

EKM’s Action Plan as Signatory of the UN Compact

This is a working document to illustrate the ways that East Kent Mencap supports the ten principles of the UN Global Compact with respect to human rights, labour, environment and anti-corruption. With this commitment, we express our intent to support the Global Compact advancing these principles, and will use this document to make a clear statement of our commitment to our stakeholders and the general public. We will also use this document to inform our Communication on Engagement (COE) that describes our organization’s efforts to support the implementation of the ten principles and to engage with the Global Compact, which is due for submission within two years of us becoming a signatory.

Date we became a signatory: 26/10/2020

Deadline for submission of Communication of Engagement: 20/10/2022

Human Rights

- Principle 1: Businesses should support and respect the protection of internationally proclaimed human rights
- Principle 2: make sure that they are not complicit in human rights abuses

Basic human rights include freedom of speech, privacy, health, life, liberty and security, as well as an adequate standard of living. As an organisation, we are constantly trying to make voluntary, positive contributions to support human rights such as creating a diverse and inclusive workplace, supporting local economies and having a particular focus on improving employee wellbeing both in and out of the workplace.

We do this in the workplace:

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| By providing safe and healthy working conditions | With a dedicated Health & Safety and Facilities Manager whose role is to ensure the organisation is compliant with health and safety regulations and government guidance. |
| | We have robust policies and procedures such as a Code of Conduct and Staff Handbook as well as a handbook specific to Health and Safety that staff must read during induction and sign a form to confirm they have understood. We also have a Stress Policy that focuses on mental health and the reduction of stress in the workplace. |
| | The Risk Assessment process is used consistently across the organisation. |
| | All new starters are required to take the following compulsory online modules as part of their induction in order to ensure their physical safety in the workplace: Introduction to Health & Safety, Infection Prevention and Control, Manual Handling of Inanimate Loads. They are also encouraged to take the following modules: |

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| | <p>Mental Health Awareness, Display Screen Equipment, Personal Safety, Fire Safety, Food Safety Level 1.</p> <p>We have made a commitment to our employees' mental health and wellbeing by signing the Time to Change Employer Pledge. This involved appointing Wellbeing Champions to feedback wellbeing issues to HR, creating Wellbeing Noticeboards in each office, sharing a staff newsletter once a week including staff good news stories and mental health resources and celebrating awareness days with activities across sites.</p> <p>As a charity that supports people with disabilities, we proactively challenge discrimination, abuse and inequalities throughout our services and in the community. We have participated in the nationwide Treat Me Well campaign which challenged health care inequalities.</p> <p>We have joined the Cycle2Work Scheme which has meant employees can hire a brand-new bike and safety equipment paid for via salary sacrifice. This has had a positive impact on employees' physical and mental health and we hope to see the scheme used by further teams over the year.</p> <p>In recognition of the impact of COVID-19 on frontline workers' physical and mental health, we have held 'EKM Heroes Week': a week of celebration and appreciation to show staff their incredible efforts are appreciated by the Senior Management Team. We hope this week keeps staff feeling motivated and improves morale and mental wellbeing during this difficult time.</p> <p>Government guidelines that relate to infection control have been shared and adhered to.</p> |
| <p>By ensuring non-discrimination in personnel practices</p> | <p>We have robust policies such as Equal Opportunities and Safeguarding that illustrate our commitment to equality and diversity in the workplace.</p> <p>We have achieved Disability Confident Leader Status meaning we have inclusive and accessible recruitment practices. This includes ensuring recruitment documents are available in an accessible format as well as guaranteeing all applicants with a disability who meet the minimum requirements for any of our roles an interview in every instance. We have committed to sharing the benefits of this scheme with our network. We ensure that the people we support are always involved in the recruitment process.</p> <p>We now send out an Equal Opportunities Form to all new starters and have begun to roll this out to interviewees as well. This allows us to report on the diversity of our workforce and identify where we can improve.</p> <p>As an organisation with the purpose of supporting people with learning disabilities, we are very proud to have a Committee made up of service users (all of whom have disabilities). This means they have a say in how the organisation is run, which ensures our business practices are as inclusive as possible.</p> |
| <p>By ensuring that we do not use directly or indirectly forced labour or child labour</p> | <p>We require ID in order to carry out DBS checks and/or right to work checks for all our roles, which ensures all employees are of legal working age.</p> |

