

FORSTERS

CSR at Forsters

2022 - 2023

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COMMENTARY BY KELLY NOEL-SMITH, CSR PARTNER

Forsters' CSR year 2022/23

The 2022/23 year saw significant development of our corporate social responsibility (CSR) work which encompasses charity and community, equality, diversity and inclusion (EDI), pro bono, sustainability and wellbeing.

There was engagement across the firm in our mission to make a positive difference to the community, to take seriously our responsibility to the planet and to ensure we provide a respectful, supportive and inclusive working environment.

We continued to build on our CSR commitments, including:

- continuing our work towards our science-based emission reduction target
- delivering the commitments in our 2021-2023 EDI strategy
- expanding our work with pro bono partner organisations, now offering all teams in the firm the opportunity to use their legal expertise in a pro bono capacity
- seeing a significant rise in people taking their CSR Day to volunteer with a variety of causes
- running our biggest charity fundraising event to date during the year, with just under 40 people taking on the Welsh Three Peaks Challenge for our partner charity, St Andrew's Youth Club
- following our 2022 'Gold' accreditation in the Mind Workplace Wellbeing Index, our wellbeing programme has continued to offer support for people across the firm.

We are indebted to the many people in the firm who give their time and energy on top of their day-to-day work to work with our CSR Team and contribute to CSR initiatives. We also benefit enormously from the support of the senior leadership in the firm. I'm pleased, too, that the capacity of our CSR team increased significantly during the year, with the addition of a CSR Coordinator to support our CSR Manager (with 2023/24 welcoming a CSR Apprentice, too).

Finally, thanks to all of the CSR leads, and everyone who takes part in our committees, support networks, working groups and initiatives. You know who you are and that we couldn't do it without you.

I hope you enjoy reading more about our 2022/23 CSR activities. We look forward to continuing and developing this work during 2023/24.

