



Responsible Business Report 2021/22

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Looking after your own wellbeing has never been so important, so I was pleased to volunteer for Anxious Minds creating a space for outdoor therapies. This will help others wellbeing, and the day volunteering definitely helped mine!”

Maisie Swindells, Trainee Solicitor



Introduction

2021 was a year of change. We had to adapt quickly and remain flexible when responding to the varying rules and regulations around Covid-19, out of which we launched our Hybrid Working Policy and introduced a Wellbeing Day for all. Throughout these changes we remained committed to being a Responsible Business and delivering the best for our people, clients and communities.

I took up my new role in February 2022, and at once set to work launching our new Purpose and Vision. With this and the accompanying five year strategy, we have a clear idea of who we are, what we stand for, how we should operate as a business and as individuals, and what we want to be known for in the future.

At the heart of our Purpose and Vision 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. Being a Responsible Business is integral to that and this report demonstrates our progress and success in 2021/22, as well as our future aims for that journey.

We continue to advance towards our goal of being net zero by 2030. We have reduced our carbon emissions across a huge array of activities, and are focusing on office space, procurement and travel as our key areas moving forward. You can read more about our move to The Spark in Newcastle on page 12.

We have made progress towards our diversity and inclusion goals - reducing our Gender Pay Gap for the fourth year running, achieving Stonewall Silver and launching our Disability Network. Last year we rolled out mental health training for managers, launched a Wellbeing Champions network and a Wellbeing strategy. We have further strengthened our focus on social inclusion, launched a new Small Advice Clinic in partnership with the University of Law and achieved over 800 hours of volunteering. We introduced a new Social Mobility pillar

to further strengthen our focus in this space. You can read more about our progress on the 'social' elements of our work on pages 14 - 27.

Within governance, we made huge strides on our sustainable procurement strategy, formalised our Responsible Business structure and outlined the core pillars that make up all we do. We are proud of all the awards and accreditations we have gained, and will continue to work with all of our communities, people and clients to keep learning. We are looking forward to seeing all that can be accomplished this year by building on these achievements. As always, we remain determined to play a pivotal role in creating better places to live, work and do business in.

A huge thank you to everyone who has contributed in some way to our progress, and here's to building on this in financial year 2022/23.



Paul Stewart
Managing Partner



Using my volunteering hours, I was able to channel my feelings of powerlessness into positive actions by volunteering. Since mid-February motivated volunteers from From Bristol with Love, have been able to successfully deliver many tonnes of food, medical supplies and portable electricity generators to the people of Ukraine.”

Danny Chambers, Recruitment Co-ordinator



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 responsible business activities. We apply the highest standards of professionalism, business ethics and risk management, building sustainable practices for the benefit of our colleagues, clients and communities.



EcoVadis is a sustainability platform assessing our environmental, social and ethical performance. The assessment looks at four key areas: sustainability, ethics, labour and human rights and procurement.

We held the Silver rating in 2021/22, and went through reassessment at the end of the financial year achieving Gold just before publication. Achieving Gold by FY 2023/24 was part of our Purpose and Vision.

In FY 21/22 we were in the top 4% of companies reporting in our industry (legal and accounting).



We achieved **Gold Investors in People** in April 2022, recognising the firm's continued commitment to our people. The feedback from each assessment encourages us to improve across a range of people areas which will in turn help us achieve our overall vision of delivering excellence and unlocking potential.

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 6 UN SDG's 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 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** – 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.
- Goal 16: Peace, Justice and Strong Institutions** – providing access to justice for all, and building effective, accountable and inclusive institutions at all levels.



WBD supports the Sustainable Development Goals.

Responsible Business Framework

Our new Responsible Business Framework outlines the work we do at the firm with our Ethical Framework sitting front and centre.

We have outlined the various pillars that make up our Responsible Business landscape, and outlined those leading on this work.

Responsible Business Framework									
Nicki Shepherd, General Counsel Charlotte von Sicard, Responsible Business Manager									
Ethical Framework									
	E Environment	S Social				G Governance			
Areas of focus	Environment	Diversity & Inclusion	Wellbeing	Community Engagement	Social Mobility	Ethics	Sustainable Procurement	Who We Act For	Privacy
Ethical Thinking Group	Lead Sponsors Jon Bower, Partner and Martin Hall, Head of Facilities Management	Lead Sponsor Jess Tresham, Partner	Lead Sponsor Theresa Wilde, HR Director	Lead Sponsor Sally Dallow, Partner	Lead Sponsor Sam Lee, Head of Recruitment	Lead Sponsor Nicki Shepherd, General Counsel			
Responsible Business Working Group	Lead Mat Swift, Sustainability Manager	Lead To be recruited	Lead Jane Freeman, HR Manager	Lead Charlotte von Sicard, Responsible Business Manager	Lead Skye Fenton-Wells, Early Talent Recruitment Manager	Lead Louise Norman, Deputy General Counsel	Leads Charmian Leatt and Jenny Hill, Managing Associates General Counsel	Leads Nick Barwood, UK Chair and Partner, and Nicki Shepherd, General Counsel	Lead Alan Keith, Head of Risk Management
Partner & Employee Networks	Environmental Reps Environmental Management Review Team (EMRT) Net Zero Subteam	D&I Reps WBD Reach WBD Pride WBD Disability WBD Thrive	Family Network Sports and Social Committees Mental Health First Aiders Wellbeing Champions Menopause Champions	Community Engagement Committees WBD Foundation Trustees	Apprenticeship Network Early Careers Ambassador Network	WBD Board and Global Board Partner Representative Group Audit Group Risk Management Committee			
Employee Forum									



“Using my volunteering hours to help at the foodbank was a sobering yet rewarding experience. Knowing I’m making a difference, even in a small way, is really important to me.”

