

Environment, Social and Governance (ESG) Policy

Introduction

PayStream Accounting Services Limited (PayStream) is one of the leading providers of limited company, umbrella company & back-office services to both contractors and recruitment agencies.

We understand that good ESG practice is crucial for us to embrace. This is the right thing to do. ESG forms part of our business strategy, mitigating risk, influencing operational efficiency, contributing to our long-term success and generating value for all our stakeholders.

This includes actions to foster a positive culture, with a diverse, talented and engaged workforce. Also, to deliver reassuring compliance, demonstrate excellence in service delivery and to play our part in looking after our environment and supporting our local community and charitable causes.

This policy highlights our approach to making a meaningful contribution to ESG issues in the context of what we do, our size and available resources, so as to avoid making sweeping generalisations.

Our approach

PayStream have established an ESG steering team made up of Directors, Managers and representative members of our workforce. This way we can reflect on ESG matters that are important to our staff, agencies, clients, customers and any other stakeholders.

The key people involved in reviewing and executing our ESG strategy are:

Name	Role
Andrew Cleal	Chief Executive Officer
Jayne Stirrup	Chief Financial Officer
Alison Roberts	Legal Director
Clare Baker	HR Director

Members of the ESG steering committee also include:

Name	Role
Kerry Hull	Marketing Director
Dave Johnson	Head of Legal
Sam Hayward	Legal Lead
Lara Turner	Lead QA - Tifo
Sarah Khursheed	Senior Payroll Administrator

In addition we promote responsible behaviours and encourage all our staff to get involved and offer suggestions in how we manage our ESG commitments.

1. Environmental Responsibility:

PayStream is committed to working in a sustainable way, actively seeking ways to minimise our ecological footprint.

- a) **Reduce Environmental Impact:** We are committed to minimizing our environmental footprint through the efficient use of resources, adopting sustainable practices, and actively seeking opportunities to reduce waste generation and pollution.
- b) **Energy Conservation:** We strive to improve energy efficiency in our operations as we provide our service from a managed service office, we will promote innovative ways to reduce energy consumption and work alongside our landlords to this effect. We consider and action, where possible, the recommendations provided from the report provided to us under the Energy Savings Opportunity Scheme.
- c) **Waste Management:** We work with our landlord to promote responsible waste management practices, including recycling and proper disposal methods.
- d) While we do not provide company cars, we encourage sustainable transportation options such as the Cycle to Work scheme and a reasonable proportion of our external meetings are now held digitally.

2. Social Responsibility and our work environment:

- a) **Employee Wellbeing:** We understand the importance of supporting our employee's wellbeing. We prioritise a safe and healthy work environment, provide equal opportunities, and encourage personal and professional growth through training and development programs. This year (2024) we are introducing "PayStream Thrive", a platform with information and benefits to support our employees in the areas of Finance, Mental Health, Family, Career Development, Physical and social wellbeing.
- b) We are Great Place to Work Certified and take our employee survey feedback seriously. We aim to continually improve the working experience of our staff.
- c) Salaries are reviewed annually to ensure we pay fairly and competitively and offer benefits that make a positive difference to our employees.
- d) We have introduced career pathways and we offer study support to everyone for their professional and personal development.
- e) We have an online training platform offering a variety of courses for individuals and managers and we continually review methods of learning and the content This is to ensure active engagement and positive outcomes for our people, and continued personal and professional growth.
- f) We promote a positive culture, where everyone is responsible for positively impacting each other's working lives and the experience of our customers.
- g) **Diversity and Inclusion:** We promote diversity and inclusion in our workforce, fostering an environment that respects and values differences in backgrounds, experiences, and perspectives. All our employees undertake mandatory training in Equality Diversity and Inclusion and Bullying and Harassment.
- h) **Community Engagement:**
 - We actively engage with the communities in which we operate, supporting local initiatives, and contribute financially to the causes that matter to our employees.
 - Due to the nature of our business, we have a substantial Apprenticeship Levy pot. We have partnered with the FCSA and other smaller businesses and transfer a part of the levy for the benefit of upskilling staff in other smaller businesses.

- i) Customer Satisfaction: We prioritize customer satisfaction by delivering high-quality services, maintaining transparent and ethical business practices, and safeguarding customer privacy and data security. We are CSE accredited and work to a very high standard. Our yearly average call time response in 23/24 for our contractors was 20.75 seconds.

3. Governance and Ethics:

We maintain a robust system of corporate governance, ensuring transparency, accountability, and responsible decision-making.

- a) We are committed to ensuring compliance with all regulatory and statutory requirements and professional standards. We hold an FCSA accreditation and our adherence to the FCSA's Codes of Compliance is reviewed and certified on an annual basis. We comply with all due diligence requests received from our third-party partners with openness and honesty and we operate with robust internal audit processes in place. Our Internal Audit function has been established to ensure we proactively review our processes and independently review compliance across all departments. We work with department managers to outline any audit findings and ensure a culture of positive and constructive feedback is maintained in order to for our high compliance standards to be upheld.
- b) We operate with integrity, honesty, and fairness in all our interactions, with our umbrella employees, agencies, suppliers and other third parties. We operate to the highest ethical standards and our Whistleblowing policy can be found on our internal HR system.
- c) All of our business partners are vetted prior to entering into a contractual relationship. We do not support or deal with any businesses knowingly involved in any non-compliant or illegal activity. The businesses that we work with are reputable and we expect them to have strong compliance policies and procedures in place, as we do. We follow a strict onboarding process which includes the completion of our New Agency/Client Payroll Form, a check on the web domain, Company and VAT numbers, a Credit check, and Company Accounts and Incorporation checks, in addition to an IT Security and Data Protection due diligence process.
- d) Mandatory staff training takes place and various policies are maintained and reviewed including those under GDPR, Anti-Money Laundering, Criminal Finances Act, Preventing Money Laundering and Modern Slavery.
- e) We operate both a Risk Register and Legal Register in order to record and assess our legislative and regulatory compliance. As well as recording ongoing requirements, these registers outline mitigations and controls we have in place which allows us to monitor and implement further improvements as necessary.
- f) We maintain a company-wide information security management system that is independently certified to the ISO/IEC 27001:2022 standard, ensuring the highest standards of security for our employee and customer data and the continual improvement of our security posture. We are additionally Cyber Essentials Plus certified and regularly perform security tests both internally and using an external cyber security partner to verify the effectiveness of our controls.
- g) We operate a robust procurement policy. The policy sets out the process for correctly approving new suppliers and obtaining all necessary diligence checks, such as information security checks and for GDPR.

Stakeholder Engagement

We actively engage with our stakeholders, including employees, customers, suppliers, to understand their expectations, concerns, and feedback. We strive to incorporate their perspectives and build long-term relationships based on trust and shared values. We conduct ESG surveys with our staff, have regular ESG meetings, communicate with suppliers and Regulators, such as FCSA and review social media feedback.

This ESG Policy sets the foundation for our commitment to environmental stewardship, social responsibility, and robust governance. We regularly review and update our initiatives to drive continual improvement in our ESG performance, ensuring we contribute positively to the sustainable development of our communities and the planet, achieve long term financial stability, provide a reassuringly secure and robust operating environment and continue to strive to make PayStream a great place to work for our employees.