



Contractor Minimum Standards Charter



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Introduction

Wakefield and District Housing (WDH) is responsible for procuring an extensive variety of goods, works, and services spending approximately £60 million each year on contracts with external organisations. We work with a wide range of stakeholders, to design and provide services that meets and exceeds the community and customer needs. We aim to help local people and businesses thrive and seek to maintain fairness and transparency in all we do.

To ensure the values and principles WDH works to are upheld by our contractors (and their supply chains), we require all organisations that are successful in tendering for work with ourselves to sign up to this charter. This represents a commitment from our contractors that they will adhere to the aims and intent of this charter and promote best practice throughout their business activities.

Statement of Intent

By signing this agreement, we the undersigned are fully committed to:

- supporting the principles and aims of this charter within our businesses and respective supply chains; and
- implementing these principles in our business and strategic plans which govern our business activities.

Minimum standards for employment

Employment rights

Our vision

We recognise that a range of different employment statuses are both needed and wanted across the diverse range of contracts we procure, however, wherever possible we wish to promote direct guaranteed levels of employment for the people delivering these contracts. We recognise the importance of creating safe, productive worksite and developing an ethos of equal treatment as well as enhancing economic opportunities within our communities.

Your commitment

We expect our contractors to:

- employ workers under recognised industry collective agreements which are fair, equitable and offer opportunity for all;
- be proactive in achieving and promoting good industrial relations and the health and safety of employees;
- actively engage health and safety representatives and support their role in helping to ensure a safe site;
- certify that they do not engage in the practice of blacklisting workers, embed a whistle-blowing policy, and mitigate against harassment or intimidation;
- operate and promote a positive culture of equality, diversity and human rights within their workforce and supply chains that respects all individuals and does not engage in any form of discrimination;

- provide safe working environments and comply with all appropriate health and safety, working hours, employment and social security requirements;
- support the principles of the universal declaration of human rights;
- support the fundamental international labour organisation conventions; and
- not engage in or support the use of child labour.

Skills and training

Our vision

Organisations delivering contracts on WDH's behalf must ensure that contractual requirements are achieved. To do this, organisations should recruit, train, and develop their workforce to ensure an appropriate mix of skills and experiences are in place to deliver the requirements of the contract.

Your commitment

We expect our contractors to:

- be able to demonstrate that employees in their employ have the appropriate skills and experience to deliver the contract requirements, whilst promoting and encouraging apprenticeships to an appropriate NVQ standard wherever possible;
- support employees by ensuring that they have access to appropriate training and development opportunities;
- ensure that they do not place employees, citizens, or WDH at risk physically, reputationally or legally;
- enable opportunities for those hard to reach and under-represented groups in employment and skills initiatives.
- work with WDH to support initiatives aimed at promoting and improving opportunities in education and training of employees;
- commit to create employment and training opportunities for residents, including people with disabilities and support people into work and work-experience placements; and
- be receptive to working with our local schools, academies and colleges to help to ensure that the young people are equipped with the right skills to match the requirements of the labour market.

Pay and benefits

Our vision

We seek to raise living standards for those in our communities and to ensure a decent work life balance for all.

Your commitment

To ensure employees have access to:

- wages that at least comply with legislation and wherever possible pay a minimum wage levels that matches the rates set by the Living Wage Foundation (<http://www.livingwage.org.uk/>);
- paid holidays;
- a pension scheme; and
- flexible working arrangements wherever possible.

Health and safety

Our vision

Health and safety of all workers is paramount. Contractors should ensure all workers operate in an environment which does not pose any unnecessary risks and complies with relevant health and safety legislation and best practices.

Your commitment

We expect all contractors to ensure that:

- health and safety standards are rigorously implemented and adhered to and are supported by suitable accreditation under SSIP (Safety Schemes in Procurement) or equivalent recognised health and safety accreditation scheme; and
- sufficient facilities are in place for workers, including reasonable standards for toilets, mess and drying facilities.

Equalities, diversity and inclusion

Our vision

Employment and benefit packages must reward people in a fair and consistent way. It is important that barriers continue to be removed that prevent or limit people from accessing services; or from participating in employment; learning opportunities; social and leisure activities; or community and public life.

Your commitment

WDH expects all contractors to:

- operate and monitor fair, open recruitment and selection processes and encourage applications from all groups in the community;
- value and respects the identity and culture of everyone;
- improve equalities practice by assessing equality competencies in the employee performance and development review process;
- review and monitor total reward packages to seek to ensure equality of pay for the workforce; and
- encourage and support employees to reach their full potential.

Modern slavery

Our vision

We must do all we can to tackle modern slavery and ensure it is not present in our contracts or supply chains. Modern slavery is a crime resulting in an abhorrent abuse of human rights. It is constituted in the Modern Slavery Act 2015 by the offences of 'slavery, servitude and forced or compulsory labour' and 'human trafficking'.

Your commitment

WDH expects our contractors (where appropriate) to:

- dedicate a senior individual(s) within the business to be responsible for compliance with the Act.
- audit the business and supply chains to help determine the level of exposure, whether or not slavery and human trafficking is a potential issue for the business and where exposure is greatest;
- develop supplier codes of conduct, tender requirements and supplier contracts have policies and codes of conduct to combat slavery and human trafficking in the business and supply chains;
- identify who requires training on the Act, for example, directors and employees who have direct responsibility for supply chain management and procurement;
- consult with individuals in the workforce who may potentially be affected; and
- ensure there are effective grievance and whistleblowing mechanisms in place so that concerns over slavery and human trafficking may be raised.

