WOMBLE BOND DICKINSON

Responsible Business Report

2022/23



Team volunteering day at Solent Youth Action, Southampton.

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Team volunteering day with Anxious Minds, Newcastle.

Introduction

Welcome to the 2023 Responsible Business Report. Over the past year, we have demonstrated a steadfast commitment to responsible business practices, achieving considerable progress which I'm pleased to share through this report. Despite the challenging global landscape, we have remained dedicated to our core values and have continued to prioritise our impact on the environment, community, and of course, our people and clients.

The scope of being a responsible business is continually evolving and driven by the growing recognition that our economic activities must align with social and environmental objectives. Stakeholders, including clients and our people, and the wider community, increasingly expect firms to actively contribute to the betterment of society.

Within this context, our firm has embraced the principles of responsible business, integrating them into our core values, strategies, and day to day operations. We believe that by aligning our firm's objectives with sustainable practices, we can create long-term value for all stakeholders while supporting the well-being of our planet.

While proud of our achievements, we recognise that the journey towards becoming a truly responsible business is ongoing and requires continuous improvement. This report serves as a reflection of our achievements, challenges, and aspirations as well our progress in various areas: environment, community engagement, diversity, equity and inclusion, social mobility, wellbeing and governance. We remain committed to setting higher targets and driving further positive change which you can read on page 64.

I remain enormously proud of our people and what we have accomplished together, illustrating that this is more than a report, or a collection of activities it's an ethos and a commitment that binds us all together. My personal highlights of the year include achieving the Data Quality and Collection Award at the Planet Mark Award for our carbon emissions data; growing our volunteering hours by 38% on the year before; our Neurodiversity Umbrella Project celebrating the different minds we have; the amazing jump in our rankings from 215th to 56th in the Stonewall Employer Index, which speaks volumes to the work of our people who are committed and involved in supporting LGBTQ+ rights; launching our WBD Thrive network; climbing 69 places in the Social Mobility Employer Index, ranking 41st in our second ever submission; rolling out Managing Mental Health Training to all managers, supervisors and leaders and having a 93% attendance rate; and the introduction of Talking Tables for our female partners.

I invite you to explore this report for yourselves, learn about our responsible business initiatives and join us in our commitment to creating a more sustainable and equitable future. Together, by embracing innovation and collaboration, we will strive to create a more sustainable and inclusive future for all.



Nick Barwood
Partner

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.

We encourage creativity and collaboration to provide innovative solutions

We conduct ourselves in a principled way with integrity and honesty

We protect our client and business confidential information

We respect each other, our clients, our professional obligations and the laws and legal rights we must follow

We work with each other, our clients and our communities to promote equality, diversity and inclusion to help build a fairer and more sustainable society



Having a positive impact on the world around us

Environmental Management

Net Zero

Supporting our people and our communities

Social Mobility

Community Engagement
Charitable giving, Pro Bono and Volunteering

Diversity, Equity and Inclusion

Wellbeing

Professionally and responsibly in our market place

Acting with integrity, quality and independence

Who we act for

Privacy and information security

Sustainable procurement



> Volunteering at The People's Kitchen was a great way to give back to the community. I had a fantastic day with Emma and Anna stocking the kitchen for local people to access which I know will make a huge difference. It was a really humbling and eye opening experience."
>
> **Laura Concannon, Financial Accountant**

Laura, Emma and Anna volunteering at The People's Kitchen, Newcastle.

Working professionally and responsibly and always doing the right thing

We focus on areas where we can provide meaningful impact 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: environment, ethics, labour and human rights and procurement. We achieved Gold EcoVadis rating in FY 22/23 and were rated in the top 5% of companies reporting globally, and the top 2% in the legal and accounting industry.

The 2022 survey evaluated over 90,000 companies from 200 industries spanning 160 countries, with WBD receiving outstanding in Environment, and advanced in both Labour & Human Rights and Ethics.

In the preceding 12 months, the firm made several changes to improve its rating. These included: the launch of a Carbon Reduction Plan to support our journey to net zero, achieving gold certification from Investors in People, the introduction and development of additional environmental, procurement and ethics policies, further development of support groups for under-represented groups and family friendly support programmes, and improved training statistics.

We were delighted to have achieved the Investors in People (IiP) Gold accreditation in the “We Invest in People” framework in the Spring of 2022. This puts us in the top 17% of around 50,000 organisations in 66 countries globally and in the top 27% of law firms who participate.

The achievement recognises the firm’s continued and advanced commitment to our biggest asset, our people. We use the framework to focus on how we lead, support and develop our people at work. We have chosen to be measured against the framework, recognising that it aligns very well with our overall vision of delivering excellence and unlocking potential, where we use three strategic pillars of Clients, Change and Communities to measure our success.

The IiP process and accreditation features firmly within the Communities Pillar of this strategy and gives us a platform to receive advice and support and, most importantly, develop and implement a clear action plan on continuously improving workplace culture, particularly around employee engagement, communication, organisational culture and work practices.

The process is firmly embedded in our business with input at all levels, from role-modelling and Influence from our Board and Partner Group to engagement from colleagues on the ground in regular benchmarking surveys – the accreditation is an important part of our people practices and we intend to develop further over time, aiming for the ultimate platinum, high performance accreditation in the future.

We map our objectives against the UN Sustainable Development Goals (UN SDG)

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 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 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 UN 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 and driving our behaviours.

We have outlined the various pillars that make up our Responsible Business landscape, and outlined those leading on this work. Having clear accountability is essential for the success of our responsible business programme. Our work is driven and supported by our Partner and Employee Networks.

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



Environment

Having a positive impact on the world around us

Team volunteering day with Anxious Minds, Newcastle.

2022/23 progress update

Key stats:

- Renewable energy supplied in five out of eight UK offices.
- Over 60% of the stationery/print products we source are either Green category or products with purpose. We have also reduced the emissions associated with the delivery of those products by 5% in the last year.
- Moved to The Spark – you can read about this in last year's Responsible Business Report. The Spark is located at the Helix estate which benefits from a purpose built 732m^2 energy centre, providing heating, cooling and power to the local networked buildings. The scheme is projected to save 30,650 tonnes of carbon during the next 40 years.
- Refurbished our Leeds office including investment in LED lighting, energy efficient technologies and re-use of existing furniture from other offices.
- We will shortly finalise our 7th year carbon reporting and certification with Planet Mark.
- 3rd year of 'EnviroNovember' a month long campaign run by our Enviro Reps encouraging colleagues to take steps to reduce their carbon footprint.
- Protected one acre of Peruvian rainforest through Cool Earth due to our certification with Planet Mark.
- Supported the Eden Project - 5% of the Planet Mark certification fee goes towards funding new projects.

Net Zero and carbon emissions:

- Published our updated Carbon Reduction Plan with our goal of becoming net zero by 2030.
- During Net Zero Week in July 2022, we partnered with one of our key suppliers (Commercial group) to deliver an internal webinar. The focus was ESG initiatives, social value generation and the impact of working collaboratively with our supply chain to identify and action carbon efficiencies within our operations, using our work to date with commercial as an example of best practice.
- Celebrated climate change and the impact we can all have during Innovation Week which allowed us to collaborate with our US colleagues.
- Took steps to measure and identify key scope 3 carbon emission areas of impact, including our supply chain, waste and employee commuting. A key part of this included running a firmwide commuting survey, where for every 5 survey responses we planted a tree with the National Trust.
- Launched our Electric Vehicle (EV) leasing scheme for colleagues.
- Invested in appropriate external training for colleagues in key positions to help drive forward progress towards our Environmental objectives. Notably IEMA (Institute of Environmental Management and Assessment) and NEBOSH (The National Examination Board in Occupational Safety and Health) qualifications.

Awards and recognition:

- Awarded the milestone award at the recent Planet Mark awards, recognising our achievement of more than 5 years certification with Planet Mark.
- Awarded the Data Quality and Collection Award at Planet Mark Awards for efficiently managing, collecting and reporting carbon emissions data across our offices. We achieved a data quality score of 95%.
- Listed in the inaugural Legal 500 Green Guide as one of the top law firms leading the way on climate change.
- ISO 14001 re-accredited, recognising that we have an effective Environmental Management System, providing a framework for continuous improvement in our environmental performance.

Examples of clients we have advised:

- Triodos Bank UK on a conservation-focused loan facility, read more on page 15.
- Ambition Lawrence Weston on the creation of a community-owned wind turbine, on page 16.
- The National Trust to roll out electric vehicle charging points across their sites, read more on page 17.
- DG Innovate plc on its £32.4m acquisition of Deregallera Holdings Ltd, an advanced research and development company pioneering sustainable and environmentally considerate improvements to electric mobility and storage.
- SeAH Wind on a deal to supply turbine foundations for the Hornsea 3 wind farm.
- Envision AESC, a world-leading Japanese electric vehicle battery technology company, on the construction of a new electric vehicle battery plant in Sunderland.

Memberships:

- Founding and Executive members of the Legal Sustainability Alliance
- Planet Mark
- Sustainable Recruitment Alliance
- Right Waste, Right Place Ambassadors
- The Bristol Green Capital Partnership
- Team London Bridge
- Redcliffe and Temple BID
- Energy and Environment Alliance
- Hydrogen South West

Teams contributing to the environment:

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

UN Sustainable Development Goals we are working towards:





“With offices across the UK, many multi-tenanted buildings, recording quality and reliable emissions data can be a logistical feat. Being recognised by Planet Mark and achieving such a high data quality score is an exceptional result – a tribute to all our people and sustainability representatives across the UK and also to Planet Mark for providing us with the right recording tools and guidance.”

Martin Hall, Head of Facilities

Martin Hall and Mathew Swift at the Planet Mark Awards.



Triodos Bank and Rewilding

Chris McLauchlan, Partner

WBD advises Triodos Bank UK on landmark multi-million pound conservation-focused loan facility

We have advised Triodos Bank UK on a landmark multi-million pound loan facility to Oxygen Conservation, in what is believed to be the largest conservation-focused commercial debt package in the UK to date.

The funding, worth £20.55 million, has supported Oxygen Conservation to take a significant step forward in its commitment to scaling conservation across the UK by expanding its growing portfolio of land holdings with the purchase of two large estates in Scotland.

Oxygen Conservation aims to tackle climate change and the biodiversity crisis, and works to protect and improve natural assets, through the delivery of a diverse range of projects, including species reintroduction, landscape connectivity, regenerative agriculture, woodland creation, renewable energy generation, sustainable housing, and eco-tourism and carbon sequestration through woodland and peatland restoration.

Our team advising Triodos was led by Edinburgh-based Banking Partner Chris McLauchlan and supported by Solicitors Frazer Robertson and Lewis Sanderson, along with Partner Paul Mason, Associate Gillian Buchanan, and Trainee Solicitors Keira Dodds and Gresa Bakolli.

Chris McLauchlan commented:

“It has been a pleasure working with the Triodos team on this innovative sustainable funding package, which will support Oxygen Conservation in its mission to protect and restore natural assets across the UK. As the move to net zero accelerates, WBD and its lawyers are proud to be supporting investment into projects that deliver positive environmental and social impact, which very much aligns with our own values as a law firm.”

Mavric Webbstock, Regional Team Manager at Triodos Bank UK, added:

“This loan, which adds to our pioneering portfolio of nature-based investment projects, is fully committed for 25 years, and is understood to be the largest debt transaction on nature-based finance in the UK. We’re extremely grateful for the expertise and commitment of Chris and the WBD team, who pulled out all the stops to make this transaction a great success.”





