



# Our Social Responsibility



# Welcome

About us	3
What we are doing and why we are doing it	
Communities	6
How we are giving back to our local communities	
Overseas work	10
Our work supporting an education hub in Sri Lanka	
People	13
Why our diversity makes us stand out from the crowd	
Pro bono and access to justice	19
Free advice and support for those who need it most	
Environment	23
Recognising the role we all need to play to protect our planet	

# Our passion for contributing to healthy and sustainable communities is reflected by our people.

Our social responsibility programme is fundamental to who we are and what we do. In an era where cuts to legal aid are preventing access to justice, the natural environment is increasingly fragile, and the divisions within our society are being felt by more and more people - we're committed to using our social and economic standing to make a positive impact.

I'm pleased to report that we've made good progress on our journey towards an integrated social responsibility programme.

We're committed to helping communities, people, the environment and providing pro bono (free legal advice) support. In 2017, we celebrated the 20<sup>th</sup> anniversary of our dedicated charity, the Irwin Mitchell Charities Foundation (IMCF). The IMCF, alongside our regional offices' Charities of the Year, allows our partners and employees to contribute to worthwhile causes. Since 1997 the foundation has raised over £2m for good causes.

I was delighted when our longstanding tradition of providing free legal advice to those who can't afford to access justice was recognised in 2018 when Irwin Mitchell won the 'Best Contribution By A Firm With An English

Headquarters' at LawWork's Pro Bono Awards. We're working with a number of university law clinics as well as providing free legal advice sessions and pro bono case work. One of the cases we successfully worked on pro bono in 2018 appeared in front of the Supreme Court, and we were able to answer the Law Society's call to provide pro bono support to victims of the Manchester Arena bombing.

We want to make sure that we reflect the communities we serve, and are committed to creating a diverse and inclusive workplace where our colleagues can flourish. Over the past five years we've been recognised for our efforts in the media, through award wins, and in terms of our employee engagement. In 2018, UK businesses were required to report their gender pay gaps for the first time. Though work is on-going to reduce the pay gap, we were pleased to have the 7th lowest out of 109 firms in the legal profession. We were amongst the first in the sector to release our figures for partners.

As founding members of the Law Society's Diversity Charter, we are paving the way to make law careers more accessible through our award winning apprenticeship scheme.

We've also launched mental health first aid training, unconscious bias training, and developed policies to attract, support and retain transgender colleagues.

Being socially responsible means thinking ahead, and these are exciting times as we're undergoing a change programme to help us become a 'law firm of the future'. Sustainability and environmental issues form part of these efforts.

We'll continue to focus on our social responsibility programme, with the support of our colleagues and clients and to make a difference to the communities we serve.



**Andrew Tucker**, CEO Irwin Mitchell

Established in Sheffield in 1912, we are one of the largest law firms in the UK, employing more than **2,800 people** in **14 offices**.



We're committed to providing our clients with a service that exceeds their expectations and we strongly believe in:

<p>Offering advice that is <b>clear</b> and <b>straightforward</b></p>	<p>Pushing the boundaries of the law to achieve the <b>very best results</b></p>	<p>Providing the <b>highest level</b> of <b>client care</b></p>
<p>Being <b>open</b> and <b>approachable</b></p>	<p>Being <b>forward-thinking</b> and offering <b>innovative solutions</b></p>	<p>Treating everybody with <b>respect</b> and <b>dignity</b> at all times.</p>

We understand that each client is different and we use our expertise and experience to ensure that we can quickly understand their needs and provide advice and solutions that are tailored to their individual circumstances.

Our social responsibility programme is a fundamental part of who we are. We believe that it's important to support the communities in which we live and work, and we do so across a broad range of activities. These are pulled together under four strands: People, Environment, Community and Pro Bono. Our Corporate Social Responsibility Board is chaired by Executive Board Member and Managing Partner for Personal Injury, Stuart Henderson.

The team is supported by a network of co-ordinators in each of our offices. Over the next 12 months we'll be reviewing the UN's Sustainable Development Goals and identifying which areas are most important for us to focus on.