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| By ensuring staff are aware of the steps to take should they feel East Kent Mencap is not adhering to the Human Rights principles | Staff are made aware of the Complaints policy, Grievance policy and Whistle-blowing Policy during their induction and asked to read all documents. This ensures they are aware of the steps to take should they feel we are directly or indirectly displaying a lack of support or respect of Human Rights or are complicit in Human Rights abuses. |
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We do this in the community:

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| By working to protect the economic livelihood of local communities | We are a large employer offering over 120 roles in several areas of East Kent including Thanet, Deal, Canterbury, Herne Bay and Sheerness, as well as continuing to grow into areas in Shepway. We apply the local first approach when purchasing equipment and services. |
| By being a successful business which provides decent work, produces quality goods or services that improve lives, especially for the poor or other vulnerable groups | Our mission statement is: 'Enabling individuals with learning difficulties to achieve the things that they want out of life and to be valued, treated equally, listened to and included.' meaning our core aim as an organisation is to offer services that improve the lives of vulnerable adults and children, giving them a voice in their wider community, while promoting their independence. We provide Safeguarding training to enable staff to recognise abuse, report and safeguard individuals. |

Considerations for further improvements:

- Making reasonable accommodations for all employees' religious observance and practices
- The creation of a standalone Human Rights Policy
- Consideration of how we can ensure our stakeholders and suppliers express a similar commitment to Human Rights
- The creation of employee networks who feedback ideas to HR about ways EKM can improve their practices around the ten principles of the UN Global Compact

Labour

- Principle 3: Businesses should uphold the freedom of association and the effective recognition of the right to collective bargaining
- Principle 4: the elimination of all forms of forced and compulsory labour
- Principle 5: the effective abolition of child labour
- Principle 6: the elimination of discrimination in respect of employment and occupation

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| We uphold the freedom of association and the effective recognition of the right to collective bargaining | We respect the right of all workers to form and join a trade union of their choice without fear of intimidation or reprisal, in accordance with national law. |
| We support the elimination of all forms of forced and compulsory labour | Employees are free to leave in accordance with established rules. We use exit interviews as an opportunity to provide feedback and improve the employee experience. All employees receive employment contracts on day one of their employment stating the terms and conditions of service, the |

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| | <p>voluntary nature of employment, the freedom to leave (including the appropriate procedures) and any penalties that may be associated with a departure or cessation of work, in languages easily understood by workers.</p> <p>We do not confiscate workers' identity documents.</p> |
| We support the effective abolition of child labour | <p>We adhere to minimum age provisions of national labour laws and regulations.</p> <p>We use adequate and verifiable mechanisms for age verification in recruitment procedures as ID is required for DBS and right to work checks.</p> <p>We avoid having a blanket policy against hiring children under 18, as it will exclude those above the legal age for employment from decent work opportunities.</p> |
| We support the elimination of discrimination in respect of employment and occupation | <p>As mentioned previously, we have achieved Disability Confident Leader Status meaning we have inclusive and accessible recruitment practices. This includes ensuring recruitment documents are available in an accessible format as well as guaranteeing all applicants with a disability who meet the minimum requirements for any of our roles an interview in every instance. We have committed to sharing the benefits of this scheme with our network.</p> <p>We keep up-to-date records on recruitment, training and promotion that provide a transparent view of opportunities for employees and their progression within the organisation. All staff are aware of the process for requesting a pay rise and are supported to go through it by their line manager and the HR team.</p> <p>All staff are made aware during induction of the grievance procedure to address complaints, handle appeals and provide recourse for employees where discrimination is identified.</p> <p>We have offered Unconscious Bias training to all managers and coordinators. There was a good uptake and we hope to offer this session again in future.</p> <p>We take care to reasonably adjust the physical environment to ensure health and safety for employees, customers and other visitors with disabilities. This includes making reasonable adjustments for staff and offering phased returns to work.</p> <p>As part of their induction staff undertake the following E-learning modules: The Mental Capacity Act 2005 and Adult Safeguarding. They also have the opportunity to complete the Care Certificate Module Equality and Diversity and Disability Awareness.</p> <p>Staff are offered the opportunity to undertake fully funded qualifications to promote personal and professional development and we ask staff to read the Training and Development Policy during induction so that they are aware of our procedures.</p> <p>Staff are able to take unpaid leave for childcare should they need to.</p> <p>We have several supported roles created specifically for people with learning disabilities, these include Health and Safety Checkers and Cleaners as well as volunteering opportunities in our new Scrapstore.</p> |

