

**STEPHENSON
HARWOOD**

**+ RESPONSIBLE
BUSINESS**

Interactive PDF
optimised for desktop



+ AT A GLANCE

Stephenson Harwood is an international law firm, and we're committed to creating *'Positive Partnerships'* with our clients. We represent listed and private companies, institutions and individuals, building lasting relationships to help them succeed in a complex and ever-changing world.

Our focus is on five core sectors:

Energy Transition + Infrastructure, Life Sciences + Healthcare, Private Capital + Funds, Technology, and Transportation + Trade.

With more than 1,500 people, including 250+ partners, across eleven offices in Europe, the Middle East and Asia, we combine deep legal capabilities and broad commercial expertise. We have also forged close ties with high quality law firms around the world, blending local knowledge with global savvy for clients in over 100 countries.

250+
PARTNERS

80+
TOP RANKING
FOR INDIVIDUALS

45+
LANGUAGES SPOKEN
BY OUR PEOPLE

1,500+
PEOPLE

100+
COUNTRIES OUR
CLIENTS ARE BASED IN

11
OFFICES

● Offices

Al Khobar + Athens + Dubai + Hong Kong + London
+ Madrid + Paris + Riyadh + Seoul + Shanghai + Singapore

+ Introduction

A MESSAGE FROM OUR SENIOR PARTNER

The last 18 months have brought significant change, both for Stephenson Harwood and the world around us.

As a firm, we have clarified who we are through our refreshed brand and values, which guide the culture and behaviours that define us. We have reaffirmed our commitment to equality, diversity and inclusion and further invested in a pro bono practice addressing unmet legal need that spans a wide range of issues and communities. We have made clear our commitment to reducing the environmental impact of our business operations by setting global net zero targets. We have also developed an environmental pro bono focus to apply our legal expertise to causes and organisations that protect the environment and support those who are most impacted by climate change.

As we grow our firm, our ambition is to do so responsibly and sustainably. Part of that is to report on our work through our Responsible Business Report, in which we aim to share our goals, progress and challenges across our three pillars - People, Planet, and Society, as we strive for purposeful growth.



PAUL THWAITE

Senior Partner,
Responsible Business
Committee Chair



Foreword

RESPONSIBLE BUSINESS AT STEPHENSON HARWOOD

As a responsible business we are committed to ensuring our strategy and decisions consider the wellbeing of our people, communities, and the natural environment, balancing the needs of our business with those of future generations. We do this because we believe that responsible business is good business.

At the core of our Responsible Business strategy sit three pillars – people, planet and society.

+ FY26 highlights



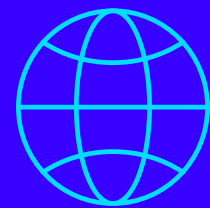
277% increase in pro bono hours across the last two years



Refreshed our firm values and two-way people promise



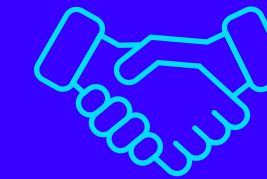
Established our environmental pro bono practice focus



Developed new global net zero targets



Strengthened our Responsible Business strategy and governance structure



Joined key industry-wide collaborations including the Legal Sustainability Alliance and Mindful Business Charter



Named in Top 75 Social Mobility Employer Index



Legal 500 ESG Award winner in Disability and Neurodivergence category



Responsible Business

PEOPLE

+ Introduction

PEOPLE

At Stephenson Harwood, we succeed because we work together as one. A combination of expertise and experience. Attitude and approach. This shapes life at our firm.



Legal500
ESG AWARD
DISABILITY AND
NEURODIVERGENCE



+ What this chapter covers

1. LIVING OUR VALUES
2. INCLUSION IN ACTION
3. WELLBEING IN PRACTICE



Living our values

OUR VALUES

Our values guide the behaviours we expect when working with each other and with our clients. They are central to our culture and at the heart of everything we do. As a firm, we have clarified who we are through our refreshed brand and values, which guide the culture and behaviours that define us.

GO FAR, GO TOGETHER

We are a place of excellence with high standards and always deliver. We are inclusive and respectful. We are in it for our firm, our clients and each other.

EXPERTS IN MORE THAN LAW

We are interested in our client's business and strive to become indispensable advisors. We believe there is always space to learn and grow, so we seize opportunities to become more rounded business people.

CAN-DO PERSONALITIES

We are pragmatic, down to earth and approachable. We find solutions that move our business and our client's business forward.

ALWAYS READY

We are entrepreneurial and ready for anything with the freedom to develop ourselves and our business. We move quickly to respond to different situations, always looking for innovative and responsible solutions.

+ *Living our values*

THE DEAL

Central to life at Stephenson Harwood is ‘The Deal’ our two-way people promise. What we offer our people and what we expect in return.

WHAT WE OFFER

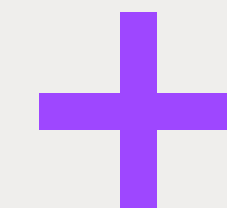
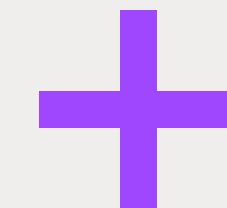
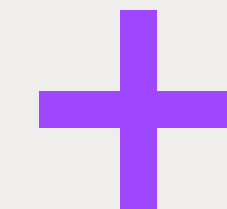
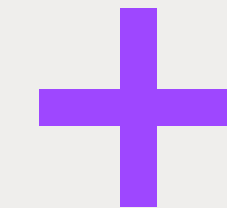
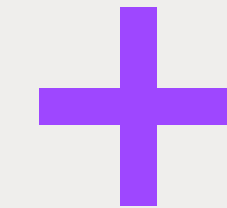
A place to be yourself and where there are no limits on what you can achieve

Fair reward and recognition, based on all round performance

Ambition with a clear strategy for growth

Early responsibility, client contact and involvement in growing the business

Ownership of your career and open conversations throughout



WHAT WE ASK

Respect individuality and create success together

Hard work and a commitment to excellence

Help the firm grow and keep it an enjoyable place to be

Seize every opportunity to become more rounded and accomplished

Use the support provided, be honest and help others when needed

+ Case Study

GO FAR, GO TOGETHER

In November, our colleagues came together for Go Far, Go Together Day – a moment to pause, reconnect and support one another during a time when many people are feeling the impact of an increasingly polarised world.

At the heart of the day was a shared commitment to one of our new values, Go Far, Go Together, which illustrates our belief that an inclusive and respectful culture enables us to support each other and our clients.

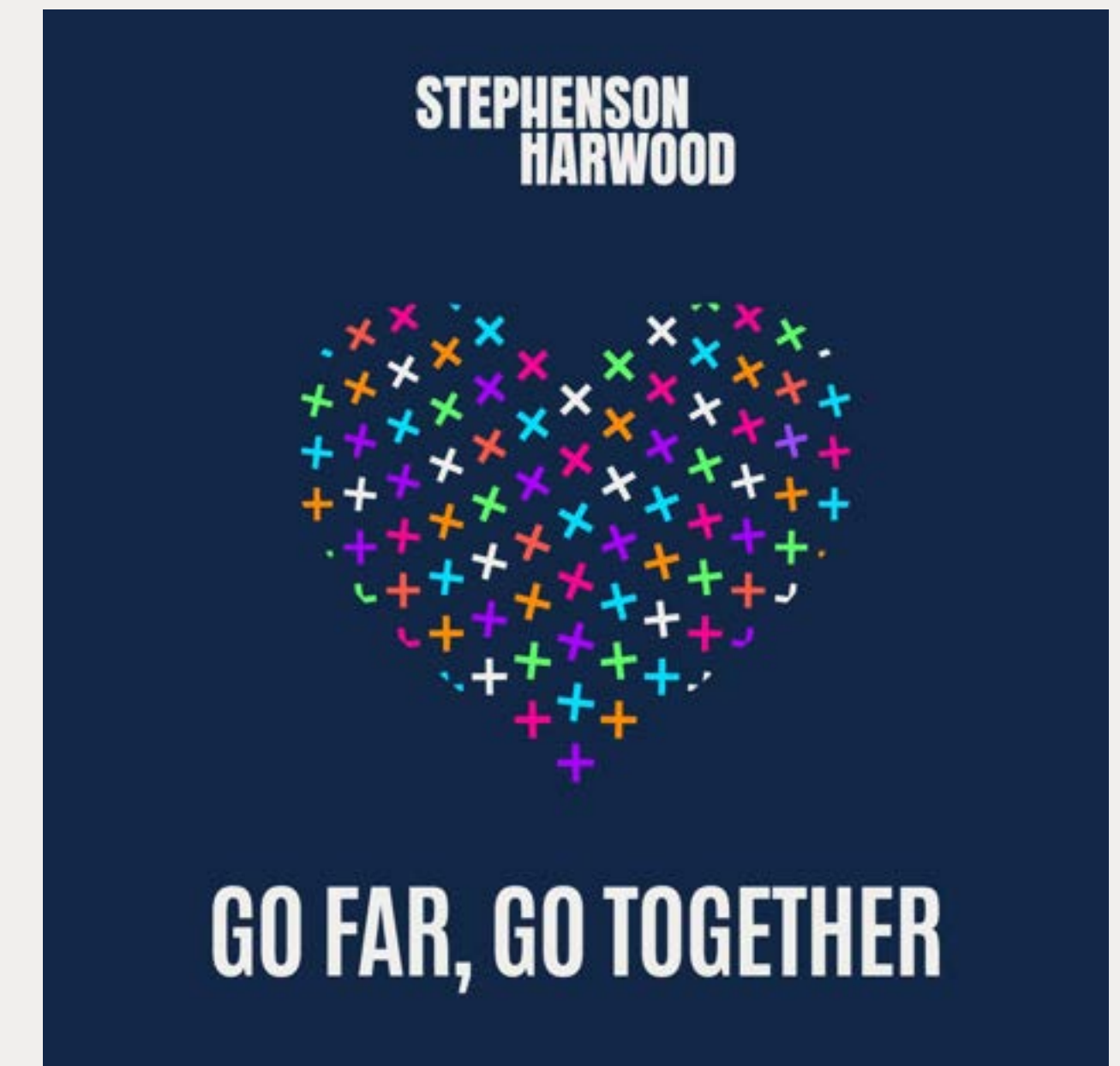
While we can't control what happens outside our firm, we can shape the culture we experience inside it – a culture built on respect, care, and unity.

Colleagues from our global offices were invited to join a webinar led by psychologists from HelloSelf. The session focused on managing change and uncertainty, offered practical tools, frameworks and guidance on how to manage anxiety and stress.

Teams across the firm took part in activities designed to foster connection and provide practical support for colleagues who may be feeling the strain of current events. We also joined forces to support food bank charity Trussell, raising £4,956 – the equivalent of 354 weekly food parcels for individuals in need.



Colleagues gathered in the London office for Go Far, Go Together Day, reflecting the event's focus on connection and togetherness.



Heart made up of multicoloured crosses with caption 'Go Far, Go Together'.

+ Living our values

BEHAVIOURAL EXPECTATIONS

We want to be a firm where all of our people can be themselves and thrive at work. This means treating everyone with dignity and respect at all times, and fostering a culture in which we all feel empowered to speak up and receive the care and support needed to resolve issues around inclusion, behaviour, bullying or harassment.

Speaking Up

It can be tricky to navigate what to do if you experience or witness inappropriate behaviour at work, and there isn't one solution for each circumstance. Our Speak Up guidance outlines the options available to help colleagues navigate what to do, including who can support them, and the options to try to resolve and issue informally or formally.

