

Connecting for positive impact



Welcome to our review which brings to life our approach to being a responsible business, reflecting on progress made and next steps.

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Welcome

An introduction from our Senior Partner, Natasha Rees

Looking back across the last year at our responsible business practices, I am proud of the commitment demonstrated across Forsters. Whilst we are on a journey of continuous improvement, now is a moment to stand back and reflect on the meaningful progress we have made together.



Our strength lies in our dedication to our core pillars: culture, communities, environment and collaboration. These elements capture the very essence of who we are and what we strive to embody every day.

Culture

Our culture is the heartbeat of Forsters, fostering an environment where respect, innovation, and excellence thrive. We believe in nurturing a workplace that is inclusive and empowering, where every voice is heard and valued. We continue to invest in our people knowing that our culture is the foundation upon which we build our success, enabling us to exceed expectations and deliver an unmatched service to our clients.

Communities

Forsters' values extend beyond our office walls and into the communities we serve. Our pro bono efforts and volunteering are pivotal to our identity, reflecting our belief that true success is measured by the positive contribution we make in fostering strong community ties and supporting initiatives that promote social justice, education, wellbeing and nature.

Environment

Environmental stewardship is a critical component of our ethos at Forsters. We are acutely aware of our responsibility to minimise our ecological footprint and champion sustainability in all of our practices. Our move to a new office in Marylebone was executed with sustainability at its core demonstrating our commitment to incorporating integrated thinking across our operations.

Collaboration

Collaboration is the cornerstone of our success. At Forsters, we believe that working together, with mutual respect and shared goals, leads to exceptional outcomes. This year has been a testament to the power of collaboration, both within our firm and with our external partners. Our efforts in community service, environmental sustainability, and professional excellence are all enhanced by the relationships we cultivate. By embracing a collaborative spirit, we ensure that our combined efforts are greater than the sum of their parts, driving us towards collective success.

This review illustrates the dedication, hard work, and passion of the Forsters team. As we look to the future, we will continue to strive to make a positive difference and achieve exceptional outcomes.

“Our culture is the heartbeat of Forsters, fostering an environment where respect, innovation, and excellence thrive.”

Natasha Rees

Building on strong foundations



Forsters has a track record as a responsible business with some key milestones set out above.

Another year of continuous improvement

An overview from our Responsible Business Partner, Kelly Noel-Smith

Responsible business at Forsters reflects our collective belief in contributing positively and proactively to society. Our approach benefits enormously from the support of our senior leadership and we are indebted to the many people in the firm who give their time and energy on top of their day-to-day work to contribute to initiatives and to take part in our committees, support networks and working groups.



Kelly Noel-Smith
Private Client Partner

The year saw a number of achievements and developments with many highlights including:

Culture

- We conducted our second employee D&I survey to inform the launch of our new Diversity and Inclusion Strategy for 2024-2026.
- We ran our second Pathways to Law Programme with The Sutton Trust and partnered with two new social mobility charities to deliver work experience programmes to 49 students.
- Our Knowledge and Learning and Development teams ran over 300 internal workshops, lectures and seminars across the firm.
- We retained our 'Gold' accreditation in the Mind Workplace Wellbeing Index and continue to deliver an innovative wellbeing programme supporting people across the firm.

[Read more on page 05](#)

Communities

- More than 120 volunteers gave a total of 1170+ hours to support pro bono projects and over a quarter of the firm used either a full or half volunteering day.
- As part of the office move, our partnership with local St Andrew's Club ended after four successful years, during which we raised significant funds, alongside volunteering and pro bono support.
- We launched our new partnership with the Marylebone Project, a local women's homelessness charity. We have already seen some impressive fundraising efforts, including the London Night Walk in March which raised £4,795, and on International Women's Day, volunteers from our Employment team hosted a workshop and afternoon tea.

[Read more on page 16](#)

Environment

- Our target to halve our absolute scope 1, 2 and 3 emissions by 2030, from our 2019 baseline year, was verified by the Science Based Targets Initiative (SBTi), a major step in defining our pathway to net zero which is a focus for the coming year.
- We were shortlisted for two sustainability awards and another boost came from a Legal Cheek accolade: their Trainee and Junior Lawyer Survey rated us A* for eco-friendliness.
- Our office move demonstrated environmental stewardship in action and we also look forward to optimising all the building's innovative technologies.

[Read more on page 23](#)

Collaboration

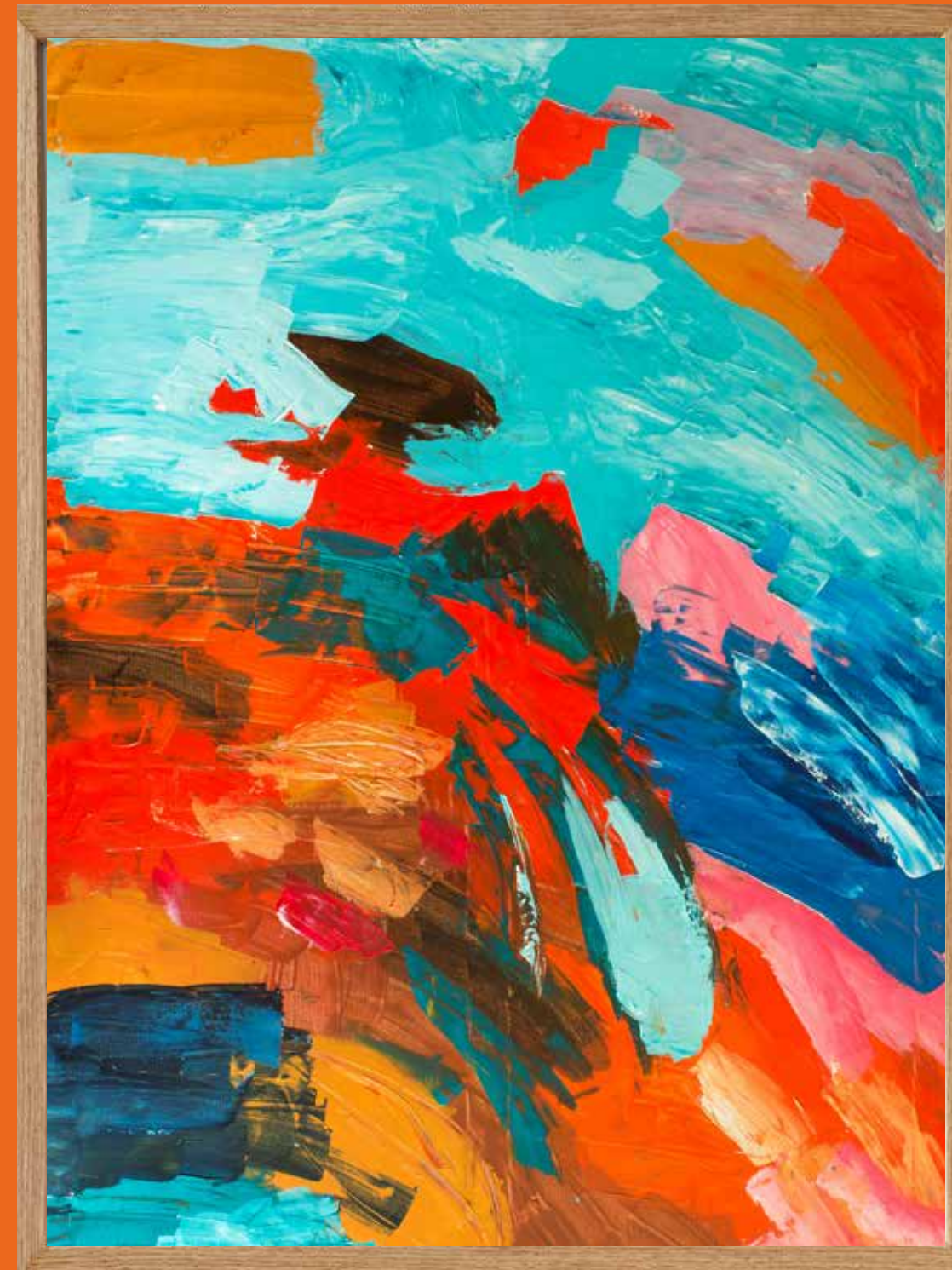
- We launched a Sustainability Collaborations programme with intermediaries to learn, evaluate and consolidate sustainable ways of working at an operational level.
- We enhanced our supplier ESG screening processes and introduced a sustainable suppliers directory to promote our use of environmentally responsible suppliers.

[Read more on page 31](#)

Creating a culture where everyone can thrive

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Creating a culture where everyone can thrive

Our greatest asset is our team of expert lawyers and business support professionals. They are crucial to Forsters' success and it is imperative that our people feel safe, supported and happy. We encourage and embrace differences, making Forsters a diverse and inclusive environment where everyone can flourish. We support professional growth and development, a positive day-to-day working experience, and empower people to speak openly about their wellbeing.

53%

53% of our Partners are female

7

7 employee-led D&I support networks

300+

300+ workshops, seminars and lectures delivered by our Knowledge and Learning and Development teams

30%

30% of the firm are signed up to our Wellbeing Fund

Diversity and inclusion

A diverse workplace, where everyone feels included and valued, helps us to retain high performing and happy staff. Building a workforce that also reflects society, at every level of our firm, is essential to meeting clients’ needs. Our aim is to break down barriers for those looking to access the legal profession. We are committed to creating an environment where everyone can develop and grow, regardless of their background.

