



## Responsible Business Report FY21

The expert hand, with  
the human touch

Ian, our blind photographer

# Our Purpose

Together we'll navigate life's ups and downs

It's our purpose and describes the very core of what we do.

Being a purpose-led organisation means we're committed to creating value beyond profit for everyone we work with and support.

Our aim is to be one step ahead. We'll be known for our curiosity and commitment to our colleagues, clients and communities.

Our pioneering and agile mind-set will turn our curiosity into value to create extraordinary experiences.

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# Our DNA & heritage



## Garry Dowdle

Group Chief Information Officer and Chair of Irwin Mitchell's Responsible Business Management Committee

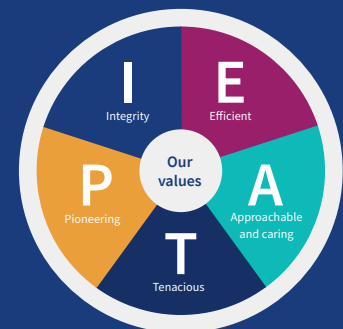
Making a noticeable difference to our colleagues, clients and communities is part of our heritage and DNA. It's reflected in our values, it's what we stand for, and who we are. We're proud that people and businesses often cite our strong sense of purpose as a differentiating factor when deciding to work with us.

In recent years, we've built on our strong foundations of corporate social responsibility and over 100 years' experience to embed responsible business, or environmental, social and governance (ESG) factors, into the heart of our Group strategy.

In 2019, we refreshed our growth strategy and set out our Future State, a future where we are increasingly diverse, agile, flexible and digital, and a leading Responsible Business.

## Our Values/ DNA

- We** value you for who you are and what you bring.
- We** support each other.
- We** push boundaries.
- We** achieve incredible things.
- We** make a real difference to our clients and communities.



## Our Future State

- ① We will meet more **needs** for more **clients**
- ② We will develop **valuable** and **enduring relationships** with our colleagues, clients and communities
- ③ We will be **flexible, diverse** and **agile**
- ④ We will personalise our **human touch** by becoming a **digital business**
- ⑤ We will be recognised in our communities as a **leading responsible business**

In 2020, we engaged over 400 colleagues and gathered insights from our clients and communities to collaboratively design our latest Responsible Business Strategy, with inclusion and sustainability emerging as our key themes.

By recognising the value being a responsible business brings to our continued growth, innovation, and high performance, we know we can help to unlock the true potential of those we work with.

The events of the past 18 months have tested us in multiple and unprecedented ways. By learning from the challenges presented by COVID-19, we've improved our colleague proposition, offering a personalised approach to flexibility and more support for wellbeing than ever before.

Our strong performance throughout such adversity and uncertainty confirms our belief that embracing our responsibilities towards our clients, colleagues and wider communities is vital to our shared and future success.

That's why responsible business, with an emphasis on inclusion and sustainability, is at the heart of our ambitious plans to grow and evolve over the coming years.

### **Evolving our approach**

The expectations of all our stakeholders are evolving with an increased demand for visible action and sustainable progress and we've evolved our approach to match. Developing a clear strategy, improving our governance and building our capacity to report on progress have been key areas of focus for us.

Our aim is to lead through our results and the positive impact we make by demonstrating thought leadership, sharing our best practice, and being open about our response to challenges

We understand the importance of listening to our stakeholders. In the wake of George Floyd's tragic murder, we listened as over 300 of our colleagues shared their experiences and attitudes to race in the workplace.

This has been invaluable as we strive to become a fully inclusive and anti-racist organisation, taking a more proactive approach to addressing racism in all its forms. We'll continue to listen, building formal feedback mechanisms into our governance and gathering quarterly pulse surveys to help ensure our approach becomes truly inclusive, sustainable, proactive and progressive.



We're continually improving how it feels to work at Irwin Mitchell. By listening to colleagues and updating our approaches, we're providing the tools needed to perform their roles and trusting them to make the choices that'll deliver the best results for their families, our clients and the communities in which we all live and work.

**Susana Berlevy**  
Group Chief People Officer

# SUSTAINABLE DEVELOPMENT GOALS

## Part of a global community

We're using the Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs), a global 'to-do' list, to make sure we're tackling shared challenges facing us all.

We've reviewed the 169 targets and identified those most relevant to our organisation. In this report, we've shared highlights of how we're contributing to these goals through the advice we offer clients, our practices and processes, and the work we do in our communities.

The 2021 Meaningful Brands report (Havas Media Group) found that while 73% of consumers believe businesses should act in favour of people and the planet, 71% don't believe they'll deliver on their promises.

We want to build trust and demonstrate that organisations can meaningfully fulfil their ESG commitments.

We're using external frameworks and benchmarking tools to help identify the areas we're more advanced in, and understand where we need to do more.

To give our stakeholders that piece of mind, we'll continue our journey to become increasingly accredited as a Responsible Business over the coming years.

Our ambitious strategy is a long-term plan that will continue to evolve.

Over the next 12 months, our ambition is to develop an even clearer articulation of our goals, how we're achieving them and the impact we're creating.

We know there's still a lot for us to learn across the responsible business spectrum. As the pace of change continues to increase, there'll be new opportunities for us to develop our approach, testing new ideas and challenging our thinking – and we're committed to shaping our future together.

## Garry Dowdle,

Group Chief Information Officer and Chair of Irwin Mitchell's Responsible Business Management Committee



While we've focused on aspects of wellbeing, resilience and the environment for some time, our new strategy is the first time that we've formally introduced the concept of sustainability into our organisation. Our aim is quite simple: to make everything we do positively impact our future.

## Sarah Ball

Director of Operations

# Responsible Business Strategy

In developing our Responsible Business Strategy, which is aligned to our purpose, we've identified what matters most - inclusion and sustainability.

We've set two overarching goals and created six focus areas we need to address to achieve them.

## Our purpose: Together we'll navigate life's ups and downs

Our aim is to become a leading Responsible Business. We'll unleash potential by using our influence and doing the right thing at all times, focusing on two goals

**Inclusion:**  
Enabling everyone to thrive

**Focus areas:**

**Diversity:** Understanding and celebrating our differences  
**Fairness:** Promoting a flexible, fair and unbiased approach  
**Access:** Improving access to employment and justice

**Sustainability:**  
Everything we do positively impacts our future

**Focus areas:**

**Resilience:** Thriving through change  
**Wellbeing:** Enabling happier and healthier lives  
**Environment:** Protecting our planet

## Achieving our goals will create lasting value for our:

Clients

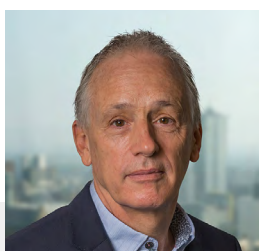
Colleagues

Communities

## Governance

We're enhancing the way we govern ourselves by establishing a Responsible Business Management Committee, chaired by Garry Dowdle, our Group Chief Information Officer. As part of this we're developing our approach so that our colleague, client and community experts inform our decision making.

To deliver our ambitious responsible business plans, and its benefits to our sustainable growth and high performance, our senior leaders work collaboratively and act as sponsors of key focus areas.



**Garry Dowdle**

Group Chief Information Officer  
and Board Sponsor for  
Responsible Business



**Susana Berlevy**

Group Chief People Officer and  
Board Sponsor for Wellbeing,  
Diversity, Inclusion and Race



**Bruce Macmillan**

General Counsel and Board  
Sponsor for Access and  
Communities



**Sarah Ball**

Director of Operations and  
Senior Sponsor for Environment  
and Resilience



**Richard Allen**

Group Chief Financial Officer and  
Board Sponsor for Wellbeing

### Demonstrating progress

It's important that we understand how we're performing against our ambitions to drive progress in all areas and to benchmark against the wider business community. We use a variety of different methods to assess our progress in our key focus areas. These include:

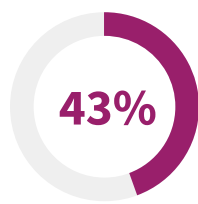
- Annual and quarterly Great Place To Work surveys
- Great Place To Work Culture Audit
- Disability Confident (aiming for level 2 in FY22)
- Ecovadis – Silver Award
- A variety of ISO certifications including energy, environment and IT security
- Stonewall's Workplace Equality Index
- Our own internal Balanced Scorecard.

Business in the Community's benchmarking tool, The Responsible Business Tracker, provides a holistic and objective overview of all areas aligned to the UN's SDGs. We've scored above average in the first two years we've taken part and have improved our performance year-on-year.

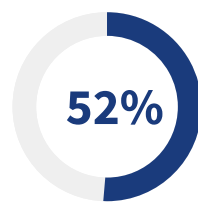
Over the last two years, we've scored consistently high in wellbeing, diversity and inclusion, and for our community work. Our most recent results demonstrated significant improvements in our supply chain, governance and strategy. Improving our scores around climate action is a key area of focus for us over the next few years.



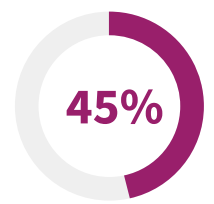
**2019-2020**  
Score



**2019-2020**  
Cohort Average



**2020-2021**  
Score



**2020-2021**  
Cohort Average



# Inclusion



<b>4</b> QUALITY EDUCATION 	<b>5</b> GENDER EQUALITY 	<b>8</b> DECENT WORK AND ECONOMIC GROWTH 	<b>10</b> REDUCED INEQUALITIES 	<b>16</b> PEACE, JUSTICE AND STRONG INSTITUTIONS 
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Our priority UN Sustainable Development Goals  
For further information please visit: <https://sdgs.un.org/goals>

## Inclusion goal: Enabling everyone to thrive

### Inclusion focus areas advise our Responsible Business Management Committee



### Refreshed D&I Strategy to empower all colleagues to deliver our inclusion goal:

#### Insight and impact

Develop an insight and impact focused approach to D&I, so we prioritise what matters most to improve how diverse and inclusive we are

#### Inclusive leadership

Strengthen our inclusive culture at all levels and in everything we do by developing our skills and awareness as inclusive leaders

#### Active allyship

Take an active stance against discrimination and inequality by developing the guidance, support and support and environment for us all to be allies

Increased accountability and investment

- Appointed D&I Manager, as dedicated resource
- Progress reports to Group Executive Committee and Holdings Board in FY22



## Diversity - understanding and celebrating our differences

Diversity is an established focus area for us, and one we've championed officially since our Diversity and Inclusion (D&I) Board was founded in 2010. We aim to ensure our colleagues mirror the communities we serve and that our services are fully accessible. We want to create active allies and take a stance against discrimination and inequality of all kinds.



UK's Best Workplaces  
for Women for the  
second year (9th)



Disability Confident  
Level 1



Signatories of HM  
Treasury's Women in  
Finance Charter



The Times Top 50  
Employers  
for Women 2020

# Key Diversity Highlights FY21



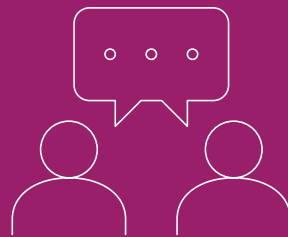
## Female Partners

Over a third of our equity partners and over two fifths of all our partners (equity and non-equity) are women, putting us in the top 10 law firms for most UK female partners.<sup>1</sup>



## British Rowing

Diversity and Inclusion is built into our strategic partnership with British Rowing, as Official Legal Partner, to support their own approach.



## Mentoring Programme

Our Group Chief People Officer and ten of our Black, Asian and Minority Ethnic<sup>2</sup> colleagues took part in Business in the Community's Cross-Organisational Mentoring Programme.

## LGBT+ Lawyers

We're ranked in the top 25 of law firms with the most UK LGBT+ lawyers (22nd).



## Charity Donations

We donated £6,100 to Enable Scotland through the Irwin Mitchell Charities Foundation (IMCF) to enable people with learning disabilities to be active in their community.



