



Business Charter for Social Responsibility

This Charter describes the spirit, style and behaviours we will adopt and will expect our partners/suppliers to adopt as we jointly work together in an open, positive and honest manner to maximise the level of customer satisfaction and value.

Solihull's business community has a corporate and social responsibility to:

- Ensure the future prosperity of Solihull, its businesses and all its citizens
- Value and respect the needs and aspirations of the diverse communities in Solihull
- Enhance social opportunity and cohesion in a dynamic and changing business environment
- Help to develop improvements for disadvantaged neighbourhoods and people
- Create and maintain a sustainable, clean, safe and attractive environment for living, work and leisure
- Recognise and promote Solihull's diversity as a major asset

Businesses will be encouraged to sign up to the Charter and by sharing in a committed approach to these responsibilities, they will achieve economic and staff quality/retention benefits, and enhanced reputation in the community.

Solihull has issued a Concordat for Small and Medium-sized Enterprises, which is a statement of principles to encourage effective trade between Solihull and small businesses. ([Concordat](#)) The Concordat and Charter are complementary.

Solihull will make appropriate use of its legal powers including the power to promote the economic, social and environmental well being of our community. All tender processes and contract awards will comply with EU Public Procurement Directives and the principles of non-discrimination, equal treatment and transparency and our duties under UK law.

Jointly, we will encourage a diverse and competitive supply market, including small firms, social enterprises, ethnic minority businesses and voluntary and community sector suppliers.

Jointly, we are committed to consider the role of these suppliers in delivering specialist elements of larger contracts and framework agreements. Solihull will work with prime contractors – both at tender stage and during the life of a contract – to jointly establish the contribution that small firms, ethnic minority businesses, social enterprises and third sector suppliers can play in the supply chain. Solihull provides details of its prime contractors on its website.

Areas of Focus & Measures of Progress

Whilst the Charter is not a legal document, it is useful to describe areas of specific focus and some simple measures of progress. Positive progress against these measures may result in publicised recognition awards. Progress is to be reported on a six-monthly basis.

1. Employment

Together, we will seek to reduce unemployment and raise the skills level of our local workforce. Working in partnership, we will promote local employment opportunities and where possible, we will encourage and facilitate learning and development of our local workforce. We will also encourage our subcontractors to endorse this philosophy throughout the supply chain network.

Measures:

- (i) Number of employees and percentage resident in Solihull Borough*
- (ii) Number of employees on learning and development schemes*

2. Equality and Diversity

Solihull Council's commitment to equality and diversity, and its framework for action, are expressed in its Equal Opportunities Policy [[Equal Opportunities Policy](#)] and Corporate Equality & Diversity Scheme [[Equality & Diversity Scheme](#)]. Jointly (including our subcontractors) we will familiarise ourselves with these documents and adopt an approach that demonstrates commitment to promoting equality and diversity in service provision, work undertaken within the Solihull community and employment.

Together, we will take all reasonable practicable steps to ensure that the way in which we operate - including policies, practices and procedures, do not discriminate or unfairly affect particular groups, such as black and minority ethnic groups and disabled people.

Measures (generic):

- (i) Equality profile of the workforce, job applicants, training, promotion, grievances, disciplinaries, and leavers.*

Measures (specific to service provision):

- (ii) Monitoring information on the equality profile of service users and complainants.*
- (iii) Records of service satisfaction surveys/consultation exercises with equality profiling of customers/employees involved.*

3. Managing Risk

When working with new partners or suppliers, the enthusiasm to have an impact and to deliver results can sometimes overtake the need to have all of the necessary arrangements and procedures in place. Problems can arise when governance and accountability arrangements are not agreed, not clear or are under-developed.

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To avoid such difficulties, we intend to work with our partners and suppliers to develop a common understanding that:

- managing risk is a joint responsibility;
- we will take all reasonable steps to protect each other, our employees and anyone else (e.g. visitors, people living nearby and other members of the public) from significant risks;
- partners/suppliers may need help to develop their competency to manage risk;
- performance monitoring arrangements will include monitoring risk management arrangements to ensure they continue to be effective;
- the extent of any monitoring will be directly linked to the level of risk (the greater the risk, the greater the monitoring).

For a full copy of the Solihull MBC Risk Management Strategy, please refer to ([Risk Management Strategy](#)).

Measures (to provide evidence of an effective Risk and Health and Safety Management System):

- (i) Production of an Annual Health and Safety Performance Report
- (ii) Regular monitoring of accident data to identify causes, trends and make recommendations to improve performance.

4. Subcontracting to other business organisations or to third sector organisations within Solihull Borough

Where subcontracting is necessary and is accepted under the terms of any prime contract, it will be conducted under the 'spirit' of this Charter and the Compact Plus for Solihull ([Compact Plus](#)) The term 'third sector' describes a range of groups, organisations and institutions which occupy the space between the public and the private sector. These include all local voluntary and community groups, large and small registered charities, foundations, trusts, and the growing number of social enterprises and co-operatives.

Measures (generic):

- (i) Number of organisations engaged (by type) and estimated associated annual value
- (ii) Number of their employees and percentage resident in Solihull Borough
- (iii) Number of their employees on training and development schemes

Measures (specific to third sector):

- (iv) Where such subcontracts are funded by public money, the number of SLAs (Service Level Agreements) that are in place.

5. Sustainability and Waste Elimination

We acknowledge that climate change is occurring and that it will continue to have far reaching effects on people and places, the economy, society and the environment, and commit to working with partners and local organisations to progressively address the causes and impacts of climate change whilst ensuring social cohesion and economic vitality.

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We will lead by example and reduce, where possible, the environmental impact of our business activities. This will include reduction of waste, increased recycling and the protection and enhancement of Solihull's natural environment for the benefit of wildlife and people. It will also include joint encouragement of the use of renewable energy sources and energy conservation.

Together, we will ensure that we follow sustainable procurement policies and processes which will exploit to the full the opportunities to minimise greenhouse gas emissions and detrimental environmental, social and economic impacts and encourage others to do likewise.

We will utilise guidance and best practice available from various organisations such as the Carbon Trust and others available via ([Solihull Footprint](#)).

Measures:

These may take the form of reports of good practice (such as reductions in fuel consumption or packaging) or, where available, details of accreditation obtained.

6. Safeguarding

Solihull MBC is committed to safeguarding and promoting the welfare of children, young people and vulnerable adults and requires the support of the entire community to achieve this aim; including local businesses.

Measures:

The level of safeguarding measures required of local businesses will vary depending on the nature of the business and should be appropriately reflected in any contract between the local business and Solihull MBC.

7. Corporate Parenting

The Children and Young People's Act 2008 identifies the role of the Corporate Parent. Corporate Parenting is a term used to define responsibilities towards looked after children, young people and care leavers (aged up to 21 years / 25 years). This group of people may also be called children / young people in care.

All elected members and local authority employees have a universal responsibility to ensure that these children and young people are considered when providing services. This also applies to partners such as Care Trust, Police, Solihull Community Housing, private and third sector providers. Education and Children's Services and workers directly providing services to these young people have a targeted responsibility. This also applies to services that are commissioned / contracted out to other agencies / partners, i.e. care placements.

Other organisations may be able to support Corporate Parenting by providing this group of people with opportunities for learning and development, including work experience.

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Measures (specific to service provision):

Measures applicable to the organisations mentioned above will be detailed within agreed SLAs specifically relevant to the respective service provision.

Measures (generic):

The number of these children and young people who are/have been provided with learning and development, including work experience.

Signed:

(for Solihull MBC)

Signed:

(for XYZ Co)