

Intention

Signatories to this charter have agreed to support us in delivering wider social, economic and environmental benefits from our supply chain, whilst continuing to deliver real, long term value.

The purpose of this document is to set out our joint commitment to the broad principles and expectations detailed in this charter.

We do not expect a “one size fits all” approach and we will enter into dialogue with signatories to understand which areas of the charter apply most prominently to them. Whilst specifics may vary for signatories the fundamental principles will be consistent throughout.

We will work with signatories to set challenging but realistic objectives to reflect the principles of this charter.

For the purpose of this charter, the term “supplier” refers to all organisations providing goods, services, works or utilities in return for payment. We expect our suppliers to adopt the scheme standards with their supply chain.

ETHICS

We expect our suppliers to join us in mirroring our ethical approach. We will not tolerate corruption, bribery and unfair anti-competitive actions and expect our suppliers to adopt the following principles as a minimum standard:

- We will comply with applicable competition or procurement laws
- We will not, directly or indirectly offer or accept any undue payment or other consideration for the purpose of inducing any person or entity to act contrary to their prescribed duties
- We will record the correct nature of all financial transactions in accordance with accepted accounting principles
- We have controls in place in our IT procedures to ensure adequate levels of data protection for our clients, employees and supply chain
- We will carry out ethical audits of our suppliers where appropriate.

PAYMENT

We will pay our suppliers in accordance with the contract conditions and expect all businesses in our supply chain to be treated in the same way.

We have demonstrated our commitment to payment on time by signing up to the Prompt Payment Code and will publish our performance. We expect our suppliers to commit to the principles of this code as a minimum and would encourage them to publish their performance.

COMMUNITY

We expect suppliers to have an understanding of how their activities impact their local area and wider community, and we encourage them to make positive contributions and investments, for example by providing appropriate local employment opportunities, workforce volunteering and charity activities.

We expect our suppliers to minimise disruption to communities, using the principles of standards such as the Considerate Constructors Scheme, where appropriate.

EMPLOYMENT

We expect all businesses in our supply chain to respect the people they employ and to offer a safe workplace that is free from harm, intimidation, harassment or fear. The Ethical Trade Initiative Base Code, and the UN Global Compact Principles along with any local employment health and safety legislation, will be considered to be the minimum standard.

We are committed to promoting equal opportunities to all our employees, customers and suppliers. We treat all people equally with respect and dignity including those contracting to supply goods or services. We do not discriminate on the grounds of age, colour, disability, ethnicity, gender, marital status, sexual orientation, religion, faith or on any other unjustifiable or illegal grounds.

HEALTH & SAFETY

We endeavour to buy materials that are not harmful to health in manufacture, use or disposal. We expect our suppliers to comply with relevant legislation such as CoSHH, REACH and RoHS where appropriate. Where possible, we expect to avoid purchasing plastics such as PVC containing phthalates with health impacts or materials containing cadmium, hexavalent chromium, lead or mercury.

Suppliers working on our sites are expected to comply with our health and safety standards and where applicable, we will seek evidence that our suppliers are compliant.

All suppliers must have in place effective health and safety management systems, appropriate for the nature and scale of their business and services provided, that ensure compliance with health and safety law generally, as well as standards and codes specific to their industry.

BEST PRACTICE

We will work towards adopting best practice standards and techniques in sustainable procurement and expect our key suppliers to do the same. We will adopt the BS 8903 standard for sustainable procurement and the CIRIA Guide To Sustainable Procurement In Construction. These documents are mutually compatible and the most appropriate guidance will be used for the procurement category concerned.

THE ENVIRONMENT

We recognise that a significant change in business practice is needed to use resources sustainably, mitigate and adapt to climate change and to prevent pollution. We expect to set challenging and continuously improving objectives in this area and expect our suppliers to support these.

CLIMATE CHANGE MITIGATION AND ADAPTATION

Where applicable, we expect our suppliers to offer solutions that reflect best practice in climate change mitigation and adaptation.

Energy

- Suppliers (including designers and engineers) whose work impacts our energy consumption will take all steps necessary to offer solutions that reduce energy consumption and offer best whole life cost including those that qualify for Enhanced Capital Allowances. Over time we will develop contractual arrangements that incentivise whole life cost benefits
- Manufacturers or purchasers of energy-intensive products will need to demonstrate an increasingly accurate understanding of their embodied carbon footprint and will demonstrate how they plan to continuously reduce this impact
- Where possible, we expect our suppliers to purchase low energy products, typically EU energy label and Energy Star rated products, or solutions that qualify for Enhanced Capital Allowances.

Carbon

- We expect our suppliers to measure, manage and reduce their carbon footprint and encourage their supply chain to do the same
- Suppliers are encouraged to join the BITC Mayday Network and where relevant seek accreditation e.g. Achilles Information Ltd's CEMARS (Certified Emissions Measurement and Reduction Scheme)
- Suppliers are encouraged to use low or zero emission transport modes and to optimise transport efficiency and/or minimise transport distances.

RESOURCE USE AND WASTE

- We expect our suppliers producing waste on our sites to be able to measure and continuously reduce the waste they send to landfill, observing the waste hierarchy of reduce, re-use, recycle. Incineration without energy capture should only be utilised as a last resort
- We expect to maximise the use of secondary materials through our supply chain in accordance with best practice as currently exemplified by WRAP or other organisations promoting best practice
- Packaging should be reduced as much as possible and unavoidable packaging must follow the waste hierarchy
- We expect to work with suppliers of water-intensive products to understand and reduce water footprints over time. Recognising that water embodied in products we buy is not well understood
- Timber products should be certified under Forest Stewardship Council (FSC) or the Programme for the Endorsement of Forest Certification (PEFC) Schemes
- We plan to work with our suppliers towards only using quarry products that meet the requirements of the BRE BES 6001 framework standard for Responsible Sourcing of Construction Products, or similar.

POLLUTION

We expect all businesses in our supply chain to act to prevent pollution to air, land and water.

BIODIVERSITY

We expect suppliers whose activities significantly impact natural habitats to comply with all legal/planning conditions and to demonstrate best practice in the management of biodiversity.

COMPLAINTS

We want to hear from any individual or organisation with a legitimate complaint to make about social and environmental conditions in our suppliers or sub-suppliers premises. We expect suppliers to ensure that any employees and subcontractors making such a complaint shall not be disciplined or discriminated against.

Complaints can be emailed to supplier.complaints@uuplc.co.uk with the specific details of the case and we commit to taking the complaint seriously, even if it is anonymous:

- We will investigate all legitimate complaints
- We will reply requesting further contact to establish the full details of a complaint, unless the complaint is anonymous, in which case we will act on the evidence provided
- We will speak to all the other parties involved to establish the full facts of the matter and determine if a supplier has a case to answer
- If so, we will inform the supplier and specify remedial action for the supplier or licensee to take in order to address the issue
- We will not deal with suppliers who do not respond to our requests for remedial action
- Unless the complaint was anonymous, we will contact the organisation or individual to inform them of the results of the investigation and the steps that are being taken.

About us

United Utilities is the North West's water company. We keep the taps flowing and toilets flushing for seven million customers every day. From Crewe to Carlisle, we work hard behind the scenes to help your life flow smoothly.