Kim Southway, Recruitment Advisor



Won Sustainable Business of the Year at Bristol Law Society Annual Awards 2021

Bristol Spring Clean

Charlotte von Sicard, Responsible Business Manager
 Keith Mitchelhill, Early Talent Recruitment Advisor
 Kim Southway, Recruitment Advisor
 Hannah Sharps, Early Talent Development Advisor



Environment

Having a positive impact on the world around us

21/22 Progress update:

- Published our Carbon Reduction Plan with our goal of becoming net zero by 2030
- Agreed our baseline year of emissions (FY 2019/20) to measure our net zero journey against
- Began working with The Planet Mark on our net zero action plan to ensure we are taking the right steps in our journey
- Continued being Right Waste, Right Place Ambassadors
- 6th year carbon reporting and certification with The Planet Mark
- Received highly commended at LexisNexis Awards for Sustainability 2022
- Won Sustainable Business of the Year at Bristol Law Society Annual Awards 2021
- Renewable energy supplied 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
- 60% of our stationery products are 'green' category with an aim of reaching 100% as soon as practical

- 2nd year of 'EnviroNovember' a month long campaign run by our Environmental Reps encouraging colleagues to take steps to reduce their carbon footprint
- Planned our move to The Spark in Newcastle, you can read more about this on page 12. This move is helping to reduce our space by more than 50% helping us to reduce our energy consumption, incorporating investment in new technology, equipment and lighting
- Started refurbishment of our Leeds office which will see energy efficient lighting and other services replaced
- Continue to contribute and engage with the Legal Sustainability Alliance as founding and executive members
- Shortlisted for best law firm for eco-friendliness at the Legal Cheek Awards 2022

- Joined the Sustainable Recruitment Alliance to take a more eco-friendly approach to early talent recruitment
- Added electric charging points in Plymouth, and upgraded the ones we had in Bristol. Now 4 of our offices have electric charge points
- Investment in LED lighting across all our offices
- Improved our EPC ratings in-line with refurbishments of our offices, in the past year we have improved to a B in Plymouth

WBD colleagues working on Environment:

- 25 Environmental Reps
- Environmental Management Review Team
- Net Zero Team
- Facilities Team



Working towards:





Our move to The Spark, Newcastle

Martin Hall, Head of Facilities Management

How is moving to The Spark helping our environmental objectives?

Reducing our overall space requirement and refurbishing our buildings to a high standard across the firm is central to our goal to be net zero by 2030. In Newcastle, over a third of colleagues are based across 2 sites (our largest cohort) and we decided in 2018 to combine offices and move to a new site that was fit for purpose.

The Spark is a brand new building which gives us the opportunity to design and fit out an office for the future. The new space will cater for people who like to work in different ways and will encourage collaboration through use of co-working spaces. The building and fit out will comply with sustainability and health and wellbeing best practice. We are looking to achieve BREEAM 'Excellent' and the Fitwel Standard.

From design to implementation, the building has sustainability at the heart. For example:

- we have ensured that local products are sourced wherever possible
- carpets have 75% recycled content
- 100% renewable energy was used in the manufacturing of the new flooring

- heating, air conditioning and electricity are all sourced from a new energy centre next to the building, and
- air quality will be constantly monitored by several sensors located in work areas.

Do WBD have any other office projects lined up?

We have a number of projects underway or planned over the next few years. In Leeds we have commenced an office refurbishment similar in style to The Spark, which will see energy efficient lighting and other services replaced. The office will be ready in September 2022.

In London we plan to install LED lighting, ensuring all of our offices are fully LED. Our firmwide goal is to use 100% renewably sourced energy by 2026.

In collaboration with Plymouth City Council, the owners of Ballard House, new solar panels have been installed on the roof together with new large air source heat pumps which will reduce our emissions.

We are also working closely with our Mechanical & Electrical Services consultants to monitor, assess and review our assets - identifying any further opportunities to increase energy efficiency in our operations.

Lastly, over the next two years we will be installing electric vehicle charge points at more sites to support our fleet of electric vehicles.

What's our next focus for sustainability?

Alongside reviewing our work across the firm, we are currently working with The Planet Mark to create a strategy for our journey to net zero by 2030. This plan will be aligned to the Science Based Targets Initiative. As part of this work we need to understand our current Scope 3 emissions including those around our supply chain and travel so will be focusing our attention on those two areas next.



We have just moved to the Newcastle Helix, 'The Spark', which offers a collaborative ecosystem for public and private companies and is considered a hub of innovation in Europe. As a firm dedicated to embracing and driving innovation in the legal sector, the new space is a perfect fit for us.

