

Social Value Delivery Plan – Islington SD-WAN Contract Renewal

How each commitment will be managed, resourced, and delivered - All social value (SV) commitments will be monitored and managed through to delivery by our in-house SV team.

Upon commencement of the contract, the team will schedule an SV kick-off session with relevant stakeholders from within Virgin Media O2 and London Borough of Islington (the Council). For us this will include different members across the wider SV team, including our SV Lead, Digital Inclusion Programme Lead and Future Careers team who support apprenticeships and work placements. We typically work with a variety of areas, from Employment and Skills, Digital Inclusion, Community and Neighbourhood teams to Health and Wellbeing, and even Housing Support teams. It will be preferable if the Council nominates their own SV Lead to ensure we collaborate and monitor commitments effectively.

We will use the kick-off meeting to discuss all the contractual commitments in more detail, including expected delivery timelines, latest updates, and the key resources from both parties that will be required to support the successful delivery of the SV commitments.

Reporting on progress of commitments – Our SV Lead will provide quarterly updates on all SV commitments to the assigned contract manager / SV Lead at the Council; the frequency of updates may alter where requested by the Council.

Internal processes in the event there are delivery issues - If there are any unforeseen issues with an SV commitment, the Council will be notified and informed by our SV Lead as to how and when we will rectify this. If any unforeseen issues with SV delivery will be escalated by VMO2's SV Lead to the Head of Public Sector Strategy who is a senior sponsor for social value delivery.

Should we fail to deliver a commitment, we will work collaboratively with the Council to mutually agree upon a new SV outcome that will be a suitable alternative. The final decision on whether alternative SV is suitable will rest with the Council.

Experience delivering social value with our other customers – We work with a multitude of public sector customers to deliver SV. For previous examples where we have successfully delivered a large-scale S programme with councils, please visit our dedicated social value page: [Social value | Sustainability | Virgin Media O2 Business](#)

Initiatives to help support skills and employment opportunities within the London Borough of Islington.

Social Value Commitment (1): Apprentice levy to upskill small businesses and charities.

Virgin Media O2 operates an award-winning apprenticeship scheme, enrolling more than 2,600 apprentices since 2008. Today we run 60+ bespoke schemes with over 400 learners across our programmes. Our scheme offers existing employees the opportunity to upskill when required, with half of our apprenticeship programmes giving individuals a qualification equivalent to a foundation degree, as well as access to industry-specific qualifications such as CIMA, CCNA, and CIPD.

Apprentice Levy transfer: As a levy-paying employer, we will support the training needs of Islington-based SMEs and / or charities by donating **£20,000** apprentice levy through the delivery of this contract. For example, should local organisation(s) wish to increase in-house IT skills to future-proof their business, the levy could fund 2 x L3 Advanced IT Solutions Technician apprenticeships. These courses are typically 24-months in duration and will include qualifications upon successful completion.

How the commitment will be managed and delivered: Our SV Lead and Future Careers team will work with you to establish which local organisations may wish to receive the

apprentice levy. We can work with third parties to facilitate this transfer, such as a local Levy Transfer Network to socialise the offering amongst local businesses requiring support.

Once we have identified and approved local employers, an agreed payment for training the apprenticeship(s) will be scheduled monthly over the apprenticeship qualification duration (e.g., if it's a 2-year apprenticeship, the employer will receive 24 monthly payments). Once registered on the government's 'Digital Apprenticeship Service' (DAS) platform, the benefitting businesses will then need to request the agreed levy transfer. Once this has been done, we will receive a notification of this request which will then be approved by our Head of Future Careers via Virgin Media O2's DAS account.

Timelines: Once employers and apprenticeship opportunities have been identified, payments will be scheduled monthly over the qualification duration. We will therefore deliver this S commitment over the length of the apprenticeship(s); this will likely be between 24-36 months.

Previous experience delivering this commitment: Virgin Media O2 currently pay around **£2.5m** every year through the Apprenticeship Levy and have spent c.55% of the levy to date on apprenticeships (versus a UK average of 39%). Please see the following case study to learn how we worked with Lancashire County Council to fund four new health and social care apprenticeships: [Delivering social value for the Lancashire County Council | Virgin Media O2 Business](#)

Initiatives to help support strong integrated communities within London Borough of Islington.