Our approach

We work hard to improve understanding and communication, while encouraging and celebrating diversity. It is vital that everyone is part of a working environment where they feel they belong.

Our D&I Committee leads diversity and inclusion activity at the firm – shaping our strategy, influencing policies, driving initiatives and supporting our seven employee-led networks. Our new two-year D&I strategy focuses on four main areas: data, recruitment, allyship and inclusion.

Our support networks

Through seven employee-led D&I support networks, colleagues meet monthly, discuss relevant topics, share information and resources, and provide feedback to the firm to shape policies and processes. Our networks also initiate and lead firm-wide events to raise awareness and foster allyship.

36

D&I support network and committee meetings

12

Events/workshops run by the networks



Read

[Our D&I strategy](#)



Network highlights

EnABLE (disability support network)

- Actively contributed to inclusive design elements of our new office at 22 Baker Street and championed our work towards Disability Confident Committed status.
- Supported International Day of Persons with Disabilities, reminding colleagues of how and where they can find more information.
- Hosted a ‘Lunch and Learn’ with Mencap challenging stigmas and preconceptions of what people with a learning disability can and can’t do.

Faith

- Hosted an Eid Celebration in April, with colleagues who had finished a month of fasting for Ramadan. Collaborated with the Working Parents and Carers network to create gift bags for colleagues to take home to their children.
- Held an Art and Faith event in October with Nabhinandan Das, a Hindu Priest, and art historian Dr Rachel Coombes, which explored the long and fascinating relationship between art and faith, and its changing role throughout history.

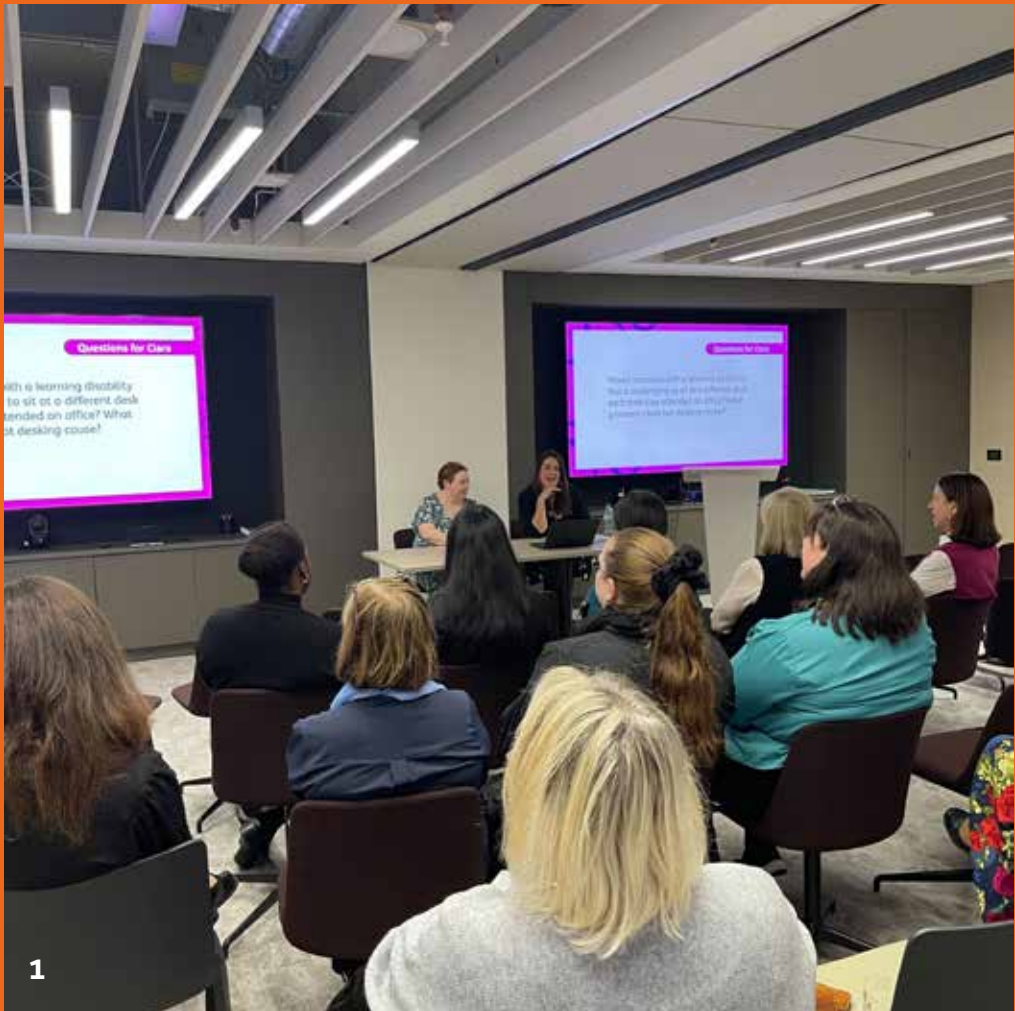
Gender Equality

- Marked International Women’s Day with an ‘Inspire Inclusion’ theme by creating a video with colleagues celebrating the many ways in which they are either inspired or seek to inspire others.
- Ongoing work to remove ‘Dear Sirs’ from precedents and other templates.

PRIDE

- Pride month in June saw our Pride network host Drag Queen Bingo, and successful bake sale which raised £520 for the Albert Kennedy Trust and Solace Women’s Aid. Members of the firm also attended the Pride in London Parade as part of LeGal BesT.
- Co-hosted an event in October with our Gender Equality Network to support National Coming Out Day, led by Private Client Partner, Rupert Mead, in conversation with award-winning trans activist Tate Smith.
- Marked LGBTQ+ History Month in February by producing weekly articles throughout the month on significant LGBTQ+ figures within Medicine.

- 1 Mencap Lunch and Learn
- 2 Eid treats
- 3 Art and Faith event
- 4 Drag Queen Bingo
- 5 Pride London
- 6 Rupert and Tate



Our values

We take happiness seriously

- We know that a friendly, respectful and flexible working environment results in exceptional performance.
- We proactively work together because we enjoy solving complex and challenging problems in partnership.
- We take responsibility for our own wellbeing and performance.
- We are committed to our clients being delighted with the service they get from us.

- 1 BHM exhibition
- 2 BHM tasting experience
- 3 BHM tasting experience
- 4 SMBP work experience
- 5 WP&C Christmas catch-up



Race

- Along with the Social Mobility network, signed up to GROW, a charity that pairs aspiring lawyers from low socioeconomic backgrounds with legal professionals for one-to-one mentoring.
- Held two events in support of Black History Month and black-owned businesses in October, with exhibitions on Black Excellence and the Windrush 75 legacy and a food tasting experience celebrating African and Caribbean delicacies.

Social Mobility

- Led a speaker event with Social Mobility Business Partnership founder Barry Matthews, to mark Social Mobility Awareness Day in June.
- Delivered presentations to sixth form and undergraduate students as part of our summer social mobility work experience programmes - read more on page 11.

Working Parents and Carers

- Co-hosted with the Wellbeing team a webinar on 'Online Safety and Cyberbullying Awareness' with Kidscape.
- Continued leading bi-monthly coffee mornings for working carers at the firm.
- Shared Christmas themed treats for colleagues to take home to their children.

Achieving Disability Confident Committed certification

As part of its ongoing focus on inclusion in the workplace and commitment to minimising employment barriers for people living with disabilities, we obtained the UK government's Disability Confident Committed certification. Disability Confident is a government scheme designed to encourage employers to recruit and retain disabled people and those with health conditions.

Read more on our [website](#).



A focus on Social Mobility and Early Careers

Our aim is to attract and retain diverse talent at every level by breaking down barriers and widening access to the legal profession for individuals from lower socio-economic backgrounds. We want people from all backgrounds to see themselves working at Forsters.

Social Mobility Foundation

We partnered with the Social Mobility foundation to offer 11 undergraduate students three days of in person work experience. The students are actively pursuing a career in law, so the programme provided an opportunity for them to explore the sector and learn about different specialisms.

Social Mobility Business Partnership

We hosted 18 A-level students in our office for a day as part of the Social Mobility Business Partnership's 'Work and Skills Insight Week'. Students spent a week visiting a variety of businesses to experience different working environments and the careers available. The week aims to break down psychological barriers to 'fitting in' at various workplaces, with the opportunity for students from low-income households to meet professionals in various sectors.

Trainee recruitment

- We have continued to partner with experts Rare recruitment to further develop our hiring processes, adding more context to applications and better understanding the candidate's performance.
- We use blind marking of applications, where assessors do not see any personal or academic information.
- We conduct blind first round assessment days, including a blind interview, group task and case study. The case study is anonymous and the assessors never meet the pool of candidates in person.
- We completed two thorough briefing sessions ahead of the application marking and assessment days. Our Head of Learning and Development, Sharon Tattan, also led unconscious bias training for the panel and observed decision making meetings to challenge assessors where necessary.
- We increased the maintenance grant and the vacation scheme weekly salary for the 2024 cohorts.