Kelly Noel-Smith



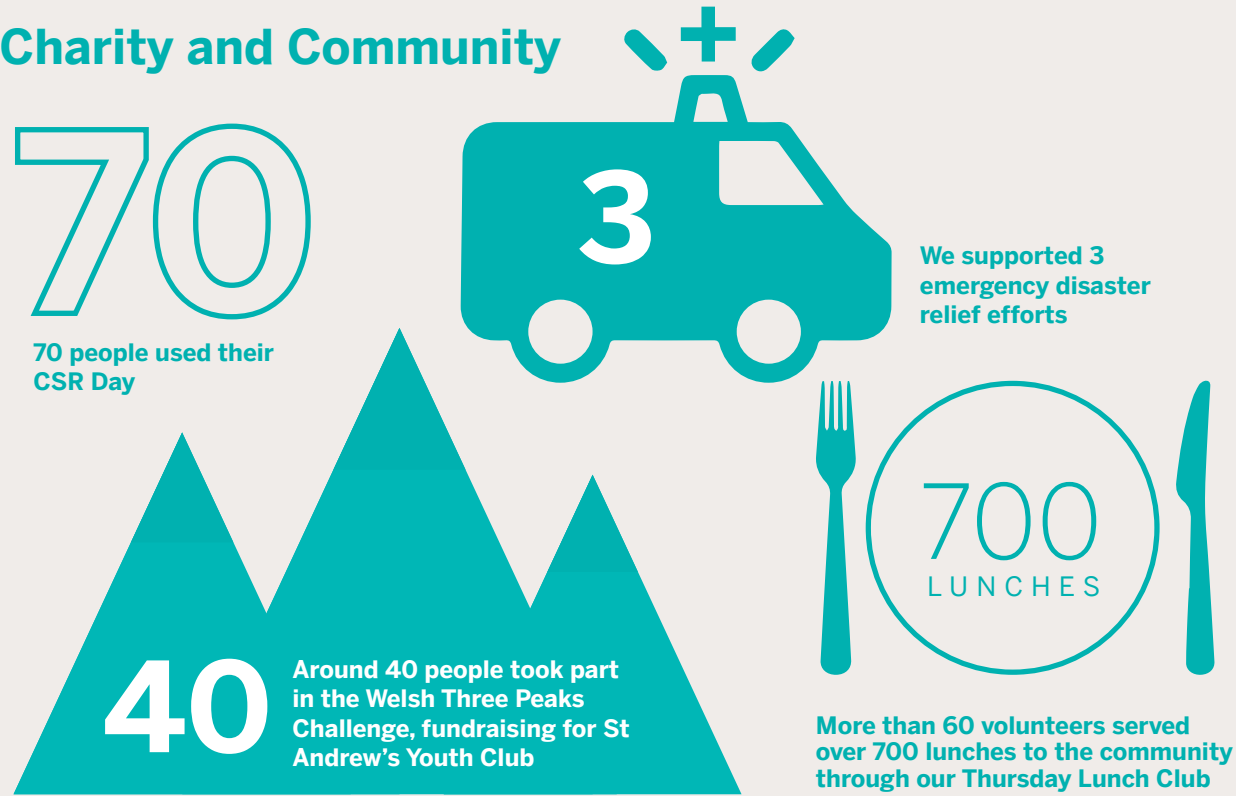
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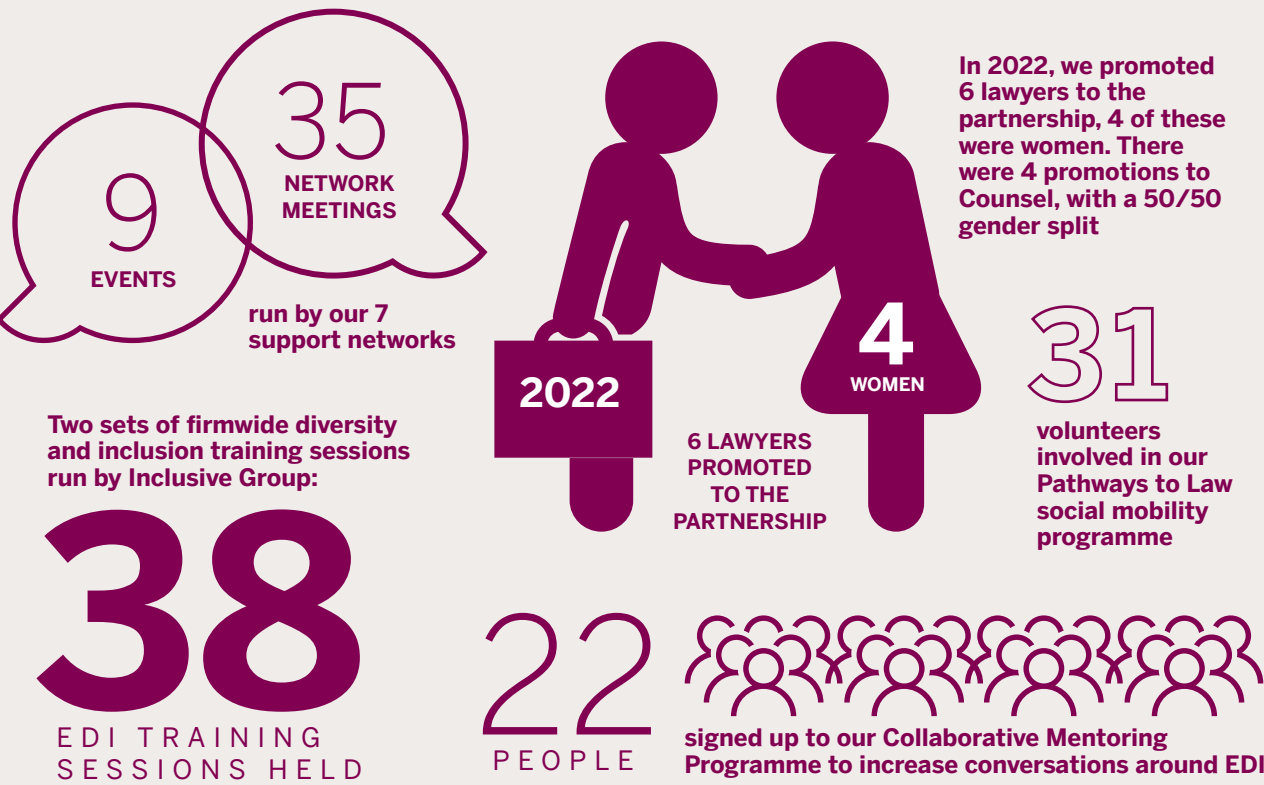
