

INTRODUCTION

Responsibility for a sustainable environment rests with all of us. At Step Ahead, we apply the same best practice principles as our clients in the public sector. Step Ahead has also signed up to the UN Global Compact, which has ten principles in the areas of human rights, labour, the environment, and anti-corruption. These principles enjoy universal consensus and are derived from:

- The Universal Declaration of Human Rights
- The International Labour Organisation's Declaration on Fundamental Principles and Rights at Work
- The Rio Declaration on Environment and Development
- The United Nations Convention Against Corruption

The Global Compact asks companies to embrace, support, and enact, within their sphere of influence, a set of core values in the areas of human rights, labour standards, the environment, and anti-corruption. We demonstrate our commitment to sustainability by ensuring that every strand of decision-making within the company takes into account the potential impact of the choices we make. We ensure that this policy is promoted and communicated to staff and participants alike.

We have a dedicated sustainability manager on staff and hold monthly team meetings during which we review our performance in the three key areas of social, economic, and environmental sustainability. Step Ahead is hugely committed to sustainability in all areas of its operation and is committed to promoting sustainable development whilst delivering activities and ensuring that any Delivery Partners and/or sub-contractors will also support sustainable development. We incorporate our company ethos, specifically our methods for ensuring that every strand of decision-making considers the social, economic, and environmental aspects of sustainability in our delivery.

POLICY

Social

At Step Ahead, we have an ongoing concern for the impact our business has on its people, our participants, and the community. We are a 'people business' and it is therefore considered imperative that every action within our organisation has a positive impact in this area.

- Contracts of Employment and Terms and Conditions for Staff are reviewed annually and amended whenever appropriate or beneficial.
- We ensure that the benefits package for staff is the best in our sector (e.g. private medical insurance, personal pension plans, annual leave allowances, etc.)
- Our employee handbook is reviewed at least annually and updated regularly to ensure that it is current and reflects best employment practice.
- Step Ahead is committed to promoting a healthy work/life balance.
- We are committed members of the REC.

Sustainability Policy

- Staff training and development is equally accessible to all staff (permanent and temporary).
- All temporary staff are debriefed weekly and have continual access to their Step Ahead consultants.
- All staff have 'mini-appraisals' monthly with their manager and six-monthly appraisals with their manager.
- We have a Process Manual for our staff which clearly and succinctly outlines our business processes.
- We have a comprehensive Equality, Diversity and Inclusion Policy.
- All staff have comprehensive induction training which includes all relevant legislation e.g. Employment Agencies Act, Health and Safety, Sex Discrimination, Race Discrimination, Disability Discrimination, Immigration, Working Time Regulations.
- All new regulations and amendments are presented to staff during group training sessions.
- Step Ahead has won several awards for its commitment to staff training and development.
- We regularly sponsor staff, clients, and suppliers in charitable events.
- We have an annual budget for charity donations.
- We have effective risk management in place in respect of harm to the vulnerable, security, confidentiality, health, fraud, and professional malpractice.

Economic

It is critical that our business can maintain sound economic sustainability –our existence depends on this.

- Management accounts are produced and reviewed every month.
- Regular reviews are held with the company's auditors.
- Our debt turns and current debtors are reviewed monthly.
- Suppliers are paid at the end of every month (or sooner, where appropriate) without fail.
- We conduct regular review meetings with our clients to gain feedback on the quality of our service versus our pricing.
- Quality assurance feedback is sought for every participant supplied.
- Competitor analysis is conducted on an ongoing basis.
- All feedback is acted upon accordingly.
- Our accounts are subject to full annual audit by external auditors.

Environmental

Because of our commitment to running our business in an environmentally friendly manner, Step Ahead has determined operational procedures and best practices for its key activities as the result of regular environmental assessments. These are conveyed to the staff by appropriate means, such as:

- Verbal/written instruction
- Do and Don't guidelines

Sustainability Policy

All staff are trained on our environmental policies and are expected to pay regard to the minimisation of waste and greenhouse gases. As part of initial induction and on-going training, staff are made aware that they are responsible for reporting environmental observations and suggestions to the Environmental Manager. Whenever it is considered relevant to the goods or services required, a copy of the Organisation’s Environmental Policy is issued to all suppliers and stakeholders. In addition, when appropriate, suppliers and stakeholders are made aware of the Organisation’s position relating to the environment, in particular regarding:


- Prevention and/or mitigation of all forms of pollution.
- Recycling of materials and to ensure that WEEE waste is disposed of legally and is not mixed with general waste.
- Waste management and disposal of waste using a registered waste collector.
- Materials sourced from sustainable and/or renewable resources.
- Support for environmental protection.

RESPONSIBILITIES

The Directors determine operational procedures and best practices for all key activities, and staff are thoroughly trained in Step Ahead’s environmental policies. Step Ahead is committed to ensuring that we and any sub-contractors appointed will promote sustainable development in line with legislation

RELATED POLICIES AND DOCUMENTS

- Carbon Reduction Plan
- Employee Handbook
- Equality, Diversity and Inclusion Policy
- Environmental Management Policy Statement

Document Control	
Document Title: Sustainability Policy	
Version Number: 1.5	Document Owner: Corporate Support
Date Approved: 05 June 2025	Approved By: Jackie Bedford, CEO
Effective Date: 05 June 2025	
Superseded Version: 1.4	
Date of Last Review: 1 May 2026	Date of Next Review: 1 July 2027