

# Corporate Social Responsibility Statement

CILEX (the professional association for Chartered Legal Executive Lawyers, Paralegals and other Legal Practitioners in England and Wales) is committed to ensuring that it considers the impact of the organisation on society, the environment and the economy, as well as our Employees, Senior Managers and the Board of Trustees, Volunteers, Agency Staff, Members and Students.

This Policy statement applies to all CILEX operations. The purpose of a Corporate Social Responsibility<sup>1</sup> programme is to positively contribute to all stakeholders, as well as adding value for the organisation itself and ensuring that it operates in a sustainable and ethical way.

## 1. Context

Corporate Social Responsibility has become increasingly important in the recent decades in the context of tackling environmental disasters and poor labour standards.<sup>2</sup> Keeping Corporate Social Responsibility at the heart of our organisation will garner trust and confidence amongst our Members and Stakeholders, which is crucial, as we move forward.

## 2. Responsibility

This Policy statement applies to all of our operations, including management, office services, delivery, and procurement. The Director of Business Transformation is responsible for ensuring that the Policy statement is implemented. It is the responsibility of the Executive Committee to ensure that rigorous processes are in place and where appropriate, that Employees are provided with relevant training. It is the responsibility of every Employee and Representative to make themselves familiar with this Policy and to ensure that the aims and objectives of the Policy statement are met.

CILEX is committed to:

- conducting every aspect of our business with honesty, accountability, and openness, respecting human rights and the interests of our Employees, Members and Stakeholders.
- respecting the legitimate interests of Stakeholders with whom we have dealings in the course of our business.
- maintaining the highest standards of integrity. For example, we will not promise more that we can reasonably deliver or make commitments that we cannot meet.

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<sup>1</sup> Corporate Social Responsibility is a type of international private business self-regulation that aims to contribute to societal goals of a philanthropic, activist or charitable nature by engaging in or supporting volunteering or ethically oriented practices. The term Corporate Social Responsibility (CSR) refers to practices and policies undertaken by corporations that are intended to have a positive influence on the world. The key idea behind CSR is for corporations to pursue other pro-social objectives, in addition to maximising profits. Examples of common CSR objectives include minimising environmental externalities, promoting volunteerism among company employees and donating to charity. Some organisations prefer to use the term ESG which stands for Environmental, Social and Governance and refers to the three factors when measuring the sustainability and ethical impact of an investment in a business or company.

<sup>2</sup> The United Nations Global Compact promotes ten principles of CR focused on human rights, labour, environment, and anti-corruption derived from the Universal Declaration of Human Rights, the International Labour Organisation's Declaration on Fundamental Principles and Rights at Work, the Rio Declaration on Environment and Development and the United Nations Convention Against Corruption.

- Acting in a socially and environmentally responsible manner and promoting sustainable development, where possible.

Our focus areas are:

- To consider the environmental impacts of our business and to continually reduce the environmental impact through our sourcing of supplies.
- To integrate sustainability considerations into our business decisions.
- To ensure that all staff are fully aware of our sustainability commitment and are committed to implementing and improving it.
- To comply with and exceed where practicable, all applicable legislation, regulations, and codes of practice.
- Engagement with Members and Staff and reacting in a positive and proactive manner.
- Investing for the long term through assessment, training, and development.
- Acting as a responsible Employer.
- Maintaining effective Health and Safety Management Systems.
- Working towards eventually gaining ISO accreditation, in relation to Quality Management (ISO 9001) and Environmental Management Systems (ISO 14001).

### **3. What is CILEX currently doing to show its dedication to Corporate Social Responsibility?**

#### Supporting the CILEX Foundation charity

The CILEX Foundation is an independent registered Charity representing members of the Chartered Institute of Legal Executives (CILEX). Through our support of the CILEX Foundation, we share their aim to support aspiring and experienced CILEX Lawyers to achieve their full potential. This can be through support with their academic journey, help, if they face unexpected hardship, which might otherwise interrupt their work or studies and encouraging the broadening of their career development opportunities.

#### CILEX Pro Bono

We actively encourage all CILEX Professionals and other Legal Professionals to participate with Pro Bono legal services, where possible and to facilitate this, we have promoted the events throughout National Pro Bono Weeks that are held annually. These events encourage CILEX members with an interest in Pro Bono work to network and engage with other like-minded professionals across the sector.

#### Equality, Diversity & Inclusion

At CILEX, we are passionate about fair and equal treatment, and we believe that everyone should have the opportunity to fulfil their potential, our Members, our Staff, and our Stakeholders.

