INSPIRE NORTH

Partner & Supply Chain Social Value Guide

A practical resource for partners and suppliers to strengthen social value alongside Inspire North



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1 Introduction

At Inspire North, we know that real social value is something created together. Our impact is strengthened through the relationships we build with the organisations we partner with, who share our commitment to people, place, and purpose.

This guide is an invitation for our supply chain to join us in shaping social value in ways that feel authentic, proportionate, and meaningful for your organisation. Whether you are a small local business or a strategic delivery partner, your contribution matters. Together, we can improve wellbeing, strengthen communities, and protect the environment in the places we all care about.

What Social Value Means to Inspire North

Social value, for us, is simple and human, we define it as *"the worth of the difference we make to people's lives and our local community"*.

This definition was co-produced with colleagues across our organisation, capturing what social value means in practice, not just numbers or targets, but the lived realities of people feeling supported, included, heard, and empowered.

Our supply chain contribute to this difference every day, often in ways that are small but deeply meaningful. This could be through offering opportunities to people facing barriers, adopting fair and inclusive practices, supporting local economies, or making environmentally responsible choices.

Why Social Value Matters in Our Supply Chain

Social value isn't created by one organisation acting alone, it is collective work. Our suppliers and partners help bring our social value commitments to life in the everyday decisions, relationships, and practices that shape our shared work.

This guide explains how we can work together in ways that align with our values, strengthen our communities, and ensure that everyone, regardless of size or capacity, can play a role in creating positive change.



2 Our Social Value Journey

Social value has been part of Inspire North's story from the beginning, rooted in the work of Community Links and Foundation. Long before we formalised it, colleagues across both organisations were already creating impact through compassionate relationships, inclusive practice, and a deep belief in people and communities.

When Inspire North was formed, we brought this shared legacy together. With support from our consultants, Social Value Business, we worked with colleagues across the organisation to co-produce our definition of social value and shape our Social Value Pledges - commitments that reflect the change we aim to create in wellbeing, inclusion, opportunity, community, and the environment.

As our journey continued, we strengthened how we listen and learn. Our most recent Social Value Report showed encouraging signs: more people told us they felt improvements in their wellbeing and confidence, and a growing proportion of our spend went to local suppliers, helping us invest more directly back into the places we serve. These achievements reflect not only the work of our teams, but the contribution of the partners and suppliers who share our values.

We are proud to have achieved the Social Value Quality Mark Bronze, Silver and Gold accreditations, reflecting our long-term commitment to embedding social value across everything we do. Each accreditation has marked an important milestone in our journey, helping us strengthen our approach, deepen our impact, and continually raise our ambitions.

Our next chapter is about widening the circle: supporting organisations of all sizes to shape social value in ways that feel authentic, proportionate, and meaningful, while continuing to learn, innovate, and build on the high standards recognised through our Gold accreditation.



3 Our Pledges

Our Social Value Pledges reflect the areas of change we strive to create as an organisation. We do not expect our supply chain to deliver all of these directly, but understanding them helps us work together with clarity and shared purpose.

No	Theme	Pledge
1	Health and Wellbeing	We pledge to improve and sustain the health and wellbeing of our clients and employees, reducing risk of crisis and promoting resilience through innovative practices, excellent partnerships in our community, and a supportive, inclusive workplace that prioritises mental, physical, and emotional wellbeing.
2	Education, Training and Skills	We pledge to develop more meaningful learning opportunities and increase the skills of our employees and volunteers, clients and partners through increased accredited training and community education offers.
3	Employment and Volunteering	We pledge to help clients and tenants reach their potential, increasing employability with access to sustainable work and volunteering.
4	Criminal Justice	We pledge to work innovatively and in partnership, to reduce offending and the harm it causes. We do this by meeting practical and wellbeing needs to achieve independence and inclusion.
5	Housing	We pledge to increase client's and tenant's access to safe homes, providing them with a foundation from which they can live aspirational and fulfilling lives.
6	Social and Community	We pledge to improve the lives of clients and tenants supported in our communities and reduce social isolation.
7	Economic	We pledge to build our local economy by employing local people, engaging local volunteers and using local suppliers and partners in our work.
8	Environment	We pledge to reduce our carbon footprint and negative impact upon the environment to improve the communities in which we operate.
9	Leadership	We pledge to improve equality in our workplace and community, develop strong partnerships, make services accessible and be innovative.

4 Measuring Social Value

Measuring social value isn't just about numbers, it's about understanding meaningful change. While data matters, it is only one part of the picture. Stories, feedback, learning, and innovation all help us see the real difference our work makes in people's lives.

That's why we use a blended approach:

- data (what we can count),
- feedback (what people tell us), and
- insight (what we learn from doing things differently).

Together, these help us stay accountable to the people we serve and continuously improve the way we create value. Accurate recording, including examples, survey responses, and updates from our supply chain, strengthens our shared ability to understand what's working well and where we can grow.

To make this as simple and transparent as possible, we use four stages to understand social value:



1. Social Inputs - What we invest

Inputs are the resources we put in to make social value possible.
They are the starting point — the things we choose to contribute.

