**

at 31 December 2023

	Notes	2023 £m	2022 £m
<b>Fixed assets</b>			
Property, plant and equipment	3	0.5	0.6
Right-of-use assets	4	2.9	3.6
Intangible assets	3	0.9	0.8
Investments	5	752.9	741.0
		<b>757.2</b>	746.0
<b>Current assets</b>			
Defined benefit pension asset	11	65.3	59.3
Debtors: amounts falling due within one year	7	1,309.0	1,449.9
Cash at bank and in hand		13.1	15.1
		<b>1,387.4</b>	1,524.3
<b>Current liabilities</b>			
Creditors: amounts falling due within one year	8	(104.7)	(108.0)
Lease liabilities	10	(0.7)	(0.7)
		<b>1,282.0</b>	1,415.6
<b>Net current assets</b>			
<b>Total assets less current liabilities</b>		<b>2,039.2</b>	2,161.6
<b>Non-current liabilities</b>			
Provisions	9	(0.9)	(0.9)
Lease liabilities	10	(2.4)	(3.1)
Deferred tax liability	6	(12.5)	(11.2)
		<b>2,023.4</b>	2,146.4
<b>Net assets</b>			
<b>Capital and reserves</b>			
Share capital	12	108.6	108.5
Share premium		205.2	199.4
Other reserves		5.6	5.6
Capital redemption reserve	13	16.1	16.1
Profit and loss account†	13	1,687.9	1,816.8
<b>Total shareholders' funds</b>		<b>2,023.4</b>	2,146.4

Approved by the Board of directors of Bunzl plc (Company registration number 358948) on 26 February 2024 and signed on its behalf by Frank van Zanten, Chief Executive Officer and Richard Howes, Chief Financial Officer.

The Accounting policies and other Notes on pages 191 to 194 form part of these financial statements.

† Profit and loss account includes a net profit after tax for the year of £91.9m (2022: £39.1m). As permitted by section 408(3) of the Companies Act 2006, the profit and loss account of the Company has not been separately presented in these financial statements.



**COMPANY STATEMENT OF CHANGES IN EQUITY**

for the year ended 31 December 2023

	Profit and loss account						Total shareholders' funds £m
	Share capital £m	Share premium £m	Other reserves £m	Capital redemption £m	Own shares £m	Retained earnings £m	
<b>At 1 January 2023</b>	<b>108.5</b>	<b>199.4</b>	<b>5.6</b>	<b>16.1</b>	<b>(63.4)</b>	<b>1,880.2</b>	<b>2,146.4</b>
<b>Profit for the year</b>						<b>91.9</b>	<b>91.9</b>
<b>Other comprehensive income/(expense)</b>							
Actuarial loss on defined benefit pension scheme						<b>(1.8)</b>	<b>(1.8)</b>
Income tax credit on other comprehensive expense						<b>0.5</b>	<b>0.5</b>
<b>Total comprehensive income</b>						<b>90.6</b>	<b>90.6</b>
2022 interim dividend						<b>(57.9)</b>	<b>(57.9)</b>
2022 final dividend						<b>(151.8)</b>	<b>(151.8)</b>
Issue of share capital	<b>0.1</b>	<b>5.8</b>					<b>5.9</b>
Employee trust shares					<b>(25.2)</b>		<b>(25.2)</b>
Movement on own share reserves					<b>17.7</b>	<b>(17.7)</b>	<b>-</b>
Share based payments (net of tax)						<b>15.4</b>	<b>15.4</b>
<b>At 31 December 2023</b>	<b>108.6</b>	<b>205.2</b>	<b>5.6</b>	<b>16.1</b>	<b>(70.9)</b>	<b>1,758.8</b>	<b>2,023.4</b>

	Profit and loss account						Total shareholders' funds £m
	Share capital £m	Share premium £m	Other reserves £m	Capital redemption £m	Own shares £m	Retained earnings £m	
<b>At 1 January 2022</b>	<b>108.4</b>	<b>194.2</b>	<b>5.6</b>	<b>16.1</b>	<b>(52.9)</b>	<b>2,043.9</b>	<b>2,315.3</b>
<b>Profit for the year</b>						<b>39.1</b>	<b>39.1</b>
<b>Other comprehensive income/(expense)</b>							
Contributions to pension scheme by participating subsidiaries						<b>3.0</b>	<b>3.0</b>
Actuarial loss on defined benefit pension scheme						<b>(6.5)</b>	<b>(6.5)</b>
Income tax credit on other comprehensive expense						<b>0.9</b>	<b>0.9</b>
<b>Total comprehensive income</b>						<b>36.5</b>	<b>36.5</b>
2021 interim dividend						<b>(54.3)</b>	<b>(54.3)</b>
2021 final dividend						<b>(136.2)</b>	<b>(136.2)</b>
Issue of share capital	<b>0.1</b>	<b>5.2</b>					<b>5.3</b>
Employee trust shares					<b>(34.2)</b>		<b>(34.2)</b>
Movement on own share reserves					<b>23.7</b>	<b>(23.7)</b>	<b>-</b>
Share based payments (net of tax)						<b>14.0</b>	<b>14.0</b>
<b>At 31 December 2022</b>	<b>108.5</b>	<b>199.4</b>	<b>5.6</b>	<b>16.1</b>	<b>(63.4)</b>	<b>1,880.2</b>	<b>2,146.4</b>

## NOTES TO THE COMPANY FINANCIAL STATEMENTS

### 1 Basis of preparation

Bunzl plc (the 'Company') is a company incorporated and domiciled in the United Kingdom and is registered in England and Wales. These financial statements present information about the Company as an individual undertaking and not about its Group.

The financial statements of the Company have been prepared on a going concern basis and under the historical cost convention with the exception of certain items which are measured at fair value as described in the accounting policies below.

