

# UKRBA ACCREDITED, LEVEL 5 FULL CSR AND ESG ASSESSMENT REPORT

DATE: 15 June 2026

Accreditation Level: UKRBA Level 5

Organisation: Staffordshire Chambers of Commerce

Membership No: UKRBA-2026-0001

Overall Position: Embedded Responsible Practice

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Organisation: Staffordshire Chambers of Commerce

Website: <https://staffordshirechambers.co.uk/>

CSR Diary: <https://staffordshirechambers.co.uk/news/>

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### Section 1: Executive Summary

Staffordshire Chambers of Commerce has been awarded UKRBA Level 5 Accreditation following a full evidence based assessment of its corporate social responsibility (CSR) and environmental, social and governance (ESG) practices. Level 5 represents the highest tier within the UKRBA framework and is reserved for organisations that can demonstrate not merely that responsible policies exist, but that those policies are actively embedded in day to day operations, leadership decisions, and community engagement. This is a significant distinction. Many organisations can present documentation. Far fewer can demonstrate that responsible behaviour is genuinely woven into how they operate, communicate, and serve their stakeholders across a sustained period.

For a procurement reviewer, a contracts panel, or a due diligence officer, the UKRBA Level 5 award confers a high degree of confidence. It signals that Staffordshire Chambers of Commerce is not making aspirational or unverifiable claims about its conduct. The evidence reviewed during this assessment, drawn from policy documentation, accreditation submissions, and the organisation's publicly maintained news and activity record, demonstrates a coherent and credible pattern of responsible practice across environmental stewardship, social contribution, workforce welfare, and governance accountability.

The key finding of this assessment is that Staffordshire Chambers of Commerce operates as a genuinely purpose driven membership organisation that uses its scale, reach, and influence across the Staffordshire business community to advance responsible commercial behaviour in ways that extend well beyond its own internal operations. Its commitment to responsible practice is visible, consistent, and independently verifiable, satisfying all

criteria required for UKRBA Level 5 accreditation.

## **Section 2: About the Organisation**

Staffordshire Chambers of Commerce is a well established, not for profit membership organisation serving the business community across Staffordshire and the surrounding region. Operating as part of the British Chambers of Commerce accredited network, it functions as a principal point of support, advocacy, and connectivity for businesses of all sizes across the county. Its membership base spans a wide range of sectors including manufacturing, professional services, retail, hospitality, construction, technology, and the creative industries, making it one of the most sectorally diverse business representative bodies in the Midlands.

The organisation provides a broad portfolio of services to its members and the wider business community. These include business support programmes, skills development, international trade advisory services, networking events, training workshops, and access to government funded business growth initiatives. It also holds a significant advocacy function, representing the interests of Staffordshire businesses in dialogue with local and national government, combined authorities, and public sector bodies. This dual role as both a service provider and a voice for business places the organisation at the centre of the regional economic ecosystem.

In terms of workforce scale, Staffordshire Chambers of Commerce is an organisation of modest but meaningful size, consistent with a well resourced regional chamber of commerce. Its staff complement spans operational, commercial, and programme delivery functions, and the organisation also relies on a network of associates, delivery partners, and volunteers who extend its reach into communities and business sectors that a purely employed workforce could not cover.

From a CSR and ESG assessment perspective, the operational context of Staffordshire Chambers of Commerce is particularly relevant. Because it serves as a convener, influencer, and support body for hundreds of member businesses, its responsible behaviour carries a multiplier effect. The values it promotes, the standards it applies internally, and the activities it champions publicly all have the potential to shape responsible practice across a much larger constituency than the organisation's own direct footprint. This broader influence is a material consideration in assessing its overall ESG position and is reflected throughout this report.

## **Section 3: Accreditation Position and Assessment Methodology**

Staffordshire Chambers of Commerce has been formally assessed and has been awarded UKRBA Level 5 Accreditation. This is the highest classification within the UKRBA framework, corresponding to what the framework defines as Embedded Responsible Practice. The organisation is now UKRBA Accredited at Level 5, and this report constitutes the formal record of that award.

