

1. Introduction

The Public Services (Social Value) Act requires those who commission public services to consider the additional social, economic and environmental benefits that can be realised for individuals and communities through commissioning and procurement activity. As an organisation that works closely with the public sector, Somersford is very keen to demonstrate how we contribute to those social values when we are chosen as a supplier.

2. Covid-19 Recovery

The Covid-19 pandemic, which started in the UK early in 2020, presented operational challenges of the kind unseen before for most organisations. For Somersford, prudent fiscal policy together with robust technical business continuity contingencies and having a highly flexible team, had prepared our organisation well for the unforeseen difficulties ahead. As a result we have been able to:

- provide uninterrupted availability of service and support to our customer-base;
- almost entirely redeploy our workforce to a home-based way of working;
- avoid compulsory lay-offs and redundancies of staff;
- minimise call upon the Government furlough scheme to a very limited number of staff;
- in 2020, sustain an 11% increase in revenues over the 2019 financial year;
- continue to recruit staff, growing the workforce by approximate 10% in the last year;
- take on new supplier-partners to enhance the solutions portfolio available to our customers;
- invest in staff education to ensure we were able to align with our customers' future needs. Between April and December 2020 our team passed over 100 Partner certifications.

We have put the wellbeing of our staff at the forefront of our plans when combating the Covid-19 challenges by taking the time and care to consider their physical and mental health. This has included simple practical measures such as:

- adopting flexible work locations (mainly working from home) to avoid unnecessary exposing staff and to avoid causing spread of the virus;
- making the office available to those staff who have had difficulties working remotely due to domestic circumstances;
- arranging regular drop-ins, one-to-ones and team catch-ups to provide regular contact, albeit remotely;
- organising social events using electronic communications tools to provide social interaction;

Forced changes to our ways of working have demonstrated that flexibility in staff work patterns can work very effectively for the business, and it is unlikely that we'll ever return entirely to an office-based approach. This will support our Carbon Reduction initiatives by cutting down the need for business travel.

From many of our customers, changing to remote working for a workforce who are normally office based has its own cyber-security challenges, and people management takes on a quite different complexion. The solutions we offer are helping our customers with *their* Covid recovery by providing the infrastructure, tooling and monitoring to support their own remote, flexible and sustainable ways of working.

3. Tackling economic inequality

3.1. Creating new businesses, new jobs and new skills

Somerford is an equal opportunities employer (see 4 below). Somerford is a growing and thriving business which actively strives to create employment and training opportunities. These are just some of the opportunities we have taken:

- In the past five years, we have taken on 15 employees entering employment for the first time after leaving school, college or university (equivalent to 20%+ of our workforce);
- Through our relationship with local colleges, we have supported 12 apprenticeships;
- We now run an internal academy scheme which aims to build a broad range of technical skills in new employees who have the inherent skills, attitude and capability to become our next generation of technicians, system administrators, architects and engineers;
- It is key to the services we provide to our customers that our professional services and technical support teams are highly knowledgeable on our partner's products, but also understand our customers' technical environments. For this reason, we invest heavily in staff training - in the year 2020 we've taken staff through over 100 training courses.

Somerford is also a signed-up and active participant in the Armed Forces Covenant Scheme. The Covenant is a pledge that we acknowledge and understand that those who serve or who have served in the armed forces, and their families, should be treated with fairness and respect in the communities, economy and society they serve with their lives. In practical terms, we aim to help redeploy and reskill people leaving the Armed Forces, and to date 16 of our staff have joined us through this route.

3.2. Increasing supply chain resilience and capacity

Somerford's solutions are a combination of high-value, enterprise software products, licenced through our partner network, and tailored to the client's requirements through a wrap-around of customised project management, implementation and technical support services.

We have carefully chosen our supplier-partners to be able to offer a high quality portfolio of software products that provide a complementary and extensive range of innovative and disruptive technologies. We have a diverse supply chain, with a combination of large international organisations, entrepreneurial new businesses, start-ups, and SMEs.

Somerford recognises the importance of evaluating and actively addressing the risks to our business from the digital service providers in our supply chain. For this reason, we have introduced processes and tooling to identify such threats and provide the technical data to manage successful remediation. The tooling we use, Security Scorecard (SSC), allows continual monitoring of the cyber-threat landscape exhibited by our key digital services providers. It produces tangible evidence of potential issues, including a detailed technical description, which we can then share with our supplier to take further action. We believe that a collaborative and mutually supportive relationship achieves better outcomes, up and down the supply chain, than an adversarial and combative approach. Each of the service providers are invited to actively participate in our cyber-risk reduction programme and collaborate with us to avert risk. SSC also allows us to practically evaluate supplier compliance with security standards such as ISO27001, Cyber Essentials Plus etc. This is very useful during supplier evaluation and selection.

