



Introduction

When we started our Responsible Procurement journey, we had a simple ambition: to demonstrate how our team could contribute to the University of Manchester’s goal to be socially responsible.

We are now recognised as responsible procurement leaders for our sector.

We use our position and profile to actively share our approach with other procurement professionals so we can maximise impact by raising the profile of our activity.

We also know our University of Manchester colleagues have never been more interested in sustainability and are keen to understand our approach. This document outlines our approach so that everyone can understand how we are addressing the significant and complex challenges we face.

Being a leader means continuing to move forwards and we also want to share what we have planned to continue to drive progress.

Kevin Casey
Head of Procurement

Our ambition

The team has worked hard to understand sustainability and social responsibility. We needed to increase our subject knowledge before we could focus on how it relates to our procurement context and to [excellent practice](#).

We knew that our progress had to be understandable and make use of generally accepted best practice for sustainable procurement. As a result we set an early ambition to make demonstrable progress by reaching Level 4 of the [Flexible Framework](#) within 6 months, and we achieved it in 2015. Two years later [we reached Level 5](#), being the first University in the UK to do so. An [independent review of our activity](#) was undertaken by a scrutiny panel, which confirmed our commitment to leadership.

We have linked our activity to the University’s strategy and continue to review these actions.

We recognise that this is a continuing work in progress and we continue to evolve, adapting what we do and how we do it to make sure that we continue to support the University’s aims and objectives. You can read more about [environmental sustainability](#) and [social responsibility](#) on the University’s websites.

- you can explore how we think about [responsible procurement](#)
- learn about how we [connect responsible procurement with excellence](#)

Our approach

Responding to the challenges of sustainability means grappling with significant complexity. There is often no simple answer to the questions ‘what we should buy?’ and ‘who we should buy from?’

We have taken a bold but simple approach by embedding sustainability into everything we do.

We have identified priority areas to help us demonstrate progress and impact and created dynamic improvement processes.

We have committed to sharing our learning to support greater impact.

- Find out about [how we embed sustainability into process and practice](#)
- Find out [how we report on what we do and how we develop new initiatives](#)
- See how we have [shared our approach](#) and [learning projects we have been part of](#)

Our stakeholders

Supporting key stakeholders is central to achieving our ambitions and is an important focus for our work.

Staff

Staff who request or purchase goods and services on behalf of the University are vital if we are to meet our ambitions. We want them to understand how we are supporting the University’s commitments to social responsibility and climate change and also access practical information that supports responsible procurement in departments and faculties. This includes:

- [A website which supports staff when making purchasing decisions](#)
- [Whole Life Costing briefing](#)
- [Purchasing Energy Efficient Equipment](#)
- [Top 10 ways to purchase responsibly](#)

Suppliers

Engaging and developing our supply chain has been at the heart of our approach. We piloted the first version of the [NETpositive Supplier Engagement Tool](#) and continue to be active in encouraging our suppliers to use it as well as promoting this across the HE sector.

- [Supplier Awards](#)
- [1000 suppliers infographic](#)
- [Demonstrating the impact of 1000 suppliers](#)
- [SME Guidance Documents](#)

Our progress and impact

We continue to demonstrate our progress and share our journey. We have issued a number of reports to highlight what we have done, and how we have done it. We are active within various networks regionally and nationally learning from others as well as sharing our experiences.

[Our webpages](#) are updated regularly to share our approach, progress and learning. We have developed and made freely available a range of guidance to support staff and suppliers as we want to help them to help us on our responsible procurement journey.

We provide lots of resources to [support our internal buyers](#) as well as [support for our suppliers](#).

Our future plans

We know that what we have done so far is not the end of the journey. We will continue to adapt and innovate to meet emerging issues and demands. However, embedding sustainability in all that we do has put us in a strong position to respond to '[Climate Emergency](#)' conversations but we are conscious that we will need to do more and faster to respond meaningfully.

This will continue to shape our approach in the years ahead.

We also continue to stimulate innovative learning projects including:

- [Sustainable Development Goals \(SDGs\)](#)
- [Supply Chain Mapping Project](#)
- [Social Value Project](#)
- [Modern Slavery](#)
- [SME support](#)

Establishment of the [HEPA Responsible Procurement Group](#) was a key element of our leadership as we were building sector consensus and raising the profile of procurement teams. The group was chaired by Kevin Casey until April 2020.