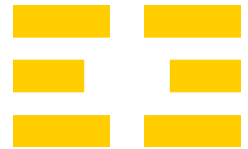


## WPP

Subsidiaries: VMLY&R, Kantar, BCW  
Locations: United Kingdom (HQ)  
Industries: Commercial and Professional Services

### RISK LEVEL:



**Medium Risk**

### DESCRIPTION:

WPP scored a 70 on the 2023 Corporate Equality Index (CEI) from the Human Rights Campaign (HRC), a political stakeholder group. By complying with the HRC's controversial demands, WPP increases the risk of dividing employees, alienating customers and harming shareholders. It also uses sex and gender ideology criteria in employee recruitment, vendor selection, and philanthropic support. WPP and VMLY&R provides a benefits package for employees which covers travel/lodging costs for an abortion and transgender medical procedures for covered employees and dependents, including children. VMLY&R uses its corporate funds to support controversial sex and gender ideologies and organizations. The company supports the Equality Act and has mandatory unconscious bias trainings. WPP has donated to ideological groups hostile to freedom of expression, such as Black Lives Matter (BLM) and is a member of the Partnership for Global LGBTI Equality (PGLE). The company opposed various state and local legislation intended to protect parental rights, girls' sports, bathroom facilities, and gendered spaces. WPP is a member of the "Don't Ban Equality" business coalition. For these reasons, WPP earns a Medium Risk rating.

### Corporate Weaponization

**Has denied service to customers, suppliers, or vendors due to their political views or religious beliefs OR corporately boycotts, divests, or sanctions regions, people groups, or industries.** **Medium Risk**

WPP received a score of 70 recruits employees based on sexual identity issues. The company discriminates against vendors that do not promote divisive sex and gender policies, indicating it prioritizes sexual issues over merit (1)(2). The same is true of Kantar and VMLY&R, WPP's subsidiaries, which have received respective scores of 80 and 60 on the 2023 HRC CEI (3)(4). However, it has not publicly terminated business relationships based on religious beliefs or political views.

**Charitable giving (including employee matching programs) policies or practices discriminate against charitable organizations based on views or religious beliefs.** **High Risk**

WPP's HRC CEI rating indicates the company will not donate to non-religious charities unless they embrace controversial sexual identity policies (1)(2). The same is true of Kantar and VMLY&R, WPP's subsidiaries (3)(4).

**Employment policies fail to protect against discrimination based on political affiliation/views and/or religion.** **High Risk**

WPP and one of its subsidiaries, Kantar, do not provide viewpoint protections for its employees (1)(2). Kantar provides a specific benefits guide with a comprehensive explanation of transgender services funded by the company (3)(4).

## Corporate Governance and Public Policy

**Uses corporate reputation to support ideological causes and/or organizations hostile to freedom of expression. High Risk**

[1](#)[2](#)[3](#). WPP signed an open letter in support of the Equality Act and advocates for “anti-racism”, displaying Ibram X. Kendi’s “How to be an Antiracist” on its website [4](#)[5](#). The company hosts mandatory unconscious bias training for all employees [6](#). WPP’s subsidiary Burson Cohn & Wolfe (BCW) has signed letters supporting the Equality Act and opposing the Florida Parental Rights in Education Act [7](#)[8](#). BCW was part of the Freedom for All Americans coalition, which advocated for federal legislation that would overrule state laws designed to protect girls’ sports and similar laws [9](#). Burson Cohn & Wolfe’s Executive VP was ranked 41 in the 2020 Pride Power List after he created the Human Rights Campaign Americans for Marriage Equality campaign [10](#). BCW’s Global President published a statement in support of Black Lives Matter [11](#). WPP’s CEO Mark Read is a signatory to CEOs For Gun Safety [12](#). During the 2022 Pride Month VMLY&R, a subsidiary of WPP held a digital event called “Made With Pride” featuring speaker events and LGBTQ employee stories [131415](#).

**Uses corporate funds to advance ideological causes, organizations, or policies hostile to freedom of expression. High Risk**

WPP and VMLY&R provides a benefits package for employees which covers travel/lodging costs for an abortion and transgender medical procedures for covered employees and dependents, including children [1](#)[2](#)[34](#)[5](#). Its subsidiaries, Kantar and VMLY&R also cover these costs [6](#)[7](#). The company is a PGLE member [8](#). The company uses gift-matching funds to support BLM and Color of Change [9](#). VMLY&R has a section of its Foundation Impact Report titled “Black Lives Matter Matching Gift Program” in which they have matched donations to the Black Lives Matter movement [10](#). VMLY&R foundation has also financially supported The Trevor Project and Des Moines Capital City Pride [11](#).

**Uses corporate political contributions for ideological, non-business purposes.**

**Lower Risk**

WPP does not operate a PAC at this time [1](#). Burson Cohn & Wolfe’s PAC has not been active since 2020 [2](#). BCW has not used its political contributions for ideological purposes[3](#). VMLY&R does not operate a PAC at this time. Kantar does not operate a PAC at this time and has not lobbied for ideological purposes [4](#)[5](#)[6](#).

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