Leadership Commitment

We know that it's vital that leadership deal with concerns effectively, and they're equipped with a clear understanding of their role. We ran workshops for leadership and HR to support this and supplemented that training with guidance for those in key roles.

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Respect in the Workplace training

Over the course of the last year, we delivered Respect in the Workplace training to our partners globally. Led by our Employment Partners and in-house Human Resources team, the training aimed to reinforce the behaviours expected across the firm and the shared responsibility we all have to create a respectful, inclusive and safe working environment. It focused on why behaviour matters, the legal and regulatory framework, the importance of speaking up, and the practical steps partners can take to challenge inappropriate conduct, support colleagues and lead by example. 91% of our global partnership completed the training, which will be rolled out to employees in the coming financial year.

Policy updates

We regularly review and update our people policies, and introduce new policies where needed, to ensure they continue to reflect the needs of our colleagues and provide clarity to colleagues on the standards of behaviour that we expect across the firm. This year, for example, we updated our Relationships at Work policy, which recognises that personal relationships may arise between colleagues, while setting clear expectations around professionalism, disclosure and the management of any potential conflicts of interest.



Introduction

INCLUSION IN ACTION

“Diversity and inclusion are not boxes to be ticked; this work is a thread that runs through our organisation.

We’re working very hard to ensure greater diversity, underpinned by an inclusive culture. I remain committed to this work and continue to believe that our organisation, and the way we serve our clients, is richer for it.”



EIFION MORRIS

Chief Executive Officer

For more information on what diversity and inclusion mean to us, watch the animation below.



Inclusion in action

OUR INCLUSION PRIORITIES

Click the icons below to explore our key inclusion priorities and the progress we have made across each area.



Inclusion in action

DISABILITY AND NEURODIVERGENCE

We aim to create an inclusive workplace where disabled and neurodivergent people are valued and supported to do their best work.

Accessible and inclusive recruitment and programmes

We aim to ensure everyone can perform at their best throughout our entire recruitment process by offering adjustments for candidates with a disability, neurodivergence or long-term condition. [Read more](#)

Employ Autism internship programme

We work with the charity Ambitious about Autism to provide eight-week paid internship opportunities for autistic adults to work across our business services teams. [Read more](#)

Tailored workplace adjustments

Our global workplace adjustments policy provides colleagues with disabilities, neurodivergences and long-term conditions with the adjustments that they need to do their best work.

In March 2026, we launched our Newly Diagnosed and Changing Conditions Support Network, helping colleagues navigating a new diagnosis or changes to an existing condition, access confidential peer support, practical advice and informal mentoring.

- + We continue to support colleagues through the formal diagnosis process via occupational health referrals and workplace assessment referrals. Through this process, colleagues can access specialist coaching to better understand their diagnosis, identify effective coping strategies and explore workplace adjustments.
- + We have developed a toolkit to help line managers support neurodivergent colleagues.
- + Colleagues can request time off for appointments, treatment, assessments and other needs related to a disability, neurodivergence or long-term condition.

Together, these help to remove barriers, build confidence in seeking support and create an environment for colleagues to build long-term, successful careers at the firm.

Raising awareness of disability and neurodivergence

We are committed to increasing awareness and understanding of disability and neurodivergence across the firm. Enable, our disability and neurodivergence network, plays a key role in promoting inclusion and supporting colleagues.

Our disability and neurodiversity hub acts as a single place where colleagues can access resources relating to disability inclusion, including a list of accessible technology available at the firm.

Inclusion in action

DISABILITY AND NEURODIVERGENCE

Disability Confident Leader

As a result of our efforts, we have achieved Disability Confident Level 3 (Leader) as per the UK Government's Disability Confident Employer accreditation. This is the highest accreditation, which reflects a range of work that we have done to attract and recruit disabled and neurodivergent talent and retain and develop our disabled colleagues at the firm.



We want to ensure that all our colleagues have what they need to do their best work. For those with disabilities, neurodivergence, and long-term health conditions, adjustments can make all the difference. Watch this video to hear from colleagues speak about their workplace adjustments and share advice to colleagues and line managers about adjustments.



Case study

ATTRACTING DISABLED TALENT IN OUR EARLY CAREERS RECRUITMENT

We continue to strengthen our approach to recruitment, helping to build more accessible pathways for disabled talent.

During our most recent early talent recruitment cycle, we strengthened our commitment to the UK Government's Disability Confident Scheme by introducing clearer candidate guidance and continuing to guarantee interviews for applicants with a disability, neurodivergence or long-term condition who met the minimum criteria for our roles.

These changes were designed to increase transparency, build confidence in the recruitment process and help ensure talented candidates are better able to demonstrate their potential.

In the most recent cycle:

9% OF TOTAL CANDIDATES OPTED IN TO THE SCHEME

16% OF THOSE CANDIDATES WERE INVITED TO INTERVIEW

11% OF TRAINING CONTRACT OFFERS WERE MADE TO CANDIDATES WHO HAD OPTED IN

These figures demonstrate the importance of creating accessible routes into the profession and ensuring candidates are confident in disclosing a disability, neurodivergence or long-term condition during the recruitment process.

Disability open day

We host a disability open day, designed to encourage disabled talent to apply for our training contract roles. The open day offers an insight into the firm and our areas of focus, guidance on navigating the recruitment process, and an opportunity to learn more about how we are building an inclusive environment for disabled talent. We are pleased that the open day is becoming a recruitment pipeline. Ilse, who attended our Disability Open Day in 2025 is joining us as a Trainee in September 2026.

“Attending the Disability Open Day was my first introduction to the firm demonstrating that inclusion was more than just a commitment on paper. My subsequent Vacation Scheme experience reinforced the firm's support for disabled talent and strengthened my confidence that this is where I want to begin my career as a trainee solicitor.”

—ILSE

Future Trainee



Case study

PATHWAYS TO EMPLOYMENT FOR AUTISTIC ADULTS

Autistic people face significant barriers to employment in the UK, with only 31% of autistic people estimated to be in employment. The situation is particularly concerning for young people: over 10% of all young people not in education, employment or training are autistic. These statistics highlight the urgent need for targeted action to improve representation and inclusion for autistic individuals in the UK workforce.

In 2024, we partnered with Ambitious about Autism, a UK charity supporting autistic people through education, employment programmes, and policy advocacy. We joined their Employ Autism programme, providing three eight-week paid internship opportunities for autistic young adults within our London business services teams.

We continued the partnership in 2025, expanding the programme into three additional departments and increasing its reach across the firm. Maylinh, a former intern who secured a permanent role following her placement, now mentors new interns and supports them in making the most of their experience.

Of the six interns who have joined the programme to date, four have gone on to secure permanent employment, including two roles at the firm.

Maylinh joined us as an intern in 2024, and now works as a Business Operations Coordinator.

“I really enjoy working with my colleagues, and I find my role both engaging and manageable. I couldn’t ask for more in a job, The Employ Autism programme has opened up real opportunities for me, and I’m really pleased Stephenson Harwood keeps supporting it so others can benefit too.”



Maylinh, one of our 2024 interns.

In May 2026, Stephenson Harwood’s Employ Autism programme won The Legal 500 ESG Award for Disability/Neurodiversity: Best Initiative of the Year 2026.

6

INTERNS JOINED US ON
8-WEEK PLACEMENTS

2 OUT OF 6

ARE NOW EMPLOYEES AT
STEPHENSON HARWOOD

4 OUT OF 6

ARE IN FULL TIME EMPLOYMENT
FOLLOWING THE PROGRAMME

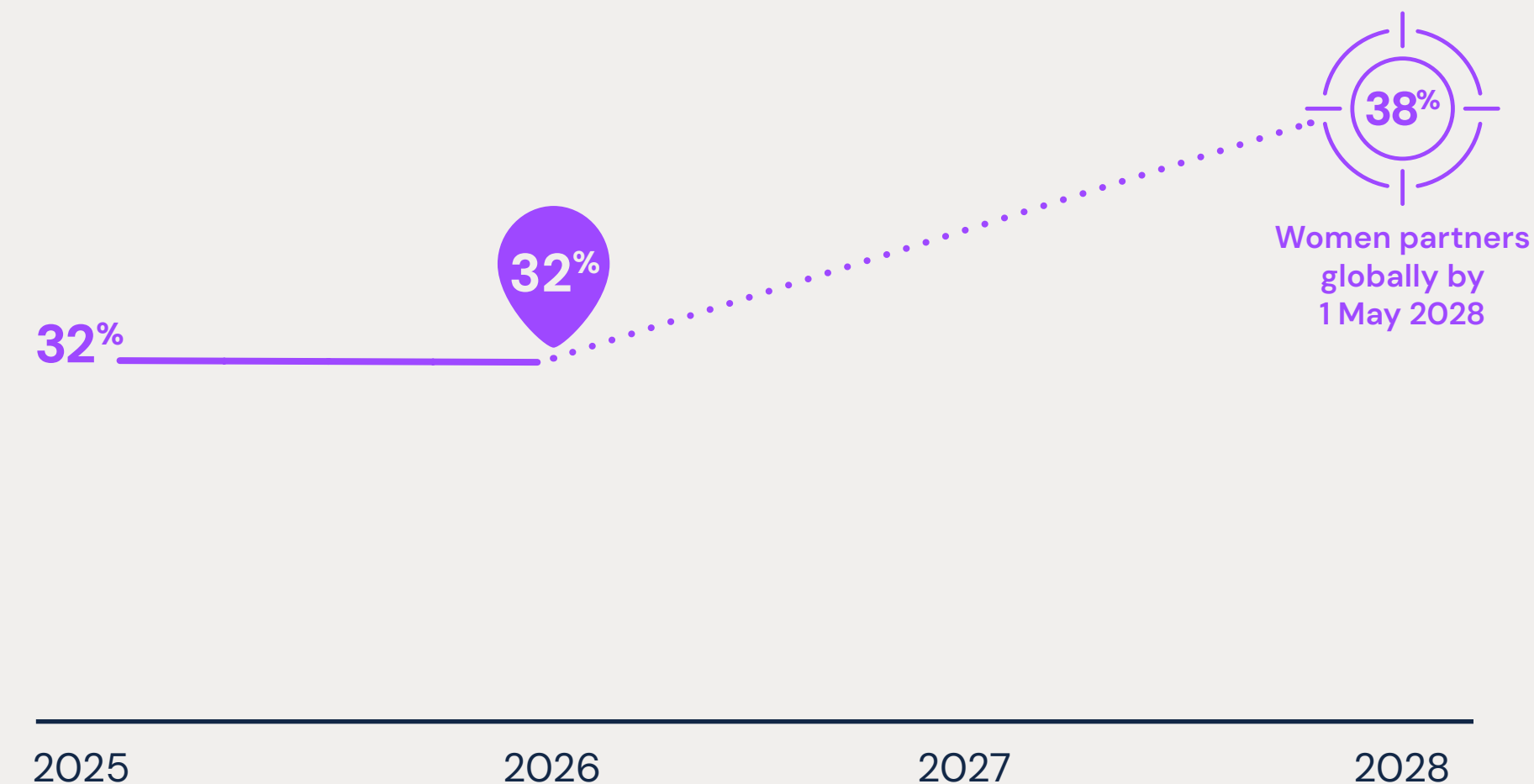
Inclusion in action

GENDER

While large numbers of women enter the legal sector, the challenge lies in advancing to the most senior positions. We are committed to cultivating an environment where women are empowered to succeed and progress in their careers.

OUR TARGETS

In May 2025, we refreshed our diversity targets.



We are currently falling short of our target to have 38% women partners by 1 May 2026. We remain committed to this goal.