Employee, time, care and expertise	**Funding or grants**	**Materials, equipment or facilities**	**Partnership working and shared knowledge**



2. Social Output - What we *do*

Outputs are the direct actions or activities we provide.
They show what has happened as a result of our inputs.

Support provided to individuals or communities	**Number of people trained or supported**	**Hours of 1:1 work delivered**	**Group sessions, workshops or community activities**

3. Social Outcomes - The change people experience

Outcomes tell us what difference our work has made.
They are the changes people feel in their lives because of the outputs delivered.

Improved confidence, wellbeing or resilience	**Increased skills, employability or readiness for work**	**Feeling safer, more connected or more supported**	**Improved relationships, independence or stability**

4. Social Impact - The long-term positive change

Impact is what happens when outcomes last and begin to shape wider communities, systems or society. This is where social value becomes long-term, meaningful and transformative.

Reduced admissions or readmissions to hospital	**Reduced need for crisis care or emergency intervention**	**People gaining employment and improved financial security**	**Fewer people turning to crime or re-offending**
Improved community safety and cohesion	**Reduced pressure on emergency services**	**Improved health and wellbeing across neighbourhoods**	**Enhanced environmental outcomes through greener behaviours**

We share this model with our supply chain not because we expect you to measure every stage, but because it helps explain how your work contributes to the wider difference we make together.

You may already be doing some of this without calling it “social value”, many organisations are. By understanding the journey from inputs to long-term impact, you can see where your contribution sits, however big or small.

This guide is here to help you recognise the value you already create, identify opportunities that feel right for your organisation, and understand how we connect your efforts to the positive change happening across our communities.

It may also support you in developing your own social value journey, giving you a simple, flexible way to think about the difference you make and how you might want to grow it over time.



5 Working Together

We want to work with organisations who share our passion for doing the right thing ethically, locally, and with care for people and the planet. We know every organisation is different, so our expectations are flexible and proportionate.

We encourage our supply chain to contribute through four areas of practice:

1. Community & Local Economy

Supporting local employment, using local suppliers, and contributing to the communities we serve. This could be through your inputs (local recruitment), outputs (offering placements), outcomes (people gaining skills), or impact (a stronger local economy).

2. Fair Work & Ethical Practice

Demonstrating inclusive, safe, and ethical working conditions, including awareness of modern slavery and commitments to equality. Your inputs might be strong ethical policies; your impact might be a more inclusive workplace culture.

3. Environmental Responsibility

Minimising waste, reducing carbon impact, and adopting sustainable practices wherever possible. Inputs may include energy-efficient equipment; outcomes may be reduced emissions; impact is a healthier environment.

4. Engagement & Learning

Taking part in surveys, review meetings, learning opportunities, and sharing innovations or good practice. These actions help us understand what's working, identify new opportunities, and grow our collective impact.



How We Work With Our Supply Chain Throughout the Year

Our engagement with partners and suppliers is grounded in strong relationships, open communication, and a shared commitment to creating positive change. Rather than a rigid schedule, we focus on meaningful touchpoints throughout the year that help us understand your experience, learn from your insights, and grow our collective impact.

Our Q3 Stakeholder Survey

Each year in Q3, we invite our supply chain, commissioners and wider stakeholders to take part in our Annual Stakeholder Survey. This survey helps us understand:

- how well we work together
- the level of placed trust in our organisation and our values
- how our partnership approach supports your work
- what we can do to strengthen collaboration

This feedback is essential for shaping our future approach to partnership, communication and social value.

Our Partner and Supplier Social Value Engagement Survey

Alongside our wider stakeholder survey, we also encourage our supply chain to complete our Partner Social Value Engagement Survey. This survey helps us understand:

- the positive social value you're already creating
- where we can support you to grow your contribution
- opportunities to collaborate or innovate together
- how we develop future training, tools and resources

We don't expect every organisation to be able to answer every question, but every insight helps. You can find the survey at www.Inspire North.co.uk



Ongoing Conversations and Shared Learning

Across the year, we stay connected through:

- partnership meetings, where we share progress, celebrate successes, and hear about what's working well
- sharing examples of good practice, such as innovations, community involvement or environmental improvements
- informal check-ins, especially for smaller organisations who may want light-touch guidance or reassurance
- shared opportunities, such as community events, wellbeing initiatives or collaborative projects

These moments help us build a richer understanding of how our supply chain contribute to our Social Value Pledges, often in ways that are small in action but significant in impact.

Here to Help You on Your Social Value Journey

If you would like support or advice on developing your own social value journey, our Quality and Compliance Team is always happy to help. Whether you're just getting started, want to strengthen what you already do, or simply need someone to talk through ideas with, we can offer practical guidance based on what we've learned on our own Inspire North journey.

We also work closely with Social Value Business, the organisation behind the Social Value Quality Mark. If you're interested in exploring the accreditation for your own organisation, we can explain how we work towards the Quality Mark, what the process is like, and help you decide whether it's the right step for you. Social Value Business can also offer more in-depth advice if you choose to explore it further.

If you'd prefer a more practical, day-to-day conversation, our operational teams can share examples of what social value looks like in real services, simple things that have worked well, ideas other partners have tried, or easy starting points for creating local impact.

Whatever stage you're at, you don't have to figure it out alone, we're here to support you.

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