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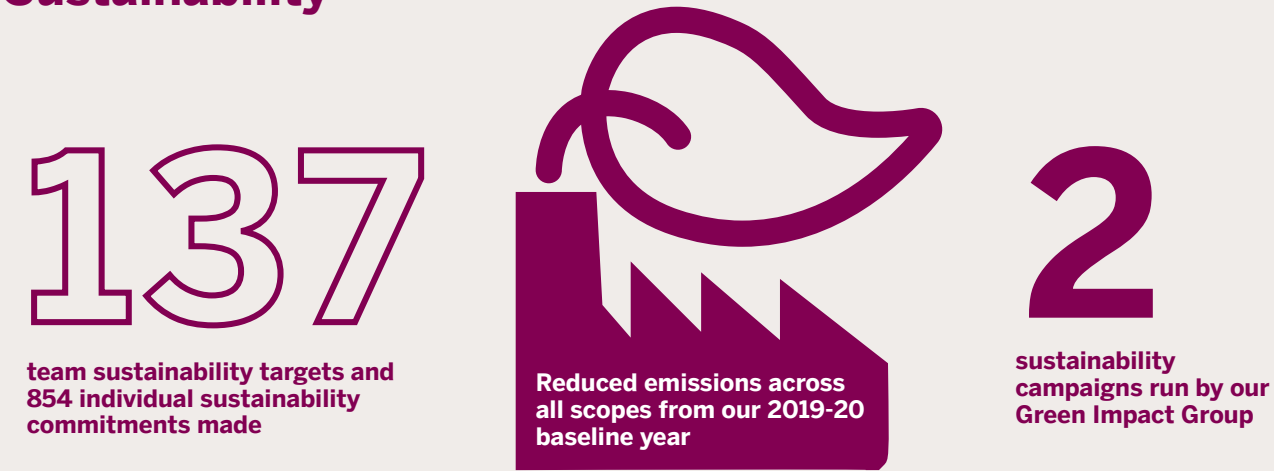
Charity and Community