As at May 2026

32%
OF OUR PARTNERS
GLOBALLY ARE WOMEN

55%
OF OUR GLOBAL
LEADERSHIP
TEAM ARE WOMEN

55%
NEW PARTNER
PROMOTIONS
WERE WOMEN

Inclusion in action

GENDER

Our global gender target is focused on representation at partner level, while we also monitor representation, pay, progression and engagement across the firm with the aim of building a strong pipeline of talent at all levels. Our Gender Action Plan is informed by both quantitative and qualitative data and is refreshed annually. We are supporting progress by:

Building a strong pipeline

This year's internal partner promotions were gender balanced, with women making up 55% of promotions across our global network. The challenge remains for us to attract and recruit more women into the partnership as we grow. We are, therefore, continuing to focus on building a strong internal pipeline, alongside seeking to attract more women into the partnership externally. This year 68% of women promoted to Managing Associate were women. We have more women at Mid Associate level, so this is proportionate to the eligible population.

Increasing visibility of pathways to partnership

We often hear that people don't see relatable role models in their team or practice group, or question how partnership can fit alongside their personal lives. However, in reality, there is no single way of doing this. This year we profiled partners from around our global network, sharing their unique journeys and routes into partnership. We also continue to share colleagues' flexible working stories, highlighting how our people work flexibly to meet client needs while building sustainable careers. Our Open Door Support Network also provides access to partners who can offer practical guidance, insight and encouragement on career development and progression.

Supporting parents and carers

We are working hard to support those on the pathway to parenthood, as well as parents and carers globally. While our policies and support are for everyone, we know they can have a particularly positive impact on women in our business, including by encouraging men to take up enhanced parental leave and share caring responsibilities. This support includes new parent coaching for all parents before, during, and after leave.



Family Day in our London office, hosted by our Parents and Carers network.

Inclusion in action

**LGBTQ+**

We strive to create a workplace where everyone, regardless of sexual orientation or gender identity, can be themselves and thrive.

LGBTQ+ inclusive policies and processes

We want to ensure that our policies are inclusive and accessible to everyone. We have a range of global policies to support our colleagues and their families. These include:

- + Our family friendly policies to support those on the path to parenthood, and parents and carers. This support includes coaching for new parents and their managers, enhanced global new parent policies for primary and secondary parents, neonatal leave policies for those whose baby is admitted to hospital, fertility and pregnancy loss policies and carers policies. All our family policies are LGBTQ+ inclusive and apply regardless of sexual orientation or gender identity and, for colleagues based in countries where adoption and surrogacy are legal, they also apply. Find out more about these policies [here](#).
- + Our transitioning at work policy and guidance which supports anyone transitioning at work, or who has a trans history. The policy provides guidance to individuals, line managers, colleagues and the human resources department on how to best support a trans colleague. Find out more about this policy [here](#).

Case Study

INCLUSIVE POLICY AND PROCESSES

In November 2025, we introduced a new Global Mobility Policy, which sets out clearer and more consistent support for international secondments and overseas working.

The policy embeds inclusion into the mobility process by ensuring secondment opportunities are open to all eligible colleagues, without assumptions based on personal characteristics or life circumstances. Colleagues are provided with the information they need to assess any risks or challenges before deciding whether to apply for, accept or decline an opportunity.

It also recognises that mobility may present additional complexities for some colleagues, including those related to sexual orientation, gender identity, faith, ethnicity, disability or neurodivergence. The policy commits the firm to making workplace adjustments, protecting privacy and ensuring that no colleague is disadvantaged if they do not feel comfortable travelling.

Inclusion in action

**LGBTQ+**

Supporting LGBTQ+ rights

Advocating for LGBTQ+ rights is a vital part of our commitment to LGBTQ+ inclusion. In 2023, we announced our partnership with Rainbow Migration, a charity which provides legal representation to asylum seekers fleeing persecution because of their sexual orientation or gender identity. Lawyers from the firm provide support to help them secure asylum in the UK.

For more information on this work, [click here](#).

Fostering community

SHout, our LGBTQ+ employee network, provides support and a peer network for LGBTQ+ colleagues. They work to increase understanding of LGBTQ+ issues and celebrate LGBTQ+ colleagues and role models.



Pride Month 2026 event with Stephen Libby, winner of The Traitors UK Season 4.

Inclusion in action



RACE AND ETHNICITY

We are committed to attracting and recruiting ethnic minority talent and cultivating an environment where colleagues can be themselves and thrive in work.

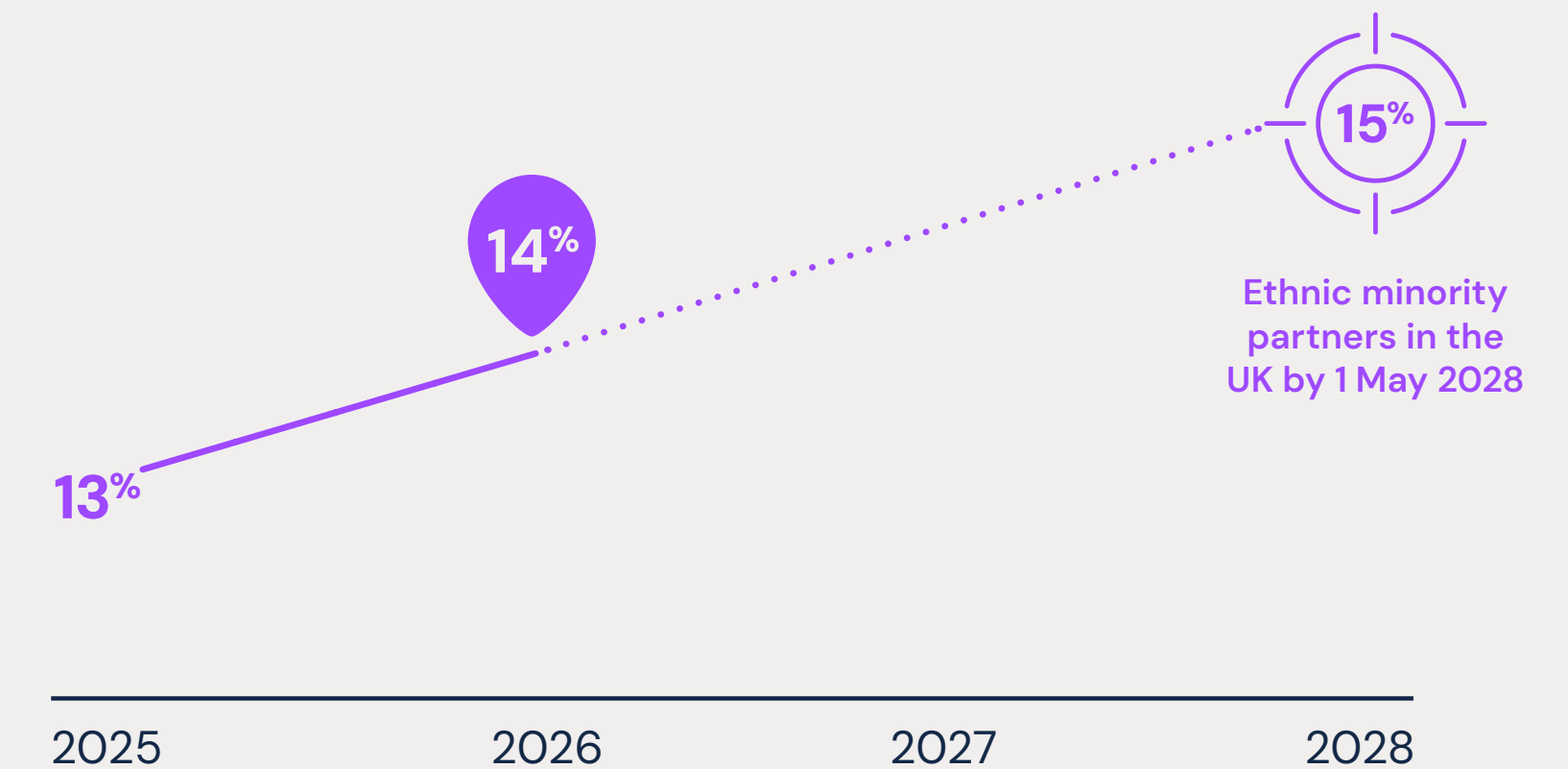
While our target focuses on representation at the most senior level; we also monitor representation, pay, progression and engagement across the firm with the aim of building a strong pipeline of talent at all levels. Our Ethnicity Action Plan is informed by our quantitative and qualitative data and refreshed annually. To the right are some actions we've taken this year:

Using colleague insight to inform change

Last year we reported that over the last three years, compared to our white colleagues, a higher proportion of our ethnic minority business services colleagues had left the firm. We conducted a listening exercise with our business services colleagues to better understand their experiences of inclusion, including with dedicated groups for ethnic minority colleagues, to test for differences in experience. This insight has informed a programme of action, including the launch of a business services mentoring programme, inclusive line manager training (attended by 70% of managers), and changes to team social activities to make them more varied and inclusive.

OUR TARGETS

In May 2025, we refreshed our diversity targets.



14%

**OF OUR UK PARTNERS
ARE FROM ETHNIC MINORITY
BACKGROUNDS**

Inclusion in action



RACE AND ETHNICITY

Building a strong pipeline

We continued to run the Articles Plus programme, which supports ethnic minority and working class trainees to navigate their training contracts. The programme equips trainees to have productive conversations with their supervisors, understand how to develop networks and to build on constructive feedback. The aim of this programme is to support retention of colleagues on completion of their training contracts.

This year's promotions to partner and managing associate in the UK included colleagues from ethnic minority backgrounds. Due to the small population size, we cannot publish figures for each group.

“The Articles Plus programme helped build my confidence during my first seat and develop strong relationships with colleagues. We explored how to make the most of our seats and adapt to different working styles. The coaching sessions also helped me build trust within my team, creating opportunities to work on a broader range of matters.”



MARC DAI

Associate, Articles Plus participant during training contract

Driving awareness and inclusive culture

We signed up to the Halo Code, a UK based pledge created by the Halo Collective to end hair discrimination in the workplace, especially for people with Afro-textured hair. We also hosted a discussion with Justice4Windrush to raise awareness of the Home Office scandal and its ongoing impact on many people from Black and minority ethnic communities. Colleagues, clients and friends joined the event to understand the role of the law in addressing these injustices and to reflect on the importance of continued advocacy and change.



Panel at Black History Month 2025 event in collaboration with charity Justice4Windrush.



Guests at Black History Month 2025 event, held in collaboration with charity Justice4Windrush.



Case Study

TURNING LISTENING INTO ACTION ACROSS BUSINESS SERVICES

Business Services colleagues play a vital role in the success of our firm. In 2025, following the conclusion of our ethnicity targets, we identified a slightly higher proportion of ethnic minority business services colleagues leaving the firm year-on-year. While the numbers were small, this was an important early signal. We wanted to understand the experiences behind the data and identify practical steps to strengthen inclusion, across Business Services.

We partnered with external specialists, extense, to carry out an independent listening exercise. Sessions were open to all Business Services colleagues, with dedicated sessions for ethnic minority colleagues to explore whether experiences differed. This created a confidential space for colleagues to speak openly and helped us move beyond headline data to a richer understanding of lived experience.

The exercise highlighted several consistent themes: the need for stronger support around career development, greater access to mentoring, clearer progression conversations, and more inclusive day-to-day leadership. Colleagues also emphasised the importance of psychologically safe teams, more varied social opportunities, and better support for neurodivergent colleagues.

Working with our Heads of Business Services, we translated these insights into a targeted action plan with clear ownership.

Actions included:

- + launching a Business services mentoring programme
- + broadening approaches to team and social activity
- + developing colleague-led initiatives and networks strengthening inclusive management skills.

