

Committed to maintaining the highest standards

The Company is committed to maintaining the highest standards of corporate governance, an obligation that is wholly endorsed by the Board.

A fundamental facet of this assurance is the desire to manage the Group in a sustainable and socially responsible manner, since we believe it to be integral to behaving in a way that is beneficial to all our stakeholders – employees, customers, suppliers, investors and shareholders – our environment, and the wider community.

Urban Exposure Plc is a young business – indeed, this annual report is its first as a public company – and in terms of headcount is relatively small, currently numbering less than 30 individuals. Nevertheless, we are mindful of our ability to make a positive contribution to society and we aim to improve continually our endeavours in these areas.

In pursuance of that aim, we recognise five key areas that contribute to corporate social responsibility: **Our people, Our clients, Our suppliers, Our environment and Our community.**

We set out both our beliefs and our tangible achievements in those areas here.

Our people

We know our business is nothing without our talented team and so investing in it is critical to how we intend to grow. We foster an environment that offers meaning and purpose through aligning personal values with business objectives. We want our employees to be proud to work with us. We actively encourage every individual to speak up, lead projects, drive change and continuously share their ideas and learnings regardless of their level within the organisation.

Our culture is underpinned by transparency. We recognise the importance of keeping employees informed of matters affecting them, such as the financial indicators impacting the performance of the business and developments in the industry in which we operate. These aspects are communicated to employees through weekly briefings, ‘town hall’ meetings and social events. It is of equal importance that our employees, regardless of seniority or tenure, have a voice so we can learn from our mistakes, improve our decision-making and continue to innovate and adapt to market demands.

Learning & development

We have cultivated a learning environment through providing various experiential learning opportunities for all. Where it is necessary, we will support learning with formal programmes. It is our belief that supporting individual growth helps our employees maximise their full potential, and strengthens our organisational capabilities, this in turn benefits all stakeholders by helping us to achieve more as individuals and collectively, and future-proofing the organisation as a whole.

Diversity

We believe that building diverse and inclusive teams is not just a generic business objective, but good for business. We are committed to promoting an inclusive and empowering working environment for all. We respect and value the things that make our people who they are. It is our different thinking styles, experiences and personality types which have allowed us to find dynamic solutions to the challenges we have faced.

Flexible working

We recognise how important it is for our employees to be able to balance responsibilities at work with responsibilities at home. We have therefore developed family-friendly policies to enable all our employees to deliver to their fullest potential whether this is working from home, compressed hours or part-time working arrangements.

Gender equality

Furthermore, gender parity is important to us and we want to be accountable for what we are doing to improve it. As an employer with less than 250 employees in the UK, the Group is not required to publish gender pay gap information under the Equalities Act 2010 (Gender Pay Gap Information) Regulations 2017. However, in the spirit of transparency, we have decided to begin publishing data from the next financial year onwards. We want to ensure that we have equality in our hiring practices, equal representation across the different functions and fair treatment for all.

We strive to improve every component of our employees' health and wellbeing through various initiatives, policies and benefit programmes. We expect a great deal from our employees and we therefore take our duty as an employer extremely seriously. We want our people to operate at their very best and we will continually work to ensure they have the tools and capabilities to do so.

Our clients

We serve many different types of client – borrowers (typically small to medium-sized residential property developers), development finance brokers, and institutional investors.

In seeking to ensure that we are providing the best possible service for our clients, we expect our employees to communicate clearly and honestly, and to exercise high ethical and moral standards at all times whilst representing the business. The Board ensures that ethical values and behaviours are recognised and respected throughout the organisation, and leads from the top in this respect by maintaining the highest standards of personal behaviour. The Audit Committee and Board scrutinise the activities of the business and have responsibility for monitoring the ongoing effectiveness of our internal controls.

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The Harris Federation

The Harris Federation is a not-for-profit charity with over 25 years' experience of education in and around London. It has built its reputation on a family of 47 (and growing) primary and secondary academies that, across the board, are setting the highest standards of excellence.