Minimum standards for enhancing our communities

Social value

Our vision

'Social value' is a way of thinking about how scarce resources are allocated and used. It involves looking beyond the price of each individual contract and looking at what the collective benefit to a community is when a public body chooses to award a contract.

Your commitment

To secure additional value from our contracted spend WDH asks all its contractors to look for opportunities to:

- promote compliance with social and labour law, including related national and international policy, commitments / agendas;
- promote SME's and civil society organisations through an observance of existing duties of equal treatment, proportionality and transparency and by making subcontracting opportunities more visible;
- promote fair and ethical trading;
- contribute to health improvement priorities;
- stimulate social integration;
- stimulate demand for environmentally friendly goods, services and works; and
- contribute to climate change, carbon reduction and to energy efficiency.

Buy local

Our vision

WDH is committed to increasing opportunities for local organisations to benefit from our spending power. Buying products and services from local companies is an important and practical way of supporting the local economy and workforce; therefore, we seek quotes from local firms wherever possible whilst ensuring we comply with procurement regulations.

Your commitment

We want our contractors to take account of the social and economic impacts of buying locally when procuring, thereby reducing unemployment and raising the skill level of the local workforce.

- support the local economy by choosing suppliers close to the point of service delivery where possible and reduce supply chain miles;
- encourage their suppliers to endorse the principle throughout their supply chains; and
- support the local economy and create much needed jobs and apprenticeships by employing and buying local.

Being a key partner in our communities

Our vision

WDH and its contractors must seek to play a vital role in the local community, especially in those areas and communities with the greatest need.

Your commitment

We want our contractors wherever possible to:

- build capacity by supporting community organisations with resources and expertise in areas with the greatest need, for example mentoring and working with youth organisations and services;
- make a local impact by improving local facilities and areas, for example employee volunteering schemes;
- provide support to third sector organisations and work with third sector organisations to deliver services and contracts; and
- work with schools and colleges, offering work experience and business awareness to students, especially those from disadvantaged areas or communities.

Being a fit for purpose, sustainable and greener business, responsive to climate change

Our vision

We have set a 2035 Vision Milestone in our Business Strategy 2025 of 'leading sustainability through social change: through the provision of net zero carbon services'. We are committed to embedding sustainability principles into all aspects of the organisation including the goods, works and services we procure for the benefit of current and future generations.

Your commitment

We want our contractors to take account of the environmental impact of the goods, works and services they provide and minimise this impact as much as possible to protect the environment and reduce their contribution to climate change.

Our contractors will commit to protecting the environment, minimising waste and energy consumption and using resources efficiently, and also maximise opportunities to improve the sustainability of the services they are delivering to us.

These commitments will also apply to their supply chains and include:

- Demonstrating the additional environmental and social value of the goods and services you provide.
- Reducing carbon emissions related to delivery of goods and services. This should be inclusive of direct emissions (such as operations and logistics) and indirect emissions (such as manufacturing processes, embodied energy / carbon in materials used).
- Using sustainably sourced products and, wherever possible, using goods with sustainable certification to provide assurance.
- Eliminating waste wherever possible and, where waste is unavoidable, adopting the 'reduce, reuse, recycle' philosophy.
- Minimising negative environmental impacts (such as relating to noise, air quality) and improving our communities (such as maximising biodiversity of our green spaces).
- Sharing best practice and expertise relating to sustainability with us and supply chain partners.
- Raising awareness amongst the workforce of sustainability issues and what tangible things can be done as part of service delivery.

Ethical procurement

Our vision

It is essential that our procurement processes (and subsequent contractual relationships) are conducted in a fair and transparent way.

Your commitment

Our contractors will commit to employing the highest ethical standards in their own operations and those within their supply chain including:

- working to the highest standards of business integrity and ethical conduct;
- compliance with the Bribery Act 2010;
- having a unequivocal policy in place that governs the offer or acceptance of gifts and hospitality, to ensure these cannot be seen to influence the award or continuation of contracts;
- paying their fair share of taxes;
- adopt best practice when procuring goods and services, for example, procure low energy products and avoid the use of rainforest timber from unmanaged sources;
- pay suppliers no later than the terms stated in the primary contract and provide WDH with management information to support this; and
- protect WDHs tobacco control work from the commercial and vested interests of the tobacco industry by not accepting any partnerships, payments, gifts and services, monetary or in kind or research funding offered by the tobacco industry to officials or employees.

Minimum standards for protecting the vulnerable

Safeguarding

Our vision

Safeguarding those who are the most vulnerable in society is everyone's responsibility. We believe it is an important role that must be embedded into organisations that come into contact with children, young people and adults. Safeguarding is the term used for a range of measures employed to keep the aforementioned groups safe and protected from harm and is underpinned by the Domestic Abuse Act 2021.

Your commitment

Our contractors have an obligation to:

- report any concerns about the treatment of adults and children that they may witness in the course of their work;
- have a designated safeguarding lead;
- have a Safeguarding Policy in place or be willing to develop a policy as part of the mobilisation process on the award of a contract;
- include safeguarding in the recruitment and selection process;
- deliver safeguarding induction and refresher training programmes;
- have procedures in place for recognising and reporting a safeguarding concern; and
- confirm that employees will be DBS / Enhanced DBS checked where required on confirmation of a contract award.

WDH looks forward to working with suppliers to help them support the aims set out in this Charter.

By signing this document, we confirm we have understood and agree to all requirements, included in WDH Contractor Minimum Standards Charter.

Name

Position

Signature*

For and on behalf

Dated

*The Charter should be signed by:

- sole contractor;
- all the partners; or
- a duly authorised agent of the limited company completing the tender.