



Practice
Plus
Group

Social value statement



Introduction

This document sets out Practice Plus Group’s approach to social value. Social value is a concept defined in the Public Services (Social Value) Act of 2013. The Act requires all public sector organisations and their suppliers to look beyond the financial cost of a contract and consider how the services that are delivered as part of a contract might improve economic, social and environment wellbeing.

The National Social Value Taskforce recommends that a Social Value Statement contains a number of key focus areas related to the five themes in the Social Value Model (December 2020). These are reflected in the numbered section headings in this document.

1. Our approach and intentions in relation to social value

Practice Plus Group recognises the important role it plays in local communities, our society and in the wider UK economy. At Practice Plus Group our vision is to deliver “Access to Excellence”. We strive to practice exceptional healthcare every day, growing responsibly so that we can help more people. Our services are chosen and trusted by patients and NHS commissioners, and are easily available to all. We are driven by innovation and proudly deliver through expert colleagues working together as a team.

Our values reflect our organisation and how we operate and interact with ourselves and others.

They are:



We treat patients and each other as they would like to be treated



We embrace diversity



We act with integrity



We strive to do things better together

We deliver social value across a number of themes. We group our social value initiatives into the following areas:



Inclusion



Our impact on society and the economy



Investing in skills



Looking after people

We recognise and value the role that delivering Social Value can play in making Practice Plus Group a successful organisation, a great place to work and a great place for our patients to be treated.

2. Key Areas of Focus

Inclusion:

Our Equity, Diversity and Inclusion committee provides a strong focus to our work in this vital area. Practice Plus Group is committed to developing, supporting, and sustaining a diverse workforce and creating a working environment where everyone is able to do their job to the best of their ability without having to face discrimination, harassment, or victimisation. We are also committed to delivering health care in a manner that recognises, respects, and responds to the diversity of the people to whom we provide clinical services. The group's mission is to raise awareness of issues and to drive change. As well as providing important educational and support resources, the group also provides a forum for discussing events that are related to ED&I.



WRES – Practice Plus Group reports on the Workforce Race Equality Standards on an annual basis, and has done since 2017.

Reverse mentoring programme aimed at helping senior leaders in our organisation to better understand some of the challenges faced by staff from minority and underrepresented backgrounds.

Practice Plus Group is the only independent sector organisation that is part of the NHS Employer's ED&I Partner programme, and has been an active participant in the programme for the past seven years.

Forward looking recruitment practices – names removed from CV sifting process in our hospitals – rolling out to the rest of the organisation this year.

Gender Pay Gap – we conduct annual reporting on the gender pay gap and have taken positive action to address issues (United Nations Sustainable Development Goals (SDG) – Goal 5 – Gender Equality).

We are a signatory to the Armed Forces Covenant scheme. Our commitment to the health and wellbeing of veterans is supported through our membership of the Defence Employer Recognition Scheme which we are proud to hold at Bronze level. We have plans in place to achieve silver status in 2024.

In line with Theme 4 of the Social Value Model - Equal opportunity – Reducing the disability employment gap, Practice Plus Group is a Disability Confident Employer – and has achieved Stage 2 accreditation in recognition of the excellent progress that we have made in this area. We support the principles of the Department of Work and Pensions – Guide for line managers: Recruiting, managing & developing people with a disability or health condition.



We monitor our performance against the metrics of the Workforce Disability Equality Standards (WDES), preparing for our first annual reporting cycle.

Investing in new skills:

Training – investment in a state of the art Learning Management System allowing delivery of formal training and access to a wide range of additional training material and assets for all staff. Training also includes modules on unconscious bias and micro-aggressions.

Springboard programme for women provides women the opportunity to take part in a dedicated programme aimed at giving them the confidence to take the next step in their careers. We have funded the training of our own in-house Springboard trainer, allowing us to broaden access to the programme across more groups. Feedback from participants has been exceptionally positive.

Career development training and leadership programmes are available to managers and leaders in the organisation, helping them to grow and develop their personal, professional and leadership skills.

Practice Plus Group supports apprenticeships across multiple areas of our business from IT Service Desk roles to healthcare assistants. Many of our most highly skilled IT engineers joined the company as apprentices and have built their skills over time in a structured and planned manner.

We invest in the training of our senior clinical staff across a wide range of specialties with internationally recognised qualifications and up to date clinical practice.

Our approach aligns with Theme 2 – Tackling Economic Inequality by developing the skill level of the current and future workforce to help create better, higher paying jobs.

