Social Value Initiatives

Below is a list of the social value initiatives that may be included in contracts. This information is taken from the Supplier guidance in the invitation to tender. Contracting Authorities may choose to tailor these initiatives or use new ones but this list should give you a comprehensive overview of the type of initiatives that Suppliers will be delivering.

## Paid Employment Opportunities

The delivery of paid employment for people who face barriers to employment. The Supplier must ensure that they satisfy one of the following categories:

* a person who is in education or has left education in the last 12 months and is seeking employment; or
* person aged under 25 that has been unemployed for more than 26 weeks and is seeking employment;
* person aged over 25 that has been unemployed for more than 52 weeks and is seeking employment;
* people with a disability;
* student placements;
* apprentices working on the contract;
* professional trainees;
* people who meet the conditions of the Contracting Authority’s Priority Groups,
* another person who faces barriers to employment or who is at risk of social exclusion and is seeking employment, as accepted by the Authority, at the Authority’s discretion

## Unwaged work experience placements

The delivery of unwaged work experience placements for:

* people who who face barriers to employment and/or who are located in deprived areas. This can include people who are long-term unemployed, people who are located in deprived areas, people who have a disability and people who are underrepresented in the contract’s workforce.
* Young people in education
* people who meet the Contracting Authority’s priority groups.

The Supplier is to provide work placement participants with meaningful work experience, training and development which will enhance their opportunities for future employment.

## Skills development and educational attainment including Green Skills

The delivery of skills development and educational attainment support in areas related to the contract to a school or organisation within the Voluntary, Community and Social Enterprise sector to aid the career development of:

* people who are considered to be disadvantaged in the labour market or at risk of social exclusion. This can include people who are long-term unemployed, people who are located in deprived areas, people who have a disability and people who are underrepresented in the contract’s workforce.
* Young people in education
* people who meet the Contracting Authority’s priority groups.

This support can include vocational talks, curriculum support, careers guidance, workplace visits, mentoring or as otherwise agreed by the Authority.

## Digital skills development and educational attainment

Policy Objective 3 of the Department of Economy’s Skills Strategy for Northern Ireland centres on “Enhancing Digital Skills, Developing Our Digital Spine”. Research and stakeholder engagement conducted throughout the development of the Strategy has repeatedly emphasised the critical importance of digital skills development in Northern Ireland. Research from the Office for National Statistics (ONS) demonstrated the high correlation between digital exclusion and social exclusion. Significant swathes of Northern Ireland populace are assessed to have a high or medium risk of digital exclusion. This is based on a combined assessment of access and skills issues and this highlights the importance of making reference to ongoing efforts to improve access across Northern Ireland. What is clear, however, is that basic digital skills are a significant factor in Northern Ireland, with 32% of the population aged 16 – 65 having low or no digital skills. There is clear evidence of a digital skills issue in our society, with the more recent ONS Survey showing Northern Ireland having the highest proportion of non-internet users of any UK region.

The delivery of digital skills development and educational attainment initiatives by the Supplier in areas related to the Contract to an education provider(s) or organisation(s) within the voluntary community and social enterprise sector to enhance the digital capability of people who are considered at risk of digital exclusion*.* This can include, for example:

* people with a disability, Looked after Children / care leavers, people who are located in deprived areas, people over the age of 65, people with an offending history, young people who are Not in Education, Employment or Training (NEET), people living in rural communities, or another group considered to be at risk of digital exclusion as agreed with the Authority, at the Authority’s discretion.
* people who meet the Authority’s priority groups.

Activities may include, for example: workshops; online training; digital clinics; peer learning projects; or equivalent initiative as agreed with the Authority, at the Authority’s discretion.

## Donation of ICT devices to support digital skills development and educational attainment

The donation of suitable ICT devices by the Supplier to enhance the digital capability of people at risk of digital exclusion within Northern Ireland (e.g. laptops, tablets, devices to provide internet access). This can include people with a disability, Looked after Children / care leavers, people who are homeless, people who are located in deprived areas, people over the age of 65, people with an offending history, young people who are Not in Education, Employment or Training (NEET), people living in rural communities, or another group considered to be at risk of digital exclusion as agreed with the Authority, at the Authority’s discretion.

