



Responsible Business Report

2020/21



2020 brought change on a scale that none of us had navigated before. We've learnt more about ourselves, our firm and our clients, and what it means to be a responsible business.”

Contents

Introduction	04
Our Ethical Framework	06
Environment: Minimising our impact and contributing to a more sustainable world	08
People: Creating a diverse and inclusive workplace	12
Community: Making a positive difference in our communities	16
Ethical business: Working professionally and responsibly in our marketplace	20
Goals and accountability	23



Introduction

2020 brought change on a scale which none of us had ever contemplated let alone navigated before. We had to adapt quickly and effectively, working closely together to pivot and adjust to new and constantly changing circumstances. We've learnt more about ourselves, our business and our clients, and what it means to be a responsible business. At the heart of our strategy is a belief in the power of building sustainable relationships with our communities, people and clients based on trust and mutual respect for each other. In a global pandemic, whilst also bearing witness to environmental catastrophes and civil rights injustices, this became more important than ever.

Staying connected when we were cut off from each other was essential, and we put communication and dialogue front and centre throughout 2020. Shifting from our offices to a virtual environment we focused on wellbeing, keeping in touch and getting to know our colleagues and clients on a personal as well as professional level.

While our business resilience was put to the test, so was our personal resilience, and I am immensely proud of the way our people adapted to new ways of working and living, supporting each other whilst continuing to deliver excellent client service. Their flexibility and openness in adapting to new ways of working and living, pretty much overnight, played a significant part in the success of our business continuity plans.

This report shares highlights of the progress we made during FY 2020/21 and again, this is down to the care and commitment of my colleagues across the firm. We are making strides with sustained and continued carbon reductions over many years. We are now looking ahead as to how we can achieve our net zero goal by 2030 – a bold and ambitious target which will come with many challenges but is a goal I am personally committed to achieving. We have refocused our energy within our communities to put social inclusion front and centre of our activities, and are setting our sights on growing the amount of time we spend carrying out pro-bono and volunteering activities for and within our communities.

We are keeping our focus on driving forward our diversity and inclusion agenda – giving voice to more under-represented groups and continuing to set our expectations higher for better representation in our own firm and the legal profession. With real inclusivity, we can unlock the full potential of our colleagues to allow them to prosper. We are proud of all the awards and accreditations we have gained, and will continue to work with all of our stakeholders to keep learning.

As we continue to adapt to the 'new normal' we must also look ahead and anticipate more change, staying flexible, open minded and ready for what comes next in what is still an uncertain future. We remain determined to play a pivotal role in creating better places to live, work and do business in.



Nick Barwood
Chair



Our Ethical Framework

We are held to high standards by society in all we do, and our Values, Principles and Ethical Standards help us understand and meet those expectations.



Working professionally and responsibly and always doing the right thing

We focus on areas where we can provide meaningful social value through charitable giving, volunteering and sharing our expertise. We apply the highest standards of professionalism, business ethics and risk management, building sustainable practices for the benefit of our clients.



EcoVadis is a sustainability platform assessing our environmental, social and ethical performance. In our 2020 assessment we rose from Bronze to Silver, and from the 66th percentile to the 91st. We are now in the top 4% of companies reporting in our industry (legal and accounting).

The assessment looks at four key areas: **sustainability, ethics, labour and human rights and procurement.**

We map our objectives against the UN Sustainable Development Goals.

The UN's goals address the global challenges we face and aim to achieve a better and more sustainable future for all. We have identified the following six UN SDGs as having most impact on our firm, and are focusing our efforts on these goals:

- Goal 1: No Poverty** – paying a living wage, screening for forced labour, assessing supply chain risk.
- Goal 2: Zero Hunger** – providing access to proper nutrition.
- Goal 3: Good Health and Well-Being** – providing healthcare and operational health and safety programmes for employees.
- Goal 4: Quality Education** – eradicating child labour, offering skills-based training, providing access to educational opportunities and promoting higher education.
- Goal 10: Reduced Inequalities** – paying a living wage, employing non-discrimination practices in the workplace and creating an inclusive work environment.
- Goal 13: Climate Action** – employing climate risk assessments, and adopting climate change governance.