Equality, Diversity and Inclusion (EDI)



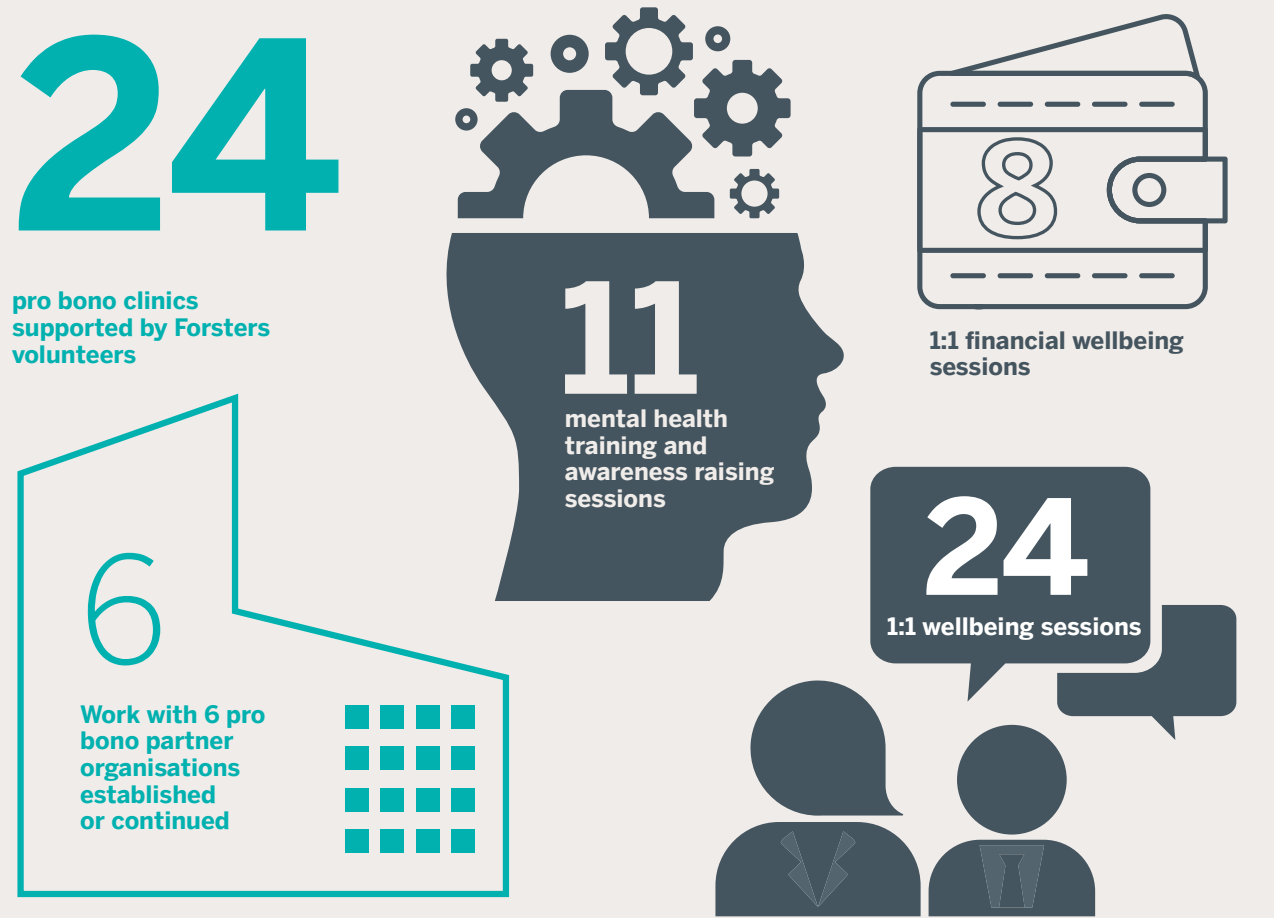
Sustainability



Pro Bono



Wellbeing



St Andrew’s Club



Over the last year we have continued our relationship with our partner charity, St Andrew’s Youth Club. The Club does fantastic work enriching the lives of young people in Westminster through opportunities to meet safely, build self-confidence and learn new skills. Some highlights from the year are below.

“The last 12 months have been bigger than ever for our partnership with Forsters: a team of 40 took on the Welsh Three Peaks Challenge; staff volunteered to run arts and crafts workshops with children in our Junior Club; and supported us with pro-bono legal advice. Forsters continue to show a genuine commitment and passion for supporting the Club and all our young people and ensures the Club is there to support the next generation - thank you!”
Sarah Nicholls, CEO St Andrew’s Club

12 Days of Christmas Raffle

Our 12 Days of Christmas raffle for St Andrew’s Club was popular once again, and we increased our fundraising total from 2021.



November Club Visit

In November, around 20 members of the firm visited St Andrew’s Club, having a tour and engaging in sports and craft activities with the Club members.

Penny balances

We’ve continued to donate our penny balances to St Andrew’s Club each quarter.

Staff Voucher Donations

Each Christmas, staff have the opportunity to donate their gift voucher amount from Partners to charities, and in 2022 this raised funds for St Andrew’s Club, Crisis and FareShare.

Thursday Lunch Club

Each week, volunteers from the firm prepare and serve lunch to guests in Grosvenor Chapel, who are either refugees or homeless and without recourse to public funds. Lunch Club is a long-standing Forsters tradition, established by now-retired lawyer Andrew Penny, and we are really pleased to be able to keep the tradition going.

This year, volunteers also arranged a Jubilee party and Festive Lunch Club event for guests, led by Hadwig Ruf.

“The guests enjoy when we spend time interacting and having conversations with them whilst they are eating. We provide a nice hot meal, which could be their only hot meal for the day or week, something we take for granted.”

Maxine Hinds, IT Service Desk Manager and Lunch Club Supervisor



FORSTERS

Welsh Three Peaks Challenge

On Friday 1 July 2022, just under 40 participants took part in the Welsh Three Peaks Challenge. Beginning around 4am, the challenge included ascents of Snowdon in the North, Cadair Idris in mid-Wales, and Pen y Fan in the South, comprising a total walking distance of 17 miles and an ascent of 2334 metres in less than 24 hours. This activity raised over £26,000 for St Andrew’s Club.