These financial statements have been prepared in accordance with Financial Reporting Standard 101 'Reduced Disclosure Framework' (FRS 101) and the Companies Act 2006 as applicable to companies using FRS 101. There are no new standards, amendments or interpretations that are applicable to the Company for the year ended 31 December 2023. In preparing these financial statements the Company has applied the exemptions available under FRS 101 in respect of:

- a cash flow statement and related notes;
- comparative period reconciliations for share capital and tangible fixed assets;
- disclosures relating to transactions with wholly owned subsidiaries and capital management;
- the effects of new but not yet effective IFRSs; and
- disclosures relating to the compensation of key management personnel.

As the consolidated financial statements of the Company include the equivalent disclosures, the Company has also applied the exemptions available under FRS 101 in respect of:

- certain disclosures required by IFRS 2 'Share Based Payments' in respect of Group settled share based payments; and
- certain disclosures required by IFRS 13 'Fair Value Measurement' and disclosures required by IFRS 7 'Financial Instruments: Disclosures'.

### 2 Accounting policies

The accounting policies of the Company have, unless otherwise stated, been applied consistently to all periods presented in these financial statements. In most cases the accounting policies for the Company are fully aligned with the equivalent accounting policies for the Group as stated in Note 2 to the consolidated financial statements. The accounting policies of the Company which are aligned with those of the Group are the policies for property, plant and equipment, leases, intangible assets, income tax, trade and other payables, provisions, retirement benefits, investment in own shares and dividends. The accounting policies that are specific to the Company are set out below.

#### a. Investment in subsidiary undertakings

Investments in subsidiary undertakings are held at cost less any provision for impairment. The subsidiary undertakings which the Company held at 31 December 2023 are disclosed in the Related undertakings Note in the Shareholder information section on pages 202 to 207.

#### b. Share based payments

The Company operates a number of equity settled share based payment compensation plans. Details of these plans are outlined in Note 21 to the consolidated financial statements and the Directors' remuneration report. The total expected expense is based on the fair value of options and other share based incentives on the grant date, calculated using a valuation model, and is spread over the expected vesting period with a corresponding credit to equity.

Where the Company grants options over its own shares to the employees of its subsidiaries and it has not recharged the cost to the relevant subsidiaries, it recognises, in its individual financial statements, an increase in the cost of investment in its subsidiaries equivalent to the equity settled share based payment charge recognised in its consolidated financial statements, with the corresponding credit being recognised directly in equity.

#### c. Financial guarantee contracts

The Company has issued financial guarantee contracts to guarantee the indebtedness of other companies within its Group. The likelihood of these financial guarantee contracts being called is considered to be remote and therefore the estimated financial effect of issuing is nil (2022: nil). The fair value of the issued financial guarantee contracts is deemed to be immaterial.

#### d. Intercompany and other receivables

Intercompany and other receivables are initially measured at fair value. Subsequent to initial recognition these assets are measured at amortised cost less any provision for expected credit losses. The Group measures expected credit losses using the expected credit loss model in accordance with IFRS 9. There were no impairment losses on intercompany or other receivables during the year (2022: none).

#### e. Defined benefit pension schemes

The Company is the sponsoring company of the UK defined benefit pension scheme. As there is no contractual agreement or stated Group policy for charging the net defined benefit cost of the scheme to participating subsidiaries, the net defined benefit pension cost or benefit is recognised fully by the Company. The contributions paid by the participating subsidiaries other than the Company are credited to profit or loss of the Company where the amounts relate to service and are independent of the number of years of service or to other comprehensive income if not linked to service.

#### f. Judgements made in applying the Company's accounting policies

In the course of preparing the financial statements, other than judgements involved in determining estimates and assumptions (see Note 2g below), no judgements have been made in the process of applying the Company's accounting policies that have had a significant effect on the amounts recognised in the financial statements.

#### g. Sources of estimation uncertainty

In applying the Company's accounting policies various transactions and balances are valued using estimates or assumptions. Should these estimates or assumptions prove incorrect, there may be an impact on the following year's financial statements. As at 31 December 2023, the only source of estimation uncertainty that has a significant risk of resulting in a material adjustment to the carrying amounts of assets and liabilities within the next financial year is the measurement of the defined benefit pension scheme liability which is explained in Note 2u to the consolidated financial statements.

## NOTES TO THE COMPANY FINANCIAL STATEMENTS continued

## 3 Property, plant and equipment and intangible assets

	Short leasehold improvement £m	Fixtures, fittings and equipment £m	Total tangible assets £m	Total intangible assets £m
<b>Cost</b>				
Beginning of year	0.4	1.8	2.2	2.3
Additions	0.1	–	0.1	0.1
End of year	0.5	1.8	2.3	2.4
<b>Accumulated depreciation and amortisation</b>				
Beginning of year	0.1	1.5	1.6	1.5
Charge in year	0.1	0.1	0.2	–
End of year	0.2	1.6	1.8	1.5
<b>Net book value at 31 December 2023</b>	0.3	0.2	0.5	0.9
Net book value at 31 December 2022	0.3	0.3	0.6	0.8

## 4 Right-of-use assets: Property

	2023 £m	2022 £m
<b>Net book value</b>		
Beginning of year	3.6	0.2
Remeasurement adjustments	–	4.0
Depreciation charge in the year	(0.7)	(0.6)
End of year	2.9	3.6

## 5 Investments

	2023 £m	2022 £m
<b>Investments in subsidiary undertakings</b>		
<b>Cost</b>		
Beginning of year	744.3	733.1
Additions	11.9	11.2
End of year	756.2	744.3
<b>Impairment provisions</b>		
Beginning and end of year	3.3	3.3
<b>Net book value at 31 December</b>	752.9	741.0