WBD supports the Sustainable Development Goals.

“From waste and business travel through to building emissions, the legal sector must act now to reduce its footprint as we embark on a decade of climate action.”



Environment

Minimising our impact and contributing to a more sustainable world

20/21 Progress update:

- Total carbon emissions were reduced by 39.4%
- Milestone moment – carbon emissions are now below 1 tonne of CO2e per employee
- 5th year carbon reporting and certification with The Planet Mark
- 57% reduction in water emissions and consumption
- Shortlisted for Best Company at The Planet Mark Awards
- Renewable energy supply in five out of seven UK offices
- ISO 14001 re-accredited, recognising that we have an effective Environmental Management System, providing a framework for continuous improvement in our environmental performance
- Over 60% of our stationery products are ‘green’ category and spend with our supplier has helped generate £100,000 of social value
- Great colleague engagement in ‘EnviroNovember’ a month long campaign of suggested environmental commitments
- Protected one acre of Peruvian rainforest through our partnership with Cool Earth
- 5% of our Planet Mark certification fee goes towards funding new projects at the Eden Project
- Continued to contribute and engage with the Legal Sustainability Alliance as founding members
- 3 offices now have electric vans (replacing diesel) and electric car charging points
- Contributed towards 9 of the UN Sustainable Development Goals, addressing 18 SDG targets



WBD colleagues working on Environment

- 25 people in different roles from across the firm are Environmental Representatives
- Facilities team

“We have an effective Environmental Management System, providing a framework for continuous improvement in our environmental performance.”

PlanetMark
Certification five years running

ISO 14001
re-accredited, recognising that we have an effective Environmental Management System, providing a framework for continuous improvement

3
Offices now have electric vans (replacing diesel) and electric car charging points



Our journey towards Net Zero

Martin Hall, our Head of Facilities, plays an integral role in our mission to reduce our carbon footprint

Q. The 2020s will be a decisive decade for climate action, what is WBD doing in that area, and why is it important to your business?

A. Our firm has already reached some impressive milestones: we procure renewable energy in the majority of our UK offices, with almost half of the energy we use across the UK coming from renewable sources. We've been continuously reducing our carbon emissions and in FY 2020/21 reported a 39% decrease in emissions compared to the previous year as well as 97% drop in business travel, as our business pivoted to home working during the pandemic.

From waste and business travel through to building emissions, the legal sector must act now to reduce its footprint as we embark on a decade of climate action. Systemic change takes time, and we are working hard to make sure that our good intentions are met with strong commitments and tangible measurements to help us towards our ambition to be a net zero business by 2030. We are putting in place a carbon reduction plan with clear emissions reduction targets to help us get there.

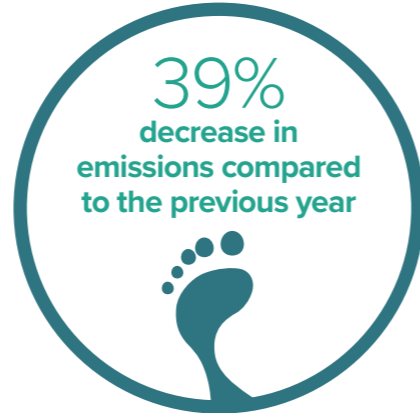
Developing and stretching our environmental targets is core to our business and we're working with a number of organisations to help us find and apply sustainable ways to improve our environmental management. We work collaboratively with clients, suppliers and other organisations to take positive action on climate

change by measuring, reducing and reporting on our carbon footprint and take every opportunity to align our environmental strategies. We also have a robust Procurement Policy in place which we try to encourage all our suppliers to observe so that third parties can adopt similar environmentally sustainable practices.

Q. When you look back at the last five years, what has WBD achieved that you're most proud of?

A. Our mission to reduce our carbon footprint started a long time ago, but since we started working with The Planet Mark, we've been able to step our commitments up a gear. We are able to better measure and reduce our emissions, setting clearer targets for what we will do next. With their support we have also been more focused on engaging with our people on the importance of environmental sustainability to drive passion for change, and it's been great to get more people involved. We now have over 25 Environmental Representatives across our offices. They support our Environmental Management Review Team in maintaining an effective Environmental Management System and driving firmwide and regional environmental initiatives.

