



# **Making a Difference**



## Purpose

As a University we are acutely aware of our social responsibilities and we are confident in stating that we already go well beyond what is expected of an organisation.

Although Corporate Social Responsibility (CSR) is a relatively new concept, the University of Sunderland has embraced CSR principles for several decades, particularly at a local and regional level.

Under CSR, an organisation's internal and external practices can influence their employees, customers, partners and environment in a positive manner.

Research indicates that organisations that take a fair approach to their activities deliver a better service, maximise their

potential and operate more productively in an increasingly competitive world.

This document highlights our commitment to CSR locally, regionally, nationally and internationally.

The University's vision is to be recognised as one of a new generation of great civic universities - innovative, accessible, inspirational and outward looking; with international reach; and with remarkable local impact. Our approach to Corporate Social Responsibility will help us to achieve this vision.

We aim to make a difference and to create and nurture an inclusive environment in which we all can flourish.



# Our University

## Our Aims

- To raise the educational aspirations of people in the community, as well as across the country and encourage their greater participation in higher education
- To encourage an inclusive environment without barriers to achievement, where students and staff are highly valued, based on mutual respect
- To provide a University campus environment and range of facilities, both educational and recreational, which are attractive, accessible and stimulating
- To integrate with and support the needs of our community and our region
- To embrace environmental responsibility and sustainable development principles, to make a positive contribution to urban regeneration and to ensure that any adverse environmental impact of our activities is minimised

## **Making a Difference**

### ***To our Students***

- The leading University in England for widening access, attracting students from a range of backgrounds
- Rated “Best student experience in England” by the Times Higher Education Supplement
- The most satisfied students in the North-East, according to the National Student Survey
- Listening and responding to the student voice, with a shared understanding of our mutual responsibilities
- Providing a range of student support at Sunderland that covers all issues
- Encouraging our students on voluntary placements in the local community and paid placements with local businesses
- Offering help and expertise for students wanting to set up businesses
- A Frank Buttle Trust Quality Mark holder in recognition of our support to students from looked after and care backgrounds
- A Disability Tick Symbol Employer with a Code of Practice for Supporting Disabled People
- The top UK University in Stonewall’s Workplace Equality Index for supporting Lesbian, Gay and Bisexual staff and students
- Providing opportunities for staff to undertake projects with local communities through our Community Fellowships programme
- An Investors In People employer with additional recognition of our fair recruitment and work-life balance models
- The Chartered Institute of Personnel Development’s Top Regional Employer for Equality and Diversity in the work place

### ***To our Environment***

- Rated number 35 in the People and Planet Green League of Universities - and aiming to improve our rating year on year
- Working for environmental improvements in the way we manage our transport, waste and energy
- Encouraging alternative transport options via our campus minibus and our Liftshare, Cycling and Parking schemes
- One of the Carbon Trust’s top universities in the UK for cutting carbon emissions
- A regional Gold Travel Plan Award holder for encouraging people to switch to more sustainable forms of transport

### ***To our Staff***

- One of 100 UK Exemplar Companies for Women’s Initiatives, with Gold status from Opportunity Now as an employer
- Reducing our male and female gender equal pay gap to have one of the lowest pay gaps of Universities in the UK



**“What the University has achieved in offering thousands upon thousands of people who almost certainly would not have had the chance, a truly life-changing experience, cannot adequately be put into words. I’m enormously proud to have played a small part in that achievement.”**

Lord Puttnam  
Chancellor  
University of Sunderland  
1997 - 2007

# Our City

## Our Aim

- To work with the City of Sunderland and other civic and regional partners to raise the profile and image of the City and the North East of England; and in partnership help secure the economic, social and cultural regeneration of the City and region

## Making a Difference

### *To Sunderland*

- A leading member of the Sunderland Partnership
- Enriching the University and City socially, culturally and economically, with our diverse and vibrant student population
- A £75m investment plan for our City Campus, helping drive the city's regeneration

### *To the Local Community*

- A gateway into study and achievement for all people in the community. Each year 5,000 young people benefit from experiencing a taste of University activities
- Our Refugee Support Officer opens doors to education and employment, enabling refugees in the City to make a contribution to the local community
- Finalists of the North East Equality Awards for our Outstanding Contribution to Promoting Equality and Diversity in the Community
- Delivering several community-based projects such as international students working with local pupils to increase cross-cultural awareness, and working with young people using music and dance to increase creative thinking and confidence



**“The University’s commitment to the region is very heartening indeed. The new North-East is primed for a brighter future and the University of Sunderland is at the forefront of helping to deliver this vision.”**

Margaret Fay  
Chair  
One NorthEast

# Our Wider Community

## Our Aims

- To strengthen our national and international reputations for developing programmes that meet the needs of employers and working with businesses to provide students with relevant teaching that enhances employability
- To respond to the increasing globalisation of industry, commerce, science and the arts by building stronger links with partners across the world

- Outlining our commitments in our tendering and procurement documents and working with partners with fair practices

## *To the Ethical Agenda*

- With over 20,000 students worldwide we have a growing international student community; with 1,200 students from 80 countries now studying in Sunderland in addition to those studying our programmes in their own countries. We strive to be consistent and ethical in our activities and work with partners who do the same

## Making a Difference

### *To our Partners*

- Working closely with regional development agency One NorthEast and business partners to achieve the aims and objectives of the Regional Economic Strategy, focussing on increasing the participation and productivity of North East people and businesses
- Working collaboratively with strategic partner Colleges and North East Universities on work-based learning and projects aimed at transferring knowledge and expertise into local, national and international businesses to support innovation and growth

- A Fairtrade University. Every hot drink at the University is Fairtrade and our products range from clothing to Fairtrade footballs. We are a key partner in helping the City of Sunderland maintain Fairtrade status. We also support local products and suppliers
- Working with partners to ensure that ethical products such as ONE water are promoted and sold, providing clean drinking water to small communities in Africa





**“We are delighted to be working with the University of Sunderland in providing cleaner drinking water to African villages.”**

Duncan Goose  
Founder of One Water





# Proud to be Making a Difference

Being socially responsible, be it as an individual, a group, or an organisation is something I believe in very strongly and it makes me proud, as Chancellor of the University of Sunderland, to highlight our commitment in this area.

As you have seen, the University is acutely aware of its responsibilities to its community, its city and its wider environment.

There are many examples I could call upon to show this, but for me one has particular significance and also shows the scale of our impact as an organisation. The University's work in helping provide cleaner drinking water in African villages is having a life-changing effect.

A similar result is being achieved by my charity COCO, which is working with some of the world's most vulnerable children in an

attempt to give them the chance not only to survive, but to strive towards a healthier, happier and more fruitful way of life through educational opportunities.

Whether in its immediate community or its wider one, the University's commitment to corporate social responsibility is a great example to not only other higher education institutions but to organisations and companies of all sizes.

This corporate social responsibility statement highlights some of the key areas in which the University operates as a socially responsible organisation. However, it is only a snapshot of the work that goes on and I, for one, am particularly proud to be associated with it.

**Steve Cram**  
Chancellor  
University of Sunderland



COCO helps to fund a Massai Nursery in Tanzania, helping children look forward to brighter futures

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