## Parent Carer Forum

Over 650 members have joined our Parent Carer Forum to access peer support and expert advice from solicitors and client liaison specialists on special educational needs provision.

<sup>1</sup> <https://www.law.com/international-edition/2021/07/13/which-law-firms-have-the-most-female-equity-partners/>

<sup>2</sup> We use the term 'Black, Asian and Minority Ethnic' in full throughout our Responsible Business Report. We're actively working with our IM Respect network members to agree what terminology to use when discussing issues of race and ethnicity and with all our networks to develop inclusive language guidance more generally.

# Diversity - Colleagues

## Improving the gender diversity of our leadership and workforce

We're proud to have been recognised for the second year as one of the UK's Best Workplaces for Women, as 9th Best UK Superlarge Workplace for Women.

With women making up the majority of our workforce and a third of our LLP Board, we continue to focus on developing our talent from within to increase the gender diversity of our senior leadership. We're also proud to showcase female talent in law through sponsorship of the First 100 Years and Next 100 Years projects.

We're working to address the gender balance in our subsidiaries too. On International Women's Day in 2021, IM Asset Management pledged its commitment to gender balance across financial services, by signing up to the HM Treasury's Women in Finance Charter. We've developed an action plan centred on three key themes of recruitment, progression and retention to help us reach our target.

### Increase in number of women in senior roles (associate or above) in Asset Management

TARGET



30%

May 2025

16%

May 2021

0%

January 2019



Over the summer of 2020, we listened to our colleagues in roundtable discussions to understand what more we could do to improve our gender balance. Reflecting on that, we decided to sign up to the Women in Finance Charter to drive change and to show our continued commitment.

**Richard Potts**

Chief Executive Officer, IM Asset Management

### Creating a more diverse workforce

We know there's still a long way to go before our workforce mirrors the communities we serve for all diversity groups. We're focused on improving our insight on diversity and inclusion, so that we can evaluate how inclusive we are and make sure we truly value our colleagues for who they are and what they bring.

#### Increase in number of colleagues sharing diversity information (Balanced Scorecard Measure)

TARGET



90%

2022

73%

2020-2021

40%

2017

Improving our data will help us understand any potential barriers or bias in our People processes and practices and take action to address these.

We want to see a change here and will be sharing more data in our next Responsible Business Report, so that we can be held accountable for our actions.

### Diversity of our colleagues (FY21):

7.8%

selected an under-represented ethnic group

1.5%

told us that they have a disability

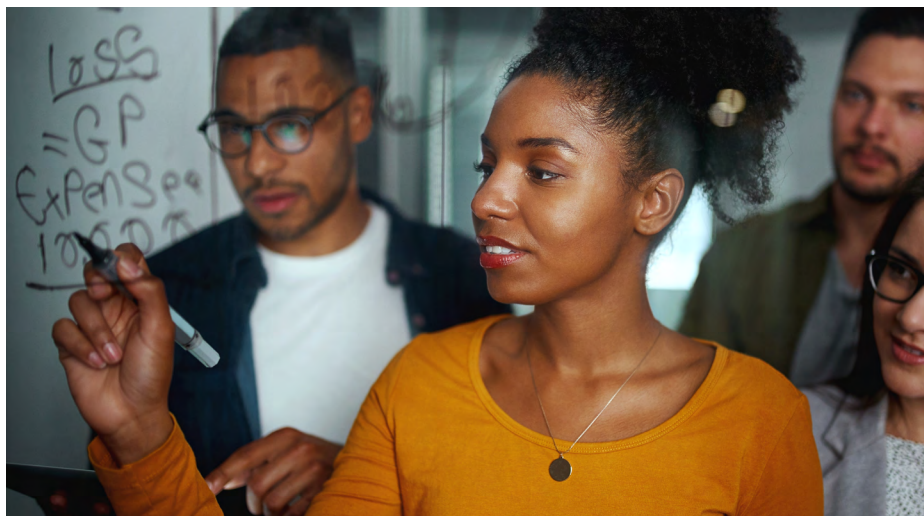
3.3%

shared that they are lesbian, gay, bisexual or a sexual orientation other than heterosexual

### Developing diverse talent

We're committed to developing a more diverse talent pool of leaders across our business and nurturing our diverse talent.

In 2019, over 40 colleagues identifying as from one-or-more underrepresented diversity groups, and their line managers, took part in IM Inclusive, a partnership with business psychology experts Delta Alpha Psi and the Wolverhampton Business School. Aimed at our high-potential leaders, the programme provided one-to-one coaching, group workshops with experts, and a peer group network to support and challenge their leadership and career progression.



The outcomes of the in-depth evaluation (conducted independently) are testament to Irwin Mitchell's commitment to increase the diversity of its future leaders and drive change through inclusive leadership.

**Dr Doyin Atewologun**  
Director, Delta Alpha Psi

Last year, Susana Berlevy, our Group Chief People Officer and Board sponsor for Diversity, Inclusion and Race, and ten of our Black, Asian and Minority Ethnic colleagues took part in Business in the Community's Cross-Organisational Mentoring Programme. This programme aims to unlock talent and improve ethnic diversity at senior levels and we've already committed to this and recruited people to take part in 2022, following the programme's success. This year, we're developing a reciprocal mentoring pilot, in partnership with IM Respect, our ethnicity, culture and faith network. It will further develop our diverse talent and increase skills within our leadership to progress race inclusion.



Given law as a profession is not very versatile when it comes to diversity, for someone like me who is a first generation immigrant and a woman of colour, it was good to be part of a diverse group where people have faced similar problems like myself.

**Anamika Pandey**  
Associate, Corporate, Irwin Mitchell

### Understanding and celebrating our differences

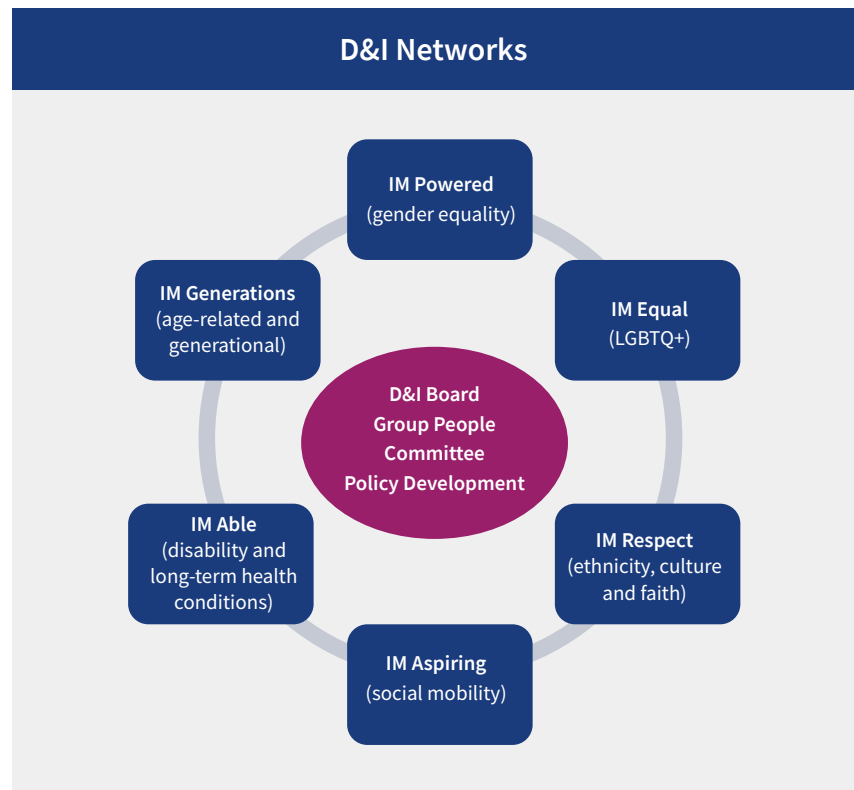
Becoming more diverse involves us all listening and learning, so that everyone feels included and is enabled to thrive. Our D&I networks (outlined in the chart opposite) provide us with invaluable insight into our colleagues' experiences and challenges, and raise awareness of how we can improve.

Our well-represented networks have been established for over 10 years, but more recently we've formalised the role they play in helping shape our strategy and our policies through:

- D&I network membership on our Group People Committee
- Requirement to consult with D&I networks as part of our policy development process.

Working collaboratively has helped us to highlight intersectional issues, as well as key challenges for different diversity groups.

As part of the onboarding and induction process, colleagues are introduced to our diversity and inclusion networks. We carry on raising awareness, listening and learning about D&I throughout the employee lifecycle using a variety of channels, including our annual Great Place To Work and quarterly pulse surveys. This continuous dialogue helps signpost how to get involved, support available, and key messages to be cascaded and discussed in teams.





### Our FY21 D&I network programme of activity:

Our D&I networks have gone from strength to strength, creating spaces for discussion, awareness raising and sharing resources to increase our leaders' and colleagues' awareness and understanding.

Our programme of activity has included:



Roundtable discussions on gender diversity for Asset Management to inform the Women in Finance Charter action plan, and on the impact of COVID-19 and the gender pay gap



Relaunch of IM Able and IM Generations



Appointment of co-chair roles for each network to provide more leadership opportunities



Presentation on Chartered Institute of Personnel and Development Insight on 'Inclusion at work: Perspectives on LGBT+ working lives'



Black History Month, including a 'Celebrating Black Talent in the Legal Industry' panel event



Workshop on age-related issues, in partnership with Business in the Community



Launch of IM Able newsletter to raise awareness of different disabilities, support available and what colleagues can do to support



Presentation to our All Colleague Conference by IM Equal and IM Aspiring leads



Delivery of Trans 101 by Global Butterflies, trans guidance for line managers and a video on how to be a trans ally.

## Diversity - Clients

Diversity and inclusion is at the heart of our campaigns. Our brand values enable us to promote, champion and challenge equality, and we take great pride in celebrating what makes people unique.

In 2019, our award winning I Am Able campaign featured five of our personal injury and medical negligence clients, with a focus on what they can do, not what they can't. We shone a light on what it's like to be disabled, to feel different but also to be empowered through positive change, rehabilitation and support.

This year, we're featuring our clients again in a campaign focusing on the human touch that matters to them, their family and their business. The campaign explores the emotional transitions people go through during their journey with us. Haley, a young girl with cerebral palsy as well as Varsha, who took her divorce case all the way to the Supreme Court, and Mike who sold his multimillion pound business stateside, are just some of the stories featured.

The adverts transition from their struggles to their successes but it's what happened behind the camera that has to be seen to be believed.

Working with creative agency Gyro, we assembled what we consider to be the most inclusive production team ever, setting a new benchmark for the broadcast industry by focusing on accessibility during recruitment. The advantages for positive change that has come from this approach.



The talented team included blind photographer Ian Treherne, who was mentored by Rankin, a make-up artist with lupus and partial hearing, an editor with PTSD as well as an amputee voiceover artist. This inclusive approach was captured by wheelchair user director, Owen Tooth. A behind-the-scenes film of the project can be viewed on YouTube.

A total of 60% of the crew, in senior roles, were had hidden and visible disabilities, an approach which demonstrates the value we place on becoming a more inclusive employer.

To hold ourselves accountable, when the campaign launched we publicly pledged to achieve Level 2 of Disability Confident, the Government's framework for employers, by May 2022 and Level 3 by May 2023.

We've also created an action plan we make the most of the advantages for positive change that has come from this approach.

### Sharing our diversity expertise

With social movements rightly putting the spotlight on diversity related issues, we're supporting our clients and colleagues to assist them in developing their approach:

- Delivering interactive equality, D&I training to clients in a range of sectors, using case studies and examples. These sessions are tailored, depending on the sector, the organisation and the level of employees being trained
- Advising on topical issues in the aftermath of George Floyd's murder and the Black Lives Matter protests, working on large discrimination claims
- Providing support to businesses on equality and diversity topics through employment webinars, talks and guidance.

