

# Our Social Contract



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# 1 Introduction

At Oaklin, we take our corporate social responsibility seriously; it is a discretionary set of activities that we choose to undertake, but in doing so we seek to acknowledge our fortunate position in society and in turn we feel a social conviction to play our part in our local community and in the global community in which our business works.

Whether it is running in the mud to raise awareness for mental health initiatives, promoting gender and economic equality or striving to be a carbon neutral business, we are extremely proud of the CSR work we do.

Our community and social contributions are guided by a set of principles we believe will generate the best outcome for our CSR partners and for us as a team. Our policy is based on the need for our community and social contributions to meet the following principles:

- Any work we do must genuinely add value and be sustainable
- It must build meaningful and sustainable relationships that are based around trust and shared values
- It must foster inclusivity; having a CSR agenda that everyone feels they can get involved in and be part of
- Our CSR efforts must bring us closer together as an organisation. The whole is greater than the sum of its parts and every contribution should be something the whole Oaklin team understands and can be proud of.

Through this Social Contract, we aspire to go above and beyond the requirements set out under the Public Services (Social Value) Act 2012 – which requires businesses to merely consider their social impact. Through our social contract, and multi-lateral relationships with our supplier and client ecosystems, we are proud to demonstrate how our social values and initiatives are deeply embedded in everyday activities within Oaklin.

# 2 Financial Stewardship

At Oaklin, we take our social contract seriously, and strive to make a positive impact to society. We aim to do this across a number of different social and operational initiatives:

## 2.1 Ethical Investing

We are committed to providing employees robust pension investment options that deliver strong returns while promoting a sustainable future. We match employee pension scheme contributions up to 12% (6% employee/6% employer) and offer a range of investment approaches that equip employees to tailor their financial profile to achieve personal goals.

From day 1, new employee pension contributions are directed by default to Oaklin's Stewardship Fund. First introduced in 1984, the Stewardship Fund has a proud heritage as part of the UK's first ethical fund range. The Stewardship investment approach follows to a three-layer qualification process:

- exclude companies that do not meet certain ethical standards or that harm society or the environment;
- support companies that make a positive contribution to society;
- encourage better environmental, social and governance (ESG) business practices through shared ownership and dialogue.

## 2.2 Prompt Payments

At Oaklin, we have made a commitment to pay all of our invoices within 60 days. In practice this means:

- Treating all our suppliers equally and fairly
- Paying our suppliers within the terms agreed at the outset of the contract, without attempting to change payment terms retrospectively and without changing practice on length of payment for smaller companies on unreasonable grounds
- Providing clear guidance to suppliers on payment procedures
- Ensuring there is a system for dealing with complaints and disputes which is communicated to suppliers
- Advising suppliers promptly if there is any reason why an invoice will not be paid to the agreed terms.
- By requesting that lead suppliers encourage adoption of the code throughout their own supply chains.

## 2.3 Practicing Fair Tax

At Oaklin, we take our tax responsibilities very seriously. We acknowledge the role this has for the society within which we operate; it contributes to vital public services from welfare to health, education to maintaining roads and highways and so on. Our principles for paying tax include:

- Obtaining expert consultancy from our accounting partners to ensure compliance to tax codes
- Paying the right amount of tax, at the right time, in the right place
- Regularly reviewing tax legislation and ensuring our tax practices are compatible with regulations.

## 2.4 Real Living Wage

At Oaklin, we believe all of our staff deserve a wage that meets their everyday needs. As a London-based employer, we are proud to confirm that all of our current and future employees will always receive a wage that is greater than the London Living Wage.

## 2.5 Give As You Earn (GAYE)

Oaklin provides an optional opportunity for employees to donate a percentage of their salary to the selected charity for that year.

- It is designed to be an easy way to donate (taken out of your salary before tax).
- It saves the charity administration time as they don't have to claim gift aid.
- It provides charities with a regular income – to allow them to plan ahead and budget for the future.

