

RESPONSIBLE BUSINESS REPORT 2023

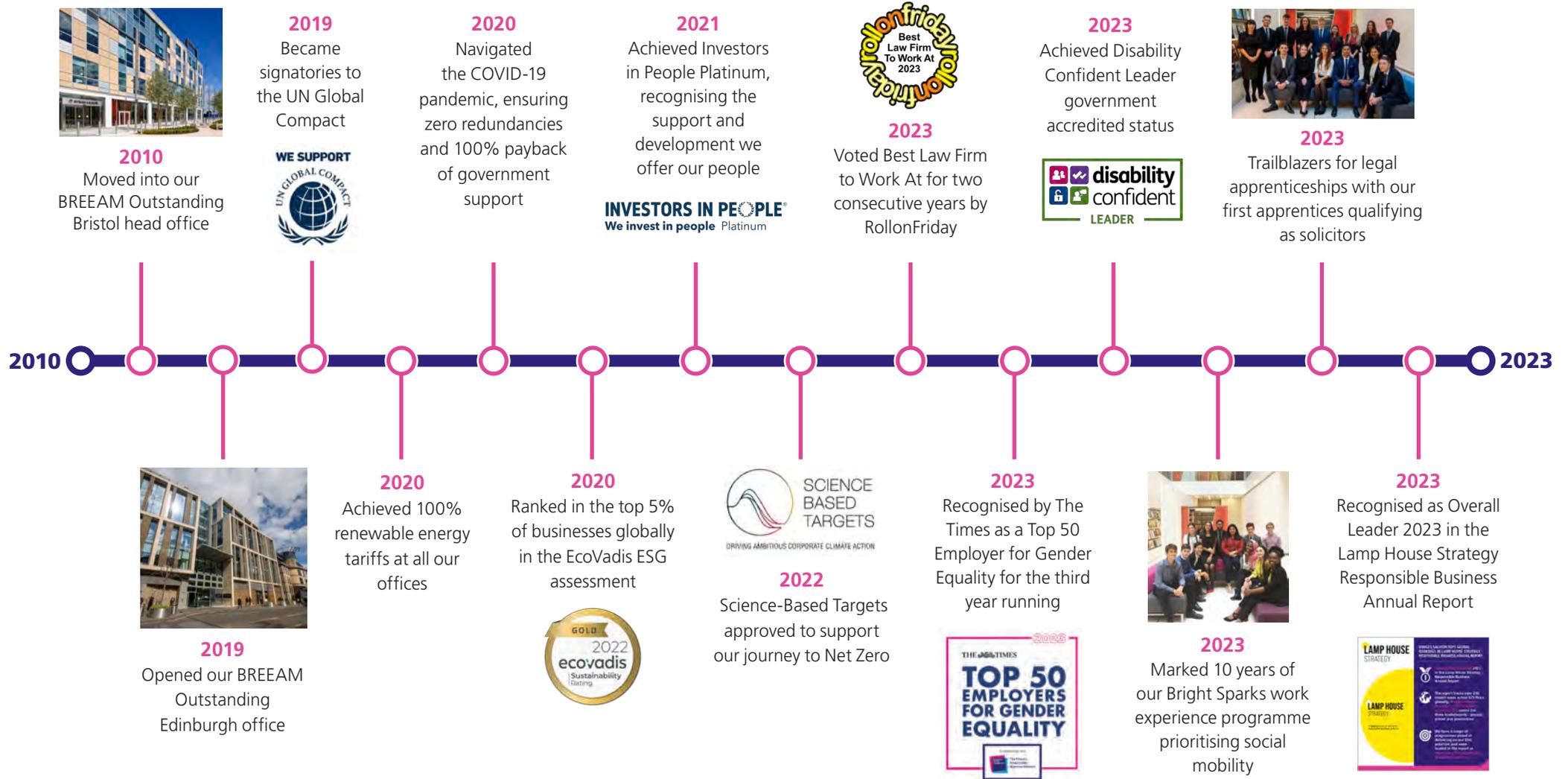
# ESG Performance as a Responsible Business

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# Our responsible business timeline



# Welcome

As Managing Partner and Senior Partner we are proud to be part of a business that genuinely cares about our people, our communities and the environment.

We work alongside people motivated to deliver against key societal challenges such as social mobility, low carbon communities and equality in education. As a firm we have pushed and tested ourselves to see what a responsible business can be. We are delighted to have received recognition for this work, being rated by Lamp House as the top responsible law firm in an analysis of 125 firms in the UK, US and Canada.

We continue to evolve our approach to responsible business and make progress towards our 10 responsible business ambitions for 2026. As signatories to the UN Global Compact we remain committed to the Principles of Responsible Business and contribute towards the advancement of the UN Sustainable Development Goals – a critical framework for ensuring all businesses make substantive contributions to a sustainable future.

Listening forms a critical part of how we deliver a successful and responsible business. We listen to our clients, to understand their needs and identify how we can support them in transitioning to a sustainable future. We listen to our people, to understand how we can build a better and fairer workplace. We listen to our communities, taking time to understand the challenges present and work alongside community partners to deliver the solutions.

Our ongoing financial performance remains a focus of our business strategy, as our success in turn supports our people, clients and communities to flourish. In the financial year 2022/23 our revenue grew by 8% to just over £128.5 million, allowing us to re-invest in our business, reward our people and deliver £470,000 in community investments and financial equivalents. We saw double digit growth in a number of our sectors such as Transport, Energy & Utilities and the Public Sector, as well as in a variety of practice areas, including Defence, Dispute Resolution, Planning & Compulsory Purchase, Construction & Engineering, Real Estate and Defence.

In this year's report you will hear about mentoring projects opening up access to careers, employment programmes for disabled and neurodivergent people, climate workshops future-proofing business and numerous collaborations with clients and other stakeholders across all areas of ESG. We value your feedback on our approach and this report, so please use the button at the bottom of the page to share your thoughts with us. This will help us to strengthen our ESG actions year after year.

[Click here to give us your feedback](#)



Chris Seaton  
Senior Partner

Roger Bull  
Managing Partner

**“As a firm we have pushed and tested ourselves to see what a responsible business can be.”**

# About us

Burges Salmon is an ambitious, sustainable and inclusive firm that ensures its clients, people and wider communities flourish.



Our clients range from the largest private and public sector organisations and institutions, to entrepreneurial businesses, as well as wealthy individuals and families.

Working from our offices in Bristol, Edinburgh, London and Dublin, we have built a progressive service culture based on collaboration and teamwork. This is shaped around the needs of our clients, to deliver excellent service.

We operate in markets where our experience, knowledge and skills deliver highly effective solutions to our clients' complex needs.

We work for clients in all three UK jurisdictions and across the globe, through our Preferred Firms Network. We collaborate with leading international independent law firms to provide clients with excellent service and advice.



**STRATEGIC PURPOSE**

We are an ambitious, sustainable and inclusive firm that ensures its clients, people and wider communities flourish.

# Our responsible business approach

We strive for best practice, acting on stakeholder feedback and utilising external assessments and benchmarks to make continuous improvements.

We are signatories of the **UN Global Compact** and members of **Business in The Community (BITC)** and we use these resources to inform our responsible business approach. Our approach aligns with the **UN Global Compact Ten Principles** and the materiality assessment of the **UN Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs)** we understand and direct our efforts where we can have the greatest impact.

We are recognised as a leader in ESG performance. In our 2022 **EcoVadis assessment we ranked in the top 5% of participants globally** and were recognised as 'advanced' across the three main pillars of ethics, environment, labour practices and human rights, and 'good' in terms of sustainable procurement. Other independent research in the legal sector conducted by RSGI Limited (a global think tank for the legal industry) and Impactvise (a legally focused ESG and technology consultancy) also **ranked us as ESG leaders amongst law firms globally**.

Our responsible business framework sets out our **five priorities to deliver our strategic purpose**. They guide us on where to focus our internal initiatives, how we can maximise impact through our core legal services and which not-for-profit organisations to partner with for the biggest positive impact.

## OUR AMBITION

We strive to achieve the highest standards in the marketplace, have an inclusive and engaging workplace, minimise environmental impact and give back to the community. We have defined 10 ambitions to achieve in five years, from 1 May 2021 to 30 April 2026, which are aligned with the firm's strategy.

This report is structured to provide progress updates relating to all five of our core responsible business objectives, as well as our 10 ambitions.

Therefore, 2023 data had been subject to Independent Limited Assurance by ERM CVS for selected Key Performance Indicators (KPIs). A copy of the Assurance Report can be found in the [appendix](#). Please refer to the [Basis of Reporting](#) in the provided link for further details of how we have prepared our data we have reported on.



Our responsible business framework

# Delivering responsible business

Roxanne Ratcliff is Head of Corporate Responsibility and drives the firm's responsible business agenda.

She contributes to our work on ESG, net zero and inclusive employment whilst additionally advising and collaborating with clients as a sustainability professional. Prior to joining Burges Salmon in 2019 she was on the management team of an award-winning sustainability consultancy and contributed to research for the UN, UK Government and the World Business Council for Sustainable Development.

## Why does Burges Salmon want to be a leader in responsible business?

All businesses should be challenging and transforming themselves to tackle issues such as the climate crisis and systemic inequalities. We want to build upon our values of fairness and respect to empower our people in finding the solutions to these challenges. Our ambition comes from a leadership team driven by purpose and a desire for a business with a positive legacy, with people ready to roll up their sleeves and push beyond 'good' to 'best'.

## How do you ensure the firm's approach is authentic and impactful?

The starting point is always listening to our clients and our people. We utilise community partners and external experts to guide us on best practice. We use key frameworks including EcoVadis and the Business in the Community (BITC) Responsible Business Tracker to highlight

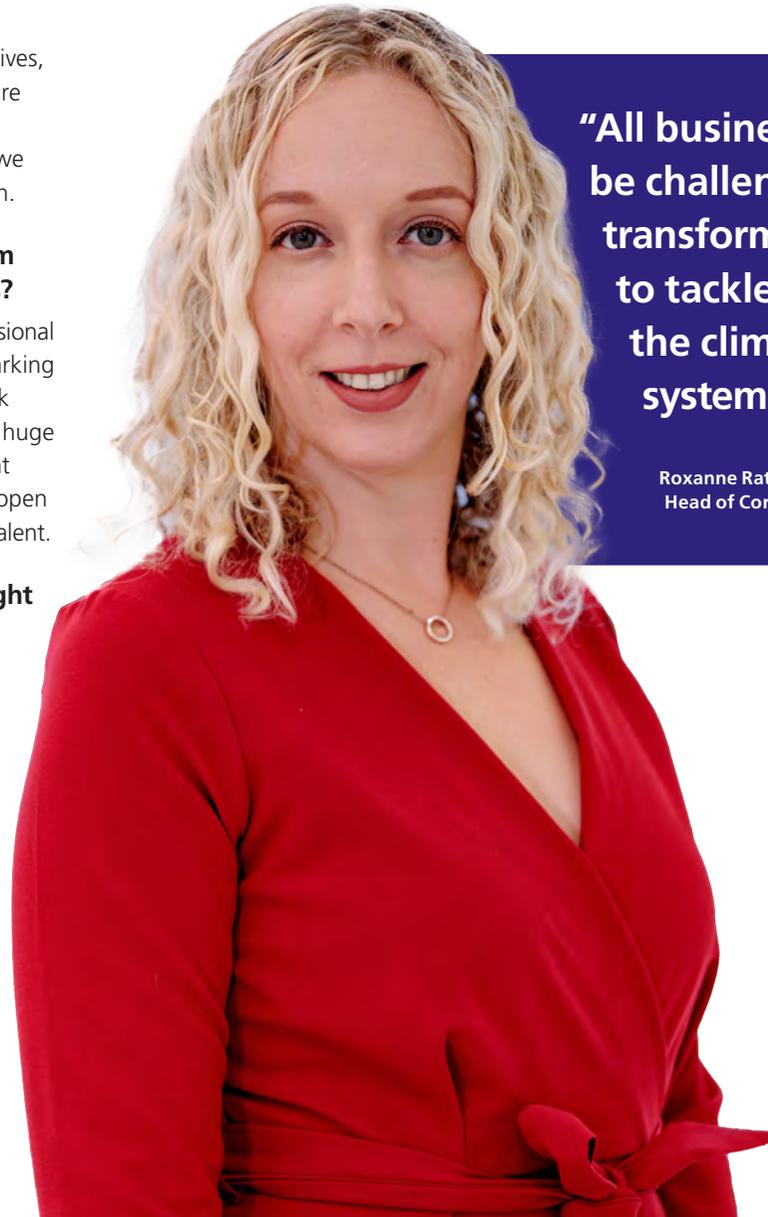
where we can improve. We set clear objectives, track KPIs and report these publicly to ensure transparency. This way, we can be held accountable and challenged if people feel we aren't being bold or moving quickly enough.

