

Corporate Social Responsibility & Environmental Policy

Other relevant CVS policies:
Whistleblowing Policy
Sustainability Policy
Equality & Diversity Policy
Mental Health & Wellbeing Policy
Safer Recruitment Policy

Approved By Board: May 2017
Reviewed: February 2024
To be reviewed: February 2025

POLICY

1.0 Overview

Sefton Council for Voluntary Service (CVS) is committed to promoting Corporate Social Responsibility (CSR) within the organisation. The development of a CSR agenda is integral to Sefton CVS professional activities and the management of the organisation. Sefton CVS is committed to promoting and developing CSR and integrating this into working practices to improve our business and performance. Sefton CVS is a Company Limited by Guarantee and a registered Charity accountable through a governing body, which carries ultimate responsibility for all aspects of the organisation.

2.0 Aim

Sefton CVS aims to follow and promote good CSR practice in order to:

- reduce the negative social, economic and environmental impacts of Sefton CVS activities; and
- assist the wider voluntary, community and faith (VCF) sector and our key partners, to do the same

When considering CSR, Sefton CVS will focus on the following key objectives:

- To comply with, and exceed where practicable, all applicable legislation, regulations and codes of practice
- To maintain and develop Sefton CVS in a sustainable manner and to integrate CSR considerations into all our business decisions
- To develop managers, staff and volunteers by providing training and information on CSR and sustainability; ensuring that all staff are fully aware of our CSR Policy and are committed to implementing and improving it
- To promote and adopt best practice within the local voluntary, community and faith (VCF) sector and keep the VCF sector informed on matters that have environmental, economic or social impacts
- To make partners and suppliers aware of CSR, and encourage them to adopt sound, sustainable management practices
- To develop good working relationships with relevant external authorities and bodies
- To review and continually strive to improve our CSR performance through developing, implementing and monitoring a CSR Action Plan.

3.0 Scope

This policy applies to all activities undertaken by Sefton CVS employees (this includes staff, volunteers and associates).

Our policy will reflect the nature of our day to day business activities and wider involvement with society in the following areas: :

3.1 Environment

- To recognise the need to deliver services in an environmentally sustainable way and to include concern for the environment in all our activities.
- To address impacts arising from the energy, water and resource use, transport needs and waste generation, of our services and activities.

3.2 Relationships

- To deliver our vision through developing strong relationships with our partners (in the statutory and voluntary, community and faith sectors, and with other external organisations and individuals).
- To conduct our relationships with integrity and courtesy; ensuring that we honour our commitments.
- To work with our contractors and suppliers to implement 'green' procurement and to develop a partnership approach for the delivery of our strategies and services.
- To play our part in eradicating modern slavery and human trafficking. We are committed to better understanding our supply chains and working towards greater transparency in, and responsibility towards, people working within them.

3.3 Communities

- To build relationships with our partners and the local communities which we serve, and to support local social businesses who share our aims.
- To encourage our staff and those acting on our behalf to consider the needs of others in the running of our day-to-day business.
- To encourage feedback from the local statutory and voluntary, community and faith sectors on our CSR policies and programmes.

3.4 People

- To respect our staff and volunteers and encourage their development and training.
- To promote and maintain equality and to have constant regard to the happiness of our people as a whole, including their welfare, health and safety, empowerment and communication.
- To encourage and promote team-working and the sharing of skills and knowledge, whilst recognising outstanding individual contribution and rewarding our people fairly.

4.0 Principles

In line with this policy, CSR processes will be incorporated into Sefton CVS Core Business process. This will include provision for monitoring and reviewing the effectiveness of CSR measures and will identify the resources required for implementation.

4.1 Corporate Social Responsibility Policy Statement

Sefton CVS recognises that some of its activities and services have an impact on the social, environmental and economic well-being of Sefton. By addressing these impacts we can also improve the quality and performance of our core organisational processes and responsibilities.

Our vision is “for Sefton CVS to be committed to promoting an environmentally friendly workplace and a sustainability agenda that is integral to Sefton CVS professional activities and the management of the organisation”. By embracing CSR we will broaden our vision by actively looking for opportunities to improve our organisation and contribute to the well-being of the communities in which we operate and beyond.

Tackling the challenge of addressing our wider impacts and reflecting our vision will require a corporate and systematic approach towards identifying these impacts, demonstrating continuous improvement and delivering wider benefits to our core business, partners and stakeholders.