In October 2022, we launched a new digital skills training programme, '[Connect More](#)', to help tackle the digital divide. The programme leverages our heritage in the digital skills space with the strong partnerships we have with public sector organisations all over the UK. A fundamental pillar of the [Connect More Programme](#) is the importance of training – providing the digitally excluded with skills, confidence, and motivation to use digital technology and make the most of being online.

Social Value Commitment (2): Employee volunteering to reduce social isolation and increase digital skills throughout the community

Connect More gives our employees an opportunity to use five paid volunteering days per year to deliver digital skills training through local authority and third sector drop-in centres across the UK. All volunteers on the programme have undergone training with our partner, Digital Unite. During the initial contract term, we will deliver additional social benefits to the community by working collaboratively with local community organisations and the Council to support **6 x digital inclusion pop-up events**.

How the commitment will be managed and delivered: Our Digital Inclusion Programme Manager will work with relevant teams to develop the digital inclusion sessions and identify existing programmes that would benefit from this support. For example, our volunteers could volunteer at the Maya Centre, a registered charity that provides free mental health and wellbeing services to women on low incomes. Many attendees are digitally excluded and may benefit from sessions providing the skills and confidence needed to navigate the online world. Alternatively, we partner with Disability Action in Islington to help bridge the digital barrier for disabled individuals in the community.

These events will include basic digital skills training delivered by local Virgin Media O2 employees to support residents, as well as signposting all Virgin Media O2 digital inclusion support. This may include, but not be limited to: how to sign up to our [Essential Broadband \(EB\) tariff](#); how to become part of the online centre network to receive free SIMS via the [National Databank](#), established with the Good Things Foundation; where to find the nearest

online centres. We've also conducted digital inclusion sessions with a specific focus on helping individuals navigate the NHS App.

This commitment will be delivered by our SV Lead and Digital Inclusion Programme Manager who is directly responsible for the Connect More volunteering programme. Our Digital Inclusion programme manager will provide the SV Lead with regular updates as and when the sessions have been delivered, including the impact they have had within the community to address digital exclusion.

Previous experience delivering this commitment: As part of our SV commitments, we are delivering digital skills support throughout the UK. This includes London, as well as other areas such as Falkirk and Greater Manchester. As of February 2024, Virgin Media O2 Business employees have spent over 690 hours volunteering and we've supported more than 900 individuals with digital skills and confidence. Please see the following article to learn about the community impact Connect More has recently had in Reading: [Virgin Media O2 Business 'Connect More' programme volunteers help to close digital skills gap in Reading - Virgin Media O2](#)

What social value benefits will the supplier deliver to help fight climate change within the London Borough of Islington.

In December 2022, Virgin Media O2 became the first telecommunications company in the world to be awarded the Carbon Trust's new Route to Net Zero Standard, at Advancing level. This is awarded to companies that demonstrate rigorous plans to cut carbon and to achieve net zero across its full value chain. As an organisation, we are set to become net zero across our full value chain by 2040.

Social Value Commitment (3): Providing annual contract-specific carbon footprint to contribute to the Council's net zero ambition

As signatories of the RE100 initiative, Virgin Media O2 uses green electricity wherever it controls the bill. Where we do not control the bill on third-party sites, we have decided to take more responsibility than we are required under the GHG Protocol by including brown electricity emissions in our scope 2 emissions, rather than scope 3. We are currently delivering a Mast Decarbonisation Project to drive the landlords of these third-party sites to source green electricity and have decarbonised 1,128 masts as of January 2024.

This activity will deliver scope 2 market-based electricity emissions reductions (based on a reduction in non-renewable electricity consumption) to contribute to a reduction in the product footprint in line with our net zero targets. Additionally, as we reduce our kWh consumption per terabyte through network efficiency projects, we expect to see a reduction in the product footprint and energy usage associated with this contract.

Virgin Media O2 has recently developed the capability to provide contract-level carbon footprints for specific B2B services which has now been validated by the Carbon Trust as an independent third party.

The approach captures carbon emissions derived from all relevant activities: sales and activation of contracts; manufacture and logistics of devices; energy use of purchased devices and accessories; servicing solutions; and any waste or disposal at the end-of-life of the devices. The results are presented as two measures; Measure 1 is in line with the Greenhouse Gas Protocol (GHGP) Product Footprint Standard; and a Measure 2 which excludes sources of emissions that may already be accounted for in the Council's corporate carbon footprint.