The Planet Mark has equipped us with the right tools and knowledge to thrive in the face of our changing climate. They have made a number of recommendations, such as carrying out regular energy audits



and collating supplier evidence to support green tariff purchases, as well as provided helpful tools and guidance to accurately gather emissions data from our seven UK offices to track our continuous improvement. We're really proud to have now achieved certification to The Planet Mark for the fifth year running.

Our new hybrid working model is part of our package of measures to reduce emissions, enabling our people to choose where they want to work. Having the ability to work from home has become an important feature of how our people want our business to operate, not just for productivity but also to reduce travel emissions. Whether at work or at home, our people are showing great enthusiasm to adopt more environmentally sustainable behaviours, which is really great to see, and we will do all we can to encourage and foster these healthy habits.

“WBD has made outstanding progress and is clearly excited about the future and what it can do next. The firm epitomises how you can make positive contributions to society and the environment and enjoy the process.”

Steve Malkin, founder of The Planet Mark



“Thanks to #CountMeIn, we can monitor progression and promotions across various groups, and make sure the right people are getting the right support and development opportunities.”



People

Creating a diverse and inclusive workplace

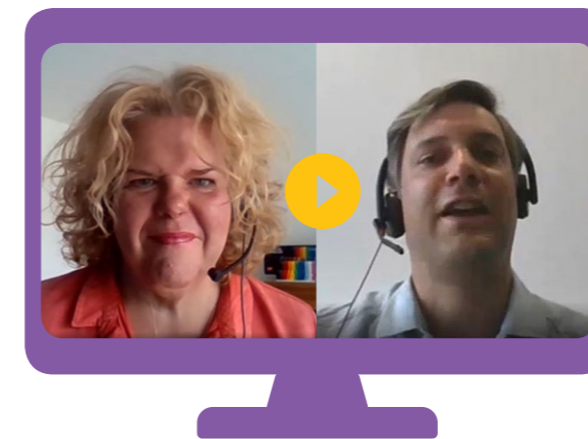
20/21 Progress update:

- Maintained our Silver Standard Investors in People
- Awarded Gold Status for the Law Society Diversity & Inclusion Charter
- Awarded Women in Law Empowerment Forum UK 2021 Gold Standard
- Won the Legal Cheek Award for Best Work/Life Balance, Spring 2021
- Became Mindful Business Charter signatories
- Made our Social Mobility Pledge
- Maintained our DWP Disability Confident Employer status
- Created our Family Network – support for working parents
- Ran wellbeing webinars in response to the pandemic. Topics focused on healthy body, mind, diet and finances and were watched by 80% of our people
- Launched #CountMeIn diversity questionnaire, our self-declaration survey to better inform our equality, diversity and inclusion strategies
- Launched gender neutral drafting policy
- Launched 'GoodHabitz' a 24/7 flexible online resource/library for people to access wellbeing and resilience training/coaching
- 90% of our people said they felt supported by their manager during the pandemic

WBD colleagues working on Diversity and Inclusion

- 32 Mental Health First Aiders
- WBD REACH network (forum for our BAME people and allies)
- WBD PRIDE (LGBTQ+ network)
- Family Network
- Sports and Social committees
- Recruitment Network

Ran wellbeing webinars on topics relating to healthy body, mind, diet and finances – watched by 80% of our people





Sharing experiences, learning from each other, and creating opportunities

Supuni Perera, Trainee Solicitor, is Network Leader for WBD Reach, our BAME network

Q. 2020 will be remembered not just for the pandemic, but also for the Black Lives Matter movement – how did the firm respond to this?

A. Systemic racism and the events that unfolded after the tragic murder of George Floyd and the EURO 2020 final served as a stark reminder of the change needed to eradicate social injustice, and for the legal sector to do more to have a workforce that's truly representative of society.

WBD, like many law firms, still has a long way to go but we are focused on achieving real and long-lasting change. WBD Reach – which stands for Race, Ethnicity and Cultural Heritage – is an active and safe forum for our BAME people and allies to voice issues, present their personal stories and discuss ways that the firm can better support them and their needs. We know that having more open and transparent conversations in the firm about Reach issues, challenging prejudice, stigma and taboo, will ultimately allow members to connect with colleagues at a deeper level, and nurture a sense of belonging and togetherness towards equitable change.

