

# ETHICAL TRADING POLICY

Organisation: **Staffordshire Chambers of Commerce**

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## **1. Introduction**

Staffordshire Chambers of Commerce is committed to conducting all business activities in an ethical and responsible manner. As a membership organisation dedicated to supporting, connecting, and growing businesses across the Staffordshire region, we recognise that our reputation, credibility, and long term success depend upon maintaining the highest standards of ethical trading practice.

This Ethical Trading Policy sets out the principles and standards that guide our operations, our relationships with members, suppliers, and partners, and our contribution to the broader business community. The policy applies to all staff, contractors, volunteers, board members, and representatives of Staffordshire Chambers of Commerce.

Our commitment to ethical trading extends beyond our own operations. Through our advocacy work, professional training programmes such as the Chamber AI Academy, international trade documentation services, and business forums, we actively encourage and support member organisations to adopt ethical trading practices within their own supply chains and business activities.

This policy reflects our understanding that ethical trading is not merely a compliance obligation but a fundamental aspect of responsible business practice that protects workers,

supports fair competition, reduces environmental impact, and builds trust throughout the business community.

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## **2. Ethical Principles**

Staffordshire Chambers of Commerce is committed to the following core ethical principles:

### **2.1 Fair and Honest Dealing**

We conduct all business dealings with honesty, transparency, and integrity. In our role as a business support organisation, we provide accurate information, unbiased advice, and reliable services to our members. We do not engage in misleading marketing, false claims regarding our services, or deceptive practices in any aspect of our operations. All communications with members, suppliers, and stakeholders are clear, accurate, and truthful.

### **2.2 Respect for Human Rights and Labour Standards**

We are committed to respecting human rights and promoting fair labour standards. We expect all organisations with which we engage, including suppliers and service providers, to:

Comply with all applicable UK employment legislation, including the Employment Rights Act 1996, the Equality Act 2010, and the National Minimum Wage Act 1998.

Ensure that workers are treated with dignity and respect, regardless of age, gender, race, religion, disability, sexual orientation, or any other protected characteristic.

Prohibit forced labour, child labour, and exploitative working practices in all forms.

Respect the right of workers to freedom of association and collective bargaining where applicable.

Provide safe and healthy working conditions in compliance with the Health and Safety at Work etc. Act 1974.

Ensure that working hours are reasonable and comply with the Working Time Regulations 1998.

Pay workers at least the National Living Wage (or applicable minimum wage) and provide compensation that is fair and timely.

## **2.3 Environmental Responsibility**

We acknowledge that environmental protection is integral to ethical trading. In our operations and in our engagement with suppliers, we seek to:

Minimise waste and promote the efficient use of resources.

Reduce our carbon footprint and energy consumption where practical and feasible.

Encourage the use of recycled and sustainably sourced materials in our activities.

Comply with all applicable environmental legislation, including the Environmental Protection Act 1990 and relevant waste management regulations.

Support member organisations in understanding and addressing environmental impacts within their supply chains, particularly through our training and advocacy activities.

## **2.4 Prevention of Corruption and Bribery**

We are committed to preventing corruption, bribery, and financial impropriety in all forms. We comply fully with the Bribery Act 2010 and the Proceeds of Crime Act 2002. We do not engage in, tolerate, or facilitate:

Bribery or the offering of inappropriate gifts or inducements to public officials, customers, or business partners.

Corruption in procurement processes or in the awarding of contracts.

Money laundering or the receipt of funds from illegal sources.

Fraud, financial misrepresentation, or falsification of records.

All staff and representatives are trained to recognise and report suspected corruption. Members are encouraged to report any concerns to our senior management or designated ethics contact point.

## **2.5 Professional Competence and Service Quality**

As a business support organisation, we maintain high standards of professional competence across all our services, including international trade documentation, professional training, events and networking, and advocacy. We:

Employ suitably qualified and experienced staff, with ongoing professional development.

Deliver training and advisory services that are evidence based, current, and relevant to member needs.

Maintain clear records of qualifications and continuing professional development for staff delivering training and advisory services.

Respond to member feedback and continuously improve our services based on effectiveness and impact.

Operate fair and transparent pricing structures that represent good value for members.

