



Communication on Engagement

Prepared by the London School of Hygiene
& Tropical Medicine (LSHTM) for the
United Nations Global Compact (UNGC)

Period covered by this Communication on Engagement (COE):

10 August 2020-1 November 2022

Statement of Continued Support:

1st November 2022

I am pleased to confirm that the London School of Hygiene & Tropical Medicine reaffirms its support to the United Nations Global Compact (UNGC) and its Ten Principles in the areas of Human Rights, Labour, Environment and Anti-Corruption.

In this Communication on Engagement (COE), we describe the actions that our organisation has taken to support the UNGC and its Principles, which we have pledged to participate and engage with through:

- Conducting applied research and thought leadership to advance best practices;
- Promoting the UNGC ten principles; and
- Educating a variety of audiences about sustainability.

We commit to sharing this information with our stakeholders, and welcome feedback on its contents.



Sincerely yours,

Liam

Professor Liam Smeeth
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Director of the London School of Hygiene & Tropical Medicine

Description of Actions and Measurement of Outcome

The London School of Hygiene & Tropical Medicine is renowned for its research, postgraduate studies and continuing education in public and global health. We have an annual research income of more than £180 million and are one of the highest-rated research institutions in the UK.

Our School has an international presence and collaborative ethos, and is uniquely placed to help shape health policy and translate research findings into tangible impact. We have 3,500 staff conducting research in over 100 countries, and more than 4,000 students — all working with a collective purpose to improve health worldwide.

Within that, we are committed to upholding the UNGC's 10 principles as a signatory. The following section describes both actions and outcomes of our work in line with that.



Human Rights

Principle 1: Businesses should support and respect the protection of internationally proclaimed human rights; and

Principle 2: make sure that they are not complicit in human rights abuses.

LSHTM works to ensure human rights are enshrined across our research, teaching, and engagement. As a university with a mission to improve health and health equity in the UK and worldwide, our primary focus directly supports Articles 25 and 26 of the [Universal Declaration of Human Rights \(1948\)](#).

We also work to uphold human rights found in the declaration as an employer and educator in our internal operations. Relevant LSHTM policies, committees, and workstreams enshrine and are otherwise transparent about other aspects of human rights across Articles 4, 5, 18, 19, 20, 23, 24 and 27.

These include our [code of practice on free speech](#), which means we are an academic community of staff and students who are free to query the positions and views of others and to put forward new and possibly radical ideas within the bounds of lawful free speech and expression. Every member of LSHTM and every student and other individual associated with the School is entitled to freedom of thought, conscience and religion, to hold opinions without interference, disability or disadvantage, and to freedom of expression within the law, including the right to seek, receive and impart information and ideas as long as their actions comply with LSHTM policies and relevant UK laws.

As part of this, we also embed relevant aspects of the UK's [Prevent Duty](#) under the [Counter Terrorism and Security Act 2015 \(CTSA\)](#), particularly Section 26(1) which covers Relevant Higher Education Bodies.

Wherever we work in the world, the safety and wellbeing of the communities that we

work with is paramount, as is the safety and wellbeing of our staff, volunteers and partners. [Safeguarding](#) is everyone's responsibility and we actively encourage an open and transparent culture that enables open discussion, supported by robust policies which we monitor the effectiveness of on a regular basis, including our [Safeguarding and Security Screening policy](#).

Our [Research Governance Committee](#) reports annually to our Senate and oversees best practices and consistency, compliance, monitoring, relevant policies and procedures, and considers and adjudicates on appeals to decisions made by our Research Ethics Committees.

We have rigorous ethics procedures that ensure the safeguarding of the rights, safety, dignity and well-being of all actual and potential research participants. This includes protecting participants from physical, psychological, social/cultural, economic and legal risks of harm.

All research projects undertaken by staff or students involving humans, their tissue, and/or their data must undergo ethical review by one of our [Research Ethic Committees](#) before the research begins. These are benchmarked against recognised international ethical standards, such as the Belmont Report (1979), World Medical Association's Declaration of Helsinki (1964, as amended (currently 2013)), ICH Good Clinical Practice (R1, 1997 & R2, 2016), CIOMS International Ethical Guidelines for Health related Research Involving Humans (2016), as well as other established standards in biomedical research.

We also embed [equity, diversity, and inclusion](#) policies, strategies, and values, which are covered more fully in later sections.

Our staff have access to a [wide range of benefits](#), including annual leave, sick leave, compassionate leave, carers leave, parental leave, flexible working, pensions, health services, professional development, well-being and engagement services, and more.

