

Corporate Social Responsibility Policy

Carpenters

Version Control

Version	Name	Reason for change	Date
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Corporate Social Responsibility Policy (“CSR”)

1.1 Introduction

Carpenters are a leading provider of claim services to the insurance industry and their customers. We are an ever-expanding business that currently employs over 400 people. The company has enjoyed considerable growth in recent years and as a local employer contributes to the regeneration of the local community. Customers, employees, community and the environment stand at the forefront of Carpenters business strategy and corporate culture.

Carpenters have a continual commitment to our clients, customers, employees and local community. Carpenters have a responsibility whilst conducting business ethically. We value our employees and they have support for both personal and professional development and are able to get involved in various ways to put forward ideas and suggestions as well as on the social side.

Carpenter’s aim is to have a positive effect on the communities in which we operate by various fundraising events and partnerships with charities. As an expanding company we know our responsibilities to the environment and we implement measures to reduce the waste our offices CSR create.

A running total of our charitable donations and fundraising events is available on the CSR intranet page.

1.2 Carpenters Commitment to CSR

Numerous CSR activities have existed at Carpenters for some considerable time. This policy aims to create a more strategic approach to CSR, based on employee involvement, practice and new innovative ways of contributing to CSR. Stakeholders are a key concern to the business, thus it is essential that the respect and trust of these stakeholders be maintained. This policy is based on continuous improvement, and the business is committed to reviewing and reporting on its CSR activities on an annual basis.

2.0 Workplace

2.1 Equal Opportunities

Carpenters are an equal opportunities employer. We recruit on basis of skill and merit regardless of gender, race, ethnicity, age, religion, disability or sexual orientation. The Policy can be found on the Risk & Compliance tab on the intranet.

2.2 Training and Personal Development

Carpenters are focused on the fair treatment of all our employees, particularly in offering them the support, training and time they need. Mutual respect runs throughout the company, communication and understanding exists across all levels of staff.

This culture is seen in the various training and personal development opportunities which we offer to all employees, regardless of level or position. Employees throughout the company are given the chance to fulfill their potential within the company. Training requests for skills that are not job specific are taken into consideration and are often offered, highlighting our willingness to develop the skills of all our employees. We believe that employees perform well if they are able to climb up the company structure and all new positions in the company are advertised internally prior to being advertised elsewhere to encourage promotion from within.

Our accreditation with *Investors in People* highlights Carpenters commitment to value and further our employees' skills. *Investors in People* aims to improve business efficiency through utilising the company workforce. We also implement a number of internal measures and policies to show our commitment to our staff and to offer the best opportunity for job development.

Examples of such internal policies include work support and supervision, proper reporting lines, performance management including a formal appraisal process, together with a training and development scheme.

2.3 Communication with Employees

Carpenters' culture is dependent on mutual respect for all members of staff and an understanding between all levels of the company structure. For this culture to remain as company expands, communication between all levels of the company is key. To aid internal communication we have introduced a staff intranet where employees can access documents and news displaying what is happening within the company. The intranet consists of various communication tools including:-

- **Employee Forum:** Representatives from each department with members of the management team, meet on a monthly basis. The forum is an opportunity for each department to voice their concerns and make suggestions for improved business practice. The management team then analyses suggestions made by the departments and acts on them where appropriate. The minutes of every forum are then published on the staff intranet system to allow employees the opportunity to read the results of the forum. We value employee opinion and CSR will be on the agenda in employee forums on a regular basis, this in turn will influence Carpenters CSR policy.
- **Outstanding Contribution Awards:** Departments nominate peers for awards that represent a contribution to the business over and above their job role. These awards are offered quarterly to three pounds each award is worth 500 pounds.
- **Back-to-the-floor days:** The management team has regular "back-to-the-floor" days in different departments to integrate with staff and understand the demands of their individual roles within the context of the business. Back-to-the-floor days lessen the gap between the management team and various departments, as well as further enhancing communication across the structure of the business.
- **Social Committee:** Carpenters believes in the benefit of employee social interaction. The social committee meets regularly to organise social events and these events are announced on the staff intranet and/or via email.

2.4 Employee Health and Well-being

Employees are a key stakeholder in the success of the company, thus employee health and well-being is a key concern for Carpenters. We offer and encourage employees to lead healthier lives, which in turn further encourages social interaction at work. For example, working groups are arranged for employees, yoga classes are held on site after working hours, football matches and teams are arranged and paid time off for employees to give blood donations.

The company has and always will promote a healthy work-life balance for its employees. The employee forum, social committee and staff intranet all offer further opportunities to suggest more ways in which promote a healthy lifestyle.

2.5 Health and Safety

Health and Safety is an important factor in the workplace of the business. A Health and Safety policy is in place to mitigate risks at all of the office sites. Members of staff in each department are appointed as H&S Assessors to make sure working conditions are at the right standard. Carpenters comply to all of the Health and Safety legislation where necessary, to protect our employees.

