

# HEFCE corporate social responsibility action plan 2008-2010

1. Corporate social responsibility (CSR) for HEFCE is about how we align our activities with the expectations of our stakeholders in relation to our economic, social and environmental impacts. Our stakeholders include Government and the universities and colleges we fund, as well as our employees, suppliers, communities and society as a whole.
2. This plan highlights the key actions we plan to undertake by March 2010 to work towards achieving the objectives and targets set out in 'HEFCE corporate social responsibility policy 2008-2014'<sup>1</sup>. It is not intended to be a comprehensive account of everything we will do to promote CSR.

## Monitoring and review

3. Our plans for regularly monitoring and reviewing our CSR performance are set out in our CSR policy. This action plan will be monitored quarterly as part of this process. We will review this action plan in March 2010 and following this we will publish a new plan for 2010-12.

## Managing our environmental impacts

4. This section sets out our actions to meet our objectives in relation to managing our environmental impacts. We will undertake these actions to work towards achieving our targets in relation to carbon emissions, water consumption, waste minimisation and recycling and transport.

Action 1: Maintain certification to ISO14001 for our main office, Northavon House in Bristol and our smaller office at Centre Point in London.

### To support our targets of reducing carbon emissions and water consumption

Action 2: Replace the heating, ventilation and air conditioning at Northavon House to improve control and energy efficiency.

Action 3: Review the windows and if practicable upgrade to improve levels of natural ventilation and daylight.

Action 4: Undertake a review of IT and communications equipment to rationalise equipment and reduce energy consumption.

Action 5: Consider the energy rating of all electrical equipment purchased with the aim of only purchasing the most efficient equipment, for example A-rated.

Action 6: Review the cooling system for our IT server room and if practicable implement changes to improve energy efficiency.

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<sup>1</sup> Available at [www.hefce.ac.uk](http://www.hefce.ac.uk) under About us/Corporate Social Responsibility.

Action 7: Identify and implement further cost-effective energy and water conservation measures.

Action 8: Implement an energy and water monitoring process to enable more effective and accurate management of emissions and consumption data.

Action 9: Work with the Carbon Trust to reduce carbon emissions with the aspiration of achieving the Carbon Standard<sup>2</sup> by March 2012.

Action 10: When tendering for our electricity contract, seek to procure at least 10 per cent from renewable sources for both Northavon House and Centre Point.

Action 11: Investigate the potential for generating energy on-site and implement cost-effective options.

**To support our targets to reduce the amount of waste produced and sent to landfill**

Action 12: Set all printers and photocopiers to print double-sided as default.

Action 13: Explore and implement a policy to reduce the number of printed documents produced and distributed by HEFCE. All printed documents to be printed double-sided on recycled paper or paper sourced from sustainable forests and totally chlorine-free.

Action 14: Remove individual waste bins and replace with banks of recycling bins alongside a general waste bin.

**To support our targets to reduce carbon emissions from transport**

Action 15: Provide incentives for staff to commute to work via sustainable modes. These incentives include the continued provision of:

- bike sheds, showers and changing facilities at Northavon House
- interest-free loans to purchase bicycles and season tickets for trains and buses
- cycle training
- ‘Doctor Bike’ sessions to help staff ensure that their bicycles are roadworthy
- guaranteed lift home scheme
- car share database to help staff identify potential car share partners, and dedicated car share parking spaces at Northavon House.

Action 16: Aim to achieve a ‘Gold’ travel plan award from South Gloucestershire County Council. We are currently awarded ‘Silver’.

Action 17: Continue to implement our policy on business travel that staff should normally travel by public transport unless there are reasons why this is not practicable or if there are other circumstances that would impede efficiency or effectiveness.

Action 18: Further promote the use of video- or telephone-conferencing to reduce the need to travel to meetings. This will include the provision of internet meeting software.

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<sup>2</sup> Further information is available at [www.carbontruststandard.com](http://www.carbontruststandard.com)

Action 19: Consider options for reducing the engine size when it is necessary to hire a car.

Action 20: Identify options for offsetting carbon emissions from necessary business travel and implement appropriate option(s).

### **Biodiversity**

Action 21: Review our contract for grounds management to ensure that they are managed in an environmentally sensitive manner that enhances biodiversity.

### **Procurement**

5. We will undertake the following actions to meet our objectives and targets in relation to procurement.

Action 22: Use the Sustainable Procurement Action Plan Flexible Framework<sup>3</sup> to evaluate procurement practice.

Action 23: Review procurement guide to include all relevant aspects of CSR and Article 5 of the Energy Services Directive<sup>4</sup> and communicate these changes to all relevant staff.