Our work takes on many forms and we believe in:

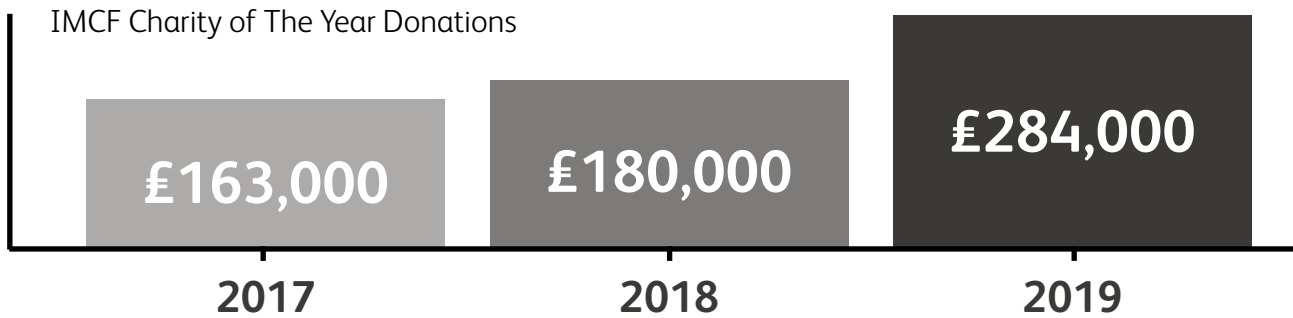
<p><b>Taking responsibility</b> for our impact upon <b>our environment</b></p>	<p><b>Helping people</b> to realise their <b>full potential</b></p>	<p><b>Supporting development</b> in the <b>local communities</b> in which we operate</p>	<p>Continuing to provide <b>pro bono legal advice.</b></p>
--------------------------------------------------------------------------------	---------------------------------------------------------------------	------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------	------------------------------------------------------------





# Communities

We encourage all of our people to take part in voluntary community activities, and have a policy enabling all colleagues to donate 14 of their working hours every year to help others. Whether it's our work in schools, supporting social enterprises or working with local charities, it's important to us that we can give something back to our local communities.



“We’re proud to make a difference, not just through fundraising, but by giving our time and expertise to those who need it the most. Even though it’s part of our culture, the generosity of my colleagues never fails to astound me and is demonstrative of the impact we can collectively have.”

Adrian Budgen, Partner, founding IMCF Trustee and member of our Social Responsibility Board.

£2m donated to good causes via the IMCF since 1997

Almost £2m of our time in 2017/8 was on community and pro bono work

All colleagues have 14 hours pro rata to volunteer in the community

In December 2018 the IMCF donated £26,000 to homeless charities near 13 of our offices

£50,000 donated to 125 grass roots disability sports organisations through Irwin Mitchell’s Don’t Quit, Do It campaign.

of colleagues to raise money for a wide variety of charities with top-up donations. Every Friday, the firm takes part in a “dress down” day and colleagues donate money to the IMCF, which distributes it to the office Charities of the Year (COTY).

Employees are also encouraged to sign up to a Give As You Earn (GAYE) scheme and donate a small sum from their salary each month, with donations matched by the firm.

### Celebrating 20 years of the IMCF

To celebrate the IMCF’s 20th anniversary in 2017, colleagues were set the ambitious target of raising £20,000 in a single month. Thanks to their generosity and efforts, over £22,700 was raised, with funds being directed towards our COTY programme.

In addition, we promoted our GAYE scheme in November 2017 and over the two day period of our annual conference, we boosted the annual donations by around £24,000.

### Irwin Mitchell Charities Foundation

The IMCF was set up by our partners and employees in February 1997 as an independent registered charity. Since then, the IMCF has raised over £2m for charities and good causes. In 2018 we donated £180,000, a record for the firm. In 2019 we donated £284,000 through our Charities of the Year programme - a record for the firm. The charity aims to relieve poverty and provide support in cases of need, hardship

or distress for people living near our offices. The IMCF has benefitted a wide range of good causes including providing support for older people, those with disabilities, children, local development initiatives and events, hospices and cancer charities.

A designated charity committee in each office meets every month to discuss donation requests and fundraising initiatives that are underway. Wherever possible, the committee supports the efforts

# Our charities of the year for 2018/19





### **Birmingham Children's Hospital Charity**

Colleagues supported this charity when Real Estate partner, Martin McQueen, nominated them to be the Birmingham office COTY 2017. Martin wanted to support this cause after the hospital cared for his son Alex, when he was struck down with Group B Strep Meningitis and went into septic shock just 18 days after being born. The funds went to the charity's Critical Journeys Appeal to help equip a fleet of four ambulances with the latest life-saving equipment.



### **Rape Crisis Northumberland and Tyneside**

Our Newcastle office, home to 83 colleagues, raised an astonishing £19,000 for their COTY 2017, Rape Crisis Northumberland and Tyneside. That money allowed their programme, which educates young people in the region about sexual abuse, exploitation and grooming, to continue for another 12 months.