Creation of a community-owned wind turbine

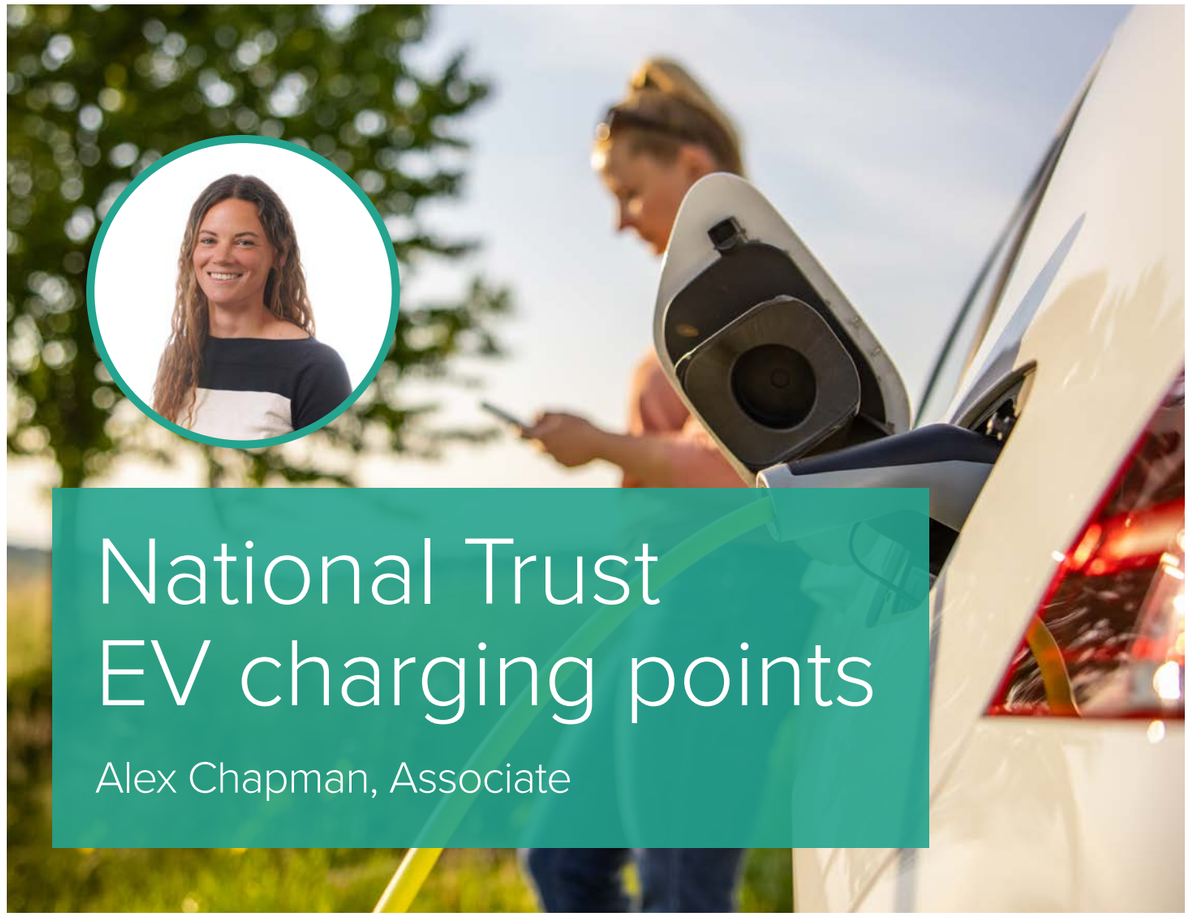
Vicky Redman, Partner & Simon Hughes, Partner

Beginning in 2021, WBD was pleased to support Ambition Lawrence Weston through the creation of a community-owned wind turbine. Ambition Lawrence Weston, a long term client of the firm, first approached the WBD team in 2020 with the concept of creating a community-owned wind turbine to help to power the local community.

WBD were able to provide support through advising on all consenting and planning issues, securing property rights and advising on land interests for the benefit of a single turbine wind development owned by and for the benefit of the local community. This pioneering scheme by a local community interest group is of significance in demonstrating the viability and potential of small scheme developments despite planning restrictions for onshore wind.

The turbine will power up to 3,500 homes from the Bristol City Council-owned land in Avonmouth, making CO2 savings of up to 1,965 tonnes a year and provide low carbon, low cost alternatives. Furthermore, there will also be an on-site Energy Learning Zone for schools and communities to learn all about renewable energy, helping to further engage and educate the community on the possibilities with renewables.

WBD were thrilled that Ambition Community Energy was recognised for this work and received the Finance & Innovation Award at the Community Energy England Awards in 2022.



National Trust EV charging points

Alex Chapman, Associate

Earlier this year we had the pleasure to work with our longstanding charity client the National Trust on a UK-wide roll out of electric vehicle (EV) charging points across sites in England, Wales and Northern Ireland.

This EV roll out is part of the National Trust's efforts to open low carbon choices for its 20 million visitors a year and contribute to the charity's own net zero target by 2030. The roll-out includes a £12m agreement with Yorkshire-based Raw Charging, who will install and maintain the charging points over the next three years.

Many of the Trust's sites are rural and, therefore, reducing the carbon footprint of everyone who wants to travel there, by building the infrastructure needed to support the transition away from petrol and diesel, will play a big part in reducing emissions and in meeting the charity's sustainability targets.

This has been a very exciting project to work on although not without its challenges. The deal was complex in nature: commercial agreements around EVs are still novel in nature and the sheer scale of the roll-out, which involved up to 280 sites across the country, meant we were navigating in somewhat unchartered waters. We had a multidisciplinary team working with our client to ensure the long-term success of the project and our in-depth commercial, energy and real estate expertise was key to seeing this through smoothly.

Our firm aims to be net zero by 2030 and we're making great progress towards this pledge through a number of initiatives and commitments all part of our Carbon Reduction Plan. We understand that to lower emissions across the UK and, in fact, globally, we need to take collective responsibility to support sustainable, low carbon projects that will make an impact. A big part of that is working collaboratively with our clients, our people and suppliers to support the decarbonisation of the economy. The National Trust project is a prime example.



Our journey to net zero

Jon Bower, Partner &
Mat Swift, Sustainability Manager

WBD was amongst the first UK law firms to announce its commitment to achieving net zero by 2030. We caught up with Jon Bower, Net Zero Partner, and Mat Swift, Sustainability Manager, to hear about our progress so far.

Why is net zero important to WBD and what role should businesses play in driving environmental change?

Jon: We recognise that WBD has a role to play in ensuring a sustainable future for all. At WBD we have been embedding the environment in our business for many years, far beyond our recent commitment to being net zero. For example we are founding and executive members of the Legal Sustainability Alliance, achieved our first ISO 14001 accreditation in 2014, and have been working with clients in this space around solar, wind and other renewables projects as well as others which may not automatically be considered as contributing to net zero. An example of this is working for rail clients on establishing efficient electrified rolling stock which will enable more people to travel by train.

Mat: As well as this supporting the environment is really important to our people. This is essential for us to attract and retain talent.

What steps have we taken so far to help us achieve net zero?

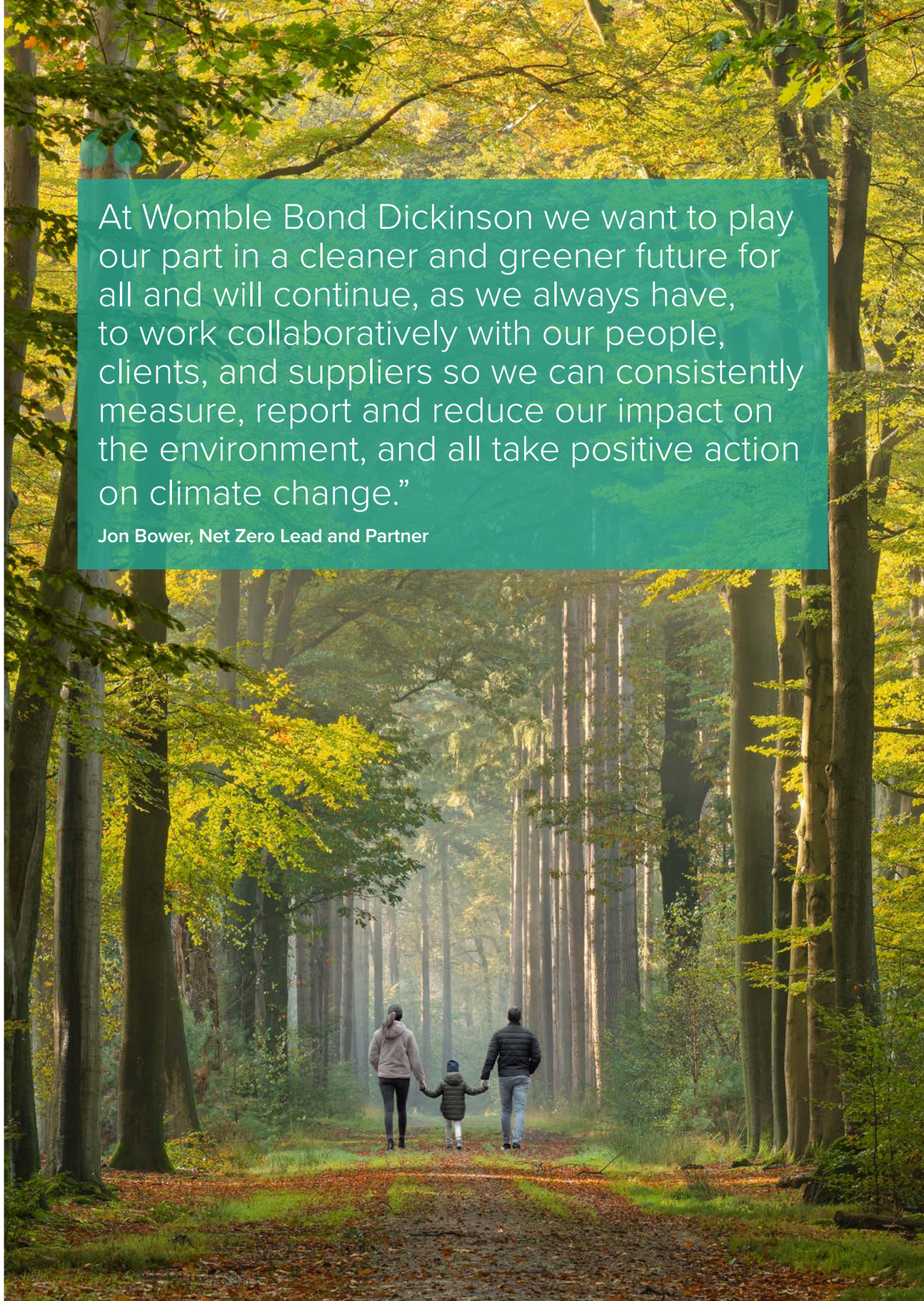
Mat: Over the past few years we've really been focusing on scopes 1 and 2 and in particular looking at our facilities. Some recent highlights include our relocation in Newcastle, and refurbishing and consolidating space in our Leeds office. You can read more about our key achievements on pages 11-12.

Jon: We've been working with Planet Mark for over six years and annually reduce our emissions. When measuring our firmwide emissions we include scope 3 and over the coming year will be rolling out another extended scope 3 review to measure improvements.

What's next in our net zero journey?

Jon: Our three focuses moving forward will be our supply chain, commuting and business travel. We know that there's more we can do on travel, such as further reducing flights, making sure our data is as accurate as possible, and introducing carbon budgets. We would also like to work with our clients to support the environment such as through offsetting to close the final gap.

Mat: We will be running a supplier workshop in Autumn to see how we can work together with our suppliers on our net zero goals. We will also continue to collaborate, learn from others and share best practice with the networks we are members of.



> At Womble Bond Dickinson we want to play our part in a cleaner and greener future for all and will continue, as we always have, to work collaboratively with our people, clients, and suppliers so we can consistently measure, report and reduce our impact on the environment, and all take positive action on climate change."
>
> **Jon Bower, Net Zero Lead and Partner**



Social

Community Engagement

Making a tangible difference in our communities

Team volunteering day with Anxious Minds, Newcastle.