It is the top-performing large multi-academy trust and educates one in every 44 pupils in London (32,000) with a £200 million annual budget and 4,000 staff. 78% of all its academies have been graded as 'Outstanding' (compared to 20% nationally).

We have identified our first Harris Federation nursery – in Peckham, south-east London – for which we intend to provide

dedicated financial support. Our aim is to raise annual charitable donations sufficient to discharge the entire operational costs of the nursery on an ongoing basis, with a launch date of September 2019. We would maintain constant involvement in the running of the nursery and, in time, would look to expand the model to further nurseries across London and the rest of the UK.

This initiative will form the core of a dedicated Urban Exposure charitable foundation – Urban Exposure Philanthropy Limited – to be launched in the autumn of 2019. We are currently undergoing the process of registering the charity with the UK Charity Commission.

Corporate social responsibility continued

Our community

The Group understands the importance of giving back to the community and, as a consequence, we recognise the importance of respecting and supporting the communities in which we operate, thereby improving the positive impact of business in society.

The Group's employees support their local communities and dedicate their time to charities and other causes, both independently and with the Group's explicit endorsement. We are keen to support employees in these endeavours wherever possible, through the provision of company resources, including the allocation of paid time off from work or direct donations. We give all staff three CSR days a year in order for them to donate their time and expertise to charities on a pro bono basis, participate in community projects or for other fundraising activities.

The various initiatives that we have supported make it clear that we have a particular passion for giving under-privileged children a better future, inspiring and empowering youth to live their dreams. As part of that strategy, we have adopted the following programmes, all dedicated to supporting youth in terms of education specifically and well-being generally. Urban Exposure employees have been actively involved in supporting all three of the initiatives described in this section.

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Norwood

The Norwood charity supports vulnerable children and their families, children with special educational needs and people with learning disabilities and autism. It has a multi-disciplinary team of practitioners and a family of services designed specifically to support vulnerable children and their families.

It offers educational support services, occupational therapy, speech therapy and groups for children with social and emotional difficulties, and also a respite facility for children with learning disabilities or complex health needs.

In addition, it owns and manages 13 residential care homes to enable older children to live as independently as possible.

Urban Exposure was proud to win Norwood's Corporate Volunteer of the Year award for 2018.

Our suppliers

The logistics of our business require us to forge relationships with a wide variety of suppliers of services, both generally and as transactional counterparties: lawyers, surveyors, valuers, project managers, and other professional services firms. Our reputation is very important to us and, to help safeguard this, we will not knowingly do business with any organisation that doesn't share our commitment to dealing with stakeholders fairly, transparently and ethically. Our approach to procurement is based on the principles of competitive tendering and dealing with suppliers in a fair and open manner.

Furthermore, as an ethical employer, we take the elimination of modern slavery and/or human trafficking practices from our supply chain seriously, as required by the Modern Slavery Act 2015. Due to the nature of our business and our approach to governance, we assess that our supply chain is low risk but will keep this under assessment on a regular basis.

Our environment

We believe resolutely in the principle of caring for the environment and, therefore, acknowledge our responsibility to do business in a manner that both protects and improves that environment, both in the present and for the benefit of future generations.

Accordingly, we strive to incorporate environmental good practice into our workplace, taking a sustainable approach to waste management, reducing our carbon emissions and using resources wisely across the business. For example, we have taken large steps in our commitment to delivering a paperless office, and we minimise business travel, providing teleconferencing facilities to enable employees to reduce the need to travel for meetings.

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Akshaya Patra Foundation

The Akshaya Patra Foundation is a not-for-profit organisation headquartered in India. It strives to eliminate classroom hunger by implementing the Mid-Day Meal Scheme in state and state-aided schools.

Constantly leveraging technology, its state-of-the-art kitchens have become a subject of study across the world. It is now the world's largest NGO-run mid-day meal programme, serving wholesome food every school day to over 1.75 million children from 15,000 schools across 12 states in India.

In February 2019, the organisation celebrated the serving of over three billion meals. It also aims to counter malnutrition and actively supports the right to education of socio-economically disadvantaged children.