## **2.6 Non Discrimination and Equality**

We are fully committed to equality of opportunity and the elimination of discrimination in all forms. In accordance with the Equality Act 2010, we:

Treat all members, staff, suppliers, and partners fairly, regardless of protected characteristics including age, disability, gender reassignment, marriage or civil partnership, pregnancy or maternity, race, religion or belief, sex, or sexual orientation.

Provide accessible services and remove barriers to participation in our events, training programmes, and forums.

Take proactive steps to ensure that our member support services reach across all communities and business sectors in Staffordshire.

Ensure that our recruitment, employment, and supplier selection processes are free from discrimination.

## **2.7 Transparency and Accountability**

We believe that transparency builds trust and credibility. We:

Maintain clear records of our operations, financial transactions, and business decisions.

Provide members with transparent information about our services, pricing, and governance.

Publish an annual report setting out our activities, impact, and financial position.

Respond openly to reasonable enquiries from members regarding our operations and decision making.

Ensure that decision making processes regarding supplier selection, service changes, and member support are fair, documented, and capable of being explained.

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### **3. Supplier Standards**

As an organisation purchasing goods and services from suppliers, Staffordshire Chambers of Commerce maintains the following standards:

#### **3.1 Supplier Selection and Engagement**

We select suppliers based on criteria that include ethical trading compliance in addition to quality, cost, and service reliability. Before entering into significant contracts or long term relationships, we:

Communicate our Ethical Trading Policy to potential suppliers and ensure that they are committed to complying with the standards set out herein.

Evaluate potential suppliers for evidence of ethical trading practices, including fair labour standards, health and safety compliance, and environmental responsibility.

Seek assurances that suppliers do not use child labour, forced labour, or other exploitative practices in their operations or supply chains.

Give preference, where practical, to suppliers who are certified against recognised ethical

trading standards or who demonstrate clear commitment to continuous improvement in ethical trading.

### **3.2 Supplier Code of Conduct**

We include ethical trading requirements in all supplier contracts. All suppliers must:

Comply with all applicable UK employment legislation and international labour standards.

Maintain safe and healthy working conditions and comply with Health and Safety at Work legislation.

Pay workers at least the National Living Wage and provide compensation that is fair and timely.

Not employ child labour or forced labour in any form.

Respect workers' rights to freedom of association and collective bargaining.

Comply with all applicable environmental legislation and seek to minimise environmental impact.

Not engage in corruption, bribery, or money laundering.

Maintain accurate records and permit auditing or monitoring of compliance with this code.

### **3.3 Monitoring and Compliance**

For suppliers delivering significant or ongoing services, we undertake proportionate monitoring to verify compliance with our ethical trading standards. This may include:

Requesting evidence of compliance with employment legislation, such as payroll records and staff contracts.

Assessing workplace conditions for contracted services delivered on our premises.

Reviewing environmental practices and waste management.

Conducting informal audits or site visits where appropriate and feasible.

Maintaining open communication with suppliers regarding any areas for improvement.

### **3.4 Supplier Concerns and Remediation**

Where we become aware that a supplier is not meeting the standards set out in this policy, we:

Raise the concern directly with the supplier and seek to understand the circumstances.

Work with the supplier to develop an action plan for improvement, with realistic timelines.

Provide support and guidance where appropriate to help the supplier achieve compliance.

Document all concerns and responses.

Where a supplier demonstrates unwillingness or inability to meet our standards, or where serious breaches occur, we reserve the right to terminate the business relationship.

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## **4. Review**

This Ethical Trading Policy will be reviewed annually, with the next formal review scheduled for 22/05/2027. The review will consider:

Changes to UK employment, environmental, and anti corruption legislation.

Feedback from staff, members, and suppliers regarding the policy's effectiveness.

Emerging ethical trading risks relevant to our sector and operations.

Best practice guidance from relevant business organisations and industry bodies.

Any concerns or incidents arising during the year that indicate a need for policy revision.

Updates to the policy will be communicated to all staff, board members, suppliers, and members, and a revised version will be published on our website.

For queries or concerns regarding this Ethical Trading Policy, staff and members should contact our senior management team in the first instance.

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