# 3 Charity Partnership: Young Minds

The Oaklin team voted to choose a not for profit cause to in the form of YoungMinds. Our relationship with YoungMinds has developed over the years, giving Oaklin the chance both to contribute to the operation of the organisation, as well as to raise money for the causes they champion, in particular placing emphasis on young people's mental health.

The relationship with Young Minds has also contributed to Oaklin's commitments to staff mental health and wellbeing in the workplace.

In order to support YoungMinds, we have set out the following set of actions:

- The CSR team will set an annual plan each year to determine the best way to work with YoungMinds through a combination of fund raising activities, pro-bono consulting, skills workshops etc.
- Each year the CSR team will also review whether there are other causes or events that Oaklin should support.
- Oaklin & YoungMinds will meet on a monthly basis to explore opportunities for Oaklin to provide support, as well as understanding the impact the charity is making.
- Oaklin Partners act as final governance body of the level of Oaklin engagement (to minimise impact on BAU activities).
- We have launched Scooch at Oaklin that encourages staff to move enough in their everyday lives to keep healthy. As we move, Oaklin is committed to donating funds on a monthly basis to a number of charities, including YoungMinds.

We are very proud of our relationship with YoungMinds, and our collective impact to society. This has been echoed by YoungMinds:

*“Oaklin have also supported our work last year to review our training and consultancy offer. Over a six-month time frame, they contributed strategically, bringing fresh and commercial thinking to our work and operationally, providing rich data analysis and spotting new market opportunities. It was extremely useful to have the Oaklin team alongside us at every stage of the project, different members of their team helped at each stage, bringing different skill sets and insight depending on our needs. All were super smart, hardworking and professional. We felt very lucky to have their support and it made a real difference to the quality of our work.” – Roxane Caplan, Head of Service Development*

# 4 Covid-19 Recovery

The pandemic has had a significant impact on our community, from healthcare to the economy, there are a few that have not been impacted. We, at Oaklin, take our role in society seriously, and established a series of affirmative actions to help our employees, clients and partners get through these unprecedented times.

## 4.1 Supporting employees

Our employees are the heartbeat of our business and ensuring their mental and physical wellbeing was our number one priority. Offering a workplace that employees felt safe working in during the pandemic was paramount:

- We made remote working the norm during this time, ensuring everyone has the opportunity to work remotely should they wish to do so.
- We have made the office available, as not everyone has optimal working conditions at home, and some would come under undue mental stress in doing so.
- In making the office available, we have ensured access to hand sanitisation, Perspex dividers between desks, daily temperature checks, one-way systems and signposted seating arrangements in the office and meeting rooms, maintaining a 2m distance.
- We have established bi-weekly leadership drop-in sessions for employees to raise any concerns, whilst also ensuring effective 1-2-1 counselling between employees and their career partners.
- We have enhanced our 'Wellbeing' support package available to employees that includes telephone counselling.

## 4.2 Supporting businesses

As the pandemic struck, many of our clients still had to pursue their key priorities, whilst having significantly less money available to do so. This required affirmative action:

- As a relationship-based business, we understood the position our clients were in, and agreed to provide consulting services at reduced fees to ensure our clients could maintain operational continuity.
- We established digital ways of working at our clients, through implementations of Microsoft Teams, SharePoint Online amongst others to introduce new ways of working (virtually) whilst maintaining productivity.

## 4.3 Supporting our partners

- We raised valuable funds for our charity partners YoungMinds, through fundraising activities that enabled mental health specialists to expand their reach.
- We provided (and continue to do so) not for profit consultancy services to Young Minds to ensure they are able to benefit from our expertise to maintain operations and maximise efficiencies to deliver their vital mental health services.

# 5 Fighting Climate Change

Oaklin has made a policy decision to be a carbon neutral business.

Oaklin's carbon offset practices have been recognised by the Carbon Footprint standard. The scheme aims to drive lower energy consumption and reduce negative externalities through contemporary practices such as the 'paperless office'.