The manufacturing, use of and disposal of ICT devices creates significant environmental and human rights risks, including: the mining of precious materials; exploitation of workers throughout the supply chains; energy consumption of devices; and the increasing amount of e-waste generated at the end of life stage.

The Authority would encourage the Supplier to adopt a circular economy approach to the donation of devices to support digital inclusion through, for example, the provision of refurbished devices to extend the life of the equipment and support closing the digital divide. The Supplier is responsible for ensuring that any device donated is compliant with all relevant data security and health and safety standards.

## Cyber Security initiatives

The delivery of skilled advice, training and / mentoring by the Supplier on cybersecurity related matters to an education provider(s) or organisation(s) within the voluntary community and social enterprise sector that work with people who are known to be at risk of becoming victims of online crime. Activities may include, for example: workshops; online training; digital clinics; peer learning projects; or equivalent initiatives as agreed with the Authority, at the Authority’s discretion.

## In-work progression and Skills Development Action Plan

The New Decade, New Approach Deal emphasised the importance of access to good jobs, where workers have a voice that provides a level of autonomy, a decent income, security of tenure, satisfying work in the right quantities and decent working conditions. The Skills Strategy for Northern Ireland (Skills for a 10x Economy) sets out the importance of tackling social and educational inequality, ensuring appropriate pathways are in place to enable all our citizens to reach their potential, benefitting from and contributing to a stronger, more prosperous, more resilient Northern Ireland. Creating good jobs and protecting workers’ rights impacts upon better health and wellbeing by tackling inequalities, building self-efficacy and combating poverty and also helps employers to attract and retain the talent they need to grow and thrive.

The Supplier will develop, implement and maintain an In-work Progression and Skills Development Action Plan to promote and support educational attainment **in the contract’s workforce** for those employees who are disadvantaged. This could include, for example, people who were long-term unemployed, people who have a disability, looked after children/care leavers and people who are underrepresented in the contract’s workforce.

**Financial donations to support people within Northern Ireland who face barriers to employment to gain recognised construction related qualifications.**

The provision of financial donations to support people within Northern Ireland who face barriers to employment to gain recognised qualifications in areas related to construction. This may include, for example, people who are long-term unemployed, young people who are Not in Education, Employment or Training (NEET), people who are located in deprived areas and are new to the sector, people who are from ethnic minority communities and are new to the sector and people from an underrepresented gender group within the sector, or another group who face barriers to employment as agreed with the Authority, at the Authority’s discretion.

The financial support can include donations towards tuition fees and relevant resources (e.g. course textbooks) or as otherwise agreed by the Authority.

**Equality, Diversity and Inclusion Action Plan**

The New Decade, New Approach Deal emphasised the importance of access to good jobs, where workers have a voice that provides a level of autonomy, a decent income, security of tenure, satisfying work in the right quantities and decent working conditions. Creating good jobs and protecting workers’ rights impacts upon better health and wellbeing by tackling inequalities, building self-efficacy and combating poverty and also helps employers to attract and retain the talent they need to grow and thrive.

The Supplier will develop, implement and maintain an action plan to continuously monitor and improve equality, diversity and inclusion on this Contract, including throughout the supply chain.

**Tackling Modern Slavery Training Initiatives for all employees**

The delivery of tackling modern slavery training for all employees working on the contract. The training will be designed to inform and support staff to understand what modern slavery, forced labour and labour exploitation is and how to deter, detect and deal with modern slavery.

The Supplier will establish a relevant baseline of employees understanding of how to deter, detect and deal with modern slavery before delivery of each training event and measure and report the impact of the training post-delivery.

## Inclusion of VCSE Organisations and Micro Enterprises including Ethnic Minority Owner/Led in the contract’s supply chain

The Supplier will include social enterprises/charities or micro businesses based in Northern Ireland in the supply chain, in relation to any sub-contracting or other business opportunities available as a result of this contract.   The Supplier should ensure this is a meaningful opportunity for the social enterprise/charity or micro business. Each VCSE organisation or micro enterprise included within the supply chain will be eligible for achieving the points against this initiative rather than each contract with the enterprise.

