

Corporate Social Responsibility Update 2017



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1 Community Involvement & Development

We believe that the essential characteristics for successfully embedding Corporate Social Responsibility (CSR) into all of our activities is the willingness to incorporate social and environmental considerations into our decision making process and being willing to be accountable for the impact of those decisions and activities on the environment and society as a whole. We believe that behaving ethically is fundamental to establishing and sustaining legitimate and productive relationships with our partners and we understand the importance of CSR to the development and growth of our business.

We have adopted the principles of ISO 26000:2010 Guidance on Social Responsibility which provides us with a framework on how to show that we operate in a socially responsible way. This means acting in an ethical and transparent way that contributes to the health and welfare of society. The standard serves to clarify what social responsibility is, helps us to translate principles into effective actions and share best practice in social responsibility.

We recognize that we play a pivotal role in contributing towards growth and sustainability and we aim to conduct business in an ethical manner and seek to improve the regions and communities in which we work. This may involve the creation of employment and training opportunities, working with local enterprises and community groups, or making the area more aesthetically pleasing.

Some of the community involvement projects we were involved in include:

Group team up with Liverpool Schoolboys

The Group has entered into a new partnership with the Liverpool Schools Football Association. We now sponsor the Primary Team, providing backing for the stars of the future. A registered charity, the Schoolboys depend on sponsorship in order to develop the city's brightest young footballing talent. Former stars of the Primary Team include: Wayne Rooney, Steven Gerrard, Robbie Fowler and Steve McManaman, who are all among the illustrious list of names to have represented the team. The funding contributes to football kits, training apparel and transport for the team.

Sovini Golf Day raises valuable funds for homeless project

Proceeds from The Group's 2017 annual golf day are helping Liverpool's homeless into employment. The golf day raised £5,000 for Liverpool Homeless Football Club (LHFC) in September, as part of our ongoing partnership with the charity. The money raised is being used to support The Back Kitchen – a catering pod, run and managed by LHFC. The pod is being used as a training aid where people from vulnerable backgrounds can learn essential catering and customer service skills and gain qualifications to enable them to work in the catering industry. The donation has provided new equipment for the project and will help participants work towards their Level 1 and 2 Food Safety and Hygiene Certificates.

SPS operatives receive vital fire safety training

SPS has joined up with Merseyside Fire and Rescue Service (MFRS) to deliver life-saving fire safety training to over 200 operatives who have regular access to people's homes. The presentation, delivered by MFRS, will help our staff to identify and refer vulnerable tenants, who are at risk of fire in their homes, to the Fire Service. SPS staff are now fully equipped to identify the dangers and common causes of fires in the home, such as burn marks on furniture, discarded cigarettes, dirty cookers and many more. This will help to reduce unnecessary house fires and potentially save the lives of our customers across the borough by alerting MFRS to carry out Home Fire Safety Checks.

We will continue to work with the Group's Customer Empowerment Team to support, sustain and strengthen the local communities, ensuring that all customers have opportunities to get involved. A schedule of Community engagement projects will be prepared each year, the effectiveness/success of which will be reviewed annually.

The Sovini Group completes work on retreat for wounded soldiers

The Sovini Group has completed work on a Merseyside retreat for wounded and ex-service men and women seeking recovery from injuries. Code's Retreat is a dedicated area of Altcar Training Camp in Hightown, consisting of four lodging pods, a shower block and a fire pit. The area provides a space that wounded soldiers can use as part of their recovery. The aim of the project is to provide a pleasant, secluded and secure location for military personnel in recovery to take relaxing breaks as part of their recuperation process. The Sovini Group was responsible for building the shower block, which consists of a kitchen, dining area and two, level-access, wet rooms, a WC, a fire pit and a barbeque.

Recognition of the collaborative Group approach

The Sovini Group has been praised for our unique partnership approach to repairs and maintenance and were awarded Most Innovative Repairs & Maintenance Scheme at the Housing Innovation Awards 2017. The judges extolled the virtues of our collaborative Group approach and singled out our major investment in our retirement accommodation as a shining example. Our collaborative Group model incorporates all Group members, working together for the benefit of our customers. The investment in the retirement accommodation includes dementia-friendly makeovers of the properties to make them brighter, more attractive and easier for the residents to navigate.