A key focus has been on building inclusive leadership capability. We delivered line manager workshops to 70% of Business Services managers and advisers. Feedback was highly positive, with participants reporting increased confidence in applying inclusive behaviours in their day-to-day roles.

The listening exercise has helped us move from early signals in the data to a clearer understanding of colleague experience, and from insight to action. It has also reinforced the importance of continuing to listen, respond and embed inclusive ways of working across the firm.

70%

OF MANAGERS ATTENDED
INCLUSION WORKSHOPS

SELF REPORTED INCLUSION
CONFIDENCE INCREASED FROM

6.8 to 8.2

Inclusion in action



SOCIO ECONOMIC BACKGROUND

We want to ensure that our firm fosters an environment where colleagues from all socio-economic backgrounds, including those from working class communities, have equal opportunities to succeed.

Access to opportunities within law

Our scholarship award is open to students from lower socio-economic backgrounds and offers £15,000 per year to cover the costs of university fees and contribute to living expenses. Recipients have a mentor from the firm, are invited to skills days, offered work experience, and guaranteed a place at an assessment centre for a training contract.

23
SCHOLARS SUPPORTED
THROUGH UNIVERSITY

22
ATTENDED RUSSELL GROUP
UNIVERSITIES

78%
HAVE PROGRESSED INTO
LEGAL SECTOR ROLES

Removing financial barriers in the recruitment process

We aim to remove financial barriers from our recruitment process. All placement scheme students are paid the London Living Wage, with accommodation provided for those from lower socio-economic backgrounds living outside London. We also provide lunch to all students during their placement.

Contextualised recruitment

We use the RARE contextual recruitment system in our graduate selection process. By contextualising the performance of applicants, the tool aims to enable us to identify 'stand-out' candidates, regardless of background.

Career development

We recognise that navigating a training contract can be even more challenging for those without family members or networks with experience in professional services.

In 2024, we introduced the Articles Plus programme, which offers Trainee Solicitors from lower socio-economic backgrounds the opportunity to participate in group and individual coaching sessions that support them to successfully navigate their trainee and qualification journey. To date, 14 trainees have participated in the programme, with the first cohort due to qualify in September 2026.

Top 75 Employer

As a result of our efforts we have been named a Top 75 Employer in the Social Mobility Employer Index in 2024 and 2025.



+ Wellbeing in practice

OUR APPROACH

We know that working in the law can be demanding alongside our personal ambitions and goals. With the right support, the challenges we face can become the very things that push us to learn, grow, and perform at our best.



Close-up macro photo of a succulent plant.

PREVENTATIVE MEASURES

We offer a range of benefits to support our colleagues to identify and address physical and mental health issues early. All of our colleagues globally can access the below, alongside localised benefits such as insurances, subsidised or funded gyms:

- + comprehensive health screenings to help identify potential health issues early and provide valuable insights to develop personalised plans to maintain their fitness and wellbeing.
- + qualified therapists, psychologists, and coaches for online therapy and wellbeing support.
- + specialised new parent coaching for all those who become parents, to be used before, during and after leave to support their transition.
- + bespoke live webinars that directly correspond to trends that we see in our wellbeing data.

We have a range of policies to help colleagues navigate professional and personal challenges that may arise at any stage of their career or life during their time with the firm. Here are a few examples of our policies that support our people through life circumstances—both fortunate and challenging—during their time with us:

- + our Career break/sabbatical policy recognises the importance of work-life balance, personal development, and interests outside of the firm.
- + our Carers policy supports all colleagues who have caring responsibilities for disabled, elderly, or sick individuals.
- + our Domestic abuse policy supports any employee impacted by domestic abuse, stalking, or coercive control.
- + our Fertility policy supports all colleagues who are undergoing fertility treatment or whose partners are receiving treatment.

WORKING PRACTICES

We analyse a combination of qualitative and quantitative wellbeing data to identify where support may be needed and respond early to emerging pressures. Our biannual engagement survey includes heatmap reporting, which, provides insight into wellbeing, trends across offices, and roles. We also review indicators such as sustained high utilisation, sickness absence and holiday usage to understand whether workloads are sustainable and whether colleagues are taking adequate time to rest and recover.

In December 2025, we also became a signatory of the Mindful Business Charter, a collaborative initiative designed to promote better working practices for mental health and wellbeing.





Case Study

PARTNER WELLBEING

Supporting partner wellbeing has been a significant programme of work over the last 18 months. We ran facilitated consultations with partners across all practice groups and offices to understand their challenges and what practical organisational changes, and individual support would positively impact their wellbeing.

These consultations identified a number of consistent themes:

- + challenges in taking proper breaks
- + pressure to remain contactable
- + administrative burdens, including email volume

Partners also expressed a desire to continue to build a greater trust and collaboration across the partnership.

Consultations took place in partner groups, alongside some individual sessions to capture feedback. All feedback and recommendations were collated, anonymised and reported to the People and Culture Committee, and onwards to the Global Leadership team.

In response, we developed a programme of organisational, team and individual actions designed to embed sustainable wellbeing for partners. This included:

- + reviewing administrative support
- + piloting new approaches to EA/TA and practice management support
- + reducing unnecessary email traffic
- + increasing awareness of preventative health benefits
- + enhancing support during vulnerable moments
- + improving integration support for lateral and newly promoted partners.

Alongside these structural actions to reduce pressures on partners, we offered targeted individual and group support. Partners were invited to attend Managing your Mind: Psychological Skills for Sustainable Performance masterclasses, facilitated by Positive Group, which focused on resilience, stress, energy management and sustainable performance.

Eighty-three partners attended sessions between October 2025 and March 2026. We also offered one-to-one wellbeing MOTs, which provided partners with personalised support around general wellbeing and personal and professional performance. Thirty-four partners attended these sessions, with eight participating in a follow-up session and three benefiting from a more extensive programme of support.

The initiative also increased engagement with preventative health benefits. Uptake of comprehensive health screenings in London rose by 50% between the start of the project and the end of FY26, supporting earlier identification of potential health issues and a more proactive approach to wellbeing.



Case Study

WELLBEING + INCLUSION

On 27 November, the firm hosted Go Far, Go Together Day – a moment to pause, reconnect and support one another during a time when many people, particularly some underrepresented groups, are feeling the impact of an increasingly polarised world.

At the heart of the day was a shared commitment to our Employer Brand Value, Go Far, Go Together: the belief that an inclusive and respectful culture enables us to show up better for each other, our clients, and our firm.

There were two aspects of the day that sought to actively promote wellbeing; a webinar for colleagues feeling the impacts of polarisation, and to foster social connection and support across the firm.

Colleagues from our global offices were invited to join a webinar led by psychologists from HelloSelf. The session, which was focused on managing change and uncertainty, offered practical tools, frameworks and guidance on how to manage anxiety and stress. Psychologists from our wellbeing partner, HelloSelf, also shared clear steps on how to build team support strategies for checking in with colleagues and creating psychological safety. All colleagues were signposted to HelloSelf for further support, making it easy for people to take the next steps.

The rest of the day focused on connection; colleagues came together to have a community-style lunch in Refresh, with many connecting over games like Connect4 and Jenga in the auditorium. The day culminated in a special monthly staff social, with food, drinks, a performance by the Stephenson Harwood choir, and a special guest DJ.



Heart made up of multicoloured crosses with caption 'Go Far, Go Together'.



Responsible Business

PLANET

+ Planet

INTRODUCTION

We recognise that we have both an opportunity and a responsibility to contribute to the transition to a more sustainable future. Addressing climate change is the right thing to do and is increasingly important to our clients, our people and the long-term resilience of our business.

This chapter sets out our approach, the progress we have made during the year, where gaps remain, and the actions we are taking.

We are committed to taking practical, transparent action to reduce our global environmental impact in our operations and value chain. Meaningful progress requires participation across our global operations, ensuring that sustainability is embedded across the way we work and make decisions. Success depends on collaboration across the firm and with our suppliers, landlords, clients, peers and industry groups, so that we can share knowledge, strengthen our approach and contribute to the wider transition to a low-carbon economy.

Underpinning this is the need to understand our environmental impacts, define a clear baseline against which to track progress, and develop a practical strategy for achieving our targets.

While we are not starting from the beginning — our London office has had emissions reduction goals and environmental management measures in place for some time — we recognise the need for a more consistent global approach across our business.

In FY26, we made important progress in building these foundations, including developing global, climate science-aligned net zero targets, improving our environmental data and reporting, and creating a strategy focused on the areas where we can have the greatest impact. We have also strengthened our delivery and governance teams to support implementation and drive progress across the firm.

+ What this chapter covers

1. SETTING GLOBAL NET ZERO TARGETS

2. STRATEGY

3. METHODOLOGY AND DATA

4. REPORTING

5. COLLABORATION

+ Planet

SETTING GLOBAL NET ZERO TARGETS

In FY26, we developed global net zero targets covering our operations and wider value chain, guided by our Responsible Business Committee, approved by our Global Leadership Team.

Our new targets are global and ensure a consistent, firmwide approach that reflects the international nature of our business. These targets are aligned with climate science and the ambition of limiting global warming to 1.5°C. The targets in our methodology are aligned with the Science Based Targets initiative (SBTi). While we have not yet committed to SBTi, we plan to revisit formal validation with the SBTi in the future as our data quality improves.

Our targets cover our Scope 1, 2 and 3 emissions. Scope 1 and 2 relate mainly to direct operations and purchased electricity, while Scope 3 includes wider value chain emissions such as business travel, purchased goods and services, and employee commuting. As is common for professional services firms, Scope 3 represents the largest and most complex part of our footprint and will be a key focus for action.



Close-up macro photo of dandelion seed head.

+ Planet

SETTING GLOBAL NET ZERO TARGETS

Our Global Net Zero Targets are as follows:

Emissions Scope	Near-term target (by 2035)	Long-term target (by 2050)
Scope 1 and Scope 2 (Direct operations and purchased electricity)	Reduce absolute Scope 1 and 2 emissions by 63% from the FY2024–2025 baseline year	Reduce absolute Scope 1 and 2 emissions by 90% from the FY2024–2025 baseline year
Scope 3 (Wider value chain emissions, such as business travel, purchased goods and services)	Reduce absolute Scope 3 emissions intensity by 66.4% per headcount from the FY2024–2025 baseline year	Reduce absolute Scope 3 emissions by 90% from the FY2024–2025 baseline year

An **intensity target** is a target that aims to reduce greenhouse gas emissions (tCO2e = tonnes of carbon dioxide equivalent) relative to a specific business metric, such as revenue, employee numbers, or office size. For our near-term Scope 3 target, we have chosen headcount as the intensity metric, as we believe it provides the most representative measure of our planned business growth.

An **absolute reduction target** is a target that aims to reduce greenhouse gas emissions (tCO2e = tonnes of carbon dioxide equivalent) from a defined baseline year. Progress is measured by the actual reduction in emissions achieved over time.

+ *Planet***STRATEGY**

Our Planet strategy translates our Global Net Zero Targets into practical action and provides a roadmap for key teams across the firm. Recognising that meaningful progress requires both strong foundations and targeted interventions, the strategy focuses on improving data quality, governance, reporting and internal capability, while driving action across our most material sources of emissions.

Scope 1 and Scope 2 priorities

Key operational priorities supporting our Scope 1 and Scope 2 targets include building on the progress already made in our London office, where we have achieved ISO 14001 and ISO 50001 certification and transitioned to renewable electricity over recent years. We intend to roll out this approach across our international office network on a phased basis, working closely with office managers to develop localised plans that take account of regional requirements, infrastructure, market availability and operational considerations.