Nigel Emmerson, Newcastle Office Head





Received Recognised Excellence for 'Most Inclusive Graduate Assessment Process' at the AllAboutLaw Awards 2022



Social – Diversity and Inclusion

Creating a diverse and inclusive workplace

21/22 Progress update:

- Gold Status Law Society Diversity & Inclusion Charter
- Women in Law Empowerment Forum UK 2021 Gold Standard
- 215th place in Stonewall UK Workplace Equality Index, rising nearly 250 places to achieve Silver Employer Award
- Launched our WBD Disability Network during National Inclusion Week in September 2021
- Introduced our new Thrive Network, to promote and support female career development
- Currently Disability Confident Employer and are working to achieve Disability Confident Leader
- Joined the Business Disability Forum
- Highly commended for Diversity and Inclusion at the Lexis Nexis Awards 2022
- 70% completion of Count Me In, our attributable data collection exercise
- Won Best Training Contract at the AllAboutLaw Awards 2022

- To date, 85% of our colleagues have completed Unconscious Bias training
- In May, we launched GoodHabitZ, an online portal which offers unlimited on demand access to over 100 courses to make learning available at a time and place which suits the learner. The e-learning delivery is available in a variety of mediums
- Launched our reverse mentoring programme between our WBD REACH Network members and senior business leaders to build awareness of issues faced by underrepresented groups to institute change
- Received Recognised Excellence for Most Inclusive Graduate Assessment Process at the AllAboutLaw Awards 2022
- In August 2021, WBDPride and our CSR committee attended Southampton Pride in support of Solent Mind. We supported Solent Mind in the parade and then manned their information stall signposting their services and selling tickets for a raffle

WBD colleagues working on Diversity and Inclusion:

- WBD REACH Network (BAME network)
- WBD Pride Network (LGBTQ+ Network)
- WBD Disability Network
- Thrive (Women's Network)
- Diversity & Inclusion Reps



Working towards:





Celebrating who we truly are

Andrew Harding and Fiona Graham,
Partners and Heads of WBD Pride



What steps have WBD taken to support LGBTQ+ colleagues?

Andrew: The main source of support is WBD Pride, our LGBTQ+ network. This group is open to everyone including allies and colleagues who have friends and relatives who are LGBTQ+. We meet regularly, and support one another by providing a safe space to be ourselves.

Fiona: It was important for the Network to feel safe together first before dipping our toe into any further work. We discussed what we as the Network wanted to achieve and take forward, and then began working on providing information across the firm, and signposting resources and support available.

Andrew: Internally we've spent a lot of time raising awareness of LGBTQ+ issues through vlogs and articles, and we've launched resources such as our WBD Ally Board. At the time of writing this has 186 messages of allyship and support which is hugely appreciated and provides LGBTQ+ colleagues with additional confidence to come out.

We also submit annually to Stonewall's UK Workplace Equality Index.

What is Stonewall's UK Workplace Equality Index?

Andrew: Stonewall's UK Workplace Equality Index is a benchmarking tool for employers to submit their progress for LGBTQ+ inclusion in the workplace.

Over 400 organisations complete the submission annually. The categories cover your support network, leaders in your business, suppliers, policies and procedures as well as employee lifecycle.

We were thrilled this year to place 215th, rising nearly 250 places from last year's submission. Achieving Silver Employer Award in our second ever submission demonstrates our commitment to diversity and inclusion at the firm, and the work we're doing to support our colleagues.

Why does WBD submit to the Stonewall Equality Index and why is our rating important?

Fiona: Because it's absolutely the right thing to do. It gives us a clear understanding of the work we're doing for LGBTQ+ colleagues, and the feedback lets us know what further steps we could take.

Andrew: Answering the survey is not easy, and our Network really champions and gets involved in the submission. It gives our Network confidence that we're already doing great things at the firm and that we're looking to do more. You can't underestimate how important this is for LGBTQ+ colleagues to make them feel included and valued.

Fiona: It's also increasingly important for new and potential employees as it shows that WBD is a place that is inclusive and supportive.

What's the most important thing about being part of WBD Pride?

Fiona: Unless you've experienced prejudice, you may not realise how hard it is to be comfortable talking about your personal life. When you can talk about your life openly it allows you to bring your true self to work. Being able to talk about my sexuality has brought confidence into other areas of my life. Seeing others share their stories and be safe and supported is really rewarding.

Andrew: I completely agree. We've had new joiners to the firm who have been happy and willing to put themselves forward for vlogs and written pieces for our intranet. It's brilliant to see that progress from where it was when I started my career, when few people were open about their sexuality.

Fiona: It's so great to enable that environment for people so that they feel free to be who they are without prejudice. I'm just so proud of the Network. It's the best part of my job and it has made a massive difference to me.

What's next for WBD Pride?

Andrew: We're looking at running more events and hoping to expand WBD REACH mentoring and reverse mentoring schemes to include WBD Pride. We're also aiming for Gold in the Stonewall Equality Index by 2024.

Fiona: We're looking to get more involved with our clients and work with them on LGBTQ+ issues. We're also thrilled that Jess Tresham will be becoming Diversity & Inclusion Board Sponsor as she is a great role model for LGBTQ+ colleagues.

Fostering a working environment based on mutual respect, inclusiveness and equal opportunities



Michelle Essen, Chair of WBD Disability Network

How did the Disability Network come into being?

During the pandemic, a close family member was diagnosed with a disability, and I reached out to our D&I partner to find out what disability support the firm offered and what initiatives were underway. I got increasingly involved, and with another colleague we spoke with HR, IT, Facilities, Marketing and other stakeholders. From that, opportunities arose to feed into policies and decisions around the business from a disability perspective and, importantly, we got a good understanding of the positive intentions around the firm to support disability.