Through offsetting, we support avoidance measures and clean/renewable energy generation projects around the world. Oaklin's active mitigation of climate change and minimisation of waste reflects the Government 25-year environmental plan with the aim of combating climate change and sustaining the environment for future generations.

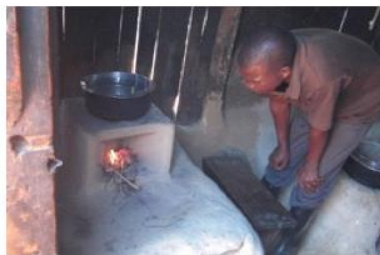
- Oaklin offsets its carbon emissions on an annual basis.
- Carbon offset practices will be through measures recognised by the Carbon Footprint standard.
- Through offsetting, Oaklin chooses to support avoidance measures and clean/renewable energy generation projects around the world.
- Oaklin's active mitigation of climate change and minimisation of waste reflects the Government 25-year environmental plan with the aim of combating climate change and sustaining the environment for future generations.





As part of our efforts to fight climate change, we are proud to support Select Certified Emission Reductions, whereby our carbon offsetting will be used to support the following communities and projects:

### Efficient Cookstove Project Kenya



- ▮ Type: Household Cookstove
- ▮ Location: Kenya, Africa
- ▮ Standard: CER
- ▮ Reference: CDM 5336
- ▮ Est. Reductions: 17,970 tCO<sub>2</sub>e per year

[More Information](#)

### Jilin Zhenlai Mali Wind Farm Project



- ▮ Type: Wind Power
- ▮ Location: China, Asia
- ▮ Standard: Gold Standard CER
- ▮ Reference: CDM 3114 / GS 678
- ▮ Est. Reductions: 110,000 tCO<sub>2</sub>e per year

[More Information](#)

### NorthWind Bangui Bay Project



- ▮ Type: Wind Power
- ▮ Location: Philippines, Asia
- ▮ Standard: CER
- ▮ Reference: CDM 453
- ▮ Est. Reductions: 56,788 tCO<sub>2</sub>e per year

[More information](#)

## Feature Project: Efficient Cookstove Project Kenya

More than 80% of Kenyan households rely on biomass (e.g. wood & charcoal) for energy; it is mainly used for cooking and occasionally for space and water heating. Wood and charcoal are obtained almost exclusively from the forest (90%), which is a key driver of deforestation in Kenya. The impact of deforestation is widespread, affecting the livelihoods of local people – mainly the rural poor - where it disrupts important environmental functions, such as water and soil nutrient retention.

- In Kenya, cooking is traditionally carried out indoors on thermally inefficient 3-stone fires, which results in incomplete combustion and the production of large amounts of smoke and indoor air pollution. Indoor air pollution has been linked to a range of health problems such as acute respiratory infections (ARI) in children, chronic obstructive lung diseases (such as chronic bronchitis and asthma), lung cancer and neonatal complications.
- The Cookstoves are distributed at no cost to the stove owners, who live in rural areas with considerable levels of poverty and would otherwise be unable to afford them.