In June 2020, we came together to host a Black Lives Matter webinar which was open to everyone. It was the stage for many BAME colleagues to talk about their own reflections on the world events, as well as their experiences of racism. It really was a milestone moment for us – colleagues bravely telling their stories and

opening up, and others listening with compassion and patience. More colleagues joined this discussion to share and to listen than any other internal event we have ever run.

Q. What is the biggest D&I challenge we face – and how are we tackling it at WBD?

A. After retention and promotion of existing colleagues in under-represented groups, the single biggest step we can take to increase diversity is to *recruit* more lawyers from under-represented groups.

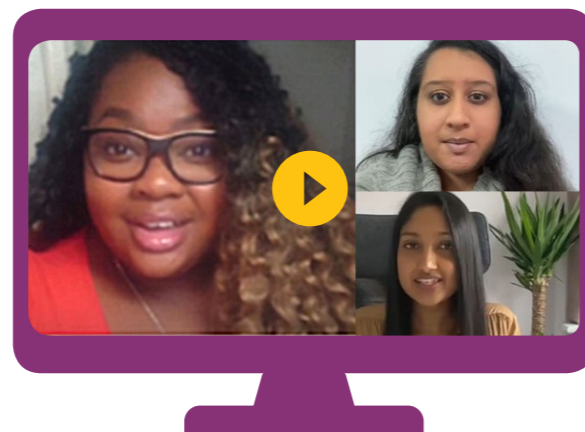
The pandemic has provided the right environment for accelerated change and our firm is committed to making this change happen with clear objectives, for example, that by May 2023, 30% of all Client Relationship Partners and deputies must have diverse characteristics.

In December 2020, we launched #CountMeIn, a firm wide, voluntary, data collection initiative designed so we can monitor how we are doing against our D&I goals, to help us more rapidly make progress towards them.

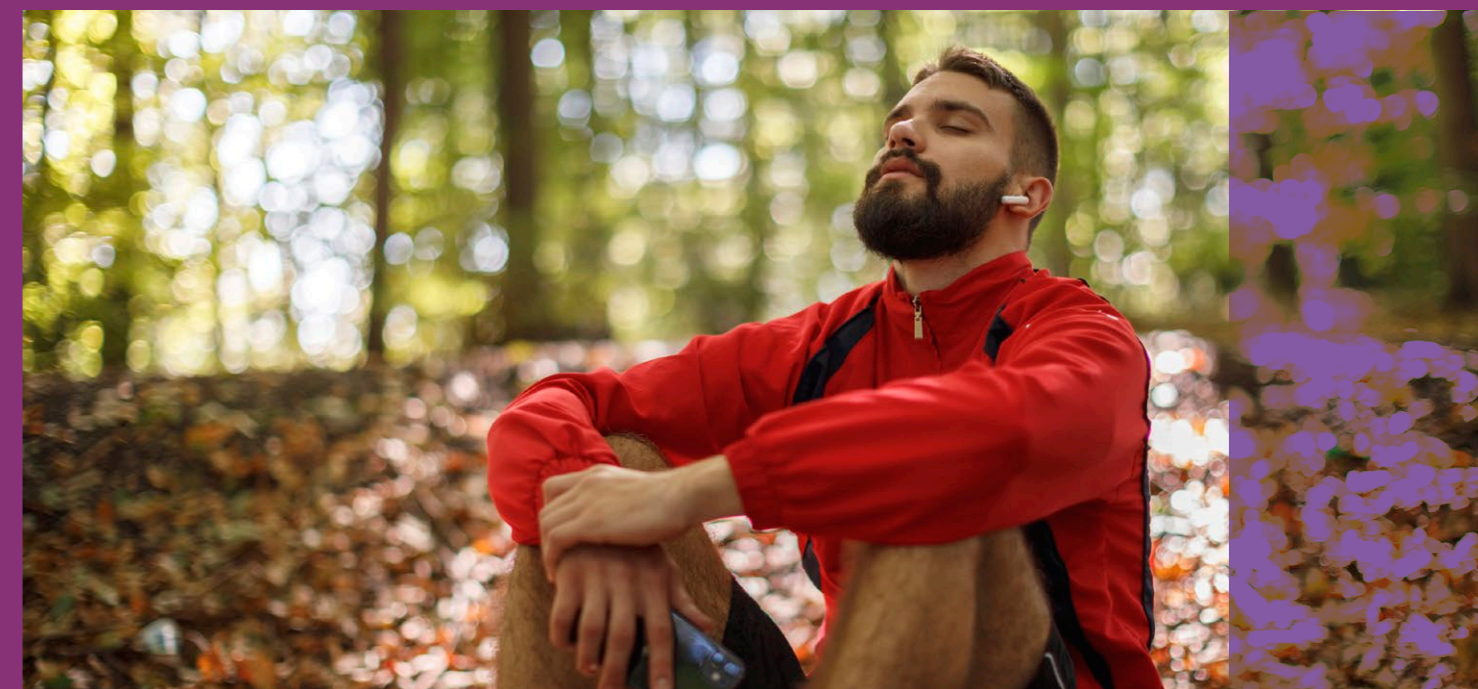
We want to recruit, promote and retain a diverse group of people but the first step towards this objective is an accurate understanding of our workforce and the challenges they face. We've had a 70% response rate which is great, and we hope to increase it.