### **Going the extra mile...**

We support many good causes each year outside of our COTY programme. Some of these include: Sheffield "Smashers" Boccia Club, Cathedral Archer (Homeless) Project, St. Luke's Hospice, RideForEric, Support Dogs UK, Comic Relief, Children In Need, Save the Children, Help For Heroes, Headway, Brake, Scope, Brainwave, The Encephalitis Society, Meningitis Now, Jo's Trust, UK Sepsis Trust, Rape Crisis, Rape and Sexual Violence Project, Contact and Personal Support Unit.

### **Southampton colleagues sleep out for homeless charity**

In February 2018, 15 colleagues from our Southampton office braved freezing temperatures to take part in a charity sleep out and raised £2,225 in aid of homeless forces veterans.

Led by Andrew Buckham, head of the Southampton Military team, colleagues unfurled their sleeping bags and huddled together to take part in Alabaré's The Big Sleep event.

The night at Salisbury Cathedral was the flagship fundraising event of the year for Alabaré, a charity that supports more than 3,000 vulnerable, homeless and marginalised people across the south and south-west of England and Wales.

For some, adapting to civilian life after leaving the Armed Forces can be difficult, and through no fault of their own, some end up on the streets.



Andrew, who spent seven years in the Army, said: "Nobody should have to find themselves in such a situation regardless of their background. The Southampton office felt passionately about trying to raise awareness of what homeless veterans go through so decided to take part in The Big Sleep.

"While we only slept out for a night, many of us found it a real challenge. Perhaps unsurprisingly the hardest thing to deal with for many of us was the cold. It was absolutely freezing but the spirit and camaraderie kept us all going. We were lucky in the respect that we had each other to keep us going through the night. Others are not so fortunate."

### **Lares trek success raises over £4,500 for brain injury charity**

In early 2018 a daring duo from our Manchester office, Lynne Carrick-Leary and Jen Cawthorne successfully completed the Lares Trek in Peru - and raised a fantastic £4,671.44 for the Child Brain Injury Trust (CBIT) in the process. Lynne, a business development manager and Jen, a Medical Negligence partner, traversed the trek's heady heights of 4,600m and camped for three nights in the Andes where it was -10 degrees Celsius, all for CBIT. The charity supports children and young people who've suffered brain injuries following an accident, illness such as meningitis or encephalitis, stroke or brain tumour.

### **Education Matters**

We work with pupils in schools across the UK, many of which are in deprived areas. Employees have volunteered to help the students with careers advice, literacy and numeracy during their lunch breaks. The reading age of some of the pupils taking part has increased by two to three years.

We have also worked with students who have poor attendance, one of whom is now up to 100% thanks to our support. With a focus on creating inclusive communities we brought together two unlikely groups; pupils from a school in Sheffield, some of which are on alternative provision and unsuited to traditional education, and the elderly who attend the local community centre, some of whom are living with dementia. Our colleagues supported the pupils, who got marks towards their qualifications, to put on events for the elderly including Mother's Day tea dances and a specially adapted pantomime.



During National Inclusion Week 2017, with the help of the students from Chaucer, a group of 40 volunteers spent the day making improvements to a local community garden, which is used by the elderly and those with mental and physical disabilities.

As part of our commitment to promoting and celebrating diversity and ensuring young people from all backgrounds are prepared for life after school, we brought together local businesses, academics, and pupils from four schools in disadvantaged backgrounds for a public speaking competition. Mentors from local businesses and the University of Sheffield teamed up with pupils over a two month period to produce a presentation on the future of access to justice. Pupils were put with students from different year groups to help them get used to working in more diverse groups.

In London, we worked with Prospects, an organisation supporting disadvantaged students in six boroughs. We arranged to provide legal careers workshops in October to 20 students growing up in very difficult circumstances. We presented on CV writing, interview techniques, legal careers in general, and gave top tips for getting into law to an audience of 16 to 18 year olds. These young people were not short on ambition or talent, but did not have the connections that more advantaged students would have.

We're continuing to work in schools and aim to achieve a more measured and strategic education programme through our partnership with business and the community.



# Our overseas work

The work of the IMCF is not limited to the UK; since 2011 the charity has donated £13,270 to Project Phoenix, which supports school children in the Sri Lankan village of Sannar.

## Helping to build education opportunities

The IMCF funded the construction of the Sannar Education Hub, which is managed by our outsourcing partner WNS Global Services, who run our office in Sri Lanka. The work was aptly titled 'Project Phoenix', as the village was rising from the ashes with renewed hope following the 30-year-old conflict in Sri Lanka.

The school, which was the only permanent building in the village when it was opened in 2011, provides local children with a safe place to receive a structured and balanced education. Since then, the IMCF has regularly invested in the education of the children by funding equipment, building works and providing teachers with full time employment.