## 6 Deferred tax asset/(liability)

Recognised deferred tax assets net of deferred tax liabilities are attributable to the following:

	Defined benefit pension scheme £m	Share based payments £m	Other £m	Net deferred tax asset/(liability) £m
At 1 January 2022	(15.7)	3.5	0.2	(12.0)
Recognised in other comprehensive income or directly in equity	0.9	(0.1)	–	0.8
<b>At 31 December 2022/1 January 2023</b>	<b>(14.8)</b>	<b>3.4</b>	<b>0.2</b>	<b>(11.2)</b>
Recognised in profit or loss	(2.0)	–	0.2	(1.8)
Recognised in other comprehensive income or directly in equity	0.5	–	–	0.5
<b>At 31 December 2023</b>	<b>(16.3)</b>	<b>3.4</b>	<b>0.4</b>	<b>(12.5)</b>

No deferred tax asset has been recognised in respect of unutilised capital losses of £60.7m (2022: £68.5m).

## 7 Debtors

	2023 £m	2022 £m
<b>Debtors: amounts falling due within one year</b>		
Amounts owed by Group undertakings	1,302.0	1,440.1
Prepayments and other debtors	7.0	9.8
	<b>1,309.0</b>	<b>1,449.9</b>

Amounts owed by Group undertakings falling due within one year are interest bearing, unsecured and repayable on demand with no fixed date of repayment. Interest rates are linked to the Bank of England Base Rate. The amounts owed by Group undertakings are classified as a current asset as the company expects to realise the asset in its normal operating cycle.

## 8 Creditors: amounts falling due within one year

	2023 £m	2022 £m
Trade creditors	0.9	4.7
Amounts owed to Group undertakings	82.2	82.1
Other tax and social security contributions	0.5	0.5
Income tax payable	3.8	3.0
Accruals	17.3	17.7
	<b>104.7</b>	<b>108.0</b>

Amounts due to Group undertakings are repayable on demand and are not interest bearing.

## NOTES TO THE COMPANY FINANCIAL STATEMENTS continued

## 9 Provisions

	2023 £m	2022 £m
Beginning of year	0.9	1.0
Utilised or released	–	(0.1)
<b>End of year</b>	<b>0.9</b>	<b>0.9</b>

The provisions relate to properties, where amounts are held against liabilities for repairs and dilapidations, and other claims.

## 10 Lease liabilities

	2023 £m	2022 £m
Beginning of year	(3.8)	(0.2)
Interest charge in the year	(0.1)	(0.1)
Remeasurement adjustments	–	(4.3)
Payments of lease liabilities	0.8	0.8
<b>End of year</b>	<b>(3.1)</b>	<b>(3.8)</b>
Ageing of lease liabilities:		
Current lease liabilities	(0.7)	(0.7)
Non-current lease liabilities	(2.4)	(3.1)
<b>End of year</b>	<b>(3.1)</b>	<b>(3.8)</b>

## 11 Retirement benefits

The Company operates a number of retirement benefit schemes in the UK, including both defined benefit and defined contribution schemes. A description of the characteristics and risks to which the Company is exposed in relation to the UK defined benefit pension scheme together with the principal assumptions used and sensitivity to changes in assumptions are detailed in Note 25 to the consolidated financial statements. The amounts included in the Company financial statements relating to the defined benefit pension scheme at 31 December were:

	2023 £m	2022 £m
<b>Amounts included in profit for the year</b>		
Current service cost (net of contributions by employees)	0.7	2.1
Net interest income	(3.1)	(1.2)
Contributions paid by participating subsidiaries linked to service	(0.3)	(0.3)
<b>Total charge to profit for the year</b>	<b>(2.7)</b>	<b>0.6</b>

## Amounts recognised in other comprehensive income

	2023 £m	2022 £m
Actual return less expected return on pension scheme assets	0.4	(150.9)
Experience loss on pension scheme liabilities	(0.7)	(15.1)
Impact of changes in assumptions relating to the present value of pension scheme liabilities	(1.5)	159.5
Actuarial loss on defined benefit pension scheme	(1.8)	(6.5)
Contributions paid by participating subsidiaries not linked to service	–	3.0
<b>Total charge to other comprehensive income</b>	<b>(1.8)</b>	<b>(3.5)</b>

## Movement in defined benefit pension scheme surplus/(deficit)

	2023 £m	2022 £m
Beginning of year	59.3	62.8
Current service cost	(0.7)	(2.1)
Contributions	5.4	3.9
Net interest income	3.1	1.2
Actuarial loss	(1.8)	(6.5)
<b>End of year</b>	<b>65.3</b>	<b>59.3</b>

## Changes in the present value of defined benefit pension scheme liabilities

	2023 £m	2022 £m
Beginning of year	247.0	396.2
Current service cost	0.7	2.1
Interest expense	12.1	7.0
Contributions by employees	0.4	0.4
Actuarial loss/(gain)	2.2	(144.4)
Benefits paid	(11.4)	(14.3)
<b>End of year</b>	<b>251.0</b>	<b>247.0</b>

## Changes in the fair value of defined benefit pension scheme assets

	2023 £m	2022 £m
Beginning of year	306.3	459.0
Interest income	15.2	8.2
Actuarial gain/(loss)	0.4	(150.9)
Contributions by the Company	5.1	0.6
Contributions by participating subsidiaries	0.3	3.3
Contributions by employees	0.4	0.4
Benefits paid	(11.4)	(14.3)
<b>End of year</b>	<b>316.3</b>	<b>306.3</b>

The actual return on pension scheme assets was a gain of £15.6m (2022: loss of £142.7m). The market value of scheme assets and the present value of retirement benefit obligations at 31 December are detailed in Note 25 to the consolidated financial statements. The total defined benefit pension liability is divided between active members (£45.6m (2022: £43.2m)), deferred members (£98.4m (2022: £92.4m)) and pensioners (£107.0m (2022: £111.4m)).