The UKRBA framework is a structured accreditation system designed specifically for UK organisations seeking independent recognition of their CSR and ESG performance. Unlike generic certification schemes that focus primarily on documentation, the UKRBA framework places equal weight on operational evidence, behavioural consistency, and stakeholder impact. Accreditation is awarded across five levels, each reflecting a progressively deeper integration of responsible practice into the way an organisation actually functions.

Level 1 reflects an organisation at the beginning of its responsible practice journey, where basic awareness is present but formal systems are limited. Level 2 indicates that foundational policies are in place and beginning to influence practice. Level 3 reflects active development across CSR and ESG dimensions with demonstrable progress. Level 4 indicates a well structured and consistently applied approach with strong evidence across most areas. Level 5, the level awarded to Staffordshire Chambers of Commerce, is reserved for organisations where

responsible practice is not a project or a programme. It is the normal way of operating.

The assessment methodology applied in this case combined three principal evidence streams. First, the accreditation submission itself, including the organisation's own policy documentation covering environmental responsibility, equality, diversity and inclusion, workforce wellbeing, and governance accountability. Second, the independently accessible news and activity record maintained on the organisation's website, which functions as a live CSR diary and provides a contemporaneous record of activities, events, and initiatives across an extended period. Third, the contextual evidence of the organisation's role and reputation within the Staffordshire and wider Midlands business community, which informs the assessment of reach and influence.

All findings reported in this document are grounded in evidence that was reviewed, cross referenced, and verified as part of the accreditation process. No claims are made in this report that are not supported by that evidence base.

#### **Section 4: Environmental Responsibility**

This report provides a full evidence based assessment of the corporate social responsibility (CSR) and environmental, social and governance (ESG) position of Staffordshire Chambers of Commerce at the time of assessment.

On the environmental dimension, Staffordshire Chambers of Commerce demonstrates a thoughtful and proportionate approach to its own operational footprint, combined with a broader commitment to promoting environmental responsibility across its membership. The organisation recognises that as a service based, office centred body, its direct environmental impact is materially different from that of a manufacturer or logistics provider. Its environmental responsibilities are therefore considered in two distinct but connected ways: the management of its own operational emissions and resource consumption, and its role as an influencer and enabler of greener business practices among the businesses it serves.

In terms of its own operations, the organisation has adopted a clear commitment to reducing unnecessary resource consumption and managing its environmental footprint in a manner consistent with its scale and nature. Paper usage, energy consumption in its premises, travel related to staff activities, and the environmental profile of its events and networking functions are all areas where conscious consideration is applied. The shift towards digital communications, online events, and virtual engagement options, which accelerated significantly during the pandemic period, has been maintained as a structural feature of how the organisation operates, reducing travel and physical resource demands in a meaningful and ongoing way.

The organisation's environmental policy sets out its commitment to continuous improvement, supplier awareness, and the responsible procurement of goods and services. Suppliers and service providers engaged by the Chambers are expected to demonstrate awareness of their own environmental responsibilities, and this expectation is built into the organisation's procurement approach. While the Chambers does not operate a complex supply chain of the kind found in manufacturing or retail sectors, its purchasing decisions across venues, catering, print, and digital services are made with environmental considerations in view.

Of particular note from an ESG perspective is the organisation's active engagement with the green economy agenda as a matter of business strategy for the Staffordshire region. The Chambers has been a consistent participant in, and advocate for, events and initiatives that address the transition to lower carbon business models, sustainability in manufacturing, clean energy, and the commercial opportunities associated with net zero. This is not merely rhetoric. The news and activity record reviewed during this assessment contains multiple examples of the organisation facilitating events, hosting speakers, and publishing guidance materials specifically designed to help

member businesses understand and respond to their own environmental responsibilities. In this respect, Staffordshire Chambers of Commerce functions as an environmental enabler for a significant portion of the Staffordshire business community, and that function is a substantive part of its environmental ESG profile.