Labour

Principle 3: Businesses should uphold the freedom of association and the effective recognition of the right to collective bargaining;

Principle 4: the elimination of all forms of forced and compulsory labour;

Principle 5: the effective abolition of child labour; and

Principle 6: the elimination of discrimination in respect of employment and occupation.

As an employer and educator, LSHTM's approach to these principles is reflected in our framework and systems, which we update where necessary in line with improving standards and best practice. These include our policies on:

Trade unions:

All LSHTM employees are entitled to join one of our three recognised [trade unions](#) even if they are part-time, have other jobs too or are employed on an hourly basis (Principle 3).

Gender equality:

LSHTM participates in the [Athena SWAN Charter](#) operated by Advance HE, and used across the globe to promote gender equality within higher education and research. We currently have an institutional bronze Athena SWAN award valid until 2022, as well as faculty Athena SWAN awards (Epidemiology & Population Health: Bronze Award, Infectious & Tropical Diseases: Bronze Award, Public Health & Policy: Silver Award).

Our latest submission includes an action plan focused on improving gender equality across recruitment (at senior levels), promotion and

career development, family friendly and inclusive organisational culture.

We further analyse our [gender and ethnicity pay gap](#) as required by UK legislation, with reporting every year, and are making continual progress. LSHTM also has an [Equal Pay policy](#), and is a member of [Working Families](#) – a work-life balance charity seeking to remove the barriers that people with caring responsibilities face in the workplace.

Many areas of our research also focus on public and global health challenges driven or encountered as a result of gender, for instance, our [Centre for Maternal, Adolescent, Reproductive, and Child Health \(MARCH\)](#). MARCH brings together over 550 researchers at LSHTM with a range of expertise across 50 disciplines, from anthropology to zoonoses, clinical care, lab, and social sciences to improve the health of women, children & adolescents worldwide.

Disability equality:

We aim to move towards [an approach to disability inclusion](#) based on the Social Model of Disability. LSHTM is a [Disability Confident Employer](#) and is partnered with [Access Able](#).

We have a [staff disability policy](#), as well as [procedures and guidance](#) for supporting disabled staff. We also welcome students with disabilities and aim to provide appropriate [disability support and facilities](#) for each student, and to review practices and procedures to enable and encourage disabled students to participate fully in life at LSHTM.

This is also a research focus area at LSHTM, primarily through our [International Centre for Evidence in Disability \(ICED\)](#). Their mission is to provide evidence to improve the health and wellbeing of people with disabilities globally. They develop tools, techniques and evidence on disability, leading to scalable interventions that can improve people's lives across the world.

ICED has a core group of 20+ researchers and doctoral students, with broad skills and knowledge in disability, working with researchers across LSHTM and beyond.

LGBTQ+ equality:

LSHTM follows several guiding EDI principles, including [one specifically on](#) “Being proactive in championing LGBTQ+ equality worldwide.” LGBTQ+ inclusion, is demonstrated and embedded in our [EDI strategy, action plan](#), and related policies and procedures, such as the [gender reassignment and trans equality policy](#).

LSHTM is also a [Stonewall Diversity Champion](#), and is committed to working to support staff who are LGBTQ+. Partnering with Stonewall allows us to access external expertise; ensuring policies, procedures and general practice are in line with the most equitable approaches for the LSHTM community. This is particularly crucial within the global environment LSHTM operates in, which has varying levels of tolerance for LGBTQ+ individuals.

Racial equality

Racial equality is a very important area of focus at LSHTM, which we have taken [major strides in](#) over the past couple of years, including a commitment in 2020 to a number of actions that non-exhaustively include:

- Becoming a signatory to the [Race Equality Charter](#)
- Appointing a champion for racial harassment and discrimination in our Executive Team
- Appointing a Pro-Director of EDI
- Appointing a Race Equality Advisor

- Widening participation and admission practices, including appointing dedicated staff
- Introducing anonymised shortlisting for professional services recruitment
- Work to decolonise our curriculum (including paid facilitators, updated teaching materials and development of language guides)
- Working in collaboration with our [Decolonising Global Health group](#) to ensure the lived experiences of staff and students are embedded in our work
- [Decolonising Global Health](#) lecture series
- A report on the [colonial history of LSHTM](#) up to 1960
- Launching a [Report & Support system](#) for bullying and harassment, including that of a racist nature
- The [adoption](#) of the IHRA definition of anti-semitism, with additional caveats recommended by the UK’s Home Affairs Committee

We also undertook an [independent review to address discrimination and advance anti-racism and equality](#) across 2020-2021, which resulted in a detailed action plan for the institute and our community. All of these actions include a variety of supporting resources, courses, events, and discussions shaping how we work to evolve our policies and processes, and to change mindsets and behaviours to make us more inclusive in all that we do for our staff, students, partners and communities.