## NOTES TO THE COMPANY FINANCIAL STATEMENTS continued

**12 Share capital**

	2023 £m	2022 £m
<b>Issued and fully paid ordinary shares of 32½p each</b>	<b>108.6</b>	108.5
<b>Number of ordinary shares in issue and fully paid</b>	<b>2023</b>	<b>2022</b>
Beginning of year	<b>337,667,846</b>	337,398,796
Issued – option exercises	<b>353,231</b>	269,050
<b>End of year</b>	<b>338,021,077</b>	337,667,846

**13 Reserves**

The capital redemption reserve of £16.1m (2022: £16.1m) as presented in the statement of changes in equity records the aggregate nominal value of treasury shares that have been cancelled.

The own shares reserve of £70.9m (2022: £63.4m) as presented in the statement of changes in equity comprises ordinary shares of the Company held by the Company in an employee benefit trust. The assets, liabilities and expenditure of the trust are included in the Company financial statements. Details of the trust and investment in own shares reserve are set out in Note 21 to the consolidated financial statements.

The dividends paid and declared in the current and prior year are detailed in Note 22 to the consolidated financial statements.

**14 Financial guarantees**

Borrowings by subsidiary undertakings totalling £1,614.4m (2022: £1,822.6m) which are included in the Group's borrowings have been guaranteed by the Company.

**15 Employees' and directors' remuneration**

The average number of persons employed by the Company during the year (including directors) was 66 (2022: 61) and the aggregate employee costs relating to these persons were:

	2023 £m	2022 £m
Wages and salaries	<b>12.5</b>	12.4
Social security costs	<b>1.6</b>	1.7
Share based payments	<b>1.6</b>	0.9
Pension costs	<b>0.9</b>	0.8
	<b>16.6</b>	15.8

Conditional awards of executive share options and performance shares are granted to executive directors and other senior employees of the Company. Employees of the Company can also participate in the Company's Sharesave Scheme. Further information on the Company's share plans is disclosed in Note 21 to the consolidated financial statements.

**16 Related party disclosures**

The Company has identified the directors of the Company, their close family members, its key management, the UK pension scheme and its subsidiary undertakings as related parties for the purpose of IAS 24 'Related Party Disclosures'. Details of the relevant relationships with these related parties are disclosed in the Directors' remuneration report, Note 25 and Note 26 to the consolidated financial statements and the Related undertakings note in the Shareholder information section on pages 202 to 204.

## STATEMENT OF DIRECTORS' RESPONSIBILITIES

### Statement of directors' responsibilities

The directors are responsible for preparing the Annual Report, which includes the Directors' remuneration report and the financial statements, in accordance with applicable law and regulation.

Company law requires the directors to prepare financial statements for each financial year. Under that law the directors have prepared the Group financial statements in accordance with UK-adopted International Accounting Standards ('IASs') and the Company financial statements in accordance with United Kingdom Generally Accepted Accounting Practice (United Kingdom Accounting Standards, comprising FRS 101 'Reduced Disclosure Framework', and applicable law). In preparing the Group financial statements, the directors have also elected to comply with International Financial Reporting Standards ('IFRSs'), issued by the International Accounting Standards Board ('IASB') ('IFRSs as issued by the IASB').

Under company law, directors must not approve the financial statements unless they are satisfied that they give a true and fair view of the state of affairs of the Group and the Company and of the profit or loss of the Group for that period. In preparing the financial statements, the directors are required to:

- select suitable accounting policies and then apply them consistently;

- state whether applicable UK-adopted IASs and IFRSs as issued by the IASB have been followed for the Group financial statements and United Kingdom Accounting Standards, comprising FRS 101, have been followed for the Company financial statements, subject to any material departures disclosed and explained in the financial statements;
- make judgements and accounting estimates that are reasonable and prudent; and
- prepare the financial statements on the going concern basis unless it is inappropriate to presume that the Group and the Company will continue in business.

The directors are responsible for safeguarding the assets of the Group and the Company and hence for taking reasonable steps for the prevention and detection of fraud and other irregularities.

The directors are also responsible for keeping adequate accounting records that are sufficient to show and explain the Group's and the Company's transactions and disclose with reasonable accuracy at any time the financial position of the Group and the Company and enable them to ensure that the financial statements and the Directors' remuneration report comply with the Companies Act 2006.

The directors are responsible for the maintenance and integrity of the Company's website. Legislation in the United Kingdom governing the preparation and dissemination of financial statements may differ from legislation in other jurisdictions.

The directors consider that the Annual Report, taken as a whole, is fair, balanced and understandable and provides the information necessary for shareholders to assess the Group's and the Company's position and performance, business model and strategy.

Each of the directors, whose names and functions are set out on pages 90 to 91 of the Annual Report, confirm that, to the best of their knowledge:

- the Group financial statements, which have been prepared in accordance with UK-adopted IASs and IFRSs as issued by the IASB, give a true and fair view of the assets, liabilities, financial position and profit of the Group;
- the Company financial statements, which have been prepared in accordance with United Kingdom Accounting Standards, comprising FRS 101, give a true and fair view of the assets, liabilities and financial position of the Company; and
- the Annual Report includes a fair review of the development and performance of the business and the position of the Group and the Company, together with a description of the principal risks and uncertainties that they face.