“Well done to everyone from Forsters LLP who completed the Welsh Three Peaks Challenge on Friday. Some difficult, wet and windy conditions, coupled with some late-night hiking made it all the more interesting (along with the 3am wake-up...)”

George Nicolaou, Senior Associate, Corporate

“We did it! I’m so proud of everyone who completed the Welsh Three Peaks Challenge. The weather, like the mountains, was up-and-down but we trekked on to complete the final descent from Pen y Fan just before 11:30pm.”

Candice Johnson, Associate, Commercial Real Estate



CSR Days

Everyone in the firm who is outside their probationary period can take one full day or two half days to volunteer with a charity. Over the last year it has been good to see the number of people using their CSR Day increase from 30 last year, to 70 this year, as our policy becomes established.

Several individuals have used their CSR Day independently, and we have also had enjoyable firm-organised days and some team days.

“During my time volunteering for The Felix Project, I spent most of my day repackaging surplus food that came from big suppliers like Sainsburys and Amazon Fresh and even travelled with a van to deliver the food to cafés and food banks across London! It was satisfying to give back to my community for a day with The Felix Project which was only a 10-minute walk from my home.”

Anastasios Kaimakamis, Paralegal,
Residential Property

The Felix Project

In March, we ran three CSR days with The Felix Project, a charity tackling food waste and poverty. Volunteers spent time sorting through surplus food donations and delivering food packages to charities in need, all across London. Other volunteers were in the kitchen preparing fresh and nutritious meals using the surplus donations.



Business Development and Marketing CSR Day

“Friday 8 October dawned bright and sunny and fortunately so, as the BD & Marketing team stepped out in Rotherhithe to spend a day at the Age UK day care centre as part of our annual Forsters CSR activity day.

As volunteers, we were able to support the centre by helping maintain the garden – lots of weeding, sweeping leaves, pruning and even some strimming took place throughout the morning, while others in the team were involved in a popular film quiz and some light aerobics in the hall. At midday, we joined the older members for a

home-made lunch, plenty of chit chat and general companionship - as most members live alone and only see each other once or twice a week. During the afternoon some of us continued with our work in the garden while others were treated to several rounds of bingo - and even took turns with the mic so that the members could concentrate on those all-important winning lines.

A good time was had by all, with the overall aim of providing company for a few hours and helping reduce the feeling of isolation for members.”

Felix Sellers, BD and Marketing Coordinator



“Please give my thanks to the volunteers, they were all so lovely and it’s such a memorable experience for our members to be able to share stories with new people.”

Age UK staff member

The Children’s Book Project

In March, a group of volunteers spent the day volunteering at the Children’s Book Project. Volunteers sorted through donated books and packaged them up to be redistributed to schools and families in need across London. The Children’s Book Project aims to give every child the opportunity to develop the literacy skills that are needed to succeed at school.



“I really enjoyed spending the day at the Children’s Book Project. It was easy to get stuck in and you felt like you were really helping and making a difference.”

Emma Cooper, Graduate Recruitment Officer, HR



We have continued delivering the commitments in our 2021-2023 Equality, Diversity and Inclusion Strategy.

Work with Inclusive Group

Following feedback in our firmwide EDI survey, we worked with Inclusive Group to roll out firmwide diversity and inclusion training. The whole firm attended two sessions on inclusive behaviour and bystander to upstander training, and leaders attended two sessions on inclusive leadership and creating a culture of psychological safety. We will be continuing to implement what we learnt over this year.

Collaborative Mentoring

Our Talent Project Team launched a Collaborative Mentoring Scheme in February 2023. We pair junior and senior people across Fee Earners, Secretarial Services and Business Services to create a mutually supportive relationship. The programme supports our EDI strategy and provides a means through which people can learn and share perspectives with each other.

Our Equality, Diversity and Inclusion Support Networks

Our seven EDI Support Networks offer an opportunity for individuals to come together to share experiences, ideas and help raise awareness of EDI issues. The groups run initiatives, host events and are an active voice in the firm.