Our impact on society and the economy:

Net Zero – we are aiming to be Net Zero for Pillar 1 and 2 emissions by 2030, and for Pillar 3 as soon as practicable thereafter. This is significantly ahead of the NHS Net Zero commitment. We have prioritised action - including off-setting carbon from necessary business travel, moving to renewable energy and reducing paper and moving residual paper use to recycled products. We have completely removed the use of Desflurane – a gas with a very high greenhouse impact - from our anaesthetic practice. In terms of environmental regeneration, to date we have funded over 20,000 trees in sustainable planting projects in Haiti, Nepal and Kenya. Our projects in Haiti and Nepal involve bio-diverse planting in heavily deforested areas providing employment and food security for local farmers. Our Kenyan project involves the restoration of a Mangrove swamp which is one of nature's most effective carbon capture and storage systems. We have chosen the projects with the biggest impact in terms of social and environmental value.

We formally recognise the existence of a climate emergency and were one of the first Healthcare organisations to publish a Carbon Reduction Plan, which we update with our progress on an annual basis.

Our approach will support achieving Theme 3 of the Social Value Model – Fighting Climate Change – effective stewardship of the environment.

Providing employment in local communities through our services and through our own supply chains, with 9,000 people working in our services across England, including in areas of higher than average deprivation.

Our services directly and indirectly support jobs across the wider UK economy through our expenditure on services, consumables, energy, catering, etc. Our services support local jobs, creating value in our localities and at a national level.

In our 2023 financial year we invested £4.8m on equipment and infrastructure upgrades in our hospitals and surgical centres alone. We plan to invest a further £5.2m in our 2024 financial year.

In our 2023 financial year we invested £2.3m on external training for our colleagues.

Looking after our people:

Our Employee Assistance Programme is available to all staff, providing access to counselling, advice and support across a multitude of issues.

We recognise that paying attention to workplace Mental Health has never been more important and support the Mental Health at Work Commitment. We will avail of the resources at Mental Health at Work website created by the Government in partnership with Mind - <https://www.mentalhealthatwork.org.uk/>

We have deployed an employee app to provide a focus on wellbeing and mental health, as well as providing a direct communications channel aimed at building engagement and a sense of belonging (Theme 5 – Wellbeing – Improve Health and wellbeing).

As an additional ‘thank you’ to our colleagues for their exceptional work during the COVID-19 pandemic, all colleagues were given an additional three days of Annual Leave. This in part supports our commitment to Theme 1 – COVID-19 recovery.

We conduct an annual ‘Over To You’ survey and provide ongoing opportunities to raise issues through a relatively flat organisational structure with approachable leadership. Our employee engagement levels are a source of pride to us.



Freedom to speak up champions, and clear whistleblowing processes where concerns can be raised without fear of negative consequences for the individual raising the concerns.

‘Matched funding’ is available for employees to access to support charity fundraising activities. We support colleagues to undertake a wide range of charitable activities in our services from Children in Need to MacMillan coffee mornings.

Delivering annual pay increases (5% in October 2023) across all levels of the organisation, helping our (non-AfC) colleagues to deal with the rising cost of living.

Additional holiday allowances are in place to recognise length of service milestones.

Our flexible working model allows many of our colleagues to travel at times that are cheaper/less busy. Flexible working also supports colleagues from a wider set socioeconomic groups as it can help colleagues to balance caring responsibilities, health needs, etc.

A cycle to work scheme is available to all employees, giving access to bicycles and cycling accessories at significantly reduced rates.

Our approach incorporates the foundational principles of the Good Work Plan (2018) – fair pay, participation and progression, voice and autonomy, and the UN SDG -Goal 3 – Good health & wellbeing. Internal engagement, communication and management of social value. Dedicated channels on company intranet to engage with and inform staff and internal stakeholders of our initiatives and progress, e.g. ED&I, Net Zero.

Regular communication and visible support and engagement from executive leadership on key issues e.g. ED&I, Net Zero.

Board level reporting on initiatives and progress in key areas.

3. Implementation approach for embedding social value

Broad programme of change across multiple initiatives with clear executive level sponsorship.

Clear executive level sponsorship and encouragement of locally driven activities that have local impacts, e.g. through our charity matched funding schemes. We aim to create an environment where our teams can bring new ideas forward for delivering social value in a beneficial and sustainable way.

Our Environmental, Social and Governance Policy (Appendix 2) defines how the company meets our broad ethical, economic, social and environmental obligations to vulnerable and dependent patients, to our employees and to other interest groups including commissioners of care, investors, suppliers and local communities.

4. Internal support available to achieve targets and ambitions

Staff supported and mandated to undertake nationally specified Continual Professional Development commensurate with their roles – enables staff to work to their full potential and helps facilitate their onward personal and professional development.