2 Environmental Achievements

We have conducted Environmental Aspects and Impact studies to assess the impact that our activities have on the environment and as such have set ourselves a number of environmental targets which are monitored on an on-going basis.

We endorse the ethos of continual improvement and some of our environment successes include:



The Groups Carbon Footprint reduced by 41% in comparison with our base years data which saw a reduction from 9.34 CO₂ tonnes per FTE in 2010/11 to 5.41 CO₂ tonnes per FTE in 2016/17.



Fuel consumption reduced by 13% per vehicle, per month, in comparison with our base year data from 2012/12. SPS invested in Driver Behaviour Technology software which provides real-time, verbal coaching technology that helps drivers understand exactly how they need to drive their vehicle to be both safe and efficient.



More than 4,400 tonnes of construction waste was generated during 2016/17 of which 99.9% was recycled in comparison with WRAP best practice target of 70-80%.

SPS are considering piloting of a number of electric vehicles, to replace vehicles which are approaching the end of their lease period. Charging points will initially be installed at Atlantic House, meaning the vehicles can be charged with energy which has been generated from the Solar Panels.

3 Labour & Employment

We provide a safe and healthy working environment and for our employees and our management systems have been assessed and registered to ISO 14001 Environmental Management Systems and OHSAS 18001 Occupational Health and Safety Management Systems. This was also recognised by the awarding of the RoSPA Gold Award for Occupational Health and Safety. The award, from the Royal Society for the Prevention of Accidents, is the highest accolade that can be achieved in this field. We have conducted our E&D Perception Survey and reviewed and developed new Equality and Diversity Policies throughout the Group.

The Sovini Group appoint Forces Champion for staff: The Sovini Group has appointed a new Forces Champion for staff as part of our continued commitment to the Forces community. Trainee Management Accountant Ryan Westhoff, who joined the Army Reserves in November last year, will act as a point of contact for any colleagues that are interested in becoming a Reservist. The Sovini Group last year received an Employer Recognition award from the Ministry of Defence for our support of the Armed Forces. The Group is committed to supporting employees fulfil Reservist commitments and last year became the first housing Group in the North West to be awarded the Armed Forces Corporate Covenant.

The Sovini Group recruiting apprentices for 2017: The Sovini Group have launched their 2017 Apprenticeship Scheme recruitment campaign – and they're looking for amazing candidates for vacancies across the Group. Opportunities include: Joinery, Roofing, Quantity Surveying, Office Administration, Housing, Commercial Finance, Electrical, Warehousing and Sales.

External Recognition:

Mindful Employer: This initiative is aimed at increasing awareness of mental health at work, providing support for staff who experience stress, anxiety, depression or other mental health issues.



Investors in Diversity: We have adopted the Investors in Diversity Model, which provides an all-encompassing methodology for improving Equality, Diversity and Inclusion (EDI) practices in the workplace. This has enabled us to take a structured and planned approach to embedding EDI at the heart of what we do. We have successfully achieved registration to Investors in Diversity Stage 2.



TPAS Contractor Accreditation in Resident Involvement: SPS are accredited the Tenant Participation Advisory Service (TPAS) Award for Contractor Re-Accreditation. In the assessment feedback, SPS were applauded for our commitment to embedding resident involvement in our business strategy to improve services. The report stated that staff "took resident scrutiny very seriously".



Customer Service Excellence: We successfully achieved Customer Service Excellence (CSE) which is a nationally recognised standard designed to drive customer-focused change. It is a practical tool dedicated to bringing high-level customer service concepts into common practice.



Disability Confident: Disability Confident is a scheme that is designed to help recruit and retain disabled people and people with health conditions.



ISO 9001:2015, ISO 14001:2015, ISO 27001:2013 and OHSAS 18001:2007:

SPS successfully retained registration to ISO 9001:2015 Quality Management Systems, ISO14001:2015 Environmental Management Systems, ISO 27001:2013 Information Security Management Systems & OHSAS 18001:2007 Occupational Health & Safety Management Systems.