3.0 Marketplace

3.1 Ethics / Legislation

As a leading provider of claims services to the insurance industry, Carpenters has a responsibility to work in an ethical manner and in the best interest of each client and to comply with all the principles and outcomes contained in the Solicitors Regulation Authority (SRA) Code of conduct. Please visit www.sra.org.uk

Carpenters are a *Motor Accident Solicitors Society (MASS)* accredited firm. *MASS* is a non-profit organisation that promotes the highest standards of legal services, bringing justice to the victims of road traffic accidents. We abide by the *MASS* code of conduct whilst handling claims. The objectives of *MASS* are:

- To enhance the expertise, knowledge and efficiency of its Members in the handling of road traffic accident claims;
- To keep under review substantive law, court procedure and all other matters affecting the awards of compensation in road traffic accident claims;
- To support test cases for the benefit of the motorist.
- To promote an efficient and expert service to persons pursuing claims arising from motor accidents.

Carpenters and *MASS* both insist on the highest quality of claims services to bring justice to the victims of road traffic accidents. To learn more about *MASS* and its actions visit www.mass.org.uk

Carpenters are also accredited by *Lexcel* which is a flexible, support management framework to help develop greater operational efficiency, manage risk effectively, reduce costs and promote profitability. *Lexcel* accredited firms undergo independent assessments every year insisting on excellence in areas of case management and risk management. To learn more about *Lexcel* visit www.lawsociety.org.uk/lexcel

3.2 Quality of Service

Quality of service is at the core of our business operations, and is the first focus of all our business relationships. To ensure that Carpenters delivers the quality of service we strive for, we have a number of measures in place across all areas of the business. Monitoring and review of all of our services is key, and this is achieved through audits and call reviews. Furthermore, staff have key performance indicators that reflect the service and quality they are expected to deliver, continually monitoring its performance against agreed service level agreements. We have a benchmarking system in place, in terms of how files are handled and their profession, whilst handling claims. These benchmarks are for carrying out actions of settling claims within defined timescales for efficiency and quality of service.

3.3 Customer Satisfaction

Carpenters encourages and welcomes feedback, good or bad, from its clients. We have a feedback section via our website and we monitor and deal with any complaints as priority. We send a questionnaire to each client at the conclusion of their claim for feedback in relation to the handling of their claim. As with the rest of our CSR policy, customer satisfaction on the implementation of continuous improvement and will be monitored accordingly.

4.0 Community

4.1 Charities and Community Support

Carpenter's chosen charity partner is *Headway Wirral* and we support the charity in various ways. The partnership is a long-lasting one that originated back in 2009. *Headway Wirral* was founded in 1988 and is our local charity and a branch of the National charity *Headway*. *Headway Wirral's* mission is to provide support for people who are affected by brain injury. They achieve this by offering a wide range of services, including career support, social re-integration, community outreach and respite care. For more information visit Headway Wirral's website www.headwaywirral.org.uk

Carpenter's support to *Headway Wirral* extends past merely philanthropic actions. We also offer its time and resources to provide services in kind, and give provision of premises to hold group meetings or providing staff support dependent on the requirements of the charity. Details of our work to date with Headway Wirral can be found on the CSR section of our intranet.

We also have a monthly charity that is suggested and voted on by the employees. Carpenters is keen to support the societal concerns of our employees and holds 'dress down for work days', raffles and various fundraising events to raise for the chosen charity. The head of the company then matches the money raised by the employees to reaffirm our commitment to its monthly charity and its societal responsibilities as a leading solicitor.

Carpenters as a local employer recognises its societal responsibilities in the community it operates in. As this policy is based on continuous improvement, we are actively looking for ways to advance its contribution to the local community in which it operates.

4.2 Regeneration

Our rapid growth over the last year has resulted in considerable job creation, contributing economically to the Liverpool and Birkenhead area. Throughout our expansion, we will continue to be a local employer and offer economic incentives to the local area.

We also have offered work experience opportunities to local students encouraging a strong work ethic in the local area including students on work experience, primarily from the Birkenhead Sixth Form College.

5.0 Environment

5.1 Office Waste

Carpenters employ what measures it can to help to reduce the environmental impact of its operations. This CSR policy will outline measures which our implementations to reduce waste and any adverse impact it may have on the environment.

Carpenters sites at both Leonard House and Priory House outsource its waste to Bagnall & Morris Waste Management who have a widely respected reputation throughout the UK for and were awarded the Wirral Environmental Business of the Year award in 2011.

In addition, we deal with a lot of sensitive and confidential information that needs to remain secure. Thus, files and paper containing confidential information needs to be shredded and this is done in an environmentally friendly way. Carpenters outsource its confidential information to Shred It, a specialized company providing tailored document destruction service which allows businesses to comply with legislation and ensure that the client, employee and confidential business information is kept secure at all times. This paper is then recycled and reused as various different paper based products.

6.0 Monitoring and Review

Carpenter's Corporate Responsibility policy is dependent on monitoring and review, as well as a commitment to the continuous improvement of the policy.

The Risk & Compliance Team has overall control and monitoring responsibility for the policy which will be reviewed and reported on annually. The next review is January 2015.