Somerford uses SSC to measure our own supply chain risk profile on behalf of our customers. The tooling provides an overall rating (A - F, where A is excellent and F is a FAIL) on a daily basis. Somerford was able to attain an A rating within months of implementing the tooling and has retained that rating for over two years.

As an element of our ISO 9001 based quality management system, we regularly seek feedback from customers on the solutions we offer. Whenever appropriate, we will provide feedback to our supplier-partner organisations or our own staff in the spirit of continual improvement, to help enhance the products and services we provide to our customers.

4. Fighting climate change

4.1. Effective stewardship of the environment

Management and staff at Somerford have been conscious of our impact upon the environment even before the Climate Change Act was introduced, and we've adopted environmentally friendly practices as the business has grown. Consequently, Somerford's business already has a reasonably low carbon footprint, and will continue to strive for further reductions wherever possible because this is beneficial for our business, our stakeholders and the environment. As an organisation that works closely with the public sector, Somerford is keen to demonstrate our commitment to supporting the achievement of the Net Zero target of greenhouse gas emissions by 2050. Details are available in our [Carbon Reduction Policy and Plan](#).

We will use our influence as a value added reseller of leading edge software products and supporting professional services to select supplier-partners whose own carbon reduction philosophy and plans are aligned with our own, and who can show commitment to the Net

Zero target. In practical terms, this means we participate in a carbon-net-zero supply chain in the delivery of the solutions from our supplier-partners to our customers.

4.2. Reducing the disability employment gap

Policy: Somersford does not discriminate on the grounds of disability and we fully comply with the Equality Act 2010 in this respect. This means we take particular care to ensure that we respect rights of those with disabilities particularly when:

- processing job applications,
- making interview arrangements,
- testing for aptitude or proficiency,
- making job offers,
- agreeing terms of employment, including pay,
- considering promotion, transfer and training opportunities,
- considering dismissal or redundancy,
- discipline and grievances,
- making reasonable adjustments in the workplace.

Adjustments: We will make reasonable adjustments to avoid those with disabilities being put at a disadvantage compared to non-disabled people in the workplace. For example, adjusting working hours or providing special equipment to help to do the job.

Recruitment: We limit any enquiries about a candidate's health or disability to the following circumstances:

- to help decide if the candidate can carry out a task that is an essential part of the work,
- to help find out if the candidate can take part in an interview,
- to decide if we need to make reasonable adjustments in a selection process,
- for monitoring purposes,
- if we want to increase the number of disabled people we employ,
- if we need to know for the purposes of national security checks.

Redundancy and retirement: Should we ever need to consider a selection process for redundancy, this will be fair and balanced for all employees. We will never choose for redundancy just because of a disability, nor will we ever force an employee to retire if they become disabled.

5. Equal opportunity

5.1. Tackling workforce inequality

We are an equal opportunities employer and do not discriminate on the grounds of gender, sexual orientation, marital or civil partner status, pregnancy or maternity, gender reassignment, race, colour, nationality, ethnic or national origin, religion or belief, disability or age.

5.2. Modern slavery

We have in place a Modern Slavery Policy which confirms our compliance with section 54(1) of the Modern Slavery Act 2015. It is our aim to conduct our business relationships in a transparent, fair and respectful manner at all times, including the employment of staff, the engagement of suppliers and partners, and the development of relationships with customers. We will not tolerate slavery or human trafficking in any part of our business and are committed to ensuring that it does not take place in our supply chain and partner network.

We will not knowingly accept, sell on, or endorse the products or services from suppliers, manufacturers or business partners who adopt slavery or human trafficking practices in their business. We will take all reasonable care to only work with suppliers and partners who adopt a similar policy.

6. Wellbeing

6.1. Improving health and wellbeing

Somerford is committed to promoting and supporting the wellbeing of all of its staff.

We aim to create a culture which focuses on prevention of issues in the workplace that can adversely affect staff health and wellbeing, and where issues are identified, they are managed promptly before they can have a detrimental impact. This includes:

- providing staff with clarity and purpose regarding their job role,
- ensuring staff have the capability, training, support and encouragement to conduct their role confidently and effectively,
- providing a physical working environment that is suitable for the work to be carried out effectively;
- encouraging staff to maintain a sensible work-life balance,
- minimising the stressful impacts of work,
- ensuring bullying and harassment have no place in the working environment,

- managing sickness and absence effectively,
- considering requests for career breaks and sabbaticals,
- providing medical assistance to staff,
- encouraging employee fitness,
- promoting dignity at work.

7. Approval

Signed on behalf of Somerford Associates Limited, (Company # 04250112)



Andy Davies, Director

Date: 02/09/2024

Document Control			
Reviewed by	Simon Weaver	Published	02/09/2024
Owning Department	Management Team	Protective Marking	Public