

Corporate Social Responsibility

The Group has long recognised the importance of conducting its business in a socially responsible manner. This is demonstrated in the way we deal with our employees, customers, suppliers and the communities where we do business. The Group considers that corporate social responsibility is an integral element of good business management.

The Environment

Group companies are committed to reducing the amount of waste they produce and to limiting the impact which our businesses have on the environment. The Group's Irish Businesses are members of Repak and our UK businesses are members of Biffpack. Continued improvement in environmental performance is sought through various initiatives including reducing waste going to landfill through the use of bailers for recycling packaging.

Health and Safety

The Group is committed to achieving the best practicable standards of health and safety for our employees, customers and visitors to our trading locations. We consider health and safety to be an important element in the overall management of our businesses. Group companies actively work to identify and minimise health and safety risks. They insure that all reasonable precautions are taken to provide and maintain conditions for employees, customers and visitors alike which are safe and healthy and in compliance with statutory requirements. Accidents are monitored so that corrective action may be taken where considered necessary and in order to reduce the number of incidents and the associated cost of claims from employees and customers.

Human Resources

The success of the Group over a long period is due to the exceptional contribution and commitment of its management and staff. The Group's decentralised culture, which is well supported at Group level, gives management and staff the autonomy to use their expertise, skills and talents both for their own career development and for the success of the Group.

The Group and its businesses are committed to high standards of employment practice and are recognised as good employers in the UK and Ireland. We aim to reward management and staff fairly by reference to skills, performance, peers and local market conditions. We provide incentives to management and staff through remuneration policies which promote commitment and reward achievement. It is Group policy that all employees receive fair and equal treatment regardless of gender, age, ethnic origin, nationality, religion or disability.

We are committed to offering equal opportunities to all individuals in their recruitment, training and career development, having regard to their particular aptitudes and abilities. Training and development programs are important to the growth and prosperity of our business. Significant attention and resources are devoted to this area. Training programs directly organised by Group businesses, include the Plumbase Academy, and in conjunction with external bodies, such as the Builders Merchant Federation in the UK, cover a range of issues including sales development, customer service, product training, health and safety and leadership skills. These programs help to ensure that we develop, retain and attract the best talent at all levels in our business. We aim to fill vacancies through internal promotions and complement internal appointments with recruitment from outside the organisation.

We have Revenue approved share schemes in place in the UK and Ireland which enable employees to share in the success and future growth of the Group. The majority of our employees in Ireland are members of the Group's Share Participation Scheme which has enabled them to benefit from acquiring shares in the Group tax efficiently. Following a highly successful SAYE scheme which was launched in 2001 and matured earlier this year, the Group will shortly announce the launch of an invitation to almost 5,000 eligible UK employees to acquire attractively discounted shares under the scheme.

Community

We recognise our responsibility as a member of the communities where our branches/plants are located and where we do business. We are committed to developing close relationships with those communities through local management supporting a range of initiatives covering health, welfare, sport, education and community projects. We also support a range of charitable causes, mainly at local level, by giving donations.

In Ireland, Woodie's DIY are sponsor of the senior track and field championships, an important event in the Irish sporting calendar featuring the best athletes in Ireland across almost thirty disciplines of athletics. Oxford, the location of the first Buildbase branch acquired in 1996 and head office to the business, is also home to Oxford United Football Club who are sponsored by Buildbase. Jacksons are sponsor to the Lincoln 10 kilometre race, an important sporting event in the Lincoln area. Employees also take part in different fundraising activities. Staff at Buildbase raised over €100,000 for Macmillan Cancer Relief and staff at Jacksons raised funds for the Lincolnshire and Nottinghamshire Air Ambulance.