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| | <p>We have an on-going collaboration with Canterbury Christ Church University in which trainee nurses have sessions with our members who have disabilities. Students taking part in these sessions have felt their experience has helped to dispel anxieties about patients with learning disabilities, assisted them to see the individual and not the disability, and helped to develop their communication skills.</p> |
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Considerations for further improvements:

- Have a clear policy not to use, be complicit in, or benefit from forced labour
- Ensure that all company officials have a full understanding of what forced labour is

Environment

- Principle 7: Businesses should support a precautionary approach to environmental challenges
- Principle 8: undertake initiatives to promote greater environmental responsibility
- Principle 9: encourage the development and diffusion of environmentally friendly technologies

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| <p>We support a precautionary approach to environmental challenges</p> | <p>We have an Environmental Policy that encourages staff to recycle and turn off lights and taps when not in use.</p> |
| <p>We undertake initiatives to promote greater environmental responsibility</p> | <p>We have annual student placements organised through the university of Kent. This year’s student focused on what we were doing to be environmentally friendly in our practices and how this could be improved.</p> <p>We ensure transparency and unbiased dialogue with stakeholders. For example, we will be sharing the above case study on our website, social media and with the University of Kent in order to encourage other businesses undertake similar beneficial placements.</p> |
| <p>We encourage the development and diffusion of environmentally friendly technologies/practices</p> | <p>We reuse and recycle materials on site. This is encouraged in our policies and with signs in the offices.</p> <p>We reduce our carbon footprint by reducing non-essential travel and promoting car sharing. We have moved to virtual meetings and homeworking which has reduced our carbon footprint further.</p> <p>We encourage a culture of sustainability and environmental awareness by sharing information on the subject in our weekly staff newsletter (for example: ‘Don’t Step on a Bee Day’, ‘Plastic Free July’, ‘World Water Week’ and ‘Organic September’).</p> <p>We have a new project called the Scrapstore which involves donated crafting items being reused and sold to staff, members and the local community.</p> <p>We have garden space where members can grow their own herbs and vegetables.</p> <p>We will make information available to stakeholders that illustrates the environmental performance and benefits of using such</p> |

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| | technologies by sharing our Communication of Engagement with our Directors, staff and the public. |
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Considerations for further improvements:

- Measure, track and communicate progress on incorporating sustainability principles into business practices. Assess results and apply strategies for continued improvement.
- Examine the sourcing policy for suppliers and contractors to ensure that tenders stipulate minimum environmental criteria.
- Increase use of garden space. Encourage staff to do gardening in their breaks if they are interested.
- Consider using renewable energy supplier for homes and offices.
- Ask stakeholders what more they think we can do.

Anti-Corruption

- Principle 10: Businesses should work against corruption in all its forms, including extortion and bribery.

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| We work against corruption in all its forms | We have a Probity Policy to ensure staff do not accept any gifts from members as well as a Personal Relationship policy to keep the boundary between personal and professional relationships very clear. |
| | We are externally audited to ensure that our practices are legally sound and are compliant with Companies and Charity Commission legislation. |
| | We have a robust GDPR policy and process. |

Considerations for further improvements:

- Report on the work against corruption in the annual Communication on Engagement; and share experiences and best practices through the submission of examples and case studies.
- Consider joining forces with industry peers and with other stakeholders to scale up anti-corruption efforts. Look into the B20 Collective Action Hub.
- Consider signing the: *“Anti-corruption Call to Action”*, which is a call from Business to Governments to address corruption and foster effective governance for a sustainable and inclusive global economy. Learn more about the Call to Action and how to sign up.