## What are you most proud of the firm achieving during the last 12 months?

Our first cohort of legal and business professional apprentices qualifying, twinned with us marking 10 years of our social mobility focused work experience programme (Bright Sparks), are huge achievements. They highlight the significant work our people have delivered to inspire, open doors and offer careers to a wide range of talent.

## What has been your personal highlight in terms of your own impact?

Spearheading the Enabled Candidates programme has been incredibly rewarding. Seeing an individual who hasn't been able to access meaningful employment due to a disability or neurodivergence successfully transition into a role at the firm is wonderful. The programme is also a great example of collaboration, with multiple teams across the business challenging what jobs should look like and how we can reengineer the way we offer roles to support people with different lived experiences.



**"All businesses should be challenging and transforming themselves to tackle issues such as the climate crisis and systemic inequalities."**

Roxanne Ratcliff  
Head of Corporate Responsibility



# ESG legal expertise

# ESG

# ESG legal expertise

We provide strategic and operational support both in helping clients manage ESG risks and realise the opportunities that arise from the ESG agenda.

Using our market-leading ESG expertise across our business, we have developed practical tools such as our ESG Risk Review, ESG Pensions Tool, ESG Corporate Disclosure Tool and our Modern Slavery Statement Compliance Check to simplify the complex and help clients understand their ESG priorities and responsibilities and to deliver on their ESG ambitions.

To assist our clients in understanding their impact, we held a GC Forum in 2023 focused on ESG and supply chain. Our GC Forum has been established to provide GCs with insight, peer support and practical guidance to identify and address the key opportunities and challenges they face in enabling transformation in their businesses.

Examples of client matters undertaken include:

- Advised key client Bluefield Solar, the UK income fund focused on acquiring and managing UK-based renewable energy and storage assets to provide growing dividends for its shareholders whilst furthering the decarbonisation of the energy system, on the successful re-financing of its £110 million three-year term loan with NatWest.

- Advised aviation fuel producer Firefly on the £5 million equity investment from Wizz Air Plc, Europe's fastest growing and most environmentally sustainable airline globally.
- Advised Gravis' infrastructure investment fund on its investment into SolarCatcher, a pioneering UK-based developer of solar-powered electric vehicle charging infrastructure.
- As lead international counsel, we advised the Facility for Energy Inclusion (FEI), FEI on its first solar mini-grid portfolio financing. FEI made \$7,500,000 of senior debt available to MySol Grid Zambia (MySol) to fund the construction of 60 solar mini-grid projects in Zambia, which will see more than 40,000 people connected to electricity in off-grid rural areas.



## ASKING THE RIGHT ESG QUESTIONS

We can help you ask the right questions, establishing what ESG really means for your business, and how we can help you achieve real value from it. Click [here](#) for more details.

## CASE STUDY

## Working to redefine conservation: Helping Oxygen Conservation to reach their tenth land acquisition as part of their ambitious plans to ‘Scale Conservation’

Since Oxygen Conservation’s formation in June 2021, we have been involved in its dynamic journey and instructed to act on the acquisition of all 10 of its beautiful and diverse sites around the British Isles, totalling nearly 30,000 acres. From the glens of the Scottish Highlands to some of the country’s most extensive tracts of ancient Atlantic rainforest in the Leighon Estate on the edge of the Dartmoor National Park, each site brings different opportunities and challenges and has enabled Oxygen Conservation to pursue a wide variety of environmental and social impact projects.

Across all 10 acquisitions, our Estates and Land team advised on deal structures, carried out legal due diligence and negotiated contract and transfer documents, taking account of the uniqueness of each site. We have also provided specialist advice on employment, intellectual property, environmental, energy, planning, and tax issues.

Alongside these significant purchase transactions, we also advised on a landmark multi-million-pound loan facility made by Triodos Bank UK in what is believed to be the largest conservation-focused commercial debt package in the UK to-date.

For more information, [click here](#)

*“None of the land acquisitions we have completed would have been possible without Burges Salmon’s expertise and timely advice. Buying land at scale in rural communities is difficult. It can be complicated and confusing but Ross and the team at Burges Salmon have helped us to achieve what many said wasn’t possible.”*

Rich Stockdale, Managing Director and Founder, Oxygen Conservation



# Wellbeing and engagement

# Wellbeing and engagement

Our aim is to make the wellbeing of our people central to the way we do things at Burges Salmon.

The focus is around educating and empowering our people to develop their own resilience levels and wellbeing practices, to ensure they bring their whole selves to work and perform to the best of their ability. We provide a working environment that drives sustainable performance through a genuine approach to wellbeing that is right for our people. This is built across the four areas of emotional, financial, mental and physical wellbeing, and allows for effective leadership and engagement at all levels.

## Highlights

- Voted RollonFriday ‘Best Law Firm to Work At 2023’
- Rolled out free access to the Headspace mental wellbeing app for all our people
- Increased the number of financial wellbeing sessions delivered, based on interest, in response to the cost of living crisis
- Scored above the cohort median in every category of BITC’s Workwell benchmarking self-assessment tool and 90% in their Responsible Business Tracker

2023 Objective	Status	Progress
To increase engagement with our financial wellbeing offering	Delivered	We provided financial wellbeing sessions during January, February, September and November. These focused on budgeting, pensions, tax and savings.
To roll out personal Wellbeing Action Plans and training	Ongoing	The Wellbeing team approved the format of the Wellbeing Action Plans. Rolling out their use to managers is in progress.
To strengthen the connection between our existing benefits offering and how it links to personal wellbeing	Delivered	We use our internal monthly Wellbeing newsletter to promote our wellbeing benefits and are designing and developing a video for people to understand what wellbeing benefits might be suitable for them depending on their concerns and whether they require support or would like to provide support to others.
2026 Ambition	Status	Year 3 progress
To enhance our Investors in People score and achieve an overall engagement score of at least 80%	On track	Our next Investors in People re-accreditation exercise will take place during spring 2024.
To enable our people in their ongoing development by investing in at least 19,500 hours per year of instructor-led training and to facilitate 14,000 visits a year to informal learning on the Learning Management System (LAB)	Under review	Since COVID-19, we have reduced the amount of in-person training and our learning & development programmes have focused on hybrid delivery and solutions.

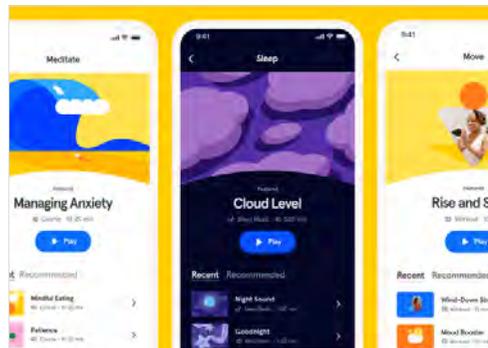
## Wellbeing

Our Wellbeing Action Plan (now in its third year) is shaped around the key themes of thriving individuals; inclusive leadership and our four pillars of wellbeing. We identified these themes through consultation with our people, our clients and communities. Through research, benchmarking against wellbeing standards, and feedback from our people, we focus on different priority areas each year.

In our latest submission to the BITC Responsible Business Tracker we achieved a score of 90% in the Health and Wellbeing section. We also completed BITC’s Workwell benchmarking self-assessment tool to serve as a baseline to identify areas for improvement. As a diagnostic tool, it assesses wellbeing strategies, measuring where organisations are in terms of Adopting, Embedding, Leading and Transforming. We are mostly in the ‘Transforming’ stage and scored above the cohort median in every category.

On World Mental Health Day, we launched a new partnership with Headspace, the mindfulness and meditation app. Research has shown that mindfulness can reduce stress, increase focus, enhance the quality of sleep and deliver mindfulness. Headspace provides a personal guide to both mindfulness and meditation with hundreds of meditations and exercises for sleep, focus and movement.

To promote mental wellbeing, our people have free access to this powerful tool and can extend access to five family members and friends. Our decision to expand the offering to family and



Headspace mindfulness and meditation app

loved ones was informed by the feedback from our people who stressed the importance of supporting their family members with mental health issues. In-person support is also available from our Mental Health First Aiders (MHFA), who work in tandem with our internal network of BWell Ambassadors to communicate and engage with our people effectively.

Throughout 2023, we held a variety of wellbeing events covering our four focus areas of emotional, financial, mental and physical

wellbeing. We prioritised mental and financial wellbeing this year to respond to wider societal themes such as the cost of living crisis. We hosted four sessions run by Better with Money focusing on budgeting and practically understanding and demystifying pensions, tax and savings. We collaborated with PCA Law to run sessions for our partners on resilience, and spotting and responding to stress in peers. Our annual wellbeing day centred on the theme “Every Mind Matters”. Hundreds of our people engaged in sessions on work-life balance and wellbeing matters, while also enjoying seated massages, postural assessments and a Burges Salmon Choir taster session.

Supporting good wellbeing means supporting our local communities too. In 2023 we sponsored the “Celebrate Life – A health & wellness retreat for women in aid of Penny Brohn Cancer Care UK” wellbeing event and donated tickets to colleagues from our community partner Heart of BS13 to attend for their own wellbeing.

### EXPERIENCE



**“In my double life as a personal trainer I have in-depth knowledge of physical wellbeing. My ‘why’ for becoming a Mental Health First Aider was so I could expand my knowledge and awareness of mental wellbeing and be able to assist in both my private and professional life. I can provide empathy and support to help process colleagues’ feelings and try to achieve better days.”**

Laura Noble, Pursuits Assistant, Marketing

**Hear about the importance of men’s mental fitness and our partnership with Talk Club**

## Engagement

We continue to deliver against our Platinum Investors in People accreditation (achieved by only 2% of organisations), the international standard for people management. Since securing Platinum in 2021 we have undertaken annual reviews to assess progress in the way we lead, support and create development opportunities for our people.

During 2023, our Managing Partner and Chief People Officer held listening sessions across the entire firm to engage with our people and encourage them to put forward ideas on how we could improve both client service delivery and the way we run our business. Those working in our legal and business teams are experts in their fields and by providing the right forum, we were able to tap into a host of excellent new ideas. 76% of our people attended the sessions and an improvement programme is now in place based on the feedback from these sessions. Responsible business actions and ambitions were captured and have been included in future plans.

We were named Best Law Firm to Work At 2023 by RollonFriday for the second consecutive year, which is based on a survey of people who work in the legal sector. Two thirds of our people responded to the survey and had the opportunity to rate how satisfied they are with their career development, pay, management, work/life balance and firm culture. We take the findings from this independent research and feed it back into our people planning to ensure we are listening to and meeting the needs of our people.

In our last People survey, results revealed ongoing satisfaction with the firm’s culture (88%), career development (79%) and management (86%) and our people positively commented on our supportive and inclusive culture, clear and transparent career progression, hybrid working flexibility, approachable leadership and competitive remuneration package.