Solicitor Apprenticeships 2025

During the year, we announced that we will be recruiting up to four solicitor apprentices to join the firm. This programme supports our objectives to attract and develop the most talented individuals and to build a diverse workforce in line with our commitment to D&I.

We will also be introducing a bursary to support candidates and future trainees with expenses, alongside introducing online Q&A sessions designed for candidates that may face barriers to travel to London or attend fairs.



1 SMF presentation
2 SMF group photo

“I have learnt that life in a law firm is not as daunting as it seems from the outside.”
Work experience student

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

“I am delighted that Forsters will be welcoming its first cohort of solicitor apprentices in September 2025. It is important to recognise that attending university isn't right for everyone. As Partner sponsor for the solicitor apprenticeship programme, I am very much looking forward to helping to create this additional early career opportunity for further generations of talent to pursue careers in law.”
Emily Holdstock,
Graduate Recruitment Partner

Professional development

At Forsters, we support every person to achieve professional growth and development. Our competency frameworks are tailored to the job role, providing clarity around expectations not only in technical excellence, but across all areas, leading to exceptional results. Regular feedback and reviews are designed to identify and enhance career progression opportunities.

Our approach

Our firmwide Knowledge team, which includes specialist Knowledge Development Lawyers working alongside our Library and Information Services experts, delivers knowledge sharing and professional development across all our legal teams.

Our new Baker Street office provides first-class learning resources, including purpose-built and flexible training rooms. The Knowledge team has created online knowledge hubs across the firm, giving teams an agile and consolidated means of accessing all required information and resources and providing an efficient means of quickly sharing legal updates.

Our Learning and Development team offers a comprehensive suite of opportunities for business skills enhancement, including ad-hoc workshops, development programmes and individual coaching and mentoring. We use internal subject-matter experts and external suppliers to facilitate skills workshops across a range of topics that are designed to enable the exchange of ideas and perspectives.

The team also designs and delivers tailored leadership programmes, mentoring and coaching at career transition points and to support progress towards business objectives and professional growth.

300+

workshops, lectures and seminars delivered across the year by the Knowledge and Learning and Development teams

Case studies

Vacation Scheme programme

Our vacation schemes provide an insight into working for us for those interested in a legal career. Participants are exposed to real client work and a range of workshops. We typically hire around 75% of trainees through this route. We keep in touch with our future joiners through a monthly newsletter packed with useful insights. Once onboard, our trainees are nurtured through their professional qualification via bespoke training, dedicated supervisors and one-to-one support from the Learning and Development team, working with each individual to help shape their 'seat' rotations.

Business Services Management programme

We introduced a new seven-month development programme for Business Services Management (BSMP) designed to bring together nominated individuals who manage others or manage key projects. Topics included Personal Brand and Professional Impact, Coaching Skills, Personality Preference, Team Effectiveness, and Supervision and Delegation. Participants leveraged ideas and experience from each other, from internal speakers and from external providers, deepening professional relationships and forging new connections.

Collaborative Mentoring programme

Collaborative mentoring is designed to support our D&I strategy through the sharing of different perspectives between junior and senior people at Forsters without any hierarchy or labels of 'mentor' or 'mentee'. In November, we launched our second cohort, matching eight pairs of junior and senior people across fee earners, Secretarial Services and Business Services to create a mutually supportive relationship.

Wellbeing

Wellbeing is integral to our distinctively friendly and collaborative culture. It underpins our values of ‘taking happiness seriously’ and ‘supporting every person to achieve’.

Working in the legal sector can be hugely rewarding, but it can also be physically and mentally demanding. We aim to provide an environment that supports wellbeing and allows our people to thrive. When our individuals are healthy and motivated, they are more productive and effective in delivering an exceptional service to our clients.

Our ambition is for employees at any level to feel comfortable in discussing their wellbeing without fear of being judged or criticised. We are committed to supporting each other so that every person at Forsters has a positive day-to-day working experience and is empowered to manage their wellbeing.

Our approach

We have a Wellbeing Vision which sets out our commitment to our employees and to providing a supportive working environment. Each team has created a Wellbeing Charter, introducing practical commitments to make our Wellbeing Vision a reality.

We have a strong firmwide programme of wellbeing-related events, communications, benefits, support tools and trained mental health first aiders to help with mental, physical and financial wellbeing.

Mental wellbeing

Mental Health First Aid Champions: We have nine Mental Health First Aid Champions across the firm who anyone can approach for confidential support. One of our Mental Health First Aid Champions, Jessie Menezes, was one of five individuals shortlisted for the MIND Wellbeing Lead Award in 2023.

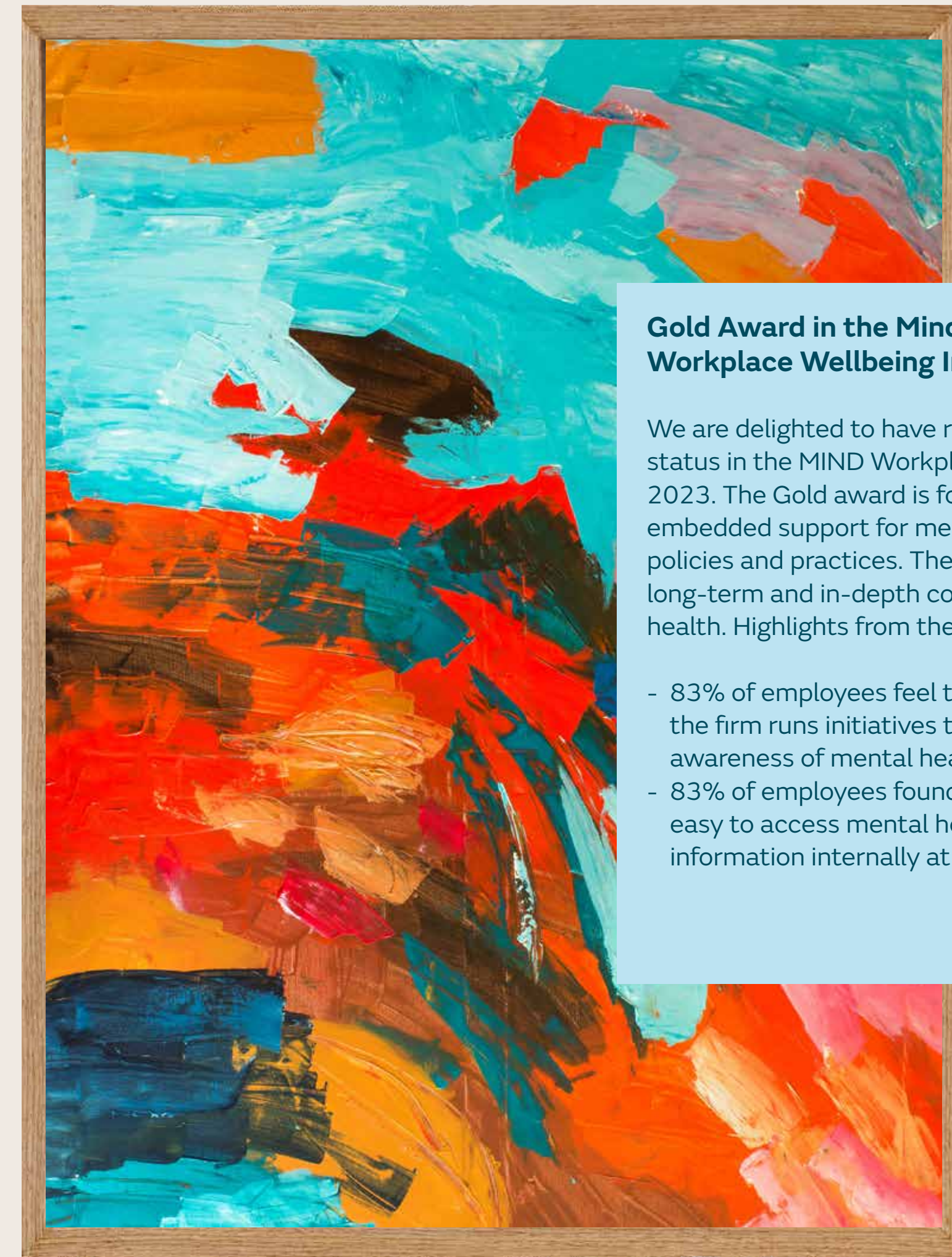
Confidential 1-1 wellbeing sessions: Through Wellbeing Partners, our people have access to one-to-one confidential wellbeing sessions.

Wellbeing Book Club: Launched to encourage colleagues to come together once a quarter and discuss a book relating to wellbeing.

Wellbeing Fund: Providing a financial contribution to a wide choice of wellbeing benefits, including mental health and wellbeing therapy, infant sleep coaching, National Trust membership, language lessons, one-to-one nutritionist support and wellbeing app subscriptions.