## Business development and knowledge sharing

The Supplier will deliver skilled advice in an area related to the contract to:

* an organisation/organisations within the Voluntary, Community and Social Enterprise (VCSE) sector.
* micro businesses in Northern Ireland

This may include: mentoring, training, advice or other professional voluntary services or equivalent initiatives as agreed with the Authority, at the Authority’s discretion.

## Supply chain resilience and capacity Action Plan

As set out in the Programme for Government, the Executive aim to develop a regionally-balanced economy that is globally competitive and carbon neutral and to build a place where everyone can reach their potential. The Executive’s Green Growth Strategy aims to ensure the sustainability of Northern Ireland’s natural environment, while fostering the necessary conditions for innovation, investment and competition that can give rise to new sources of economic growth, while building resilient ecosystems. By doing so, we can create jobs, reduce carbon, enhance profitability, lower waste, increase efficiency and protect our environment and climate for future generations.

The Supplier will develop, implement and maintain an action plan to continuously monitor and improve the supply chain’s resilience and capacity on this Contract. This must at least include and address among other things the Supplier’s actions to:

* Modernise delivery by increasing circular solutions throughout the supply chain.
* Promote and support innovation throughout the supply chain to deliver more sustainable goods and services.
* Demonstrate collaboration and knowledge sharing throughout the supply chain to support economic growth and encourage ethical and resilient business.
* Maximise security of supply on the contract, for example, by minimising proximity of supply chains to point of delivery.
* Employ low or zero-carbon practices and materials on the contract and support the contract’s supply chain to minimise carbon footprint and emissions.

## Environmental Action Plan including Carbon Reduction

As set out in the Programme for Government, the Executive aim to develop a regionally-balanced economy that is globally competitive and carbon neutral and to build a place where everyone can reach their potential. The Executive’s Green Growth Strategy aims to ensure the sustainability of Northern Ireland’s natural environment, while fostering the necessary conditions for innovation, investment and competition that can give rise to new sources of economic growth, while building resilient ecosystems. By doing so, we can create jobs, reduce carbon, enhance profitability, lower waste, increase efficiency and protect our environment and climate for future generations.

The Supplier will develop a sound proactive environmental action plan in the delivery of this Contract, designed to minimise harm to the environment by:

* conserving energy and minimising carbon emissions and identifying opportunities to increase the amount of renewable energy used on the Contract;
* conserving materials such as wood, paper and other natural resources;
* minimising packaging and waste, and using compostable, reusable or recyclable options;
* phasing out the use of single-use resources, instead re-using (where possible), recycling or using recycled resources;
* promoting circular economy outcomes through extending the useful life, reusing, refurbishing and reconditioning products used to deliver this Contract;
* phasing out the use of ozone depleting substances and minimising the release of greenhouse gases, volatile organic compounds and other substances damaging to health and the environment;
* raising awareness of the environmental impacts related to the Contract amongst the Supplier’s workforce and encouraging environmentally conscious behaviours within the workplace including the use of sustainable methods of transport for commuting.

The Supplier will develop, implement and maintain an Environmental Action Plan detailing their environmental commitments in relation to this Contract.The Action Plan will set out the processes and actions that the Supplier will undertake to demonstrate that their activities in relation to this contract show a consideration to the environment and a commitment to continually reduce the contract’s impact on the environment.

## Environmental Initiatives

The delivery of environmental initiatives in areas related to the Contract designed to influence staff, suppliers, customers and communities through the delivery of the contract to support environmental protection and improvement.

Activities may include: delivery of training to the contract workforce to promote environmental awareness in the performance of the contract; partnering/collaborating in engaging with the community in relation to the performance of the contract, to support environmental objectives; volunteering opportunities for the contract workforce, e.g. undertaking activities that encourage direct positive impact; supply chain events to raise awareness of environmental issues in relation to the contract; or equivalent initiative as agreed with the Authority, at the Authority’s discretion.

**Climate Adaptation Training**

The delivery of climate change and adaptation training for staff working on the contract. The training will be designed to influence and support staff to undertake climate analysis, vulnerability assessment and adaptation planning in relation to the delivery of the Contract. Key knowledge areas should include, as a minimum:

* Understanding the risks to the contract delivery from climate change
* How to develop and embed processes and controls to continuously monitor and mitigate risks through climate adaptation measures.
* Ways to reduce the environmental impact of the Contract.