## Healthcare legal practice

During 2023, the firm’s Healthcare and Public Sector teams acted for the UK’s national innovation agency on The Pathways to Antimicrobial Clinical Efficacy programme. We supported Innovate UK to establish a £30 million programme, supporting innovation to address the threat of antimicrobial resistance.

The Pathways to Antimicrobial Clinical Efficacy (PACE) programme is a collaboration of Innovate UK, the UK’s national innovation agency, medical charity LifeArc and the Medicines Discovery Catapult, a non-profit organisation supporting pioneering medical research.

Antimicrobial resistance (AMR) is one of the top 10 global public health threats. The UK Review on Antimicrobial Resistance estimates that worldwide deaths attributable to infections caused by bacterial AMR will rise to 10 million people annually by 2050.

Dr Phil Packer, Innovation Lead AMR and Vaccines for Innovate UK, said: *“The PACE consortium will enhance the likely success in delivering new antimicrobials and diagnostics to help address the silent pandemic of AMR.*

*Burges Salmon provided IUK excellent advice and legal rigour for the launch of the PACE consortium, without which it would not have been launched so quickly and smoothly.”*

Innovate UK has partnered with LifeArc and Medicines Discovery Catapult, bringing together grant funding, resources and sector expertise to help identify and fund innovative and precision therapeutics and associated diagnostics projects in the early AMR translation space. PACE forms part of the UK’s national action plan on AMR and will contribute to wider international efforts in this space.

Rory Trust, senior associate in the Healthcare team at Burges Salmon, said: *“We are delighted to work with Innovate UK on such an important project. AMR is a serious public health issue*

*and PACE will help drive innovation in the Life Sciences sector to find potential solutions.”*

Indro Mukerjee, CEO, Innovate UK, said: *“By bringing together the innovation ecosystem, offering funding opportunities, and promoting collaboration, PACE aims to reshape the trajectory of AMR. Our goal is to help protect public health and strengthen the UK life sciences sector.”*

PACE recently announced its first funding call with up to £10m available for innovators focusing on early-stage, novel, antibacterial therapeutics. Up to 12 applicants will be awarded a maximum of £1 million in grant funding, with projects expected to last up to two years. AMR innovators worldwide are eligible to apply.

## CASE STUDY

### “Let’s Talk About” interactive webinar series

**During 2023, we ran a “Let’s Talk About” series, raising awareness of topics which are often taboo, as we believe it is important for our people to feel able to bring their whole selves to work. We want to create and maintain a psychologically safe culture, where people feel comfortable to speak about challenges they are experiencing or have experienced in the past.**

**Sessions have been facilitated by leading experts in “childless not by choice”, “fertility” and “being a single parent”. We are planning sessions focussed on “domestic abuse” and “alcohol” in 2024. The feedback received from attendees of these sessions shows how important it is to talk about challenging experiences from a support and education perspective.**

## Wellbeing and engagement objectives for 2024

- To roll out Wellbeing Action Plans to line managers and embed their use at the firm
- To continue to educate our people on the benefits of nurturing a sustainable working environment using the Mindful Business Charter framework
- To continue to develop our wellbeing metrics to ensure they are effectively measuring the impact of our Wellbeing Action Plan

Key Performance Indicators				
Wellbeing and engagement	FY 2019/20	FY 2020/21	FY 2021/22	FY 2022/23
Absence through sickness	1%	1%	1%	1%
Turnover of our people	16%	8%	14%	11%
RollonFriday ranking	9th	8th	1st	1st
Investors in People	Gold	Platinum	Platinum	Platinum
Number of Learning and Development courses completed*	–	–	–	16,945
Overall satisfaction – People survey	Biennial	82%	Biennial	Spring 2024
Volunteering (of total people)	53%	16%	41%	46%



UN Sustainable Development Goal




UN Global Compact Principle

**Principle 1**  
Respect of Human Rights

### Commitments and collaborations





\*For the results of the assurance, see ERM CVS's [assurance report](#). Please refer to the [Basis of Reporting](#) for further details on how we have prepared the report.



# Inclusive workplace

# Inclusive workplace

We want to attract and invest in a wide range of talent and contribute to a society that is inclusive and cohesive.

Our aim is to enable the progression of talent in an inclusive workplace and in the pursuit of social mobility.

## Highlights

- **Achieved Disability Confident Leader accreditation**

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- **Set up Diversity Mentoring Scheme programme with the University of Bristol**

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- **Named one of The Times Top 50 Employers for Gender Equality 2023**

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- **Top 75 Social Mobility Employers Index ranking**

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- **Gender balance network, BBalanced, launched our Connections Menu, supporting people with shared experiences**

2023 Objective	Status	Progress
<b>To implement a digital inclusion framework to ensure learning content is designed for inclusion and accessibility</b>	Achieved	Launched to L&D team during November 2023, by our Design for All team.
<b>To achieve the employer’s Disability Confident Level 3 accreditation</b>	Achieved	We achieved the employer Disability Confident Leader accreditation in April 2023.
<b>To establish a new Business Apprenticeship scheme, to commence September 2023</b>	Achieved	4 Legal Apprentices + 4 Business Apprentices (Digital Marketing, Finance, IT and Project Management) started September 2023.
2026 Ambition	Status	Year 3 progress
<b>To achieve at least 33% female partners, on the road to parity</b>	Requires focus	Female partners for FY 2022/23 = 24%.
<b>To reach at least 4,000 students through our 'Working with Schools' programme, targeted towards state schools</b>	On track	Over the last three financial years, we have reached 3,029 school pupils through a selection of initiatives.

## Gender

We have been named one of The Times Top 50 Employers for Gender Equality 2023 for the third consecutive year, which recognises the work we have achieved in levelling the playing field around fulfilling, balanced careers and leadership roles. 62% of our people are female and we are working towards gender balanced leadership teams. Currently, 24% of our partners and 59% of our business service leaders are women. In the last year, 40% of partner promotions were women. We continue to develop our leadership pipeline from a gender perspective with support from our Managing Partner and our gender taskforce.

This year our gender balance network BBalanced launched the innovative *Connections Menu*. This is a directory of volunteers across the firm who others can connect with to discuss and gain insight into shared experiences. 33 topics are covered, including returning from family leave, preparing for promotion, flexible working, going on secondment, experiencing bereavement, and fertility treatment. The *Connections Menu* was set up in response to feedback from our inclusive careers survey which stated people wanted to understand how others managed key events in life and careers.

## Diversity and inclusion

We share our D&I targets and progress in the public domain through our D&I Data Report. We also report on inclusion and belonging metrics from our biennial people survey and inclusion survey. Our annual 'Inclusion Week' celebration event and firm-wide D&I Update webinar brought hundreds of our people together to reflect on this work and thank people and our community partners for their help in evolving best practice. We have delivered a number of key initiatives this year focusing on different areas of diversity and enhance our award-winning inclusive workplace. We were awarded Bristol Law Society's Diversity, Inclusion & Wellbeing Champion of the Year 2023.



National Inclusion Week 2023

## Ethnic diversity



Bristol Future Talent Partnership students

Our internal diversity mentoring scheme, supported by our people-led ethnic diversity network BCultured, shares ethnic minority experiences and insights with our leaders and senior managers to understand how we can improve processes and policies to strengthen inclusion. Participants have included our Managing and Senior Partners, Chief Markets Officer, Chief Operating Officer and a host of partners and business services leaders. Through the programme, leaders felt 30% more confident in understanding the practical actions that they can take to improve equality at the firm in relation to ethnic diversity. This work links into our Ethnic Diversity Action Plan, with our Senior Partner, Chris Seaton, as executive sponsor.

*“It was a great opportunity to share experiences with people in places of authority within the firm. My mentee was engaging and showed a genuine interest in understanding the issues facing people of minority ethnic backgrounds at work and in life.”* **BCultured member**

As founding members of the Bristol Future Talent Partnership we continue to offer spring and autumn work experience programmes focused specifically for Black, Asian and Minority Ethnic students. Many students are unaware of the variety of jobs available in the legal sector and its supporting roles.

### EXPERIENCE



“I was really keen to be part of the ethnicity mentoring programme. Part of my role is to ensure we reach diverse talent but more importantly from a personal perspective, I was aware this would be a huge development opportunity.

I will admit to initially being nervous – mainly worried I would say the wrong thing or inadvertently offend. However, my wonderful mentor was kind and understanding of my many questions as we explored a huge range of topics related to race – both in the workplace and also more broadly.

I have read books that I never would have picked off the shelf (preferring instead terrible novels!) and engaged with podcasts and content that now fill my social media feeds. I have commented to many friends, family and colleagues that I would go as far to say being part of this initiative was life changing for me.”

Holly Fey, Head of Resourcing

The programme aims to tackle the long-standing multiple inequalities and under-representation faced by people from black and minority ethnic backgrounds, particularly in education and employment, by providing a positive experience for students to learn about jobs that might initially be off radar. During the past year, we engaged with 1,489 students through mentoring, work experience schemes and training sessions.



Click to hear David and Shachi talk about their experiences of our ethnic diversity reverse mentoring programme

## Sexual Orientation LGBT+

During 2023, we sponsored Bristol Pride and Pride Edinburgh, with our people actively marching and participating in the festivals to raise awareness of inclusion and inclusive careers. Our LGBT+ population is 6%, which is greater than the respective populations in the cities in which we operate. During LGBT+ History Month, our LGBT+ network, BProud, hosted a firm-wide learning session with "OurStories" where people shared their experiences. Our Transitioning at Work Policy and Trans Equality Guidance was reviewed by an external specialist and as a result, we made improvements to ensure our approach continues to support our people.



Bristol Pride 2023

## Disability

This year we were delighted to achieved Disability Confident Leader accreditation, the highest level of government accreditation that recognises the innovative projects and improvements we have delivered around disability inclusion. As part of this accreditation, we trained our line managers on disability awareness, providing them with the information, guidance and tools needed to help our people build successful careers. We held multiple firm-wide learning sessions on key topics such as 'the language of disability' and 'neurodiversity understood', which help strengthen how we work across teams, to

provide a positive and welcoming working environment for our people, clients and visitors.

During July 2023, BEnabled, our disability and health conditions network, launched our first Disability Pride week. They organised a series of events highlighting the need to open the conversation about disability and neurodiversity in the workplace. The week opened with a learning session delivered by Esi Hardy, from Celebrating Disability, on helpful versus harmful language and how to confidently approach conversations about disability in the workplace. This was followed by an insightful internal roundtable, led by BEnabled co-chair Amy Davies, where a range of legal and business professionals at the firm shared their experiences of disabilities and how they manage them in the workplace.



Pride Edinburgh 2023

[Click to watch our video on Disability Inclusion](#)



[Click to hear what our people get out of being in our BGroups, our employee networks focusing on D&I](#)



## EXPERIENCE

"It was great to be a part of the events planning team for Burges Salmon's first BEnabled Disability Pride Week and put together an event which hopefully many in the firm found helpful and informative. We were really fortunate to have two brilliant main sessions. It was fantastic to see these events supported by so many people from around the firm; the learning opportunities throughout the week has helped enforce the positive environment for disabled people and those with caring responsibilities that Burges Salmon aims for.

We think this year's Disability Pride Week has given the BEnabled team a great foundation to build on for future events where we know we're all keen to keep spreading our message as much as we can."

Jemma Ellis, Jess King and Nick Elliot  
(BEnabled events planning team)

## Social mobility

We continue our focus on social mobility as part of our PRIME legal sector commitment to widen access to the legal profession. We use our participation in the Social Mobility Employer Index to help develop improvement plans and have retained our Top 75 Social Mobility Employer status, ranked 47.

Through our ‘Working with Schools’ programme, we deliver in-person and virtual events and activities, including Law Information Days and work experience weeks for students. We have had almost 1,500 interactions with students and in July 2023, our Bright Sparks work experience programme celebrated its 10th anniversary. During this ten-year period, 246 students from 70 schools participated in the programme and we have a commitment that at least 50% of these places are for students from lower socio-economic backgrounds. We have recruited legal apprentices and trainee solicitors through Bright Sparks and are pleased that 82% of these cohorts are young people who face barriers in education and work because of their socioeconomic background.