Key staff are given protected time to move initiatives forward – e.g. head of Equality, Diversity and Inclusion.

Budget is ring-fenced to support key initiatives e.g. Spring Board Programme, Leadership Development programmes, upgrades to recruitment websites.

Capital investment programme with annual re-investment of millions of pounds in our services, systems and tools.

5. Collaboration, external engagement and support available to partners that want to contribute to creating place-based social value

One of our core values is that we strive to do things better. We are open to discussions with external partners about how we can enhance social value through the delivery of our services. An example of this is our engagement with third party suppliers to understand their plans to move towards Net Zero.

6. Action Plans

Acknowledging the breadth of social value initiatives, Practice Plus Group will deliver its commitments via Timed Action Plans overseen by working groups either formed from existing forums or by specific task and finish groups aligned to a key area of focus.

A priority for Practice Plus Group in 2023/24 has been Equality, Diversity and Inclusion which is being delivered by Practice Plus Group's ED&I Committee according to their action plan. The appointment of a full-time lead for Equality, Diversity and Inclusion underlines our commitment to this important area.

Progress with action plans will be monitored and assessed at monthly meeting of Practice Plus Group's executive.

7. Performance management

Practice Plus Group is committed to openness and transparency is reporting our achievements in delivering social value.

We currently report on our delivery of key outcomes against the key themes and our areas of focus on an individual objective basis. To consolidate our reporting we have registered with the Social Value Portal to explore how the online solution can assist us in measuring and managing the contributions that we and our supply chain makes to society.

The Portal allows organisations to report both non-financial and financial data, and rewards organisations for doing “more good” in the community. Its measures environmental, social and economic activities and helps to identify and measure the additional social value delivered through project, initiatives and service delivery in terms that are meaningful to the public.

A key part of our Action Plan for 2023/2024 – by March 2024 - is exploring and selecting which of the measures within the National Social Value Measurement Framework – or National Themes, Outcomes, Measures (TOMs) – we adopt to as a method to report and measure social value to a consistent standard. The Framework is reviewed and endorsed by the National Social Value Taskforce.

8. Achievements and benefits realisation

Our Social Value Programme has already delivered a number of important achievements. Some key highlights include:

Over 100 women have now taken part in the Springboard programme with a further 60 participants aligned to upcoming courses.

Planting of a 20,000 tree forest in Haiti, Nepal and Kenya providing carbon capture, economic benefits and food security for the local population with a further 5,000 trees expected to be added by the end of 2024.

Over 250 reverse mentoring sessions held so far with senior leaders and colleagues from a BAME background.

Achievement of Stage 2 accreditation as a Disability Confident Employer (October 2021).

9. Actions and next steps for delivery

We recognise that delivering social value is not a one-time activity. We have taken a number of steps that we are proud of, and will continue to focus on the positive role that we can play in the localities that we serve, in our society and in the wider UK economy.

We commit to continued executive and board oversight of our programme of activity and overall progress.

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Appendices:

- Appendix 1 – Resources and publications
- Appendix 2 – Practice Plus Group Environmental, Social and Governance Policy
- Appendix 3 – Equality, Diversity and Inclusion Action Plan

Appendix 1 – Resources

The Social Value Model - <https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/procurement-policy-note-0620-taking-account-of-social-value-in-the-award-of-central-government-contracts>

United Nations Sustainable Development Goals – [United Nations Sustainable Development – 17 Goals to Transform Our World](#)

Good Work Plan (2018) - [Good work plan - GOV.UK \(www.gov.uk\)](#)

Mental Health at Work – <https://www.mentalhealthatwork.org.uk/>

The Mental Health at Work Commitment - [https://www.mentalhealthatwork.org.uk/commitment/Improving Lives; the Future of Work, Health & Disability - \[Improving Lives The Future of Work, Health and Disability \\(publishing.service.gov.uk\\)\]\(#\)](https://www.mentalhealthatwork.org.uk/commitment/Improving Lives; the Future of Work, Health & Disability - Improving Lives The Future of Work, Health and Disability (publishing.service.gov.uk))

Guide for line managers: Recruiting, managing and developing people with a disability or health condition - [Guide for line managers: Recruiting, managing and developing people with a disability or health condition - GOV.UK \(www.gov.uk\)](#)

The Social Value Portal - <https://socialvalueportal.com/>

Appendix 2 – Practice Plus Group Environmental, Social and Governance Policy	Reviewed annually and updated as required
Appendix 3 – Equality, Diversity and Inclusion Action Plan	Reviewed annually and updated as required