We have asked our entire community to actively engage in our collective effort to move forward in pursuit of an equitable and inclusive environment for everyone, in line with Principle 6.



Anti-slavery and trafficking:

LSHTM is committed to improving our practices with the aim of combatting slavery and human trafficking (Principle 4), with [statements made](#) pursuant to Section 54 of the UK’s [Modern Slavery Act 2015](#). Due diligence is carried out as a member of the London University Purchasing Consortium.

A number of projects and workstreams across LSHTM also investigate and provide evidence to uphold these principles and those of the [ILO Declaration on Fundamental Principles And Rights at Work \(1998\)](#) in the scope of their research.

For example, research was recently carried out on [risks of modern slavery](#) in the UK, which sought to understand risk factors for paid care workers and provided recommendations to reduce their vulnerability to this (Principle 4).

Elsewhere, relevant to Principle 5, the [‘Invisible Girls’ project](#) works to build an evidence basis to guide programming and policies to address child labour. It is designed to reduce harm associated with child domestic work, improve the context of opportunities for working children to learn, gain skills, and increase their chances of securing safe, healthy futures and livelihoods.

Environment

Principle 7: Businesses should support a precautionary approach to environmental challenges;

Principle 8: undertake initiatives to promote greater environmental responsibility; and

Principle 9: encourage the development and diffusion of environmentally friendly.

LSHTM's [2022-2027 strategy](#) is working towards a healthy, sustainable, and equitable world for everyone. Sustainability is thus a core principle of our operations and deliverables, and as we pursue our mission and vision, we have openly committed to: *Maintain an enduring commitment to embedding environmental sustainability in our research, education and all aspects of our work and achieving carbon neutral by 2030.*

As a global research and education institution we recognise our responsibility to generate evidence and empower future health leaders, and that in doing so we have an impact on the environment. We aim to continually expand our understanding of the impacts of climate change on human and planetary health, and are taking significant steps to ensure this impact is mitigated with a plan to deliver our mission in a sustainable way. We aim to embed sustainability and move towards net zero in all our operations, policies, decision making and infrastructure improvements, in line with all three UNGC Environment Principles.

LSHTM has made its own commitment to [Net Zero by 2030](#), an ambitious goal which drives many of our progressive work programmes including our underpinning [Energy Carbon and Management Plan](#). As a result, we recently placed 38 (out of 154 universities) in the [People and Planet League 2021](#).

We provide comprehensive updates on our actions to date, and opportunities for further improvements in our [Sustainability Update](#), and have a comprehensive and growing range of policies, practices, and research that enable us to realise this vision across key areas of operations and infrastructure, people, research, innovation, and with a dedicated governance structure.

Operations and infrastructure:

Sustainability and environmental considerations are at the forefront of our operations and infrastructure.

All of our [building improvements and operations](#) are undertaken through a sustainability lens, with the aim to provide a high quality, flexible and sustainable environment for research and education. LSHTM is [ISO 14001:2015 Environmental Management certified](#) (August 2022) and related workstreams include our:

- [Heat Decarbonisation Plan](#) to support our carbon reduction and identify areas that require additional funding for energy efficient heating solutions;
- [Sustainable and energy efficient laboratories and equipment](#) (including groups and awards for best practice);
- [Renewable Electricity Certification](#) (renewal expected Q4 2022);
- [Sustainable waste management policy](#), which includes guidance has oversight from the Head of Sustainability and is updated every two years to reflect new industry best practice.

Progressive sustainability infrastructure projects are also taking place across our Units in Uganda and the Gambia. These include the installation of [solar photovoltaic systems at MRC/UVRI and LSHTM Uganda Research Unit](#)

across three field sites, and the [largest solar power generation system in The Gambia at MRC Unit The Gambia at LSHTM](#) inaugurated at our Fajara campus, with support from the UNIDO/GEF 5 project: "Greening the productive sectors in The Gambia".

In terms of financial operations, LSHTM is committed to improving our environmental sustainability, which necessarily includes our investment portfolio.

We divested from coal in 2015, and in 2020 stated our intention to completely divest from fossil fuels. As of 31 December 2020 our investments in fossil fuels stood at £116,507, all of which we committed to removing from our portfolio by August 2021. As of July 2021, we divested our only remaining direct holding in a fossil fuel company. LSHTM has no plans to hold any direct investment in fossil fuels in the future.

We also have a policy on [sustainable purchasing](#), in which we committed to "adopt sustainable purchasing and the use of environmentally sound goods and services." This covers areas of purchase like paper, furniture, laboratory equipment, ICT equipment, and catering.