In April 2021, we saw our commitment to D&I recognised when we were appointed to Centrica's legal panel after being evaluated on our diversity credentials and have recently been working with them on EDI and mentoring initiatives. Analysis of specific data is really exciting and a game-changer as it enables us (and our clients) to analyse our commitment to recruitment, retention and promotion of individuals with diverse characteristics.

Thanks to #CountMeIn, we can monitor progression and promotions across various groups, and make sure the right people are getting the right support and development opportunities, and that development is focussed on what people need, not what we think they need.



“Wellbeing is of utmost importance at the firm, and in my role as Mental Health First Aider I see first hand the impact of our support. We're working hard to destigmatise mental health, opening up conversations and encouraging each other to put wellbeing first.”





“We have supported foodbanks in our communities for many years, and so it was natural for us to focus on what we could do to make a difference.”



Community

Making a positive difference in our communities

20/21 Progress update:

- New focus on social inclusion and refresh of community programme – 2/3 charities per office
- £111,000 given to charities across the UK focusing on food poverty, domestic abuse and supporting disadvantaged families and communities who had been hard hit by the effects of the pandemic
- Donated 130 laptops to schools in our local areas to help tackle the digital divide
- Donated £30,000 to local foodbanks to provide emergency food and help stop food poverty
- Awarded Bronze Payroll Giving Quality Mark
- Ran 108 access to law events (96 graduate events like law fairs, networking and mock interviews, and 12 non-graduate events like Envision, mentoring schemes and career fairs)
- Approximately 52 pieces of one-off pro bono legal advice given through University of Greenwich Legal Advice Centre
- Organised a team of 203 socially distanced walkers for 10,000 Steps for Justice challenge which replaced the postponed London Legal Walk. We were the largest team to take part and raised over £5,200

WBD colleagues working on Community

- 123 CSR members
- WBD Foundation trustees (4 partners, General Counsel and UK Chair)





Tackling social exclusion throughout the pandemic



Jon Bower, Partner, led the efforts of our Bristol office

Q. How did you focus your efforts during the COVID-19 crisis?

A. The pandemic brought unprecedented hardship to many people and foodbanks faced one of their busiest periods on record. We have supported foodbanks in our communities for many years and so it was a natural for us to focus on what we could do to make a difference here. We donated over £30,000 in 2020 to foodbanks and other food charities up and down the country. Some of the donations were made up of personal contributions from WBD staff with the total amount raised matched by the WBD Foundation which manages funds aimed at supporting our firm’s responsible business activity.

Our people also dedicated many hundreds of volunteering hours to support their local food charities. For example in Bristol we supported FareShare South West’s emergency winter operation, FoodStock 2020, which aimed to build a stockpile of emergency food, with our team of volunteers helping to create 520 food parcels for the community working in their warehouse.