We work in collaboration with external partner organisations, such as Envision and IntoUniversity, to provide a range of support such as delivering student programmes, providing funding, volunteers, and hosting events. This year we reached out to a number of schools in social mobility cold spots, either directly or via our partnership organisations, to deliver careers insights and support.



Bright Sparks 10 year anniversary

We sit on the board of the UK’s Social Mobility Business Partnership (SMBP) and run the South West Cluster of activity, organising meaningful work experience for students through a collaboration of businesses across the region. SMBP is a volunteer-led charity which brings together professional services firms, commercial organisations and professional sports teams to support students from low-income backgrounds in their pursuit of a career, in particular as a legal or finance professionals. We have worked alongside our client Yeo Valley since 2018 to deliver a joint insight day and this year once again delivered this at their farm in Somerset. The day involved working on a sustainability business project challenge focusing on people, planet and profit.

We held several social mobility roundtable events for our people, to stimulate conversation and awareness around how social mobility interacts with career progression and to gather feedback on how to further support socially mobile people at the firm. As part

### EXPERIENCE



**“University never really appealed to me, so when I found out about the apprenticeship programme at Burges Salmon I applied straight away. That was seven years ago and Burges Salmon has supported me in getting to where I am today; a qualified solicitor. In terms of a highlight from my apprenticeship, I won Junior Lawyer of the Year at the Bristol Law Society Awards 2021 and that certainly wouldn’t have happened without the level of responsibility that I was given, even in the early stages of my career and the amazing quality of support I received from those around me.**



**I now look forward to developing my skills as a qualified solicitor in the firm’s family team, and I am keen to play an active role in Burges Salmon’s apprenticeship programme and supporting our apprentices”.**

India Jenkins, Solicitor

of our work on social mobility we continue to expand our apprenticeship schemes with over 20 apprentices now part of our business. In September 2023 our first cohort of legal apprentices qualified as solicitors at the firm, after completing their seven-year apprenticeships. The firm was one of the trailblazers of legal apprenticeships in the UK and we are incredibly proud of this

cohort of talented individuals qualifying into the profession. During September 2023 we re-introduced our business apprenticeship scheme, which was paused temporarily during the pandemic. The scheme offers apprenticeships in Finance, IT, Marketing and Project Management, providing opportunities for school leavers to pursue a business career without the cost of going to university.

## Employment legal practice

With responsiveness as a priority, our award-winning employment lawyers (*Employment Law Firm of the Year – Personnel Today*) offer straightforward, pragmatic and commercial advice on all employment issues from day-to-day advice through to large scale projects. This has included a range of support and guidance to our clients around issues relating to diversity and inclusion.

Key themes in the past year have included voluntary reporting of ethnicity pay gaps, reasonable adjustments for mental health, supporting employees through the cost of living crisis and positive action in the workplace.



Partner **Luke Bowery** wrote about reporting on ethnicity pay gap data in light of the government’s decision not to make ethnicity pay gap reporting mandatory. He

described how the world of work has moved on since the government consultation on ethnicity pay gap reporting in 2019. ESG strategies are now much higher up the corporate agenda and there is an increased focus on employer diversity and inclusion initiatives with pressure on employers to show they are identifying and tackling any barriers. Many already voluntarily report on their ethnicity pay gap data and the steps they are taking to address any disparities, mindful, in part, that reporting may become mandatory at some point in the future.

[Read his article here.](#)



**Kate Redshaw**, Head of Employment Practice Development, considered the outcome of the UK’s trial of the four-day week and asks whether the need for

increased time efficiency could come at a cost. In an article she wrote that the four-day week is almost certainly here to stay, and, in time, more employers may need to embrace it to recruit and retain their people. However, for workplaces to continue to be hubs of creativity and collaboration, where people think beyond their own “to do” lists, employers will need to show that they value – and indeed expect – some time to be spent looking up, around, and beyond, so that the “head down” approach, with the downsides it brings with it, doesn’t become the default. [Read her summary here.](#)

**To find out more about how employers can be considering ED&I as part of their ESG strategies, sign up to our quarterly ED&I newsletter [here](#) by selecting ‘Equality, Diversity and Inclusion’ from the Interests list.**



Personnel Today Employment Law Firm of the Year Award

## CASE STUDY

## Burges Salmon Diversity Mentoring Scheme with the University of Bristol

In collaboration with the University of Bristol, we have welcomed two cohorts of students as part of our mentoring scheme supporting those from diverse backgrounds, to gain valuable work experience to help with their future careers.

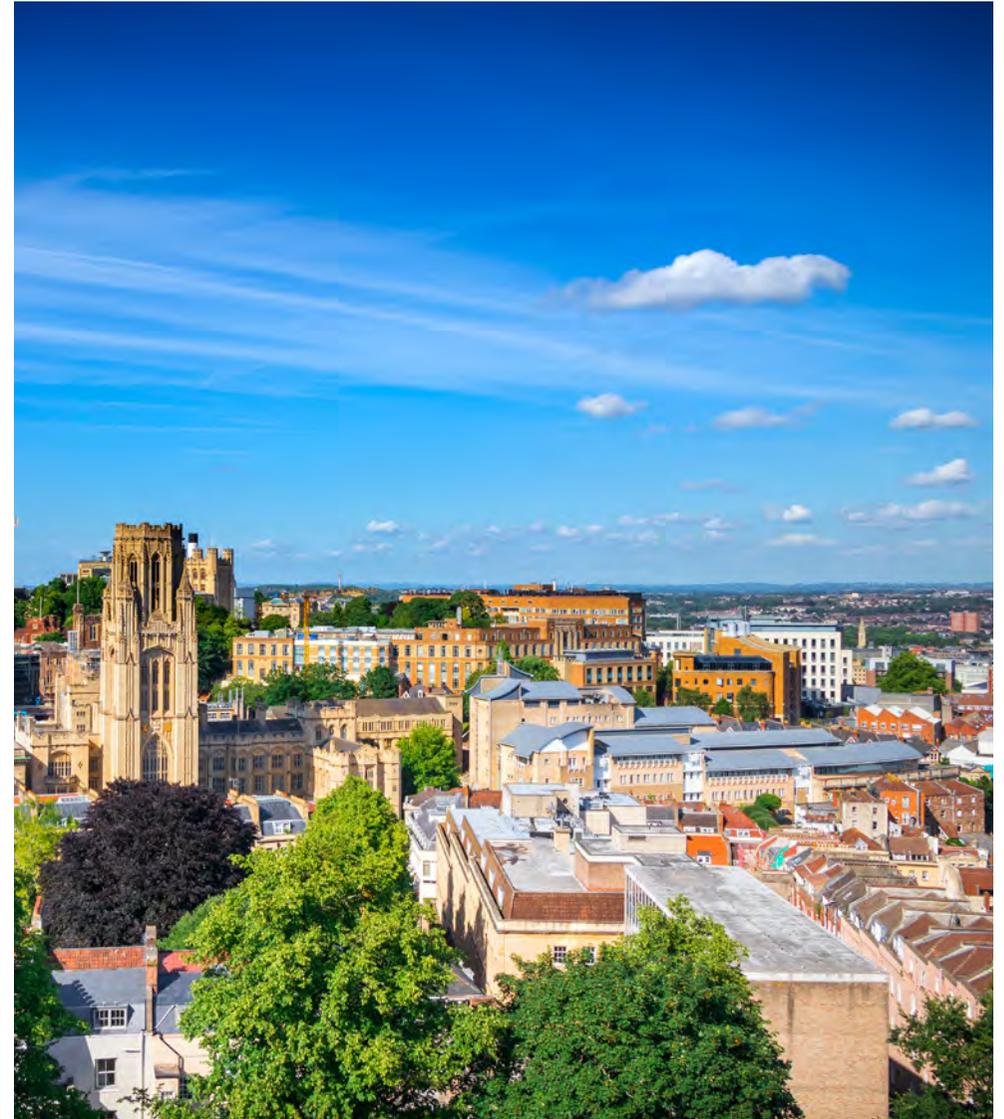
The new partnership aimed to tackle the imbalance of representation from minority ethnic groups in the legal profession. The scheme also builds further on the support we offer, such as supporting our students through the [Professional Mentoring Scheme](#).

The [Burges Salmon Diversity Mentoring Scheme](#) is for students from minority ethnic backgrounds, in years two, three and four of their LLB Law degree and years one and two of the MA Law programme.

During 2023, we provided four students access to a long-term mentor from our BCultured network, supporting them regarding general advice on careers in law, career aspirations, practical insights into roles and tips on training contract applications, how to prepare for assessment centres, etc. The students participated in a tailored two-week work experience placement at Burges Salmon, where they found out about practice areas, learnt job hunting skills and shadowed lawyers at work. Mentees will continue to benefit from ongoing mentorship upon completion of the scheme.

Similar to a vacation scheme, during the placement, mentees gained invaluable work experience whilst gaining an insight into the firm's practice areas, including Commercial, Competition, Dispute Resolution and Projects, undertaking a range of work for a number of lawyers including research tasks, contract reviews and case summaries. Mentees will also partake in workshops to develop confidence in application and interview strategies and building commercial awareness.

Often these sorts of schemes can provide students with good insights but not necessarily the opportunity to turn those insights into a career. Therefore, each student on our programme was given a Training Contract interview, which was key. They were assessed in the same way with the same level of rigour as all of our trainee solicitor candidates and we are delighted that one of the four students from our mentoring cohort this year will be joining us as a trainee solicitor in 2025.



## Inclusive workplace objectives for 2024

- To develop a people profile tool on our website, to increase visible representation and support diversity in candidate applications
- To complete research with our employee-resource groups, to understand how we can better support our people in building inclusion and implementing improvements based on the findings
- To reinvigorate the relationship with Bristol City College, with a view to offering the Client Support team emerging talent roles

Key Performance Indicators				
Inclusive workplace	FY 2019/20	FY 2020/21	FY 2021/22	FY 2022/23
Female partners	21%	23%	25%	24%
Female partner promotions	50%	60%	40%	40%
Female directors and senior associates	51%	57%	60%	59%
No. of apprentices (hired)	8	0	4	8
Social Mobility Employer Index ranking	39	56	23	47