The organisation does not overstate its environmental credentials. There are no claims in the documentation reviewed that cannot be substantiated by operational reality. This is itself a mark of credibility. At Level 5, the UKRBA framework does not require perfection. It requires honesty, consistency, and genuine commitment to improvement, all of which are present in the evidence reviewed.

## **Section 5: Social Responsibility and Workforce Conduct**

The social dimension of Staffordshire Chambers of Commerce's ESG profile is, in many respects, its most distinctive and most developed area of practice. As an organisation whose core purpose is to support and strengthen the business community, its social responsibilities are both internal, relating to its own people, and external, relating to the communities, businesses, and individuals it serves. Both dimensions are addressed in this section.

On workforce wellbeing, the organisation demonstrates a genuine commitment to the people who work for it. Its approach to staff management reflects the values one would expect from an organisation that advises businesses on good employment practice. Flexible working arrangements, open communication between leadership and staff, investment in professional development, and a culture that values contribution and recognises effort are all features of the organisational environment that emerged from the evidence reviewed. The workforce is relatively compact, which means that the culture of the organisation is heavily influenced by leadership behaviour and interpersonal relationships rather than by policy alone. The evidence suggests that in this respect the culture is healthy and that staff wellbeing is taken seriously as an operational priority rather than a compliance obligation.

The organisation's approach to equality, diversity and inclusion is clearly articulated in its policy framework and is reflected in the breadth of its external activities. The Chambers actively supports initiatives designed to widen participation in business, remove barriers to enterprise, and ensure that economic opportunity is accessible to people across all communities in Staffordshire. This includes engagement with programmes targeting young people, women in business, entrepreneurs from underrepresented communities, and businesses in rural or economically disadvantaged parts of the county. The organisation does not treat equality and inclusion as a box ticking exercise. The evidence from its news and activity record demonstrates that these commitments translate into real programming, real partnerships, and real support for people who might otherwise find the business support ecosystem inaccessible.

The community contribution made by Staffordshire Chambers of Commerce is substantial relative to its size. Its position as a convener of businesses means that many of its activities generate social value not just for the Chambers itself but for the wider community. Business networking events create commercial connections that sustain employment. Skills workshops equip people with capabilities that improve their economic prospects. Advocacy work on infrastructure, transport, and skills provision directly influences the quality of life available to residents across Staffordshire. The organisation's engagement with schools, colleges, and universities, connecting young people with business mentors, work experience opportunities, and careers guidance, represents a particularly meaningful area of social contribution that extends well beyond the organisation's membership base.

The organisation also plays an active role in civic life. It contributes to local economic strategy discussions, participates in regional governance structures relevant to economic development, and uses its voice and its platform to champion causes that benefit Staffordshire as a place to live and work as well as a place to do business. This civic function is a material component of its social ESG profile and is one of the reasons it achieves

the Level 5 classification.

## **Section 6: Governance and Accountability**

Governance is the dimension of ESG that tends to receive the least attention in assessments of smaller and medium sized organisations, yet it is often the most revealing. Strong governance does not require elaborate bureaucratic structures. It requires clarity about who is responsible for what, how decisions are made, how performance is monitored, and how accountability is maintained over time. On all of these measures, Staffordshire Chambers of Commerce presents a credible and proportionate governance position.

Responsibility for CSR and ESG matters within the organisation is held at leadership level. This is appropriate for an organisation of this scale and reflects a genuine understanding that responsible practice cannot be delegated entirely to a junior function. Senior leaders are actively involved in the direction of the organisation's community and social programmes, in the communication of its values externally, and in the decisions that shape its relationships with partners, funders, and member businesses. The governance framework is not overly complex, but it is functional and appropriately designed for a regional business support organisation.

The organisation operates with transparency as a core value. Its news and activity record is publicly maintained and regularly updated, providing any interested party with a contemporaneous view of what the organisation is doing, who it is working with, and what it stands for. This level of public accountability is notable and contrasts favourably with many organisations that make responsible practice claims without providing any mechanism for independent verification. The fact that Staffordshire Chambers of Commerce maintains a living, accessible record of its activities means that its CSR and ESG claims are continuously testable against observable reality.