The Supplier will establish a relevant baseline before delivery of each training event and measure and report the impact of the training post-delivery.

**Climate change and carbon reduction training**

The climate change and carbon reduction training will be designed to support environmental protection and improvement, reduce waste and work towards net zero greenhouse gas emissions.

The Supplier will establish a relevant baseline before delivery of each training event and measure and report the impact of the training post-delivery.

**Contract specifications in the supply chain that include environmental sustainability commitments**

The Supplier will develop and implement contract specifications for supply chain opportunities for the contract that include environmental sustainability commitments in order to support environmental protection and improvement. For example, specifications that:

* conserve energy, minimise carbon emissions and identify opportunities to increase the amount of renewable energy used on the Contract;
* reduce water consumption;
* conserve materials such as wood, paper and other natural resources;
* minimise packaging and waste, and using compostable, reusable or recyclable options;
* phase out the use of single-use resources, instead re-using (where possible), recycling or using recycled resources
* reduction of scare materials in the products used in the supply chain of the contract
* reduce the use of ozone depleting substances and minimise the release of greenhouse gases, volatile organic compounds and other substances damaging to health and the environment
* encourage the use of electric vehicles in the supply chain of the contract;
* implement circular economy commitments through extending the useful life of products used in the supply chain to deliver this Contract, through relevant durability, repairability and upgradability features of the products, the provision of detailed care instructions to extend the life of the products, and repair and re-use where appropriate
* adoption of a circular business model to retain the value of resources.
* deliver climate change and carbon reduction training for staff.

## Packaging and Waste Action Plan for the contact

Statistics from Keep Northern Ireland Beautiful[[1]](#footnote-1) showed that there were 1.3 million pieces of litter on our streets at any one time, equating to 28 tonnes of rubbish, resulting in an annual clean-up bill of £45 million. A total of 71% of all waste collected was made up of plastics, much of which can end up in landfill and pollution of waterways and oceans. These figures demonstrate the need to further reduce single use plastics and encourage the use of recycled materials in food packaging.

The Supplier will develop, implement and maintain a packaging and waste action plan to continuously monitor and reduce packaging and waste throughout the delivery of this Contract. This must at least include and address among other things:

* + baseline measurements of the packaging used and waste produced through the current contract delivery arrangements;
  + the actions the Supplier will undertake to minimise packaging and waste in the production, processing and transport elements of the contract by reviewing their onsite operations and by engaging with the supply chain
  + the actions the Supplier will undertake to reduce the consumption of natural resources, in particular the use of single use plastic;
  + the actions the Supplier will undertake to include circular solutions to reduce packaging and waste;
* how the Supplier will monitor and measure the impact of the actions they are taking to minimise packaging and waste
* how the Supplier will review and revise the actions they are taking with suitable regularity to continue to reduce packaging and waste wherever possible
* how the Supplier will feedback on progress and results to the Contracting Authority

## Biodiversity Training

The delivery of biodiversity awareness training for staff working on the contract. The training will be designed to influence and support staff to understand the biodiversity risks and opportunities associated with the contract and the resilience of ecosystems, including throughout the contract’s supply chain. Key knowledge areas should include, as a minimum:

* Understanding the biodiversity risks and opportunities associated with the contract, including throughout the supply chain
* How to develop processes and controls to continuously maintain and enhance biodiversity and promote resilience of ecosystems
* Take action to maintain and enhance biodiversity and promote resilience of ecosystems throughout the contract supply chain.

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## Biodiversity Initiatives

The delivery of environmental initiatives in areas related to the Contract designed to influence communities through the delivery of the contract to maintain and enhance biodiversity and promote resilience of ecosystems.

Activities may include:

* partnering/collaborating in engaging with the community to deliver biodiversity initiatives;
* volunteering opportunities for the contract workforce, e.g. undertaking activities that encourage direct positive impact in relation to biodiversity and resilience of ecosystems; or
* equivalent initiative as agreed with the Authority, at the Authority’s discretion. The Supplier shall agree the scope of activities with the Authority prior to delivery.

## Environmental Initiatives for Improving Air and Water Quality Levels

The delivery of environmental initiatives in areas related to the Contract designed to influence staff, suppliers, customers and communities through the delivery of the contract to contribute to improvements of air and water quality and promote nature-based solutions.