We're collaborating with the Rugby Football Union to share feedback and best practice as we both develop our approaches further.

We've also built diversity and inclusion into our strategic partnership agreement with British Rowing, as their Official Legal Partner. We'll be supporting them, as they develop their diversity and inclusion strategy.



## Diversity - Communities



### Enable Scotland

Our team in Scotland raised £6,100 via the Irwin Mitchell Charities Foundation (IMCF) for their charity of the year, Enable Scotland.

The charity campaigns to end discrimination and break down barriers that prevent people with a learning disability living as equal members of society. We're continuing to support them throughout 2021.

### Parent Carer Forum

Since August 2020, we've built a community of parent carers in our Facebook group, the Parent Carer Forum by Irwin Mitchell. The 670+ members often post questions and concerns about their child's special educational needs provision, and help each other to find solutions. A team of our experts are on hand to offer support and signpost parents when needed too. Sometimes they'll have a more in-depth discussion with a parent outside of the Group.



### Superheroes Series

We're long-term supporters of The Superheroes Series, the UK's one-and-only disability sports series for the everyday superhero. Their mission is simple: to create fun, full-throttle mass-participation sports events where people with disabilities – AKA superheroes – call the shots and don't have to worry about cut-off times or equipment restrictions. Due to COVID-19 restrictions, last year's events were slightly different but we still supported their Superheroes at Home event.



## Fairness - promoting a flexible, fair and unbiased approach

Fairness has been added to our Responsible Business Strategy to build on and complement the work of our Diversity and Inclusion Board to ensure we create a flexible, fair and unbiased culture. Our aim is to use our expertise and influence to push boundaries and reduce inequality in our communities and on behalf of our clients.



Race Champions and signatories of Race At Work charter



Zero tolerance approach to bullying and harassment



Stonewall Diversity Champion and Top 100 Employer 2020 (74th)

# Key Fairness Highlights FY21

## Pay Gap

Our ethnicity pay gap was voluntarily published for the second year.



## Zero tolerance

We adopted a zero tolerance approach on bullying and harassment, working with Business in the Community to enhance our efforts and empower our colleagues to be allies, challenging micro aggressions and discrimination.

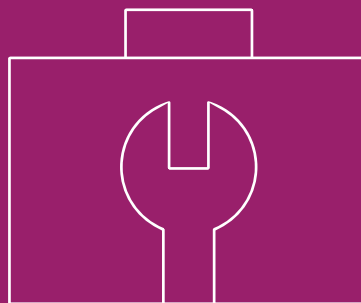
## LGBTQ+ support

Scott Halliday, Family Law Associate (Family Law Young Solicitor of the Year), leads our project with University of Bristol to produce specialist support for LGBTQ+ clients on family law.



## Let's Talk About Race

Over 300 colleagues and our Executive Board shared their experiences and attitudes to race in Let's Talk About Race sessions.



## Menopause awareness

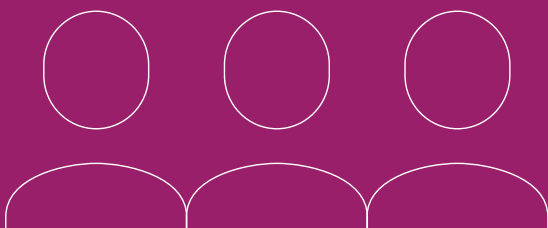
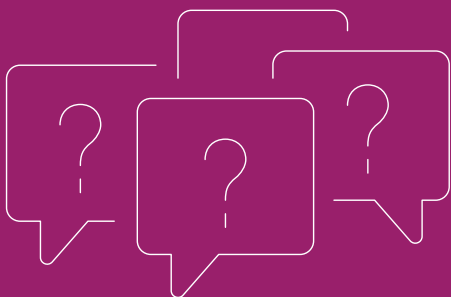
Jenny Arrowsmith, Employment Partner, co-authored Law Society guidance on experiencing menopause in the legal profession to mark Menopause Awareness Month.

## Flexible working toolkit

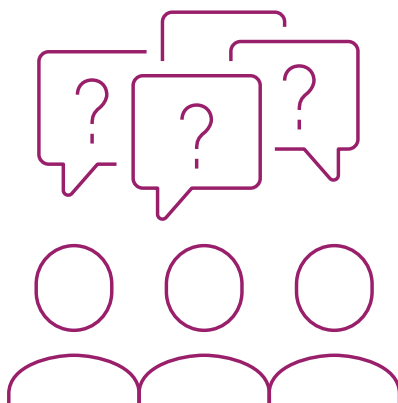
Our Employment team developed a toolkit to help employers proactively deal with hybrid and flexible working.

## Disability Rights Award

Kirsty Stuart, Public Law Associate, won the inaugural Disability Rights Award at the Legal Aid Lawyer of the Year Awards for supporting disabled people get a say in their care.



## Fairness - Colleagues



Over 700 of our colleagues shared their views and experiences in Business in the Community's national Race At Work survey.

### Let's Talk About Race - becoming an anti-racist organisation

Events of 2020 have been a stark reminder of the overt and systemic racism that exists in our society. Last year, our IM Respect network hosted 'Let's Talk About Race' sessions throughout the summer. Over 300 colleagues and our Board joined these sessions, openly discussing their experiences of race and what more we could do to support our colleagues who identify as Black, Asian or Minority Ethnic.

Colleagues found these sessions to be informative and a safe and confidential place to talk about issues which many find difficult to discuss. The detailed findings have been used to inform our diversity and inclusion strategy and Race At Work Charter action plan, as we develop our anti-racist approach. One area highlighted was the impact of racial micro aggressions and how to deal with them. This year, we're working with Business in the Community to make sure our policies and approach cover this type of behaviour. We're listening to our colleagues' experiences of them to develop our guidance for dealing with them as well.



As part of our Race At Work Charter commitments, we take a zero tolerance approach to bullying and harassment in any form. We've reaffirmed this this year, issuing information on how to report bullying and harassment, our whistleblowing policy, and the support available. Our Board has made it clear that colleagues have their full support when raising these issues.



### Taking an unbiased approach to our people, processes and practices

At 9.2%, our gender pay gap is significantly lower than comparable size law firms. As part of our flexible, fair and unbiased approach, we analyse wider workforce data, including recruitment and promotion data. Our analysis has demonstrated the great opportunities we provide for women to develop and progress.

Over 70% of partner promotions go to women, helping to improve our gender balance at senior levels. Because we recognise the potential for biases to limit our performance, we've started monitoring and evaluating the impact of all our People processes and practices by diversity.

#### Our aim is to:

- Understand the impact biases have on all colleagues
- Identify any potential barriers or bias
- Take action to address these to ensure a fair and unbiased approach.

This year, we've analysed our performance review process and promotions by ethnicity, in addition to our regular gender analysis. We've included information on the potential for bias during performance reviews in our support and guidance for line managers and developed guidance for our People team so they can challenge potential bias during moderation of performance ratings.

## Fairness - Clients

Fairness is something we value within our own business, so it naturally translates to the services we provide to our clients.

### Employment law

As leaders on flexible working in the legal profession, our Employment team has developed a toolkit to help employers proactively deal with hybrid and flexible working. This complements the range of services we offer clients on complying with equality legislation. We work with business owners, HR professionals and directors to implement policies and train their staff and to manage situations.

### Ensuring accessible and inclusive Family Law for LGBT+ clients

You can't separate the law from the ongoing struggle for equality that LGBT+ people face. Our Family Law team stand out for their commitment to wider LGBT+ issues within the legal industry, writing and lecturing on LGBT+ family law, as well as taking landmark cases.

We're proud of Family Law associate Scott Halliday, for being awarded Family Law Young Solicitor of the Year at the Lexis Nexis Family Law Awards in recognition of his ground-breaking work in the 'modern families' sphere. As a member of the Law Society's LGBT+ National Committee, Scott also leads our project with University of Bristol to produce specialist support on navigating the complicated family justice system for LGBT+ clients. The project, 'We Are Family Too! Working with LGBT+ Clients in the Family Justice System', will produce a series of written, audio and video resources on eight different areas of family law of particular importance for LGBT+ clients.



The project's aimed at both the general public and lawyers, and is funded through support from the University of Bristol's Economic and Social Research Council (ESRC) Impact Acceleration Account. The project's set to have a big impact on the family law system, providing more accessible, understanding and sympathetic guidance for LGBT+ clients needing to access the legal system.

### Supporting clients around the menopause

We regularly advise employers on issues relating to menopause in the workplace. We've seen real enthusiasm from our clients to change workplace attitudes towards menopause, and we've supported this in a range of ways:



- Jenny Arrowsmith, Employment Law Partner, co-authored Law Society guidance on experiencing menopause in the legal profession to mark Menopause Awareness Month
- We've held seminars on the menopause and shared guidance on issues such as:
  - o Why menopause is a business issue
  - o Working from home and the menopause
- Last year, we held a virtual HR Conference, attended by a range of sectors and HR leaders, including a module on the menopause and the law, with a menopause policy provided for free as follow up.

# Fairness - Communities

## Promoting ethnicity pay gap reporting

We were one of the first firms to go above the statutory gender pay gap reporting requirements by publishing our partner data. We're also advocating for mandatory ethnicity pay gap reporting, and this is the second year we've voluntarily reported our ethnicity pay gap. We publish this as part of our wider commitment to increasing the representation of Black, Asian and Minority Ethnic colleagues, and as advocates for transparency, the need to increase reporting on ethnicity pay gaps.

We've also committed to improving our rates of disclosure so we can understand the causes of our ethnicity pay gap and the action we need to take to increase the ethnic diversity in our workforce and leadership.

For our latest Pay Gap Reports, please visit the About Us section of our website.

## Disability Rights Award at Legal Aid Lawyer of the Year Awards

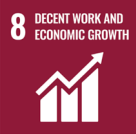
We're proud of Kirsty Stuart, Public Law Associate, for winning the inaugural Disability Rights Award at the Legal Aid Lawyer of the Year Awards. Kirsty represents families across the country and specialises in handling health and welfare as well as medical treatment cases. She also campaigns and acts for families of people with learning disabilities and with autism to secure their discharge out of in-patient units and into their own homes in the community.



They have had to handle a lot of difficulty in terms of not having contact with their loved ones. They are really having to do their best to overcome a lot of difficulty. I've been there to help them along the way. It is an honour to represent them.

**Kirsty Stuart**

Associate Solicitor on the impact of COVID-19 on her clients



## Access - improving access to employment and justice

Improving access to justice has been part of our agenda through our pro bono work for many years and our strategy aims to amplify and increase the work we're doing to support some of the most vulnerable people and organisations in our communities.

This year we've widened the scope of our Access focus area to incorporate the increasing amount of work we're doing to help people from disadvantaged backgrounds develop the skills needed to gain meaningful employment, as well as the measures we're making to ensure our own careers are fully inclusive and accessible.



Winner of Diversity, Inclusion and Belonging category of 2020 In House Recruitment Awards



PRIME Initiative member



Member of LawWorks the Law Society's pro bono charity



Partner of Aspiring Solicitors



Silver award for Defence Employer Recognition Scheme (Upgraded to Gold in July 2021)

# Key Access Highlights FY21

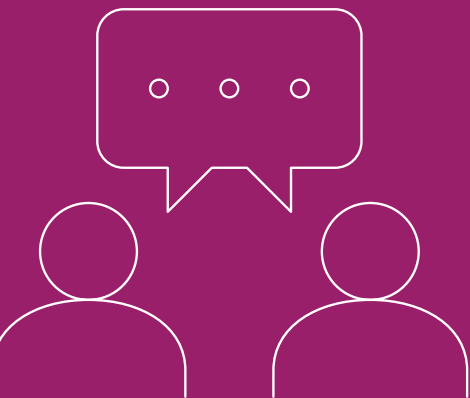
## Lockdown pro bono service

We launched a pro bono service for victims of domestic violence throughout lockdown, after restrictions in movement caused a spike in calls to charities from people asking for help.