For the purposes of this policy, CSR is about how organisations manage the business processes and relationships to produce an overall positive impact on society.

4.2 Principles

Sefton CVS is committed to establishing a CSR system which is guided by the following principles:

- **Shared responsibility** – CSR involves everyone in our organisation, which means sharing the responsibilities of ownership as well as its rewards.
- **Openness and accountability** – We will communicate our CSR policies, objectives and performance openly and honestly to our staff, partners and other stakeholders. We will also seek their views and encourage them to communicate with us.
- **Continuous improvement** – Sefton CVS is committed to measuring and improving our CSR performance. We will develop and implement specific policies and procedures, monitor our performance, set targets for improvement and report our progress.

- **Demonstrating compliance** – As a minimum we will meet or exceed all relevant legislation. Where no legislation exists we will seek to develop and implement our own appropriate standards.

5.0 Definitions

Corporate Social Responsibility - a company's sense of responsibility towards the community and environment (both ecological and social) in which it operates

Sustainability - meeting the needs of the present without compromising the ability to meet future needs in terms of economic, environmental and social factors and the interrelationships between them

Economic Factors - the set of fundamental information that affects a business or an investment's value over the short and longer term

Environmental Factors - surrounding conditions, influences, or forces by which organisations are influenced and modified in their growth and development

Social Factors - the behaviour, tastes and lifestyles of communities on a local, national and international scale

Modern Slavery - is a crime and a violation of fundamental human rights. It takes various forms, all of which have in common the deprivation of a person's liberty by another in order to exploit them for personal or commercial gain.

6.0 Monitoring & Review

This policy and the associated procedure will be reviewed annually to ensure that it remains fit for purpose and compliant with current legislation and best practice.

PROCEDURE

7.0 Practical Steps

In order to embed CSR principles into practice, Sefton CVS will:

7.1 *Travel and meetings*

- Aim to walk, cycle and/or use public transport to attend meetings, project/organisation visits etc, apart from in exceptional circumstances where the alternatives are impractical and/or cost prohibitive.

- Include the full costs of more sustainable forms of transport in our financial proposals, rather than the least cost option which may involve travelling by car.
- Avoid physically travelling to meetings etc, where alternatives are available and practical, such as using teleconferencing / video conferencing and efficient timing of meetings to avoid multiple trips. These options are also often more time efficient, while not sacrificing the benefits of regular contact with clients and partners.
- Promote Green Travel Plans by reducing the need for our staff and volunteers to travel by supporting alternative working arrangements, including home working etc, and promoting the use of public transport.
- Explore an emissions recording scheme for business travel to monitor our impact.

7.2 Purchase of equipment and consumption of resources

- Minimise our use of paper and other office consumables, for example by double-siding all paper used, and identifying opportunities to reduce waste.
- As far as possible arrange for the re-use or recycling of office waste, including paper, computer supplies and redundant equipment.
- Commit to reducing the energy consumption of office equipment by purchasing energy efficient equipment and practicing good housekeeping.
- Ensure that timber furniture, and any other timber products, are recycled or from well-managed, sustainable sources.
- Purchase fair-trade and/or organic beverages.

7.3 Working Practices and advice to partners

- Undertake voluntary work with the local voluntary, community and / or environmental organisations and develop ideas to seek to offset carbon emissions from our activities.
- Develop family friendly and childcare provision policies to support our workforce.
- Ensure that any organisation we contract with take account of sustainability issues in their advice to partners and other organisations.

- Identify and monitor risks of Modern Slavery within our organisation and supply chains.
- Include a copy of CSR in all our proposals to partners.

8.0 Action Planning

Sefton CVS has devised an action plan that outlines the key areas of work we need to look at, guidance, score criteria, evidence/comments, what needs to be actioned and by whom. The Equality and Diversity Steering Group will monitor and review organisational performance in regard to CSR.

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8.1 Action Plan Monitoring Arrangements

The Equality and Diversity Steering Group will report to the Senior Management Team (SMT) summarising progress towards CSR targets and objectives. On approval, the report will be published and made widely available to staff and stakeholders.

CSR training will be provided to the SMT and all relevant employees with the aim of ensuring that they have the skills necessary to identify, evaluate and manage the CSR aspects associated with the services they provide.