However, we didn't have a Network to support people more directly, or as a group. In our Count Me In Questionnaire (the firm's self-declaration survey), 8% of respondents shared that they had a disability or long term condition; and we firmly believed a Network would create a community of support, and better represent our people.

With the Board's full backing, we launched the WBD Disability Network during National Inclusion Week in September 2021. We were overwhelmed by the positive feedback, including six partners who had immediately volunteered to be Network "Champions" and shared their personal stories. Since then, the Network has continued to grow, and we have 60 members today.

What has the Disability Network achieved since its creation?

We asked our members what they wanted the Network to achieve – and the response was to raise awareness across the firm about disability and long term conditions. So, the starting point has been explaining to the business what a disability or long term condition is (as not everybody knows), and what that means for our people. This includes looking at disability in terms of information, statistics and infographics – but, most impactfully, our Network members are bravely deciding to share their stories with the business, giving insights into their lives, experiences and challenges. We've also been highlighting important dates, starting with last year's International Day of People with Disabilities, then Rare Disease Day, Neurodiversity Celebration Week, Deaf Awareness Week, Carers Week and more.

Alongside this, we've set up an internal buddy system within the Network (another members' request); reviewed the firm's HR policies, including Hybrid Working; fed into our office move plans for The Spark in Newcastle; introduced Euan's Red Cord Cards in all accessible toilets, making them safer; been working with Recruitment to make our job adverts and recruitment processes more accessible; selected more inclusive imagery for our communications; contributed to the

firm's Purpose and Vision Strategy; and joined the Business Disability Forum.

What is the one thing the Disability Network is looking to achieve?

Ultimately we want to foster a working environment based on mutual respect, inclusiveness and equal opportunities, and to create a safe space where colleagues feel confident being themselves at work. As part of that, we are working towards becoming a Disability Confident Leader (we are currently a Disability Confident Employer).

What's your favourite thing about the Network?

The people, they are absolutely inspiring! The value of having a support network like the one we now have - where people openly share their thoughts, experiences, concerns, ideas – is immeasurable. Disability affects us all, directly or indirectly; and knowing we are not alone and normalising conversations about our experiences lends enormous strength. Over the past few months, our members have felt increasingly able to tell their stories, often for the first time in a professional environment, and the honesty of those invariably moves me to tears.

The Disability Network is driving positive change, and it's so rewarding and humbling to be a part of that.



Social – Wellbeing

Supporting our people’s wellbeing so that they reach their full potential at work and at home

21/22 Progress update:

- Launched our Hybrid Working Policy to promote better working practices and colleagues’ preferences for working at home or in the office, put at the heart of the decision
- Shortlisted for Best Supplier to Work For at the Employee Benefits Award – our submission was titled Health and Wellbeing, underpinning our 2020 benefits strategy
- Continued to work with Mindful Business Charter – attending regular meetings to learn and share best practice with our peers
- Wellbeing pulse survey circulated to all employees and partners in May 2021
- Developed our own wellbeing working practices in line with the launch of hybrid working
- Introduced a wellbeing day for all in addition to annual leave entitlement. In FY 21/22 58% of our people took a wellbeing day

- Over 50% of employees have taken advantage of at least one health and wellbeing benefit on offer (not including wellbeing days)
- Began rolling out compulsory Mental Health Training for all managers and supervisors
- Created and shared a new Wellbeing strategy
- Created a new Wellbeing Champions group to support our activity and feed back from around the business
- Signed up to take part in Investors in People ‘We invest in wellbeing’ standard – 61% response rate from the survey element of the assessment
- Introduction of Spotlight – online system for recognising and sharing colleagues’ achievements
- Launched our Family Network, supporting our carers at the firm

WBD colleagues working on Wellbeing:

- Wellbeing Champions
- 32 Mental Health First Aiders
- Family Network
- Sports and Social committees
- Menopause Champions



“As a Mental Health First Aider you are putting yourself out there, encouraging open and honest conversation, and helping to break down the stigma surrounding mental health.”

Chris Oddy, Head of Pricing & Commercial Development

Working towards:



My role as a Mental Health First Aider

Chris Oddy, Head of Pricing & Commercial Development



Tell us about your role as a Mental Health First Aider (MHFA). Why did you first become a MHFA?

A: I first joined the firm in February 2019 and during my induction heard about the wellbeing support available for staff, including access to a team of MHFAs. My previous employers hadn’t had a MHFA network so I was pleasantly surprised as it clearly demonstrated that wellbeing was an important part of the firm.

Everyone has mental health, so awareness around support available is really important. As a manager I had received some training in my previous roles regarding HR and supporting my teams but I wanted to learn more.

In Spring 2021, an email went out asking for interest in becoming a MHFA. As one of my colleagues in finance had stepped down, I jumped at the chance to fill their spot, and underwent the MHFA training course and personal study equating to 30 hours training in June 2021. During the course I learnt so much around mislabelling, recognising the signs and the support available at the firm, and externally. As MHFAs we are trying to normalise conversations around wellbeing and hopefully, this will help people feel less alone.

On my personal journey, I recognise that understanding myself better has helped me to become a better MHFA. I have had sessions with GPs, psychologists and others to grow my understanding. I already knew that I was dyslexic to a point, and at the age of 51 I have discovered that I also have ADHD. Traditionally I think these conditions are looked at narrowly concentrating on the drawbacks, however on the flip side there are certain ‘superpowers’ or enhanced skills that allow me to think outside of the box, have great empathy, as well as hyper focus. For those looking for resources regarding dyslexia, I’ve found the website www.madebydyslexia.org really helpful.