2022/23 progress update

Fundraising and donations of items:

- Donated 54 iPhones and 10 laptops to our local charity partners to support their work in the community.
- Supported our seven chosen charities (focusing on our national theme of social inclusion) and worthy causes through WBD, WBD Foundation and colleagues' fundraising. This amounted to £166,000.
- Donated just shy of 500kg of supplies and over 1,800 items to Leeds North and West Foodbank through a supermarket sweep event. You can read about supermarket sweep on page 25.
- 81 WBD employees took part in the Access to Justice Legal Walks across the UK, with WBD helping to organise the Newcastle and first ever Plymouth legal walk.
- Raised over £8,000 through WBDbay, our virtual auction that runs firmwide. This auction supports all of our chosen charities.
- 13 employees cycled from Plymouth to Bristol raising over £8,500 for Fareshare South West, you can read more on page 26.
- 12 WBD colleagues took on Power2Paddle dragon boat race and won, raising £1,068 for the charity.
- Donated £20,000 through our WBD Foundation in light of our Disaster Response Policy. £10,000 was donated to the Türkiye Syria Earthquake Appeal, and £10,000 to the Pakistan Floods Appeal.
- 48 colleagues took advantage of our match funding pot for causes they care about. They took part in events such as Macmillan's Mighty Hikes, the Great North Run, Firewalks and Half Marathons.
- Donated wellies and hats to Victoria Road Primary school in Plymouth for their first ever school trip to a farm. Some colleagues took it further and even knitted and crocheted several hats for the year 6 pupils.
- Ran a firmwide competition for best Christmas Jumper 2022 and Best Festive Pet Outfit with 123 entries (both humans and pets). Money raised was donated to charity, and the winner donated her prize back to charity.
- Over 160 gifts were donated across our offices for our Festive Giving Tree.
- Donated excess hand sanitiser to local charity, From Bristol with Love for Ukraine. We gave 96.5 litres of hand sanitiser, and 12 litres of anti-bacterial hand soap.

Volunteering:

- Gave 1,100 hours to local charities across the UK through volunteering. This was an increase of 38% on the year before.
- As well as several other charities, over the past few years we've volunteered for Solent Youth Action. You can read more about the impact we've made on page 27.
- Our teams gardened, painted, helped to manage woodland, packed food packs, sorted clothing, read stories to children, gave HR advice, applied for grant funding, and much more. Thank you to everyone who gave their time, and to the charities for hosting us.

Pro Bono:

- Increased our pro bono support through the growth of our University of Law clinic, and other projects such as Black Lives in Music and Life Cycle UK. We hit 600.8 hours in FY 22/23.
- Carried out 10 sessions with the University of Law through a Small Business Clinic offering pro bono advice to a range of clients.

2022/23 progress update (continued)

Other charitable support:

- Recruited our first Responsible Business Apprentice to support our work in community engagement and the environment.
- Linked up with Wellbeing and invited our charity partner, Smile for Life, to talk during Neurodiversity Week.
- 76 people used our spaces for free charity events including team days and events.
- Decided to expand our CSR Committees into our new Teesside office located in the Wilton Centre – beginning in FY 2023.

Awards:

- Shortlisted for Bristol Law Society's Community Engagement Award 2022.
- Retained the Bronze Payroll Giving Mark.

Members contributing to community engagement:

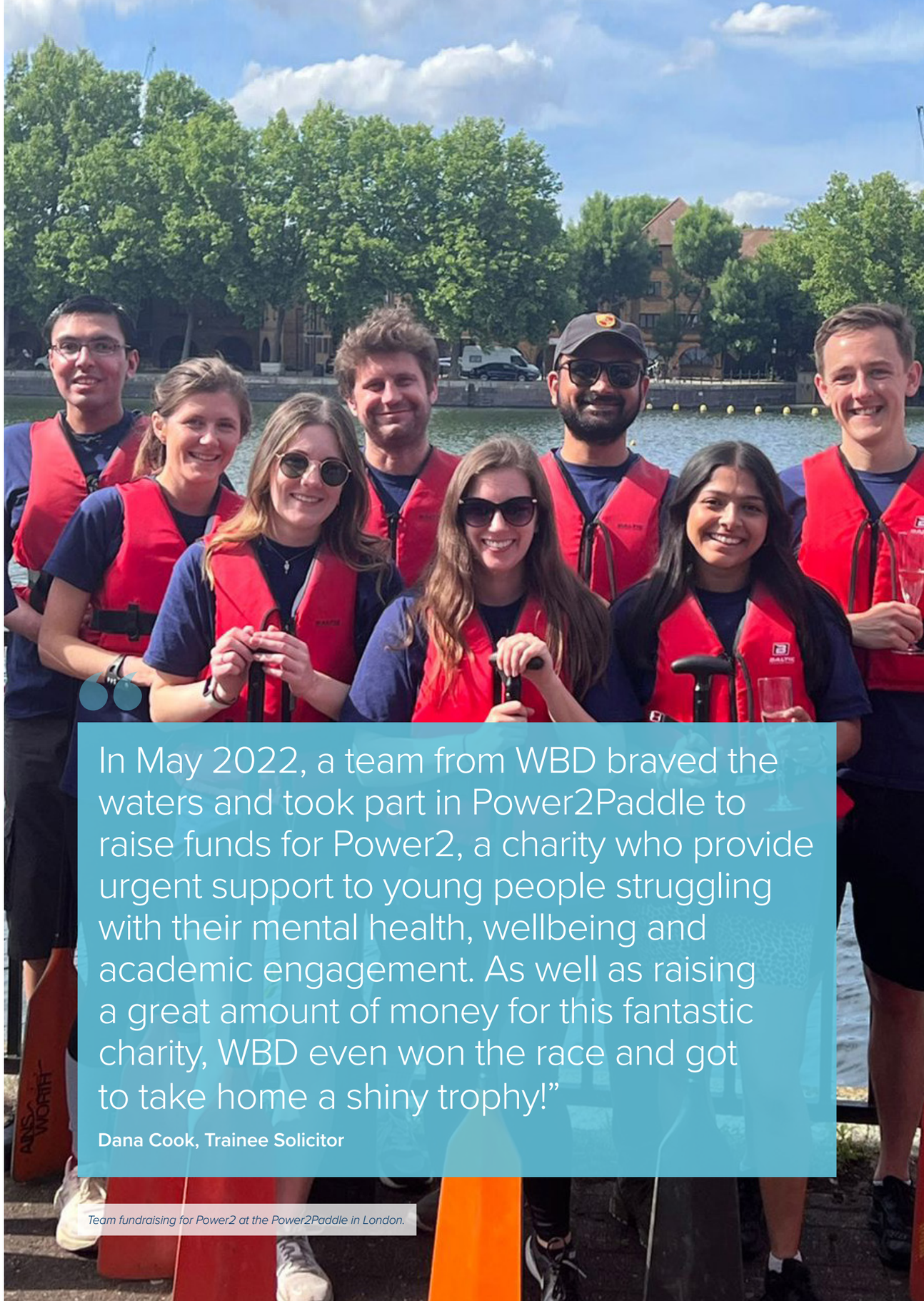
- 116 CSR members in 7 CSR committees.
- 2 Pro Bono volunteer coordinators.
- WBD Foundation Trustees (4 partners, General Counsel and UK Chair).

UN Sustainable Development Goals we are working towards:





Team volunteering day at St Luke's Hospice.



In May 2022, a team from WBD braved the waters and took part in Power2Paddle to raise funds for Power2, a charity who provide urgent support to young people struggling with their mental health, wellbeing and academic engagement. As well as raising a great amount of money for this fantastic charity, WBD even won the race and got to take home a shiny trophy!"

Dana Cook, Trainee Solicitor

Team fundraising for Power2 at the Power2Paddle in London.



Pro Bono advice for Black Lives in Music

Jo Coleman, Partner

We were pleased to be able to provide pro bono legal advice to Black Lives in Music (BLiM). BLiM is a Black-led national organisation at the forefront of efforts to address racial inequity in the UK Jazz and Classical music sectors. Their vision is for an inclusive music community and industry free of racism, prejudice and discrimination, where everyone can feel confident that they belong.

Jo Coleman, Partner in WBD's Charities team advised BLiM on a pro bono basis and helped register the organisation as a charity. This was a great way to align our diversity, equity and inclusion goals with our community engagement work.

Jo commented that, "Equality of opportunity is something I am really passionate about and so when Black Lives in Music approached me for support and advice, I immediately wanted to help. The work the organisation undertakes to advocate for more diverse representation in the music industry and to drive change for equal opportunities, is awe-inspiring and it has been an absolute pleasure to work with such a passionate and forward-thinking team."

Charisse Beaumont, Chief Executive at Black Lives in Music, added: "The knowledge and advice we received was impeccable. The application was a lengthy process due to the pandemic but we felt an unwavering commitment from the team that their focus was to see this through to the end. Jo attended meetings and was a great advisor to us. Ultimately, we received charity status and as an organisation are now able to make a greater impact across the music sector. Thank you Jo for your professional and friendly advice. Thank you Womble Bond Dickinson for understanding our mission from the very beginning.



Supermarket Sweep Leeds

Stephanie Antrobus, Solicitor

Our Leeds CSR team are currently supporting Leeds North and West Foodbank as their chosen charity. Through this support they are committed to volunteering, raising funds and donating items to the charity. The Leeds CSR team are always thinking of new ways to support Leeds North and West Foodbank and in March they decided to organise a supermarket sweep to ensure the foodbank had the items it needed. Organising the event required the creation of a subcommittee.

The subcommittee confirmed a list of items that the foodbank needed, from 'must buys', 'accepted items' to 'banned items'. They then asked teams of four to sign up committing to shop at a supermarket of their choice. Teams then visited their chosen store and timed themselves from entry to timestamp on receipt. After the shops, the food was donated to the foodbank, and the winning team was the one that stuck closest to the budget, purchased the most items and with the quickest time.

Collectively the event had over 10 teams take part, and resulted in over 1,800 items being donated, just shy of 500kg of supplies! This was an incredible effort and the foodbank were thrilled with the support. A massive thank you to all of our colleagues who got involved and made this event such a success.



Tour de South West

Clare Parkin, Solicitor

In July 2022, a team of 15 cyclists in our Bristol office took on a charity bike ride, ‘Tour de South West’, to raise money for FareShare South West. The cycle covered 157 miles over two days, with the team starting at the WBD Plymouth office, through Devon and Somerset back to the WBD Bristol office.

The route ran from Plymouth to Bristol as FareShare South West had just opened a new warehouse in Plymouth. This involved skirting around Dartmoor National Park before heading for a well-earned rest in Tiverton, just north of Exeter.

On day two, they set off from Tiverton, passed through Taunton and an ice cream stop in Weston Super-Mare before making their way back to the Bristol office.

The target was to raise £6,000, the equivalent of 24,000 meals and saving 10.2 tonnes of surplus food from going to waste. The team exceeded this, raising over £8,500 for the charity.

FareShare South West tackles food poverty in the region by redistributing surplus food that would otherwise go to waste, and redistributing it to charities, schools and community groups for those that need it most.

In FY 22/23 we were pleased to support FareShare South West as one of our three charity partners in our Bristol office. Alongside the cycle we organised fundraising events in the office and volunteered at their warehouse.



Volunteering for Solent Youth Action

Rianna Farrow, Apprentice Solicitor

For one of our chosen charities in Southampton, Solent Youth Action, we have been regularly providing volunteers to help at their site, The Routes. Rianna Farrow, co-head of our Southampton CSR committee has commented, “It’s so rewarding to see the difference we’ve all made to the site over the past few years.”