The Chambers also benefits from its position within the British Chambers of Commerce accredited network, which imposes its own standards of conduct, financial management, and governance on member chambers. This external accountability framework provides an additional layer of assurance for procurement reviewers and due diligence assessors, over and above the specific requirements of the UKRBA accreditation process.

Policy documentation reviewed during the assessment covers the key areas expected of a responsible organisation at this level: environmental management, equalities and inclusion, health and safety, data protection, and procurement conduct. Policies are written in clear language, are proportionate to the operational reality of the organisation, and do not contain commitments that are not achievable within the organisation's scale and resources. This is a mark of genuine governance maturity. Overcommitment in policy documentation is a common failing and typically indicates that policies have been written for appearance rather than for implementation. No such concern arose in the assessment of Staffordshire Chambers of Commerce.

Review processes for policies and practices are embedded in the organisation's normal governance cycle. Responsibility for ensuring that policies remain current and that commitments are being delivered is held by named individuals within the leadership team, and there is evidence that this responsibility is exercised actively rather than nominally.

## **Section 7: CSR Diary, Verified Activity Record**

The CSR diary maintained through the news section of the Staffordshire Chambers of Commerce website represents one of the strongest elements of the evidence base underpinning this accreditation. It provides a rich, publicly accessible, and regularly updated record of the organisation's activities across social, environmental, and community dimensions. The entries reviewed during this assessment span an extended period and collectively paint a detailed picture of an organisation that is consistently active, genuinely engaged with its community, and

comfortable operating transparently in the public domain.

The following specific areas of activity were identified and verified through the CSR diary review.

The organisation has a sustained and active programme of business support events, workshops, and networking sessions that serve its membership and the wider Staffordshire business community. These events are documented consistently in the news record, with clear descriptions of purpose, audience, and outcomes. Events covering topics such as digital skills, export readiness, access to finance, legal compliance, and sustainability were all represented in the reviewed record, demonstrating a broad and responsive programme of support that addresses the real needs of businesses across a diverse membership.

Several entries in the news record relate to the organisation's engagement with skills and education, including activities connecting young people with businesses, supporting apprenticeship awareness, and participating in careers events at local schools and colleges. These activities reflect the organisation's understanding that its social responsibility extends beyond its membership to the future workforce of Staffordshire and the health of the regional skills pipeline.

The CSR diary also records the organisation's involvement in regional economic development initiatives, including its participation in events and consultations relating to Staffordshire's economic strategy, infrastructure investment, and the post pandemic recovery of the local economy. These entries demonstrate that the Chambers is not a passive participant in regional governance but an active, contributing voice in decisions that affect the prosperity and wellbeing of the county.

Entries relating to international trade and export support are also present in the diary record and are relevant to the organisation's governance and accountability profile. The provision of international trade advisory services requires the organisation to operate to high standards of accuracy, compliance, and professionalism, and the documented activity in this area indicates that these standards are maintained consistently.

Community and charity related entries appear throughout the diary record, reflecting the organisation's engagement with the voluntary and community sector. The Chambers regularly uses its platform to support charitable causes, highlight community initiatives, and encourage its member businesses to contribute to the social fabric of Staffordshire. This consistent pattern of community engagement, maintained over an extended period, is a significant marker of genuine social commitment.

The organisation's communications across the diary period are consistently professional in tone and transparent in content. There is no evidence of selective reporting or the omission of difficult topics. The diary record presents the organisation's activities honestly, including challenges, changes, and ongoing work, rather than offering a curated highlight reel. This transparency is both a governance strength and an indicator of organisational confidence.

Taken together, the CSR diary entries reviewed during this assessment provide compelling evidence of an organisation that is genuinely active, genuinely responsible, and genuinely committed to the communities it serves. The diary is not a