Lunch and Learn sessions: We have partnered with experts to deliver informative wellbeing sessions covering a range of topics including:

- Neurodiversity Awareness with Daniel Aherne, Founder of Adjust
- Grief in the Workplace with Nici Harrison, Founder of The Grief Space
- How to Switch from Saboteur to Sage Brain with Georgina Halabi, Mental Fitness Trainer



Gold Award in the Mind Workplace Wellbeing Index

We are delighted to have retained our Gold award status in the MIND Workplace Wellbeing Index in 2023. The Gold award is for employers who have embedded support for mental health into their policies and practices. These organisations show a long-term and in-depth commitment to staff mental health. Highlights from the employee survey include:

- 83% of employees feel that the firm runs initiatives to raise awareness of mental health
- 83% of employees found it easy to access mental health information internally at work



Physical wellbeing

Bupa on-site vaccinations and health checks: We ran a series of on-site ‘Know your Numbers’ health checks and flu vaccinations led by Bupa professionals.

Sports and movement: We continued to offer sports activities including Run Club, Yoga, Football, Table Tennis, Cricket and guided wellbeing walks, encouraging colleagues to take time away from their desk.

Self defence classes: We ran on-site self-defence classes with KB Fitness, available to all employees.

Menopause support group: This year, we worked with Women’s Health Specialist Claudine Thornhill to launch and facilitate our Menopause Support Group which meets quarterly.

Financial wellbeing

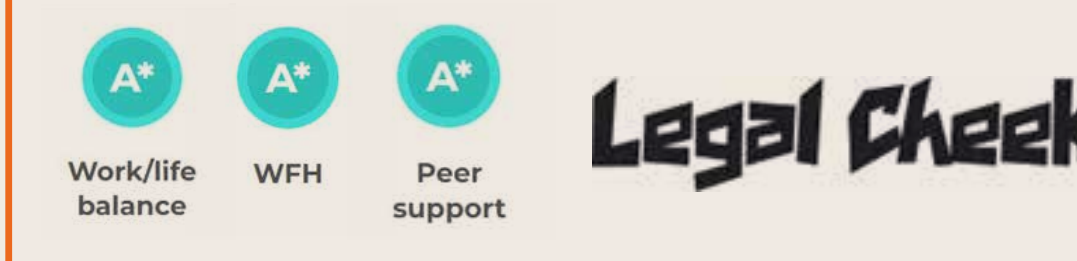
In 2023, we partnered with an experienced Chartered Financial Planner and Coach to lead our financial wellbeing programme including:

1-1 financial coaching: Employees can book a 45-minute ‘Drop in Clinic’ appointment to discuss anything in relation to money and finances. The clinics provide a confidential and safe space to talk about money concerns and provide financial guidance and coaching.

Lunch and Learn sessions: We ran nine financial wellbeing lunch and learn sessions covering topics such as The Sandwich Generation, Navigating the Cost-of-Living Crisis, How to Plan for Your Retirement, Managing your Mortgage and Managing Your Money in Stressful Times.

External recognition and awards

Legal Cheek Trainee and Junior Lawyer Survey
In the Legal Cheek Trainee and Junior Lawyer Survey 2023/24, we scored A* on work/life balance, work from home and peer support.

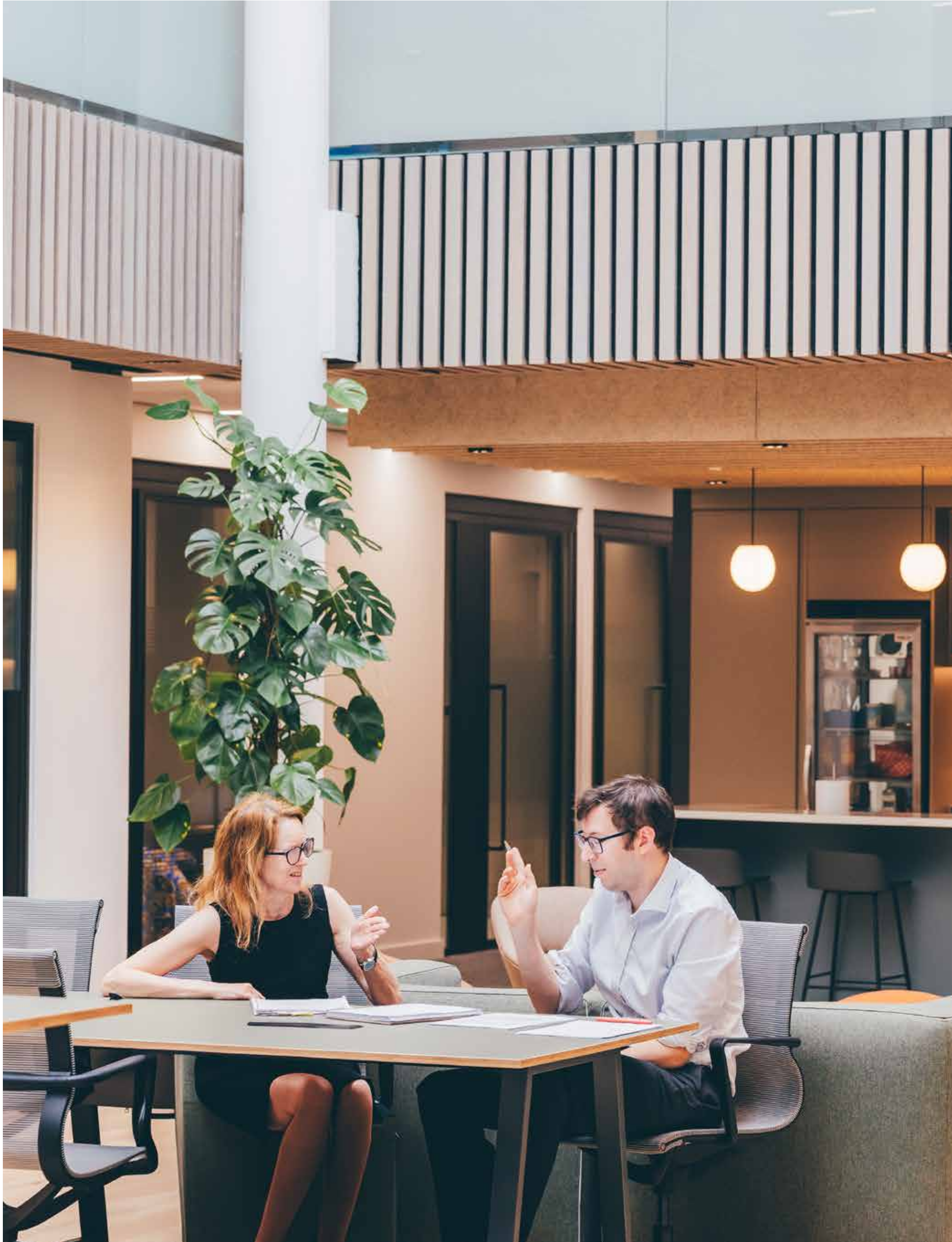


Legal 500 Future Lawyers Survey
In 2023, we were named Legal 500 Future Lawyers Winners in three categories; Supervisor approachability, Social life and Work from home.



- 1 Guided wellbeing walk
- 2 Self defence class





Our working environment

Our new office was designed with employee wellbeing, agile and activity-based working in mind, including open-plan staircases to encourage connection and collaboration across groups.

The interiors also facilitate accessibility and inclusion, with finishes that factor in neurodiversity.

We have Mobile Connect hearing assistance in our larger meeting rooms and Café.

Dedicated spaces around the office support specific wellbeing and inclusion aspects, including:

- a Multi-Faith Room for prayer or meditation
- a Wellness Room for first aid, breastfeeding and onsite health-checks
- a Studio for wellbeing events including yoga, table tennis and self-defence classes
- a terrace with biophillic planting for eating, meeting and relaxing
- support for commuters with over 100 bike spaces and shower facilities

Next steps

Diversity and inclusion

- Put systems and processes in place to collect diversity-related data and drive participation.
- Strengthen and foster allyship to advance D&I through the ongoing provision of training and education.
- Explore further recruitment best practices to ensure that we are accessing a diverse set of applicants and then improving the diversity of our entire workforce.

Professional development

- Continue to develop our programmes in alignment with the requirements of the firm and our clients.
- Optimise the use of technology to deliver effective programmes.
- Identify more ways to create closer connections between our people and with our clients through learning and development opportunities.

Wellbeing

- Enter the Mind Workplace Wellbeing Index again in 2024/25, with the aim to improve our score as a result of the ongoing development of our wellbeing initiatives.
- Work towards becoming a Living Wage accredited employer in 2024.

Making a positive difference to our communities

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Making a positive difference to our communities

We recognise the mutual benefit of engaging with and enriching the community around us. We want our people to feel connected to the local community and we encourage them to support causes they are passionate about through a range of activities including fundraising, volunteering and pro bono legal advice.

600+

600+ meals served annually by our Lunch Club volunteers

£16K+

£16K+ raised through four annual December raffles for St Andrew's Youth Club

141

141 people took a full or half day to volunteer

1,170+

1,170+ hours spent providing pro bono legal advice

Pro bono

The aim of our Pro Bono programme is to offer our legal expertise to individuals, charities and community groups that can't afford to pay for advice. We work with a number of partners, including legal advice centres and referral organisations that connect firms with charities, offering support directly to vulnerable individuals.

We have a Pro Bono Committee and are a signatory to the [Joint Pro Bono Protocol for Legal Work](#) which governs how we undertake our work in this area. Our Pro Bono Policy encourages lawyers in the firm at every stage of their career to participate with time spent actually counting towards billable hours targets. During the year, 120+ volunteers collectively spent 1,170+ hours on pro bono legal advice.