When a team of volunteers in Southampton last visited the site back in April, they spent the morning planting trees that were donated from The Tree Council and building raised beds ready for the students to start growing vegetables and plants (using the railway sleepers we donated). This shows the huge progression that has been made to the site since we first volunteered in June 2021, where the day was spent cutting down overgrown tree’s and clearing up the site so it was safe for the students to use. There is only a small team working at the site and they continue to express how grateful they are for all our volunteering support as they wouldn’t have had enough time between working with the young people to develop the site themselves!

Solent Youth Action is a Youth Provision Charity based in the South of Hampshire, working directly with vulnerable young people aged 10-25 and supporting them to engage in positive activities in their community and release their potential. Their site is used as a way for young people to learn and build social skills, develop individual and team building skills, learn how to use construction tools, develop health and safety knowledge and awareness, learn forestry and horticultural skills and make a positive contribution to the community.

Social

Diversity, Equity and Inclusion (DEI)

Creating a diverse and inclusive workplace



Smile for Life's talk for Neurodiversity Awareness Week, Newcastle.

2022/23 progress update

Strategic focuses:

- Appointed new DEI Board Lead, Jess Tresham to set the strategy and direction at the firm.
- Achieved Stonewall Gold accreditation for the first time and ranked in the top 100 companies in the Stonewall Index in 2023.
- Signed up to the UK Mansfield Certification - aimed at improving diversity by considering 30% diverse candidates for 70% of internal roles, promotions and participation in pitch meetings. For Mansfield this includes: disability, gender, LGBTQ+, race and ethnicity. As part of this we have made our career paths more transparent, plan to share information on what leadership roles look like, how to achieve them and change our promotions process. We hope to make further improvements to increase diversity in all categories and expand the principles to all roles in our business not just the specified lawyer roles that Mansfield requires.
- Building on our Disability Confident Employer status, we are aiming to achieve Disability Confident Leader accreditation (which will include guaranteed interview for disabled candidates who meet the minimum job criteria). Members of the HR, Recruitment and Disability Network are currently working with Business Disability Forum who will externally validate the evidence we provide to ensure best practice and make suggestions on areas of development.
- Retrieving data remains a key focus so that we can support and structure our DEI strategy – while we remain below 80% completion rate we have been working with DEI Networks who have fed into changes to our Count Me In. Examples include changes to our disability questions giving breadth to and describing the range of conditions and illness that qualify, and mirroring this in the questions we ask about caring responsibilities.

Recruitment:

- Invested in employer profile and recruitment advertising with Vercida, showcasing the work that our various teams and colleague networks have been doing to ensure an inclusive work environment.
- Utilised a blind recruitment process for graduate/ apprentices and our recruitment system uses bias checking software to ensure our adverts are gender neutral.
- Shared DEI resources with prospective candidates, including relevant networks and contact details should they wish to speak to a network member during the recruitment process.
- Provided assessment materials and interview questions in advance in an attempt to level the playing field for neurodivergent candidates, and those from lower socio-economic backgrounds.
- Delivered briefing sessions for all assessors involved in graduate and apprentice recruitment, with a focus on fairness, consistency and unconscious bias.
- Delivered workshops to successful apprentice and graduate candidates ahead of assessment stages, designed to provide insight into the process and level the playing field for underrepresented groups.
- Implemented the Rare Contextual Recruitment System for graduates and apprenticeships. The system allows us to understand the context in which a candidate's experiences have been gained and enables us to identify top candidates from the widest talent pool possible. This will be integrated with our current Applicant Tracking System and will deliver two outputs: flags to measure disadvantage and Performance Index (PI) to measure outperformance against students at the same school.
- Further developed our DEI Recruitment Network, a collaboration of members of each of our DEI networks and the recruitment team, with the objectives of reducing all bias from our recruitment process, broadening the diversity of our talent pools and embedding DEI into our recruitment DNA.
- Established focus groups within the recruitment team to partner with each of our networks to develop and progress our DEI recruitment plans.
- Worked with head-hunters and recruitment agents to highlight our DEI priorities and, where appropriate, ensure diverse shortlists are presented to the firm.

2022/23 progress update (continued)

DEI Networks:

- Celebrated Neurodiversity Week for the first time with the umbrella art installations in each of our offices and related client events.
- Launched our Thrive Network, to promote and support female career development. Our launch session was the highest attended internal event to date.
- WBD Pride hosted their annual firmwide Pride Quiz in March including a very popular music round.
- Agreed to expand our reverse mentoring pilot to the WBD Board and other DEI networks (we started with WBD Reach in 2021).
- Signed up to 10,000 Black Interns with two interns starting in Summer 2023.
- Launched phonetic spelling and pronunciation, as well as gender pronouns in email signatures.
- On International Women's Day, WBD Thrive hosted an external panel event with GCs and other senior women in legal and business roles. The panel of clients shared the challenges they have faced and overcome on their career journeys and how they have learnt to embrace their own power.
- Network members and allies shared case studies to help others understand the challenges faced by those with protected characteristics, help to learn about different cultures and more. Some campaigns we marked included Islamophobia week, International Men and Women's days, National Inclusion Week, Pride month, Neurodiversity week and more.

Examples of clients we have worked with:

- Centrica, who our WBD Thrive network hosted an event with. You can read more about this on page 35.
- We act for Rentplus UK Limited, one of the UK's largest provider of affordable rent to buy homes and all their subsidiary companies. We advise Rentplus on all their collaboration agreements with their Registered Provider partners and agreements with local authorities throughout the UK to deliver high quality affordable homes to those who would otherwise not be able to rent and buy their own homes on the open market.

Memberships and Awards:

- Count Me In, our DEI data collection exercise, was shortlisted in the Excellence in HR Innovation at the Legal Innovation Awards 2022.
- Women in Law Empowerment Forum UK 2021 Gold Standard.
- Member Business Disability Forum.

Members contributing to DEI:

- WBD Disability Network.
- WBD Pride Network (LGBTQ+ network).
- WBD Reach Network (Race, Ethnicity, and Cultural Heritage).
- WBD Thrive Network (women's career development).

UN Sustainable Development Goals we are working towards:



> WBD Thrive were pleased to run our Female General Counsel event on International Women's Day. The event focused on embracing your power and influence to effect gender diversity change. It was a fantastic evening and encouraged open and honest conversations both internally and with some of our clients. WBD are committed to driving forward change by encouraging collaboration, reducing barriers and raising awareness."
>
> **Jo Beattie-Edwards, Co-Lead of WBD Thrive and Partner**



Female General Counsel event on International Women's Day with our clients in London.



Neurodiversity the power of the mind

Michelle Essen, Legal Director & Emily Cox, Associate

We are a firm of thinkers. Deep, lateral, and creative thinking are central to what makes our people so good at what they do, and how we provide excellent and unique services and solutions to our clients.

With a variety of different brains and ways of thinking, our differences and diversities also help make our world more interesting and colourful. As such, we embrace neurodiversity and celebrate different minds.

Neurodiversity is an umbrella term covering several neurological differences, such as Autism, ADHD, Dyslexia, Dyspraxia and Dyscalculia.

Creating an inclusive culture requires more than just words, it takes meaningful action and time; we work hard to foster an environment that not only values the unique strengths and perspectives of every individual but also actively looks to supply equal opportunities and remove barriers for our colleagues.

Throughout March, for Neurodiversity Celebration Week, we launched our Neurodiversity Umbrella Project (as part of the ADHD Foundation's national project), with multi-coloured umbrella displays across our UK offices as an awareness-raising, visual representation of neurodiversity - celebrating the different minds we have. Our clients and our own people have told us of the impact it has had for them, by placing neurodiversity on their radar or, for those who are neurodiverse, by making them feel welcome and included.

We also hosted an event with learning disability charity Smile for Life. And, in a brave and public blog, Emily Cox, WBD's Disability Network Steering Group member, shared her experience of neurodiversity as a lawyer at WBD.

Overwhelmed by the firmwide and wider public support Michelle Essen, Chair of WBD's Disability Network, said "around one in five people is neurodivergent and yet there are still many misconceptions and a lack of understanding about what being neurodiverse means. We shouldn't be talking about neurodiversity as a limitation or even necessarily as a superpower - it's a difference in the way we think, exactly as there are differences in the way we look or the way we do things. Every person should be valued for exactly who they are".

As a firm and through our Disability Network, we will continue working hard to drive conversations and progress around neurodiversity, and disability more widely, throughout the whole year.



An inclusive and safe space

Nikki Powell, Partner & James Clark, Managing Associate

WBD Pride is the firm's network for LGBTQ+ colleagues and allies. In addition to advancing initiatives to raise awareness of challenges faced by the LGBTQ+ community and create a more aware and inclusive workplace, we work with clients to support joint initiatives, host internal and external events and also meet regularly to provide a safe space to talk and to support one another.

Our most recent event was an open panel attended by colleagues and clients exploring the topic of bias both conscious and unconscious, with the hope to move towards conscious inclusion. The event was led by key note speaker, Jude Guaitamacchi, (Tedx Speaker, Trans & Non-binary advocate, face of Harrods beauty and campaigner).

The fantastic work undertaken across the firm has resulted in WBD being listed in Stonewall's Top 100 employers. This index is open to all businesses in the UK, not just law firms. This is a huge achievement.

We have ranked 56th in the Top 100 Employers list, up from 215th last year, and also received the Gold Award in recognition of our initiatives to foster an inclusive and safe workplace for all our people and where everyone can feel empowered to be their real selves.

Over the past year, we and our dedicated LGBTQ+ network, WBD Pride working with our colleagues across the firm, have made significant strides towards creating an inclusive working environment.

Andrew Harding (he/him), Co-Chair WBD Pride comments: "We're proud to have been recognised by Stonewall as a leading LGBTQ+ inclusive employer. Being ranked 56th, in only our third year entering the index, as well as receiving the Gold Award for our commitment to diversity and inclusion, is a fantastic achievement and shows how far our firm has come in recent years. This is also a tribute to the work put in by our WBD Pride and wider race, ethnicity and cultural heritage, disability and women's networks, with support from across the firm, to create an inclusive culture for all our people, where difference is visibly valued and welcomed."

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Celebrating race, ethnicity and cultural heritage

Jo Martin, Partner & Suzanne Gado, Legal Director

Now in its fourth year, our Reach Network continues to grow, evolve and deliver exciting and impactful initiatives. The Network provides a place for Black and minority ethnic employees to share their lived experiences; a forum where members discuss their challenges and explore solutions.

Reach also provides education and support to the wider firm in understanding and addressing these voiced and unvoiced challenges - helping to create and sustain a culture of belonging and togetherness.

Below is a sample of what we are proud to have achieved this year. The addition of new network leads to our steering group brings fresh perspectives to the work we are doing and will help us achieve more over the coming year.

10,000 Black Interns

In May we hosted the inaugural intake of interns for the 10,000 Black Interns programme, welcoming two brilliant interns, Miah and Eugenia into the firm for a six week paid placement. Reach worked with the early talent team to create a positive, engaging programme for the interns while network members provided mentoring and support throughout. Feedback was positive and Miah Whittle commented “I am extremely grateful for this experience which has developed my legal experience and allowed me to make long- lasting connections.”

Name Pronunciation Tips

Our names are part of who we are and reflect our heritage and identity. Pronouncing names correctly is not only respectful, but important and inclusive, and impacts positively on our relationships. Reach was delighted to be a key part of the firm’s introduction of the optional use of phonetic spelling of names in our email signatures, helping people share the correct pronunciation of their names Check out the case studies here.

Recruitment

Encouraging applicants from a range of backgrounds, ethnicities and cultures is a key deliverable for us and to that end we’ve worked with our Recruitment Team on the DEI Recruitment Framework Plan ensuring the firm’s recruitment methods, channels and communications continue to evolve and be inclusive.

Reverse Mentor Scheme

We are also very proud of our reverse mentoring programme which you can see here.



Amplifying female voices

Lucy Pringle, Partner & Jo Beattie-Edwards, Partner

In October 2022, WBD Thrive officially launched. The network plays an important role in enabling WBD to unlock everyone’s full potential through fostering professional growth, support, and empowerment for women in our firm. It provides a platform for skills development, networking, informal mentorship, and advocacy.