Q. Did you continue to support other organisations throughout the pandemic?

A. Beyond foodbanks, we supported many of our local charities during the pandemic including, to name just a few, our local hospice and children’s hospital in Edinburgh, Leeds disability charity Henshaws and, in Bristol, the Quartet Community Foundation’s Coronavirus Response Fund.

There was a huge surge in domestic abuse calls during the COVID-19 pandemic and so we also targeted our support towards a number of domestic abuse charities in the UK including Leeds-based IDAS, Plymouth Domestic Abuse Services and Somerset & Avon Rape & Sexual Abuse Service, in Bristol.

Q. WBD often works with local schools and other charities in the education sector – how were you able to help this year?

A. There was a firm wide effort to support the most disadvantaged families and their children with home schooling throughout the pandemic and ensuing lockdowns. In total our firm donated 130 laptops to local schools and other charities to help families who didn’t have the ability or digital infrastructure to support their children with home schooling.

We have a high level of disadvantaged children in our local areas who were very much at risk of falling behind in their learning and so it was important for us to step-up and support those who were most impacted by the school closures. We hope that access to the laptops, books and resources we made available supported the children’s learning and made remote education a better experience for children and carers alike.

“There was a huge surge in domestic violence calls during the pandemic and so we also targeted our support towards a number of domestic abuse charities in the UK.”



“Bristol is home to powerful organisations and we are grateful to have had support from a number of the big legal companies in Bristol, including WBD. Need for food support continues to soar, with increasing numbers seeking support – many of whom may never have had to seek food support before.

Our frontline partners, who have received our emergency food throughout our FoodStock 2020 operation, have done an amazing job of supporting the most vulnerable during such uncertain times.”

Phoebe Ruxton, Head of Development at FareShare South West

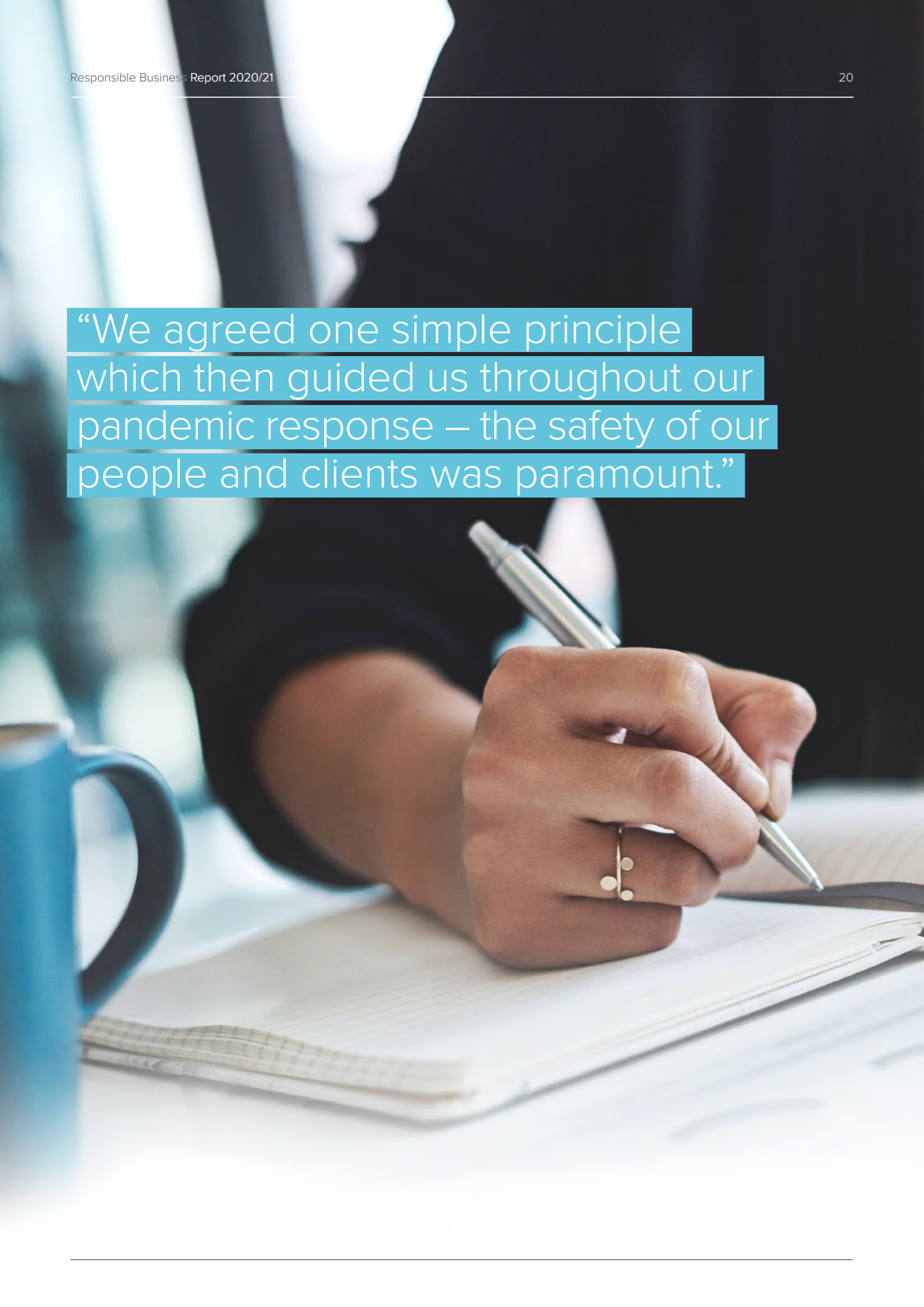
“We’re so grateful to WBD for the laptops that were donated and these have already been allocated out to families who have not had the ability to support their children with home schooling during lockdown. We have a high level of disadvantaged children in our area who are very much at risk of falling behind in their learning.