## Black Solicitors Network

We launched a corporate partnership with Black Solicitors Network to develop a bespoke package to share more opportunities with existing and aspiring Black solicitors to work for us.



## LawWorks partnership

We won seven appeal cases, supporting vulnerable clients on a pro bono basis to receive vital benefits through our partnership with the charity LawWorks.

## Website accessibility

We improved the accessibility of our website for disabled users and those with low literacy levels, with 100% accessibility for Lighthouse software and above industry standard on SiteImprove.

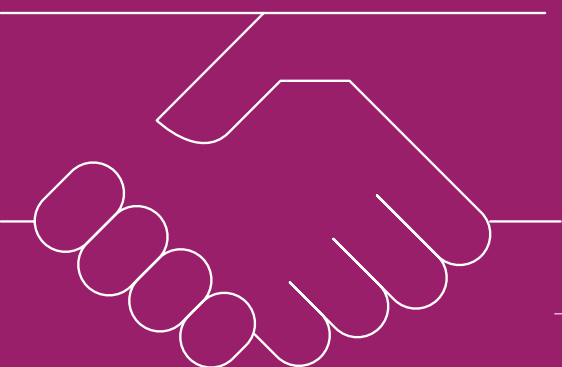
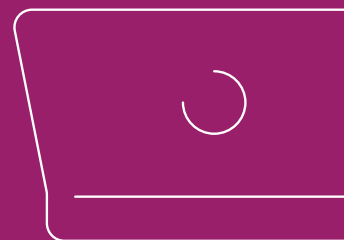
## Laptops for Kids

We donated £40,000 to the Laptops for Kids campaign and £10,000 to the National Literacy Trust to provide access to essential technology and help raise literacy levels.



## Free legal advice

We delivered free legal advice to organisations, including Birmingham's Rape and Sexual Violence Project, Leeds Irish Health and Homes, HOST's (Home of Skills & Technology) innovation hub.



# Access - Colleagues

What is pro bono?  
The translation from Latin is “for the public good.” For us, it means using our wide-ranging legal expertise to give something back by providing free advice and support to those who need it most.

## £762,464

In 2019-20, 18% of our legal experts provided 3,493.9 hours of pro bono advice, valued at £762,464.

### Inclusive and accessible recruitment

We’ve taken steps to ensure our careers are fully inclusive and accessible, including:

- Inclusive recruitment training for our Talent Acquisition team to support our hiring managers to reduce any bias in the recruitment process
- Review of our recruitment process to identify any barriers with Business in The Community
- Commitment to pay our colleagues the real Living Wage and ensure our minimum hourly rates are aligned to those published by the Living Wage Foundation
- No zero hours contracts
- Active promotion of our vacancies on targeted jobs boards and through diversity networks to increase the diversity of our talent, including:
  - o Corporate partner of the Black Solicitors Network, working to develop a bespoke package to share more opportunities to work with us and to increase applications from existing and aspiring Black solicitors
  - o Career Transition Partnership to provide a tailored employment pathway to those leaving the Armed Service, as part of our Armed Forces covenant
  - o Forces Families Jobs for family members of current serving UK military personnel, as part our Armed Forces covenant.

Since 2019, we’ve been Silver Award holders in the Defence Employer Recognition Scheme, in recognition of the work we do to support the Armed Forces and their families in employment. This year, we’re proud to have been granted a Gold Award.



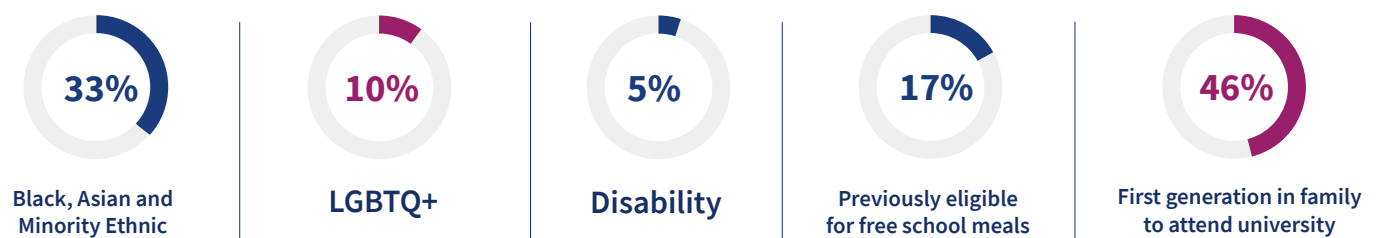
## Diversifying the talent pipeline for the legal profession

Our trainee solicitors are integral to our future. We're keen to attract a diverse talent pipeline, from all backgrounds and experiences. We retain 93% of our trainees on qualification due to the hands-on training, guidance and mentoring our trainees receive throughout their training contract.

Recognising the barriers to recruitment and the under-representation of particular groups in the legal profession, our Early Careers team has been doing things differently:

- Producing videos about the different stages within the recruitment process, to assist candidates from neurodiverse backgrounds and those from different social backgrounds to understand the process in advance, allowing them to perform better
- Introducing 'blind screening' to debias the recruitment process
- Involving members of our diversity and inclusion networks in the assessment process to diversify our assessors to identify the best talent
- Providing training to all trainee assessors to carry out this role, including unconscious bias training.

## Diversity of students attending our virtual events (FY21)



Adapting to changes during COVID-19, we've continued to share insights on a legal career with us to students under-represented in the legal profession, through virtual events, open evenings, law fairs and podcasts. Our current trainees have shared their stories and top tips, and offered to speak to students from similar under-represented groups to them about their experiences. In 2020, our Early Careers team engaged with over 150 university societies, including those focused on disability, LGBTQ+, race and religion, to create links to students from these groups in entering a career in law.

We're also partners of Women in the City Afro-Caribbean Network and Aspiring Solicitors. These networks allow us to reach a more diverse group of students and work with organisations supporting under-represented groups, for example on panel discussions with Queer Lawyers of Tomorrow.



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## Apprenticeships

We're committed to making our organisation and the wider industry more diverse. We currently spend around a quarter of our apprenticeship levy spend per annum on helping to increase how diverse we are and we've set a target to double our use of the levy over the next two years. We're keen to grow not only the number of apprenticeships, but also the variety of programmes available: focussing more attention on non-legal apprenticeship pathways.

Since 2016 we've welcomed 37 apprentice learners with the majority completing their apprenticeships. With 12 new starters in 2019-20 and three in 2020-21, we now have 24 apprentices, mainly in the paralegal and Chartered Legal Executive arena, but also in IT, Business Administration and Chartered Management. This year, we've recruited an Apprenticeship Manager to support the growth of apprenticeships in line with the growth of our business, to educate colleagues about apprenticeships, and to support our apprentices and their line managers to ensure their experience is positive for all involved.



**93rd in Top 100** Apprenticeship Employer awards (Rate My Apprenticeship - July 21) where our own IM cohorts have voted about their experience



**19th in Top 50** Companies for Apprentices.  
(TheJobCrowd awards)



As a Black working-class woman, having a working environment which is open to development, change and progression is vital. Seeing that Irwin Mitchell has signed the Business in the Community's Race at Work Charter, encourages me in believing that the firm is going in the right direction towards racial equality. Furthermore, I was enamoured by the mentoring programme for Black, Asian and Minority Ethnic colleagues. This takes into account that not only is getting your foot through the door difficult for Black, Asian and Minority Ethnic applicants, it is also difficult to keep it there. Having a mentoring scheme shows that IM is actively helping its current colleagues in progression.

**Candidate applying for Trainee role**

# Access - Clients

## Access to justice

Providing Access to justice is a key area of focus for our Responsible Business Strategy. From ensuring our website is fully accessible to engaging on policy reform, we're constantly fighting to ensure our clients, both current and future, have the best chance of redress. We're prepared to go above and beyond for our clients to ensure their rights are protected. We're often at the forefront of litigation in terms of technical and difficult test cases.

## Pro Bono

Last year, we undertook measures to improve the integrity of our data on pro bono work and promoted our time recording guidance to improve the accuracy of our reporting. This year, we've included a pro bono target within our Balanced Scorecard (BSC) to encourage more of our lawyers to do this type of client work. Our target is to increase the number of our lawyers recording at least one hour of pro bono work a year by 5%.



Members of LawWorks, a pro bono charity that connects volunteer lawyers with people in need of legal advice, for the past 11 years



Signatories to The Law Society's Pro Bono Charter, since 2017, recognised at the LawWork's Pro Bono Awards in December 2018.

### What support do we offer?

Demand for pro bono work is increasing with legal aid cuts, people denied access to legal advice, and the impact of the pandemic. We provide free legal advice and representation to individuals, small non-government organisations (NGOs) and community groups who otherwise wouldn't be able to access justice – either because they can't afford it or due to lack of public funding.

### Pro Bono during the pandemic

- Launched a free advice service to victims of domestic abuse, following the increase in calls to charities helping victims of domestic abuse. Our team of family law experts focused on getting domestic abuse victims the help they needed, from free legal advice to signposting to relevant services
- Partnered with innovation hub HOST, the Home of Skills & Technology, to provide specialist pro bono legal advice to technology businesses in the North West through our media and innovation team. The partnership offers tailored business support to members through events such as webinars, workshops, seminars and masterclasses, and sponsorship of HOST's event on the importance of nurturing positive mental health and wellbeing both at work and at home.

### Our ongoing pro bono work includes

- Providing support to community initiatives throughout the country, from Southampton and Chichester to Newcastle and Glasgow, including free legal advice to Citizens' Advice Bureau (CAB) office or advice centres
- Working with Birmingham's Rape and Sexual Violence Project (RSVP) to provide free legal advice to over 50 of their service users so far. The charity provides access to a broad range of legal topics, including civil claims
- Supporting Leeds Irish Health and Homes through monthly free legal advice clinics and running monthly clinics at the Birmingham Irish Association, assisting over 200 of their service users since 2013
- Partnering with the University of Bloomsbury in 2013 to deliver a family law advice clinic, advising on 250 cases
- Taking part in projects run for the charity Amicus on a pro bono since 2018. This has included statistical analysis of all homicide cases in Missouri to work out what factors are taken into account when sentencing a defendant to death. US attorneys expect to use the data as evidence to provide insight into the fairness of the application of the death penalty
- Partnering with Queen Mary Legal Advice Centre (QMLAC) to provide pro-bono legal supervision to university undergraduates supporting members of the public. In 2020, the Centre won a Collaborative Award for Teaching Excellence (CATE) in recognition of its outstanding contribution to higher education through its collaborative partnerships with law firms such as ours.



We're planning on testing the accessibility of our site with people once the COVID-19 situation eases. While there's still more to do as our website and technology evolves, our ambition is to raise awareness of the issues and ensure all of our teams can design with accessibility in mind from the offset.

### **Making our website more accessible**

We're committed to continuously improving. When accessibility problems with our website were identified during our rebrand in late 2019, we undertook a course to bring a deeper understanding of the issues to our wider team, resulting in:

- Changes to colour contrasts to assist people with sight impairments to read our webpages easier
- Ensuring the code used to build the website is compatible with screen readers used by those with sight impairments
- Making the site navigable by keyboard to improve accessibility for those unable to use a mouse
- Evolving the language and tone of voice we use to make it easier for people who have difficulties reading
- Improving the experience for our web users with poor sight by ensuring it can be magnified.