Certificate No. 2771
ISO 9001, ISO 14001, 27001, OHSAS 18001

Investors in People Health & Wellbeing Award:

SPS achieved the Investors in People Health & Wellbeing Award, which represents a true commitment to employee wellbeing and demonstrates a solid foundation of good practice. We believe that having a health and wellbeing programme in place supports a culture of happy and healthy employees, in turn providing improved productivity, attendance and motivation.



Investors in People (Gold): SPS also achieved the Investors in People (IIP) Accreditation which is the most successful framework for business improvement through people in the UK. We believe that IIP Gold Status helps to improve our competitive edge, reputation and performance whilst attracting and retaining the best staff.



Great Places to Work: The Sovini Group was ranked in Europe's top ten best workplaces at a special ceremony in Paris on Thursday, 8th June. Microsoft, Ferrari and 3M number among the previous winners of European Great Workplaces. In May 2017, The Sovini Group was named as one of the UK's best workplaces, placing ahead of companies such as McDonald's, Hilton Worldwide, Mars and MBNA. The award ranked The Sovini Group as the UK's best workplace outside London.



4 Consumer Issues

In order to ensure that fair, factual and unbiased information is readily available, we have compiled a suite of policies and leaflets which can be accessed either from our webpage, at any of our offices or upon request. All corporate information is free from stereotypes and prejudice in relation to age, gender, religious belief, race, disability or sexuality. An Equality Impact Assessment is also undertaken on all of our policies to reduce any negative impact to any group or individual.

Outbound Customer Satisfaction surveys are conducted centrally, by the Group, to monitor the customer perceptions of the quality of works and services which have been provided. These surveys are conducted across all equality strands, to ensure there is no disparity or discrimination towards any group of customers.

All construction waste which is generated through our activities is transported to Materials Recycling Facility where the waste is mechanically sorted and separated to ensure that the optimum amount of waste is recycled and we have set ourselves a challenging target of recycling + 90% of all waste which we receive and process.

SPS named the best in the business

SPS has been named Repairs and Maintenance Provider of the Year at the 24Housing Awards at Coventry's Ricoh Arena. SPS claimed the award ahead of five other shortlisted Repair and Maintenance Providers to be named the best in the country. The 24Housing

Awards are one of the most prestigious in the housing sector. Judges singled out SPS's partnership working with the Sefton Veterans Project as the initiative that set them apart from the competition.

5 Organisational Governance

We will ensure that we continue to practice accountability and transparency at all levels of our organisation. We will undertake annual reviews of our Strategic Plans, CSR Action Plan and processes to ensure that effective arrangements are in place. We have developed and maintain a full suite of policies and procedures to ensure compliance with legal, regulatory requirements and best practice. We have a dedicated team who facilitate the Strategic Planning Process which considers both the internal and external operating environment.

Organisational Governance is achieved through practicing accountability and transparency at all levels of our organization, using leadership to create an organizational culture which uses core values of social responsibility when making business decisions. Processes include: Governance and Probity; Gifts and Hospitality; Business Assurance Committee; Probity Issues.



6 Fair Operating Practices

We have developed our own Governance and Probity procedures which are supported by our Anti-Fraud, Corruption and Money Laundering Policy and Gifts and Hospitality and Charitable Giving Policy, compliance with which is mandatory.

We are committed to promoting the highest standards of ethical business practice, from our recruitment and employment activities, through to the behaviours and procedural arrangements we expect from our supply chain partners. This includes being vigilant to the human suffering caused by those involved in acts of modern slavery and human trafficking activities. Our aim is for continuous improvement in this area and we will build on our existing strong emphasis on promoting employee welfare, stringent selection procedures and monitoring of our supply chain, through to our zero tolerance stance for any form of discrimination or Human Rights breaches.

We have amended our Approved Supplier Questionnaire to include an element in relation to Corporate Social Responsibility. Suppliers will then be monitored to ensure they adhere to the terms of the contract relating to social responsibility. This could include: creating apprenticeships; creating permanent positions; education in school; work placements; assistance with the Community Fund; giving free of charge labour or supply goods and materials to certain schemes or community projects.

In Accordance with the Modern Slavery Act we have also included a requirement for prospective suppliers to provide us with a copy of their Modern Day Slavery Annual Statement and the Group have also nominated a Modern Day Slavery Champion.



**“Act as if what you do
makes a difference.
It does.”**

— William James