We are really grateful to the EDI Support Network leads and the many people in the firm who work with the CSR Team to support the activity of our networks. See some highlights from the support networks below.

EnABLE Support Network

Disability Awareness Event

In January, our EnABLE Network hosted an awareness raising event with Celebrating Disability. We spoke about what disability is and what can be done to encourage increased discussion and awareness in the workplace.

This year, we also joined the Business Disability Forum to further our focus on disability inclusion.

Faith Support Network

Music and Faith Speaker Event

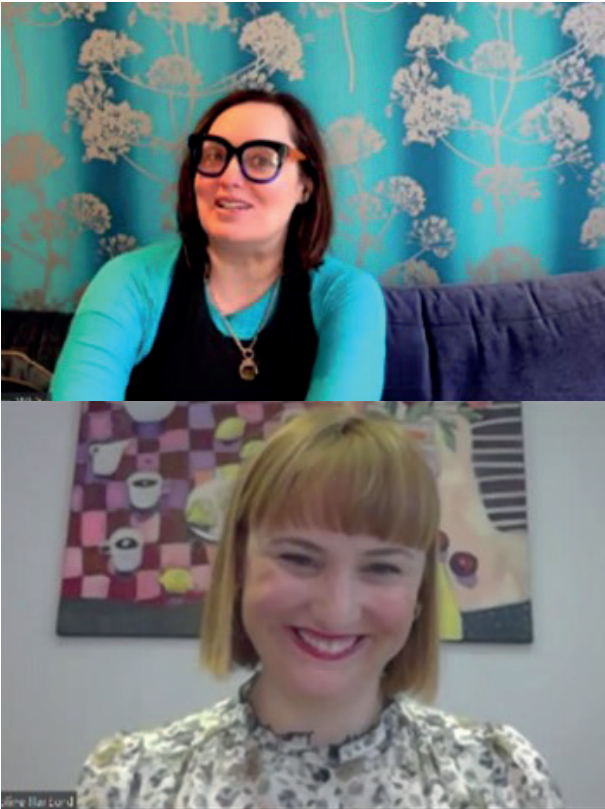
In February, our Faith Support Network held a Music and Faith Speaker event with Majors Jill and Brian Miller from the Salvation Army and Cantor Bex. The event explored the long and fascinating relationship between music and faith, through hearing from leaders in two religious practices which have music at their core.



CSR AT FORSTERS

Diwali Tea

In November, our Faith Support Network hosted a Diwali tea for the firm. There were sweet and savoury treats for people to try and it was great to see so many attending to support and celebrate with colleagues.



Gender Equality Network

International Women's Day

For International Women's Day this year, the Gender Equality Network hosted a special event with Deborah Frances-White, the host of The Guilty Feminist podcast. Deborah discussed the concept of 'guilty feminism', building inner confidence and the importance of supporting women across a variety of backgrounds.

We also ran an IWD LinkedIn Q&A campaign, interviewing individuals across the firm who go above and beyond to champion equality.



LGBTQ+ Network

Pride Month

To celebrate Pride Month in June, our LGBTQ+ Network hosted a Pride Tea for the firm.

Race Support Network

Black History Month

Our Race Support Network put together a busy programme of events and communications for Black History Month in October, focusing on the themes Black HERstory (the role of Black women in history) and Arts & Culture. The Network also hosted a Black History Month speaker event with Nicola Williams, Crown Court Judge, author, and winner of Cosmopolitan Magazine's Woman of Achievement Award.



Race Equality Week - BAME in Property Event

Priya Aggarwal-Shah, Founder and Director of BAME in Property joined Commercial Real Estate and Residential Property team members during Race Equality Week, sharing about diversity in the built environment, inclusive cultures, and increasing ethnic diversity at board level.

Speaker Event with Carolann Edwards OBE

The Race Support Network and our Learning and Development team organised a speaker event in March with Carolann Edwards OBE, focussing on building confidence to enable career progression. Carolann covered overcoming the feeling that you are an imposter, understanding your value, career objectives and planning and building your personal brand.