# Access - Communities

## Access to jobs

We want to be part of the movement to improve the educational and employment outcomes for the 4.1 million children in the UK living in poverty. As a Responsible Business, we're committed to reducing inequality in our communities by providing access to fair, inclusive and sustainable jobs. We're supporting our future generations by:



Providing mentoring, numeracy and literacy support, careers and CV workshops, soft skills training and office visits to pupils from schools in deprived areas or with high numbers of pupils who end up out of full time education and unemployed (NEET) through our relationship with Business in the Community



Running Our Speak Out competition in Sheffield to address the lack of vital confidence building and public speaking skills in the curriculum. This year, we piloted the competition virtually, offering pupils a chance to compete with others across the city, supported by local university students and business mentors



Developing a remote mentoring scheme with Holy Trinity School in Birmingham, with 15 of our colleagues mentoring 20 pupils (of which the majority were Black, Asian and Minority Ethnic) to help build their confidence, raise their awareness of different career paths and prepare them for life after school



Working with PRIME, a consortium of law firms committed to increasing social mobility and access to a career in law, to offer high-quality work experience placements to school pupils and students. Last year, we delivered our PRIME placements virtually to students either eligible for free school meals or first in their families to consider university



Mentoring undergraduate students from disadvantaged backgrounds through City Solicitors Horizons. This three-year support programme, aimed at improving access to the legal profession, runs alongside the students' degree and includes classroom and one-to-one training sessions, mentoring from our lawyers and work experience placements



Providing guidance from our Talent Acquisition team on interview training, CV writing and general recruitment to different diversity groups, including Sheffield Law Society for Blind and our PRIME students.

### Laptops4Kids

In July 2021, we donated £40,000 to the Laptops for Kids campaign to help school children in Sheffield gain much-needed access to essential technology. We raised the funds by recycling old laptops and aged server equipment with specialists at N2S. A survey of 100 Sheffield schools and colleges highlighted that 44% needed essential technology to support their education. Our donation, equivalent to 170 laptops, will be used by Laptops for Kids to purchase essential kit from computers to data dongles, helping meet the specific real-time needs of local schools and their pupils facing digital exclusion. We're planning to build on this and explore opportunities to support digital inclusion near our other regional offices.



We are thrilled with this show of support from Irwin Mitchell – it demonstrates how businesses can be a powerful force for good in our communities and we encourage more companies to come forward and support the Laptops for Kids campaign. Covid outbreaks in schools have reached the highest level since December, further disrupting education for young people and especially those who cannot get online at home because of poverty.

**David Richards**

co-founder of Laptops for Kids and founder, CEO and chairman of data software company WANdisco plc

### National Literacy Trust

To mark a year since the first lockdown restrictions and 12 months of disruption to the schooling of millions, we donated £10,000 to the National Literacy Trust, a charity committed to improving the reading, writing, speaking and listening skills of young people who need it most. The donation supported the National Literacy Trust in raising literacy levels in areas most in need, giving children the best chance of success in school, work and life.

# Our data and targets

We're committed to increasing the diversity of our workforce so that it better reflects the clients and communities we serve.

We're publishing our diversity data as part of this commitment. We recognise that there's more work for us to do, and we're taking actions to address this. This year, we'll be developing an insight and impact-focused approach, so that we prioritise what matters most to improve how diverse and inclusive our workforce, services and access programmes are.

## Diversity

### Gender

#### Group

Full Equity Member
Fixed Share Member
Senior Associate
Associate
Colleague
Early career

Female	Male	Other
<b>70.1%</b>	<b>29.7%</b>	<b>0.1%</b>
35.1%	64.9%	0.0%
53.9%	46.0%	0.0%
60.9%	39.1%	0.0%
64.5%	34.9%	0.6%
73.4%	26.5%	0.1%
73.7%	26.3%	0.0%

### Ethnicity

#### Group

Full Equity Member
Fixed Share Member
Senior Associate
Associate
Colleague
Early career

White	Black, Asian and Minority Ethnic	Prefer not say
<b>64.5%</b>	<b>7.8%</b>	<b>1.2%</b>
77.0%	6.8%	2.7%
74.6%	4.2%	0.0%
70.7%	7.0%	0.5%
76.7%	7.6%	1.9%
61.6%	8.1%	1.2%
60.9%	8.3%	0.6%

73.41% of colleagues providing ethnicity data in our People system



## Disability

### Group

Full Equity Member

Fixed Share Member

Senior Associate

Associate

Colleague

Early career

Not declaring a disability	Declaring a disability	Prefer not say
<b>69.2%</b>	<b>1.5%</b>	<b>2.8%</b>
81.1%	0.0%	5.4%
76.4%	1.2%	1.2%
75.4%	0.5%	2.3%
80.8%	1.6%	3.8%
66.9%	1.5%	2.6%
62.2%	3.2%	4.5%

73.41% of colleagues providing disability data in our People system

## Sexual orientation

### Group

Full Equity Member

Fixed Share Member

Senior Associate

Associate

Colleague

Early career

Heterosexual	Lesbian, gay, bisexual or other sexual orientation	Prefer not say
<b>67.2%</b>	<b>3.3%</b>	<b>2.6%</b>
77.0%	5.4%	4.1%
75.8%	0.6%	1.8%
70.7%	4.2%	3.3%
79.6%	3.5%	3.1%
64.9%	3.4%	2.6%
62.2%	7.1%	0.6%

73.38% of colleagues providing sexual orientation data in our People system

## Fairness

### Great Place to Work survey (November 2020)

People are treated fairly regardless of their age	88.0%
People are treated fairly regardless of their disability	93.0%
People are treated fairly regardless of their gender	92.0%
People are treated fairly regardless of their race or ethnic origin	93.0%
People are treated fairly regardless of their sexual orientation	96.0%

## Access

### Early careers - Application stage

#### Gender

	2018-19	2019-20	2020-21
Female	77.0%	75.0%	77.0%
Male	22.0%	24.0%	22.0%
Trans/other	0.5%	0.5%	0.5%
Prefer not to say	0.5%	0.5%	0.5%

#### Ethnicity

White	68.0%	65.0%	66.0%
Black, Asian and Minority Ethnic	29.5%	33.0%	32.0%
Prefer not to say	2.5%	2.0%	2.0%

#### Sexual Orientation

Heterosexual	87.0%	84.0%	84.0%
Lesbian, gay, bisexual or other sexual orientation	8.0%	9.0%	10.0%
Prefer not to say	5.0%	7.0%	6.0%

### Early careers - Offers

#### Gender

Female

Male

Trans/other

Prefer not to say

#### Ethnicity

White

Black, Asian and Minority Ethnic

Prefer not to say

#### Sexual Orientation

Heterosexual

Lesbian, gay, bisexual or other sexual orientation

Prefer not to say

	2018-19	2019-20	2020-21
Female	67.3%	63.2%	74.1%
Male	32.7%	36.8%	14.8%
Trans/other	0.0%	0.0%	0.0%
Prefer not to say	0.0%	0.0%	11.1%
White	85.5%	79.0%	75.9%
Black, Asian and Minority Ethnic	9.1%	15.8%	13.0%
Prefer not to say	5.5%	5.3%	11.1%
Heterosexual	78.2%	63.2%	74.1%
Lesbian, gay, bisexual or other sexual orientation	9.1%	15.8%	7.4%
Prefer not to say	12.7%	21.1%	18.5%

### Lateral hires (direct hires only) - Applications

#### Gender

Female

Male

Trans/other

Prefer not to say

#### Ethnicity

White

Black, Asian and Minority Ethnic

Prefer not to say

#### Sexual Orientation

Heterosexual

Lesbian, gay, bisexual or other sexual orientation

Prefer not to say

	2018-19	2019-20	2020-21
Female	68.3%	66.8%	69%
Male	30.6%	32%	29.9%
Trans/other	0.1%	0.1%	0.1%
Prefer not to say	1.1%	1.2%	0.9%
White	63%	58.6%	60.1%
Black, Asian and Minority Ethnic	33.7%	37.7%	36.8%
Prefer not to say	3.3%	3.7%	3.1%
Heterosexual	89.1%	88.2%	86%
Lesbian, gay, bisexual or other sexual orientation	5.7%	5.8%	7.74%
Prefer not to say	5.3%	5.95%	6.23%

### Lateral hires (direct hires only) - Offers

#### Gender

Female

Male

Trans/other

Prefer not to say

#### Ethnicity

White

Black, Asian and Minority Ethnic

Prefer not to say

#### Sexual Orientation

Heterosexual

Lesbian, gay, bisexual or other sexual orientation

Prefer not to say

	2018-19	2019-20	2020-21
Female	76.4%	72.3%	73.0%
Male	18.3%	25.4%	26.2%
Trans/other	0.9%	0.8%	2.2%
Prefer not to say	5.2%	2.3%	0.8%
White	75.6%	75.0%	76.3%
Black, Asian and Minority Ethnic	17.9%	20.8%	20.9%
Prefer not to say	6.6%	4.2%	2.8%
Heterosexual	84.3%	85.5%	86.6%
Lesbian, gay, bisexual or other sexual orientation	4.4%	7.4%	8.6%
Prefer not to say	11.4%	7.11%	4.7%

### Apprenticeships

Number of apprentices

(New starters)

2019-20

2020-21

12

3

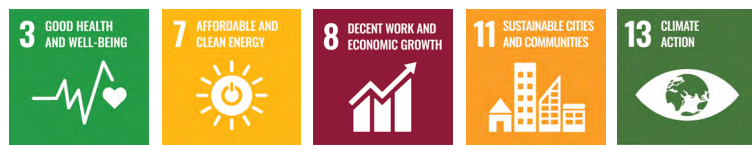
1 (Level 2)

2 (Level 3)

11 (Level 3)

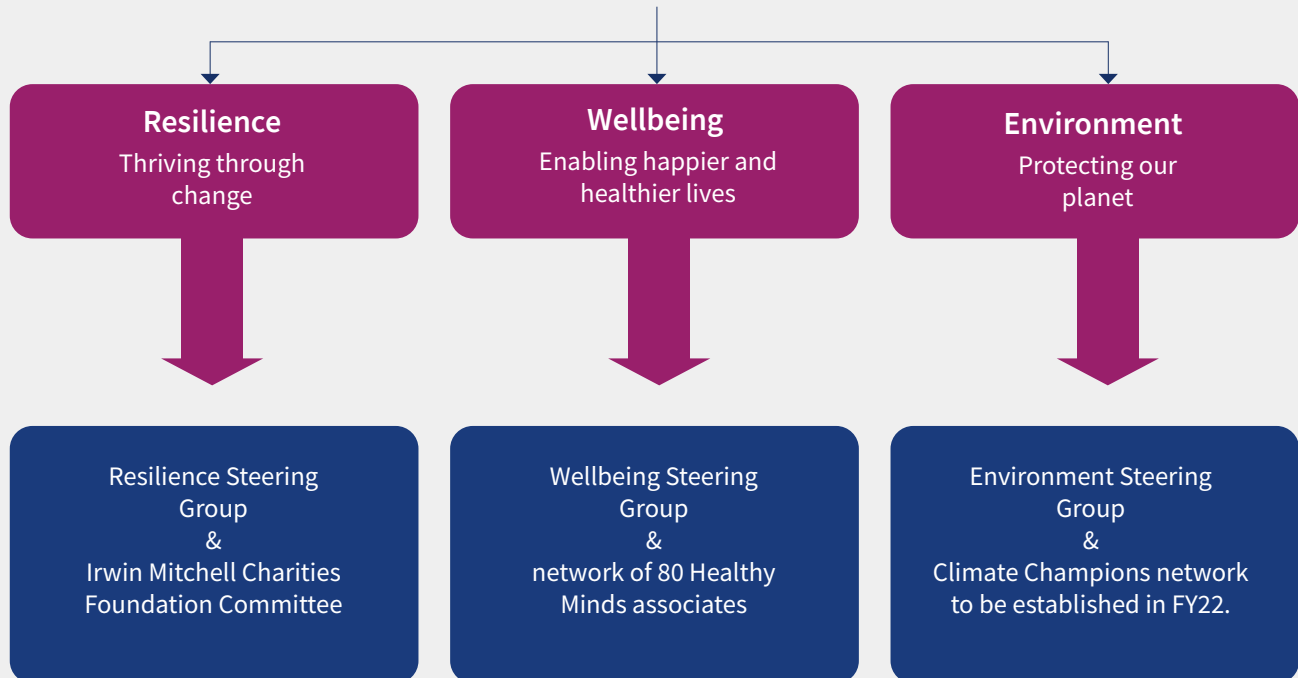
1 (Level 4)

# Sustainability



Our priority UN Sustainable Development Goals

For further information please visit: <https://sdgs.un.org/goals>

**Sustainability: Making everything we do positively impact our future****Sustainability focus areas advise our Responsible Business Management Committee**



## Wellbeing – enabling happier and healthier lives

We've significantly increased our focus on wellbeing over the last five years and aim to take a personalised approach, influenced and evidenced by data and science. We're working to embed empathy and psychological wellbeing in our services and DNA, equip colleagues to proactively manage their own wellbeing and provide careers that support a good balance with safe and secure working communities.