UN Sustainable Development Goal






WE SUPPORT  
UN GLOBAL COMPACT

UN Global Compact Principle

**Principle 6**  
Elimination of discrimination in respect of employment

### Commitments and collaborations

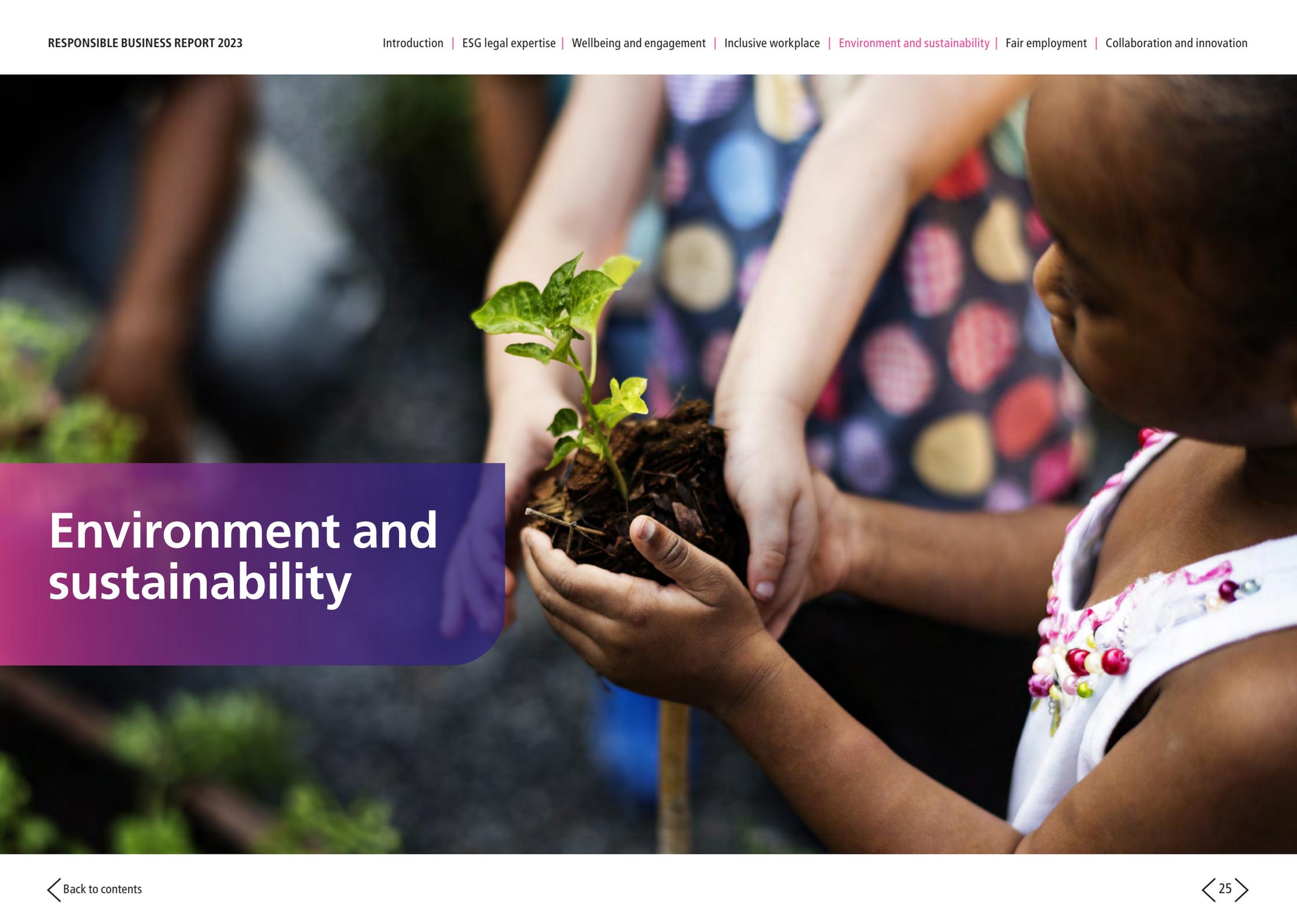











A young girl with dark skin, wearing a white top with colorful floral patterns, is shown in profile, holding a small green plant with soil. Her hands are gently cupping the plant. In the background, other people's hands are visible, also holding similar plants, suggesting a community activity. The overall scene is outdoors with soft, natural lighting.

## Environment and sustainability

# Environment and sustainability

Our aim is to take action for an environmentally sustainable future that positively impacts the community.

## Highlights

- Completed Task Force on Climate-related Financial Disclosures (TCFD) climate scenario workshops

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- ‘Commended’ in the ‘Sustainability Initiative’ category for the development of our Pension Schemes ESG Tool – The Lawyer Awards 2023

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- Pensions director, Kate Granville Smith, recognised as ESG Distinguished Adviser in this year’s [Financier Worldwide 2023 Power Players List](#)

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- Shortlisted for Excellence in ESG award – Law.com British Legal Awards 2023

2023 Objective	Status	Progress
To agree environmental targets for relevant indicators towards 2026, from a 2019 base year	Ongoing	The Environment Committee has met to discuss and the 2024 objectives can be found later in this report.
To progress key improvement opportunities, informed by our Carbon Disclosure Project (CDP) submission, including addressing climate-related risks and opportunities	Delivered	We held TCFD scenario workshops with relevant key stakeholders.  We used IBA guidance to improve our Risk Register.
To complete an energy audit within our office footprint, to identify further efficiencies and reductions	Ongoing	The latest iteration of the process has begun with an ESOS Phase 3 process, which will highlight recommendations and opportunities.
2026 Ambition	Status	Year 3 progress
Net Zero – Offset Scope 1,2 MB + 3 business travel	On track	We are continuing to explore carbon offsetting via accredited schemes with local charities.
To make progress on our Science Based Targets towards a 50% reduction in Scope 1, 2 and 3 emissions by 2030 and achieved Net Zero by 2026 (Scope 1, 2 & 3 Business Travel)	Requires focus	Our Total Scope 1,2 and 3 emissions have reduced by 13% since our 2019 baseline and we are currently on track to meet our Science-Based Targets.
To achieve a waste reuse/recycling rate of at least 80%	Requires focus	Our waste reused or recycled rate for calendar year 2022 was 60%.

## Net Zero

We have committed to reduce our absolute Scope 1 and Scope 2 GHG emissions by 50% by 2030 from a base year of 2019 and to reduce absolute Scope 3 emissions by 50% within the same timeframe. We have formal approval from the Science Based Targets Initiative for these science-based targets.

Working with external specialists we have gained a deeper appreciation of our total carbon footprint, particularly our Scope 3 supply chain emissions, which account for 96% of our overall carbon footprint. We collaborated with the University of Bristol on a project assessing risk in our supply chain and will be implementing the recommendations from their report following the onboarding of a new Procurement Manager.

We recognise the importance of collaborating with our suppliers to encourage data disclosure and the setting of reduction targets. As part of this we are actively educating our supply chain through training around topics such as 'sustainability in procurement' at our annual supplier engagement day.

We participated in the Carbon Disclosure Project (CDP) for a third year and have made progress on further consideration of risks and opportunities, as guided by the Task Force for Climate-related Financial Disclosures (TCFD). As we have learned more about the requirements of the benchmark, we are hoping our CDP score will improve from C (awareness) and eagerly await our result in 2024. We will continue to pursue improvements with the aim of achieving a B score or higher and to help us achieve this, we held climate workshops in relation to TCFD with key stakeholders.



Although carbon offsetting is a last resort, we believe it has a role to play on our journey to Net Zero if accredited, as it provides environmental benefits. Consequently, we offset our Scope 1, 2 and Scope 3 business travel emissions with Trees for Life, supporting its reforestation and biodiversity work. We continue to be a corporate partner of the charity, helping with their long-term plans.

We continue to advocate for climate actions more widely and contribute to a number of external forums, including the Net Zero Lawyers Alliance, the Legal Sustainability Alliance, the Chancery Lane Project and Bristol Green Capital Partnership Climate Leaders Group. A number of our junior lawyers participate in events run by the Law Society's Legal Voices for the Future, an initiative that aims to encourage discourse and action on the most pressing issues facing us: the climate and ecological crises.

**Hear how we work with rewilding charity Trees for Life on offsetting and biodiversity projects**



## Environmental impact

In addition to energy use and carbon emissions, our Environment Committee monitors our other environmental impacts and sets objectives around issues such as paper use, single-use plastic usage, water consumption, hospitality waste and general waste each year. Our environmental management system is ISO 14001 accredited until October 2025, subject to annual audits.

We measure the firm's percentage of recycled and non-recycled waste produced and have an ambitious target of ensuring over 80% of waste is recycled by 2026. Since our 2019 baseline year, the amount of waste we have recycled has fluctuated between 60% and 74%, so it's an area we need to focus on to improve.

To upskill our people and suppliers around waste considerations, people from our Operations team alongside some of our contractors visited the Suez Material Recycling Plant in Avonmouth. Suez currently holds the contract to provide building waste collection for our Bristol office. The visit helped everyone understand how waste streams are collected and sorted and what improvements could be made to maximise recycling. The main learning was regarding simplified processes, clear messaging and education of people and contractors. Suez has agreed to work closely with us to improve the messaging across all areas of waste generation at the firm.



## Environmental awareness

We continue to provide our people with regular communications and events aimed at raising awareness of environmental issues and encouraging sustainable behaviour. Organised by our BSustainable network of environmental champions, our annual Green Week took place during June with in-person and virtual events, engaging 270 of our people in nine different activities. Awareness sessions explored a variety of sustainability topics including bike maintenance, food waste, biodiversity net gain and a screening of “Our Planet: Too big to fail”. We also held a sustainable fashion panel event and hosted charity Mend for Good to encourage our people to act sustainably and think about the circular economy.

We have been a long-standing supporter of Fairtrade and during Fairtrade Fortnight, we welcomed children from Hannah More Primary School to celebrate the theme of “Choose Fairtrade now and help save our favourite foods.” At our Bristol office the school children made bunting and learnt more about Fairtrade with a quiz to win Fairtrade chocolate Easter eggs and popcorn. People at our Edinburgh office baked cakes and biscuits using Fairtrade ingredients, in exchange for donations to the Fairtrade Foundation and people throughout the firm made Fairtrade pledges, such as committing to buy Fairtrade bananas, tea, coffee and chocolate.



Children from Hannah More Primary School

To continue the education around Fairtrade, we hosted Erika Lazas Rodas, a single mother of four from Nicaragua, for a conversation session with our people. A Fairtrade coffee producer and member of UCA SOPPEXCCA, her smallholding has over two hectares of coffee. Her awareness-raising talk was held in collaboration with Bristol Fairtrade Network, which brings together local people, businesses and organisations in support of small-scale farmers and workers across the globe.



Fairtrade Fortnight

## CASE STUDY

### Supporting the community and the environment

**Our collaboration with the charity Heart of BS13 is thriving, in more ways than one, since we first provided pro bono advice on their long lease acquisition. The charity strives to improve the environment, tackle food insecurity and create vocational training and jobs and, is committed to being part of the solution to the climate crisis. Consequently, it aligns with several of Burges Salmon’s Responsible Business aims and UN Sustainable Development Goals, including Zero Hunger, Good Health & Wellbeing, Reduced Inequalities, Sustainable Cities and Communities and Climate Action.**



**During FY 2022/23, 46% of our people volunteered for a total of 3,806 hours; the financial equivalent of £125,647. At Heart of BS13, people from our Banking, Employment, Pensions, Projects, Real Estate and People teams have spent 686 hours volunteering; the financial equivalent of £23,090. Their tasks focused on horticulture and biodiversity, including prepping growing spaces for planting, planting trees and native hedgerows, weeding, adding woodchip to pathways, as well as setting up wildlife habitats and planting foliage at a bog pond.**

**Following a very successful visit by Heart of BS13 during our annual Green Week, the charity will return to our Bristol office twice a year, to sell their fresh and long-lasting flowers.**

**We are also working with our in-house caterers to collaborate with them on their ‘Pay It Forward food service’ which aligns with our charitable theme of “No Child Goes Hungry” by helping to address food insecurities. Sales from this meal range will support their work, as within the BS13 community, 1 in 8 households are struggling financially and are unable to afford the food they need. Since the COVID-19 pandemic, Heart of BS13 has provided almost 50,000 meals to the community, free of charge.**

## Environment and sustainability objectives for 2024

- Carbon:** To operate a sustainable travel policy to reduce emissions from business travel, monitor, and engage our people to commute sustainability

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- Responsible Procurement:** To continue to operate a Responsible Procurement policy, which we expect suppliers to demonstrate a commitment to achieving sustainable business practices, to ensure the products and services delivered have regard to issues such as sourcing, energy efficiency, waste reduction, recycling and sustainability

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- Waste:** To reuse items and materials where possible or donate for reuse elsewhere. We have targets to increase our recycling rates and we work closely with our catering suppliers and events teams to reduce hospitality waste

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- Environmental Collaboration:** To share best practice regarding the climate crisis through our founding membership of the Legal Sustainability Alliance, the Net Zero Lawyers Alliance and our participation in the Chancery Lane Project

\*For the results of the assurance, see ERM CVS's [assurance report](#). Please refer to the [Basis of Reporting](#) for further details on how we have prepared the data.