By order of the Board

**Frank van Zanten**  
Chief Executive  
Officer

26 February 2024

**Richard Howes**  
Chief Financial  
Officer

## INDEPENDENT AUDITORS' REPORT TO THE MEMBERS OF BUNZL PLC

# Report on the audit of the financial statements

## Opinion

In our opinion:

- Bunzl plc's Group financial statements and Company financial statements (the "financial statements") give a true and fair view of the state of the Group's and of the Company's affairs as at 31 December 2023 and of the Group's profit and the Group's cash flows for the year then ended;
- the Group financial statements have been properly prepared in accordance with UK-adopted international accounting standards as applied in accordance with the provisions of the Companies Act 2006;
- the Company financial statements have been properly prepared in accordance with United Kingdom Generally Accepted Accounting Practice (United Kingdom Accounting Standards, including FRS 101 "Reduced Disclosure Framework", and applicable law); and
- the financial statements have been prepared in accordance with the requirements of the Companies Act 2006.

We have audited the financial statements, included within the Annual Report, which comprise: the Consolidated balance sheet and the Company balance sheet as at 31 December 2023; the Consolidated income statement, the Consolidated statement of comprehensive income, the Consolidated cash flow statement, the Consolidated statement of changes in equity and the Company statement of changes in equity for the year then ended; and the notes to the financial statements, comprising material accounting policy information and other explanatory information.

Our opinion is consistent with our reporting to the Audit Committee.

## Separate opinion in relation to IFRSs as issued by the IASB

As explained in note 1 to the financial statements, the Group, in addition to applying UK-adopted international accounting standards, has also applied international financial reporting standards (IFRSs) as issued by the International Accounting Standards Board (IASB).

In our opinion, the Group financial statements have been properly prepared in accordance with IFRSs as issued by the IASB.

## Basis for opinion

We conducted our audit in accordance with International Standards on Auditing (UK) ("ISAs (UK)") and applicable law. Our responsibilities under ISAs (UK) are further described in the Auditors' responsibilities for the audit of the financial statements section of our report. We believe that the audit evidence we have obtained is sufficient and appropriate to provide a basis for our opinion.

## Independence

We remained independent of the Group in accordance with the ethical requirements that are relevant to our audit of the financial statements in the UK, which includes the FRC's Ethical Standard, as applicable to listed public interest entities, and we have fulfilled our other ethical responsibilities in accordance with these requirements.

To the best of our knowledge and belief, we declare that non-audit services prohibited by the FRC's Ethical Standard were not provided.

Other than those disclosed in note 5 to the Group financial statements, we have provided no non-audit services to the Company or its controlled undertakings in the period under audit.

## Our audit approach

### Overview

<b>Audit scope</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• We performed full scope audits and other procedures of the financial information of 87 components spread across 26 different countries across North America, Continental Europe, UK &amp; Ireland and Rest of the World.</li> <li>• Specific audit procedures in relation to various Group activities, including consolidation, taxation, pensions, business combinations and the carrying value of goodwill and intangible assets, were performed by the Group audit team centrally</li> <li>• The components where we conducted audit procedures, together with work performed by the Group audit team centrally, accounted for approximately 94% of the Group's revenue and 94% of the Group's adjusted profit before tax. The full scope components in the North America, the Netherlands and Australia comprise sub consolidations; in calculating these coverage levels we have taken 100% coverage from the full scope audits performed in these locations</li> </ul>
<b>Key audit matters</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Valuation of intangible assets acquired in a business combination (Group).</li> <li>• Valuation of defined benefit schemes' obligations (Group and Company).</li> </ul>
<b>Materiality</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Overall Group materiality: £42.0 million (2022: £40.0 million) based on 5% of adjusted profit before tax.</li> <li>• Overall Company materiality: £20.0 million (2022: £21.0 million) based on 1% of net assets.</li> <li>• Performance materiality: £31.5 million (2022: £30.0 million) (Group) and £15.0 million (2022: £15.7 million) (Company).</li> </ul>

### The scope of our audit

As part of designing our audit, we determined materiality and assessed the risks of material misstatement in the financial statements.

### Key audit matters

Key audit matters are those matters that, in the auditors' professional judgement, were of most significance in the audit of the financial statements of the current period and include the most significant assessed risks of material misstatement (whether or not due to fraud) identified by the auditors, including those which had the greatest effect on: the overall audit strategy; the allocation of resources in the audit; and directing the efforts of the engagement team. These matters, and any comments we make on the results of our procedures thereon, were addressed in the context of our audit of the financial statements as a whole, and in forming our opinion thereon, and we do not provide a separate opinion on these matters.

This is not a complete list of all risks identified by our audit.

## INDEPENDENT AUDITORS' REPORT TO THE MEMBERS OF BUNZL PLC continued

Valuation of inventory provisions (Group), which was a key audit matter last year, is no longer included because of the reduction of risk in 2023. Otherwise, the key audit matters below are consistent with last year.

Key audit matter	How our audit addressed the key audit matter
<p><b>Valuation of intangible assets acquired in a business combination (Group)</b></p> <p>Refer to the Audit Committee report, Note 2 and Note 9 of the Group financial statements.</p> <p>Given that the Group continues to make significant investment in acquisitions, accounting for intangible assets acquired in a business combinations is an area of focus due to the level of judgement involved in the valuation. Business combinations can involve judgements in relation to the value of assets and liabilities that are recognised on acquisition, particularly the allocation of purchase consideration to goodwill and separately identified intangible assets.</p>	<p>Management relies on external valuation specialists for larger acquisitions to value significant intangibles acquired in business combinations. Where management has relied on such specialists, with the support of our own valuation specialists, we assessed their objectivity and competence and tested the results of their work. For smaller acquisitions, management prepares their own valuation models.</p> <p>We focused in particular on the following areas:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• We assessed the methodology and key assumptions used in determining the value of the customer relationship assets for the more significant acquisitions;</li> <li>• We determined whether the cash flows applied within the valuation models and the key assumptions such as the discount rates, growth rates, customer attrition and period for amortisation, were appropriate;</li> <li>• We evaluated the consideration paid or payable in respect of certain acquisitions made; and</li> <li>• We considered the disclosures in Note 2 and Note 9 of the Group financial statements and we are satisfied that these disclosures are appropriate.</li> </ul> <p>Based on the procedures performed, we noted no material issues arising from our work.</p>

### Key audit matter

### How our audit addressed the key audit matter

#### Valuation of defined benefit schemes' obligations (Group and Company)

Refer to the Audit Committee report, Note 2 and Note 25 of the Group financial statements.

