

Procurement in FM and the path to social value

2 years ago



For FM service providers, there is a growing responsibility to find the practical ways we, as an industry, can positively feed into the communities we're part of. Adopting a strategy that champions social value through working with local businesses to create a diverse chain of local suppliers, where possible, carries a spectrum of benefits like building support for SMEs and boosting local economies and communities.

Alongside a boost to your social value credentials with a tangible commitment, procuring services and products locally can impact an organisation's carbon reduction strategy too. [Anabas](#) tracks suppliers' social value credentials. It recognises the value in understanding suppliers' carbon trails for example, and how they impact us, as well as suppliers' own social value promises and how they align with Anabas'. This helps the company to make well informed decisions of who to work with.

Identify aligned suppliers

The greatest challenge is identifying the suppliers whose social values align with your own because a partnership with them will reflect a shared perspective for positive change. The uncomfortable truth is simply that many of them may talk the talk, but when it matters, they fail to walk the walk. The key to selecting a suitable partner often rests in taking the time to cut through the marketing messages and interrogate if these policies are being delivered on. This often means asking the right questions, to the right people to examine whether the values that your organisation believes in are reflected in those of the supplier.

Globally, we're all in the race to Net Zero, so the entire workforce should be supported to engage with doing good for the planet. A shiny logo on cleverly worded marketing collateral simply doesn't cut it any

longer, so finding ways that individuals at every level of the organisation can contribute, will impact the team as well as the wider organisation.

Share success stories

Anabas considers its work with the [Circle Collective](#), a social enterprise that helps disadvantaged young people gain permanent life-changing work, a success story. Through this partnership, it has offered eight young people permanent roles at Anabas after their work experience placements ended. The programme has seen these individuals continue to grow within their roles, changing the course of their future. Anabas also runs awareness days where it talks to groups of young people who are working with the charity about the benefits of choosing FM as a career.

In terms of employment, FM can be a leading player in the development of social value at client organisations. Creating job opportunities and holding local recruitment drives to bring local people into client sites are key to creating social value in employment.

Getting everyone involved

Your team should be engaged in regular training and learning opportunities. Engaging individuals and helping to develop their skills further, and to encourage progression in the industry is important. But ensure training is not exclusively FM-related. Expanding your team's development both professionally and personally is a more enriching experience.

As an industry, FM is brimming with opportunities to develop social value initiatives. This goes for FM service providers within their own teams as well as their clients. Getting clients on board with your company's social values and working together to create the best outcomes will ensure both businesses and communities are looked after. By setting the right example and being consistent, suppliers can be inspired to follow suit.

Be the change

Of course, encouraging your staff and supporting them to live up to your organisation's social value ambitions is important but making sure key team members are engaging with these such initiatives is critical. Providing careers talks, apprenticeship schemes, mentoring, and introducing wellbeing programmes are only an effective social value principle if they are being used. When teams truly engage with these activities, the results of such investments will shine. Anabas has introduced a [employee experience manager](#) role with the focused purpose of getting our team members to engage with our initiatives.

Ensuring robust environmental policies are in place and being taken seriously has the potential to catalyse great change in social value ambitions. Positive sustainability measures and looking after the environment has never been more important. As FMs, it is our responsibility to guide change – within ourselves and our supply chain – and ensure the right initiatives are in place with realistic targets.