Our partners

- South Westminster Legal Advice Centre
- Queen Mary University Legal Advice Centre
- Citizens Advice Wandsworth
- The Chancery Lane Project
- TrustLaw
- LandAid



Case studies

South Westminster Legal Advice Centre (SWLAC)

supports local people who cannot afford legal advice. Their work typically includes family, housing, landlord and tenant, employment, probate and litigation matters. We provide regular in-person volunteers every Tuesday, with qualified lawyers, trainees and paralegals all providing valuable assistance.

“Coming into my training contract, I knew that I wanted to be involved in the charity and pro bono elements of Forsters. Pro bono, for me, is a chance to use our legal training for the good of the community, helping those who cannot access legal advice. South Westminster Legal Advice Centre is a great way to be able to do this. Giving even just a small piece of advice to help clients resolve their issue is really rewarding.”

Sophie Wilson
Trainee

Blue Sky Autism is an innovative and unique service providing individualised programmes of therapy and nursery placements to young children aged from 6 months old who are experiencing developmental delays, including autism.

“Our team acted for Blue Sky Autism, who wanted to expand their offering and reach by taking on new premises. We assisted them in negotiating a new commercial lease. Being a father myself and being constantly amazed watching my children grow and learn, I was delighted to be able to use my and the firm's expertise to support a charity that helps children. The transaction was successful, and I hope that many other children have benefitted from their expertise and programmes.”

Commercial Real Estate team volunteer

Community partnerships

St Andrew's Club

We are proud to have supported St Andrew's Youth Club as our charity partner from 2019 to 2023. St Andrew's Club is a youth club based in Westminster, providing fun and educational activities for young people from age five to adulthood. Highlights from 2023 included:

- Our volunteers supported the running of the Club's summer activities programme
- We sponsored the Club's supporter event at the Leathersellers' Hall in October
- Our trainee volunteers wrapped over 130 gifts for St Andrew's Youth Club members to receive at their festive party in December
- Our Christmas raffle raised £3,730, with £16K+ raised through this initiative over the length of the partnership

The Marylebone Project

In January 2024, we established a new partnership with the Marylebone Project, a local charity providing a life-changing service for women experiencing homelessness, with the intention of empowering them towards independent living. We are directly supporting the charity through fundraising, material donations, volunteering and skills-based support that helps to empower women to live fulfilling independent lives. We hope our partnership will raise awareness of the Marylebone Project's vital services and the experiences of women who are facing homelessness in London.

Furniture donations

As part of our office move to Marylebone in January, we donated 50 furniture items which were used to furnish the Project's newly refurbished reception, three lounges for residents and two office spaces.

Clothing donations

Five boxes of office wear were donated to the Marylebone Project's clothing store for women to use when attending interviews, work placements and paid employment.

International Women's Day workshop

To celebrate International Women's Day in March, volunteers from our Employment team and trainees hosted an 'Employment Basics' workshop and afternoon tea for 31 women at the Marylebone Project.



1 Launch event for the Marylebone Project



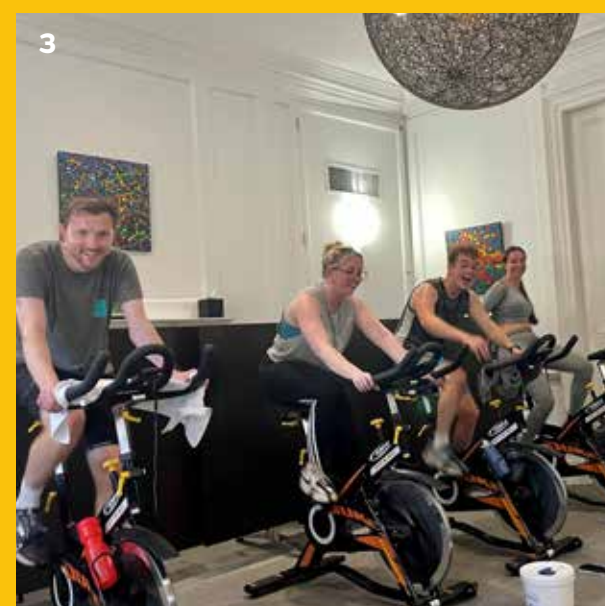


Our values

We are driven by what really matters

- We make decisions with integrity, demonstrating a clear desire to do the right thing.
- We take pride in our commerciality; knowing our client's business well enables us to consistently deliver quality outcomes.
- We make the time to find out what is important to our colleagues and our clients.
- We set high standards for ourselves, taking pride in consistently acting with respect, empathy and professionalism.

- 1 London Night Walk
- 2 Lunch Club party
- 3 St Andrew's Bike Challenge
- 4 PedElle



Thursday Lunch Club

Thursday Lunch Club is a longstanding Forsters initiative. Our volunteers provide a hot meal and warm welcome once a week to people in the community in need of support. Over the last few years, the club was held at Grosvenor Chapel in Mayfair, but we now host guests at St Marylebone Parish Church following our move to Marylebone in January 2024.

60+

volunteers take it in turns to prepare and serve weekly lunches to the community

15+

guests are served weekly

Fundraising

PedElle

In June, Senior Partner Natasha Rees and Partner Helen Marsh joined 60 women in the real estate sector to cycle 450km across Slovenia. The Forsters team raised £2,400 for Club Peloton, a grant-making charity focusing on transforming the lives of young people.

St Andrew's to St Andrew's Cycle Challenge

In July, a team set out to cycle the 488 miles from St Andrew's Youth Club, London, to St Andrews, Scotland, in a single day on four exercise bikes. The challenge raised £3,080 for St Andrew's Youth Club which finances over 1,500 hot and nutritious meals for young people at the After School Club.

London Night Walk

In March, a group of 15 walked a half marathon as part of the London Homeless Collective's London Night Walk. The event united London-based charities that are tackling homelessness in walking as one through the night and to reflect on the challenges faced by those that don't have secure housing. The team raised a brilliant £4,771 for the Marylebone Project. This total will fund 95 vulnerable women in accessing an emergency bed for one night, as well as access to nutritious meals, toiletries and health services.



Volunteering

Supporting the wellbeing and development of our local community is vitally important, whether it's nurturing and maintaining green spaces, or supporting food banks. Every person in the firm can take a paid volunteering day each year. We take the happiness of our people seriously and actively encourage everyone to use this day to support causes they are passionate about.

25.5%

of the firm used their volunteering day, an increase of 101% from FY22/23

20+

20+ different charities supported

The Felix Project

The Felix Project rescues good, surplus food from the food industry that cannot be sold and would otherwise go to waste. The project then delivers it to hundreds of food banks, charities, primary schools and holiday programmes in London. In November, our team of volunteers helped prepare 800 meals in the charity's kitchen for Londoners in need.

The Switch

In January, volunteers supported 90 students attending an 'Options and Careers Day' at a school in Tower Hamlets, facilitated by education charity The Switch. The day encouraged students to explore different career pathways and consider next steps when they finish Year 11.

Commercial Real Estate team and Sebby's Corner

In January, members of our Commercial Real Estate team volunteered at Sebby's Corner, a charity based in Barnet providing for disadvantaged families. The team spent the day preparing referral packs with essential supplies for children and families who have been specifically referred to Sebby's Corner from the local authority or another charity.



- 1 Felix Project
- 2 The Switch
- 3 Sebby's Corner

Next steps

- Review our Pro Bono Policy to ensure we are delivering a positive impact in line with our goals.
- Continue to strengthen our partnership with the Marylebone Project through fundraising and skills-based volunteering to enrich lives and support independent living.
- Work toward the launch of a Reading Scheme with a local primary school to support pupils with their reading for a school term.
- Partner with a local secondary school to offer student careers advice and work experience during its Careers Week.
- Continue to increase the number of opportunities available for our people to give back to the local and wider community.

Taking action for our environment

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Taking action for our environment

We work together to minimise our impact on the environment and sustainability is a core consideration in our operations taking into account climate change, biodiversity, the health of ecosystems and use of natural resources.

-50%

-50% emission reduction target across Scopes 1, 2 and 3 by 2030 against a 2019/20 baseline

97%

Scope 3 accounts for 97% of the total emissions

100%

100% renewable energy across our offices

-41%

-41% reduction in number of printers across our offices

Our approach to climate action

In October 2021, we made a public commitment to halve our Scope 1, 2 and 3 greenhouse gas emissions by 2030, from a 2019/20 baseline. In September 2023 our target was verified by the [Science Based Targets Initiative \(SBTi\)](#). With our near-term target in place, we have begun planning our pathway to achieve net zero with the aim to have a commitment and plan in place by the end of the next year. Our focus is on embedding environmental sustainability into our decision-making across every aspect of operations in order to manage down our emissions and achieve our reduction targets.

Tracking progress

This is our fifth year of emissions reporting including Streamlined Energy and Carbon Reporting (SECR) and during the year we submitted our first Carbon Disclosure Project (CDP) questionnaire. We have improved and extended the scope of our data which gives us a more accurate picture of the shape of our carbon footprint and where to prioritise action. Our emissions are audited and verified by a third-party in accordance with ISO14064-1:2018 and we aim to achieve Achilles Net Carbon Zero certification again for this year as a result of meeting the required reduction rolling average, our action plans and the purchase of verified carbon credits.