Now that I understand myself better, my life has changed completely. I know what it’s like to get up feeling positive, and know that you’re going to have a good day. This experience has made me a better MHFA.

What does Wellbeing mean to you?

A: Wellbeing is physical, emotional and mental health and how these are all interlinked. If you look after one area, this will impact the others. To look after our wellbeing, we need to be kinder to ourselves. The day starts with us, and understanding that I need to look after myself to look after my friends and family has really helped.

How do you look after your own wellbeing?

A: Staying physically fit is really important for my wellbeing. It calms me down, stops rushing thoughts, and connects me to my community and the wider world. I can now recognise when I’m not doing enough exercise, and I’ll then create time to focus on it. Without taking that time for me, I’m not able to do my job properly.

Do you enjoy the role? What’s the best part of the role?

A: I really enjoy my role as MHFA. I love working with people across the firm who each have their own unique experience, background and culture. You learn and grow through open and honest conversations. I like knowing I’m helping progress our culture of supporting each other. As a MHFA you are putting yourself out there, encouraging open and honest conversation, and helping to break down the stigma surrounding mental health.

How can we reduce/remove the stigma around mental health?

A: By building on our #BeYourself culture to create a place where everyone can bring their true selves to work. The more we do this, the more open and honest conversations we can have and the more we break down the stigma around mental wellbeing.



I get a huge sense of purpose through volunteering. The difference we were able to make through the garden renovation will have a lasting impact”.

Ellie Gadsby, Trainee Solicitor



Social – Community Engagement

Making a positive difference in our communities

21/22 Progress update:

- Donated 136 desktops to schools in our local areas to help tackle the digital divide
- Donated £126,000 to charities working to support social inclusion – our national theme
- Filled over 160 food packs volunteering with FareShare South West
- Achieved the Bronze Payroll Giving Mark
- Ran our #GivingTree campaign during the festive period and donated games, gifts and toys to our chosen charities
- Launched a partnership with the University of Law through a Small Business Clinic offering pro bono advice to a range of clients
- Over 100 WBD employees took part in the Access to Justice Legal Walks across the UK

- Relunched WBDbay, our online auction raising £6,500 for our chosen charities
- Achieved over 800 volunteering hours including volunteering at foodbanks, litter picking and at youth centres
- Donated over 350kg of food to our local foodbanks in London, Plymouth and Leeds
- Supported the launch of One Southwark to support 20 young people in Southwark to help achieve their ambitions
- Donated over £70,000 to the Ukrainian Crisis Appeal and ran a successful Sunflowers for Ukraine appeal for colleagues to buy sunflower seeds. We also collected items and donated them locally to help support the effort

WBD colleagues working on Community

- 125 CSR members in 7 CSR committees
- WBD Foundation Trustees (4 partners, General Counsel and UK Chair)
- 2 Pro Bono volunteer coordinators



Volunteering hours



Working towards:





Knowing we are making a difference

Hope Gallant, Trainee Solicitor and part of our Newcastle CSR Committee



What has been your most rewarding volunteering experience?

Myself and three of my colleagues recently assisted Paula and Hannah from Smile For Life (one of our chosen office charities) renovate a large garden for a very deserving family. The day consisted of prepping the land ready for turfing (clearing the garden and flattening the soil) and laying the turf itself.

Having a safe, level and accessible outdoor space was really important to the family as Robyn has complex disabilities including a visual impairment. Smile For Life had previously began the renovation by installing decking as the garden had very steep steps from the house which prevented Robyn from accessing the garden. The garden itself was also very uneven meaning there was no opportunity to enjoy the space. Following the laying of the turf, the garden is now accessible, safe and a brilliant place to play. The family plan to buy an egg chair so Robyn can read outdoors (their favourite activity!) and start enjoying the fresh air.

It was so rewarding to know that we were able to make even a small difference to this family's life by doing something that enables them to utilise their outdoor space. They were thrilled with the transformation and so grateful for our help.



What are the benefits of volunteering?

Volunteering gives me a huge sense of purpose. People are so grateful for the time you're able to give and it makes a huge difference. With the gardening project, we'd never done a day's gardening in our lives but seeing the look on the families faces was amazing, and they were so touched by our support.

Volunteering also gives you the opportunity to connect with your community, your colleagues, people you're helping and even network with others. It's a great way to feel connected to your local area.

Getting involved in Responsible Business activities is an important part of life at the firm. What opportunities have you been involved with since you started?

During my time at WBD, I've been involved with lots of different events and activities in and out of the office. As part of the CSR committee, I've worked with my colleagues to help facilitate Smile For Life's Café Beam coming into the office, run bake sales and raffles (most recently raising over £735), as well as volunteering at events such as Tea and Togs – a fashion show run by Smile For Life.

I've also helped to organise the Newcastle Legal Walk and coordinating and recruiting a WBD team to take part.

At the moment we're gearing up for our Planning Team Day where we're volunteering with the Ouseburn Trust cutting back hedges, clearing paths and steps, and litter picking. It's an important part of our efforts to support the environment, as well as being a great way for our team to come together.