People:

We have a sustainable and recently updated [Travel Policy](#), which ensures that LSHTM can carry out its duty of care with respect to working off-site and to reduce the environmental impacts of travel activities, including carbon emissions from business travel that make up 70% of LSHTM's carbon emissions.

Our LSHTM community is encouraged to participate in our [Ride2Work scheme](#), which provides affordable access to bicycles through work programmes, reducing the

carbon footprint of commuting to our sites. While on site, all staff, students, and visitors have access to [sustainable and healthy food provision](#), including our 'Planetary Pick' which are meal options that aim to promote sustainable and healthy diets, and allow individuals to make more informed choices about what they eat. We also provide [Fairtrade accredited](#) food and drink, in alignment with the UNGC's principles on human rights.

Research:

LSHTM is home to the [Centre on Climate Change and Planetary Health \(CCCPH\)](#), which was set up to respond to the challenge of a changed planet and directly informs an understanding of environmental challenges (Principle 7) while promoting greater environmental responsibility (Principle 8).

Through the many research streams of its members and their collective inputs, they work to prepare governments, academia, health systems and citizens for a new era of public health: one that can embrace and contend with the realities of the Anthropocene.

Examples of research include [mapping carbon footprint reductions from virtual conferences](#), [modelling excess mortality as a result of heat/cold extremes](#), [increased child mortality from carbon emissions](#), [assessments of air quality improvement during lockdown](#), and [much more](#).

The Centre also drives [engagement with the public](#), encouraging a collective global solution to the public health issues driven by climate change.

CCCPH and LSHTM also support [Planetary Health Post-doctoral Fellowships](#) in partnership with Stanford University, and are further host to the [Planetary Health Network](#). This is a group of LSHTM students, alumni

and early career researchers, supported by CCCPH and forming part of its membership. They aim to: promote engagement in planetary health research and evidence within LSHTM communities; connect and collaborate with current and future leaders in climate change and planetary health; and work in partnership with LSHTM to promote evidence-based and feasible actions to increase school sustainability.

Innovation:

A key aspect of responding to these challenges are to encourage the development and diffusion of environmentally friendly technologies (Principle 9).

LSHTM is in the middle of establishing the [Sustainable Climate Impact Fund \(SCIF\)](#). This is a pioneering and progressive social enterprise focused on improving the health and socio-economic wellbeing of communities and their local environment in low- and middle-income countries.

A subsidiary of LSHTM, SCIF is a unique initiative that uses carbon offsetting as a means to deliver solutions, placing transparency at the heart of its service. Unlike other offsetting schemes, it draws on LSHTM's expertise in global health to put the health and socio-economic wellbeing of the people who need it most at the forefront of its operations and choices of intervention.

Ultimately, the initiative aims to:

- Develop and facilitate community-based initiatives which reduce, ameliorate and avoid the environmental, social and economic effects of climate change on rural communities in low- & middle-income countries (LMICs) through targeted projects and interventions.

- Foster improvements to the health and wellbeing of communities in LMICs, especially women and girls, by improving access to basic amenities and fostering economic empowerment for a more sustainable, prosperous future.

Innovations in sustainability and environmentally friendly technologies are also being driven elsewhere in LSHTM.

For example, students at LSHTM's MRC Unit The Gambia recently won the top prize in the Queen's Platinum Jubilee Student Challenge for their [3D printer sustainability solutions](#). They will set up two waste recycling plants, the first with a 3D printer which will convert plastic waste materials generated on-site to a range of reusable products like laboratory equipment and medical components. The second will use organic waste to produce methane that will power the cookers in the on-site restaurant, with by-products being used as fertiliser for their flower and community vegetable garden.

Governance:

All of this work is overseen by our dedicated sustainability team (Head of Sustainability, Sustainability Operations Officer, and Sustainability Communications Officer). They are further supported by a Sustainable Action Committee, which is comprised of both academics and professional services staff across the institute who work voluntarily to progress these efforts.

Recent outputs from the sustainability team include an internal sustainable behaviour change campaign inclusive of [digital animations](#) to raise awareness externally as well. This was focused on incentivising staff, students and our wider community to improve practices in the course of their work and in achieving our environmental targets together.

Anti-corruption

Principle 10: Businesses should work against corruption in all its forms, including extortion and bribery.

LSHTM has a long-standing [Anti-bribery and Corruption Code of Conduct](#), which reflects the legislated [UK Bribery Act 2010](#), and which all staff, students, and persons associated with LSHTM are expected to comply with. This outlines definitions, principles, reporting systems, penalties, and guidance.



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