



UK FLOUR
MILLERS

UK Flour Millers ESG charter

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Foreword



Flour millers play an essential role in the food supply chain, providing the key ingredient that households, bakeries, food manufacturers, and other food businesses use to make everything from staples like bread to treats including doughnuts and biscuits.

Ours is an industry meeting relentless demand – more than 12 million loaves of bread are supplied across the country every day. Our collective industry commitment is to meet this demand while operating sustainably and responsibly.

This Charter sets out a common framework through which our members demonstrate their leadership on environmental, social, and governance matters. It has been developed to support collective progress, rather than impose a single prescriptive standard. It provides members with a proportionate basis for action, encourages continuous improvement, and helps articulate the sector's contribution to a more sustainable and secure food system.

The ultimate beneficiaries are all stakeholders, from employees to the local communities where mills are located, suppliers to customers, and many more besides. The Charter underlines our commitment to being a good partner while underpinning national food security through the domestic production of our essential ingredient.

Alistair Gale

Chief Executive, UK Flour Millers

1. Purpose

This Charter sets out a shared commitment by the milling industry to integrate environmental, social and governance (ESG) considerations into their operations and business practices.

It recognises the essential role of the milling sector within the food supply chain and its responsibility to operate in a sustainable, ethical and resilient manner.

The Charter is intended to provide a clear and proportionate basis for action, supporting members at different stages of ESG maturity. It reflects a collective ambition to improve practices over time, while remaining practical and accessible across the sector.

2. Our Commitments

The milling sector commits to conducting its operations in a manner that reflects high standards of environmental stewardship, social responsibility and corporate governance.

In particular, the sector commits to:

Taking reasonable and proportionate steps to reduce the environmental impact of milling activities and to use natural resources efficiently



Providing safe, fair and inclusive working environments, promoting diversity, equity and inclusion, and treating all workers with dignity and respect



Acting with integrity, transparency and accountability in all aspects of its business conduct, including upholding high standards of business ethics



The sector acknowledges that ESG performance is an evolving process. Accordingly, members are encouraged to make commitments that are appropriate to their size, capabilities and operational context, while striving for ongoing improvement.

3. Priority Areas

To give effect to these commitments, this Charter sets out key environmental, social and governance priority areas in which members are encouraged to take proportionate and meaningful action.

Priority Area 1



Environmental

Members should seek to understand and manage the environmental impacts arising from their operations.

This includes:

- Promoting the efficient use of energy and water resources across milling processes
- Reducing waste generation, improving resource efficiency, and minimising emissions, including greenhouse gases where feasible, while supporting more circular approaches to resource use
- Supporting the sustainable and responsible sourcing of raw materials, including engagement with suppliers and consideration of environmental and social impacts, as well as evolving agricultural practices
- Developing awareness of climate-related risks and opportunities, and implementing appropriate adaptation and resilience measures to support operational continuity



Social

Members should ensure that their activities positively contribute to people, both within their workforce and in the wider community. This includes:

- Safeguarding the health, safety and wellbeing of employees, contractors and visitors
- Upholding fair labour practices and respecting internationally recognised human rights standards
- Supporting employee development through training, skills enhancement and engagement initiatives
- Promoting diversity, equity and inclusion within the workforce, ensuring equal opportunities and a respectful working environment
- Maintaining constructive relationships with local communities and contributing positively where possible





Governance

Members should maintain effective systems of oversight, accountability and ethical conduct. This includes:

- Adhering to high standards of ethical business behaviour, including the prevention of bribery and corruption, and promoting responsible and ethical practices across supply chains, with appropriate transparency and due diligence
- Ensuring compliance with all applicable legal and regulatory requirements
- Promoting transparency in decision-making and maintaining appropriate internal controls
- Establishing and maintaining proportionate risk management and business continuity arrangements



4. Expected Actions

Members are encouraged to take practical and proportionate steps to embed ESG considerations within their operations.

Such actions may include:

- Undertaking an initial assessment of current practices to identify key ESG risks and opportunities
- Defining clear priorities and setting achievable objectives aligned with organisational capacity
- Implementing policies, procedures and initiatives to address identified areas (e.g. energy efficiency measures, health and safety controls, supplier expectations)
- Monitoring and recording progress using appropriate metrics where feasible
- Engaging with employees, suppliers, customers and other stakeholders to support awareness and implementation
- Considering risks to operations and supply chains (e.g. climate, resource availability, market volatility) and identifying proportionate measures to strengthen resilience
- Communicating expectations on ethical conduct and responsible practices to suppliers and business partners
- Exploring opportunities for innovation and collaboration to support more sustainable and resilient food systems

Members are encouraged to adopt a pragmatic approach, recognising that actions and timelines will vary across the sector.



5. Continuous Improvement

This Charter represents an ongoing commitment to improvement rather than a fixed or prescriptive standard. Members are encouraged to build on their existing practices and to strengthen their approach over time.

This includes:

- Periodically reviewing ESG practices, policies and performance to identify areas for enhancement
- Building internal capability through training, communication and awareness-raising
- Learning from industry developments, emerging standards and peer experiences
- Gradually strengthening commitments, targets and disclosures over time as organisational maturity increases
- Enhancing organisational resilience over time by integrating ESG considerations into risk management and long-term planning

Through this approach, the sector as a whole can work progressively towards higher standards of sustainability, responsibility and governance, thereby contributing to a more resilient milling industry.