Scope 3 priorities

To support the delivery of our Scope 3 targets, we will focus on strengthening supplier engagement through enhancements to our procurement policy and targeted engagement. We currently assess the performance of our supply chain through a combination of supplier due diligence, including our Supplier Accreditation Questionnaire (SAQ), which incorporates dedicated environmental questions, as well as environmental criteria within procurement processes for new contracts and contract renewals.

This enables us to evaluate and score supplier practices, encourage alignment with recognised standards such as ISO 14001 and ISO 50001 and integrate sustainability considerations into decision-making.

We are aiming to strengthen this approach by improving data quality and expanding our monitoring capabilities (including by targeting supplier engagement to collect actual emissions data over time). We will also focus on reducing emissions associated with business travel, another one of our most significant sources of Scope 3 emissions. Alongside efforts to better understand and reduce travel-related emissions, we will focus on the collection of actual employee commuting data and reducing reliance on estimates and providing a more robust basis for reporting and future action.

+ Planet

STRATEGY

SCOPE 1 & SCOPE 2

2% OF TOTAL EMISSIONS

NET ZERO TARGETS

Short term Scope 1 & 2 – 63% reductions by 2035

Long term Scope 1 & 2 – 90% reductions by 2050



Direct Operations

(On site heating and cooling)

Improve data quality: get actuals v estimates (landlord engagement)

Increase renewable energy sourcing

ISO 14001 and ISO 50001 – global (all offices by end FY28)

Develop localised plans for offices



Indirect Emissions

(Purchased electricity)

SCOPE 3

98% OF TOTAL EMISSIONS

Short term Scope 3 – 66.4% intensity reductions by 2035

Long term Scope 3 – 90% absolute reductions by 2050



Travel

Analysis (incl. gaps)

Recommendation

Set reduction goal



Purchased goods & services

Analysis

New supplier criteria / renewal criteria

Supplier engagement

Improve data quality: use primary supplier data over spend-based estimates

Set reduction goal



Employee commuting

Improve data quality: get actual vs estimated



Select and implement data storage & reporting tool



Upskill, train, engage colleagues



Explore carbon offsetting/removals projects

+ Planet

STRATEGY

Upskilling and training

Building internal capability is a critical component of achieving our targets. Over the coming months, we are implementing a programme of awareness raising, training and team specific workshops to support colleagues across the firm in understanding our environmental sustainability strategy and the role they can play in helping us to achieve our targets.

Our aim is not only to support delivery of our targets, but also to equip our people to engage confidently with clients, suppliers and other stakeholders on environmental sustainability-related topics. By embedding knowledge and accountability throughout the firm, we can accelerate progress and strengthen the firm's overall awareness and level of maturity.

Our approach to carbon offsetting

While we recognise that carbon credits may play a role in addressing residual emissions that cannot be reduced further as part of a net zero pathway, our current priority is reducing emissions at source and delivering meaningful decarbonisation across our business. Any future use of carbon credits will go through a rigorous assessment to ensure they are high-quality, credible and aligned with international best practice standards.



Interior of a glacier.

+ Planet

METHODOLOGY AND DATA

Our methodology to measure our greenhouse gas (GHG emissions) is aligned with the GHG Protocol, the international standard for carbon footprint reporting. This involves collecting activity data from across the firm, including office utilities, such as electricity, gas, water and waste, as well as business travel, courier services and purchased goods and services. We then apply recognised emissions factors to calculate the associated carbon emissions.

The tables below outline our emissions for our baseline year (FY2024-2025) and most recent reporting year (FY2025-2026):

Table 1. Scope 1 & 2

Global Emissions Scope	FY2024-2025 Tonnes of carbon dioxide equivalent (tCO2e)*	FY2024-2025 Tonnes of carbon dioxide equivalent (tCO2e)
Scope 1	98.67	98.75
Scope 2 (location-based)	528.82	526.57
Scope 2 (market-based)	309.41	292.89

The table above outlines our global Scope 1, Scope 2 location-based, Scope 2 market-based emissions for FY2024-2025 and FY2025-2026.

*Data reported for FY2024-2025 may differ from disclosures made in previous years as, in some cases, we have been able to obtain more accurate, complete and granular data, improving the quality of our emissions inventory and reporting.

The GHG Protocol requires companies to report Scope 2 emissions using both location-based and market-based methods, a practice known as dual reporting. [Scope 2 Guidance | GHG Protocol](#). A location-based method reflects the average emissions intensity of grids on which energy consumption occurs.

+ Planet

METHODOLOGY AND DATA

Table 2: Scope 3

Scope 3 category	FY2024–2025 Tonnes of carbon dioxide equivalent (tCO2e)	FY2025–2026 Tonnes of carbon dioxide equivalent (tCO2e)
Category 1: Purchased goods and services	19, 532	20, 262
Category 3: Fuel and energy (not included in Scopes 1 and 2)	144	165
Category 4: Upstream transport	1	*
Category 5: Operational waste	15	15
Category 6: Business travel (including hotel stays)	4,025	4,480
Category 7: Employee commuting	353	401
Category 9: Downstream transport	58	149
Total	24,128	25,472

The table above outlines all applicable Scope 3 category global emissions for FY2024-2025 and FY2025-2026.

*All courier emissions are currently reported within Category 9 (Downstream Transportation and Distribution). We are working to improve data granularity to enable accurate allocation between upstream and downstream activities in future reporting periods.

Our current greenhouse gas inventory covers our global offices; London, Paris, Athens, Dubai, Singapore, Hong Kong, Shanghai, Seoul, and we plan to add our new offices in Saudi Arabia and Madrid to our inventory next year. We have not included our associated firms such as Virtus and Wei Tu into our inventory.

Our inventory comprises a mixture of actual, accrued and estimated data. Improving the quality, completeness and accuracy of our environmental data has been a key focus throughout the year and will remain a priority as our work matures. As with many organisations at this stage of their sustainability journey, our greenhouse gas inventory currently includes a combination of actual, accrued and estimated data.

Over time, we aim to increase the proportion of actual data within our reporting through closer engagement with office landlords, suppliers and other stakeholders, while strengthening our internal data collection processes.

Our emissions data has not yet been third-party verified. However, we work with external environmental consultants to support our data collection, carbon footprint calculations and methodology aligned to the GHG Protocol, providing an additional level of technical rigour and objectivity. As our processes and data maturity improve, we intend to explore formal third-party verification for future reporting.

+ Planet

REPORTING

We report through several mandatory and voluntary environmental disclosures and certifications, which support us to measure our performance, drive continuous improvement and provide transparency to our internal and external stakeholders.

The latest versions are available on [our website](#) and include:

UK Carbon Reduction Plan

We first produced a Carbon Reduction Plan in 2025 and have recently completed our latest disclosure for 2026, in accordance with Procurement Policy Note (PPN) 006. We continue to align the plan with our wider environmental strategy, including our ISO 14001 and ISO 50001 certifications in the London office and our Global Net Zero Targets, helping to ensure a consistent and integrated approach to environmental management and reporting.

ISO 14001 & ISO 50001

We hold ISO 14001 (Environmental Management System) and ISO 50001 (Energy Management System) certifications for our London office, which are focused on operational improvements within our workplace encompassing areas such as energy efficiency measures, improved waste management, and resource consumption.

CDP (formerly known as the Carbon Disclosure Project)

We have reported through CDP for several years as part of our commitment to transparency and continuous improvement. Our most recent Climate Change score was B-, reflecting the progress we have made in strengthening our environmental management and reporting practices. We do not currently receive scores for the Forests or Water Security questionnaires, as these areas are not considered material to our operations as we are a professional services firm.

EcoVadis

We also report through EcoVadis, an ESG assessment platform widely used by clients to evaluate supplier ESG performance. Our latest score is 54/100. Following this latest assessment, we developed a detailed action plan to address gaps, strengthen our strategy and improve our performance in future disclosure cycles.

+ Planet

COLLABORATION

External engagement and collaboration are an important part of strengthening our strategy and expanding our network.

We continue to work with external environmental consultants to support our data, reporting and target strategy work, enabling us to stay abreast of the latest developments in this rapidly evolving field. Their specialist expertise provides technical challenge and independent insight.

We are also collaborating with sector-wide initiatives and frameworks. This includes participation in the [Legal Sustainability Alliance](#), where we contribute to its sustainable procurement, business travel, and engagement working groups. Through this collaborative network, we share challenges and opportunities, learn from peers across the legal sector, exchange best practice and stay informed of emerging developments through industry events.



Close-up macro photograph of a dandelion seed head.

+ Planet

PRO BONO+ENVIRONMENT

Alongside our commitment to environmental sustainability in our operations, we use our legal skills to protect the environment.

Protecting the Environment is one of our pro bono pillars, through which we aim to support climate-affected communities and equip people with tools and knowledge to protect their environment. In FY26, we expanded the environmental pro bono practice, further enhancing existing partnerships, and introducing some new ones with our lawyers spending over 1,000 hours on pro bono to protect the environment.

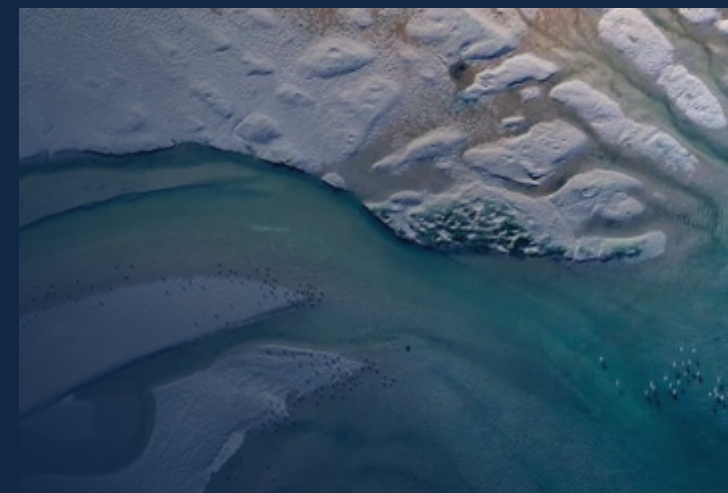
1,000+
HOURS ON PRO BONO TO
PROTECT THE ENVIRONMENT

Below is an overview of these partnerships:



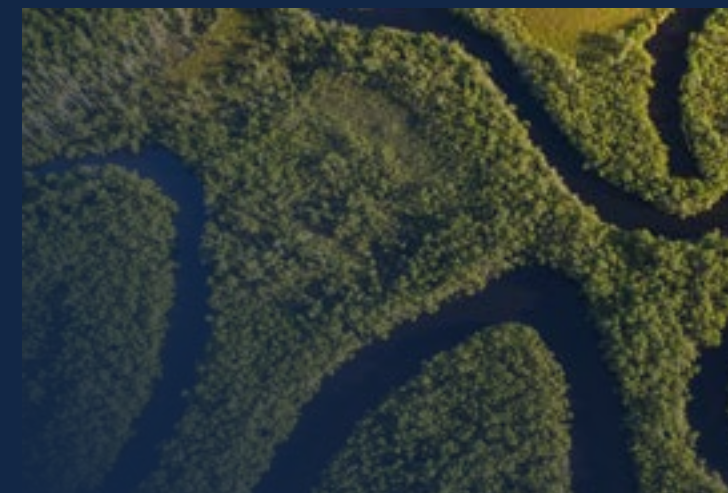
PLASTIC ODYSSEY

Targeting plastic pollution during a three-year maritime expedition. [Read more](#)



BLUE CARBON POLICY RESEARCH

Research into Kenya's policies around the protection of the blue carbon ecosystem in partnership with East African Wild Life Society.



VOLUNTARY CARBON MARKETS

Research into the legal effects of voluntary carbon markets in Northern Kenya in partnership with Haki na Sheria.



ECO VENTURES COUNSEL

Partnering with climate tech startups to provide pro bono legal advice.