Access to effective devices to support their learning is going to have a positive impact not only on their learning but also their emotional resilience at home and when they eventually return to school.”

Mrs C Pryn, Headteacher at St Peter’s School in Plymouth



“We agreed one simple principle which then guided us throughout our pandemic response – the safety of our people and clients was paramount.”



Ethical Business

Working professionally and responsibly in our marketplace

20/21 Progress update:

- Procurement Policy changed to reflect our Ethical Framework – increased focus on social and environmental issues in supply chain relationships
- Supplier due diligence process update – improved understanding of the social and environmental impact of our suppliers
- Roll out of Inclusive Working training series
- 94% attendance rate for unconscious bias training, which built on the appetite amongst colleagues to become more aware of and practise inclusive behaviours
- Remote supervision training for line managers – maximising every step of the supervision process to improve working practices, build effective relationships, increase employee engagement and people development
- Delivered on commitments to provide updates on modern slavery statement, money laundering and other financial crime risks such as bribery and corruption, data protection obligations, information security risks and our professional and ethical responsibilities
- Legal Innovation Awards 2021 finalist for ‘Future of Legal Services Innovation’ with Docusign and ‘Knowledge Management Innovation’ with iManage Insight
- ISO27001 re-certification (information security – evidence that we ensure information is secured, treated with integrity and kept confidential)
- ISO9001 re-certification (quality management – evidence of our commitment to ensuring strong customer focus and continual improvement)
- Cyber Essentials Plus re-certification (a key component in our cyber-attack prevention and defence strategy)
- Re-designed our Audit Programme and implemented our flagship Regulatory Compliance Audit – pro-actively monitoring compliance with regulatory and service requirements, providing assurance and pro-actively identifying risks and opportunities to improve

WBD colleagues working on governance

- Risk and Best practice team
- Ethical Thinking Group
- WBD Board Members

94% attendance rate for unconscious bias training, which built on the appetite amongst colleagues to become more aware of and practise inclusive behaviours

ISO 27001 re-certification (information security – evidence that we ensure information is secure, treated with integrity and kept confidential)



Navigating uncertainty with collaboration and care

General Counsel Nicki Shepherd played a critical role in leading the firm's business continuity response to COVID-19



Q. As news of the pandemic hit, what were your first priorities?

A. We pro-actively deployed our business continuity plans as soon as the first reports came into the UK, enabling our people to efficiently work from home, mitigating business disruption and maintaining our usual high levels of service to clients. We agreed one simple principle which then guided us throughout – the safety of our people and clients was paramount.

