

corporate & social responsibility

We believe that sound social, ethical and environmental practices make good business sense and have embraced these principles into our general operations.

Alexandra plc is committed to providing equal opportunities irrespective of sex, age, marital status, disability, sexual orientation, race, colour, ethnic or national origin or religious belief. Our employment policies provide a structure in which our staff can develop and achieve their ambitions and are regularly reviewed to ensure compliance with current employment legislation and good practice.

Examples of recent initiatives include the acquisition of the "Positive About Disabled People" accreditation, the support and promotion of the government's "Age Positive" programme as well as our "pro-active partnership" approach toward the following organisations:

- Commission for Racial Equality
- Disability Rights Commission
- Equal Opportunities Commission

A current and ongoing training programme aims to ensure that all managers and supervisors are fully aware of the requirements, beliefs and aspirations of the above.

In addition, we recognise that we are part of all of the individual communities that we serve, as well as of the wider national community. As such, we encourage and support a number of charitable initiatives and sponsor staff fundraising efforts for a variety of causes.

The Group's operations are executed at all times in such a way as to ensure, so far as reasonably practical, the health, safety and welfare of all of our employees and all other persons who may be affected by our operations.

We are committed to compliance with health and safety legislation, maintaining a safe working environment and ensuring the prevention of accidents. We regularly review and update procedures and training to ensure that, as far as possible, staff minimise any risks associated with their tasks. In addition we ensure that health and safety continues to remain a focus of attention for both management and staff with a series of task or risk-specific communications throughout the year.

Workplace risk assessments have been carried out and these are regularly reviewed on a rolling programme, with additional reviews where any new procedures are introduced or new risks identified. We encourage the active involvement of our staff, both through health and safety committees, where appropriate, and through line management.

All areas of the Group operate in accordance with the Group's Environmental Policy. We recognise the impact of our operations on the environment, and our aim is to reduce this impact and to operate in an environmentally responsible manner. To facilitate this we have achieved registration against BS8555 phase 1, as part of the process for implementation of an ISO 14001 Environmental Management System, gaining international recognition for our environmental initiatives and also for our future plans to further reduce our impact on the environment.

As part of the continuing development of our policies and practices we will not only continue to ensure compliance with all relevant environmental legislation, but will also develop the awareness and involvement of both staff and suppliers to work towards continued improvements.

Within Alexandra plc's operations the significant environmental impacts have been identified as energy consumption and waste produced. Working with the Carbon Trust a number of initiatives were identified, some of which have already been implemented whilst others continue to be reviewed to ensure that they provide the energy consumption reductions envisaged and that they fit in with any strategic developments that the Company has under consideration. A significant proportion of our cardboard waste is currently recycled and we continue to review options to both recycle other waste and to reduce the volumes of waste produced.

The Group is aware of its responsibility to ensure that its supply chain operates in a way which maintains acceptable practices with regard to their staff and the environment, and requires its suppliers to comply with the ethical and environmental standards detailed in our quality manual. We recognise that in some countries there are legal and cultural differences from our own, but we will only purchase from suppliers that meet core minimum requirements, as set out in the Ethical Trading Initiative base code, and are prepared to work towards continuous improvement in their operations. In operating our policy Alexandra's objective is to improve and not to judge.

Ethical Auditing is the responsibility of the Quality department, working with the Buying department.

To ensure that the ethical auditing programme is given sufficient priority the Company Secretary is responsible for ensuring that the Company's ethical policies are carried out, and reports to the Board of Directors on a regular basis.

Standards are checked using both our own staff and also independent consultants to carry out formal audits. We also have a dedicated team whose main role is to work with suppliers to ensure that they continue to comply with requirements and make improvements where necessary. Major suppliers are re-audited on a two-year rolling programme.

The Ethical Auditing programme is regularly reviewed and modifications to the process made from time to time to provide improvements.

In addition to carrying out our own ethical auditing programme, Alexandra plc has also been audited itself by a number of its larger customers. These audits have examined our procedures and have also included audits of some of our suppliers. All have been satisfied that Alexandra plc's procedures show a robust approach to ensure that suitable standards are maintained and that improvements are made where necessary.

