

November 2024

# ESG AT FIRST INTUITION - STATEMENT OF INTENT

## Statement of Intent

First Intuition has always been about strong values and creating a great place to work, even in the early days when it was a network of businesses set up by a number of experienced accountancy lecturers who were looking for a better way to do things.

It has been a big year for First Intuition with Reading, Bristol and Maidstone joining the Group, as well as new offices opening in Liverpool, Canterbury and Exeter. First Intuition Learning Solutions has started to promote First Intuitions courses in the international market.

However, as we have grown, we have sought to hold onto those beliefs creating a business which has won awards, and which continues to thrive. We have built an ethos on keeping people, both our staff and our customers and the employers we work with at the heart of what we do.

In its latest stage of development First Intuition is uniting behind a strong set of principles which will carry it into the future and seek to demonstrate how to be a force for good in business.

This document sets out our intentions as we embark on this journey.

## Statement from our CEO



*"We are extremely fortunate at First Intuition (FI) to have our purpose as enhancing career opportunities for thousands of young people (and a few retraining as well). This in itself has a social value to our customers and our team members but there is always more we can do to improve the impact we have on our community, our society and our environment. Having commissioned an external ESG review recently we are much clearer on our strengths which we need to build on, but also areas where we can improve. I am excited to see how FI continues to develop in this area and how we can ensure our clients, suppliers, students and team members all help us along this journey."*

*Martin*

## Our Journey

Although strong ethical and social values have always been a characteristic of First Intuition we have not traditionally promoted these and tracked our impact on the planet or on those communities we engage with. This year we have decided to change that.

Our ESG Team was set up in the summer of 2024 and represents many aspects of our business and geographical areas. Our Team are excited to bring together all of the great initiatives across the Group and have set challenging targets to take us even further in the future.

The ESG Team report to the First Intuition Board and also to our people across the country to make sure that ESG is embedded in our practices and that best practice is shared across the Group.

In July 2024 we employed an independent company to carry out a full assessment of our ESG position. Whilst we were pleased to be identified as a company with well “established” ESG principles, and one which fell in the top quartile of those assessed by Sustainable Advantage, we would like to do more. and based on this we have developed our priorities plan for 24/25.

In 2025 the ESG Team will produce their first Impact Report setting out the progress we are making. This document is intended to provide a preview of where we hope to be when our first full impact report is produced.

## Meet the Team



Jo Dyson  
Director,  
First Intuition  
Reading



Sarah Mackey  
COO



Jess Colver  
Project Manager



Claire Mills  
Apprenticeships  
Director Bristol



Liv Szekelyhidi  
People Team



Becki Hunter  
Head of Business  
Projects



Zach Dyson  
Finance Team



Julie Powell  
Head of  
Operations &  
Customer Services,  
Northwest

## Social

### Being a great Place to Work

This has always been a strong area for First Intuition as the business was built by management for its people. Making the business fun and recognising the contribution of our people is important to us.

In 2024 we were recognised in The Times Best Places To Work (medium businesses) which recognised our investment in people.

- We are a Living Wage Accredited Employer
- We offer a range of benefits for our staff as well as extensive training opportunities and progression.
- First Intuition is 48% owned by its people
- First Intuition promotes inclusion in all of its activities and this is demonstrated by the local EDI groups as well as the national inclusion series which brings external speakers in to raise awareness of all aspects of inclusion from Racism to Men's Health and Menopause.
- We have introduced blind screening for new job applicants to make sure that we are reducing barriers in the business

Our plans for the future include a further review of our benefits extending our family pay to make us a leader in our sector.

Next year we will publish our first gender pay report which reveals that women are well represented in the senior management Team. However, we will take steps to make sure that both genders are fairly represented at all levels of the organisation and salary levels.

### Working with local schools and careers services

As an organisation which seeks to promote social mobility through education we work closely with local schools and careers services to provide careers information about our sector. We aim to raise awareness of the benefit of apprenticeship as a route to a professional career.

### Our Activities this year

Across all of our centres we attend local careers sessions reaching pupils from year 10 upwards to help them to understand the different pathways into accountancy and help them to choose their next steps. Our 1-2 day academies are open to all year 12-13 pupils and are free of charge. They help young people to make better decisions about their next steps and to understand the career pathways available to them as well as giving a taster of what it might be like to study accountancy. Attendees will be given guidance in CV writing and interview technique to prepare them for working life.

In house we offer Careers support to those who are deciding on their next steps, whether it is progressing in house or moving onto something new. We help them to recognise their own strengths and weaknesses as well as building on the transferable skills they have acquired whilst they were with us.

Our plans for the future include creating a Pre - Careers service for school leavers to help them to make informed decisions about their career and to support them as they transition into working life. Our new partnership with LTSB will help us to achieve this.

## Our Charity Work

First Intuition People are a very generous bunch and our regular website blog illustrates some of the fantastic projects which our people are part of.

## Working with LTSB

We have just completed our annual review of our National Charity and the firm have voted to support LTSB which is a charity with similar values to First Intuition. LTSB encourages social mobility by supporting young people as they make their first steps into the working world.

