

# what's **your** footprint?

Virtually everything we do leaves a "footprint" on the lives of others, the community in which we live and work, and the environment that we share. This footprint is often negative (such as waste, carbon emissions) but can also be positive, for example creating employment or helping to provide investment in the local community.

Solihull has a thriving economic and social community encompassing the "independent" sector (private businesses), the state sector (local government, schools, hospitals) and the so-called "third sector", such as charities, social enterprises and voluntary groups.

Every organisation from each and every type of sector has a vital role to play in making sure that, individually and collectively, we leave the best possible footprint in the borough.

That is why Solihull Metropolitan Borough Council (SMBC) has created the "Solihull Footprint" to help highlight the role that Corporate Social Responsibility (CSR) can play in our community.

This leaflet gives you some outline information and will hopefully start you thinking about the footprint that your organisation makes in Solihull.

## community, environment, economy and education

Solihull Footprint is about linking you, as a business in Solihull, with the community in Solihull and, likewise, the community with your business.

It is about encouraging every organisation in the borough to start thinking about what they could do, be it in a large or small way, that could enhance the quality of life for everyone who lives, works or is educated in the area, and then doing something about it.

There are lots of different ways that this can be achieved. You will be surprised at the desire and willingness of the people within your organisation to do something to make a difference or to "put something back" into the community and the wider environment.



Solihull Council  
Council House  
Solihull  
B91 9QS

Tel 0121 704 6894  
Web [www.Solihull.gov.uk/csr](http://www.Solihull.gov.uk/csr)  
Email [economicdev@Solihull.gov.uk](mailto:economicdev@Solihull.gov.uk)



# footprint

taking social responsibility  
forward in solihull

## CSR in action

Corporate Social Responsibility or "CSR" is not just about donating to good causes.

It is about taking positive action to show an organisation has a responsible attitude to the people and environment on which it impacts.



It means businesses, whatever their size, playing their part in maximising the benefits of whatever they do within the community and minimising the negative aspects of their activities.

Recycling, tree planting schemes, providing work experience, allowing staff time off work to take part in local voluntary projects – are just some examples of CSR in action.

**social responsibility**  
stepping forward in solihull

## walking the talk

There are many areas where organisations in Solihull can make a difference - here are a few thoughts for starters...

### minimising wastage

Studies have shown that turning off unnecessary electric lights would reduce the average company's energy bill by up to 19%. It has also been estimated that the amount of waste paper buried in the UK each year would fill over 100,00 double decker buses.

Could your organisation make a big impact by making a little change?

### managing environmental impact

With the Stern Report highlighting the very real threat of flooding and permanent displacement as a result of global warming, no company can afford to ignore its environmental impact.

Is your organisation looking beyond regulatory compliance towards building environmental issues into its day to day operations and decision making?

### implementing a skills programme

According to the Department for Education and Skills the lack of basic skills in the workplace costs UK business £10 billion per year. By bringing an additional 3.5m people up to the basic level of achieving five or more GCSEs, employment levels could increase by 375,000 - 425,000 over the next 15 years.

What can you do locally to help narrow the skills gap?

### encouraging employee involvement

Many companies find that by supporting employee volunteering, they are sending a clear message that the business cares about its employees and its local community.

What are you doing at the moment to encourage or support your employees?

### addressing the needs of vulnerable customers

Not all customers or consumers are the same. Some, due to disability, ethnic origin or education for example, may experience greater difficulty than others in accessing the information they need on particular goods and services. Others are more at risk, either to impacts caused by a product or service or, under certain circumstances, to interruption in supply of the product or service.

Do you have any vulnerable customers that could be better served or protected?

### reducing barriers to work

Homelessness is a major problem throughout the UK and many homeless people face prejudice in the search for a job, which in turn leads to low self-confidence. Offering work experience helps people affected by homelessness to move away from dependence and towards long term employment.

Could your organisation help a homeless person become more independent?

### the power of partnerships

Businesses tend to make the greatest impact when they work in partnership with each other and with not-for-profit organisations, or local government, to improve neighbourhoods and tackle social problems.

Is there a partnership your organisation could work with to make a difference to a local scheme?

### addressing diversity in the workplace

Workplace equality promotes opportunity, fairness, trust and respect for all staff. Without equality, employers will be unable to tap successfully the diverse talents employees bring to work.

As an employer, are you doing all you can on this issue?

## benefits of being involved

There is a wealth of evidence to show that an organisation of any size can reap substantial benefits from taking an active approach to its wider social responsibility. Here are just some of the benefits:-

- Increased brand value, reputation and re-enforcement of company core values through investment in community projects;
- Access to skills they might not otherwise source - through offering flexible working and targeting under-represented sections of the community;
- Reduced operational costs through recycling and other sustainability schemes;
- Reduced negative environmental impact on the community;
- Healthier and more appropriately skilled employees;
- Profits from supplier relationships in developing sectors, for example computer and mobile phone recycling.

Everyone can get involved – your customers, your suppliers, your employees, your board – it is all about making the best possible footprint in Solihull.

## first steps

Even the longest journey starts with the first step. By visiting the SMBC website, you will find detailed information on how your organisation can play its part in taking social responsibility forward in Solihull. Visit [www.Solihull.gov.uk/csr](http://www.Solihull.gov.uk/csr) or call us on 0121 704 6894