LEGAL RESPONSE INTERNATIONAL

Legal support to developing nations during UN climate framework meetings.



Responsible Business

SOCIETY

+ Society

INTRODUCTION

We recognise that we have an opportunity and an obligation to create a positive impact in our communities beyond our commercial activities. As an international law firm, we can contribute not only our financial support but also by sharing our expertise, skills, networks and dedicating our time to supporting our communities.

Our approach to social impact is guided by a belief that lasting change requires holistic action.

Through our pro bono practice, we use our legal expertise to support individuals, charities and community organisations who may otherwise be unable to access legal advice.

Through our partnerships and programmes, we support communities facing immediate challenges, while also working to expand access to opportunity and improve social mobility in the longer term.

We also seek to embed social responsibility into the way we operate as a business, creating opportunities for our people to contribute to causes they care about and engraining positive social impact in our firm's day-to-day operations.

This chapter showcases how we bring our strategy into action through our pro bono work, investment in young people and pathways into the legal sector, the positive practices that help embed social responsibility within the firm, and our partnerships with community organisations.

+ What this chapter covers

Our society strategy is made up of four pillars:

1. PRO BONO

2. SUPPORTING YOUNG PEOPLE

3. POSITIVE PRACTICES

4. CAUSES OUR PEOPLE CARE ABOUT

+ Highlights

3,816

books donated to primary school children as part of The Children's Book Project

29

year 10 students mentored by our people as part of our school partnership with Royal Docks Academy

£80k

donated to our Charity of the Year, Trussell. This is the equivalent of 5,714 people receiving a weekly food parcel

277%

increase in pro bono hours across the last two years

1/3

of our partners globally involved in pro bono

3,000+

pro bono hours to support refugees and forcibly displaced people in FY25

+ Society

AMPLIFYING OUR IMPACT THROUGH INTEGRATED PROGRAMMES



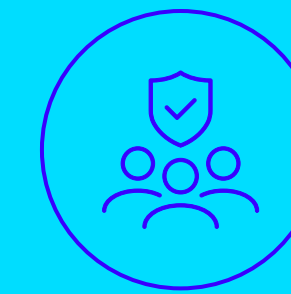
Pro bono



Community
partnerships



Pathways to
the profession



Positive
practices

We believe that *complex social issues require innovative solutions*. Using our pillars as a foundation, we seek to build *integrated programmes of work* that offer support across several areas of need and *amplify our impact* for the people who need it most.

+ Integrated programmes

SUPPORTING REFUGEES AND FORCIBLY DISPLACED PEOPLE

As a firm with a strong history in the maritime sector, we have a geographical presence in many of the world’s major shipping hubs and port cities. This also means we work in countries that are central to many of the world’s key migration corridors and operate in jurisdictions that accept thousands of people each year who are forcibly displaced from their homes.



Pro bono support to target specific areas of need within the asylum system in multiple jurisdictions



Community partnerships and financial support to organisations that support people on the ground



Supporting refugees seeking to re-enter the legal profession

United Kingdom

In London, our lawyers support people seeking asylum who have fled persecution in their country of origin and come to the UK in search of safety.

Since 2023, we have partnered with Rainbow Migration to represent people seeking asylum who are fleeing persecution on the grounds of their sexual orientation or gender identity. As of 2026, we are also partnering with Refugee Legal Support to represent people seeking asylum who are forcibly displaced in the context of climate change.

We also continue to support Afghan families that were separated in 2021 during Operation Pitting to reunite in the United Kingdom. We partner with Refugee Legal Support to find legal routes of safe passage for those who were left behind and remain in hiding from the Taliban, and provide financial support to people who are still in hiding to access online support networks.

Alongside this work, we have provided a full-time secondee to Refugee Legal Support for the past two years to assist on their casework and outreach with the Afghan community in the UK.

We also provide careers support to refugees and forcibly displaced people who are seeking to access the legal profession by hosting skills sessions in our London office.

Greece

Since 2025, we have worked with the Greece Pro Bono Collaborative to support European Lawyers in Lesvos (ELIL) provide legal assistance to people seeking asylum in Greece. Our lawyers across our global offices undertake two-week secondments to the ELIL offices in Athens or Lesvos to help people seeking asylum prepare their case for asylum, attend outreach sessions in refugee camps and community centres and draft legal representations to the Greek Asylum Office.

“We recognise the unique opportunity we have to support the many thousands of people worldwide who are forced to flee their homes each year, and so we dedicate a significant proportion of our pro bono and social impact resource to supporting refugees and forcibly displaced people through donating our time, legal expertise and money.”



OLIVIA LOXLEY

Pro Bono Counsel

+ Integrated programmes

ENABLING REHABILITATION AND REINTEGRATION FOR EX-OFFENDERS

Over the last few years, we have built a holistic programme of work that supports offenders and ex-offenders in their rehabilitation and reintegration with the community after serving custodial sentences.



Pro bono partnerships with organisations that support people in, leaving, and after prison



Community partnerships to fund programmes that will build strong family ties and aid rehabilitation

Not Beyond Redemption

Our London office partners with Not Beyond Redemption to run family law clinics at HMP Downview, a women's prison in Surrey, and take on cases for women who wish to establish or maintain contact with their children during their sentence.

Since launching this partnership in 2024, our London office has dedicated over 1,500 pro bono hours to supporting women in or leaving prison who are seeking to re-establish maintain their bonds with their children.

Tap Social Movement

As part of our support for rehabilitating people after they have left prison, we also provide pro bono support to the Tap Social Movement, a fully independent social enterprise, craft brewery, bakery and hospitality organisation that provides training and employment opportunities for prisoners and prison leavers.

Children's Book Project

Alongside our pro bono work, we also support The Children's Book Project and their Share a Story programme for incarcerated mothers and their children. The programme allows mothers to choose books with or for their child to read together, providing them the means to connect with their children through the powerful medium of stories.

Having sponsored the Share a Story programme at HMP Bronzefield in our first year, we are now sponsoring the launch of the programme at HMP Downview to allow the women we support with Not Beyond Redemption to build stronger connections with their children once contact is re-established.

"My mother worked for a charity that helps the families of prisoners, so I knew from her the benefits it can have to maintain family links while people are in prison. Maintaining family support and that network is a huge help in breaking the cycle and not re-offending."



ARCHIE CAMPBELL

Partner

+ Integrated programmes

IMPROVING ACCESS TO JUSTICE

As part of our focus on improving access to justice through pro bono work, we invest in holistic partnerships with advice providers and legal charities that support vulnerable individuals in the justice system.



Pro bono support to organisations that help vulnerable individuals seeking to access justice



Financial support to frontline advice providers to help tackle barriers in the justice system

RCJ Advice

We are a longstanding supporter of RCJ Advice, a unique Citizens Advice and Law Centre that provides people with access to justice at a time when they need it most. Our lawyers volunteer through the Civil Advice Clinic to advise litigants in person on court procedure and making applications, and we provide financial support to RCJ Advice as a corporate supporter.

RCJ Advice operates out of the Royal Courts of Justice and Central Family Court alongside charity Support Through Court, who provide practical and emotional support to litigants in person.

Support Through Court

Alongside the legal advice provided by RCJ Advice, Support Through Court assists litigants in person to complete forms and manage the practical and emotional aspects of bringing a case through the court system. We proudly support the work of Support Through Court as members of their Corporate Guardians programme.

The 'Closer Ties' Project

In 2025, following consultations with both RCJ Advice and Support Through Court, we funded a "Closer Ties" pilot programme to examine ways of working for both organisations for litigants in person at the Royal Courts of Justice and identify opportunities that would maximise their efficiency and impact. Through "Closer Ties", RCJ Advice and Support Through Court have:

- + Rolled out a joint referral system for litigants at the Royal Courts of Justice so that clients of one service can be directly referred to the other for priority support;
- + Developed a coordinated communication strategy for service users and members of the public to better understand what services are provided by each organisation; and
- + Created a training programme to support court staff, service users and other stakeholders on how both services can support litigants in person and streamline the court process for all parties.

This pilot has also provided a framework for potentially expanding the collaboration between RCJ Advice and Support Through Court in other courts throughout England & Wales, expanding access to justice in "advice deserts" and improving the support available to litigants in person as they navigate the justice system.



Pro bono

OUR STRATEGY

At Stephenson Harwood, pro bono work is free legal advice, research, and representation based on social, community, humanitarian or environmental reasons for clients without access to funding for the help they need.

Our pro bono pillars

While the work we undertake as part of our pro bono practice varies greatly, it is underpinned by a fundamental and unwavering commitment to the rule of law.

Our pro bono practice broadly aims to:

- + defend human rights
- + provide access to justice
- + protect the environment

Pro bono in our strategy

Our pro bono practice is embedded in our strategy and core values as a firm, meaning that we prioritise pro bono work that:

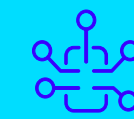
- + aligns with our areas of focus;
- + reflects our commitment to diversity and inclusion in society; and
- + allows our lawyers to support the causes and issues that matter most to them.

“Our spark sits at the intersection of what we do for good and what we do best.”

—OLIVIA LOXLEY

Pro Bono Counsel

PRO BONO IN OUR KEY SECTORS



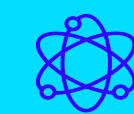
HUMAN RIGHTS + TECHNOLOGY

We utilise our expertise in the technology sector to help drive innovation for good. We have focused on the use of technology to protect and promote human rights for vulnerable and marginalised groups by partnering with eyeWitness to Atrocities to review and catalogue verifiable footage captured using the eyeWitness App by civil society groups, journalists and civilians for submission as evidence in legal proceedings.



HUMAN RIGHTS + LIFE SCIENCES AND HEALTHCARE

Our specialists in the life sciences and healthcare sector advocate for the protection of human rights in healthcare settings and the ethical use of pharmaceutical products, including working with Reprieve. Reprieve supports pharmaceutical companies in protecting their lifesaving products from being used in lethal injections in the United States.



ACCESS TO JUSTICE + ENERGY TRANSITION AND INFRASTRUCTURE

Our lawyers in the energy transition and decarbonisation sector work with Legal Response International to advise nations that may not otherwise have access to specialist legal support during the UN Framework Convention on Climate Change meetings, including Conference of the Parties (COP) and interim meetings. This helps to ensure equal access to legal advice and representation in international climate negotiations.

+ Pro bono

PROTECTING KENYA'S BLUE ECONOMY

We are using our legal expertise to help safeguard critical ecosystems in Kenya that are vital to both local communities and the global climate.

We are supporting the East African Wild Life Society (EAWLS) on a project to strengthen the legal and policy framework for conserving blue carbon ecosystems in Kenya such as mangroves and seagrass meadows.

EAWLS is a pioneering conservation NGO with a 60-year legacy across Kenya, Tanzania and Uganda, known for championing the protection of endangered species and habitats, influencing environmental policy and working closely with local communities.

Our lawyers are working with EAWLS to review Kenya's existing policy and regulatory frameworks relevant to blue carbon ecosystems. Our work involves:

- + Analysing the current climate, environmental and coastal management frameworks to understand how they address blue carbon ecosystems;
- + Identifying strengths, gaps and opportunities in existing legal protections and institutional arrangements;
- + Comparing Kenya's approach with emerging best practice in other jurisdictions and developing recommendations for how Kenya's framework could be strengthened to better integrate blue carbon ecosystem conservation into national law and policy.

The project will culminate in a detailed report and a concise policy brief aimed at policymakers and regulators.

"By helping to strengthen the legal framework for protecting mangroves and seagrass, we are supporting EAWLS's efforts to ensure that these ecosystems continue to store carbon, protect coastlines and sustain local livelihoods. This project is a powerful example of how pro bono work can contribute directly to climate action and environmental justice, and I am proud of the way our team is using its expertise to make a tangible difference."