The Group has defined benefit pension schemes (with material schemes in the United States and the United Kingdom) with a net surplus of £49.4m at the current year end (2022: net surplus of £39.9m). The gross assets and liabilities in each scheme are significant in the context of the Consolidated balance sheet.

Management estimation is required in relation to the measurement of pension scheme obligations, and management employs independent actuarial experts to assist it in determining appropriate assumptions such as inflation levels, discount rates, salary increases and mortality rates. Movements in these assumptions can have a material impact on the determination of the liability and, therefore, the extent of any net surplus or deficit.

We used our own actuarial experts to satisfy ourselves that the assumptions used in calculating the US and UK pension scheme liabilities are appropriate, including confirming that salary increases were appropriate and that mortality rate assumptions were consistent with relevant benchmarks.

We determined that the discount and inflation rates used in the valuation of the pension scheme liabilities were consistent with our internally developed benchmarks.

In each case we considered the assumptions made by management to be reasonable in light of the available evidence. We also performed procedures to satisfy ourselves over the completeness and accuracy of the employee data used in the calculation.

Based on the procedures performed, we noted no material issues arising from our work.



## INDEPENDENT AUDITORS' REPORT TO THE MEMBERS OF BUNZL PLC continued

### How we tailored the audit scope

We tailored the scope of our audit to ensure that we performed enough work to be able to give an opinion on the financial statements as a whole, taking into account the structure of the Group and the Company, the accounting processes and controls, and the industry in which they operate.

We identified one financially significant component, being North America, where a full scope audit has been performed. In addition, we have identified two material components being the Netherlands and Australia. To achieve the coverage desired, we identified five components across the UK and France for which a full scope audit of their financial information has been performed. In order to satisfy the request of the Audit Committee and management, we performed full scope audits and other procedures on a further 79 components. The components where we performed audit procedures covered over 94% of Group revenue and adjusted profit before taxation.

Where work was performed by component auditors, detailed instructions were issued by us and the Group audit team conducted conference calls with component teams. For our financially significant and material components, oversight procedures included regular communication with the component team, reviewing their working papers, and attending the clearance meeting either virtually or in person. Specific audit procedures over central functions and areas of significant judgement, including consolidation, taxation, pensions, business combinations and the carrying value of goodwill and other intangible assets, were performed by the Group audit team centrally.

### The impact of climate risk on our audit

As part of the audit, we inquired of management to understand and evaluate the Group's risk assessment process in relation to climate change. Management has sought advice from external sustainability experts to help them understand the environmental challenges they face, and to source science-based inputs for their assessment of climate risk. We reviewed management's paper which sets out their assessment of climate change risk to the Group and the impact, if any, on the financial statements and impairment testing. In evaluating the completeness of the risks identified, we assessed the objectivity and competence of management's experts, we engaged our internal climate change experts to review management's assessment, we considered the return submitted to the Carbon Disclosure Project by the Group and challenged management on how they considered the Group's net zero commitment in their assessment. In responding to the risk identified, we specifically considered how climate change risk would impact the assumptions made in the forecasts prepared by management used in their assessment of the carrying value of goodwill. We read the disclosures in relation to climate change made in the other information within the Annual Report to ascertain whether the disclosures are materially consistent with the financial statements and our knowledge from our audit. Our responsibility over other information is further described in the Reporting on other information section of our report.

### Materiality

The scope of our audit was influenced by our application of materiality. We set certain quantitative thresholds for materiality. These, together with qualitative considerations, helped us to determine the scope of our audit and the nature, timing and extent of our audit procedures on the individual financial statement line items and disclosures and in evaluating the effect of misstatements, both individually and in aggregate on the financial statements as a whole.

Based on our professional judgement, we determined materiality for the financial statements as a whole as follows:

	Financial statements – Group	Financial statements – Company
<b>Overall materiality</b>	£42.0 million (2022: £40.0 million).	£20.0 million (2022: £21.0 million).
<b>How we determined it</b>	5% of adjusted profit before tax	1% of net assets
<b>Rationale for benchmark applied</b>	Given that the Group's businesses are profit oriented and the directors use adjusted profit measures to assess the performance of the business, we believe that adjusted profit before tax is the best benchmark to use.	Considering the nature of the business and activities in Bunzl plc (holding activities) we use the Company's net asset value as a basis for the calculation of the overall materiality level.

For each component in the scope of our Group audit, we allocated a materiality that is less than our overall Group materiality. The range of materiality allocated across components was up to £35.0 million. Certain components were audited to a local statutory audit materiality that was also less than our overall Group materiality.

We use performance materiality to reduce to an appropriately low level the probability that the aggregate of uncorrected and undetected misstatements exceeds overall materiality. Specifically, we use performance materiality in determining the scope of our audit and the nature and extent of our testing of account balances, classes of transactions and disclosures, for example in determining sample sizes. Our performance materiality was 75% (2022: 75%) of overall materiality, amounting to £31.5 million (2022: £30.0 million) for the Group financial statements and £15.0 million (2022: £15.7 million) for the Company financial statements.

In determining the performance materiality, we considered a number of factors – the history of misstatements, risk assessment and aggregation risk and the effectiveness of controls – and concluded that an amount at the upper end of our normal range was appropriate.

