Ensuring Equality and Diversity: File Digitisation for the Human Resources Transformation Programme and Haven Document Services

A Case Study of Sustainable Procurement at the University of Edinburgh

# Background

The University of Edinburgh currently has an employee record management process that is heavily manual and paper-based. To move towards a more standardised and efficient system, the University’s Human Resources Transformation Programme (HRTP) is creating a single electronic file for each employee. As part of this process the HRTP project team needed to procure the services of an external company to digitise the existing paper records. In March 2018 Haven Document Services was contracted to provide this service. The contract, which is ongoing until the digitisation is completed, has been an opportunity for the University’s Procurement office to promote equality and diversity in a procurement.

# Pre-Contract Stage: Identifying Social Responsibility and Sustainability Risks

It is central to the University’s [Procurement Strategy](https://www.ed.ac.uk/procurement/policies-procedures/university-procurement-strategy) to consider sustainability and social responsibility in all procurements. This enables us to fulfil legislative duties under the [Procurement Reform (Scotland) Act of 2014](https://www.legislation.gov.uk/asp/2014/12/contents) and to implement the University’s other guiding policies and commitments for sustainability and social responsibility.

*‘We aim to meet the needs for goods, services and capital works as a truly global university, rooted in Scotland’s capital city and achieve value for money on a whole life basis, generating benefits not only to the University, but making a significant, sustainable and socially responsible contribution locally and globally.’*

The University of Edinburgh’s Procurement Strategy

It is an important priority for us to ensure equality and diversity in the workforces of our suppliers. When procuring within Scotland, this can help us to work in support of the [Scottish National Outcomes](https://www.gov.scot/About/Performance/scotPerforms/outcome) 2 and 7 and towards our commitment under the [Scottish Business Pledge](https://scottishbusinesspledge.scot/) to a ‘balanced workforce’. Our [Equality and Diversity Strategy](http://www.docs.csg.ed.ac.uk/EqualityDiversity/Strategy.pdf) also commits us to embedding equality and diversity across all of the University’s work.

*‘We realise our full economic potential with more and better employment opportunities for our people.’*

*‘We have tackled the significant inequalities in Scottish society’*

Scottish National Outcomes 2 and 7

As part of the ‘Sustainable Procurement Duty’ under the Scottish legislation the University should ‘facilitate the involvement of small and medium enterprises, third sector bodies and supported businesses in the process’, And ‘improve the economic, social, and environmental wellbeing of the authority's area’, ‘in particular reducing inequality in the area.’ Here a ‘supported business’ means an economic operator whose main aim is the social and professional integration of disabled or disadvantaged persons and where at least 30% of the employees of the economic operator are disabled or disadvantaged persons.

# Contract Stage: Opportunities to Embed Social Responsibility and Sustainability

The HR File Digitisation project has been an opportunity for the Procurement Office to work towards equality and diversity in the University’s supply chains. Haven Document Services is a supported business in Falkirk, which specialises in document scanning and storage. Haven Document Services aims to provide sustainable employment for disabled people, who are supported by the company to train and progress in their careers, within the company, and by moving on to open employment where that is their goal. Following the University’s Procurement Strategy, Haven Document Services were awarded the Contract to scan the HR files.

# Post-Contract Outcomes and Monitoring

Since being awarded the contract, Haven Document Services have provided an excellent scanning service for the HR team. This case illustrates how careful choices in its procurements, can enable the University of Edinburgh can contribute to a more equal and diverse Scotland.

*‘As Project Sponsor procuring the services of an experienced scanning company was one of the foremost concerns in being confident that our File Digitisation project will ultimately be a complete success. Haven Document Services have demonstrated that they are able to meet all of our requirements including speed of turnaround, accuracy and of course scanned documents of the highest quality.  Equally important to me is knowing that Haven Document Services ensure our files are transported and held securely both during and after the scanning process and that we can, if need be, quickly retrieve a file which has been sent for scanning.’*

Susan McNeill, Head of HR at the University of Edinburgh

*‘The engagement of Haven Document Services has proven to be a win-win situation for both themselves and the University’s file digitisation project. Haven Document Services not only have the required accreditation for the sector, but they have obtained this in advance of many international organisations and so they are able to offer the required confidence levels of a professional organisation very experienced in dealing in sensitive files. The full spectrum of quality of service given by Haven Document Services has meant that they have very quickly become a valued partner.’*

Linda Robertson, University of Edinburgh HR Transformation Programme team