Pictured: Maria Emberson (left) with Julie Spencer, at the opening of the new room at Jeremiah's Journey



Providing a safe and accessible space for families

Maria Emberson and Clare Elliott, CSR Co-Heads of our Plymouth Office

Throughout our charity partnership with Jeremiah's Journey we have been humbled by the fantastic work and support they provide to our community, offering bereavement support and counselling to so many children and their families who have lost or are facing the loss of someone special.

We were pleased to support them with the refurbishment of their first ever family room, which will provide a safe and accessible space for family therapy in response to the Keyham tragedy that took place in our local community.

Julie Spencer, operations manager for Jeremiah's Journey said: "The community's response to the Keyham shootings have enabled us to provide this room and we have also been very fortunate to have the very generous support of Womble Bond Dickinson to furnish the room and provide books and toys for the children and families that we will be working with."

Offering free legal advice with our new partnership

Sumbel Mehdi and Rory Ibbotson, Pro Bono Volunteer Co-ordinators

In March 2022, we were thrilled to announce a new partnership with the University of Law through their Small Business Clinic. On average our team give free legal advice once a fortnight virtually for a range of queries including setting up a company and general intellectual property issues.

Volunteers at the Small Business Clinic, like Nazmin Akthar, Associate, have enjoyed the opportunity to use their expertise to give advice to those in need. "It was quite a sobering experience to support small business owners who,

without this opportunity, might not have been able to obtain the level of advice and guidance provided. It highlighted the importance of initiatives like the Small Business Clinic which increase access to legal services and it has been humbling to see the impact made in a short space of time. It has been mutually beneficial too as I was able to apply my knowledge and skills in new situations and it also gave me the chance to work with colleagues from different teams within our firm which we might otherwise not have had the chance to do due to the nature of our day to day activities.

We're looking forward to continuing this partnership and providing more free legal advice to those who need it.



For the first time we have separated our work on Social Mobility from Diversity and Inclusion. This is to provide a greater spotlight on the work we're doing in this field, and alongside our progress update we already:

- Participate in both the PRIME and Pathways to Law schemes. We're a founding member of PRIME
- Are one of the founding Cornerstone Employers in the West of England (and are the current Chair), partnering with West of England Combined Authority, the Careers & Enterprise Company and 11 other employers in the region to support local schools and colleges with their careers education, helping to inspire future generations, acting as champions to encourage new businesses in the area to get involved in supporting schools and colleges
- Run a mentoring programme for KS4 students in below average schools for progression rates. This programme has been running since 2014
- Create alternative routes to qualification by way of our solicitor apprenticeship programme, first launched in 2016 in Newcastle and since rolled out to Bristol and Southampton, with plans to extend to Leeds, London and Plymouth during the 2022/23 financial year
- Recognised with The 5% Club Gold Award through their 2021 Employer Audit Scheme. This award recognises our contribution to the continued development of all our employees through "Earn and Learn" schemes like our apprenticeships and training contract program



Social – Social Mobility

inspiring young people to unlock their potential

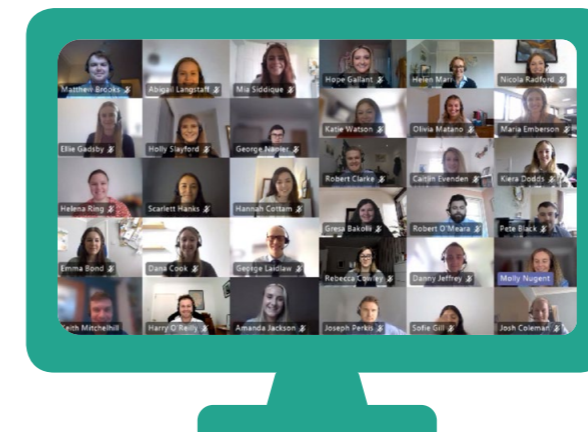
21/22 Progress update:

- Submitted to the Social Mobility index for the first time, ranked 110th
- Signed the Social Mobility Pledge which encourages organisations to be a force for good by putting social mobility at the heart of their purpose
- Began integration of our charities partners with our social mobility work
- Launched our new early careers programme which will be targeting schools within social mobility cold spots or non-selective state schools with lower progression rates to further or higher education, and above average levels of pupils eligible for free school meals
- Co-leading an initiative in the West of England, collaborating with a number of law firms to provide school outreach activities across the region with the ultimate vision of ensuring every school and college in the region has access to and support from a law firm

- Launched our Early Career Ambassador Network, a network of like-minded, committed and enthusiastic individuals across the business who will support, champion and steer our school outreach activities
- Supported 10 students through the Envision programme in FY 21/22. Through Envision, we provide business mentors to help support young people in tackling a real-life social issue, whilst also gaining valuable insight into the world of work through meaningful employer engagement
- Partnering with an organisation, Forage, to provide virtual work experience to young people who might be considering a career in the legal sector
- Working in collaboration with a client, 9 mentors from WBD took part in the Aspiring Solicitors mentoring programme supporting 18 mentees and providing opportunities

WBD colleagues working on Community

- Early Careers Ambassador Network
- Early Talent Team



Working towards:

- 4 QUALITY EDUCATION
- 8 DECENT WORK AND ECONOMIC GROWTH
- 10 REDUCED INEQUALITIES
- 17 PARTNERSHIPS FOR THE GOALS



Being surrounded by talented and driven lawyers really motivates me

Lauren Hall is a third year Solicitor Apprentice in our Bristol office



How did you find out about our Apprenticeship scheme, and why did it appeal to you?

