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CSR-A Compliance at a Glance

A practical guide for businesses across the Four Pillars

The **CSR-A Four Pillars** — Environment, Workplace, Community and Philanthropy — provide organisations with a practical framework for demonstrating environmental and social responsibility. Legal compliance is the baseline. CSR-A then looks at what an organisation does beyond compliance, the impact it creates and how it demonstrates continuous improvement.

The CSR-A Compliance Ladder

A CLEARER PATH TO A BRIGHTER TOMORROW

1 Compliance
We meet our legal responsibilities.

Examples: Minimum wage, statutory risk assessments, legal waste disposal, mandatory reporting

2 Good Practice
We voluntarily do more than the law requires.

Examples: Real Living Wage, voluntary carbon measurement, wellbeing programmes, volunteering policies

3 Measurable Impact
We can demonstrate what changed.

Examples: CO_2 reduced, waste avoided, employees supported, jobs created, volunteer hours, beneficiaries reached

4 Leadership
We are creating long-term change.

Examples: Innovation, collaboration, supply-chain transformation, sector leadership, strategic multi-year programmes

Compliance is the baseline. Good practice demonstrates commitment. Measured outcomes demonstrate impact. Leadership demonstrates genuine environmental and social responsibility.

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The Four Pillars
Environment and Workplace

Two pillars that help businesses manage their environmental footprint and create a safe, fair and supportive workplace.

1 Environment

Managing climate, energy, waste, pollution, water, biodiversity and wider environmental impact.

What to check

- Waste Duty of Care and hazardous waste
- Environmental permits and licences where required
- Pollution prevention and spill controls
- Energy and carbon reporting (SECR if in scope)
- ESOS if applicable
- Packaging EPR obligations
- Water use and discharge controls
- WEEE, batteries, F-gases and other sector-specific requirements
- Biodiversity and planning requirements where relevant

Typical evidence

Environmental policy, waste transfer notes, permits, carbon data, environmental risk assessments, recycling records, energy bills, ISO 14001 / ISO 50001 where held.

Beyond compliance

Carbon reduction, renewable energy, waste prevention, circular economy, resource efficiency, biodiversity enhancement and measurable year-on-year improvement.

Key question:
Can we show that we understand our significant environmental impacts and are actively reducing them?

2 Workplace

Creating a fair, safe, inclusive and engaging place to work.

What to check

- Health and safety responsibilities
- Risk assessments, fire safety and first aid
- Workplace stress and mental wellbeing risks
- Equality, diversity and anti-harassment procedures
- Minimum wage and pay compliance
- Employment contracts and working time
- Family-friendly rights and statutory leave
- Workplace pensions
- Gender Pay Gap reporting where applicable
- Modern slavery, whistleblowing and employee data protection

Typical evidence

Health and safety policy, risk assessments, training records, payroll records, contracts, pension records, equality policies, wellbeing surveys and employee communications.

Beyond compliance

Real Living Wage, wellbeing programmes, flexible working, inclusive recruitment, EDI action plans, employee development, engagement and career progression.

Key question:
Are we simply complying with employment law, or are we creating a workplace where people can genuinely thrive?

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The Four Pillars
Community and Philanthropy

Two pillars that help businesses build responsible relationships with communities, partners and charitable causes.

3. Community

MANAGING THE ORGANISATION'S RELATIONSHIP WITH COMMUNITIES, CUSTOMERS, SUPPLIERS AND WIDER SOCIETY.

What to check

- Safeguarding responsibilities and DBS where relevant
- Community project governance and risk assessment
- Data protection and photographic permissions
- Equality and accessibility in community activities
- Responsible procurement and supply-chain due diligence
- Modern slavery and ethical sourcing
- Public procurement obligations where relevant
- Social value commitments and contract delivery evidence

Typical evidence

Safeguarding policy, community programme records, procurement documents, supplier due diligence, DBS processes, impact reports, stakeholder feedback and social value records.

Beyond compliance

Local employment, apprenticeships, school engagement, community partnerships, SME and local supplier support, skills development and measurable social value outcomes.

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Key question: Can we demonstrate that our community activities are safe, inclusive, ethical and producing measurable outcomes?

4. Philanthropy

GOVERNED GIVING, FUNDRAISING, VOLUNTEERING AND CHARITY PARTNERSHIPS THAT CREATE GENUINE SOCIAL BENEFIT.

What to check

- Governance of donations and fundraising
- Charity partnerships and written agreements where needed
- Commercial participator rules where relevant
- Anti-bribery and conflicts of interest
- Employee volunteering, safeguarding and insurance
- Payroll Giving, Gift Aid and tax treatment where applicable
- Accurate recording of donations, volunteering and in-kind support

Typical evidence

Donation records, fundraising approvals, volunteering records, charity agreements, anti-bribery policy, financial controls, due diligence checks and beneficiary information.

Beyond compliance

Paid volunteering, matched giving, pro-bono support, skills-based volunteering, strategic long-term charity partnerships and measured beneficiary outcomes.

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Key question: Can we show where our resources went, who benefited and what difference they made?

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10-Minute Compliance Check

A simple business self-check and next steps

Use this page as a quick internal review. The aim is to confirm that legal compliance is under control and identify where your organisation can evidence good practice, measurable impact and leadership.

Quick business checklist

1. ☐ We know which legislation applies to our organisation.
2. ☐ Responsibility for compliance is clearly allocated.
3. ☐ Our key policies are current and reviewed regularly.
4. ☐ Required licences, registrations and permits are up to date.
5. ☐ We can evidence our environmental responsibilities.
6. ☐ We can evidence our workplace responsibilities.
7. ☐ Community, safeguarding and supply-chain risks are appropriately managed.
8. ☐ Any fundraising, volunteering or charitable activity is properly governed.
9. ☐ Our environmental and social claims can be supported by evidence.
10. ☐ We can demonstrate improvement and impact beyond compliance.

What good looks like

Compliance
We meet the rules.

Good Practice
We choose to do more.

Impact
We can measure the difference.

Leadership
We create long-term value.

Next steps

- Review your current compliance position across the Four Pillars
- Identify any evidence gaps or policies needing update
- Record activities that go beyond legal minimum requirements
- Measure outcomes wherever possible
- Prepare for CSR-A assessment with clear documented evidence

CSR-A Principle: Compliance demonstrates that an organisation is operating within the rules. CSR demonstrates what it chooses to do beyond those rules. Impact demonstrates whether those actions actually make a difference.