KIRSTI MASSIE

Partner



Pro bono

SUPPORTING LGBTQ+ PEOPLE SEEKING ASYLUM WITH RAINBOW MIGRATION

For the past three years, we have partnered with Rainbow Migration to support LGBTQ+ people navigating the UK's asylum and immigration system, and ensure people are safe from persecution and safe to be themselves.

Through this work, we have helped several people seeking asylum secure refugee status in the UK after fleeing persecution in their country of origin on the grounds of their sexual orientation or gender identity.

One of our clients, Anel, was forced to flee Kazakhstan to escape persecution after her relationship with another woman was discovered on social media. With pro bono support from a team in our London office, facilitated by Rainbow Migration, she was able to secure refugee status in the UK.

“Our work with Rainbow Migration profoundly impacts people's lives. Anel now has the opportunity to be herself, love who she wants and live a life free from fear of persecution. Seeing her bravery and tenacity result in a positive outcome is extremely rewarding. I am proud to work with a team that makes a real difference to the lives of others, and a firm that has these ideals hardwired into its culture.”



DARREN FODEY

Partner

+ Pro bono

STRENGTHENING ACCESS TO JUSTICE IN SINGAPORE

Our partnership with Pro Bono SG brings together our legal expertise and Pro Bono SG's strong community reach to support vulnerable individuals, charities and grassroots organisations across Singapore.

Mitigation Plea Project

The Mitigation Plea Project, a pilot initiative with Pro Bono SG and four other law firms, aims to improve outcomes for underprivileged persons who plead guilty to criminal charges and cannot access state-provided legal aid. Working with a Pro Bono SG supervising lawyer, our volunteers conduct research and help prepare written mitigation pleas and supporting documents for individual cases. This work plays an important role in ensuring just sentencing outcomes and improving the long-term prospects of those involved.

Legal Health Check Clinics

We also support Pro Bono SG's Legal Health Check initiative, which helps small charities improve governance, compliance and risk management.

Over the last two years, our volunteers have supported charities focussed on empowering female entrepreneurs, supporting gender equality and improving education to strengthen their operations and continue delivering impact in their communities.

Community Legal Clinics

Our lawyers in Singapore also volunteer for Pro Bono SG's Community Legal Clinics, providing individuals who cannot afford legal representation with basic legal advice and clear guidance on their rights, remedies and next steps.

MacRitchie Challenge, Walk-To-Talk

Alongside our pro bono work, partner Tom Platts supports Pro Bono SG with fundraising events via Walk-To-Talk, a charity initiative Tom founded to raise awareness of dementia care in Singapore.

What began as an early morning walk at MacRitchie Reservoir on New Year's Day in 2023 has grown into a global initiative that brings together professions to walk, talk and fundraise for dementia research and care projects. Since starting the MacRitchie Challenge, over 3,500 Walk-to-Talk participants from 65 countries have raised \$500,000+ for dementia charities worldwide and valued partners such as Pro Bono SG.



Partner Tom Platts leading a Walk-to-Talk group.

+ Pro bono

TACKLING MARINE POLLUTION WITH PLASTIC ODYSSEY

Plastic pollution is one of the most pressing environmental challenges facing our oceans. Every minute, an estimated 19 tonnes of plastic waste enters the sea, causing severe harm to marine life, ecosystems and coastal communities.

As part of our environmental pro bono practice, Stephenson Harwood supports Plastic Odyssey, a non-profit organisation undertaking a three-year global expedition to combat plastic pollution.

Aboard its 128-foot vessel, the Plastic Odyssey team is travelling across three continents and visiting 30 cities to promote research, education and innovative recycling solutions that can be replicated worldwide.

Our lawyers provide pro bono legal advice to Plastic Odyssey on the complex laws and governance issues linked to this unprecedented journey. Led by M&A partner Guillaume Briant and a team across Paris, Singapore, London and Hong Kong, we support Plastic Odyssey in navigating international regulatory frameworks, contractual arrangements and risk management.

“It’s an immense privilege to support Plastic Odyssey on its journey around the world. The intersection of technology and environmental protection is something we’re passionate about at Stephenson Harwood.”



GUILLAUME BRIANT

Partner



A baby sea turtle climbing over plastic waste to reach the ocean © Marine Reveilhac.



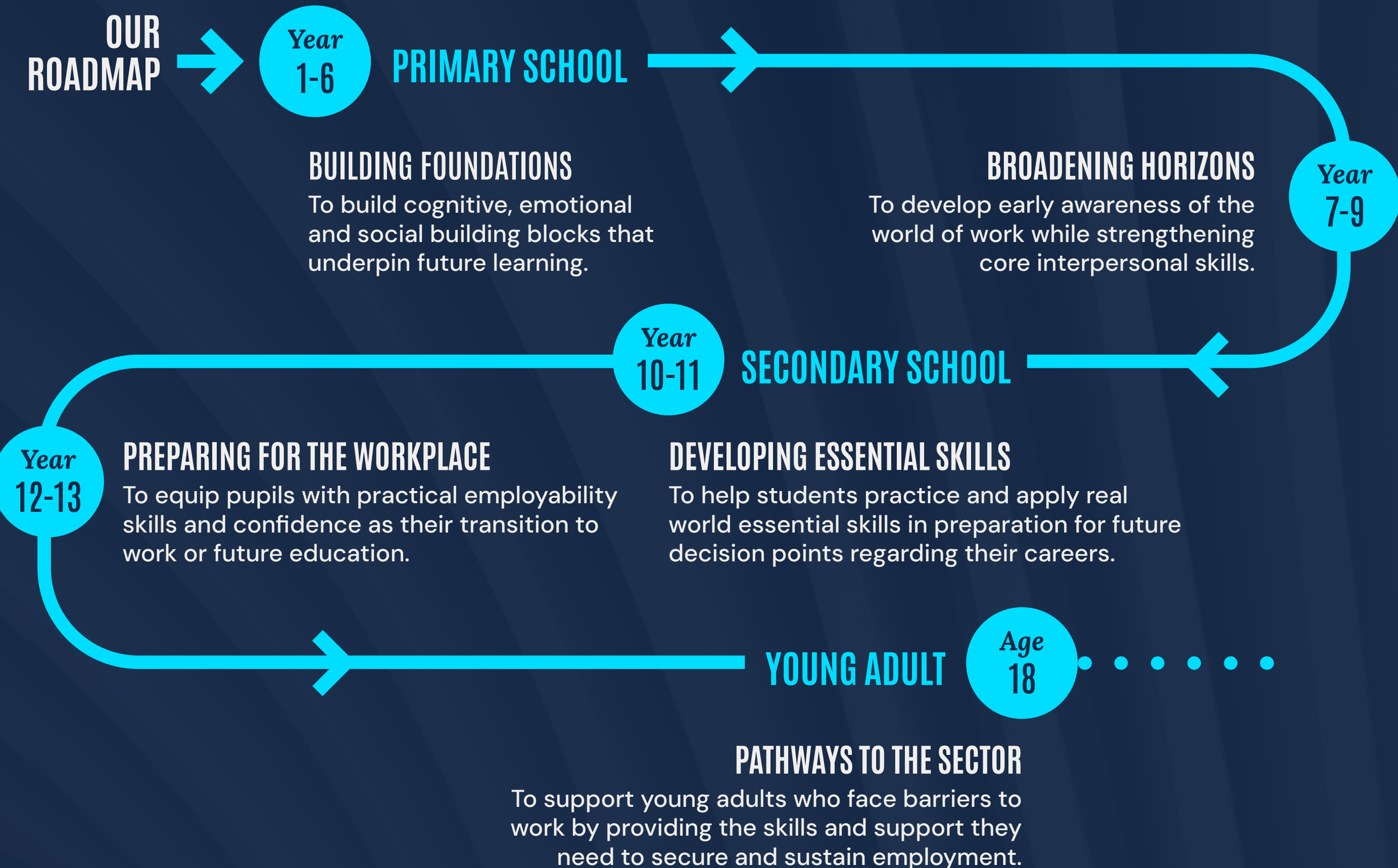
Supporting young people

FROM EDUCATION TO EMPLOYMENT

We want to play our part in supporting young people to develop the skills and confidence needed to thrive.

We recognise that barriers to opportunities emerge long before someone applies for work experience, university or a job at our firm, so our social impact partnerships span primary education to employment. Through a combination of literacy support, mentoring, insight days, and access to professional opportunities, we support young people to develop the skills that underpin future success.

The roadmap to the right shows how we aim to support young people at key stages of their educational journey, from primary education to entry into the legal profession.



We believe pathways to opportunity start long before a young person begins thinking about their career. Literacy, communication and confidence are key foundations for future learning, employment and social mobility. We therefore focus our earliest interventions on promoting reading and tackling book poverty among children in the UK.

CHAPTER ONE

To support children at this critical stage of development, we have partnered with literacy charity Chapter One.

Over the 2025/26 academic year, ten colleagues volunteered to provide weekly one-to-one online reading support to Year 2 pupils at Newport Primary School in Middlesbrough. The school serves a community facing significant levels of socio-economic disadvantage, with 68% of pupils eligible for free school meals against a national average of 23%. Chapter One's virtual model means we are not limited by geography – our volunteers can support children who need additional personalised reading time in schools anywhere in the UK.

Reading takes both skill and will. Working alongside schools, Chapter One volunteers help children become better readers, grow in confidence, and discover the enjoyment that keeps them reading. Over the academic year, Stephenson Harwood's team of volunteers delivered more than 104 hours of reading support.

While this year's partnership directly supported ten pupils, we wanted to extend the benefits of the partnership to the wider Year 2 class. We donated a book for every child in the class, helping to promote a culture of reading and ensuring more children could enjoy the benefits of book ownership.

Our volunteers' commitment was recognised at the Chapter One Partner, Volunteer and School Recognition Awards when we received the Reading Commitment Award 2025/26. This award celebrates the new partner organisation with the highest average number of stories read per volunteer, with our volunteers averaging 37 stories each.

104
HOURS OF READING DURING
THE 25/26 ACADEMIC YEAR

414
STORIES READ THIS
ACADEMIC YEAR



Students at Newport Primary School holding books donated at Christmas.

+ Building Foundations

THE CHILDREN'S BOOK PROJECT

Reading for pleasure is one of the strongest indicators of a child's life outcomes. Research by the OECD has consistently shown that children who choose their own books perform better academically than those who do not, with the benefits extending beyond literacy to confidence, wellbeing and future economic success. Yet nearly one million children in the UK do not own a book of their own.

The Children's Book Project was established to bridge the gap between those who buy and love books and children who may not otherwise have access to them. By redistributing new and gently used books, the charity helps ensure that more children can experience the benefits of choosing and owning books, addressing both sustainability and book poverty.

We partner with The Children's Book Project to support two schools: Lily Lane Primary School in Moston, Manchester and Thomas Buxton Primary School in Tower Hamlets, London. During the 2025/26 school year, 1,047 children attended a free pop-up bookshop each term, at which they were encouraged to browse and choose six books each to take home and keep, resulting in 6,615 books being distributed through the programme. By giving children ownership of books that they can choose themselves, the programme helps to encourage reading for pleasure, sharing stories with family members and develops a positive relationship with reading beyond the classroom.

Alongside our work in schools, we support The Children's Book Project's Share a Story programme at women's prison HMP Bronzefield in Surrey. The programme enables parents in prison to select and send books to their children, helping families stay connected through the shared experience of reading. By using books as a bridge between children and parents, the programme supports family relationships while encouraging reading for pleasure.

