

# Corporate Social Responsibility - our story so far



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# The Norse Way at a glance



**£20m**

investment in renewable energy



**60%**

of our apprentices gained permanent jobs



**£30,000**

Community Fund available for causes important to our staff annually



**12**

locations took part in the 2018 Norse Tidy Up



**8 hours**

volunteering each year available for staff



**21,000**

cups saved from landfill through adopting reusable cups

## About The Norse Way

The Norse Group delivers quality public services touching the lives of more than a million people across the country. It brings together facilities management specialist Norse Commercial Services, property consultancy NPS Group and care provider NorseCare.

Our commercial flair and public service ethos is known nationally for creating a powerful combination, improving services for our clients, saving costs and driving growth.

We employ more than 9600 staff in England and Wales, with a turnover of more than £280m. We have been named by accountants Grant Thornton as the largest Local Authority Trading Company in the country.

As our roots lie in the public sector, we know there is great potential for ethical service providers in the marketplace who share and understand the public service ethos.

Our approach to '**Ethical Commercialisation**' creates imaginative partnerships which protect jobs and ensure quality public services are delivered in the most cost effective way possible is set to continue to prosper in the future.

As well as our business expertise, we have long held a strong commitment to corporate social responsibility (CSR) which helps us stand apart from our competitors. Our CSR strategy is called **The Norse Way** and the different elements of our Norse Way story are outlined here.

The Norse Way, is designed to promote staff wellbeing and help strengthen local communities. It's a positive and determined ethical stance and applies to us all - regardless of where we work.

Our approach focusses on key areas we believe could have a long-term impact on our business and society such as supporting older people,

wellbeing and preventing obesity, regeneration, employment and youth opportunity, skills and employee development, environmental management and building customer trust.

Whether it's how we deliver our services or our approach to recruitment, the way we work with our suppliers or look after our staff, everything we do is shaped by our four values:

Quality

Innovation

Respect

Trust



## Strengthening communities

We are passionate about strengthening local communities. As well as being there for our customers when they need us, we are committed to extending our impact and working together to tackle the challenges our communities face every day.

Our staff can take up to eight hours a year paid time off work to volunteer for a good cause. With thousands of volunteering hours on offer, we hope we are making a real difference!

We are also committed to improving the health of the communities we serve. Norse Catering is a **Gold Food for Life** provider, recognising our use of organic produce, ethical and environmentally friendly food, locally sourced ingredients and steps taken in providing healthy, well-balanced menus. Our school menus team and dietician in Norfolk have achieved a 25% sugar content reduction in Primary School recipes.

In Devon, Norse has bought a pedal powered 'Smoothie Bike' to support our commitment of the development of healthy lifestyles. In Norfolk, our catering division is eliminating the use of straws within Primary Schools by no longer pre-packing drink offers.



## It's all about people

Supporting staff to live well is a key pillar of our social responsibility values and we run a number of initiatives throughout the year to help build a healthier and happier workplace.

The Group is an enthusiastic supporter of **Project Search**, a national initiative which helps students with learning difficulties make the transition to work and which can change the lives of those taking part.

Course leader Michele Claxton explains: "We see an enormous change in our students during the academic year. By the end, we have a group of young people fully equipped with the skills and confidence to enter the world of work."

We have a strong track record of recruiting people who have been unemployed and those who might otherwise face multiple barriers to breaking into employment.

The Group has also pledged to help armed forces personnel make a successful transition into civilian employment by signing the Ministry of Defence Armed Forces Covenant.

Norse is also joining the national **Bright Future** scheme, which provides job opportunities for survivors of Modern Slavery – giving them a

pathway for their reintegration into society. The scheme, which is led by the Co-op, sees modern slavery victims given an initial four-week paid work placement and, providing minimum requirements are met, and both sides are happy to proceed, a permanent job offer. Norse is

committed to making each placement a success and will consider placement requests made by Bright Future, most likely in areas such as Kent and the North West where we have a strong presence.



## Improving skills

The Group is proud to be the leading agency in the new £13m Norwich International Aviation Academy, the first of its kind in the UK, creating an internationally recognised centre of excellence for education and skills. It is serving the UK's demand for increasing levels of aviation skills and helping to meet the well documented worldwide aviation skills deficit with places for hundreds of students.

We have a number of STEM ambassadors around the country who use their enthusiasm and commitment to bring subjects such as science, technology, engineering and maths to life with the aim of inspiring the next generation of engineers, surveyors and architects.

We want our staff to realise their full potential and invest heavily in their development in line with our organisational values.

Norse Commercial Services is Investors in People accredited and is making the most of the new Apprenticeship Levy by being a registered apprenticeship provider. We have previously invested heavily in apprentices in conjunction with our shareholder



Norfolk County Council. Of a 100 strong cohort taken on in 2012, almost 60% who completed

their apprenticeships went on to gain permanent positions.

