

CORPORATE SOCIAL RESPONSIBILITY (CSR) POLICY

Introduction

We acknowledge that running our business has an effect on society. In particular, we have a responsibility to our clients, our employees, and contractors as well as the broader community in which we operate.

We are committed to taking responsibility for our actions and encourage a positive contribution towards improving standards for our clients and employees, minimising our impact on the environment and improving the quality of the local community.

By putting CSR into practice, we are committed, wherever possible, to:

- conducting ourselves responsibly and in an ethical manner
- creating a positive and supportive working environment
- supporting local communities
- improving service levels to clients
- acting fairly in our dealings with suppliers and other third parties
- minimising the impact on our environment

Communication

We communicate this policy to our staff, clients and other stakeholders by means of the firm website and internal intranet.

We provide our staff with training on our CSR strategy and this policy and seek to raise awareness of any negative impacts of our business and methods to reduce them. Training is provided at staff inductions and additionally at staff away days.

Responsibility and review

The Compliance Officer for Legal Practice (COLP) is responsible overall responsibility for our CSR strategy and for implementing this policy. They have a key role in ensuring the systems and controls we have in place are effective.

All members of staff have a role to play in complying with our CSR objectives and are encouraged to make further suggestions in relation to initiatives we could undertake. If anyone has a suggestion, they should contact the Marketing Manager in the first instance.

We are fully committed to the highest possible standards of openness, honesty and accountability. In line with that commitment, in accordance with our Whistleblowing Policy we actively encourage all staff members who have serious concerns about any real or perceived departure from the high ethical standard that we set to voice those concerns openly. Our Whistleblowing Policy can be found on the firm's internal intranet.

We are committed to ensuring our policy remains effective. As part of our ongoing commitment, this policy is reviewed at least annually to verify its effective operation. Records

of the reviews are maintained, and any necessary amendments are made to the policy, as appropriate.

Our CSR principles

Our conduct:

We aim to adopt the highest professional standards and not to act in such a way as to compromise our firm's integrity.

We are authorised and regulated by the Solicitors Regulation Authority (SRA) and comply with all SRA requirements.

We actively promote respect between our staff members in their dealings with each other and with clients and other third parties.

We are committed to legality and willingness to observe community values.

We use the initiatives taken to promote human rights, help communities and protect our natural environment.

Our working environment:

We recognise that our staff are our most important resource. We actively seek to offer our staff a positive and healthy working environment and ensure that they have rewarding careers and job satisfaction.

We maintain an Office manual, which sets out the rights and expectations of all members of staff.

We seek to ensure that all staff have access to the learning and development (L&D) they need for their own personal development, to meet their regulatory obligations and to ensure they can deliver a high quality service.

We consider all staff members to be equal and we aim to create a working environment which is free of unlawful discrimination. In this regard, we have an Equality and Diversity policy.

We actively promote our Mental Health First Aiders to provide ongoing and continuous support for all members of staff.

Our community:

In considering our impact on the community we sponsor or otherwise support:-

- Westcountry Rivers Trust
- St Margert's Colour Run
- St Margaret's – Wear it Yellow Campaign

- Dunster Show
- Collections of clothing and bedding for homeless charities
- Christmas Box Appeal
- Christmas Jumper Day
- Petherton Folk Festival
- Bridgwater and Taunton Foodbanks

We will allow members of staff time off work to enable them to carry out work in support of their chosen charity up to 7 hours or 1 day a year pro-rata.

Staff will also be granted paid time off to participate in blood donations (in a location near to their office). We understand the significance of donating blood in saving lives and supporting healthcare initiatives. By allowing our employees the flexibility to donate blood during working hours, we aim to encourage a culture of giving back to society.

We will donate client balances that we are unable to allocate to our Charity of the Year, subject to the SRA rules.

We will also offer assistance to them by offering free use of our office space to raise funds by coffee mornings etc.

We will provide pro bono services for free legal clinics in relation to Asbestos related respiratory conditions in Exeter, Taunton, Yeovil, Bridgwater and Barnstaple.

A number of our members of staff are trustees of charities, governors of schools and committee members of local sports clubs.

Our clients:

We are committed to delivering a high level of service to all our clients. We understand that our business exists in a very competitive market and in order to retain our clients we need to deliver a professional and courteous service. This is achieved by conducting customer satisfaction surveys, training in relation to capturing and retaining new and existing clients to all staff members and is included as part of our staff inductions.

Wherever possible, we take steps to promote equal opportunity in relation to access to the legal services that we provide. We take account of the diversity of the communities we serve in order to ensure that, subject to funding constraints, our services are accessible to all clients.

We have a Client Care Policy.

Suppliers:

We are committed to eliminating unlawful discrimination and to promoting equality and diversity in our professional dealings with suppliers and other third parties.

We endeavour to enter into clear and fair contracts with our suppliers. We commit to the timely settlement of suppliers' invoices.

Wherever possible, we aim to support the local economy by contracting with local suppliers such as, SDS in Bridgwater and Nexus in Exeter.

Environment:

We are committed to behaving responsibly and to minimising our impact on the environment. In considering the environment, we have resolved to

- encourage environmental responsibility among our contractors, suppliers and staff and include environmental considerations in our purchasing and procurement processes and in business travel
- minimise our consumption of natural resources and manage waste through responsible disposal and reuse and recycling, including paper and ink cartridges
- promote a paper light model to minimise the use of paper and printing facilities as much as possible
- all promotional goods and resources encourage environmentally friendly materials, such as reusable bottles, bags and our biobased pens
- supporting Westcountry Rivers as our Charity of the Year in order to support our climate change efforts

In addition, the Managing Partner is the Chair of the Climate Change Committee of the Devon and Somerset Law Society and holds a significant role in promoting environmental responsibility within the legal community.