Key Performance Indicators				
Environmental performance	CY 2019	CY 2020	CY 2021	CY 2022
Scope 1: Direct GHG Emissions (tCO <sub>2</sub> e)*	254	196	177	221
Scope 2: Indirect GHG Emissions (Market based) (tCO <sub>2</sub> e)*	54	31	0	0
Scope 2: Indirect GHG Emissions (Location based) (tCO <sub>2</sub> e)*	717	432	394	519
Total Scope 3: Indirect GHG Emissions (tCO <sub>2</sub> e) (consisting of Categories 1-7, 13 & 15)	8,123	7,842	9,432	7,304
Scope 3: (Category 5) Waste generated in operations GHG Emissions (tCO <sub>2</sub> e)*	52	1	1	4
Scope 3: (Category 6) Business Travel GHG Emissions (tCO <sub>2</sub> e)*	441	60	62	268
Total Scope 1, 2 (market-based) & Scope 3 GHG Emissions (tCO <sub>2</sub> e)	8,431	8,069	9,609	7,302
Percentage of waste reused or recycled per year	67%	74%	70%	60%



UN Sustainable Development Goal





WE SUPPORT



UN Global Compact Principle

**Principle 7**  
Precautionary approach to environmental challenges

**Principle 8**  
Promote greater environmental responsibilities

**Principle 9**  
Diffusion of environmentally friendly technologies

### Commitments and collaborations



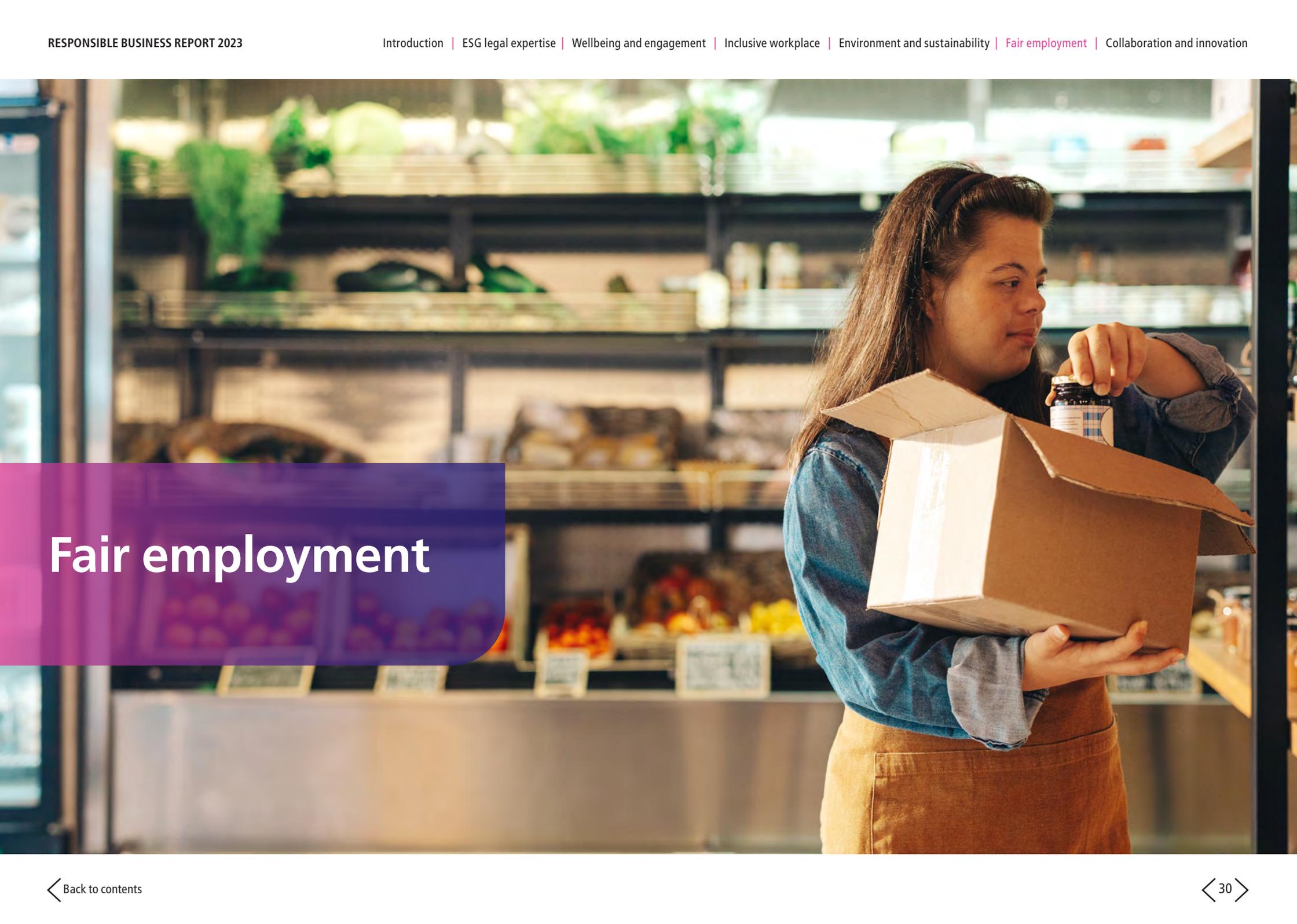











A woman with long dark hair, wearing a blue denim shirt and a brown apron, is standing in a grocery store. She is holding a large cardboard box and is in the process of packing a jar into it. The background shows shelves stocked with various grocery items, including fresh produce and packaged goods. The lighting is warm and natural, suggesting an indoor setting with large windows.

# Fair employment

# Fair employment

Our aim is to contribute to the provision of employment opportunities that are inclusive and fair. Fundamental to this aim is the respect of human rights.

## Highlights

- **Launched our Enabled Candidates Scheme employment programme focused on candidates with disabilities and neurodivergence**
- **Supported and raised awareness of Anti-Slavery Day in collaboration with charity partner Unseen**
- **Delivered advanced training for key internal stakeholders on modern slavery and procurement**
- **Continued support for displaced Ukrainian people and refugees**
- **Shortlisted for six In-House Recruitment awards**

2023 Objective	Status	Progress
To progress the focus of the BITC South West Skills and Employability Taskforce with a new Wellspring Settlement Inclusive Employment Partnership	Ongoing	Consultation process being delivered with representatives from the Wellspring community to inform the development of an employment partnership that is tailored to community need.
To further position Burges Salmon as an attractive employer to wider diverse talent pools, particularly through resourcing and BRedi	Achieved	<p>We delivered two Bristol Future Talent Partnership schemes (March and October) where 92% of participants rated the scheme excellent or very good. 89% of Bright Sparks work experience students rated the programme excellent or very good. Both schemes have 100% alumni sign-up via LinkedIn. Engagement with our Bright Sparks alumni included our 10-year anniversary event.</p> <p>Our Apprentice cohorts are strong in terms of social mobility: 58% of applicants have 1 or more RARE flags; 67% at first stage, 65% at second stage and 75% of those hired. 100% of the cohort are state school educated. We continue to promote Apprenticeships by hosting Careers Advisor roundtables, open events (both in person and virtual) and attend school careers fairs.</p>
To review and advance the enhanced Responsible Procurement Supplier Programme and hold a supplier engagement event	Ongoing	We developed a new code of conduct, requiring suppliers to commit to our <b>responsible procurement criteria</b> . This year we recruited a Procurement Manager, with on site supplier audits being trialled, focusing on responsible procurement. We also worked in collaboration with the University of Bristol on a Supplier Risk project.
2026 Ambition	Status	Year 3 progress
To invest in emerging talent including school leavers, apprentices, graduates and trainee solicitors, enabling at least 300 new career opportunities	On track	During FY2022/23 we hired 26 trainee solicitors, 8 apprentices (4 Legal + 4 Business) and 36 client support team people.
To have at least 95% of suppliers being paid within 60 days	Requires focus	Over the last four years, there has been a gradual improvement and the current rate is 89%.

## Human rights

We subscribe to internationally recognised human rights in line with the principles and guidance of the UN Global Compact, the UN Universal Declaration of Human Rights, the core conventions of the International Labour Organisation (ILO) and the UN Guiding Principles on Business and Human Rights (UNGPs). We have a Modern Slavery statement and Human Rights Policy, as well as a Responsible Procurement Policy.

[Click here for more information and to access our 2023 Modern Slavery Statement](#)



As a law firm our people are required to comply with Codes of Conduct specified by the relevant regulatory authorities, including the Solicitors Regulatory Authority and the Law Society of Scotland. We provide an Employee Assistance Programme to our people and we have a Whistleblowing Policy, Social Dialogue Principles and a clear concern reporting procedure. We recognise freedom of association and the right to collective bargaining. However, as we don't have a unionised workforce, we regularly engage with our people through our internal networks, key representatives and other communication channels including anonymised surveys and listening sessions with our Managing Partner and Chief People Officer.

We continue to partner with anti-slavery and human trafficking charity, Unseen as we recognise the importance of addressing other social and environmental issues that can lead to vulnerabilities and put people at risk of modern



Skydiving in aid of Unseen

slavery and human trafficking. During 2023, our people raised over £3,500 running the London Landmarks half marathon and skydiving in aid of Unseen. We also made a financial donation to Unseen as part of its Big Give appeal helping it to secure additional funding.

Focus on our supply chain has been key during 2023, as we recognise the risk of human rights

infringements and abuse is greater. Given our understanding of risk we provide all of our people with basic modern slavery training and more in-depth training for people in specific roles, including the People team, Risk and Best Practice team, supplier relationship managers and Procurement team. This training involves a combination of an additional e-learning and compliance module 'Practical Steps for

Procurement' and a facilitated workshop. The workshop is designed to enable discussion, consideration of risk in the operational context of the firm and to deepen understanding of how modern slavery manifests in the UK and global supply chains. Unseen provides this training in-house and 23 of our people attended training sessions in March 2023.

## Pro bono

Providing expertise to charities on a pro bono basis makes a significant difference to those we support. We have a long history of pro bono work and helping the community – it’s part of our culture and is an important component of our Responsible Business aims.

We provide pro bono legal advice to support communities around human rights and access to justice. Since 2014, our Employment team has continued to provide pro bono support to the Citizens Advice Bureau (CAB) and the Avon & Bristol Law Centre (ABLC). Our Employment lawyers offer advice on a range of employment issues, including relating to contractual issues, discrimination, any conduct or performance procedures and dismissal rights. Junior lawyers in the team gain experience in advising employees on employment law disputes and developing their soft skills, as well as providing legal advice to those who may not otherwise have access to it.

During 2023 we continued our support of various pro bono opportunities that enable access to justice for the more vulnerable and disadvantaged. We continued to support the Legal Walk, in connection with the Access to Justice Foundation through an annual financial donation. We make a donation to the charity ‘Support Through Court’ and our Employment team lawyers are involved in supporting pro bono employment clinics.

During the year we have provided pro bono advice for many local charities including Bristol

Beacon, Bristol Future Talent Partnership, Heart of BS13, Sparks Bristol (part of the Global Goals Centre) and Project Seagrass. Since 2019, we have provided nearly 4,000 hours of pro bono legal advice.

*“Burgess Salmon pro bono support was extremely helpful to us as a charity, working through an unprecedented time both in terms of a major refurbishment project that meant we have had to review and update many of our policies and employment practices and, in helping us navigate the implications for our business of COVID”.*

### Care Jack, Chief Operating Officer, Bristol Beacon

*“The pro bono work we have received from Burgess Salmon has been a huge help to our charity. Helping us to secure a contract with Bristol Beer Factory which will bring in an income to the charity for the foreseeable future has helped us to have a regular stable income which helps the charity to build on the great work we have done so far in the community”.*

### Gavin Thorpe, Co-founder and Co-CEO, Talk Club



## Fair employment

We recognise that part of our respect of human rights includes enabling fair employment opportunities. This is linked to our agendas for diversity, inclusion and community. A key focus is to support employability and skills development within our community portfolio.