A: Although I had a place, I knew University wasn't the right option for me, and I was looking at apprenticeships available. I hadn't seen the role at WBD until a teacher at my sixth form approached me and told me to take a look as they thought it was what I wanted. I will be forever grateful to them. The role was exactly what I was looking for.

The Apprenticeship appealed to me as everything was rolled into one, I'd learn on the job whilst attending the University of Law and I could get stuck in now. It was also a huge weight off my mind financially. Solicitor Apprenticeships are still not widespread so I also thought it may give me an edge and help me stand out when I finished the 6 years.

I'd really fallen in love with Law at A level, but since I was little everyone always said I was cheeky and could argue my case and so I should consider becoming a lawyer! I'd also done work experience in year 10 and had an insight into life at a local firm.

How does the Solicitor Apprenticeship work?

A: This paid, on-the-job training gives me a law degree and 6 years of legal experience. I work four days a week and study on the fifth day, so I'm gaining practical experience whilst learning. I'm now three years into my Solicitor Apprenticeship, and starting my fourth year in September. Until September 2023 I'll stay in the Planning team, where I've been since joining which has been incredibly helpful as my understanding grows and develops.

From September 2023 I'll be on a 6 monthly rotation for the final 2 years, and then I'll be applying for roles. I also have the option from University of Law to extend my study with them by 6 months to achieve a masters in Law, which really interests me.

“Unlike the traditional route through university, through the Apprenticeship the firm pays your salary and tuition fees so no student loans or debt.”

Why do you think the Solicitor Apprenticeship scheme is important?

A: The Solicitor Apprenticeship scheme offers a unique way into law. It's an alternative path and it widens access to the profession which is incredibly important.

Unlike the traditional route through university, through the Apprenticeship the firm pays your salary and tuition fees so no student loans or debt. This appealed to me as I could get started after sixth form and learn alongside my work. A lightbulb moment for me happened recently when at University we were focusing on Landlord and Real Estate, and it directly linked to the work I was doing at WBD. It was taking my learning in to a real life setting.

Ultimately, a huge driver for me is being surrounded by what you're wanting to be. I want to progress my career in law, and eventually become a partner, so being surrounded by talented and driven lawyers really motivates me. I know I've made the right choice by becoming a Solicitor Apprentice.



Supporting Young People in Southwark

Southwark, where our London office is based, is a borough characterised by both wealth and poverty, where life chances are unequally spread. One of the groups most affected by this inequality is young people, with 40% growing up in poverty.

A group of businesses, SMEs and voluntary organisations joined forces to help address this forming a coalition, One Southwark, in a bid to level the playing field. The focus is helping young people to achieve their aspirations. We're pleased to be part of this coalition which is supporting 20 young people, who will be given knowledge, networks and resources to take advantage of career and development opportunities. The young people will be able to access financial support, personalised and tailored support and support networks, to help achieve their unique ambitions.

This is not a traditional place-based giving scheme where funding can be applied for in isolation. Instead, the young people who have been selected have been through an application process, phone call and an 'assessment' day with workshops such as mental health for young people, leadership and team building, to secure a place on the programme.

The bespoke support given to the young people to achieve their goals is as unique as the individual. This support could be entrepreneurial, work-experience related, advice from professionals in their field, interview practice, and introductions to various leading members in their area of interest.

One Southwark is supported by a coalition of members, which currently include: United St Saviour's Charity, Peabody Housing Association, Southwark Council, Good People, Community Southwark, Team London Bridge, Alan & Babette Sainsbury Charitable Fund, Norton Rose Fulbright, Merchant Taylors and Womble Bond Dickinson.



At WBD, we're trying to take those everyday procurement decisions and look at them through a sustainability lens."

Charmian Leatt, Managing Associate



Governance

Working professionally and responsibly in our marketplace

21/22 Progress update:

- Launched the Work in Confidence anonymous communication system to support a safe and respectful working environment. Also launched our Sharing and Reporting Concerns Policy to make it easier to understand and access the range of reporting channels available and to provide confidence that any issue or behaviour which a colleague feels is wrong or inappropriate can and should be raised, whether it is a minor issue or something more serious
- Sustainable Procurement launch which outlines our approach to embedding environmental, economic and social criteria into contractual documents with an aim of motivating suppliers to offer more sustainable products and services. This includes a refreshed:
 - Sustainable Procurement Policy
 - Supplier Due Diligence Process

- Shortlisted at the Legal Innovation Awards 2022 for Excellence in Human Resources Innovation for our work on Count Me In, and shortlisted for Future of Legal Services Innovation – Large Private Practice
- ISO27001 re-certification (information security - evidence that we ensure information is secured, treat with integrity and kept confidential)
- ISO9001 re-certification (quality management – evidence of our commitment to ensuring strong customer focus, quality management and continual improvement)
- Cyber Essentials Plus re-certification (a key component in our cyber-attack prevention and defence strategy)
- In response to the invasion of Ukraine, we revised our guidance on client acceptance (and our Sanctions Policy) to ensure that we do not accept clients who are supporters of or are connected to the Russian regime

WBD colleagues working on governance

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



ISO 9001 re-certification



ISO 27001 re-certification



Cyber Essentials Plus re-certification

Working towards:





Sustainable procurement affects us all

Charmian Leatt, Managing Associate, General Counsel



What is sustainable procurement, and why is it important?

