

UNICEF UK's

Common Approach

Working together for children



unicef 

Common Approach

A culture to be proud of

When I first joined UNICEF UK in 1999, I was struck by the positive and friendly culture. I realised that the way we worked together to achieve collective goals was the key factor in our success.

To ensure that this special approach could continue to work for us, I wanted others to take notice of the culture and to appreciate the importance of sustaining and developing it as UNICEF UK grew and became more complex. I began to talk about what I was

seeing and feeling and what I had learned was important from my experience of leading and managing in other organisations. The resulting philosophy is what we call Common Approach.

The seven inter-connecting principles that make up our Common Approach explain how we work together at UNICEF UK. These principles reflect our values, describe the culture we aspire to and are an important part of what we do:

- 1 Putting children first
- 2 Personal responsibility
- 3 A sound work-life balance
- 4 Transparent and appropriate information sharing
- 5 Mutual trust and respect
- 6 Innovation and learning
- 7 Good management

The words that follow seek to bring these principles to life. And, to strengthen understanding and application of the principles, we are committed to providing everyone who works at UNICEF UK with the opportunity to participate in relevant learning activities.

Working in a Common Approach way is not always easy, and we will have the occasional 'off' day when we might say or do something that does not reflect our shared values. But working in a Common Approach way is everyone's responsibility and it requires conscious and constant effort from us all. I believe that this effort will enable us to achieve the best results for the children whose rights we exist to uphold as well as contributing to UNICEF UK being a happy and fulfilling place to work.



David Bull

Putting children first

At UNICEF UK, we are united by a shared belief in a better world for children and this is reflected in the passion we all bring to our work. We see the organisation as one team and collaborate enthusiastically with colleagues at all levels to deliver the best possible results for children.

1

Putting children first means prioritising and sustaining focus on work that will have the greatest impact on our agreed goals. Making the world a better place for children is the ultimate reward for our efforts.





focus
impact **united** passionate
prioritisation
collaborative
enthusiastic

Personal responsibility

Everyone is encouraged, enabled, empowered and supported to act on their initiative and make decisions within parameters agreed with their manager. With this delegated responsibility, each one of us recognises and accepts accountability for our actions and the decisions we make en route to the achievement of our objectives.

2

Having clear and agreed parameters means that we don't need our boss to sign off on everything but we'll ask for advice if we aren't sure, knowing that we won't be thought less of for seeking help and guidance

We know we can't succeed alone and we work with others in our team and beyond to get the best results for children. We recognise everyone's contribution and avoid blaming others when setbacks occur. We adjust our strategies if they are not working well, seeking to learn from the results of our collective efforts.





working together
recognition initiative
parameters accountability
decisions

A sound work-life balance

Work and life are not completely separate. Just as life occasionally has an impact on our work, so work sometimes affects our home lives. We acknowledge this reality and work with it to our best ability.

We cherish our well-being and proactively manage our own work-life balance. We know that sometimes we will need to work longer hours, especially during children's emergencies and time-sensitive projects.

We care about each other's well-being and take an interest in each other's work, helping and supporting one another where we can. We work hard and understand that everyone needs to recuperate so we take our annual leave and breaks during the day to re-energise ourselves.

We also embrace flexible, committed working when it has mutual benefits and does not interfere with the achievement of organisational goals.

3





support
balance - well-being
re-energise
flexible
proactive

Transparent and appropriate information sharing

4

At UNICEF UK, we are committed to transparent and appropriate information sharing. We regularly ask ourselves “who needs to be aware of this?” and share relevant information accordingly. We recognise and accept that some information is confidential or time sensitive and cannot be widely shared. We explain when this is the case and share appropriate information as soon as we can.

We are sensitively decisive: taking the time needed to consider the right information and debate issues before making clear decisions to which we all commit.

We choose the best channel for sharing information and decisions, prioritising verbal and face-to-face communication wherever possible.





confidentiality
clarity
decisions
commitment
sharing
relevant

Mutual trust and respect

At UNICEF UK, we value a working environment based on mutual trust, where we can be ourselves, knowing that we will be supported rather than judged when we don't know the answers, are uncertain or make mistakes.

We start from the presumption that our colleagues are motivated, competent and committed and we relate to them on that basis. We respect and value our colleagues' different backgrounds, skills, experience and knowledge and we are open to ideas that are different from our own.

We maintain a supportive environment so that we are all able to ask questions and express opinions without fear of embarrassment. We explore each other's views with interest, listen and seek to understand.

5





open to ideas
competent
committed motivated
value others
listen express

Innovation and learning

We know that we need a high level of creativity and innovation if we are to compete effectively and achieve our ambitions. We use step change thinking to challenge ourselves and our colleagues to achieve the very best results for children. We empower staff to innovate and welcome new ideas that are focused on the delivery of strategic priorities.

6

We are open to feedback on innovative ideas and projects, realising that sometimes ideas won't work in the way we hoped and they may not achieve intended outcomes. This is to be expected in an innovative culture and is a positive sign that we've been thinking big and striving for a better world for children.

We are willing to take considered risks and manage them in accordance with UNICEF UK's risk statement and policy, to achieve the very best for children. We are committed to reviewing results and learning from misses or mistakes so that we can optimise future performance.





learning
challenge
risk-taking
creativity
ideas
feedback
reviewing

Good management

The manager's job is to support their staff to do the best job they can, to empower them and give them the confidence to make the best decisions they can.

At UNICEF UK, managing people well is a crucial management responsibility because of its direct links to the well-being and engagement of our staff and our ability to achieve the very best results for children. Good managers know that spending time managing and motivating their staff is as important as the 'doing' aspects of their role and they allocate their time with this in mind.