Through WBD Thrive we amplify our female voices and can collectively advocate for change, leading to greater representation in decision making processes, policies, and company initiatives. We give opportunities for our female colleagues to connect, share experiences, and offer advice to one another.

When WBD Thrive launched we were delighted by the turnout to our inaugural event. More than 240 people attended the event in person or online, making it the largest internal event that WBD has run! It says a lot about our firm and our commitment to being a responsible business dedicated to diversity, equity and inclusion.

Jo Beattie-Edwards, co-head of WBD Thrive added that, “A lot of preparation went into our launch and the feedback from our employees in our pulse survey January 2022 has been crucial in giving us direction. We are thrilled that so many people have interacted with our events this year and hope to have an even greater impact in 2023”.

Since our launch we are proud to have hosted many events. The majority have been internal but we have been pleased to invite clients into the office for one of our sessions and had a great turnout with speakers from clients Babcock, Centrica and Vattenfall (with many others in attendance). We have reviewed and fed into policies into the firm including our menopause policy, raising awareness of the barriers that may hold women back.

Our next big event is in September where we will focus on allyship. Many of our male colleagues are stepping forward to embrace the male ally concept and support from them makes an enormous difference to our work and what we are trying to achieve. Having insight from those with other perspectives and experiences, makes our approach more robust so that we can continue to grow and develop what we offer to the network and wider audience.

It’s been a busy period for the sponsors and members of the network, but we are pleased with our progress and the willingness of our colleagues to take part and are excited to see what comes next.

Social

Social Mobility

Inspiring young people to unlock their potential



Kim Southway collecting her award from Envision for being Mentor of the Year, Bristol.

2022/23 progress update

School engagement:

- Ran our first year of 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. We provided a week long insight programme for year 10 students. The initiative saw 6 law firms come together to support 30 students across 5 schools.
- Continued to run our mentoring programme with Oasis Academy, a programme that involved 3 workshops (21 March, 26 April, 16 May), 14 students and 17 WBD volunteers. The workshops each contain numerous activities including group exercises, completing CVs, mock interviews, presentations and career planning. Each student is assigned a mentor who represent a range of roles throughout the firm from Apprentices to HR members to Partners. They assist the student throughout the workshops to complete their activities.
- Launched our new "Insight" programme which includes a variety of live webinars that students and parents/guardians can sign up to throughout the year to hear more about WBD, different roles at a law firm (both legal and business services) and routes into these careers.
- Supported the Envision programme in Bristol, working with 24 year 9 students from St Bernadette's School and Patchway School. Through this 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.
- Launched Forage to provide virtual work experience to young people who might be considering a career in the legal sector. This programme can be undertaken any time, any place, and has been shared with schools across the region. It also has massive benefits for under-represented groups (URGs) as it doesn't require any previous work experience or involve an application process. Over 1,000 people have registered for the programme which has a completion rate of 9%, well above the industry standard of 3%.
- Supported Think Law, a programme organised by North Tyneside Learning Trust working with schools across North Tyneside to support students with insights into careers in law, interview processes and work experience, with work placements taking place over the summer months.
- Continued to support Pathways to Law, a structured programme offering A-level students up to 3 days office based work experience. Pathways have a criteria students need to meet to be eligible for the programme and placements take place early in the year during February and Easter half term weeks. Students are selected through the Pathways programme and complete a selection of skills workshops with Pathways before joining us for work experience.
- Took part in the Big Interview in Southampton at Regents Park Community College, an event for their year 10 students to prepare for and undertake a mock interview as part of their career development.
- Supported the Careers Speed Dating event at Regents Park Community College, a morning of quick fire questions from the school's year 9 students to help them learn about different professions and the various routes available to get into different careers.

Memberships and achievements:

- Rose 69 places in the Social Mobility Index, ranking 41st in our second ever submission.
- Founding members of PRIME. This is an alliance of law firms and in-house legal teams determined to improve access to, and socio-economic diversity within, the the legal profession.
- One of the Cornerstone Employer in the West of England and current Chair.
- Member of West of England Legal Early Careers Network.
- Signatories to Social Mobility Pledge which encourages organisations to being a force for good by putting social mobility at the heart of their purpose.
- The 5% Club. Through this we were awarded the Gold Award recognising our contribution to the continued development of all our employees through "Earn and Learn" schemes like our apprenticeships and training contract programme.
- Our initiative in the West of England with other law firms was awarded the 2022 Community Engagement Award in the Bristol Law Society Awards. It was also shortlisted in the Best Social Mobility category in the People in Law Awards.

2022/23 progress update (continued)

University Engagement and Apprenticeships:

- Launched a pilot mentoring scheme with the University of Greenwich in Commercial Law. The pilot saw 11 mentors and 16 mentees come together and offered insight into life at a law firm. Due to the success of this 3-session pilot, we'll now be rolling out a full 6-session programme in Autumn 2023.
- Sponsored Strive's Supernova programme - their flagship scheme which supports aspiring commercial lawyers who are looking for vacation schemes and training contracts. Strive are a social mobility charity who source and develop talent who are intersectionally diverse, socially mobile and from underrepresented backgrounds, to help them realise their full potential.
- Provided a scholarship to students who are studying at Newcastle Law School via the PARTNERS supported entry route involving a talk to the cohort then visit/placement for the winner of an essay competition.
- Ran an insights day with our client, AIG. You can read more about this in our stories section on page 43.
- Recruited 12 new apprentices into roles at the firm with a further 2 enrolments to support existing team members' progression.

Members contributing to social mobility:

- Early Careers Ambassador Network.
- Early Talent Team.

UN Sustainable Development Goals we are working towards:



Presentation by our WBD team to students at the University of Greenwich as part of our AIG Insights Day, London.



Commercial Mentoring

Matthew Wright, Trainee Solicitor

WBD has worked closely with the University of Greenwich over the years, including through a pro bono clinic and the AIG Insights Days (on page 43). When we were approached in 2022 to consider launching a new commercial mentoring scheme with the University we were keen to work together and create a programme which gave students connections, insight and opportunity that might otherwise have not been possible.

In 2023 we were pleased to launch the new pilot mentoring scheme, linking our WBD employees with University of Greenwich mentees who were studying commercial law. Our 10 mentors, alongside our lead mentor, ran a series of sessions including a Q&A and panel, commercial awareness skills and application preparation skills.

Carol Withey, Associate Head of Student Success: Law and Criminology commented that, "The Commercial Law and Practice Mentor Scheme was a great success! The online sessions allowed Greenwich students to apply their commercial law knowledge to realistic practical problems. Student mentees really enjoyed the task-based sessions and appreciated the constructive feedback they received. All the WBD mentors were inspiring and helped to build mentee confidence as well as develop work-based skills. The University of Greenwich is extremely grateful to WBD for partnering with our Law School to help improve diversity within the legal sector."

The pilot was such a success that we will be rolling out a full six session programme in October 2023-March 2024 to support a new cohort of students. Matthew Wright, Trainee Solicitor who was a mentor last year and will be our lead mentor for our next cohort added, "The scheme was a wonderful opportunity to engage with law school students and help demystify what can sometimes be a challenging industry to break into. As someone who was recently in their position, it was extremely rewarding to share my experiences and insights and assist my mentees in developing their skills. The experience was enjoyed universally by all the mentors, and we are all very excited to be involved in the upcoming programme in October!"

Strive Mentoring

Rebecca Cowley, Trainee Solicitor

Introducing our latest social mobility programme

We have started a new programme with Strive – a social mobility charity who source and develop talent from intersectionally diverse, socially mobile and under-represented backgrounds to help them realise their full potential. We are sponsoring their Supernova programme – a flagship scheme which supports aspiring commercial lawyers who are looking for vacation schemes and training contracts. Rebecca Cowley, a mentor of the scheme shared her insights.

Why is it important for the firm to be supporting social mobility?

The Legal Profession has a challenging stigma attached to it, around schooling, background and connections. Social mobility is all about tackling that misconception and demonstrating that the legal profession is open to everyone.

For me personally, there could have been a lot of barriers to accessing the legal profession. Going to a state school we'd never had anyone come in to talk to us about a career in law and I hadn't studied Law at A Level. Then later when I was at University I saw some of my peers getting legal work experience when I was studying full-time, working to fund my education and caring for my nan.

If I hadn't had a conversation with a tutor back in school (who first suggested law could be for me) then I wouldn't be where I am now. Once at university I didn't know what I needed to do to get a training contract, or how it all worked. We need to change that for current and future students and make it easier for everyone to understand the process, and to decide if law is for them.

What is involved in your role as mentor?

The programme began in October 2022, and in my role as a mentor, I've been assigned three mentees. I support them through the whole lifecycle of the application process from researching to applying to vacation schemes to finding out if they've got a place to being unsuccessful and looking for other opportunities.

Mentoring has had huge benefits on the individuals, especially around confidence. When you're going through the process, as I did myself, you think everyone else knows how it all works. Being from a state school, I wasn't told how to do this and so having someone to ask and get advice from really matters. I learnt a lot about myself during the mentoring too.

What tips would you share to those who are struggling to access the legal profession?

One piece of advice would be that if you don't ask, you won't get. A good example of this is that when I was applying for roles I found one where they asked for better grades than I had received, however I still applied and was invited to interview.

I'd also suggest that you focus on you. Keep doing things every day to improve you from online learning, to boosting your CV to making connections. They will all help.

Lastly, don't discount your experience. All experience is experience – whether that's professional or otherwise. Increasingly firms want to hear about you and your unique life experience so don't be afraid to share.



Supporting Young People through Envision

Kita Watkins, Early Talent Recruitment Advisor

Envision empowers young people from less advantaged backgrounds to develop essential skills and confidence through tackling social issues affecting the community. Each year WBD supports Envision's 12 week programme, which involves young people working with trained Envision staff and mentors from WBD to design, develop and deliver an in-school youth social action project. Working towards key milestones they build the essential skills and confidence that will help them to succeed in later life.

WBD has been supporting the programme for four years. In 2022-2023, WBD supported 16 young people from 2 schools in Bristol complete the programme. From our WBD teams, 93% demonstrated improvement in their communication, 86% demonstrated improvement in their creativity, 71% demonstrated improvement in their determination, and 57% demonstrated improvement in their teamwork.

Our first cohort decided to tackle racism in their school, they proposed a culture week where they would celebrate cultural foods, dress and music, and carry out a survey to understand different cultures.

Our second cohort decided to raise awareness of Knife Crime. They planned to create posters about consequences and impact of knife crime to display as a campaign around their school. We were thrilled that the cohort were crowned the winning team!

Through these 2 programmes, 9 WBD staff volunteered as mentors, with Kim Southway, Recruitment Advisor, being awarded Mentor of the Year!



AIG Insights Day

Lucy Hadrill, Associate

We partnered with our client, AIG, and their renowned Pro Bono Program, to host an insight day for LLB students at the University of Greenwich. We've been running these days together since 2018.

The agenda was packed with presentations and activities to teach and inspire the students at the University. The students learnt what it's like to work in the legal team at AIG, the variety of practice areas available at WBD, and much more.

They even got involved in some negotiations of their own – there was fierce competition in a debate about Jaffa cakes, and great teamwork to compromise on a sports sponsorship contract.

We also offered the students who attended the day the unique opportunity to apply for work experience with both AIG and WBD, which is a great way for students in the local community to gain real insight into life as a lawyer and valuable experience for their future training contract applications.

The day was a huge success, and it was a pleasure to host it alongside AIG's Pro Bono volunteers. Working with our clients to engage with the local community is an essential part of our responsible business programme, and we are always looking for more ways to do this.

Social

Wellbeing

Providing a safe and supportive working environment where people can flourish



Colleagues in our Newcastle office before our Wellbeing Walk.