Centre of Excellence  
for Wellbeing - Great  
Place To Work



Signatories of the  
Mindful Business  
and Mindful  
Employers Charters

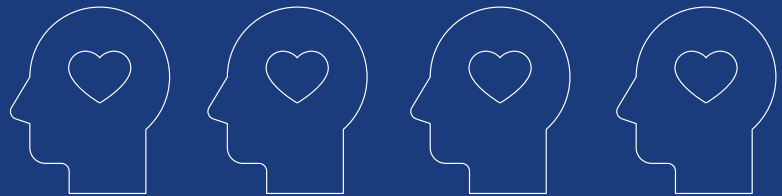


Highest marks in  
cohort for Wellbeing  
in Business in the  
Community's Responsible  
Business Tracker

# Key Wellbeing Highlights FY21

## Great Place To Work

We saw improvements in our Great Place to Work survey results for wellbeing, with a 19% increase for good work/life balance and a 7% increase for a psychologically healthy place to work.



## Quarterly pulse

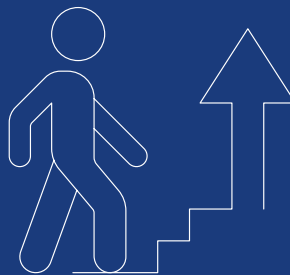
Quarterly pulse surveys informed our move to a more proactive and preventative wellbeing approach, along with 2,000 colleague responses to our survey with The Positive Group.

## Wellbeing Day

A 'Wellbeing Day' was introduced to give colleagues time to focus on themselves in Winter 2020 and 2021.

## Healthy Minds Advocates

Over 80 colleagues trained as Healthy Minds Advocates by Mental Health First Aid England and over 73% of line managers trained to support mental health in their teams.



## Positive Leaders Programme

200 senior colleagues participated in our 'Positive Leaders Programme,' delivered by The Positive Group, on embedding the foundations of psychological health into their teams.

## Disability sports

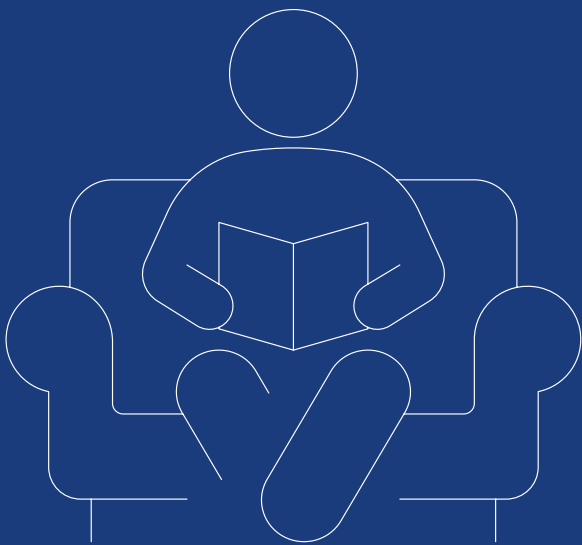
Continuing partnerships championed the benefits of disability sports, including British Wheelchair Basketball, Boccia England and Hannah Cockcroft MBE. programme.

## Flexible by Choice

Our Flexible by Choice (Flexible by Success for Ascent) approach launched offering colleagues freedom to choose when and where they work.

## Attrition decrease

We have seen a decrease in attrition by 7.61% and year-on-year improvements since implementing our wellbeing programme.





# Wellbeing - Colleagues

## A preventative approach

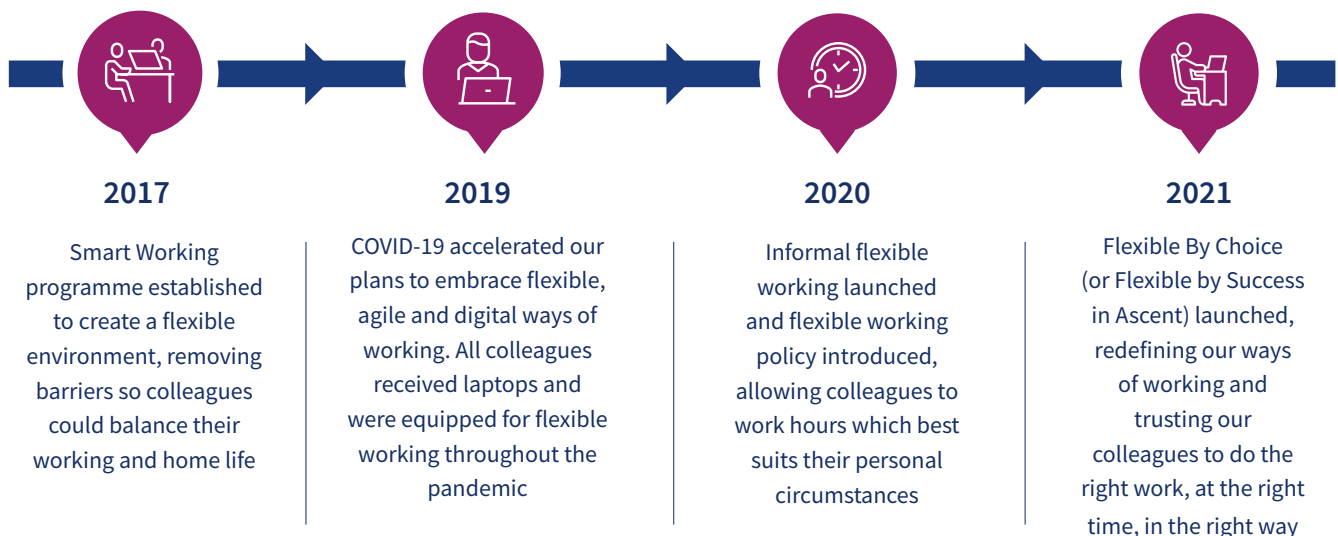
Our wellbeing strategy, part of our colleague commitment and developed with our wellbeing networks is based on the Great Place To Work Excellence model. It focuses on:

- Fulfilment at work
- Interpersonal relationships
- Work-life balance
- Mental and physical health
- Work environment
- Financial security.

We've moved towards a more preventative approach to wellbeing, tackling the root of problems facing our colleagues and focusing on knowledge, data and social learning. This helps us equip our colleagues to recognise the mental health impacts and seek help.

Wellbeing is included on our risk register, as well as our Balanced Scorecard, so our Board has oversight and can monitor progress monthly. While we have increased our focus on wellbeing throughout the pandemic our existing infrastructure and expertise enabled us to step up to the unprecedented circumstances.

## Supporting our colleagues' wellbeing through flexible working



By enabling a more flexible approach to the way we work...

...we're supporting our colleagues to balance their work and personal lives, whether it's to attend medical appointments, manage caring responsibilities or to make morning prayers during Eid.

It's all part of valuing our colleagues for who they are and what they bring.

### Supporting our colleagues and their families

Last year, we launched a Family Leave Portal to provide support for our colleagues' wellbeing when they take family leave and for our line managers to keep in touch.

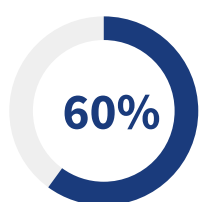
Supported by our diversity and inclusion networks, we enhanced our family leave policies, introducing them in July 2021, including:

- Enhanced Shared Parental Leave pay so it's in line with our current enhanced Maternity and Adoption pay
- Increased Paternity Leave from two weeks to four weeks' pay, regardless of length of service
- Removed the time limit for colleagues undertaking fertility treatment
- Flexibility to take parental leave as single days, rather than in one block
- Removed the limit for our enhanced adoption, maternity and shared parental pay so colleagues benefit from these from the first day they join
- Provided five days additional leave for those fostering
- Enhanced our Parental Bereavement Leave Policy to include and support our colleagues through loss of a child regardless of age and miscarriage.

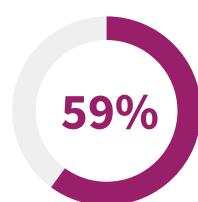
### Measuring progress

We monitor and analyse data, including absence, return to work and occupational health. Using our employee assistance programme to focus our interventions, we measure how well we're supporting our colleagues' wellbeing. Our quarterly pulse surveys feed into our Balanced Scorecard, monitored by our Board, and we monitor the Great Place To Work survey annually. By looking at this at team and divisional levels, we can create action plans and review these throughout the year. Our senior sponsors for wellbeing share updates to colleagues at live Q&A sessions and in regular articles and to line managers in our fortnightly leadership update. Our Healthy Minds Advocates group catch up monthly to act on feedback from colleagues and any concerning trends.

### Our Great Place To Work data

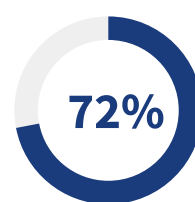


2019

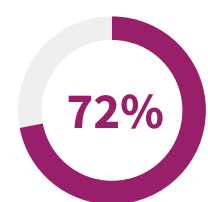


2020

This is a psychologically and emotionally healthy place to work



2019



2020

People are encouraged to balance their work life and personal life

# Wellbeing - Clients

Being the expert hand with the human touch ensures we support the wellbeing of our clients by forging strong and close relationships built on trust.

We help our clients navigate some of life's most crucial moments. In doing so, we strive to make a real difference for every person and every business that we work with. It's because of this that we take the time to learn about our clients' situations and goals for the future, so that we can support them to achieve these.

As well as supporting the wellbeing of our clients, we also:



Provide world-class medical negligence expertise in areas including birth injuries, orthopaedic injuries and cancer misdiagnosis claims to ensure our clients access the support needed to enjoy the best quality of life possible, including specialist rehabilitation and support services to assist with recovery



Train healthcare providers sharing the vital insights we acquire through our expertise in medical negligence, workplace illness and serious injury to improve future safety and care standards



Commission research on the impact of divorce on wellbeing and campaigning for changes to the standards in family law to remove unnecessary stress from the process of splitting from a spouse



Run virtual 'General Counsel Coffee Breaks' to provide general counsels training on topics such as resilience and driving change and to connect them with peers to share their experiences, challenges and solutions



Hold regular virtual events and producing podcasts in partnership with our clients on topics including coping with bereavement, emotional challenges of running family businesses, and the impact of suffering a life changing injury.

# Wellbeing - Communities

Our desire to promote good health and wellbeing extends to our communities. We're passionate about the power sport in boosting both mental and physical health.

While we use our legal expertise to support a number of sporting institutions, we've also seen first-hand the difference being active can have on the quality of life of our clients. It's because of this that we champion disability sports and partner with a variety of individuals and organisations.

