

Lancashire County Council

Delivering social value initiatives to support the local community



Including social value commitments in contracts helps our clients achieve their wider strategic goals

We offered a social value proposal as part of our mobile contract with Lancashire County Council, with measurable benefits for those in the community who are most in need.



The challenge

Lancashire County Council wanted to provide additional support for its residents and have a positive environmental impact, beyond the standard telecoms provision.

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For us, boosting social value is part of a strategic plan to improve the lives of our residents, especially those most in need. There are many aspects to this and we're very pleased that Virgin Media O₂ Business has been proactive in helping us achieve our goals.

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James Bennett
Digital Procurement Manager, Lancashire County Council

The social value solution

While delivering our mobile contract with Lancashire County Council, we were able to offer a package of measures to promote social value in the local community, benefiting those most in need, which in turn brings measurable benefits to the council in terms of engagement and trust.

Providing social value solutions that helped address the digital divide was a key requirement for the council. As such, we were able to leverage our charitable partnerships to deliver localised support.

We partnered with leading digital inclusion charity, Good Things Foundation, to create the National Databank community. Organisations can register to join the National Databank to provide free mobile data, texts and calls to those who may otherwise struggle to stay connected.

Through this partnership, Lancashire County Council's 66 libraries are now all part of the National Databank scheme. In one year alone, the council's library services distributed more than 1,200 free SIM cards to local residents at risk of data poverty.

To support the development of local skills, our Social Value team worked closely with the Lancashire Levy Network to identify local businesses wishing to upskill their workforce through apprenticeship qualifications. As part of our commitments, we've donated £20,000 to fund four new health and social care apprenticeships in partnership with a Preston-based organisation who provide care services for domiciliary, mental health and learning disabilities care.

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This training is invaluable for my team, and the positive impact extends to the local children and families we work with. It ensures that our community receives the finest advice, guidance, and care possible.

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Carlie Brooks

Managing Director at Direct Approach Care



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Virgin Media O₂ Business came to us with a range of options to help us promote social value. We couldn't have done it without them, their resources, their experience and their partners.

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James Bennett

Digital Procurement Manager, Lancashire County Council

The outcome

- Measurable benefits for local people including provision of free data for the digitally excluded and upskilling via apprenticeships
- Improved interactions with residents
- Improved perceptions of the council
- Visible improvements to local area

Social value services provided

- 1,200 free SIMs provided for local people who are digitally excluded
- £20,000 in apprenticeship funding to train local people
- Beach clean-up in St Anne's

'Take Five' initiative



Cleaning up St Anne's beach

Thanks to Virgin Media O₂'s 'Take Five' initiative, which offers all staff five paid volunteering days a year to support community projects, several North-West based employees organised a clean-up of litter and debris at local beauty spot St Anne's beach.

This activity supported the Surfers Against Sewage 'Million Mile Clean' initiative, which aims to clean over 10 million miles of UK landscape by 2030.

It's estimated that the clean-up will enhance the area for a considerable amount of time as the lack of litter encourages visitors to maintain the pristine appearance of the beach.



And that's just in one year. We look forward to continuing to work collaboratively with Lancashire County Council and local organisations to deliver further social value initiatives for Lancashire's communities.

To learn more about the National Databank – Powered by Good Things Foundation go to
www.goodthingsfoundation.org/national-databank/