Activities may include:

* partnering/collaborating in engaging with the community in relation to the performance of the contract, to support air and water improvement objectives;
* volunteering opportunities for the contract workforce, e.g. undertaking activities that encourage direct positive impact in relation to improving air and water quality; or
* equivalent initiatives as agreed with the Authority, at the Authority’s discretion.

## Waste Management Training Initiatives for Communities/ VCSE/ Education Establishments

The waste management training initiatives will be designed to influence and support people and organisations in communities to support environmental protection and improvement, reduce waste and work towards net zero greenhouse gas emissions

Activities may include: developing curriculum resources to raise awareness of waste management issues; partnering/collaborating with the community to support the Contracting Authority’s environmental objectives; volunteering opportunities for the contract workforce e.g. undertaking activities that encourage direct positive impact; promoting and communicating the benefits of working towards net zero greenhouse gas emissions; or equivalent initiative as agreed with the Authority, at the Authority’s discretion.

## Waste and Resource Efficiencies in the delivery of the contract

Moving towards a more circular economy will reduce our demand for virgin materials and reduce our greenhouse gas emissions, by keeping resources in use as long as possible, extracting maximum value from them, minimizing waste and promoting resource efficiency. Companies that manage their business waste efficiently achieve significant cost and energy savings. In doing so they also make a contribution to tackling climate change. Reuse, repair, remanufacture and recycle are key components of the circular economy with the focus being to retain as much value as possible in line with the waste hierarchy.

The Supplier will take measures to actively reduce waste and transfer business waste, unwanted materials and by-products (both bio-based and technical materials) from the contract’s supply chain to be reused, repaired recycled, reprocessed and repackaged by another organisation.

Reuse and repair organisations work to do more with less, to make better use of available resources and to reduce waste while promoting new forms of employment and tackling inequality. A directory of reuse and repair organisations can be found at [www.ni-rn.com/reuse-and-repair-near-me/](http://www.ni-rn.com/reuse-and-repair-near-me/).

Invest NI’s Resource Matching Service (<https://www.investni.com/support-for-business/resource-matching-service>) provide advice and guidance to help businesses achieve resource matching solutions specific to their resource and waste management needs.

**Circular Economy training for staff working on the contract**

The delivery of circular economy training for staff working on the contract. The training will be designed to influence and upskill staff to take action that supports the circular economy, by minimising waste and extracting the maximum value of resources in the delivery of the contract, including throughout the supply chain. Knowledge areas should include, as a minimum:

* Understanding the circular economy and how to take action to implement circularity on the contract
* Knowledge of responsible consumption practices to reduce waste and work towards net zero greenhouse gas emissions
* Building and maintaining a culture of sustainability across the contract workforce.

**Health and Wellbeing initiatives to support employees including those working remotely on the contract.**

The Public Health Agency (PHA) recognises that using the workplace as a setting to promote and support health and wellbeing makes good business sense and has many benefits for both employers and employees which is especially important as workplaces emerge from the COVID-19 pandemic. According to the World Health Organisation, the definition of a healthy workforce is: ‘... one in which workers and managers collaborate to use a continual improvement process to protect agnd promote the health, safety and wellbeing of all workers and the sustainability of the workplace’.[[2]](#footnote-2)

The Supplier will deliver initiatives that are designed to support the physical and mental health of employees working on the contract, including those who are working remotely. These initiatives should support employees to use personal health resources, adopt a healthier lifestyle, promote a positive psychosocial work environment and/or prevent stress at work.

Initiatives can include, for example:

* Initiatives to build a culture of wellbeing for the contract workforce by for example offering flexible working arrangements, creating a staff wellbeing committee, delivering initiatives to foster continuous improvement.
* workplace wellbeing initiatives (e.g. financial literacy sessions, counselling support, stress management courses, post-trauma support.);
* initiatives to engage people in health interventions (e.g. smoking cessation, healthy eating, exercise, addiction treatment and support etc.);
* mental health awareness training for managers and/or mental health champion training for staff; or
* equivalent initiative as agreed with the Authority, at the Authority’s discretion.