Our partnerships include:

- Paralympian wheelchair racer Hannah Cockroft MBE
- Para-table tennis player Ross Wilson
- The only female tetraplegic racing driver in the world, Nathalie McGloin
- Power chair football athlete Harry Shenton
- Commercial partner of **British Wheelchair Basketball** supporting the sport to develop grassroots community initiatives and grow access and participation for the sport
- Assisting **Boccia England**, as official partner since 2015, to increase its profile nationally, help identify players for their talent pathway and signpost players to their club network. Many of our colleagues also volunteer to set up Boccia clubs, as Boccia is the only sporting option for many severely disabled and older people with limited motor skills
- Supporting **England Amputee Football Association League** to launch a Junior program, run development and awareness sessions, operate the EAFL National League, send National squads to compete in and win International competitions and increase participation within the sport for amputees.

Supporting youth rugby



**IM** irwinmitchell  
MENTORING CLUB

As the official legal partner of England Rugby, we've helped them introduce a legal and tax helpline to support member clubs and developed a new mentoring programme for young players.

The programme aims to keep more young people in the sport for longer, and create a community of adult mentors across England to support 35,000 14 to 18-year-old players navigate the unique challenges at that age.



As the new official legal partner, we'll be working alongside British Rowing to ensure rowing continues to be one of Great Britain's most successful Olympic sports. As well as sharing our expertise on diversity and inclusion to ensure that the sport's more accessible to a wider audience.



We're excited at the potential this partnership has to deliver tangible change – not only to our affiliated clubs and members, but also with respect to our ongoing work in making rowing an inclusive and diverse sport that welcomes and has an offer for everyone.

**Andy Parkinson**  
British Rowing CEO



Our partnership with British Wheelchair Basketball includes supporting the organisation to develop grassroots community initiatives and grow access and participation for the sport.



As a sport we are about to enter one of our most progressive periods of change in our history, which will see British Wheelchair Basketball come ever closer to realising its ambitious five-year strategy goals. It is critical to our continued success that we are working with like-minded partners, who are driven to deliver change, committed to equality and support the important aspirations of our organisation, our athletes and participants

**Lisa Pearce**  
CEO of British Wheelchair Basketball



The Irwin Mitchell Charities Foundation was set up by colleagues to support those experiencing hardship and distress in our communities.

After the initial lockdown in April 2021, the Irwin Mitchell Charities Foundation (IMCF), funded by donations by our organisation and colleagues, donated £65,000 to good causes supporting the front line COVID relief effort. Each office was given £5,000 to split between up to five local good causes.



## Resilience – thriving through change

Thanks to the resilience we've developed within our colleagues and organisation we were able to absorb the challenges presented by COVID-19 to enjoy our 11th consecutive year of growth. We've incorporated resilience into our Responsible Business Strategy business to ensure we continue to strengthen our ability to thrive through change while extending our expertise to help our clients and communities do the same.



**A Great Place To Work**  
78% +5  
Trust 76% +2  
Engagement 79% +3



**New Supplier Management Framework to embed Inclusion and Sustainability into our supply chain**



**Certified international security standard ISO ISO/IEC 27001:2013**



# Key Resilience Highlights FY21



## GPTW scores

We saw improvements in our Great Place To Work scores.



## Online Leadership Academy

We launched an Online Leadership Academy to accelerate development and learning of our leaders, together with a Leadership Framework and toolkits to support managers during COVID-19.



## Awards wins

We won awards for both our inclusive and accessible annual conference for colleagues and for our pandemic response at the Communication and Engagement awards.

## Strategic Growth Plan

Our Strategic Growth Plan and new organisational structure announced to deliver our plans to expand our business sustainably over the next four years.



## Charity of the year

Over £250,000 in total was donated by the Irwin Mitchell Charities Foundation to our 13 Charities of the Year and to support the COVID-19 relief effort and homeless charities.

## IMCF work in communities

An additional £560,000 was donated to the Irwin Mitchell Charities Foundation to support good causes in our communities over the next five years.

# Resilience - Colleagues

## Preparing for the future

We've supported our clients through two world wars, economic ups and downs, and vast changes to our society. Our resilience has ensured we've emerged from more than a century of business as a strong, trusted brand with values that stand the test of time. With the pace of change set to continue increase, we're pooling expertise from across our business to ensure we can better support our colleagues, clients and communities to thrive through inevitable change. Led by Senior Associate Sarah Garrington, the team will ensure that resilience is fully embedded into our Group strategy, including:

- Purposeful leadership that ensures a healthy, compliant and agile culture
- Preparing for and managing risk in everything we do
- Developing enduring relationships with suppliers which embrace inclusion and sustainability via our supplier management framework.

## Sharing a clear vision

Outside of our wellbeing programme, we make sure our people are resilient by providing purposeful and clear leadership. Making sure our colleagues all understand our ambition, strategy and values is a key part of this.

### Over the past four years we've worked together to develop our:

- Strategy
- Vision
- Purpose
- Future State
- DNA.

These incredible foundations have led us to the next chapter in the evolution of our business. This sees us changing how we're structured to deliver our Strategic Growth Plan (SGP) and enhance our focus on becoming a truly client-centric business. We embed these key components through strategic internal communication developed by our award-winning communications team, and through engagement at a department and team level.



Resilience about developing is our capacity to absorb shocks and thrive through change, not only in the way we support our colleagues and clients, but also by building resilience within our communities.

**Sarah Garrington**

Senior Associate and Head of Resilience

The introduction of Microsoft Teams and move to virtual events has accelerated our communications strategy and made our leaders more visible and accessible than ever before. During the pandemic we launched weekly all colleague Q&A sessions with our Board members, which, based on the needs of our colleagues, have evolved to run monthly. These have been attended on average by 500 (20%) of colleagues each month. We also listen to our colleagues' feedback through regular pulse surveys, ensuring that they have the tools and support they require to confidently and securely support our clients and our business.

In addition, our annual conference, which was previously an in person event for partners and associates, moved to being virtual and fully inclusive to all colleagues. As a result, we've seen improvements to our Great Place To Work scores around understanding of our strategy and employee engagement. The conference won an award at the Communication and Engagement awards, alongside awards for our response to the pandemic and the integration of our internal and external communications.

### Purposeful leadership

Our leaders impact and influence everything our colleagues do, so equipping them to support teams through change is vital. This year our Organisational Development team have:



Continued to embed our Leadership Framework, setting out examples of what great leadership does and doesn't look like



Helped our leaders navigate the different phases of our people measures during the pandemic with a focus on protecting our business and supporting the wellbeing of our colleagues



Devised additional toolkits for managers, covering topics such as organisational agility and change



Launched our online Leadership Academy, a new resource for all colleagues to help accelerate development and learning of our leaders



Introduced 360 feedback for our senior leaders, allowing them to gather insightful information on how they are performing as a leader, from a representative sample of colleagues they work with.

# Resilience - Clients

## Helping our clients build resilience

The practical and sector-specific advice we offer to clients ensures they can build operational and organisational resilience through their specific regulatory and compliance requirements. Our legal experts ensure that we advise clients of options supporting their long-term sustainability, supporting them to ensure their financial, emotional and organisational resilience as a minimum. We help firms anticipate potential regulatory issues in the future and plan ahead to overcome them as effectively as possible.

Different entities within our Group are regulated by either the Solicitors Regulatory Authority or the Financial Conduct Authority.



### We help clients:

- Develop compliant policies and procedures
- Stay up-to-date with regulatory changes
- Report the right information to your regulators
- Audit businesses for existing compliance issues
- Manage regulatory investigations and fitness to practice hearings.

We ensure that we support all our clients by sharing best practice and complying with the most stringent requirements of our regulators and stakeholders. All data is processed securely so that we operate in a compliant, responsible and conscientious manner.

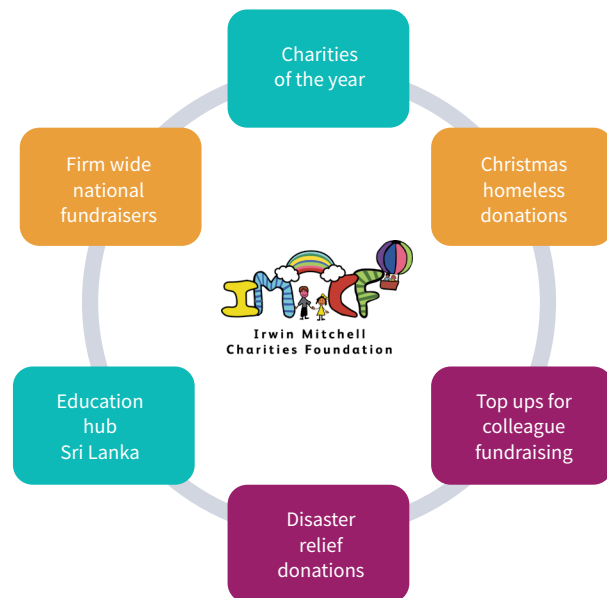
Our Business Continuity programme is committed to ensuring that our client service delivery is maintained during any disruption, and was successfully implemented through the COVID-19 pandemic.

# Resilience - Communities

## The Irwin Mitchell Charities Foundation

The IMCF was set up by our partners and employees in 1997 as an independent registered charity.

Since then, we've helped the IMCF raise over £2.5m for small to mid-sized charities and good causes, which are more economically vulnerable due to their lack of funding, helping build resilience in our communities.



### The IMCF objectives are:

1. Promotion of charitable purposes for the benefit of the community generally;
2. The relief of poverty in cases of need, hardship or distress; and
3. General charitable purposes where the Trustees have discretion as to the charities selected.

Since its inception, the IMCF has benefited a wide range of good causes, from hospices to homeless shelters, which are put forward by colleagues in our regions each year and then selected via an annual voting system.

A designated charity committee in each office meets regularly to discuss donation requests and plan fundraising initiatives. Wherever possible, the committee supports the efforts of colleagues to raise money for a wide variety of charities with top-up donations. Employees are also encouraged to sign up to a Give As You Earn (GAYE) scheme and donate a small sum from their salary each month, with donations matched by the firm (up to £20).

## Our Covid-19 response

Not only did Covid-19 increase the need for services provided by charities, it also created unprecedented challenges towards fundraising.

Having a proportion of our people placed on furlough or juggling work and home-schooling, lockdown restrictions dealt a significant blow to our ability to raise funds for the IMCF.

Despite our best efforts make the most of virtual fundraising events we were unable to continue the streak of increased annual Charity of the Year totals we've achieved in the past few years, reflected in a 63% year-on-year decrease.

## £155K

In total we raised over £155,000 for our 13 Charities of the Year, via the IMCF, who used reserve funds to double the amount raised by colleagues and added an additional top up of 10%.

## £130K

In 2020 the IMCF also donated £130,000 to charities supporting the Covid relief effort and homeless charities, (£28,000 of which was directed to some of our Charities of the Year and reflected in our annual total). We also highlighted the pressures faced by the foodbanks and homeless shelters we donated to by producing a special report and podcast.

## £250K

In total the IMCF donated over £250,000 to our Charities of the Year and other great causes in the past year.

## Our charities of the year 2021



Because of the impact of the pandemic on our fundraising abilities our committees elected to continue supporting our 2020 Charities of the Year throughout 2021.



### Ensuring the IMCF's Future

As part of our commitment at the end of FY21 we were able to donate an additional £500,000 to the IMCF. Throughout 2021 our teams will work with the IMCF to help them develop a grant making programme to support our communities over the next five years. We look forward to updating our audiences on what this looks like in future reports.

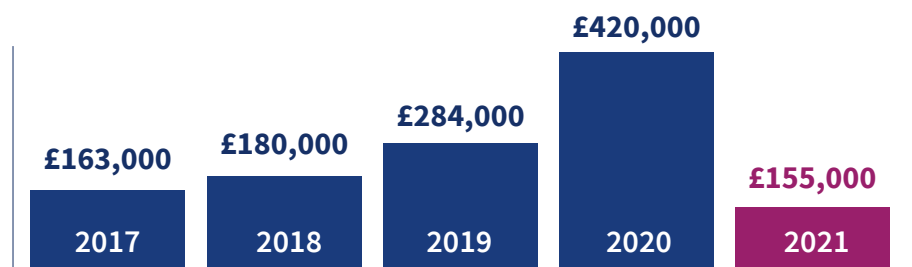
### Funds raised by Irwin Mitchell for the IMCF during the pandemic

Despite Covid-19 challenges, we set ourselves a reduced target of raising £240,000 for the IMCF during FY21 in our Balanced Score Card (42% less than what we raised in the previous year).