Action 24: Review tender evaluation criteria and elevate CSR considerations. Communicate these changes to all relevant staff.

Action 25: Provide fair trade tea and coffee for meetings held at Centre Point. Our catering supplier at Northavon House currently supplies fair trade coffee and we will continue to encourage it to provide fair trade tea as well.

### **Our people**

6. In order to achieve our objectives and targets in this area we will undertake the following actions.

Action 26: Develop a people strategy, the aim of which will be to outline explicitly our approach to people within the organisation and be clear about how the management of our people resource is key to the achievement of our strategic objectives. It will articulate our aspirations as an employer, including our approach to CSR.

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<sup>3</sup> Set out in 'Procuring the Future – The Sustainable Procurement Task Force National Action Plan', which is available at [www.defra.gov.uk/sustainable/government/index.asp](http://www.defra.gov.uk/sustainable/government/index.asp) under Publications/2006. The Flexible Framework identifies five key themes: people; policy, strategy and communications; procurement process; engaging suppliers; and measurement and results. These are in effect the key behavioural and operational change programmes that need to be delivered in each public sector organisation to deliver sustainable procurement.

<sup>4</sup> Further information is available at [www.defra.gov.uk/environment/climatechange](http://www.defra.gov.uk/environment/climatechange) under Action in the UK/Energy/Energy Services.

Action 27: Run an awareness-raising campaign to encourage staff to contribute to our CSR initiatives. This will include regularly updating the information available on our intranet, posters and staff forums.

Action 28: Include CSR in the induction session for new staff so that they are informed of our commitments to CSR and their roles and responsibilities.

Action 29: Hold an annual CSR week to raise staff awareness of CSR issues and how individual action can make a positive difference.

Action 30: Include CSR within our enablers which are used to review the performance of all staff.

Action 31: Run a team carbon plan competition which encourages teams to consider how they can reduce their individual and team carbon emissions.

Action 32: Report annually on our equality scheme<sup>5</sup> which explains how we will meet our statutory duties to promote race, disability and gender equality. Undertake an annual review of this scheme and update where necessary. This will include considering human rights as part of the scheme.

Action 33: Maintain our long-standing Investors in People status.

Action 34: Contribute to staff well-being by providing a fully equipped on-site gym and offering health screening for all staff once every two years and covering the costs of a home cholesterol test, flu vaccinations and annual eyesight tests. Provide a confidential employee assistance programme which is available free to all staff and their partners.

Action 35: Promote work-life balance through flexible working including part-time working, flexible working hours, the ability to work from home and other external locations, as well as compassionate, maternity and paternity leave.

## **In the community**

7. We will undertake the following action to meet our objectives in relation to the community.

Action 36: Encourage further volunteering and support colleagues to flex their working hours to undertake voluntary work.

Action 37: Support HEFCE's Sports and Social Club and staff in voluntary fundraising activities by giving them the time and opportunity to participate in charitable events.

## **Working with the sector**

8. We will undertake the following actions to make sustainable development a central part of our strategy for the future development of the higher education sector.

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<sup>5</sup> 'The HEFCE Equality Scheme' (HEFCE 2007/01) can be read at [www.hefce.ac.uk](http://www.hefce.ac.uk) under Publications.

Action 38: Develop, in consultation with the sector, a strategy for supporting sustainable development in higher education<sup>6</sup> by March 2009.

Action 39: Promote equality and diversity within the staff and student bodies in higher education<sup>7</sup>.

Action 40: Undertake sector impact assessments on all our developing policies, initiatives and significant projects. The assessments will aim to: identify potential negative impacts; take mitigating actions where possible and appropriate; and use opportunities to promote sustainable development, equality and diversity.

Action 41: Continue to make sustainable development a cross-cutting theme of our strategic plan, which is due to be reviewed in 2009.

## **Benchmarking and reporting**

9. We believe it is important to report publicly on our performance and benchmark ourselves to judge the effect of our initiatives. Therefore we will take the following actions.

Action 42: Publish an annual CSR report including progress towards targets and other commitments set out in our CSR policy.

Action 43: Participate in Business in the Community's Corporate Responsibility Index<sup>8</sup> and aspire to year-on-year improvements.

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<sup>6</sup> Further information is available at [www.hefce.ac.uk](http://www.hefce.ac.uk) under Leadership, governance & management/Sustainable development.

<sup>7</sup> Information on how we will meet this commitment is available at [www.hefce.ac.uk](http://www.hefce.ac.uk) under Leadership, governance & management/Equality and diversity.

<sup>8</sup> Further information is available at [www.bitc.org.uk](http://www.bitc.org.uk)