



Policy: Corporate and Social Responsibility

Introduction to Corporate Social Responsibility (CSR)

CSR refers to the way in which businesses regulate themselves in order to ensure that all of their activities positively affect society as a whole. Our CSR policy aims to guarantee that we work ethically, considering human rights as well as the social, economic and environmental impacts of what we do as a business. We aim to meet or to exceed any relevant legislation, and if legislation does not exist in a particular area, we aim to ensure that we carry out best practices anyway.

Always Consult is committed to ensuring that any business undertakings are conducted as ethically as possible by following the below policy.

Looking after Employees

We recognise that in order to retain loyal and productive staff, it is vital to maintain a good working environment.

- We define ourselves as an Equal Opportunities Employer as per the Human Rights Act 2010, and we take steps to train all our staff to act in line with the Modern Slavery Act 2015.
- We have a health and safety policy and mandatory health and safety training for all staff.
- We take care to make high quality and appropriate training available to all staff. We conduct regular appraisals that include focus on personal development.
- We communicate with staff on strategy, policy and procedure through multiple channels such as one-to-one meetings, team meetings, Microsoft Teams channels and our staff newsletter.
- We offer competitive pay and benefits that exceed the minimum for the industry and are well above legal minima. Staff are staff paid correctly and on time. Employees can join the company pension scheme and are automatically enrolled in accordance with pensions legislation. Employees are provided with mobile phones and computer equipment to enable them to work remotely.
- The company enlists the assistance of specialist HR expertise to ensure that any HR issues are dealt with appropriately.
- We offer regular face-to-face conferences and team-building activities.

Looking after Customers

We recognise the importance of looking after our customers, to make sure that they have a positive and lasting impression of our business:

- We regularly ask our customers for feedback, positive or negative, via online questionnaires to enable us to adapt our offering in order to improve customer satisfaction and retention.
- We carry out risk assessments when visiting our customers to ensure that our services are carried out safely for all concerned.
- We communicate with our customers individually on a regular basis and through our corporate website.

Suppliers' Standards

We recognise the importance of using good suppliers and maintaining a good working relationship with them.

- We always ask suppliers for evidence that they adhere to the Modern Slavery Act 2015.
- We always obtain evidence that our suppliers operate in line with the Bribery Act 2010.
- We use local suppliers where possible to ensure minimum impact on the environment.
- We are committed to paying our suppliers properly and on time.
- We always obtain evidence that our suppliers have a CSR policy in place.
- We are committed to clear communication with suppliers.

Protecting the Environment

Always Consult acknowledges the connection between our climate and other environmental crises and the threat of current and potential future homelessness, disease, destruction of biodiversity, food and water shortages and poverty for millions of people around the world and thus its responsibility to reduce its own carbon and environmental footprints.

Always Consult formally commits itself to being an environmentally responsible organisation. To take this forward it commits to the following actions:

Management

The Managing Director takes responsibility for taking forward and implementing this commitment.

Progress on improvement of Always Consult's environmental performance will be a standard item at senior management meetings.

Staff will be expected to help Always Consult in carrying out its aim of being an environmentally responsible organisation in how they carry out their day-to-day duties. Induction procedures for new staff will include information on the company's environmental practices.

Always Consult will ask all our current and future suppliers for their environmental policies and for evidence of implementation of such policies and indicate that such performance will be used as criteria for supplier selection.

Always Consult will seek to have relevant environmental clauses included in all future contracts agreed with outside bodies.

Always Consult will include environmental responsibility training in future staff training programs.

Always Consult will seek to make all its current and future premises to be as energy and water efficient as practical with an objective of eliminating all waste to landfill / incineration and seeking to avoid creation of waste in the first place.

Where it does not own premises, it will work with the owners to try and achieve this ambition.

Always Consult if, or when, involved in lobbying various agencies will press for environmental policies to be integrated where relevant, including all local government and charity sector policies that affect the homeless, vulnerable and wider community e.g., seeking zero carbon and high-water efficiency standards for any proposed new homes or hostels for the homeless or elderly.

Always Consult will observe environmental legislation as a minimum standard and seek to out-perform current legislative requirements where practical.

Always Consult will develop and maintain a sustainable transport policy, seeking to reduce unnecessary travel and making the transport that is necessary as sustainable as possible and will monitor progress annually.

Green Purchasing Policy

Always Consult commits itself to drawing up a green purchasing policy that requires staff to judge any purchasing decisions on the basis of a green purchasing hierarchy:

Reduce: Always Consult ask it's managers to firstly question whether a purchase is strictly necessary and whether the amounts required could be reduced.

Re-use: Secondly it will seek to buy re-used items in preference to new items where practical.

Recycle: If new items are purchased, it will seek whether there is a feasible option of buying products made locally from recycled materials or a more energy efficient model.

Always Consult will only buy sustainable wood and fish products with FSC (forest stewardship council or MSC (Marine stewardship council) certification.

Community Engagement

As a business, we always aim to support local communities.

- Sponsorship of or monetary donations to: local charities, such as Hope House and Severn Hospice, schools, sports clubs, societies and youth groups.
- Support local charities etc. by donating time i.e. staff participation in volunteering days when appropriate.
- Supporting the surrounding community by employing local people, where and when appropriate.

Measurement

We regularly monitor this policy is being implemented in the day-to-day operation of our business by:

- Reviewing all or part of the policy in our monthly Senior Leadership Team meetings for any ideas or changes on what and how can be improved and actioned.
- Including on the staff induction programme to ensure staff are aware of the commitment and can suggest ways to implement.
- Asking all staff to read and sign annually, they fully understand the policy and its commitment and asking for suggestions on what can be implemented to make a difference to the company policy and CSR responsibilities.