It is testament to our community spirit that our people were able to help us exceed our reduced target by 17.5% (£282,210 raised for IMCF by Irwin Mitchell during FY21).

As well as matching the Give As You Earn donation, we also donate £50,000 per year to the IMCF. In FY21 we donated an additional £60,000 to the IMCF to support our struggling Charities of the Year.

### IMCF Charity of The Year Donations



I am writing to express my sincere thanks to you and your colleagues who have raised the fantastic sum of £45k for the Sheffield Children's Hospital Charity. A truly outstanding achievement.

It has been an extremely challenging year for all businesses, but charities like ours have been particularly hard hit; as so much of our income is derived from community workplace events. This makes the sum raised even more impressive, as most of the money was raised against the background of lockdown and home working.

#### Paul Firth

Excerpt from a letter sent by Paul Firth, Chairman of the Sheffield Children's Hospital Charity following the IMCF donation of £45,000 raised throughout 2020



## Environment – protecting our planet

Although our environment focus area isn't new, we've significantly increased resource and expertise in this area to ensure we can adapt to the magnitude of the challenges presented by the climate emergency. Not only are we committed to understanding and improving our own impact, but we're also considering ways we can better support our clients and communities in taking climate action.



Founding members of  
Legal Sustainability  
Alliance



10% increase in  
Climate Action  
score in Business in  
the Community's  
Responsible Business  
Tracker



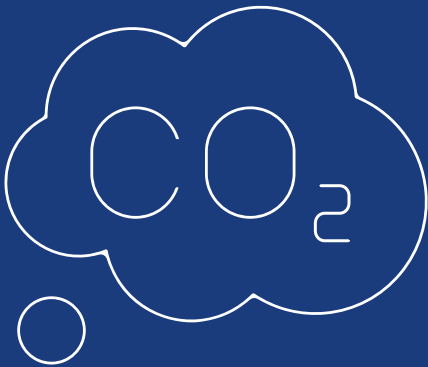
Signatory to Legal  
Renewables Initiative.  
Committed to  
switching to certified  
100% renewable  
electricity by 2025 in  
all of our locations



Accredited with ISO  
14001:2015 and  
ISO 50001:2018  
environmental and  
energy standards



# Key Environment Highlights FY21

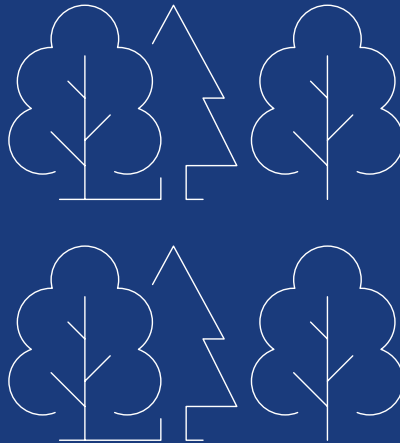


## Year-on-year emissions

We increased investment in technology and set targets to maintain reduced printing and travel levels, building on significant improvements on our reduced emissions year-on-year.

## Carbon Intelligence

We commissioned Carbon Intelligence to review our environmental impacts, with strategists, technologists, data scientists and engineers informing our future ambitious carbon goals.



## Rainforest Trust

We donated £6,000 to the Rainforest Trust UK to support a project to save highland wildlife paradise in Nepal and Trees for Life to plant trees in the UK and key projects.

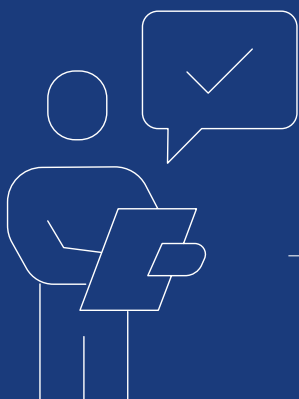
## Working with Red-Inc

We planted 7,092 trees and protected 4,168 acres of rainforest through our work with Red-Inc, a certified B Corp stationary supplier.



## Silver ranking

We improved from basic to silver and ranked in the top 25% with EcoVadis, a global, independent ratings platform for corporate social responsibility and sustainable procurement.



# Environment - Colleagues

We recognise the vital need for everyone to step up their commitment on climate action. We're proud our recent efforts have been reflected in our improved scores in BITC's Responsible Business Tracker, taking us 3% above our cohort average of 20%. But we recognise the urgency and need to go further.

We're continuing to focus on digital ways of working, increasing our investment in technology and undertaking a comprehensive review of our environmental impacts through an externally led assessment led by Carbon Intelligence.

Their team of strategists, technologists, data scientists and engineers will conduct an audit of our Scope 1, 2 and 3 emissions, which will support us to identify our key areas of focus and priority. Armed with a full understanding of our impacts, we'll explore our options for setting our future ambitious carbon goals before the end of FY22. Director of Operations Sarah Ball continues as our Senior Sponsor for Environment and we successfully appointed an Environmental and Sustainability Manager, Louise Needham, who joined us in September 2021 to drive forward this important work.

## Our data

We have current UK Government environmental reporting guidance, using the GHG Protocol Corporate Accounting and Reporting Standard (revised edition) and emission factors from the UK Government's GHG Conversion Factors for Company reporting 2020 to calculate the disclosures in the table on the following page. We showed a significant improvement year-on-year. While this was largely due to the impact of COVID-19, we're aspiring to keep improving, decoupling our growth from our environmental impact. As we look ahead, we'll explore adopting best practice when it comes to our environmental reporting, such as Task Force on Climate-related Financial Disclosures (TCFD).

### GHG emissions and energy usage data for period 01 May 2020 to 30 April 2021

Emissions from combustion of gas (Scope 1 - tonnes of CO<sub>2</sub>e)

Emissions from combustion of fuel for transport purposes  
(Scope 1 - tonnes of CO<sub>2</sub>e)

Emissions from electricity purchased for own use including  
for the purpose of transport (scope 2 - tonnes of CO<sub>2</sub>e)

Emissions from business travel in rental cars or employee-  
owned vehicles where company is responsible for purchasing  
the fuel (scope 3 - tonnes of CO<sub>2</sub>e)

Total gross CO<sub>2</sub> based on above

Office energy consumption to calculate emissions kwh

Scope 1 Tonnes CO<sub>2</sub> emissions per m<sup>2</sup> office space occupied

Scope 2 Tonnes CO<sub>2</sub> emissions per m<sup>2</sup> office space occupied

CO<sub>2</sub> emissions per employee

FY20 Tonnes	FY21 Tonnes
21	Not reported
490	1,008
1,074	1,358
16	217
1,602	2,583
4,722,421	5,304,469
0.0009	Not reported
0.0132	0.0152
0.412	0.525

The pandemic accelerated our plans to focus our activity on becoming a digital business, positively improving our environmental impact. With the vast majority of colleagues working from home, our business travel and printing levels were significantly reduced leading to a reduction in our carbon emissions.

As we move out of the current phase of COVID-19 restrictions and continue our plans for growth, we're aiming to further reduce our impact. To achieve this, we've added thresholds in our 2021-22 Balanced Scorecard to ensure travel and printing levels remain significantly lower than pre-pandemic. These translate into our objectives making it a shared responsibility.

#### Travel

Our 'Flexible By Choice' (Flexible by Success for Ascent) approach means that as long as we continue to deliver our excellent client services, ensure regulatory compliance and take into account the needs of the business, colleagues can work when and where they want. Our guidance actively encourages colleagues to think about the environmental impact when deciding whether to work from one of our offices and only travel when there's a genuine need.

To encourage greener modes of transport we offer:

- A Ride to Work scheme, allowing our permanent employees to acquire tax-deducted cycling equipment with a value of up to £1,000
- Interest-free loans to help colleagues fund public transport season tickets
- Hybrid and electric vehicles in our car fleet.

# Environment - Clients

We offer a wide range of services to help clients comply with the latest planning and regulatory laws around the environment. These include:

 <p><b>Built heritage – including listed building status</b></p>	 <p><b>Environmental impact assessments</b></p>	 <p><b>Renewable energy planning issues</b></p>
 <p><b>Waste management</b></p>	 <p><b>Town or village greens and green space issues</b></p>	 <p><b>Water resources, including pollution and flooding.</b></p>

In addition to the environmental services we provide to clients, our digitisation strategy has also helped us adopt greener ways of supporting our clients, including:

- Electronic signing of documents
- Scanning of all incoming post where we've had to continue to receive incoming paper post
- Use of IM Share which allows secure storage and transfer of documents with other law firms, our clients, experts and the court
- A move to virtual events, which we estimate not only reduced our costs by over £100,000 but were attended by over 15,000 guests and lowered our carbon emissions by 11.35 tonnes of Co2, the equivalent of a car driving 28,000 miles or charging 150,000 smart phones
- The development of our picture archiving solution for medical records (PACS), so medical records can be viewed and shared securely between organisations without the need for printing.

# Environment - Communities

## Supply chain

We've made significant investment to increase the size of our Procurement team in the last year, allowing us to create a Supplier Relationship Management Framework that ensures our supply chain is increasingly inclusive and sustainable. In addition to learning from and sharing best practice with our suppliers, we've also incorporated environmental checks into our Due Diligence Questionnaires for all suppliers. We now require our critical suppliers to demonstrate their sustainability credentials, which are evaluated and scored, as part of our tender process.

## Making a difference with our suppliers

Given that one of our biggest impacts is our use of paper, we work very closely with our supplier Red-Inc who challenge us on the resource efficiency of the products we use, as well as the volume and frequency of our purchases and deliveries. We also take part in a variety of their schemes which support Trees for Life, a charity working to revitalise wild forests in the Highlands of Scotland, and The Rainforest Trust UK.

For every box of paper that we buy, Red-Inc, a certified B Corp, protect half an acre of threatened rainforest in Peru, fund the planting of critical trees in Madagascar and support the employment of locals to grow, plant and protect to maturity native trees, and plant trees in the Caledonia Forest, Scotland.



**7,092**

trees  
planted



**4,168**

acres of rainforest  
protected



Red-Inc have also supported us in switching to more sustainable products, including Cheeky Panda tissues in our client meeting rooms, providing a sustainable bamboo alternative to tree-based tissues and more environmentally friendly legal document wallet. Our old wallets included materials which are hard to recycle, whereas the replacement product has the parts made of durable 100% recyclable “kraft” material. We’ve also changed our lever arch files to ones that can be recycled and contain 70% recycled plastics.



From a technology perspective, we’re beginning our journey away from on premise data centres towards the cloud. As part of our growing capability within our Procurement team, we’re starting to take advantage of the environmental credentials and strategic plans of our suppliers to help us drive this change.



We’re also working with Vision, our managed print service partner, to review our printing and scanning fleet. We’ve embarked on a roll-out programme to replace our aged equipment with new printing and scanning equipment, working to reduce our printing fleet by half.

### Christmas trees

Rather than putting Christmas trees in each of our offices in 2020 over the festive season, we donated £6,000 to:

- Rainforest Trust UK to support their project to save a highland wildlife paradise in Nepal. Our donation was quadrupled by generous supporters of Rainforest Trust, meaning that we have saved four times as much forest for wildlife, communities and the climate – a total of 2,910 acres.
- Trees for Life to plant trees in the UK and to support other key projects within their organisation.

Together we'll  
become a leading  
Responsible  
Business.

Being a purpose-led organisation  
means we're committed to creating  
value beyond profit for everyone we  
work with and support.



Expert Hand. Human Touch.

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