### 5.1 Social and Sustainability Benefits

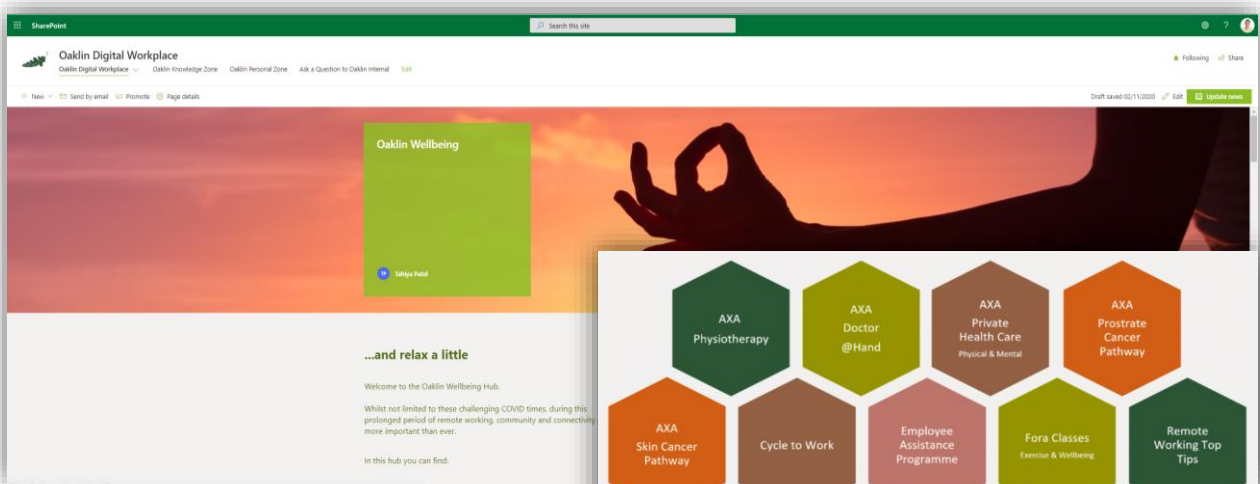
- Reduction in emission of Greenhouse Gases
- Avoidance of deforestation – also preventing soil erosion & nutrient loss and risk of flooding
- Protection from lung diseases & lung cancer
- Protection from neonatal complications
- Reduced burns and injuries (from exposure to an open fire)
- Number of families reached: 19,674
- Number of people positively impacted: 96,402

# 6 Wellbeing

Not only do Oaklin focus on Wellbeing of Children, through YoungMinds, but we're also very proud of our active employee wellbeing programme. Wellbeing of our workforce is central to our people management and we aim to build our resilience to cope better in times of poor mental health and provide support services in times of struggle. We offer a comprehensive range of mental health and emotional wellbeing services.

We understand the importance of maintaining our physical health (offering a weekly morning workout session run by one of our consultants as well as a Cycle to Work Scheme) and in the same way, we're aware of the importance of good mental health. Working to enhance and maintain our mental health and emotional resilience can better position our people to reach their full potential and play full part in their relationships, workplace and community.

There has been a special focus on wellbeing through COVID-19, given the extra strain this pandemic can have on our health, both physical and mental. Our theme throughout has been to 'Keep Connected'. We use an application called [Donut](#) to randomly connect two people in the organisation on a monthly basis. The idea is they grab a virtual donut, snack or coffee and catch up. We run a fortnightly leadership drop-in, whereby employees have a chance to speak to the



Wellbeing site on our intranet

Oaklin Wellbeing Offering

Leadership Team about any topics they desire, not restricted to work. We have a monthly social, which has been virtual of late. This has included: cocktail (and mocktail) making, cooking classes, murder mysteries, art lessons and many more. Finally, we also have a weekly newsletter to let everyone know what is going on across the firm. See the images below for a preview of our Wellbeing Intranet page and also Oaklin's wellbeing offering, which is hosted on the intranet. It provides external self-help resources, various applications, an *Employment Assistance Programme*, and much more. No matter what level of assistance is required, there is a service to help us keep connected.

# Inclusion & Diversity

We believe that diversity should be celebrated. At Oaklin, we understand the challenges of being a minority in the workplace and we ensure that differences are welcomed, accommodated, and not hidden away.

We are aware that businesses often profess to embrace diversity but fail to act in a manner that brings about a meaningful difference. At Oaklin we strive to bring our viewpoint on Inclusion & Diversity to life through our culture and importantly, our actions.

## 6.1 Ways We Are Inclusive

*Everyone is welcome at Oaklin and takes pride in how they contribute to its success; we value inclusion and equality as much as we do different ideas and perspectives. We harness the range of views and backgrounds to be found within Oaklin for the good of our clients and of each other. - Oaklin's INCLUSIVE value*

To help each person live this value, we have identified ways that each of us can be more inclusive throughout all the ways we interact with each other. These fall into two main themes of behaviour: what we say and what do.