We agreed with the Audit Committee that we would report to them misstatements identified during our audit above £2.0 million (Group audit) (2022: £1.9 million) and £2.0 million (Company audit) (2022: £1.9 million) as well as misstatements below those amounts that, in our view, warranted reporting for qualitative reasons.

**INDEPENDENT AUDITORS' REPORT TO THE MEMBERS OF BUNZL PLC** continued**Conclusions relating to going concern**

Our evaluation of the directors' assessment of the Group's and the Company's ability to continue to adopt the going concern basis of accounting included:

- We assessed the appropriateness of the cash flow forecasts in the context of the Group's 2023 financial position and evaluated the directors' downside sensitivities against these forecasts.
- We evaluated the key assumptions in the forecasts and considered whether these were supported by the evidence we obtained.
- We examined the headroom under the base case cash flow forecasts, as well as the directors' sensitised cases, and evaluated whether the directors' conclusion that headroom remained in all events was supported by the evidence we obtained.
- We obtained the Group's covenant calculations and reperformed the calculation including applying sensitivities to assess the potential impact of downside sensitivities on covenant compliance.
- We also reviewed the disclosures provided relating to the going concern basis of preparation and found that these provided an explanation of the directors' assessment that was consistent with the evidence we obtained.

Based on the work we have performed, we have not identified any material uncertainties relating to events or conditions that, individually or collectively, may cast significant doubt on the Group's and the Company's ability to continue as a going concern for a period of at least twelve months from when the financial statements are authorised for issue.

In auditing the financial statements, we have concluded that the directors' use of the going concern basis of accounting in the preparation of the financial statements is appropriate.

However, because not all future events or conditions can be predicted, this conclusion is not a guarantee as to the Group's and the Company's ability to continue as a going concern.

In relation to the directors' reporting on how they have applied the UK Corporate Governance Code, we have nothing material to add or draw attention to in relation to the directors' statement in the financial statements about whether the directors considered it appropriate to adopt the going concern basis of accounting.

Our responsibilities and the responsibilities of the directors with respect to going concern are described in the relevant sections of this report.

**Reporting on other information**

The other information comprises all of the information in the Annual Report other than the financial statements and our auditors' report thereon. The directors are responsible for the other information. Our opinion on the financial statements does not cover the other information and, accordingly, we do not express an audit opinion or, except to the extent otherwise explicitly stated in this report, any form of assurance thereon.

In connection with our audit of the financial statements, our responsibility is to read the other information and, in doing so, consider whether the other information is materially inconsistent with the financial statements or our knowledge obtained in the audit, or otherwise appears to be materially misstated. If we identify an apparent material inconsistency or material misstatement, we are required to perform procedures to conclude whether there is a material misstatement of the financial statements or a material misstatement of the other information. If, based on the work we have performed, we conclude that there is a material misstatement of this other information, we are required to report that fact. We have nothing to report based on these responsibilities.

With respect to the Strategic report and Directors' report, we also considered whether the disclosures required by the UK Companies Act 2006 have been included.

Based on our work undertaken in the course of the audit, the Companies Act 2006 requires us also to report certain opinions and matters as described below.

**Strategic report and Directors' report**

In our opinion, based on the work undertaken in the course of the audit, the information given in the Strategic report and Directors' report for the year ended 31 December 2023 is consistent with the financial statements and has been prepared in accordance with applicable legal requirements.

In light of the knowledge and understanding of the Group and Company and their environment obtained in the course of the audit, we did not identify any material misstatements in the Strategic report and Directors' report.

**Directors' Remuneration**

In our opinion, the part of the Directors' remuneration report to be audited has been properly prepared in accordance with the Companies Act 2006.

**INDEPENDENT AUDITORS' REPORT TO THE MEMBERS OF BUNZL PLC** continued**Corporate governance statement**

The Listing Rules require us to review the directors' statements in relation to going concern, longer-term viability and that part of the corporate governance statement relating to the Company's compliance with the provisions of the UK Corporate Governance Code specified for our review. Our additional responsibilities with respect to the corporate governance statement as other information are described in the Reporting on other information section of this report.

Based on the work undertaken as part of our audit, we have concluded that each of the following elements of the corporate governance statement is materially consistent with the financial statements and our knowledge obtained during the audit, and we have nothing material to add or draw attention to in relation to:

- The directors' confirmation that they have carried out a robust assessment of the emerging and principal risks;
- The disclosures in the Annual Report that describe those principal risks, what procedures are in place to identify emerging risks and an explanation of how these are being managed or mitigated;
- The directors' statement in the financial statements about whether they considered it appropriate to adopt the going concern basis of accounting in preparing them, and their identification of any material uncertainties to the Group's and Company's ability to continue to do so over a period of at least twelve months from the date of approval of the financial statements;
- The directors' explanation as to their assessment of the Group's and Company's prospects, the period this assessment covers and why the period is appropriate; and
- The directors' statement as to whether they have a reasonable expectation that the Company will be able to continue in operation and meet its liabilities as they fall due over the period of its assessment, including any related disclosures drawing attention to any necessary qualifications or assumptions.

Our review of the directors' statement regarding the longer-term viability of the Group and Company was substantially less in scope than an audit and only consisted of making inquiries and considering the directors' process supporting their statement; checking that the statement is in alignment with the relevant provisions of the UK Corporate Governance Code; and considering whether the statement is consistent with the financial statements and our knowledge and understanding of the Group and Company and their environment obtained in the course of the audit.

In addition, based on the work undertaken as part of our audit, we have concluded that each of the following elements of the corporate governance statement is materially consistent with the financial statements and our knowledge obtained during the audit:

- The directors' statement that they consider the Annual Report, taken as a whole, is fair, balanced and understandable, and provides the information necessary for the members to assess the Group's and Company's position, performance, business model and strategy;
- The section of the Annual Report that describes the review of effectiveness of risk management and internal control systems; and
- The section of the Annual Report describing the work of the Audit Committee.