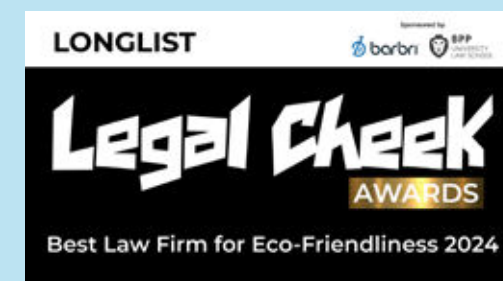
Governance

Our Sustainability Board meets bi-monthly. It is chaired by our Responsible Business Partner and includes the Managing Partner, Heads of Finance, Risk and Operations, and members of the Responsible Business team. The role of the Board is to ensure that environmental sustainability is at the heart of the firm's operations. Topics covered during the year included:

- Performance updates and planning
- Law Society Guidance
- Resource reduction initiatives
- Planning for our office move
- Approaches to offsetting
- Policy updates, rollouts and engagement
- COP28 outcomes

Awards

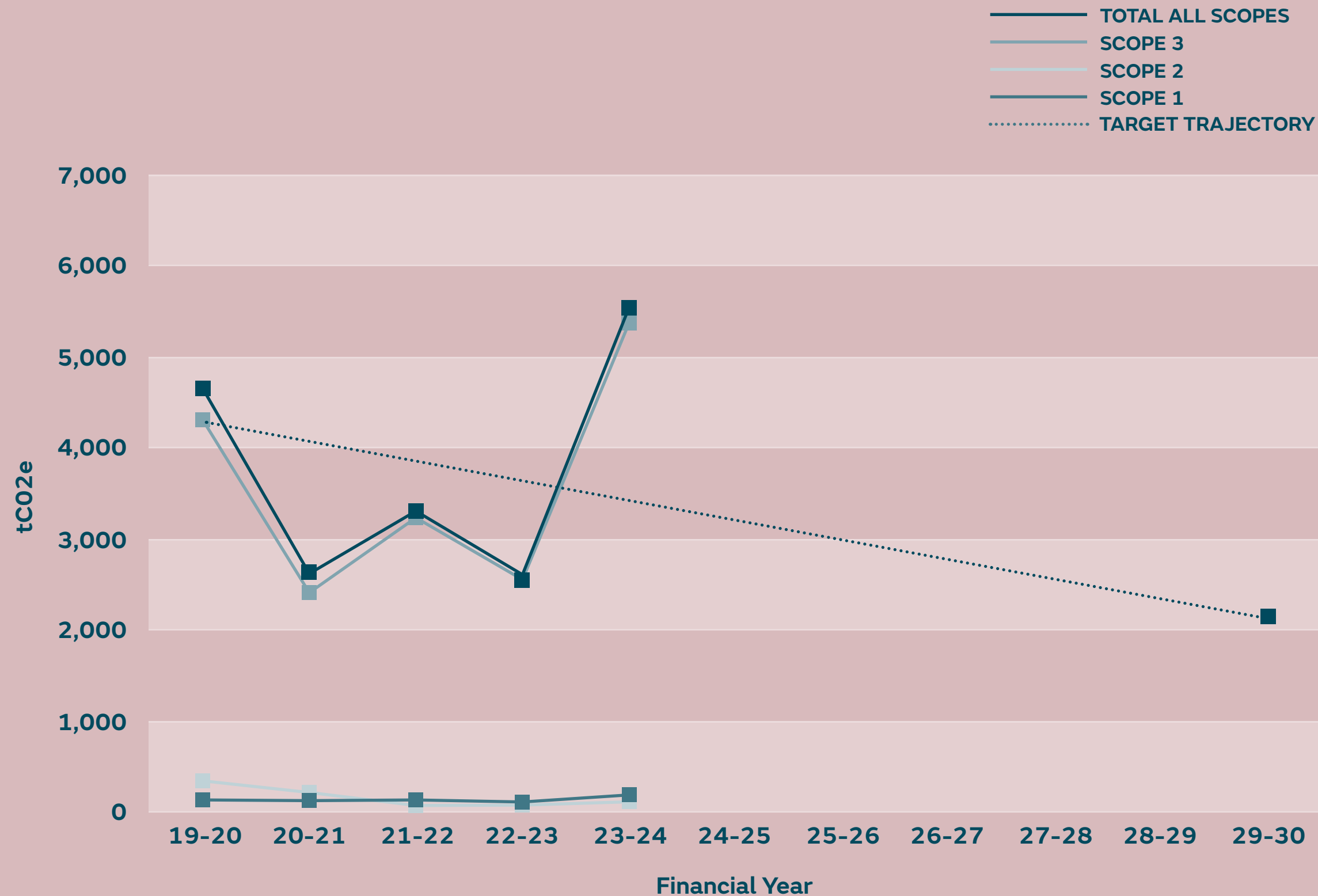
At the start of the year, Forsters was shortlisted for two sustainability awards, including a nomination for Kelly Noel-Smith, our Responsible Business Partner, for Environmental Sustainability: Private Practice Champion of the year (internal). We also achieved an A* in the Legal Cheek eco-friendliness award category.



Our performance

The 2023/24 emissions reporting scope included:

- Four London offices;
- Scope 1: direct emissions from use of fuels in our offices;
- Scope 2: indirect emissions from electricity purchased to power our offices;
- Scope 3: indirect emissions from operational activity including business travel, commuting, couriers, waste, water, purchased goods and services and capital goods.



Progress towards our Scope 1,2 and 3 Absolute tCO2e reduction target.

Our carbon hotspots and progress against our baseline year

The trend diagram shows progress against our 2030 emission reduction target starting from a 2019/20 baseline. We have seen a significant increase in Scope 3 emissions during this financial year as a result of our office move which, has accounted for 54% of these emissions. We expect high capital goods expenditure to continue as we complete the final phase of our new office refit scheduled for early 2025. However, sustainability has been at the centre of our office move with the goal of BREEAM Excellent certification as a result of minimising waste, choosing sustainable materials and maximising opportunities for innovative energy efficient and renewable technologies - read more on pages 29-30.

We have improved our purchased goods and services data, which has shown a 14% reduction in related emissions on last year and a 42% reduction on our baseline year. Going forward we will work with our suppliers to continue to improve data collection and establish emission reduction plans, starting with the highest spend.

Whilst business travel (including accommodation and third-party vehicle use) has not returned to pre-pandemic levels and is 15% below our FY19/20 baseline line year, it has increased by 32% on last year reflecting our increasingly international client base. We plan to focus on engaging teams with the new sustainability elements in our Business Travel policy, launched in the Spring, so as to tackle transport-related emissions where possible alongside ongoing improvements to data capture systems and processes.

Our employee commuting emissions remain well below our baseline year by 45% and show an 11% reduction on last year. As a result of our now established agile working patterns and improved calculation methodologies, we can see a more accurate picture of our homeworking related emissions which provides us with the opportunity to consider consistency of behaviours when in the office or at home.

Memberships and certifications



* Achieved FY22/23 and FY23/24 audited certification process in progress.

Connecting colleagues with the environment

Our Green Impact Group (GIG) was established to engage staff with environmental issues and the firm's strategic priorities. Here is some of what they got up to this year.

Nurturing green spaces

In May, the Banking and Finance teams volunteered to support Holland Park's horticultural team by litter picking and clearing large areas of invasive bamboo.

In June, 45 volunteers headed to the River Lea for an afternoon of litter picking in canoes, removing rubbish from the waterway to protect wildlife and the broader environment.

In October, a team of 11 volunteers helped restore the Tower Hamlets Cemetery Park by pruning trees and shrubs, and planting spring bulbs.

Marking Sustainable Development Goals Action Month

In September, GIG organised a series of events to raise awareness of the Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs) including: a clothes donation drive, in support of Goal 1, No Poverty; a clothes repair workshop in support of Goal 12, Responsible Consumption and Production; a nature conservation volunteer day in support of Goal 15, Life on Land.

Celebrating art and nature

Over the Easter school holidays, GIG and our Working Parents and Carers networks collaborated to run a children's art competition, encouraging children to enjoy playing in nature during spring. The winner enjoyed a trip to Kew Gardens and the runner-up joined an outing to an exhibition at the Natural History Museum.



- 1 Banking and Finance volunteering day
- 2 Restoring our waterways by clearing rubbish from River Lea in Hackney
- 3 Pruning trees and shrubs, and planting spring bulbs to help restore Tower Hamlets Cemetery Park

Our values

We support every person to achieve

- We go the extra mile to provide support and to help each other, with the best outcomes for clients at the front of our minds.
- We create opportunities for the development and growth of all of our people.
- Forsters is a place to belong and to feel valued for who you are and your unique personality, skills and interests.
- Every client is different so we work in a bespoke way, supporting them to achieve successful outcomes.



Our strategy in action: creating a future fit office

Our move to 22 Baker Street gave us the opportunity to review our approach to materials and resources across a number of different areas, starting with the building itself.