Our Board delegated business continuity group had the authority to make rapid decisions, and this group met daily to make sure that our advice to colleagues, suppliers and clients reflected the fast moving situation and changes in government advice. We established several focused working groups with clear remits, and the overall goal of reducing the risk to our people, clients and business. Having clear lines of communication between these groups, and our stakeholders, was essential.



Within three days of the first national lockdown our 1,100-strong UK workforce was set up and working from home. It was a major logistical feat, only made possible by the tireless work of our business support teams and existing, robust cyber security practices. We also made sure all our people's working environments were assessed by our facilities team and made funds available to everyone at the firm so they could purchase the equipment they needed to feel safe and comfortable working at home.

During the various lockdowns, we also moved our training and development programmes online and organised a number of sessions to support our people. We provided targeted and meaningful support and delivered a wide range of training sessions not only to enhance expertise but to also develop skills such as resilience.

We recognised that home working whilst home schooling and / or childcare was a very tough balancing act for families and carers during the pandemic and so we asked Rachel Vecht from Educating Matters to run a number of sessions to provide practical, pragmatic and instant tips to support our people with home-schooling. Many who were not home-schooling also attended the sessions to understand the challenges colleagues with children were experiencing. We also offered these out to our clients, many of whom joined and welcomed the personal support.

Q. We have been through a huge amount of change over the past year, but what has changed for the better because of it?

A. COVID-19 has accelerated and expanded innovation and tech solutions across the firm which might otherwise have taken longer to roll out and bed in. We have made major investments in our IT systems and security in recent years, and we really saw the return on that in the face of the exceptional challenges that sprang up in March 2020 and beyond. Technological developments like electronic signatures, which became a business critical tool during the pandemic, have transformed our business practices. Investment in Microsoft Teams and other collaborative technologies means we have found new ways of working that suit our people and haven't compromised our ability to protect our client's information and deliver excellent client service.

Working from home has been a success and has shaped our thinking about hybrid working, allowing our people to choose where they work. A more flexible model of working will bring efficiencies in the way we spend our time, benefits to the wellbeing of our people, and has a continued, positive impact on our environmental sustainability.

Goals and accountability

Progress against 2020 goals

- 1 Creation and utilisation of a central system for logging and valuing the outputs of our responsible business activities. We will do this by working closely with an accreditation body such as The Planet Mark or the Social Value Portal to assess where we are currently in our processes and to identify areas for improvement.
- 2 Aligning the various elements of our responsible business activities so that we can achieve greater and more measurable impacts for those charities and causes that we choose to support which are more closely aligned to our 3 Es strategy. We will do this by re-visiting our charitable giving policy and re-focusing our office based CSR committees.
- 3 Revise our pro bono policy and to seek out more opportunities for pro bono work.
- 4 Pursuing our ethnic diversity, LGBTQ+ diversity and gender balance objectives by:
 - a. Rolling out unconscious bias training for the whole business
 - b. Implementing an Ethnic Diversity Action Plan
 - c. Implementing Stonewall Workplace Equality Index feedback and achieving at least Bronze Employer award status
 - d. Establishing targets for female partner and other senior leadership roles and obtaining UK WILEF Gold Status for 2020.
- 5 Reducing our environmental impact by:
 - a. Further reducing our carbon emissions by 5% in 2020/21
 - b. Working with our providers to eradicate single-use plastics, especially in packaging
 - c. Reducing paper consumption by 20% in 2020/21
 - d. Reducing business travel by 25% in 2020/21
 - e. Working towards a long term objective to achieve zero carbon in at least one office by 2030.

- Good progress / Complete
- In progress

What are we working towards? FY 2021/22 goals

- 1 Developing and stretching our environmental targets, with a commitment to being net zero by 2030.
- 2 Develop an early careers strategy that will broaden and diversify our talent pools, create talent pipelines for our graduate and apprenticeship programmes and support the communities we live and work in, making us an employer of choice.
- 3 Achieve Disability Confident Leader award and launch our disability network, demonstrating our commitment in this space.
- 4 Grow our time spent carrying out pro bono, skilled volunteering and volunteering by 5%.
- 5 Assess our current procurement practices and work with our suppliers to address environmental and social criteria.