*"We are absolutely thrilled to be partnering with First Intuition. Together, we have the opportunity to create transformative experiences for the young people we support that will inspire, equip and positively impact their lives. This partnership marks the start of an exciting and impactful journey, and we can't wait to see the incredible difference we will make together, having some fun together along the way! From the bottoms of our hearts, thank you."* - LTSB. Find more information [on our blog](#).

*"Whilst our link with LTSB is new to us we are very excited at the opportunities it offers both to raise funds and support the charity as well as providing opportunities for our Team to volunteer through mock interviews and CV writing."* Jo Dyson ESG Champion

We also support ICAEW RISE initiative which provides workshops in schools to promote financial literacy. Seven academies across the country introduce apprenticeships to students in years 10 to 12, offering taster sessions and explaining pathways into accountancy and related job roles. They also provide advice on finding and succeeding in job opportunities. Over 100 presentations have been given at schools and careers fairs to raise awareness about careers in finance and business, and to share information about apprenticeships.

[Rise: social mobility programme sets sights on expansion](#)

## What our Team get up to

FI Team members often give their time and we have a plethora of football coaches, park run co-ordinators, mentors, fundraisers and volunteers.

Each centre actively engages to support charities of their choice from food banks, winter clothing for the homeless and supplying advent calendars to disadvantaged children.

To see just some of the activities our Team have got up to please see [our charities blog on the website](#).

## Our Volunteering Policy

We offer staff up to 2 days per year to volunteer for a charity of their choice. In some cases this is extended so that we can support a worthwhile cause.

As an example our Manchester office recently completed a community action day combined with a chance to get the Team outside in the fresh air.

[ESG: Working with charities to lift spirits at FI](#)

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## Governance

The creation of the ESG Team demonstrates First Intuition's commitment to promote ESG as a pillar on which we do business. This ensures that in future we will have better quality information on which to make decisions which may impact the environment or our stakeholders.

As we grow strong governance will be a key to our success and we are delighted to have a strong management Team at FI as well as support from our investors. This is supported by a network of governing bodies scrutinising key areas of our business. Over the years we have adjusted to the impact of Covid on the education sector as well as the impact of fixed funding bands for apprentices and regulatory changes. To thrive we have remained agile introducing changes and responding to business needs in a changing environment.

## Our role in the Trailblazers Standards

First Intuition have played a key role in developing the new apprenticeship standards for the finance profession, from level 2 through to level 7. Our staff have committed time over a number of years to make sure that the developing standards meets our employers needs as well as supports the needs of future apprentices.

## Our partnership with Professional Bodies

First Intuition Teams work closely with all of the Professional Bodies in our sector to make sure that the quality of education we offer is second to none. In recent months the Team have worked closely with ICAEW to develop their new syllabus and to make sure there is a smooth transition to the new standard for our learners.

Our work with the AAT resulted in First Intuition being awarded a Special Recognition award which recognises our long term commitment.

## Working with Industry and the Finance Profession

To be successful it is important that our programmes meet the needs of employers. The next generation of finance professionals will have different skills to those of the past. We regularly consult with our clients and local businesses to make sure that we understand their needs and that this informs our programme design.

Our plans for the future include introducing Audit, and remuneration/ nomination committees to support the growing business.

We are also implementing formal tracking of all ESG metrics across the business to share with our stakeholders and support decision making.

## Our suppliers

First Intuition has long worked collaboratively with its suppliers but we are working hard to introduce a full ESG screening for all of our suppliers. This should be in place by the end of 2025 and will consider both the carbon impact of our supply chain as well as wider ethical aspects. In this way we hope to be able to promote awareness of ESG principles in making business decisions and also to encourage our suppliers to join us on our ESG journey.

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## Environmental

It is important to us that we reduce our impact on the planet. With this in mind we have already taken steps to look carefully at our future growth plans especially choosing buildings which will help to minimise our carbon footprint.

## Our Estates

Our new state of the art office in London has been selected with sustainability in mind including blue roof technology and heat capturing technology. Find out more information on our website; [Sustainability at FI: Building a Greener Future](#).

In addition, our Southampton office has been newly refurbished by our landlords to make sure that it meets the highest energy rating.

As the business continues to expand we will continue to focus on choosing buildings which can support us on our journey. Where this is not possible we will work with our landlords to make changes which minimise our impact on the environment.

## Our Suppliers

By strengthening our procurement processes we hope to reduce the impact on the environment arising from our supply chain. For example, we are working with our print suppliers to make sure that our notes are printed on FSC paper and that we print as little as possible. For example, we have reduced the number of pages in our printed materials by taking more of our materials online. We continue to support printed materials as research shows that learners achieve best when using a combination of printed material as well as online resources. We continue to monitor this research.

## Circular economy

Reuse, and recycle are key tenets in reducing our carbon footprint. The recently launched FI marketplace seeks to build in this by offering a chance to share unwanted goods with others in the network. Between us we can reduce the number of unwanted items going to landfill.

Our IT team make sure that our old laptops are recycled wherever possible.

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## Final words

This statement includes a sample of the work we are doing at FI, but it wouldn't be possible to include everything here. Each centre and each individual at FI is encouraged to embrace ESG values. Each person approaches things in a way which reflects their own interests and the needs of their local environment.

In the years ahead we will continue to take steps to promote ESG and to make sure that we act in a sustainable way creating an example for our learners and for those we work with.