Social Mobility Support Network

Pathways to Law Programme

In February, we ran our second Pathways to Law programme with the Sutton Trust. We had over 20 students join us for three days of online work experience to understand what it is like working at Forsters, both from a legal and business support perspective.

In the coming year we are also working with the Social Mobility Foundation and Social Mobility Business Partnership, to expand our outreach work.

"I absolutely loved finding out about the diversity of Forsters and about the company itself; I was very surprised about all the different departments there are, which has changed my mind about what I would like to do in the future."

Pathways to Law student 2023

"Following the success of our first Pathways to Law scheme in 2022, it was great to be able to build upon that experience and welcome students again for a second time this year. It was brilliant to see so many people volunteering to run sessions with the students and get involved with the scheme from all departments across the firm (both fee-earning and business support) and from all ranges of seniority."

Sophie Smith, Associate, Planning and Pathways to Law lead

Mentoring Opportunities

The Social Mobility Network have also been promoting mentoring opportunities available to both Fee Earners and Business Support staff. Members of the firm are working with organisations such as GROW and The Access Project.

"I have been involved with GROW mentoring for around 6 months now. In my experience, being a mentor has not been time-consuming at all, and is genuinely something I very much enjoy doing."

Sonny Stewart, Trainee

Working Parents and Carers

The Working Parents and Carers Network held a number of discussions and meet-ups, to support parents and carers within the firm. They also supported other network events with resources and gifts for children.

Looking Ahead

- Continuing to embed learning from Inclusive Group and developing our support networks
- Working towards Disability Confident status, and other accreditations
- Improving our EDI Data Collection processes, to inform our future strategy

External Commitments and Partnerships





We have a pro bono policy which enables lawyers in the firm to onboard pro bono clients who meet our eligibility criteria.

As part of this policy, pro bono work that is aligned with our criteria can contribute towards lawyer annual hours targets.

During 2022-2023 we launched a number of partnerships with pro bono organisations, which enable lawyers in all legal groups to use their specific legal expertise in a pro bono capacity.

Organisations we now work with are listed below. Some of our pro bono partners are referral organisations, connecting firms with charities needing support, and others are legal advice centres, offering support directly to vulnerable individuals.

LandAid

The **Chancery Lane Project**

Queen Mary
University of London

SOUTH WESTMINSTER
LEGAL ADVICE CENTRE

citizens advice Wandsworth

TrustLaw
A THOMSON REUTERS FOUNDATION SERVICE

Spotlight on our new legal advice centre partnerships this year



Queen Mary Legal Advice Centre – Wills and Probate Clinic

From September 2022, lawyers from the firm have been supporting the Queen Mary Legal Advice Centre Wills and Probate Clinic. Our lawyers supervise university students, attending appointments with clients and reviewing the letters of advice that follow the appointments.

It has been great being able to support both the clients and students, and share a particular area of our legal expertise and we hope to expand our work in the next year.

South Westminster Legal Advice Centre

South Westminster Legal Advice Centre has been providing free legal advice to those who don't have the means to pay for it for nearly 25 years. Volunteers from Forsters have started attending the centre every Tuesday evening.

“It’s a huge benefit that firms such as Forsters are sending volunteers along. For us it means if we know we’re going to have two volunteers each week, we can adjust the number of appointments that we have available for clients. The more appointment spaces we have, the more clients there are to fill them up, so we really value the support we’re getting from Forsters and other firms.”

Richard Walford, Chair and Founding Trustee

“It’s great that anybody from any legal department can get involved. It’s pretty intense because there’s great demand for our services there, but it’s a great way to give back to the local community.”

Anna Mullins, Partner, Property Litigation

“It is a very different sort of experience that you get from your daily work. Junior members of the team will be researching on the job, doing a lot of fact checking for the associates, making the client feel comfortable, including interviewing and face time, so there are lots of transferable skills. The two and a half hours go by really quickly, and you get to connect and network with others in the firm too. By the end of the session you’ve made a new friend and bonded over the fact that you worked on something quite meaningful.”

Tin Hei Lam, Paralegal, Banking and Finance



Our Sustainability Commitment

In October 2021, as one of the first law firms of our size to do so, we made a public commitment to halve our greenhouse gas emissions by 2030, from a 2019/20 baseline, as part of our journey to net zero. We also committed to continuing to offset our emissions as we work towards our target.