We continue to actively partner with community organisations to support inclusive employment, such as Women’s Work Lab. Through this partnership we have offered an annual work placement each year to help unemployed mums gain experience and meaningful employment.

[Click to hear Women’s Work Lab candidate Louise talk about her experiences of a work placement](#)



In 2023, we launched our Enabled Candidate Scheme employment programme. Aimed at candidates with disabilities or long-term health conditions who have struggled to access meaningful employment, the programme re-engineers roles at Burgess Salmon to make them accessible for individuals who may only want or be able to work one or two days a week. Working with external employability charity Send2Work, we match candidates on their portfolio with roles and then bring them through a tailored induction and upskilling process to achieve successful employment. Following the successful pilot of the programme we look forward to expanding and scaling it up in 2024.



Within the community we lead the BITC Employability and Skills Task Force in the South West. This is to drive a collaborative approach to inclusive employment across a number of the region’s employers. The main project of the Task Force in 2023 has been the creation and funding of an Employability and Skills Partnership with the Wellspring Settlement. Wellspring is a charity that supports the Lawrence Hill ward of Bristol. As a ward it has a high proportion of BAME residents as well as a high proportion of rented accommodation, high-rise overcrowding and higher than average levels of unemployment.

The Inclusive Employment Partnership aims to bring together employers and the community to learn and to shape both the employers’ ‘offer’ and the community ‘ask’ so that where possible they can be matched. This is to help people from having any job, to a better job and into a career. In 2023, the Partnership kicked off by launching a consultation process with community members to understand the current gaps between employers and those seeking careers, with the view to co-creating an Employability programme in the first half of 2024 to minimise these gaps.

CASE STUDY

## Further support for Ukraine

We continue to strengthen our focus on refugees and to express solidarity with the Ukrainian people. We joined Somerset Aid for Ukraine Foundation to support those Ukrainians who are suffering as a result of the devastating tragedy at Kakhovka hydroelectric power plant that caused mass flooding in the Kherson region of southern Ukraine.

The idea of holding a special event came from our Ukrainian colleagues, who organised a quiz with interesting facts about Ukraine’s history and legal system, the sale of Ukrainian traditional sweets for charity donations and a collection of a bare necessities, to support people from the Kherson region.

They also presented the Constitution of Ukraine to the firm, to express gratitude for the ongoing support of their country.

*“We are deeply touched by your incredible support whether through donations, cake purchases or simply to be there to cheer us up. Your kindness and generosity will go a long way in providing us much-needed aid to those suffering because of the war.”*

Tetyana Kornya, Legal Advisor



Ukraine Constitution Day 2023

## Employment & Human Rights objectives for 2024

- To roll out our Enabled Candidates Scheme, to provide a minimum of two permanent roles for long-term unemployed candidates with disabilities or neurodivergent conditions
- Develop a Pro Bono action plan to further align the firm's Pro Bono activities with its specialisms and business strategy
- To launch a mentoring and work experience programme focused on black university students looking to enter business professional careers

### Key Performance Indicators

Employment and Human Rights	FY 2019/20	FY 2020/21	FY 2021/22	FY 2022/23
Headcount	822	855	940	980
Code of Conduct (Anti-bribery) e-learning completion rate	99%	97%	98%	99%
Modern Slavery e-learning completion rate	89%	87%	93%	97%
Pro bono (hours)	1,467	838	789	875
Suppliers paid within 60 days	77%	83%	86%	89%
% of targeted suppliers completed responsible procurement assessment	N/A	N/A	76%	89%



UN Sustainable Development Goal





UN Global Compact Principle

**Principle 1**  
Respect of Human Rights

**Principle 2**  
Not complicit in human rights abuses

**Principle 3**  
Freedom of association and collective bargaining

**Principle 4**  
No forced or compulsory labour

**Principle 5**  
Abolition of child labour

**Principle 10**  
Work against corruption and bribery

### Commitments and collaborations



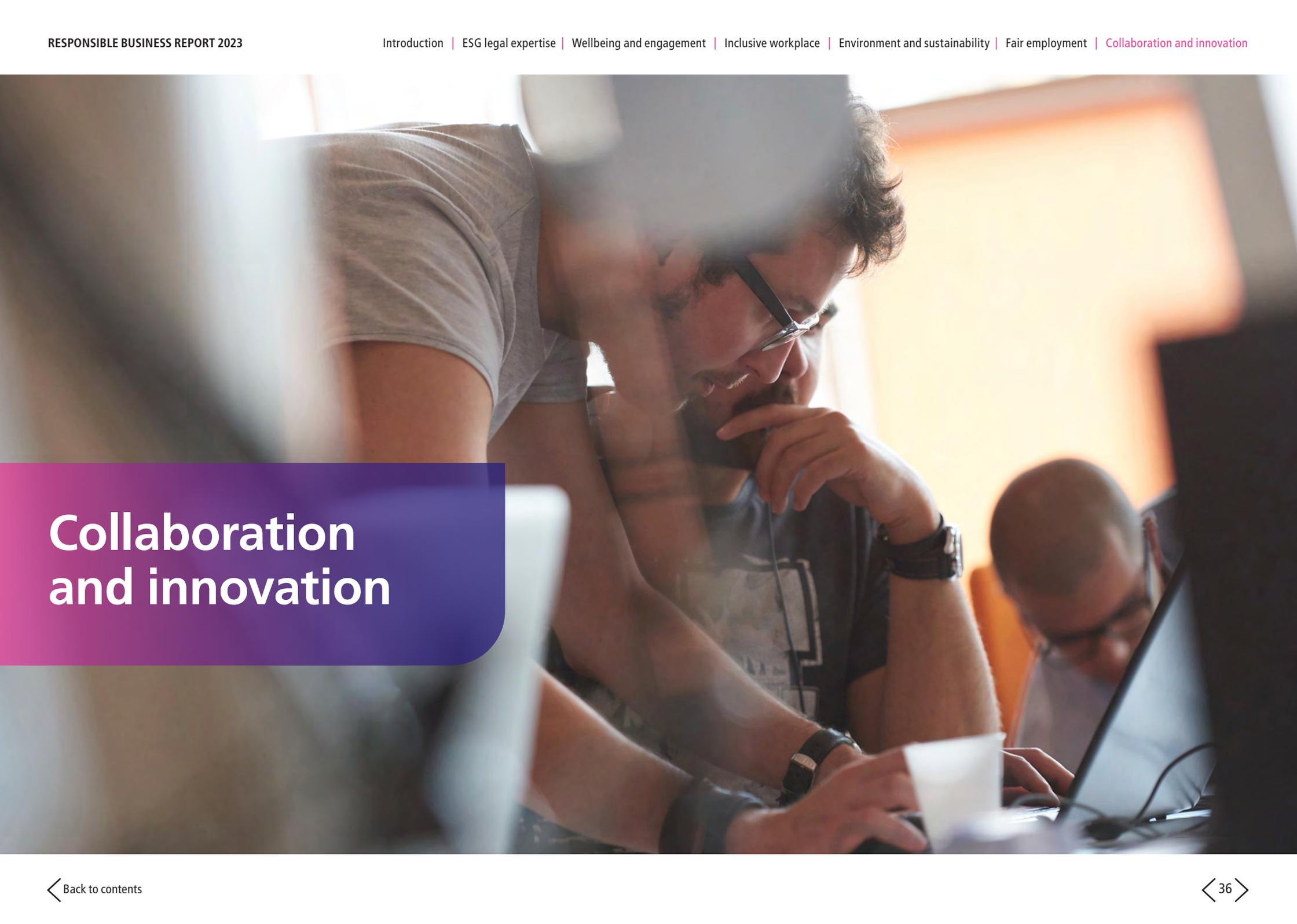












# Collaboration and innovation

# Collaboration and innovation

Our aim is to work together and with others for a greater collective impact.

## Highlights

- **Won Legal Process Improvement Project of the Year – International Institute of Legal Project Management 2023**
- **Around 200 of our people attended at least three different events during our BInnovative innovation week**
- **Delivered Knowledge Unlocked knowledge management project on time, to scope and in budget**
- **Finalist in the ‘Legal Technology Team of the Year’ – The Legal Business Awards 2023**

2023 Objective	Status	Progress
<b>To further develop the Pension Schemes ESG Tool and enable it online</b>	Ongoing	Our Pensions team are updating and enhancing the current tool, including adding new regulatory content and exploring new features that could enhance the user experience.
<b>To contribute expert insights as a responsible business in relevant forums supporting at least four events</b>	Achieved	Our head of corporate responsibility contributed to two UN Global Compact events, presented at an ICRS event on ESG frameworks and to Legal 500 (Legalease) on Sustainable Conversations about “how law firms can really walk the talk and become more sustainable” and, represented Burges Salmon at a roundtable discussion with a delegation from Tokyo, convened at Bristol City Council with other members of the Bristol SDG Alliance.  We also hosted a Lloyds Sustainable Finance event and a BITC South West RB in Action event.
<b>To progress improvement opportunities identified from our 2022 hybrid working survey to best enable collaboration through the ways we work</b>	Ongoing	In a survey of our people, 94% agreed the hybrid principles introduced in March 2022 hit the right balance. The People team is undertaking a further review to look at what has changed over the last year, considering both internal and external trends and research, with a likely focus on supervision and a series of recommendations or nudges to improve hybrid working.
2026 Ambition	Status	Year 3 progress
<b>To invest at least £4 million into community funding and financial equivalents</b>	Requires focus	Over the last three years we have invested nearly £2 million.
<b>To provide more than 25,000 volunteering and pro bono hours</b>	Requires focus	We have provided a total of 10,680 hours of volunteering and pro bono over the last three financial years.

## Collaboration

We champion a collaborative approach to responsible business that is underpinned by our values and the standards to which we operate. We collaborate with other law firms, other businesses, clients, suppliers and the local communities in which our offices are based.

We strive to continuously improve client service delivery through a range of innovative initiatives, including through our multi-disciplinary team of innovation and technology specialists who help shape our approach and use technology tools to suit specific client needs. By combining people, process, and technology, together with leveraging internal expertise, we are well-equipped to develop a number of bespoke and innovative solutions for clients to enhance client service delivery. For example, we offer clients the use of an industry leading collaboration platform known as Burges Salmon ClientSpace. This enables us to create bespoke, secure solutions where documents and content can be shared easily, clients can access key information at any time, and processes (for example due diligence) can be streamlined. Using this technology effectively means our legal services can be delivered smarter, faster and more efficiently to our clients.

Read how our Innovation team used technology and expertise to design and build a digital compliance tool for one of our clients

In collaboration with other law firms, we founded and developed the Legal Sustainability Alliance, a not-for-profit sustainability network providing advice, information and resources, leading the legal sector as it transitions to Net Zero. We are currently working with them to understand and address our Scope 3 supplier emissions.

Within the wider community we have co-created organisations, such as the Bristol Future Talent Partnership to tackle distinct needs in the cities in which we operate, helping to improve employment outcomes for black and ethnic minority young people. This collaboration has resulted in over 500 students within the city and 45 at the firm participating in work experience and mentoring opportunities.

We have more than 60 key charity partnerships through which we make financial donations, provide resources and volunteers, to help enable solutions to community challenges. This year we invested over £470,000 in our local communities. We also provided our facilities and hosted over 2,700 members of the local community by supporting charity and community events, training and development sessions. We continue delivery against our charitable theme 'No Child Goes Hungry' and during 2023 we pledged to support Bristol Good Food 2030, helping to make Bristol's food system better for communities, climate and nature.

We are members of the Institute of Corporate Responsibility and Sustainability (ICRS), the UN Global Compact and Business in the Community.

From July to September 2023, Burges Salmon sponsored the Bristol Unicornfest Art Trail. The Burges Salmon unicorn was painted by artist Ella-Mia Grant and was based in the heart of St Paul's, where the carnival which Burges Salmon also sponsored, takes place.