We gain great satisfaction from empowering, enabling and supporting others to do their best work and we prioritise and protect one to one time to do this.





coach
clarify
motivate
empower
support
enable
engage
recognise



Good management (continued)

We provide strategic direction, set clear objectives, clarify expectations and agree the parameters for each person's authority and accountability. We also equip them with the essential skills, knowledge and resources they need to be effective.

7 We champion growth and development giving timely, specific feedback to support learning and performance. Where appropriate, we favour a coaching approach over a telling approach: listening, asking questions and exploring issues to enable staff to find their own routes to success.

We work with our staff to review results, extract learning and optimise future performance. We make a point of recognising individual, team and organisational achievements and if things are not going well we take action to identify and address the root causes and put things right.





empower
clarify
motivate
support
enable
engage
recognise
coach

Working in a Common Approach way

In order to bring our Common Approach principles to life and to help each one of us understand and model them more effectively, we have identified some patterns of behaviour that are essential for organisational success. The intention is to nurture these behaviours in ourselves and others in the firm belief that they will help us sustain a positive working environment where we can do our best work for children.

HOW WE MANAGE OURSELVES



The Common Approach principles of 'putting children first', 'personal responsibility' and 'a sound work life balance' describe how we manage ourselves at UNICEF UK. When we are doing this well we model the following behaviours:

1

Putting children first

-  We prioritise work that will have the greatest impact on our agreed goals
-  We collaborate with colleagues across the organisation to achieve our strategic goals for children
-  We willingly share expertise, best practice, know-how and ideas with colleagues for best results

Personal responsibility

- We make decisions within agreed parameters, seeking clarity as needed, and are accountable for our actions
- We monitor our results and adjust any approaches that are not working in order to address any problems and set-backs
- We recognise our colleague's contributions and avoid blaming others when things don't go well

3

A sound work life balance

- We proactively manage our work-life balance for greater well-being and professional effectiveness
- We ask for help from and offer support to our colleagues for best results
- We take breaks during the day, knowing that doing so will help us be more effective

HOW WE WORK WITH OTHERS

The Common Approach principles of 'transparent and appropriate information sharing' and 'mutual trust and respect' describe how we work with others at UNICEF UK. When we do this well we model the following behaviours:

4

Transparent and appropriate information sharing

- ... We take a proactive approach to communication, regularly asking ourselves "who needs to be aware of this?" and sharing relevant information accordingly
- ... We prioritise verbal and face-to-face communication for sharing information and decisions
- ... We communicate clearly and with the appropriate level of detail, taking care not to overburden people with information they don't need

5

Mutual trust and respect

- We value diversity, respecting and drawing on our colleagues' different perspectives, skills, experience and knowledge to help us make the best choices
- We assume positive intent, trusting colleagues to do the best possible job
- We give and are open to receiving specific, timely and constructive feedback
- When a decision is made, we commit to it (even if it wasn't our preferred option) so that related action can be taken and outcomes achieved

HOW WE MOVE FORWARD

The Common Approach principle of 'innovation and learning' describes how we move forward at UNICEF UK. When we do this well, we model the following behaviours:

6

Innovation and learning

- ... We welcome new ideas and are open to testing new ways of working, knowing that innovation is essential for our success
- ... We review results and learn from misses, seeking better ways of doing things to improve efficiency and impact
- ... We are flexible and adaptable in response to change knowing that this is vital if we are to achieve the best results for children
- ... We seek out opportunities for our own development that will benefit the organisation as well as ourselves

Good management



The behaviours that we demonstrate when we model the Common Approach principle of 'good management' have been grouped under five headings to help clarify what we expect of all managers at UNICEF UK, from Executive Director to the newest line manager:

PROVIDING DIRECTION



We provide clear guidance on UNICEF UK and team priorities to help people focus on work that will have the greatest impact for children



We motivate and inspire staff by showing them how their work contributes to the results UNICEF UK seeks to achieve for children



We lead by example and model Common Approach values and behaviours

Good management (continued)

DRIVING TO SUCCEED

- We are ambitious and creative in setting goals, using step change thinking to challenge ourselves and our teams to achieve the very best we can
- We seek know-how from others, inside and outside UNICEF UK, to achieve great results
- We recognise good work by promptly expressing sincere appreciation of others in detailed and specific terms
- We address unacceptable behaviour and poor performance promptly, giving specific feedback and support to help people do better



ENABLING OTHERS

- We empower and develop others by delegating clear areas of responsibility: setting objectives, clarifying parameters for decision making, allocating resources and agreeing accountability
- Supporting and encouraging our team members is a priority: we allocate time and energy to enable them to do their best work
- We flex our management approach for best results: coaching; supporting; delegating; or where necessary, giving clear direction; according to the situation and the people involved
- We enable our staff to grow and develop at work by helping to devise and support personal development plans

Good management (continued)

INSPIRING GREAT TEAM WORK

- We create a safe environment so that people are able to express their opinions appropriately and openly to help us reach the best decisions
- We inspire great team work by encouraging positive and supportive working relationships within and between teams and cross-departmental project teams
- We care about the well-being of our team and help them to maintain their work-life balance so they can make their best contribution at work
- We embrace flexible working when it has team or well-being benefits and supports the achievement of organisational goals

ACHIEVING CHANGE

- ❖ We plan and actively manage change, communicating with staff at all stages to facilitate engagement
- ❖ We communicate the positive reasons for change and the better outcomes we seek and expect
- ❖ We support colleagues to embrace change, recognising that people will respond in different ways and at different paces

empower support enable
coach clarify motivate recognise
engage

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