

# SOCIAL RESPONSIBILITY POLICY

Policy Ref:	SocialRespPol
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Version	1.1
Date approved by Committee	03.11.2020

## SOCIAL RESPONSIBILITY POLICY

Staffordshire University is firmly committed to its social, economic and environmental responsibilities and to achieving benefits for all of our stakeholders, including students, staff and the communities we work with. As a major UK Higher Education Provider, a Civic University and a significant employer, the University can and does play a major role as an influencer within wider society. The University fulfils this role by researching, creating, and disseminating knowledge and by promoting and enacting behaviours which contribute to long term sustainability. Sustainability is defined in the widest economic, social and environmental terms, as set out in the UN's Sustainable Development Goals.

The Sustainable Development Goals are the blueprint to achieve a better and more sustainable future for all. They address the global challenges we face, including those related to poverty, inequality, climate change, environmental degradation, peace and justice.

We are committed to:

1. Promoting environmental sustainability in all aspects of our operations, and, recognising the University's responsibility for guardianship of the environment:
  - Achieving a Carbon Net Zero position by 2030 (scope 1 and 2 emissions)
  - Achieving major change in environmental sustainability through research; innovation and enterprise; and student and civic engagement

The University has signed up to the [One Planet Pledge](#)

The University's commitment is set out in more detail in the **Environmental Sustainability Policy**, which covers the Academic Strategy; Consumption, lifestyle and workstyle, the Built environment and Communities

All new major developments and projects within the University require the completion of an Environmental Sustainability Impact Assessment

2. Promoting equality, diversity and inclusion for students and prospective students

We have signed up to the [Social Mobility Pledge](#)

Our [Access and Participation Plan](#) is updated by us and approved annually by the Office for Students

We publish an annual [Transparency Return](#) which sets out the outcomes of the annual UG undergraduate recruitment cycle in terms of applications, offers and acceptances

3. Promoting equality, diversity and inclusion within our staff recruitment, selection, employment and remuneration practices

We subscribe to a number of national initiatives including **Stonewall, Athena Swan and the Race Equality Charter Mark**

All new developments, decisions and projects within the University require the completion of an **Equality Impact Assessment** which considers the impact of the

proposals on staff, students and other stakeholders in terms of protected characteristics.

We have made a firm commitment to better support its technical workforce by signing up to the [Technician Commitment](#) as part of HEATED

4. Promoting awareness of the UN Strategic Development Goals and incorporating reflection on environmental, social and economic impact into our Teaching and Learning

A new [Academic Strategy](#), featuring the Connected Curriculum Continuum, has been published Autumn 2020

5. Monitoring and supporting the wellbeing of staff and students including providing access to appropriate internal and external resources and services. During the recent pandemic, this has extended to providing bereavement support resources for managers and advisors working with both staff and students

Staff wellbeing is supported more widely by a new [Wellbeing Strategy](#), which was published Summer 2020.

The University is also collaborating on a project funded through the OfS Mental Health Challenge Competition, supporting student mental health and wellbeing in conjunction with a range of other agencies including Keele University and Mind (North Staffordshire)

6. Improving our practices to combat slavery and human trafficking

We publish a [Modern Slavery and Human Trafficking Statement](#) which is updated annually to reflect progress

7. Engaging in sustainable procurement activities including using local suppliers and supporting SMEs through fair payment arrangements, and embedding environmental sustainability in our procurement processes

A [Sustainable Procurement Policy](#) has been developed

8. Maintaining our commitment to compliance with the GDPR

As part of the University's [Data Protection Policy](#), all new staff are required to familiarise themselves with the GDPR policies and complete the mandatory training as part of their probationary period. Mandatory updates are also required periodically for all staff.

9. Maintaining the current policy of not holding any direct investments in organisations specifically involved in fossil-fuel extraction, armaments or tobacco. More broadly, the University wishes to seek investment opportunities in organisations and countries which demonstrate a positive approach to individuals, communities, environmental protection, pollution control, conservation and recycling, safety & security and ethical employment practices.

The University's [Ethical Investment Policy](#) sets out expectations around investments and is used to inform third parties who invest funds on behalf of the University

10. Building and sustain long term relationships with civic and community partners to have a positive impact on our place and its people. Examples of local commitments include the University's participation in the Staffordshire University Academic Trust and the creation of Community Research Fellows.

The **University's Civic Agreement** is currently under development. It is a declaration of our commitment to our place, people and partners.

November 2020