[Read more](#) about this partnership as part of our integrated programme on Rehabilitation & Reintegration.



Students at Lily Lane primary school picking a new book as part of a pop-up bookshop.

6,615
BOOKS DONATED

1,047
CHILDREN ARE NEW BOOK OWNERS

As young people approach important educational and career decisions, access to role models, guidance and practical skill development becomes increasingly important.

YEAR 10 MENTORING PROGRAMME

Our mentoring programme with Royal Docks Academy, a non-selective state secondary school in Newham, London focuses on supporting students at a stage when future aspirations and educational choices are beginning to take shape.

More than half of the students at the school are eligible for free school meals, reflecting the socio-economic challenges faced by many young people in the local community.

Year 10 students at Royal Docks Academy come to our office for one-to-one mentoring to develop the skills and confidence to make informed decisions about their futures. Mentors, who are trained and supported by East London Business Alliance (ELBA), explore future education and career pathways with their mentees.

Since starting the programme in 2025, 30 students have participated, supported by 29 volunteer mentors culminating in more than 180 hours of mentoring. Through mentoring, students explored A-level choices, career planning, workplace expectations and personal development, gaining insight into professional working life and the diverse pathways available to them.

Students reported enhanced leadership, communication and listening skills, highlighting these as the areas where they experienced the greatest development.

85%
OF PARTICIPANTS REPORTED
IMPROVED SCHOOL ATTENDENCE

92%
REPORTED IMPROVED
ACADEMIC GRADES

92%
SAID THE MENTORING PROGRAMME
HAD IMPROVED THEIR ATTITUDE OR
BEHAVIOUR AT SCHOOL

100%
WOULD RECOMMEND THE
PROGRAMME TO YOUNGER
STUDENTS

PREPARING FOR THE WORKPLACE

When students reach the stage of making key decisions about their future education and careers, access to professional networks and workplace experiences can play an important role in shaping their confidence and aspirations.

YEAR 12 WORK EXPERIENCE

Through our Bright Sparks work experience programme, we provide Year 12 students from lower socio-economic backgrounds with insight into life at a commercial law firm while helping them develop the skills needed to navigate interviews and workplace environments. Students spend a week in our London office taking part in interactive workshops, work shadowing, skills development and networking opportunities.



Our 2025 Bright Sparks students.

The programme aims to:

- + Develop an understanding of the core responsibilities and essential skills required to excel as a lawyer
- + Increase awareness of the different routes into the legal profession
- + Create opportunities to engage with lawyers at all levels and become part of a community of peers exploring careers in law
- + Gain soft skills as they look to their post 16 education and future careers

The programme's impact extends beyond the work experience week with some participants going on to apply for our Solicitor Apprenticeship and Scholarship programmes.

Ibrahim attended the programme in 2025 and is now joining Stephenson Harwood as an incoming Solicitor Apprentice, highlighting the programme's long-term impact.

"Bright Sparks gave me a genuine insight into life at a leading international law firm. Experiencing Stephenson Harwood's culture first-hand played a significant role in my decision to apply for the Solicitor Apprenticeship programme. Today, as an incoming Solicitor Apprentice, I can clearly see the lasting impact of Bright Sparks."

—IBRAHIM

Incoming Solicitor Apprentice and
2025 Bright Sparks Student

Age
18+

YOUNG ADULTS

PATHWAYS TO THE LEGAL SECTOR

The UK legal sector is strongest when it draws from talented individuals from a wide range of backgrounds and experiences. However, financial, social and cultural barriers can limit access to education and professional careers. Our Scholarship Award helps remove these barriers, supporting talented young people to transition into higher education and the workplace.

STEPHENSON HARWOOD SCHOLARSHIP AWARD

In 2021 we launched the Stephenson Harwood Scholarship Award, which supports talented students from lower socio-economic backgrounds to access higher education and pursue a career in law. We recognise that barriers to entering the legal sector extend beyond the cost of university and that access to professional networks, role models, practical guidance and career insights can be just as important in shaping a young person's future opportunities.

Since launching the programme, we have supported:

23

SCHOLARS TO ATTEND
UNIVERSITY

22

TO ATTEND RUSSELL
GROUP UNIVERSITIES

78%

TO PROGRESS INTO
LEGAL SECTOR ROLES

+ Pathways to the legal sector

STEPHENSON HARWOOD SCHOLARSHIP AWARD

The Award is open to students looking to study law at university in the UK. Each year, up to five students are awarded £15,000 per year throughout their three-year undergraduate law degree to help cover tuition fees and living expenses. In addition, recipients benefit from:

- + A dedicated mentor from the firm
- + Invitations to networking opportunities and a firm open day
- + Work experience shadowing days
- + Bespoke scholar skills days
- + A guaranteed place at a Vacation Scheme which includes an opportunity to be assessed for a training contract.

“The scholarship has given me invaluable insight into the profession, but the mentoring relationship has had the greatest impact. Having someone who has taken the time to share their experiences, offer honest advice and support my development has given me the confidence to take the next step in my journey, as I begin my legal career at Stephenson Harwood following a successful Vacation Scheme.”

—MAAZ

Stephenson Harwood Scholar
and Future Trainee

We recognise that preparing for a career in law is about more than accessing higher education. The Scholarship Award has therefore been designed as a structured three-year programme, building upon key skills needed in each year:

Year
1

Understanding the profession

The first year focuses on helping scholars understand the professional environment and explore what a career in law can look like.

Year
2

Building commercial awareness and career readiness

The second year focuses on helping scholars to deepen their understanding of the business world and the role lawyers play within it.

Year
3

Transitioning to the profession

The final year focuses on supporting scholars as they prepare for life after university and their transition into the workplace.

For many scholars, the award has not only helped make university an option but has also enabled them to make the most of their university experience by reducing financial pressures and providing access to mentoring, professional networks and career development opportunities.

By providing sustained support throughout university and beyond, the Scholarship Award helps talent students realise their potential while contributing to a better represented future legal sector.



Positive practices

EMBEDDING RESPONSIBILITY INTO OUR OPERATIONS

Alongside our social impact programmes, we have an opportunity to embed responsible business in our operations. We seek to do so through the employment standards that we uphold, the suppliers and service providers we choose, and the partnerships we build to support a more circular economy.

SOCIAL ENTERPRISE IN OUR SUPPLY CHAIN: CORPS SECURITY

Corps Security are specialists in security services and a veteran-owned social enterprise. Through their work, they support serving and former members of the armed forces, emergency services personnel and their families as they transition to civilian life. Their dedicated team helps ensure our London office remains a safe and supportive environment for colleagues, clients and visitors every day.

This commitment is reflected in our signing of the Armed Forces Covenant, formalising our support to members of the Armed Forces community, including veterans, reservists and military families. The Covenant reflects our belief in creating an inclusive workplace where everyone is treated fairly and are not disadvantaged in recruitment, employment or wider society.



LONDON LIVING WAGE EMPLOYER

As a London Living Wage employer, we ensure that everyone who works for us, including our UK suppliers, is paid a fair wage that supports financial security and reflects the real living wage.



+ Positive practices

SIMPAL

As access to services, employment opportunities and social connections increasingly relies on technology, digital exclusion can create significant barriers. Individuals experiencing homelessness, displacement, long-term illness or financial hardship may lack access to the devices and connectivity needed to access essential services, apply for jobs and stay connected to support networks.

To help address this challenge, we partnered with SimPal, a UK charity that provides phones, laptops and connectivity to people experiencing digital poverty.

Working with SimPal, we repurpose some of the firm's decommissioned devices by donating them for redistribution through the charity's network. By extending the life of existing technology, we can create both social and environmental value through a single initiative.

Building on this partnership, we also launched a colleague Device Drop + Donate campaign, enabling colleagues from across the firm to donate personal devices.

SimPal is a small organisation with a big vision so we are also helping them build their capacity and reach through a financial donation and skills-based volunteering.

"Working with SimPal has made me reflect on how much we take everyday technology for granted. Without access to technology and connectivity, daily life becomes much harder. While we often focus on big tech innovations, it's these routine interactions that quietly underpin how we live, work and move through the world. Partnering with SimPal brings that into sharp focus, giving us a tangible way to support those facing digital poverty and at the same time encouraging us to make more meaningful and responsible use of technology across the firm."

—CHRIS NOAKES

IT Service Delivery Manager



Members of our IT team delivering laptops to Chris Lewis, CEO of SimPal.

"As more services move online, access to technology is no longer a 'nice to have' – it's essential. Yet across the UK, many people are still being left behind by digital poverty. Access to a device and connectivity can transform how someone lives day to day – that's why partnerships like the one with Stephenson Harwood are so important. By repurposing devices that are no longer needed within the firm, we're able to turn existing technology into something that has a real, practical impact for people who need it most."

—CHRIS LEWIS

CEO of SimPal



Causes our people care about

CHARITY OF THE YEAR

We understand that charitable giving is personal and that colleagues may wish to support causes that reflect their own experiences, interests and communities. Alongside opportunities to volunteer through our firm established programmes, we provide a range of ways for colleagues to contribute their time, skills and resources to causes that they care about.

Our London Charity of the Year is driven by people choice: colleagues nominate charities that are personal to them, and vote to select the cause that we support over a two-year period.

OUR PARTNERSHIP WITH TRUSSELL

From May 2024 to May 2026, the firm partnered with Trussell, a charity working to end the need for food banks in the UK. Through its nationwide network of food banks, Trussell provides emergency food and practical support to people experiencing financial hardship, while also campaigning for long-term solutions to poverty.



Stephenson Harwood staff choir singing at our festive social for Trussell.

INTRODUCING ALZHEIMER'S SOCIETY

Selected by our people, Alzheimer's Society became our new Charity of the Year in May 2026. As the UK's leading dementia charity, it provides support to people living with dementia and their families, funds research and campaigns for change.

£80k
DONATED

80
PRO BONO
HOURS

5,714
WEEKLY FOOD
PARCELS



Responsible Business

GOVERNANCE

+ Responsible Business

GOVERNANCE

Good governance underpins our commitment to operating as a responsible business and supporting the firm's approach to purposeful growth.

At Stephenson Harwood, responsible business is delivered through a structured governance framework that brings together senior leadership and specialist committees.

Our governance approach is designed to:

- + support the delivery of our firm strategy and long-term purposeful growth
- + embed responsible business into decision-making
- + provide oversight of our responsible business priorities
- + ensure accountability through leadership engagement

The Global Leadership Team provides overall leadership and accountability for the firm's strategy, including the responsible business strategy.

Supporting this are three key committees, each with responsibility for a specific area of focus while working collaboratively to drive progress across the firm.



RESPONSIBLE BUSINESS COMMITTEE

Provides strategic oversight of our global responsible business strategy and environmental sustainability priorities, helping to set environmental goals, monitor progress and embed responsible practises across the firm.



PEOPLE + CULTURE COMMITTEE

Provides oversight of our people strategy, including wellbeing, equality, diversity and inclusion helping to ensure our people priorities support the firm's strategic objectives.



SOCIAL IMPACT COMMITTEE

Provides strategic direction for our social impact programmes and charitable giving, overseeing activity across pro bono and social impact.

+ Responsible Business

GOVERNANCE STRUCTURE



+ Responsible Business

CONTACTS

We have a dedicated page on our website covering voluntary and regulatory Responsible Business reports, which you can access [here](#).



PAUL THWAITE

Senior Partner,
Chair of Responsible
Business Committee



KEVIN NORBURY

Chief Operating Officer,
Vice Chair of Responsible
Business Committee



KATHERINE WENBOURNE

Chief People and Talent
Officer, Co-Chair of
the People and Culture
Committee



LIZ COPE

Head of Responsible
Business

STEPHENSON HARWOOD

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