2022/23 progress update

Wellbeing Strategy:

- Achieved Silver 'We Invest in Wellbeing' Standard from Investors in People.
- Had our first in person wellbeing champion strategy day to discuss our priorities for the year and bring together colleagues championing wellbeing across offices.
- Introduced a revised wellbeing strategy, covering positive working culture and practices, shared responsibility and role modelling, promotion of wellbeing best practice, sharing of information and resources and improved engagement with events and campaigns.
- Expanded our Wellbeing Champions group to ensure all teams and offices are represented.
- Clarified the role of Wellbeing Champion and introduced regular champion meetings and sub teams to drive the strategy and network's objectives. The champion group is now working on two key objectives. They include raising the profile of our Champion group and of wellbeing more generally, and a review of working practices to better support positive health.

Support provided:

- Continued with 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.
- 93% managers and supervisors completed Managing Mental Health Training. You can read more about this on page 60.
- Dedicated specific months to highlight Men and Women's health, focusing on topics that were relevant to our people. The focus for Men's health was encouraging conversation, for Women's health we looked at fertility and endometriosis. Both months saw a number of people share their stories on how these different topics have impacted them either directly or indirectly. This is helping to break down barriers and open up conversations.
- Launched menopause and neonatal policies giving clearer guidance and additional leave and flexibility. We consolidated the support available for people undergoing fertility treatment and launched a short video to outline the support available.
- Extended our faith and wellbeing rooms to our London office, and created purpose-built rooms with our office refurbishments in Newcastle and Leeds.
- Offered free sanitary products for our colleagues, clients and visitors in all offices.
- Relaunched our financial support fund to help our most impacted employees with tangible and bespoke aid. We have continued to advertise this regularly.
- Ran a session with one of our chosen charities, Anxious Minds in Newcastle on mental health and support. We have also collaborated with other providers such as on men's mental health and with the Newcastle United Football Club Foundation on wellbeing, sleep and stress.
- Launched new initiatives including Wellbeing Walks, Wellbeing drop-in's, local office Choir, firmwide book club, and invested in sports and social committees to bring people together to connect.
- Relaunched flexible benefit platform to bring all our benefits under one room allowing our people to build a benefits package to suit their lifestyle.
- Family Network worked with Disability Network to run a session on Carers, got people thinking about what the role of a carer is and talked about the support available to them.
- Relaunched our financial support fund to help our most impacted employees with tangible and bespoke aid. We have continued to advertise this regularly.

2022/23 progress update (continued)

Collaboration:

- Continued to work with Mindful Business Charter – attending regular meetings to learn and share best practice with our peers and helping to frame our own wellbeing working practices to try and support and encourage our people to work smarter on their own, within teams and with clients.
- Continued to work with clients such as Handelsbanken to support the financial wellbeing of our people.

Members contributing to wellbeing:

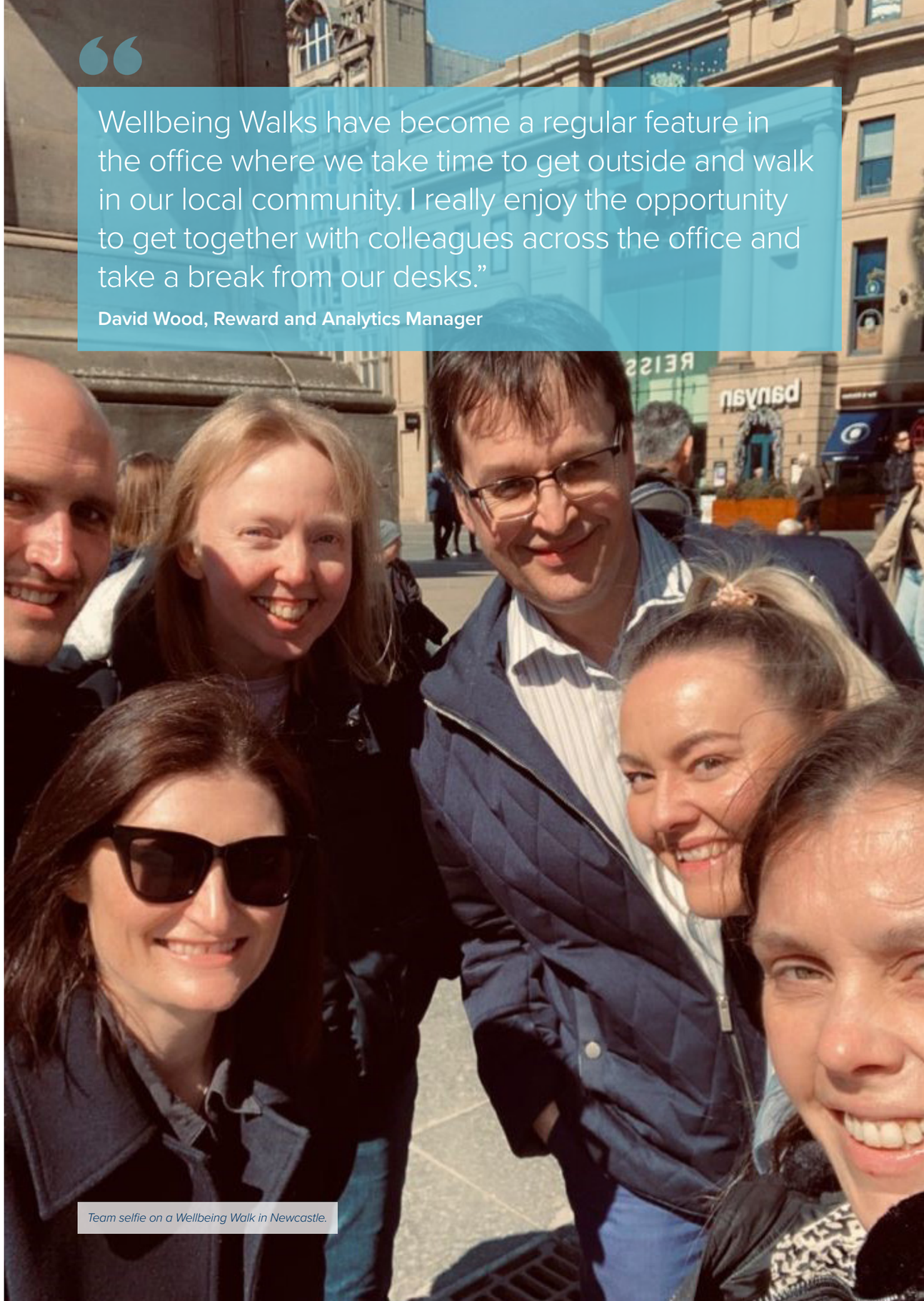
- Wellbeing Champions.
- Menopause Champions.
- Mental Health First Aiders.
- Physical First Aiders.
- Family Network.
- Sports and Social Committees.

UN Sustainable Development Goals we are working towards:





Team volunteering day at Solent Youth Action, Southampton.



> Wellbeing Walks have become a regular feature in the office where we take time to get outside and walk in our local community. I really enjoy the opportunity to get together with colleagues across the office and take a break from our desks."
>
> **David Wood, Reward and Analytics Manager**

Team selfie on a Wellbeing Walk in Newcastle.



Preventing Burnout Training for Clients

Paul Harvey, Head of Knowledge and Training & Hilary du Randt, Partner

Hundreds of our clients and contacts engage with our highly acclaimed Informed Counsel programme, led by Partner, Hilary du Randt, and Head of Knowledge and Legal Training, Paul Harvey.

Our Informed Counsel programme is designed for all in-house lawyers and other key decision makers, enabling them to remain informed in an ever-changing legal landscape. Participants get access to a wide range of exclusive content, providing insight and updates on key legal, regulatory and market issues to help make roles easier, as well as support for personal development and career progression. Our content is delivered in a variety of formats to suit legal and personal needs, including networking opportunities to help strengthen personal and business networks.

We align our Informed Counsel programme to the needs of our clients, and this mirrors the work we're doing internally to support our people's wellbeing. We recently ran a Preventing Burnout series. This involved two webinars on the topic of burnout by an external presenter, Charlene Gisele. Charlene is a performance and well-being coach, as well as a qualified ex-magic circle lawyer. Her main goal is to provide tools and knowledge for others to prevent burnout after experiencing the normalised stress of the legal industry.

In the first webinar we looked at how to recognise personal burnout, symptoms of burnout and how to implement individual strategies in prevention. The session also looked at values and boundaries. The second webinar covered the three core pillars of sustainable leadership – connection, culture, and creativity. We also discussed challenges, the future of leadership, practical skills and tips, as well as purpose.

We had great take-up from clients who either attended the sessions live or watched the recording. Attendees included senior inhouse lawyers and business colleagues from clients across a range of sectors, including energy, infrastructure, manufacturing, retail, real estate, and public sector.



Introducing the Family Network

Claire Ritson, Head of HR

Created a few years ago informally, we have decided to formalise our Family Network. The Network exists for colleagues to share experiences, challenges and tips, as well as learn from people who have been there and done that.

The Network has sub-groups who look at under 5's support, primary years, secondary years, moving on from secondary, and carers.

Why does WBD need a Family Network?

Sometimes, the support and benefits that are most important to people are those that encourage a strong work and family partnership, so that the demands of home and work responsibilities can be balanced. With almost 30% of people telling us they have caring responsibilities it made perfect sense to set up our Family Network to complement the existing family friendly practices we have.

What is the main benefit?

The network gives people the opportunity to connect and offer advice and support to one another on a range of family matters. Establishing a network that people want demonstrates our commitment to our people and in turn improves levels of engagement. It's also great to have a group of people to discuss initiatives and ideas with to make sure what we are doing is meaningful to family life.

What would you advise to anyone looking to find their community at work?

First and foremost get involved. If there's a group or network you are interested in then join. If there isn't a group already established then take the initiative and set this up. My advice would be to discuss this with your employer so they understand why it's important and the benefit you can see such a group having on the wider business.



Supporting Our People

Karen Davies, Associate

Our colleagues ready to join in the London Legal Walk.

WBD is focused on providing a range of support so our people can flourish

We caught up with Karen Davies, Associate, who shared some insights on LawCare and how law firms can support their people's wellbeing. Karen is a member of our Wellbeing Champions group.

Why is it important for law firms to support their people's wellbeing?

Looking after your wellbeing is essential to living happy and healthy lives. When you create a supportive and open environment at work where wellbeing is openly discussed, people are more comfortable being themselves. Ultimately the goal is for people to comfortably share with the team when they aren't 100%, and the team then supports them.

What is your role as a wellbeing champion?

I first saw the wellbeing champion role advertised on The Hub, our intranet, and wanted to get involved. Once I'd spoken to the HR team and signed up, I mentioned my volunteering at LawCare and was asked to build on my experience to find resources and activities to support our people.

Ultimately as a wellbeing champion I'm here to encourage open and honest conversations. Everyone experiences mental health, but we often don't share what we're experiencing, I want people to know that they are not alone.

What's the next focus/step?

LawCare is the mental wellbeing charity of the legal community. They offer free, confidential, emotional support to anyone working in the law and their family members.

I heard about the amazing work of LawCare when I first reached out to them when I was going through a difficult time. After this, I saw they were advertising for volunteers on LinkedIn and were especially keen to have a diverse range of volunteers at all stages of their careers so I signed up to be a peer supporter.

The reason I first got involved in LawCare was that I was already providing support to my friends, and had a great support network personally. I knew how much this meant to me so I wanted to be able to provide support to others.

The support the charity provides ranges from practical, physical to mental, it can be anything under the wellbeing umbrella, and it's available to anyone working in the legal sector.

What's your next focus as part of the wellbeing champions group?

The main focus for the Wellbeing Champions is to raise awareness of the group and wellbeing as a whole. This is something I'm really passionate about. Ultimately we want everyone to understand what they need for their own wellbeing. For me that's sleeping well, eating well and exercising.