As part of this SD-WAN contract, your account manager will provide an annual contract-specific carbon footprint in accordance with the GHGP Product Standard, enabling a

comprehensive view of carbon emissions arising across the full lifecycle of the contract as well as how these will reduce over the contract lifetime.

How will the supplier support digital inclusion within the London Borough of Islington for residents and businesses.

Social Value Commitment (4) Free connectivity to 10 x local third-sector businesses to increase digital access and improve services

This offer is comprised of 10 x 1Gb Voom business broadband circuits (or the fastest speed available at the time the order is placed). The service will be available for third-sector organisations, including council-run temporary accommodation schemes, that support vulnerable residents across Islington.

For example, this offer could be used to provide Manor Gardens with free-of-charge connectivity to support this organisation's role as an Access Islington Hub. Individuals visiting the Hub will benefit from being able to access digital services that offer support on money, work, food, family, safety, housing and wellbeing.

Alternatively, the offer could be used to provide free connectivity to The Stuart Low Trust. With access to the internet, the Trust can effectively achieve its goal of providing safe spaces and community activities for local people experiencing social isolation or mental distress. Organisations that are already paying for broadband services will benefit from being able to redirect these costs back into the community of Islington.

Each organisation will benefit from 3-years free of charge connectivity from installation (£2210 in savings per organisation based on current list price), where the premise is Virgin Media serviceable.

How the commitment will be managed and delivered: We will aim to deliver all the free connectivity during year 1 of the contract term, but the offer will be available until we have supported all 10 sites.

It is at the Council's discretion where these free connections are allocated. To support identification of sites, we can provide a co-branded 'Expression of Interest' Microsoft Form that can be socialised with local VCSE organisations to help identify suitable premises.

Our SV team will then identify which sites are serviceable and will engage with key contacts based at the organisation to draw up an order form, keeping them informed about delivery. We have processes in place to ensure the beneficiaries do not receive any charges over the contract term.

We will begin the order process as soon as eligible premises have been identified by the Council; lead times currently 20 working days from the order being keyed in. Upon successful completion of each install, the beneficiary will receive a confirmation email from the service delivery team with key account information. The SV team will also notify the relevant Council team for commitment tracking purposes.

Timelines: We will deliver this in-kind connectivity as soon as eligible premises have been identified by the Council, and lead times will adhere to Business-as-Usual delivery timescales for the broadband service.

Previous experience delivering this commitment: To see where we've delivered this package of support as part of current SV programmes, please visit the following link: [Greater Manchester: 17 community sites granted free fibre broadband for five years as UK's largest local connectivity programme nears completion - Virgin Media O2](#)

Social Value Commitment (5) Digital Inclusion fund to help tackle digital exclusion within the borough

Virgin Media O2 Business will donate £15,000 to support local community projects that are seeking to help tackle digital exclusion across the borough. This commitment will benefit digitally excluded individuals across the Borough.

How the commitment will be delivered and managed: Following contract signature, our SV team will work with the relevant stakeholders to identify local, high-impact digital inclusion initiatives that may benefit from additional funding. We have a flexible long-term approach to community investment, so we will work closely with the Council to identify how the fund is allocated between initiatives.

The Council may choose to allocate the entire fund to one initiative or split the fund between multiple initiatives. The in-kind donation must be vetted against Virgin Media O2 charitable donations policy prior to making any such donation.

For example, this could fund refurbished mobile and tablet devices for cohorts living in Islington without access to digital devices and data. We could do this with our charity partners, such as Hubbub who specialise in redistributing refurbished technology to digitally excluded groups.

Alternatively, it may be used to procure other electronic hardware to support digitally excluded residents. For example, we recently supported Lambeth Borough Council's Sanctuary Services with the purchase of 98 Chromebooks as part of our SV commitments with the local authority. This donation has meant that asylum seekers living in the borough are now able to study from the comfort of their rooms, rather than relying on library computers. According to the Council, this has empowered individuals to complete important digital tasks, such as applying for Universal Credit and check the progress of their applications with the Home Office directly.