We have nothing to report in respect of our responsibility to report when the directors' statement relating to the Company's compliance with the Code does not properly disclose a departure from a relevant provision of the Code specified under the Listing Rules for review by the auditors.

**Responsibilities for the financial statements and the audit****Responsibilities of the directors for the financial statements**

As explained more fully in the Statement of directors' responsibilities, the directors are responsible for the preparation of the financial statements in accordance with the applicable framework and for being satisfied that they give a true and fair view. The directors are also responsible for such internal control as they determine is necessary to enable the preparation of financial statements that are free from material misstatement, whether due to fraud or error.

In preparing the financial statements, the directors are responsible for assessing the Group's and the Company's ability to continue as a going concern, disclosing, as applicable, matters related to going concern and using the going concern basis of accounting unless the directors either intend to liquidate the Group or the Company or to cease operations, or have no realistic alternative but to do so.

**Auditors' responsibilities for the audit of the financial statements**

Our objectives are to obtain reasonable assurance about whether the financial statements as a whole are free from material misstatement, whether due to fraud or error, and to issue an auditors' report that includes our opinion. Reasonable assurance is a high level of assurance, but is not a guarantee that an audit conducted in accordance with ISAs (UK) will always detect a material misstatement when it exists. Misstatements can arise from fraud or error and are considered material if, individually or in the aggregate, they could reasonably be expected to influence the economic decisions of users taken on the basis of these financial statements.

Irregularities, including fraud, are instances of non-compliance with laws and regulations. We design procedures in line with our responsibilities, outlined above, to detect material misstatements in respect of irregularities, including fraud. The extent to which our procedures are capable of detecting irregularities, including fraud, is detailed below.

Based on our understanding of the Group and industry, we identified that the principal risks of non-compliance with laws and regulations related to listing Rules, health and safety regulations, environmental regulations, data protection, and we considered the extent to which non-compliance might have a material effect on the financial statements. We also considered those laws and regulations that have a direct impact on the financial statements such as the Companies Act 2006 and tax legislation. We evaluated management's incentives and opportunities for fraudulent manipulation of the financial statements (including the risk of override of controls), and determined that the principal risks were related to the posting of inappropriate journal entries to increase revenue or reduce expenditure, and management bias in accounting estimates. The Group engagement team shared this risk assessment with the component auditors so that they could include appropriate audit procedures in response to such risks in their work. Audit procedures performed by the Group engagement team and/or component auditors included:

- Enquiry of management, those charged with governance and the entity's in-house legal team around actual and potential litigation and claims.
- Reviewing minutes of meetings of those charged with governance including the Board, Audit committee and Executive committee
- Reviewing internal audit reports
- Assessment of matters reported on the Group's whistleblowing helpline
- Auditing the risk of management override of controls, including through testing journal entries and other adjustments for appropriateness and testing accounting estimates (because of the risk of management bias)

## INDEPENDENT AUDITORS' REPORT TO THE MEMBERS OF BUNZL PLC continued

There are inherent limitations in the audit procedures described above. We are less likely to become aware of instances of non-compliance with laws and regulations that are not closely related to events and transactions reflected in the financial statements. Also, the risk of not detecting a material misstatement due to fraud is higher than the risk of not detecting one resulting from error, as fraud may involve deliberate concealment by, for example, forgery or intentional misrepresentations, or through collusion.

Our audit testing might include testing complete populations of certain transactions and balances, possibly using data auditing techniques. However, it typically involves selecting a limited number of items for testing, rather than testing complete populations. We will often seek to target particular items for testing based on their size or risk characteristics. In other cases, we will use audit sampling to enable us to draw a conclusion about the population from which the sample is selected.

A further description of our responsibilities for the audit of the financial statements is located on the FRC's website at: [www.frc.org.uk/auditorsresponsibilities](http://www.frc.org.uk/auditorsresponsibilities). This description forms part of our auditors' report.

### Use of this report

This report, including the opinions, has been prepared for and only for the Company's members as a body in accordance with Chapter 3 of Part 16 of the Companies Act 2006 and for no other purpose. We do not, in giving these opinions, accept or assume responsibility for any other purpose or to any other person to whom this report is shown or into whose hands it may come save where expressly agreed by our prior consent in writing.

### Other required reporting

#### Companies Act 2006 exception reporting

Under the Companies Act 2006 we are required to report to you if, in our opinion:

- we have not obtained all the information and explanations we require for our audit; or
- adequate accounting records have not been kept by the Company, or returns adequate for our audit have not been received from branches not visited by us; or
- certain disclosures of directors' remuneration specified by law are not made; or
- the Company financial statements and the part of the Directors' remuneration report to be audited are not in agreement with the accounting records and returns.

We have no exceptions to report arising from this responsibility.

### Appointment

Following the recommendation of the Audit Committee, we were appointed by the directors on 19 May 2014 to audit the financial statements for the year ended 31 December 2014 and subsequent financial periods. The period of total uninterrupted engagement is 10 years, covering the years ended 31 December 2014 to 31 December 2023.

### Other matter

As required by the Financial Conduct Authority Disclosure Guidance and Transparency Rule 4.1.14R, these financial statements form part of the ESEF-prepared annual financial report filed on the National Storage Mechanism of the Financial Conduct Authority in accordance with the ESEF Regulatory Technical Standard ('ESEF RTS'). This auditors' report provides no assurance over whether the annual financial report has been prepared using the single electronic format specified in the ESEF RTS.

### Neil Grimes (Senior Statutory Auditor) for and on behalf of PricewaterhouseCoopers LLP

Chartered Accountants and Statutory Auditors  
London  
26 February 2024