During 2022/23 we submitted our target work for approval by the Science Based Target initiative, and we joined the Achilles Carbon Zero programme, to ensure that we are both measuring and offsetting our emissions to the highest standard.

We are pleased that in 2022/23 our emissions were lower than our baseline year in all reporting areas.

Team Level Targets and Individual Commitments

To put our commitment into action, last year the firm set 137 team targets and 854 individual sustainability commitments. It has been great to see examples of action taken within teams and by individuals over the last year. Teams have also started producing Sustainability Newsletters, sharing what they are doing to inspire the rest of the firm.

Our Travel Policy

We re-launched our travel policy, with measures and incentives to support sustainable travel decisions. The new policy includes a train-first policy for UK train travel and destinations served directly by Eurostar.



Green Impact Group

Our Green Impact Group drives our sustainability initiatives within the firm, and also forms four sub-groups, focusing on Travel, Printing, Offsets, and Recycling, to help the firm meet our individual and team level commitments. Some highlights are below:



Recycle Week

In September, our Green Impact Group ran a Recycle Week campaign as a chance for us to check and improve our recycling habits. The group produced a quiz to test recycling knowledge and created a video with useful hints and tips.



Cycling Campaign

To celebrate Bike Week, Green Impact Group launched a cycling campaign, including a bike maintenance workshop and a range of resources, to support increased cycling.



Cost of Living Sustainability Tips

As there is a strong link between potential cost efficiencies and sustainability, our Green Impact Group compiled some tips and resources for the firm to support long and short-term cost savings.

Looking Ahead

- During 2023/24 we plan to begin reporting our emissions through the Carbon Disclosure Project, and have our target approved by the Science Based Target initiative
- Our office move in January 2024 will enable us to make significant operational sustainability advancements. The fit-out of our new office is being carried out to the highest sustainability standards
- Green Impact Group and environmental volunteering activities for the year ahead include litter picking on the River Lea and a Sustainable Development Goals Month in September 2023.

External Commitments and Partnerships

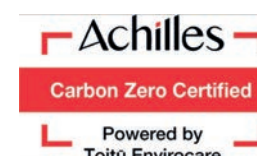
Finalist of

LexisNexis
Legal Awards 2020

LSA
Legal Sustainability Alliance



Business Declares



We have continued our wellbeing support this year to ensure the good health and wellbeing of our staff. We have a firmwide programme of wellbeing related events, communications, benefits and support tools.

Webinars and Wellbeing Sessions

This year, our webinars and wellbeing sessions have focused on:

- World Mental Health Day – with Wellbeing Partners
- Self-defence – with KB Fitness
- Domestic Violence – with Solace Women's Aid
- The Menopause – with Claudine Thornhill.

Wellbeing Newsletters

Our wellbeing newsletters have continued to be popular, with staff sharing personal experiences on topics including mental health, living with cancer and work life balance.

Financial Wellbeing Programme

This year we launched our financial wellbeing programme partnering with Chartered Financial Planner, Svenja Keller. Svenja has hosted several webinars for the firm covering topics such as:

- Supporting Financial Wellbeing
- Navigating the cost-of-living crisis
- Creating a budget
- Managing your mortgage and dealing with other debt
- The Sandwich Generation.

We also offer 1:1 'drop in clinic' sessions with Svenja for members of the firm to talk about their finances confidentially.



Lunchtime wellbeing walks

A Chance To Connect

There have been a number of opportunities for employees to meet up over the last year:

- Wellbeing book club
- Lunchtime wellbeing walks
- Table tennis tournaments
- Running Club
- Choir



Ongoing Wellbeing Support

We continue to have a variety of wellbeing support available for people in the firm on an ongoing basis:

- **Mental health support:** access to an Employee Assistance Programme; confidential counselling sessions; and Mental Health First Aiders
- **Wellbeing-related benefits,** including: a Cycle to Work scheme; subsidised gym membership; and health insurance
- **Wellbeing+ portal** which is available for all staff and has a wealth of regularly updated resources to support physical, mental, emotional and financial wellbeing.