A: As individuals we make buying decisions on a daily basis, and many of us have begun to stop and think about the human and environmental impact of our decisions on the world around us. As a business, the complexity of our buying decisions is much greater and so is the wider impact of those decisions.

At WBD, we're trying to take those everyday procurement decisions and look at them through a sustainability lens. We are working to embed environmental, economic and social criteria into the way we make choices about the products and services we need to meet our business today. This means taking into account the impact of those products and services over their entire lifecycle and along their whole supply chain.

We recognise that this work is not just important to the future of our business. We know from our conversations with our colleagues, clients and communities that they really care about what we are doing too. We are also delighted that many of our current suppliers have already taken big strides towards greater sustainability, enabling us to learn with and from them on our own journey.

How are WBD taking steps to ensure their supply chain is sustainable?

A: Our suppliers play a key part in the success and sustainability of the firm. We want to work with suppliers who not only provide great products and services that enhance and protect our business, our people and our clients but also want to work with us to promote equality, diversity and inclusion and to build a fairer and more sustainable society.

We are integrating sustainability into our end to end procurement process. We have put sustainability at the heart of our recently launched Sustainable Procurement Policy and created a Sustainable Procurement Hub on our intranet ensuring that the information is accessible to all at the firm.

We have improved our supplier selection process to give us a better understanding of how our suppliers approach sustainability and take account of that in the process. We have added sustainability provisions to our contracts – these primarily focus around net zero and steps suppliers are taking in diversity and inclusion, and ethics regarding anti-corruption and modern slavery.

Lastly, we are planning to roll out training on our supplier selection process to ensure those carrying out the selection are informed and understand the importance of sustainability to the firm.

How does the work you're doing in sustainable procurement tie in with the firmwide objectives?

A: Our procurement objectives and goals are closely aligned with our Purpose and Vision Strategy which launched in 2022. This strategy includes goals around becoming net zero by 2030, diversity and inclusion, and providing social value.

These commitments are driven by the Board and reflected in the Ethical Framework. However, they are also driven by the commitment of our people. Colleagues at the firm are actively engaged in our Responsible Business activities and are making changes in their daily lives which lend support to our goals in sustainable procurement.

One example is our Facilities Team who have been working on sustainable procurement for many years within their supply chain and the management of our workplaces. We are now providing the framework for sustainable procurement to be progressed and embedded across all areas of the firm. Our clients and suppliers will also ensure we are held to account in this space.

Goals and accountability

● Complete
● In progress

Progress against 2021 goals

- 1 **Developing and stretching our environmental targets, with a commitment to being net zero by 2030.**
We are currently working with The Planet Mark to create a strategy for our journey to net zero by 2030. This plan will be aligned to the Science Based Targets Initiative. As part of this work we need to understand our current Scope 3 emissions including those around our supply chain and travel so will be focusing our attention on those two areas next.
- 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.**
We are currently piloting the first phase of our programme. Our early careers strategy has been developed with a focus on diversifying our talent pools. Our next step is to further develop our talent pipelines.
- 3 **Achieve Disability Confident Leader award and launch our disability network, demonstrating our commitment in this space.**
We have launched our WBD Disability Network, and are currently creating an action plan to achieve Disability Confident Leader.
- 4 **Grow our time spent carrying out pro bono, skilled volunteering and volunteering by 5% in FY 2021-2022.**
We have worked hard over the past year improving our data capture, encouraging colleagues to get involved, and in part, due to the bounce back from the pandemic we have grown our time giving pro bono advice and volunteering by 116% this financial year. We now have a better idea of where we are, and are putting in place goals to grow this further.
- 5 **Assess our current procurement practices and work with our suppliers to address environmental and social criteria.**
We have assessed our current procurement practices and launched a new sustainable procurement hub with a sustainable procurement policy, questionnaire and guidance. We are now looking at the next stage, working with our suppliers to address environmental and social criteria.

What are we working towards for next year?

- 1 **Environment. To continue on our journey to net zero, our goal is to:**
 - Release a net zero action plan with The Planet Mark.
 - Carry out a scope 3 assessment of our supply chain.
 - Run a commuting survey to understand the habits of our colleagues in our baseline year, and current trends.
 - Review our travel policy from an environmental perspective.
- 2 **Social: Diversity and Inclusion. We aim to:**
 - Sign up to the Mansfield Certification.
 - Achieve Stonewall Gold Accreditation.
 - Achieve Disability Confident Leader Accreditation.
- 3 **Social: Health & Wellbeing. We will:**
 - Complete the Investors in People 'We invest in wellbeing' standard.
 - Use the feedback from Investors in People to build on our existing Wellbeing strategy.
- 4 **Social: Community Engagement. We will:**
 - Further reduce our charity partnerships so we're focusing on 1 or 2 partnerships per office to have a more meaningful impact.
 - Separate our pro bono and volunteering goals and set targets for both areas.
- 5 **Social: Social Mobility. We will:**
 - Create a Social Mobility Strategy focusing on key steps we can take to support this group.
 - Build a recruitment support programme for participants which will include follow-up activities such as mentoring, insight events and advertising, tracking and flagging young people through the process and providing guidance throughout.
 - Extend our solicitor apprenticeship programme to Leeds, London and Plymouth during the 2022/23 financial year.
- 6 **Governance. We will:**
 - Review our internal governance processes making sure accountability sits with the right individual or team.
 - Create a strong responsible business structure and strategy so it's clear how all of our work is helping achieve our goal of unlocking potential.



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