Ella said: "I wanted to pay tribute to one of UK's most inclusive events that happens right here in Bristol city! My take on a glimpse into the St Pauls Carnival experience where music, dance and the Afro Caribbean culture are celebrated. With a special shoutout to the seven community activists who

founded this event back in 1968 to ultimately bring people together in unity. I am very proud of my mixed Jamaican heritage and wanted to represent my love for the community and the famous event that is always a good time!"



The Burges Salmon unicorn 'Carni' was painted by artist Ella-Mia Grant

## Innovation and digital

We held our fourth B-Innovative Week during January 2023, run by our Innovation and Learning Technology teams, which featured sessions entitled ‘Delight your client’, ‘iManage 10 showcase’ and ‘The firm’s new Knowledge Management System’.

As a firm we are committed to supporting everyone. When our people come to work, we want them to feel empowered to be who they are and succeed in their own way. With this in mind, we’ve given every one of our people access to software called Read&Write for Work, a powerful set of inclusive digital tools that help everyone work with more confidence, accuracy, and efficiency.

The software had previously been offered to people who had asked for additional support. However, people don’t always know what support they might need or that they could benefit from it. We wanted to remove any barriers and make it much easier for everyone to access advanced digital inclusion tools – bringing benefits to many different people. For visually impaired learners, auditory processors and verbal communicators provide a bespoke set of tools to aid work. This new approach to software is one way in which we are looking at practical and proactive inclusion to support all of our people – supporting colleagues who may be neurodivergent or disabled along the way.

Digital technology is integral to our workplace and we continue to maintain a robust focus on cyber security. Our people are required



Bristol Hub

to undertake regular training on Information Security and we invest in technologies that enable cyber security. We are certified to ISO 27001 for information security and to ‘Cyber Essentials Plus’. During the autumn of 2023 we launched a new Information Security and Risk Reporting process.

Twice a year, Burges Salmon sponsors Bristol Hub’s Social Innovation Programme (SIP), in collaboration with the University of Bristol. The Spring 2023 programme featured Catalyse Change, Changes Bristol, Unseen and Young South Bristol. Over the course of eight weeks, student teams work on a community brief for a local charity and, four Burges Salmon people act as professional mentors, to support and advise their approach.

### EXPERIENCE



**“My experience as a Bristol Hub mentor has been extremely rewarding. It has been wonderful watching a group of individuals who didn’t know each other, before taking part in the SIP programme, grow as a team and work together to produce an excellent piece of work for a community partner. The mentees took a proactive approach and were keen to get the most out of the experience. As a mentor, this made my job easy – I helped guide the team’s enthusiasm, posed challenges from time to time and gave the group encouragement where they needed it. I also learned from my mentees; many of them were studying science or maths subjects and their approach to the task was naturally quite different to what mine would have been. This encouraged me to challenge my way of thinking and approach tasks from a different perspective in the future. I would recommend this experience to anyone looking to challenge their perspectives and develop their soft skills, all while supporting local community partners”.**

Helena Sewell, Solicitor

## Artificial Intelligence

Our Knowledge and Innovation teams held an in-person knowledge café focusing on gathering insights to develop a new area on Knowledge Unlocked to house AI-related content and resources. The café was attended by fee-earners and business professionals throughout the firm, coming together to help identify a useful set of content we can all refer to in this emerging and fast-moving area of legal and business practice. Highlights included sharing insights on AI from a business perspective and an overview of AI regulations. Two subsequent round table discussions generated interesting ideas for the new AI resource on Knowledge Unlocked, AI submissions taxonomy and insight into the type of AI-related information different practice areas would find helpful.



Knowledge café

### CASE STUDY

## Knowledge Unlocked

**We have long understood that delivering consistently exceptional results for our clients depends on our legal teams' ease-of-access to the firm's preserved and organised collective knowledge. Remote working confirmed increasing requirements for accessibility and an opportunity to update the firm's 15-year-old system for its knowledge. To achieve a more intuitive, scalable system, Burges Salmon went to iManage for the Knowledge Unlocked solution with Lexsoft T3. Since implementation through a well-managed, collaborative project that ran to time, scope and budget, we established an efficient workflow for document submission, and inspired strong adoption and new use case proposals among teams throughout the firm.**

**We first adopted our in-house firm-wide Knowledge Management System (KMS) during 2008. However, when during lockdown it became clear the applications needed updating, to ensure they were suitable for supporting legal teams working remotely. Certain basic premises remained the same: A KMS should provide context for each best practice document – why it was drafted**

# Knowledge Unlocked

a certain way, what the document is good for and, recommendations for how to use it. However, the value proposition falls apart if the user can't even find it.

We had already moved our Document Management System (DMS) to iManage Cloud and, to integrate well with the updated DMS, we needed a new KMS with a cloud-focused roadmap. While revamping the knowledge submission process our knowledge team wanted to account for existing resources our lawyers used every day; for example, LexisNexis and Thomson Reuters, as well as the firm's proprietary knowledge content and, to be able to associate additional metadata with internal content. The interface needed to be fast and intuitive to help the firm's PSLs share documents and metadata, including the standard form precedents they draft

and maintain and, the best practice know-how examples contributed by users. The system also needed to be customisable, scalable, and taxonomy-ready to ensure lawyers' searches would yield relevant results quickly.

To achieve these desires, the knowledge solution needed the right combination of tools but there was work to be done beyond simply replacing the system. Team members from IT and Knowledge combined forces with the PSLs and external consultants to optimise the firm's Knowledge Management function. The aim was to increase the speed, quality and consistency of the work Burges Salmon's lawyers performed and achieve the highest business outcome of even better client service.

## Collaboration and innovation objectives for 2024

- To review how AI and other digital innovations affect our stakeholders
- To consider communities and clients with poor digital skills and access, when designing new digital services
- To launch a community resource portal to provide charities access to up-to-date legal guidance and resources

Key Performance Indicators			
Collaboration and innovation	FY 2020/21	FY 2021/22	FY 2022/23
Award shortlists and wins	65	70	53
Partners recognised by Chambers UK	67%	70%	70%
ISO Standards	4	4	4
CRM: Clients 'extremely or very satisfied'*	100%	92%	90%
Business in the Community Responsible Business Tracker	71%	N/A	73%
Community visitor (hosting)	0	632	2,765
Community investment against operating profit*	1.62%	1.62%	1.20%
Total community investment*	£463,105	£415,458	£473,446



UN Sustainable Development Goal



WE SUPPORT



UN Global Compact Principle

**Principle 1**  
Respect of Human Rights

### Commitments and collaborations



The Prince's Responsible Business Network









\*For the results of the assurance, see ERM CVS's [assurance report](#). Please refer to the [Basis of Reporting](#) for further details on how we have prepared the data.

# Appendix

ERM CVS Assurance Report – February 2024

# Independent Limited Assurance Report to Burges Salmon LLP

ERM Certification and Verification Services Limited (“ERM CVS”) was engaged by Burges Salmon LLP (“Burges Salmon”) to provide limited assurance in relation to the selected information set out below and presented in Burges Salmon’s Responsible Business Report 2023 (the “Report”).

## Engagement summary

### Scope of our assurance engagement

Whether the selected 2023 ESG KPIs below are fairly presented in the Report, in all material respects, in accordance with the reporting criteria.

Metric	Unit of Measurement	Reporting period
Scope 1 Direct GHG Emissions	Metric tonnes of CO <sub>2</sub> e	1 January 2022 – 31 December 2022
Scope 2 Indirect GHG Emissions (Location-based)		
Scope 2 Indirect GHG Emissions (Market-based)		
Scope 3 (Category 5) Waste generated in operations GHG Emissions		
Scope 3 (Category 6) Business Travel GHG Emissions		
Total Community Investment	£	1 May 2022 – 30 April 2023
CRM: Clients ‘extremely or very satisfied’	%	
Number of Learning and Development courses completed	Number	

Our assurance engagement does not extend to information in respect of earlier periods or to any other information included in the Report.

### Reporting periods

- 1 January 2022 – 31 December 2022
- 1 May 2022 – 30 April 2023

### Reporting criteria

The Selected Information must be read and understood together with:

- Burges Salmon’s Basis of Reporting 2023 (available at: <https://www.burges-salmon.com/about-us/responsible-business/responsible-business-report>)

### Assurance standard and level of assurance

We performed a limited assurance engagement, in accordance with the International Standard on Assurance Engagements ISAE 3000 (Revised) ‘Assurance Engagements other than Audits or Reviews of Historical Financial Information’ issued by the International Auditing and Assurance Standards Board.

The procedures performed in a limited assurance engagement vary in nature and timing from, and are less in extent than for a reasonable assurance engagement and consequently, the level of assurance obtained in a limited assurance engagement is substantially lower than the assurance that would have been obtained had a reasonable assurance engagement been performed.

### Respective responsibilities

Burges Salmon is responsible for preparing the Report and for the collection and presentation of the information within it, and for the designing, implementing and maintaining of internal controls relevant to the preparation and presentation of the Selected Information.

ERM CVS’ responsibility is to provide a conclusion to Burges Salmon on the agreed scope based on our engagement terms with Burges Salmon, the assurance activities performed and exercising our professional judgement.

## Our conclusion

Based on our activities, as described below, nothing has come to our attention to indicate that the data and information for the disclosures listed under 'Scope' above are not fairly presented in the Report, in all material respects, in accordance with the reporting criteria.

## Our assurance activities

Considering the level of assurance and our assessment of the risk of material misstatement of the Selected Information a multi-disciplinary team of sustainability and assurance specialists performed a range of procedures that included, but was not restricted to, the following:

- Evaluating the appropriateness of the reporting criteria for the Selected Information;
- Performing an analysis of the external environment, including a media search, to identify sustainability risks and issues in the reporting period that may be relevant to the assurance scope;
- Interviews with management representatives responsible for managing the selected issues;
- Interviews with relevant staff to understand and evaluate the management systems and processes (including internal review and control processes) used for collecting and reporting the selected disclosures;
- A review at corporate level of a sample of qualitative and quantitative evidence supporting the reported information;
- An analytical review of the year-end data submitted by all locations included in the consolidated data for the selected disclosures which included testing the completeness and mathematical accuracy of conversions and calculations, and consolidation in line with the stated reporting boundary;
- Physical visit to Burges Salmon's office in Bristol to review source data and local reporting systems and controls;
- Assessing the conversion and emission factors and assumptions used; and
- Reviewing the presentation of information relevant to the scope of our work in the Report to ensure consistency with our findings.

## The limitations of our engagement

The reliability of the assured information is subject to inherent uncertainties, given the available methods for determining, calculating or estimating the underlying information. It is important to understand our assurance conclusions in this context. Our work was partly undertaken at Burges Salmon's head office in Bristol.

## Our independence, integrity and quality control

ERM CVS is an independent certification and verification body accredited by UKAS to ISO 17021:2015. Accordingly we maintain a comprehensive system of quality control, including documented policies and procedures regarding compliance with ethical requirements, professional standards, and applicable legal and regulatory requirements. Our quality management system is at least as demanding as the relevant sections of ISQM-1 and ISQM-2 (2022).

ERM CVS applies a Code of Conduct and related policies to ensure that its employees maintain integrity, objectivity, professional competence and high ethical standards in their work. Our processes are designed and implemented to ensure that the work we undertake is objective, impartial and free from bias and conflict of interest. Our certified management system covers independence and ethical requirements that are at least as demanding as the relevant sections of the IESBA Code relating to assurance engagements.

ERM CVS has extensive experience in conducting assurance on environmental, social, ethical and health and safety information, systems and processes, and provides no consultancy related services to Burges Salmon in any respect.



Gareth Manning  
Partner, Corporate Assurance  
London, United Kingdom

27 February 2024

On behalf of:  
ERM Certification and Verification Services Limited  
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We welcome comments and feedback on our Responsible Business Report, please email a member of the Corporate Responsibility team at [corporate.resp@burgess-salmon.com](mailto:corporate.resp@burgess-salmon.com)

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