Personally I've also been asked to raise the profile of LawCare within the business and following my introduction, the firm is looking at ways we can bring LawCare into WBD whether that's through webinars, training or awareness raising.



Being a Menopause Champion

Caroline Lessiter, Personal Assistant

Last October we launched our Menopause Champions across the business. Caroline, one of our Menopause Champions, explains why this is so important for our people.

Why do you think the Menopause champion role is so important to businesses like WBD?

By directly talking about the menopause, we're encouraging an open environment where you can truly be yourself. The menopause affects most women, and by investing in resources and providing real support we can ensure that we look after and retain our colleagues.

What is the role of a Menopause champion, and why did you want to be involved?

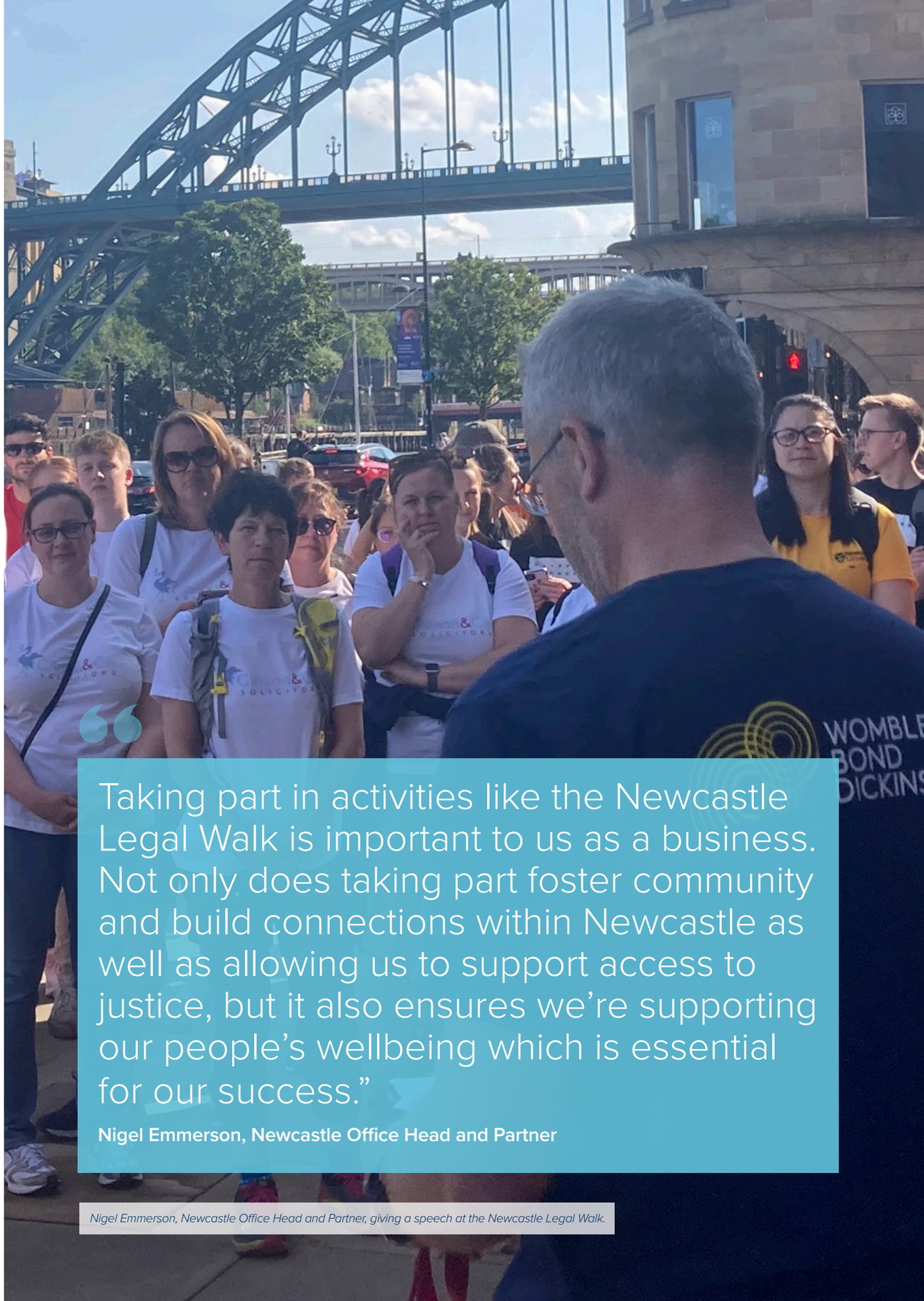
The role of the Menopause champion is to support women in our workplace experiencing symptoms of perimenopause and menopause. We also aim to make the menopause more visible by raising awareness and understanding across the firm.

I became a Menopause Champion because I wanted to help others and to ensure they weren't alone on their journey. In 2004 I had surgery which led to early onset menopause. As it wasn't spoken about then, it was difficult for me to access information and support and I really struggled to manage the symptoms on my own. I knew as soon as I heard that we were launching Menopause Champions at WBD that I wanted to be involved, as this was my way of ensuring that people felt that they had someone to talk to in a trusted environment and didn't have to face it alone.

What has WBD done to provide menopause support, and what is next for the group?

I'm proud to work for an organisation which has done a lot on this topic. We've launched a menopause policy, which supports our hybrid and flexible working policies already in place. We have also created a page on our intranet dedicated to the menopause which includes a resource library and links to various support networks, including our champions.

We are currently looking to expand the champion group - we would love to have male menopause champions, as this would open up different lines of communication. We are also planning more menopause webinars, drop in sessions over coffee, and will be focusing on the perimenopause on World Menopause Day in October.



> Taking part in activities like the Newcastle Legal Walk is important to us as a business. Not only does taking part foster community and build connections within Newcastle as well as allowing us to support access to justice, but it also ensures we're supporting our people's wellbeing which is essential for our success."
>
> **Nigel Emmerson, Newcastle Office Head and Partner**

Nigel Emmerson, Newcastle Office Head and Partner, giving a speech at the Newcastle Legal Walk.



Governance

Working professionally and responsibly in our marketplace

Our refurbished office in Leeds.

2022/23 progress update

Developing our firm:

- Continued to progress and develop our internal audit programme. This is an integral part of our governance strategy and enables us to pro-actively identify assurances, risks and opportunities to improve – particularly focussing on: regulations, quality, compliance, service delivery/ financial management and best practice.
- Carried out extensive scope 3 emissions for our supply chain on our baseline year of FY 2019/20.
- Revamped our IT Training and IT Hub sites to improve our communication with the business.
- Through working closely with clients we are committed to acting responsibly. You can read about some of our projects with our clients on pages 15, 16, 17, and 43.
- Celebrated Innovation Week with the launch of Idea Drop which allows colleagues to feedback and suggest ideas of how we can improve what we do. Idea Drop allows colleagues to put their ideas in front of the right people who have the power to act on them faster than before. It is going to make the innovation process more effective and transparent. Each idea will receive timely feedback as well as clarity on how it's progressing towards any implementation. Read more about this new initiative on pages 58-59.
- We are currently working with the wider business, and in particular the Wellbeing group, in our reassessment of mobile phones and use across the business and ensuring that we are prioritising digital wellbeing.

Developing and supporting our people:

- We introduced Talking Table; small group coaching for our women partners to help them achieve their potential; an initiative where they can come together, step back and reflect, develop their ideas and thinking and learn from one another. You can read more about this on page 57.
- We provide development opportunities across all career stages developing programmes that reflect the changing legal sector and the skill set our people need to develop now to build their careers and a sustainable firm for the future. Our aspiring leaders programme, Tomorrow's Lawyers, takes a cohort approach to encourage learning from each other, sharing experiences and developing peer support networks. Since the programme was launched in Autumn 2021, 33% of our current Managing Associate and Legal Director Population have attended the Tomorrow's Lawyers Programme with a further cohort due to start in October 2023.
- Enhanced our user's experience through our IT team launching accessibility related Genius Bytes. These are to ensure our environment is as inclusive as possible.
- Continue to support our people through training programmes such as STEP Diploma, CILEx CPQ, SQE and CLE programmes, and Accounting – ATT/CTA Tax Pathway.
- Ran a series of events through our Informed Counsel programme including two webinars on Burnout and a session on Thinking Differently, looking at exploring how language, thinking and posture affects our performance and practical tools to increase resilience and wellbeing. These sessions are an important part of our work with clients. You can read more about this on page 48.

Certifications:

- ISO27001 re-certification (information security – evidence that we ensure information is secured, treat with integrity and kept confidential).
- Cyber Essentials Plus re-certification (a key component in our cyber-attack prevention and defence strategy).
- ISO9001 re-certification (quality management – evidence of our commitment to ensuring strong customer focus, quality management and continual improvement).

2022/23 progress update (continued)

Examples of clients we have worked with:

- Employee engagement consultancy Scarlettabbott on a significant investment deal into the company by long-standing client LDC, the UK's leading mid-market private equity firm. York-headquartered Scarlettabbott specialises in helping clients better engage with their people to enhance performance and positively influence workplace culture. Clients include Sony Interactive Entertainment, Booking.com, EY and Chivas Brothers.
- Newcastle-based Drummond Central, a 60-strong independent creative agency, on its transition to employee ownership. This sees the business being acquired by a newly formed Employee Ownership Trust, thus ensuring it continues to run in a way that protects the agency and all its people.

Awards:

- Achieved EcoVadis Gold Medal.
- ESG Firm of the Year Award at the Legal 500 Northern Powerhouse Awards.
- Achieved Investors in People Gold main standard.
- Shortlisted by the Financial Times in the FT Innovative Lawyers Awards Europe.

Members contributing to governance:

- Risk and Best Practice team.
- Learning & Development team.
- WBD Advance.
- IT team.
- Knowledge & Legal Training team.
- Ethical Thinking Group.
- WBD Board Members.

UN Sustainable Development Goals we are working towards:





Stronger Together - Talking Table Initiative

Krishna Anand, Head of Learning & Development

What is Talking Table?

The idea of our initiative is to create a space for our women partners, so they can come together, take time to step back and reflect on a wide range of topics that are important to them.

It brings together women at various stages of their partnership career, from those newly appointed to those with many years of experience and provides an opportunity to learn from one another, with individuals sharing their lived experience and providing insight and support to one another. We tailored attendance so that women across our business and our locations had the opportunity to expand their network by getting to know colleagues they may not normally come into contact with.

Why are initiatives like Talking Table so important?

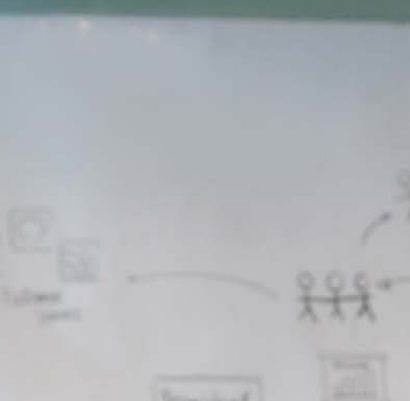
Over recent years we've made great strides in increasing the gender balance in the partnership, which we are continuing to work on, but we recognise the importance of carrying on supporting women once they achieve partnership.

Talking Table responds to the specific challenges of partnership and particularly those that many women partners face in their partnership role. The aim is to support them to flourish and able to take on further leadership roles. We wanted to give women the opportunity to talk freely about their challenges but also to share their many achievements and successes, to build confidence and become greater advocates for one another.

Plans for the future?

In the first year of launch we received overwhelmingly positive feedback with over 50% of women partners joining a coaching group; newly formed networks are continuing once the formal programme comes to an end; coffees, lunches and dinners are taking place to continue conversations and deepen relationships.

We have seen how the Talking Table initiative has supported a significant cultural change with women being more open about their challenges, sharing wisdom and ideas. Now a regular fixture on the Learning and Development calendar, the programme complements the work of our WBD Thrive Women's network. It has also provided an opportunity for women to hone their listening and coaching skills which they can use to mentor and coach the women coming behind them.