An innovative refit
by Sarah-Jane Muskett-Green,
Head of Operations

The base build and fit-out of our new office was designed with the goal of BREEAM Excellent certification including Whole Life Carbon Assessment to inform the choice of materials.

We have used enhanced renewables as part of our energy strategy with photovoltaic roof panels. New mechanical and engineering plant (MEP) services, using lower carbon, have been installed alongside new heating, ventilation and air conditioning systems to incorporate heat recovery.

The infrastructure allows us to work towards a mid-level NABERS rating, a relatively new metric in the UK which measures how sustainably a building is running.

Principles of the WELL Building Standards were also followed to deliver enhanced indoor environmental quality and user experience.

Streamlining to change behaviours
by Jayne Bailey,
Assistant Workplace Services Manager

The new office provided the opportunity to reduce the number of printers in use by 41%, from 22 to 13. We also implemented a checks and balance system to supervise print requests exceeding a certain size and amount. The first six months at Baker Street illustrated a clear downward trajectory in paper use against the same time period in 2023.

-50%
reduction in A3 paper ordered

-33%
reduction in A4 paper ordered



Transitioning to a paperless library
by Kate Heward,
Library and Information Services Manager

Ahead of the move, our Knowledge team, which manages our Library, initiated a project to move resources online. This has resulted in an approximate reduction of two-thirds of the print materials coming into the building. A thorough book audit also led to a more streamlined library with the removal of around 40% of our total holdings.

Integrated thinking to reduce
by Anthony Stables,
Chief Information Officer

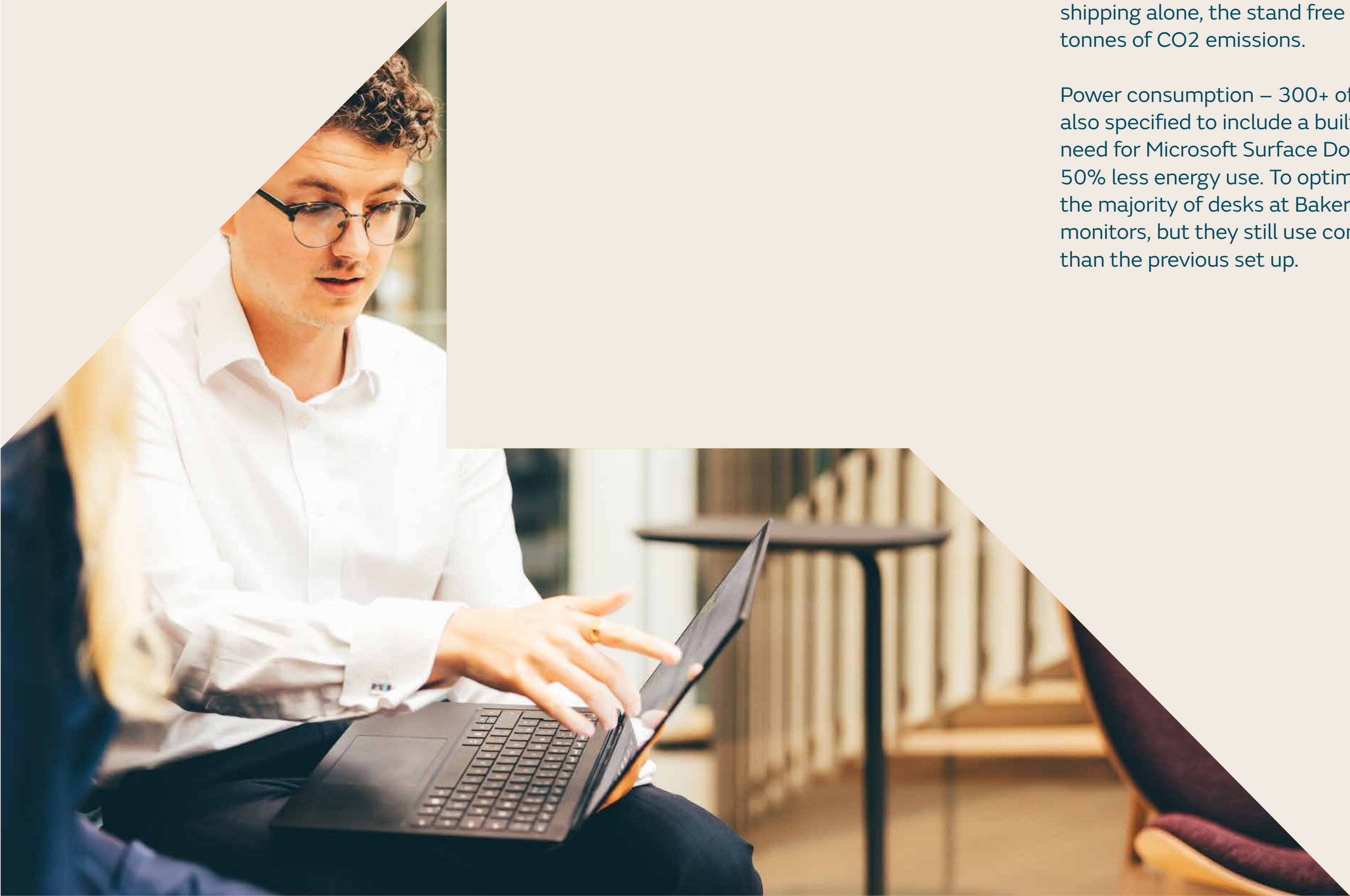
Environmental, social and governance criteria are at the heart of the IT strategy including planning and procurement which was illustrated by our collaboration with Lenovo to manufacture the 600+ monitors purchased for our new office.

Resource use and logistics - by thinking about use, the firm requested a stand free monitor design. This reduced the material used and the package weight from 8.6kg to approximately 4.5kg. Using a figure of 16.12g per metric tonne per kilometre, and 3176km travelled in shipping alone, the stand free monitors saved 51 metric tonnes of CO2 emissions.

Power consumption – 300+ of the new monitors were also specified to include a built-in dock, removing the need for Microsoft Surface Dock, resulting in approximately 50% less energy use. To optimise the working environment, the majority of desks at Baker Street are set up with two monitors, but they still use considerably less energy than the previous set up.

Next steps

- Work together and with climate experts to co-create our climate transition plan and define our net zero commitment.
- Build engagement with the transition plan across the firm and with our business partners to drive action.
- Continue to improve data quality, including through work with our suppliers.
- Engage more deeply with our networks and memberships to share and learn from each other to accelerate progress.



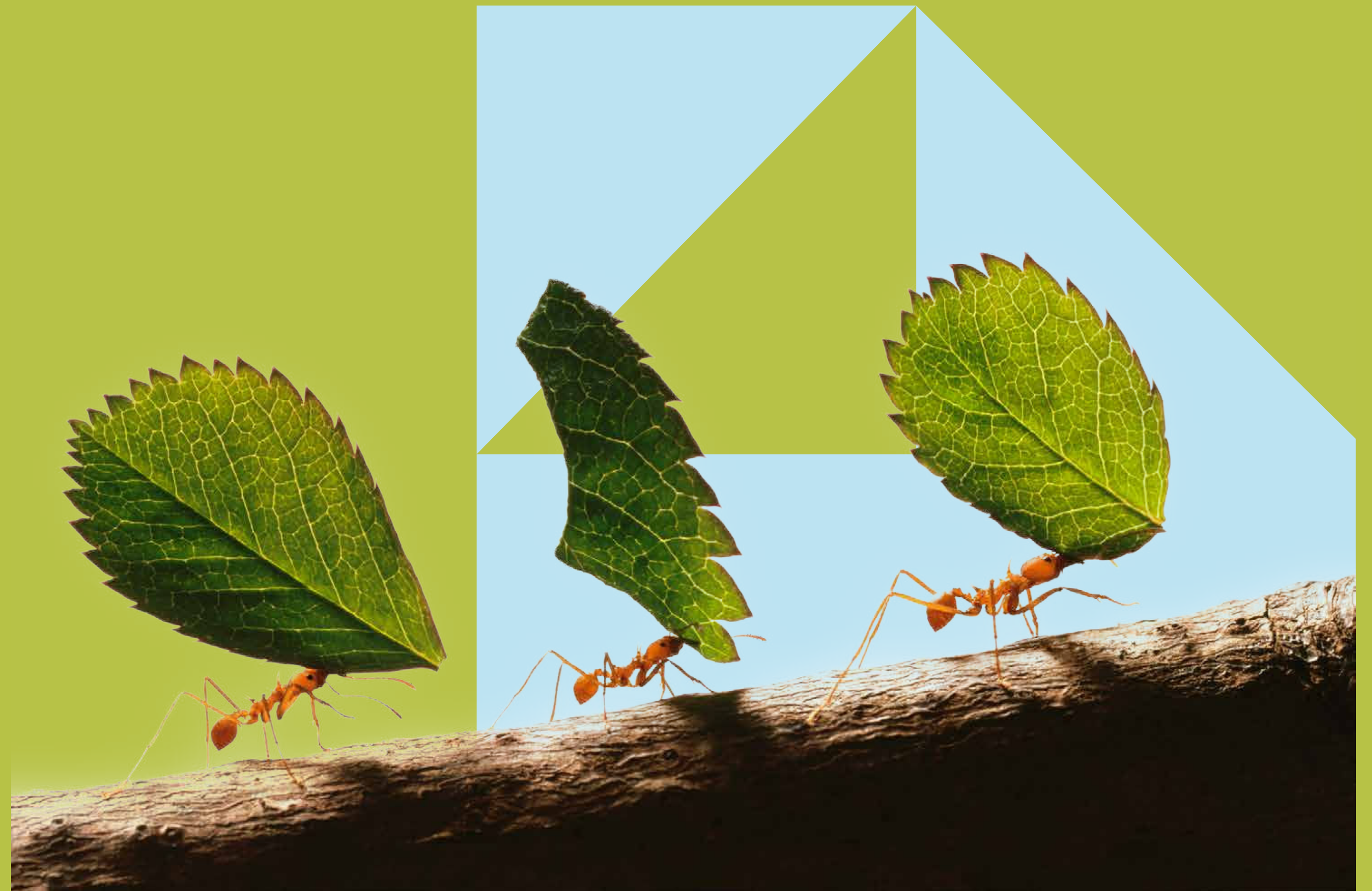
Creating a spirit of collaboration

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Creating a spirit of collaboration