## Being kind to the environment

We are committed to cutting energy consumption and natural resources use, largely by reducing water consumption, transport fuel use, energy consumption and minimising waste sent to landfill.

Both NPS and Norse Commercial Services are accredited to the ISO 14001 Environmental Management Standard which helps organisations enhance their environmental performance, reducing their consumption, waste and costs.

We have a strong track record of supporting local schools, tenants and businesses to save money, energy and carbon through both innovative delivery solutions and technologies, and have made a £20m investment in renewable energy projects in both the public and private sector. Our initiatives have allowed a number of schools to have renewables without the need for upfront capital.

The award-winning Carrowbreck Meadow is an environmentally sustainable housing development near Norwich built to Passivhaus standards, which exceeds requirements for air tightness five times over.

We operate a number of electric vans in different parts of the country and are trialling hydrogen

technology and fuel additives to reduce fuel consumption in its vehicles.

We have accessed Government funding to introduce new bio mass boilers powered by wood pellets at some of our residential homes, saving carbon, reducing running costs and greenhouse gas emissions.

We encourage staff to take an interest in the environment, by supporting Walk to Work Day in April, World Environment Day in June and office workers take part in our annual **Norse Tidy Up** in September. The latest was held at 12 locations, making it our biggest Tidy Up yet.

As part of our commitment to be an environmentally friendly organisation, Norse has joined a scheme which recycles empty crisp packets and turns them into something useful. We have put collection boxes in our headquarters building and in the first month we collected more than 500 packets which would otherwise have gone to landfill. The packets are cleaned and shredded to turn them into plastic pellets which are then transformed into park benches, plant pots, watering cans and cool bags.





## Buying locally and sustainably

Our Norse Way strategy contains a commitment to supporting local suppliers and small and medium sized businesses.

Our school meals service in Norfolk buys 84% of its meat, fruit and vegetables from within East Anglia and all poultry, pork and beef we use within our catering service is traceable right back to the farm and is **Red Tractor** assured.

Similarly, schools in Devon are required to keep a daily record of food waste where we have achieved a **13% reduction** in food waste in a year. All fresh meat, ice cream and dairy products come from West Country farms.

We ensure that timber is procured from sustainable sources. We encourage our tender processes to include weighted scoring for quality, corporate responsibility and Health & Safety, ensuring we work with suppliers that share our values. That way, we use controlled purchasing to benefit the local community and environment.

The company is running a number of initiatives around the country to reduce waste. A move in Devon to encourage staff to buy reusable cups at

civic sites in exchange for a discount on hot drinks saved at least **21,000 cups** going to landfill. Our catering division is eliminating the use of straws within Primary Schools in Norfolk.

We have reduced the use of plastic containers in our primary school 'pick 'n' mix' lunches in Norfolk by **95%** and Norse Catering has launched a '**Bring Your Own Lunchbox**' scheme to the sites we serve under which customers receive 10p off their meal price if they use their own lunchbox instead of a card takeaway box.

We have a long history of working constructively with small and medium sized businesses and are building on the many positive local proactive initiatives which already exist. We always try to fix terms of payment with our suppliers in advance and abide by the agreed terms of payment.



## Helping good causes

We have a **Community Fund** and our staff are encouraged to apply for support to a good cause that's close to their heart.

Grants are often in the region of £750 and successful applications can be anything from sports clubs seeking new kit to local charities seeking new equipment.

We also sponsor individuals who are talented children of parents or grandparents who work for us.

Staff at our joint ventures around the country frequently support local and national charities either by fund raising in the workplace or by putting their volunteering hours allowance to good use.



## A dementia friendly organisation



We are aiming to have at least one **Dementia Champion** at each of the main offices across our Group and support Dementia Awareness Week organised each year by the Alzheimer's Society.

Our nominated Dementia Lead has trained staff from around the country as part of our commitment to become a more dementia friendly workplace.

In Barnsley, our staff have successfully created 50 dementia friends – who largely work for us in front line roles such as caretakers, cleaners and porters – and are actively working with the South Yorkshire Dementia Action Alliance to support local events within the community.

In Norfolk, our Head of Catering Operations has recruited a dozen young dementia friends by forging a link between a local primary school and a NorseCare residential home. We hope to extend this initiative in the future.

All new NorseCare staff are encouraged to become a Dementia Friend when they join us as part of their learning and development plan and all our care schemes have a Dementia Lead. They not only work within our homes, but also play an important role in raising awareness of dementia and in creating dementia-friendly communities.

The Norse Group has been awarded the **In Good Company Quality Mark Plus** for its work tackling loneliness in Norfolk. Judges gave our application a Plus mark, which is only awarded to organisations going the extra mile.





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