Timescales: Following contract signature, we will work with the Council to identify funding opportunities for the £15,000. The fund will be available for the first 2 years of the contract term.

Tackling inequality in the workforce including inclusive recruitment, supporting in work progression, and supporting staff health and wellbeing, including physical and mental health.

Inclusive recruitment

We remain focused on evolving how we attract, hire and engage diverse talent to ensure inclusivity and gender neutrality – demonstrated by our 2022 win at the In-House Recruiter Awards for “Best Equity, Diversity and Inclusion Strategy”. We use workforce analytics to provide our leaders with regular insight on opportunities to create more diversity in their teams and at senior levels.

We also encourage diversity across our early careers vacancies by utilising innovative support tools such as Match Me and Practice Situational Judgement Tests (SJTs). Match Me encourages people from diverse backgrounds to apply for roles they would not have previously considered (e.g. (e.g., women into engineering), while Practice SJT aims to give women and Global Majority candidates enhanced skills and confidence in the recruitment process. Additionally, we use a ‘blind recruitment’ process for our early career vacancies to open opportunities to a diverse range of individuals who have potential but may lack relevant qualifications or experience. This is in light of the experience gap exposed by our research

findings – 74% of 25-34-year-olds have been rejected from an entry-level role for not having enough experience.

In-work progression

LinkedIn Learning: All Virgin Media employees now have free, unlimited access to LinkedIn Learning, empowering all employees to learn further business, creative, and/or technology skills to achieve personal and professional goals. With over 16,000+ online courses taught by passionate, real-world professionals, LinkedIn Learning helps employees master in-demand skills and broaden their expertise. Our employees can also learn on the move with the LinkedIn Learning app, with all of the above, bitesized 'Daily Learns' the option to share certificates with teams and on their LinkedIn Profile and the ability to download content to make it available offline while they commute.

ILX Platform: All Virgin Media O2 employees can access a range of free learning courses using the ILX platform. ILX is an internationally recognised provider of accredited professional learning and training, bespoke consulting, and recruitment solutions, with a focus on Project Management. If we recognise a specific training need, Virgin Media O2 will pay for employees to become certified in a range of external qualifications, including Prince2 Project Management and Managing Professional High-Velocity IT.

Apprenticeships: Over 155 internal employees have upskilled and 30 have reskilled via an apprenticeship to support their in-work progression.

Supporting staff health and wellbeing

We believe in promoting a culture of health, education and wellbeing so that we can support all employees, both personally and professionally. Virgin Media O2's Thrive programme provides a comprehensive range of advice, tools and policies to support our people and ensure they can be their best at work. Below we have captured the types of wellbeing tools and initiatives we have in place to support employees mentally, physically, emotionally, and financially.

Bupa Healthcare: All Virgin Media O2 employees are enrolled on the Bupa Medical plan from day one. Employees can even choose to extend this to their partner and/or children by paying an amount every month to ensure they receive the care they need. Beyond physical health conditions, we have now extended the medical plan to cover mental health.

Bupa Healthy Minds is a free telephone helpline service giving employees round-the-clock access to impartial and completely confidential support and advice from trained therapists. Employees can even arrange to meet in person or use online therapy if it's appropriate. Whatever's on your mind, whether it's work or personal, Bupa Healthy Minds can help our people cope with life's ups and downs and support their mental wellbeing.

Employees can call about anything from relationships to financial worries, legal issues, dependent care needs and coping with bereavement. Employees can also access Bupa's online mental health support by completing a self-assessment. Depending upon what's right for the individual, they'll either be guided to Emotional Wellbeing Online, which offers practical tools, calculators and quizzes to help cope with day-to-day life, or to Computerised Cognitive Behavioural Therapy (CCBT).

Ride-to-Work Scheme: Our Ride-to-Work scheme helps employees enjoy all the benefits of cycling during their daily commute. Everyone can apply for it at any time throughout the year, reducing their carbon footprint, improving fitness and saving money on the cost of a bike.

Manager's Toolkit: We offer the following management development modules as part of our learning and development programme for our managers:

- Stamp Out Stigma: Managers' mental health awareness.
- Anxiety and Depression: Managers' toolkit.
- Workplace Stress: Managers' survival kit.

These tools enable our managers to recognise when others may be struggling with their health and wellbeing, so they can confidently provide appropriate support.