Lawyers at Forsters are encouraged to be fully rounded professionals, immersed in our rapidly changing markets and connected to both our communities and the sustainability landscape. Trends around ESG are as much a part of the market as any other micro or macro-economic dynamics. We aim to make a positive impact through our relationships with clients and business partners through our legal services as well as our collaborative learning and knowledge sharing initiatives.



Supporting the Sector Race to Net Zero

Sector Race to Net Zero is a cross-practice campaign that explores how different sectors are placed on the Net Zero journey and the challenges unique to them. The campaign is led by our Commercial Real Estate (CRE) team, working closely with our dedicated Planning, Construction, Litigation and Finance teams, specialises in various sectors including Build to Rent, Building Safety, Hotels, Later Living, Industrial and Logistics, Retail, Occupiers and Student Accommodation. ESG considerations transcend these sectors and our cross-practice approach allows us to deliver joined-up commercial advice to clients at all stages of their ESG journey.

Team expertise

Our CRE team's experience is extensive and includes:

- Renewable Energy (Wind Farms, Solar Farms, Solar Panels, Urban Buildings)
- Green Lease Clauses
- ESG (EPC, BREEAM, Well Building)
- Sustainable building design and construction (Embodied Carbon, Net Zero Carbon etc.)
- Smart Grids/Battery storage
- Strategic advisory: impact assessment/reporting
- Biodiversity
- Green lending

Find out more on our [website](#).

Listen

[The Sector Race to Net Zero – a fund level perspective](#)

[The Sector Race to Net Zero – a cross-sector regulatory perspective](#)



Client case study

An award-winning client collaboration

The CRE team, led by Partner Victoria Towers, has collaborated for the past couple of years with one of our key clients, institutional real estate investor Patrizia. Victoria, supported by the Knowledge Development Lawyers and several associates in the CRE team, worked on putting together a green lease package for Patrizia. This consisted of various lease clauses with 'light', 'medium' and 'dark' green options, which are tailored depending on the asset and tenant type in question. We also put together a bespoke sustainability guide for Patrizia, to reflect their sustainability aims and focuses, which Patrizia are able to present to tenants in order to explain their green aims and encourage commitment from their tenants. This guide is innovative in avoiding overly legal terms and adopting the branding and tone of Patrizia rather than a more generic legal document.

We continue to closely monitor the adoption of the various green lease clauses across Patrizia's portfolio, and regularly meet with Patrizia to discuss what changes could be made to improve sustainability across their properties, and to ensure that they continue to be ahead of the curve on their green lease journey. We are also constantly reviewing and adapting the drafting to reflect changes in legislation and market practice.



Victoria Towers
CRE Partner

The Patrizia Hanover Property Unit Trust secured the AREF Outstanding Fund Achievement Award 2023 and have credited the work that the Forsters' CRE team has done with them to focusing their minds on the importance of green lease drafting and contributing to this success.

The CRE sustainability group regularly visit Patrizia, as well as other existing and potential clients, to offer training on green lease drafting and sustainability issues such as MEES/EPCs, BNG and renewable energy, and by working closely with our clients we are able to gain a deep understanding of the main sustainability issues which are being encountered and how best we can support the clients.

The state of play with green lease drafting is constantly evolving, and our close working relationship with Patrizia, along with other clients, enables both the Forsters team and also our clients to keep ahead of the game.

Watch



[Watch an interview](#) with Mischa Davis and Ben Lonsdale of Patrizia, talking about their Fund and why it won.

A photograph of three women in an office setting, looking at a computer monitor. The woman on the left is wearing a plaid shirt and glasses. The woman in the middle is wearing a purple top. The woman on the right is wearing a pink top and is smiling. A green diagonal overlay is on the right side of the image, containing text.

Our values

We collaborate for excellence

- We understand that exceptional outcomes for clients happen when we work as a team.
- We build strong, long lasting relationships based on respect and trust.
- We are invested in each other's success, making time to share expertise and knowledge.
- Pulling on our diverse strengths enables us to be open to new ideas and future possibilities.

Driving the Natural Capital agenda

At Forsters, we are passionate about the opportunities that Natural Capital promises for the rural economy, the environment and for the wealth of social and economic benefits that will come with it. The Rural Land and Business team works closely with colleagues across the firm, drawing on experts in planning, private wealth and tax planning, litigation and corporate structuring to deliver the highest quality advice to landowners and land managers to be part of these new markets. The team's expertise in this area is reflected in their public appearances including for the Agricultural Law Association speaking on the future role of Conservation Covenants, and for the Hong Kong Association speaking on the Natural Capital investment opportunities.

Profile: At the heart of the conversation
Rural Land and Business Partner, Polly Montoneri, has been closely involved with the work of the Country Land and Business Association (CLA) throughout her career. The principal focus of the CLA is to represent the interests of landowners and rural business owners at government level across the full breadth of the rural sector. Drawing on insights from her work as a rural lawyer working in the development, renewables and nature finance sectors, Polly invests time in being part of the CLAs ongoing conversation with its members and government.

Polly's involvement started at a community level chairing her local branch committee in South Wales. She previously sat on the CLAs National Legal, Parliamentary and Property Rights Committee exploring the legal aspects of legislative and policy change. She currently chairs the Natural Capital Markets and Forestry Committee, a dynamic and innovative forum exploring the evolution of new nature finance markets and the increasing opportunities and pressures on UK forestry and woodland.



Polly Montoneri
Rural Land and Business Partner

The strength of the CLA's influence at government level is dependent on galvanising support from its members and contributors, who feed in their personal experiences of how policy impacts them and how it can be developed to create economic and social opportunity in rural areas, foster best practice and mitigate unintended consequences.

With Net Zero and Biodiversity targets moving closer, the role of the rural sector and the work of the CLA is increasingly relevant and vital. Polly's role in shaping these conversations with government through the CLA means greater insights to inform leading edge advice.

Hear Polly, alongside Planning Associate, Sophie Smith, talk about the impacts of Biodiversity Net Gain obligations and the challenges landowners are faced with.

Listen

[Understanding Biodiversity Net Gain: part one – developers](#)

[Understanding Biodiversity Net Gain: part two – landowners](#)



Read

[Financing Biodiversity Net Gain requirements – who pays?](#)
[Sophie Smith shares her thoughts with Sustain](#)



Team expertise

Our Rural Land and Business team's experience is extensive and includes:

- Land Management
- Transactions
- Rural Development
- Natural Capital
- Renewables

Find out more on our [website](#).



ESG insights

Find our ESG briefing notes highlighting some of the main sustainability considerations facing the Real Estate Sector here:



<u>ESG Glossary</u>	<u>Sustainable Finance Disclosure Regulations – Guidance note</u>	<u>Biodiversity Net Gain</u>	<u>Green Lending & Certificate of Title Considerations</u>
<u>EPC Conversion Factors – Guidance Note</u>	<u>MEES and EPCs for Commercial Property</u>	<u>Roof Top Solar for Commercial Property</u>	<u>Residential ESG – Guidance Note</u>
<u>Landlord and Tenant ESG Requirements</u>	<u>Construction ESG – Guidance Note</u>	<u>Electric Vehicle Charging Points – A Quick Guide</u>	<u>NABERS – Guidance Note</u>

Next steps

- Establish a new working group with the aim of sharing ideas and initiatives across the firm’s departments, both operational and client facing. The forum will help us to be more holistic in our approach so as to seize and maximise opportunities to make a positive difference.
- Continue to build close connections with clients, business partners and relevant organisations with social and environmental impact front and centre.

Looking forward

Reporting is a key part of our approach to responsible business. It enables us to take a step back and reflect on progress made, identify and prioritise areas for improvement, galvanise plans going forward, and engage the people that will help us achieve our goals.

A key focus for the coming year is to establish a set of responsible business performance indicators aligned with our strategic priorities so we can track progress and set targets where appropriate. We will also establish a responsible business working group, to ensure collaboration and optimise our ways of working to achieve our shared objectives.

We aim to make significant strides forward year on year. We continue to be ambitious and energised by the opportunities ahead to create close connections, both internally and externally, that will shape, drive and scale positive outcomes.





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