**Initiatives to reduce the stigma of mental illness and increase awareness of health and well-being issues among employees and managers engaged on the Contract.**

The Supplier will deliver initiatives to reduce the stigma of mental illness and increase awareness of health and well-being issues among employees and managers engaged on the Contract. These initiatives will be designed to ssupport all employees working on the Contract, including those with mental health problems, to remain in and thrive through work.

This may include: initiatives to identify and understand issues relating to physical and mental health in the contract workforce, management training, support groups, awareness raising events or other equivalent initiatives as agreed with the Authority, at the Authority’s discretion.

**Initiatives to influence suppliers, customers and communities to support health and wellbeing, including physical and mental health.**

The Supplier will deliver initiatives that are designed to influence suppliers, customers and communities through the delivery of the contract to support health and wellbeing, including physical and mental health.

This may include training, advice or other equivalent initiatives e.g. physical activities for adults and children in the community, actions taken to support older, disabled and vulnerable people to build stronger community networks (befriending schemes, digital inclusion clubs etc.) or equivalent initiative as agreed with the Authority, at the Authority’s discretion. Initiatives can be run in partnership with an organisation from the Voluntary, Community and Social Enterprise sector or as part of a company programme.

The Mental Health Charter for employers and service providers provides a framework for working towards mentally healthy workplaces and has been jointly produced by the Equality Commission NI, Action Mental Health, Disability Action, MindWise, Mental Health Foundation and Inspire.

## Community engagement activities related to artwork or cultural activities

The Supplier will deliver initiatives that are designed engage with communities to determine the most relevant artwork or cultural activities that should be delivered through the contract.

The Supplier shall agree the scope of activities with the Authority prior to delivery.

**Initiatives to improve good relations between people from different religious, political, racial and ethnic background.**

The Together: Building a United Community Strategy outlines a vision of “a united community, based on equality of opportunity, the desirability of good relations and reconciliation - one which is strengthened by its diversity, where cultural expression is celebrated and embraced and where everyone can live, learn, work and socialise together, free from prejudice, hate and intolerance.”

The New Decade, New Approach Deal further emphasised the need to encourage and promote reconciliation, tolerance and meaningful dialogue between those of different national and cultural identities in Northern Ireland with a view to promoting parity of esteem, mutual respect, understanding and cooperation. To help achieve these objectives, the supplier will deliver initiatives that are designed to improve good relations between people from different religious, political, racial and/or ethnic backgrounds in the contract workforce and/or communities affected by the contract. This could include, for example:

* Activities that result in the supplier developing an increased level of understanding of the local demographics of the community affected by the contract,
* the development of partnerships with organisations in the VCSE sector who work to deliver activities designed to improve good relations within the local community;
* Activities that increase awareness of good relations, equality, diversity and inclusion issues within the contract workforce and provide adequate training for employees and managers engaged on the contract. This training could be delivered by the VCSE sector;
* Activities to promote good relations, including cultural pluralism and respect for diversity, including Northern Ireland’s ethnic, national, linguistic and faith communities so that everyone has a sense of belonging.

**Donation of time and labour to support small organisations**

The Supplier will deliver skilled labour in an area related to the contract to educational establishments or organisations working with people who are at risk of social exclusion or who are disadvantaged in the labour market.

**Donation of construction supplies or tools to educational establishments or organisations working with people who are at risk of social exclusion or who are disadvantaged in the labour market.**

Donation of construction supplies or tools to organisations working with people at risk of social exclusion or who are disadvantaged in the labour market. This may also include the loan of larger tools/vehicles which would normally incur a cost to the organisation. For example, the loan of cranes/lifts plant machinery that would otherwise be hired for a one-off purpose where the value of the donation would be equivalent to the cost of hiring that same machinery for the length of time required (e.g. the daily rate of commercial hire X number of days needed on site).

1. Keep Northern Ireland Beautiful; [Litter Composition Report 2019/20](https://www.keepnorthernirelandbeautiful.org/keepnorthernirelandbeautiful/documents/blog-000968-20200228111517.pdf). [↑](#footnote-ref-1)
2. [Healthy workplaces: a model for action (who.int)](https://www.who.int/publications/i/item/healthy-workplaces-a-model-for-action) [↑](#footnote-ref-2)