Innovation Week's Idea Drop

Mercy Chirau, Technology Solutions Manager

Harnessing the potential of people and doing things differently

Innovation Week takes place every year in March between WBD USA and WBD UK and this year's theme was climate change. We had industry expert talks, subject matter experts from our own teams, open discussions and the launch of a new innovation tool, Idea Drop.

What's your role?

I'm Mercy and I'm one of our Technology Solutions Managers in the technology transformation team. The main focus of our team is to bring around process change and drive innovation to make us more efficient.

What is Idea Drop?

Imagine submitting ideas into a box, this is a digital way to do that. Idea Drop allows you to put your ideas in front of the right people who have the power to act on them faster than before. It makes the innovation process more effective and transparent. Each idea receives timely feedback as well as clarity on how it's progressing towards any implementation.

It's a way of us gathering feedback to improve our business with every single business group recognised in the system. Ultimately it puts employee voice front and centre.

Why did it come about, and how can it help?

When I started at WBD, Idea Drop was already underway. I gathered key stakeholders across the business, focused on upskilling, creating communications and material pieces around the platform. I also ensured we put a WBD spin on the programme so it felt and looked like us. We then launched a trial in our Leeds office which was a huge success – 1/3 of our colleagues dropped ideas and engaged with the platform. This gave us proof that the system was needed and people wanted to interact with the firm. It also helped us spot some ways to improve the platform and make it even better.

Why is innovation so important?

Innovation is hugely important to any business and there are two sides for us at WBD: the people-side and business-side.

People: By investing in our people and improving the way we work, we can make our colleagues lives easier, they can have better wellbeing and work/life balance. It also means we can address inefficiencies and encourage creative thinking. Innovation inspires pride, collaboration and garnering diverse opinions is so important. Ultimately it leads to a workplace we can all be really proud of.

Business: From a business perspective it allows us to understand our clients better, to meet their requirements and needs. It can lead to us making their lives easier, and making our own business more cohesive. It allows us to progress, and ultimately get to the next phase of WBD!

To me, personally, I think innovation is key to everything I do because I like seeing the change it makes in people's lives. I like to really think about someone else's day and how I can make that easier. Innovation really doesn't have to be a mile, it can be a single step and it can change a business. It's all about a little innovation every day!



Managing Mental Health

Jane Freeman, HR Manager &
Laura Tokell, Senior HR Project Executive

With the support of our Wellbeing Champions group, the HR team has rolled out compulsory ‘Managing Mental Health’ training for all managers, supervisors and leaders. This is essential for managing our business in a supportive and responsible way.

Working with an external trainer, the aim has been to raise awareness and confidence in talking about mental health issues across our business.

We recognised the adverse impact that the Covid-19 pandemic and subsequent lockdowns had on the mental health of our workforce. We worked hard to encourage colleagues to talk about their wellbeing at work but understood that as a consequence we would also need to support managers to handle these conversations professionally and sensitively.

The sessions started in May 2022 and to date we have had 93% attendance. Training has included a two-hour live session with one-hour pre-learning. Groups have been made up of around 20 colleagues, allowing for excellent group and breakout discussion.

The sessions have focussed on helping managers to identify when colleagues may need their support, knowing when and how to start a conversation and to better understand the tools, resources and support available at the firm.

Supporting our people to reach their potential is central to the way we run our business, and wellbeing is an integral part of that. Over the next financial year (23/24) we will complete the series of sessions, with all managers and those with a supervisory responsibility having had the benefit of the training.



“We’re extremely proud to be recognised as a firm leading the way in ESG strategy. Womble Bond Dickinson is committed to creating better places to live, work and do business and we’re delighted to be presented with this award. This latest success is testament to our team and the work we are doing to build sustainable practices within WBD.”

Charlotte von Sicard, Responsible Business Manager

Our team collecting the ESG Firm of the Year Award at The Legal 500 Northern Powerhouse Awards.

Responsible Business Key Performance Indicators (KPIs)

Environmental

Number of Environmental Reps
21/22 - 25 / 22/23 - 25

Electricity use
21/22 - 1,797,970.5 kwh / 22/23 - 1,616,786.5 kwh

Gas use
21/22 - 3,204,731.8 kwh / 22/23 - 1,536,591.2 kwh

Business travel emissions
21/22 - 52.7 tCO2e / 22/23 - 198.4 tCO2e

Total scope 1
21/22 - 587.4 tCO2e / 22/23 - 302.1 tCO2e

Total scope 2
21/22 - 381.8 tCO2e (location) /
22/23 - 307.3 tCO2e (location),
21/22 - 159 tCO2e (market) /
22/23 - 221.4 tCO2e (market)

Measured scope 3
21/22 - 107.2 tCO2e /
22/23 - 240.3 tCO2e

Emissions associated with paper use
21/22 - 15.7 tCO2e / 22/23 - 11.7 tCO2e

Water usage
21/22 - 12,031.7 m3 / 22/23 - 8,924.5 m3

Emissions associated with water usage
21/22 - 5.1 tCO2e / 22/23 - 3.7 tCO2e

Community Engagement

Volunteering hours
21/22 - 812 hours / 22/23 - 1,119 hours

Pro bono hours
21/22 - 420 hours / 22/23 - 601 hours

Total given to charity
21/22 - £126,000 / 22/23 - £166,000

Number of colleagues in community engagement committees
21/22 - 130 members / 22/23 - 122 members

Diversity, Equity and Inclusion

Female partners
21/22 - 26% / 22/23 - 30%

Female partner promotions
21/22 - 57% / 22/23 - 73%

Female Senior Leaders
(Board and Support Directors)
21/22 - 33% / 22/23 - 29%

Stonewall Employer Index ranking
21/22 - 215th / 22/23 - 56th

Disability Confident level
21/22 - Disability Confident Employer /
22/23 - Disability Confident Employer

Number of members of DEI networks
21/22 - Not recorded / 22/23 - 285

Social Mobility

Social Mobility Employer Index ranking
21/22 - 110th / 22/23 - 41st

Number of apprentices employed
21/22 - 10 / 22/23 - 12

Percentage of non-Russell group candidates for graduate recruitment
21/22 - 36% / 22/23 - 50%

Number of work experience students supported with office-based work placement
21/22 - 4 / 22/23 - 46

Number of students attending virtual work experience
21/22 - Not measured / 22/23 - 26

Number of workshops and events attended such as career fairs, career talks and mock interviews
21/22 - Not measured / 22/23 - 20

Wellbeing

Percentage of colleagues taking a wellbeing day
21/22 - 49% / 22/23 - 59%

Number of managers and supervisors trained on managing mental health training (%)
21/22 - N/A / 22/23 - 93%

Investors in Wellbeing Standard Award
21/22 - N/A / 22/23 - Silver

Members of wellbeing groups
21/22 - Not recorded / 22/23 - 188

Governance

Headcount
21/22 - 1,169 / 22/23 - 1,206

Investors in People Main Standard
21/22 - Silver / 22/23 - Gold

EcoVadis Award
21/22 - Silver / 22/23 - Gold

Average training hours per person
21/22 - 5.77 hours / 22/23 - 10.9 hours

Unconscious Bias training completed as percentage of workforce
21/22 - 84.6% / 22/23 - 93%

Number of lawyers recognised by Chambers UK
21/22 - 103 / 22/23 - 105

Number of ISO standards achieved
21/22 - 3 / 22/23 - 3

Goals and Accountability

Progress against our 2022/2023 Goals

- Complete
- In progress
- Not progressing

Environment

- In progress: Release a net zero action plan with Planet Mark.
  Explanation: We have been working on a net zero action plan with Planet Mark based on our baseline year of emissions of FY 2019/2020. We hope to release this in the first quarter of FY 2023/24.
- Complete: Carry out a scope 3 assessment of our supply chain.
- Complete: Run a commuting survey to understand the habits of our colleagues in our baseline year, and current trends.
- Complete: Review our travel policy from an environmental perspective.

Social: Diversity, Equity & Inclusion

- Complete: Sign up to the Mansfield Certification.
- Complete: Achieve Stonewall Gold Accreditation.
- In progress: Achieve Disability Confident Leader Accreditation.
  Explanation: Members of the HR, Recruitment and Disability Network group are currently working with Business Disability Forum who will externally validate the evidence we provide to ensure best practice and make suggestions on areas of development. We are aiming to be accredited in 2024.

Social: Wellbeing

- Complete: Complete the Investors in People 'We invest in wellbeing' standard.
- In progress: Use the feedback from the Investors in People to build on our existing Wellbeing strategy.
  Explanation: Since receiving our Investors in People feedback, we have further expanded our Wellbeing Champion group, updated our wellbeing strategy and created two clear objectives for the 23/24 FY. They include raising the profile of our Champion group and of wellbeing more generally, and a review of working practices to better support positive health.

Social: Community Engagement

- Complete: Further reduce our charity partnerships so we're focusing on 1 or 2 partnerships per office to have a more meaningful impact.
- Complete: Separate our pro bono and volunteering goals and set targets for both areas.

Social: Social Mobility

- In progress: Create a Social Mobility Strategy focusing on key steps we can take to support this group.
  Explanation: A first draft of our social mobility strategy has been produced and some elements are already being progressed. Where there is a firmwide impact we are consulting with relevant individuals with a view to publishing on the Hub in due course.
- In progress: 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.
  Explanation: We have built a recruitment support programme including mentoring, insight days and supporting people through the process. We will continue to build on this moving forward.
- In progress: Extend our solicitor apprenticeship programme to Leeds, London and Plymouth during the 2022/23 financial year.
  Explanation: This year we expanded the programme to Plymouth, with two apprentices joining in August. Although we had hoped to extend to Leeds and London this year, the timing wasn't quite right and we have postponed until the next cohort.

Governance

- In progress: Review our internal governance processes making sure accountability sits with the right individual or team.
  Explanation: We have modernised our Members' Agreement which forms the firm's constitution. We are also reviewing our role definitions for key senior roles within the business; this view also forms part of our work towards gaining Mansfield certification.
- Complete: 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.

Our goals for 2023/2024

- Not started

Environment

- Reduce our emissions by 12% from our baseline year in line with Planet Mark's recommended reduction.
- Run at least 1 supplier engagement workshop to encourage our supply chain to work with us collaboratively on our journey to net zero.
- Carry out a further extended scope 3 emissions measurement, including scope 3 categories such as waste, supply chain and commuting.

Social: Diversity, Equity & Inclusion

- Achieve Disability Confident Leader (carried over).
- Recruit 2 interns through 10,000 Able Interns.
- Achieve Mansfield Certification aimed at increasing diversity in law firm recruitment and promotion practices.

Social: Wellbeing

- Promote a positive, high performing culture across all teams by identifying and supporting healthy working practices. Our Wellbeing Champions will be reviewing the firms approach to delegation, meetings, emails and time off.
- Develop the Wellbeing Champions group to raise the profile of our wellbeing activity and resources.
- Intend to achieve ISO 45001 (Health and Safety) certification in 2024 following third party assessment.

Social: Community Engagement

- Launch a grant funding application process that aligns with our Responsible Business networks and campaigns.
- Grow our pro bono hours by 10%.
- Grow our volunteering hours by 9%.

Social: Social Mobility

- Launch our "live" virtual work experience programme with schools in the region. This will take place over three days in the summer and sessions will be a mix of skills building and insight into roles within our business.
- Launch an early talent programme in memory of a colleague, focusing on providing support to those from ethnic minority and less socially mobile backgrounds.
- Create a social mobility network at the firm.

Governance

- Refresh and update our Ethical Thinking training across the firm.
- Review our role definitions for key senior roles within the business.
- Publish a new Supplier Code of Conduct, expanding on and extending our existing Supplier Standards, and ask suppliers to commit to compliance with the new Code.



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