The legal profession has a responsibility to ensure that all are equal under the law, that everyone in our society has access to justice and that there is no place for prejudice of any kind. We adhere to the Equality Act 2010.

CILEX has a diverse Membership<sup>3</sup> enabled by our learning delivery that creates outstanding Legal Professionals, but we recognise that we must and want to do more.

Particularly, we have reflected that we have a duty to be more assertive on issues about Equality, Diversity and Inclusion and to do all we can to identify, challenge and fight discrimination for and on behalf of our Members.

As such, we commit to the following actions:

- CILEX will consult its Membership on a regular basis to hear differing perspectives from all our Members, who may face discrimination and prejudice in the workplace. In particular, this work will allow us to understand how issues may be disproportionately affecting groups within our Membership and to specifically measure the impact of barriers to inclusion affecting our ethnic minority members.
- CILEX supports an annual Scholarship and Bursary Programme aimed at encouraging enrolment onto the CILEX Professional Qualification (CPQ) from people who face social mobility and financial barriers to achieve their potential, reinforcing our commitment of promoting inclusivity and accessibility to the law, wherever and however it presents itself. We work with the charity The CILEX Foundation, who administer the CILEX Lawyer Scholarship and Bursary Programmes.

## Wellbeing

Social value is a key driver for business and considers things like happiness, health, wellbeing, and empowerment. This concept goes way beyond Corporate Social Responsibility, as it drives the core business rather than complimenting it, as a rudimentary element.

There are various services and benefits available to CILEX Members and Staff with a great emphasis placed on wellbeing and mental health, including:

- Access to Law Care - a free confidential advisory service offering information and support to those with mental health and wellbeing problems.
- Specialist Reference Groups - CILEX operates a series of virtual specialist reference groups to assist us in representing our members' interests. These groups are free for members to join and cover both protected characteristics and various practice areas.
- PayPlan - through partnership with the CILEX Foundation charity, members, their families and CILEX staff can access free, regulated money, budgeting, and debt advice from specialist advisors. Confidential advice can be offered online/digitally and is available around the clock, ensuring that it meets accessibility needs of our members.

## 4. New Ways of Working into the Future

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<sup>3</sup> As of the end of 2023, of members who provided their gender information to CILEX 76% are female, of members who provided their ethnicity information to CILEX 16% are from an ethnic minority background and of members who provided their sexual orientation information to CILEX 4% identify as LGBTQA+”

CILEX has taken the opportunity to reflect on how our working environments will change for the future.

The outcome of this reflection includes:

- A permanent move to remote working: This brings potential long-term benefits, like the opportunity for greater flexibility, autonomy and work/life balance for Employees and an increase in talent mobility, as a result of nationwide recruitment.
- Remote working removes the necessity for the daily commute and attending meetings in person, which in turn helps to reduce fuel consumption and greenhouse gas emissions, improves air quality, and contributes to the government’s Clean Air Strategy 2019 (Clean Air Strategy 2019 - GOV.UK ([www.gov.uk](http://www.gov.uk))).
- An improvement in sustainability, due to reduction in paper, plastic, energy and water consumption and other office consumables. By enabling Employees to work remotely, CILEX has reduced the use of everything from printer paper to the use of plastic. Remote workers typically create less waste during their workday preferring to use email, digital tools for messaging and online video conferencing for both internal and external meetings. Documents are also transferred electronically cutting down on the requirement for printing. There are also options for electronic notetaking such as using MS OneNote (instead of using paper or notebooks) and MS Stream, in conjunction with MS Teams that can be used to produce an electronic copy of a recorded meeting transcript.
- IT asset recycling and disposal (EU WEEE Directive and ISO 14001) means that all computer screens, CPUs, and laptops are securely recycled and that all hard drives are wiped via a third-party service provider.
- A focus on Health and Wellbeing: Health, Safety and Wellbeing continue to be important to CILEX. New working practices have resulted in updated Health and Safety Procedures. This has also highlighted the need to focus on mental wellbeing, which CILEX is very active in promoting and nurturing with a variety of additional internal initiatives, including the availability of Virtual GP’s, regular check-ins regarding wellbeing, Mental Health Champions/First Aiders and a Stress and Wellbeing Policy.

## 7. Useful Contacts:

Business in the Community - [www.bitc.org.uk](http://www.bitc.org.uk)

[Institute of Corporate Responsibility & Sustainability | ICRS](#)

Institute of Business Ethics - [www.ibe.org.uk](http://www.ibe.org.uk)

Mind - [www.mind.org.uk](http://www.mind.org.uk)

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