



Impact on Society and Social Value

Winner

Creating Profit for a Purpose, Eric Wright FM



Eric Wright FM's focus on investing in its workforce and local community in the North West of England.

The FM business is part of construction and property services organisation, the Eric Wright Group, which has its entire shareholding wholly owned by the Eric Wright Charitable Trust. The trust was established in 1990 and awarded 49 per cent of the group's shareholding. In 2016, the trust received the remaining 51 per cent. So, none of the group's profits are distributed to private shareholders.

Instead, it reinvests profits into developing its business or investing, through the trust, in charitable activities. The group and trust share the focus of addressing social inequalities and promoting environmental benefits.

Results

The ownership of the group by the trust has created a unique long-term relationship between the commercial and charitable arms, with significant results for local communities. The group's focus has been on six charitable sectors, which it considers key to social wellbeing:

- Young persons' development
- Elderly care
- Health and wellbeing
- Carers' support
- Education and training
- Community and voluntary service organisations

Water Park Estate

The Trust purchased the Water Park Estate on Coniston Water in March 1998 and converted the former mansion house into a residential outdoor adventure centre, which focuses on young people and groups with additional needs and provides courses from key elements of the National Curriculum to personal/social education and recreation.

To date, 50,000 children have visited the park from 350 schools and community groups. But local adults have gained from employment. The FM team employed local subcontractors for chimney sweeping, pest control, catering maintenance, window cleaning, deer fencing and boat servicing services, keeping investment in the local community.

Eric Wright FM also guided subcontractors through the prequalification and procurement processes. The FM company let 87.7 per cent of work packages to businesses within a 37-mile radius of the work locations.

The Eric Wright Learning Foundation

The Eric Wright Learning Foundation delivers employment and skills, key parts of the trust's strategy to support young learners in construction-based vocational programmes, such as the Young Apprentice Scheme for 14-16 year olds, Foundation Level BTEC Certificate, Level 2 BTEC, First Diploma, Year 8 taster courses and NEET training during school holidays.

Since 2005 the foundation has helped more than 2,500 young people from age 14 achieve vocational qualifications and has provided over £300,000 in funding support, first at its educational premises at Leyland and now in partnership with Preston's College.

Grants Programme

The trust has three grant programmes: major grants (£10k+); community grants (£5k-£10k) and minor grants (£1-£5k).

Best practice

A successful company must be profitable, ethical and farsighted, and owned by a shareholder structure that maximises stability and an equitable treatment of profit.

Trustees and senior management meet quarterly to ensure CSR values are fully embedded in the business strategy of the group and that there is a transparent flow of information within the organisation as a whole, concerning social values and activities.

Focus on sharing the stories across the group through social media channels, the company website and regular company newsletters to demonstrate the collective social value the business can and does deliver.