### **We are mindful of what we say**

## 6.2 Verbal language

- Using welcoming and non-combative language during meetings to encourage everyone to share their perspectives.
- Being attentive when others are speaking, removing distractions where we can and waiting for others to finish their thought before we begin.
- Leaving space for questions and replies.
- We are aware of all the different personalities of people in our meetings and make space for quieter people to speak.
- Understanding that everyone has challenges in their personal life that we may not be aware of – we are kind.

## 6.3 Written language

We review the language we use in emails because we know that the tone of our language is important. We recognise the importance of:

- Getting the recipient's name right.
- Using the right pronoun – if we aren't sure, we ask (also relevant for verbal communication).
- Writing with simple, unambiguous language.

## **We are mindful of what we do**

We create an open, inviting culture by:

- Taking advantage of monthly catch ups to speak with people outside of our projects.
- Using Teams, Slack, email, and phone to stay connected with colleagues, encouraging video when appropriate.
- Planning a broad spectrum of social events e.g. some people may not be comfortable with physically demanding activities, events planned around alcohol, etc.
- Considering commitments which may make certain meeting times difficult e.g. childcare and during the school run, at the same time as an early exercise class etc.
- Being welcoming in the office – a smile and a hello can change someone's day.
- Being welcoming to new joiners and offering to help them settle in or answer any questions they feel embarrassed to ask.
- Not making assumptions about how someone spends their personal time. Ask open questions about a person's interests or weekend pursuits that allows them to answer as they wish.

## **6.4 Diversity of Thought**

Everyone at Oaklin has a unique and interesting range of experiences and backgrounds. People join us to do great work and one of the ways we achieve this is through the diversity of thought that we employ as a firm, gained from the diversity of experiences among our employees. Inclusion & Diversity is as important to us as it is to our clients and we know that by ensuring we have an inclusive and diverse workplace, we are doing the right thing by our employees and by our clients.

## **6.5 Our Structure**

Our flat structure enables us to work as a team without hierarchal boundaries. All ideas are welcome and encouraged. If anyone has an idea for a business growth initiative, they are free to work on it, no matter what their role is in the firm.

*“Oaklin is my first full time place of work. As I entered an environment where my colleagues are predominantly far more experienced than me, it would have been easy for more senior members to create a hierarchical structure where junior team members are seen but not heard. Oaklin's meritocratic culture, however, meant that I was treated with respect from day one. I feel just as comfortable talking to a member of the Leadership Team as I do to one of my fellow graduate Analysts.”*

**Christian Hill, Business Support Analyst**

For more information on our I&D viewpoint, please visit our [\*\*website\*\*](#)

## 7 Equal Opportunity

Oaklin is a proud equal opportunities employer, as set out by the The Equality Act 2010 whereby:

- We are committed to promoting equality of opportunity for all our people and job applicants. We have created a working environment in which all individuals can make best use of their skills, free from discrimination or harassment, and in which all decisions are based on merit.
- We do not discriminate against staff on the basis of age, disability, gender reassignment, marital or civil partner status, pregnancy or maternity, race, colour, nationality, ethnic or national origin, religion or belief, sex or sexual orientation.
- The principles of non-discrimination and equality of opportunity also apply to the way which we treat visitors, clients, customers, suppliers and former staff members.
- All of our people have a duty to act in accordance with this policy and treat colleagues with dignity at all times, and not to discriminate against or harass other members of staff, regardless of their status.

## 8 Our Policies

We are governed by a set of internal policy and procedures that are reviewed and refreshed on an annual basis, these cover a range of policies that enable our social contract, they include (but not limited to):

- Equal Opportunities Policy
- Anti-Harassment and Bullying Policy
- Anti-Bribery and Corruption Policy
- Anti-Discrimination Policy
- Whistleblowing Policy
- Anti-Slavery and Human Trafficking Policy