Since 2017 the IMCF has:

Donated £4,000 to fund a multimedia system and screen providing pupils video-based and online training modules.

Funded a toilet and shower facilities in the school for the first time.

Funded a 12 month initiative providing English and computing classes to over 100 students

Sponsored 253 gift packs for students, including school books, bags, sweets and toys.

“All of our work in Sri Lanka highlights the human impact our work and social responsibility programme has overseas. Our community work in the UK is well-documented, so it’s easy to forget that similarly great work takes place in Sri Lanka and makes a massive difference to so many people.”

Jonathan Scarsbrook, supervising partner of our Sri Lanka office





### **Volunteering and donations**

In 2018, document production manager Jayne Barton from our Sheffield office made the 5,500 mile trip to visit the school, taking suitcases full of donated clothes provided by our colleagues, stationery and IMCF goodie bags for the pupils.

Jayne and colleagues from our Sri Lankan office gave the school a makeover by painting the building, carrying out some general repair work and tidying the surrounding area.

Jayne said “I cannot begin to describe how welcoming the children were, how well the villagers looked after us, and how humbling it was to be helping people so far away, with so little. A WNS colleague even managed to rope the Sri Lankan army in to deliver food for the entire village during our time there. It gives a real new meaning to the word ‘community’. It was inspiring to see what a difference it is making.”

### **Making a difference**

Abisa is just one of the many students who has benefitted from the charitable work the IMCF have carried out in Sri Lanka. Now 11-years-old, Abisa was just four years old and when she joined the newly completed Sannar Education Hub.

#### **Abisa, aged 11, Sri Lanka said:**

“Before your help, we had no permanent building for our school in the village, as we had just resettled. But now, thanks to IMCF’s support, our village has one where dozens of children benefit each year.

“Since 2010, my friends and I have been given school books, bags, shoes and stationery and we’ve been given the opportunity to take part in so many programmes to motivate us.

“I am very keen to pursue my studies and have benefitted immensely from your support. Recently, we have been provided with a computer lab and I am now excited to learn computer skills and English.

Thank you for making all this possible.”



# People

We believe that everyone deserves a chance to flourish, and proactively celebrate the diversity of our people, clients and communities. We take our responsibility to build an inclusive and supportive working environment seriously and, as signatories of the Law Society's Diversity and Inclusion Charter, we encourage other law firms to do the same.

While our work continues, we're delighted to be recognised as one of the UK's most diverse law firms and have consistently performed well in league tables, at award ceremonies and have been featured in the national media for our efforts in diversity and inclusion.

“We're taking a more forensic and collaborative approach to our work on diversity and inclusion than ever before, and building on the strong foundations laid in previous years. We regularly share our best practice with other organisations and connect with businesses outside of the legal profession to make sure we're at the forefront of innovation in this area. Being a leader sometimes means taking a leap of faith, as we've seen in releasing additional information on our pay gap data and implementing new policies. We do it because we recognise that being bold in our efforts is a necessity when it comes to transforming our ambitions in this area into a reality.”

**Stuart Henderson,**  
Chair of our Diversity Board and Executive Board Member

## Achievements 2015-2019

Ranking 5th overall in the Black Solicitors Network 2015 Diversity League Table

Training over 500 colleagues as Dementia Friends in 2017

Signing up to the Mindful Employer Charter

Having Irwin Mitchell Partner Anita Jewitt being named Inspirational Woman of the Year by First 100 Years project

Early careers scheme ranked 87th in the Guardian Top 300 Graduate Schemes for 2017, as well as in the Times Top 100 Graduate schemes for the past two years

Winning the Excellence in Diversity at the Signature Awards 2017 and 2018

Shortlisted in the Excellence in Diversity and Inclusion category at The Lawyer Awards 2018

Winning the Job Crowd's Top Law Firm Award for our apprenticeship scheme

Winning the Community Engagement category at the Disability Sport Yorkshire 2018 Awards

Winning the Regulatory Firm of The Year category at the Women in Compliance Awards

Over 200 colleagues signing up to receive mental health support training

Ranking 22nd out of 45 law firms, and 134 out of 434, businesses in Stonewall's Work Place Equality Index 2017/8

Making unconscious bias training available to all colleagues.



### **Listening + action = results**

As part of our commitment to creating a diverse workplace, we have a Diversity Board, which forms part of its integrated social responsibility agenda. Led by Stuart Henderson, who also sits on the our Executive Board, the Diversity Board is responsible for overseeing the practical implementation and continued development of the firm's diversity strategy. Internal networking groups have been established to focus on sexual orientation, age, gender, physical and mental health, social mobility, and multiculturalism. Each group is made up of volunteer members from all offices and departments, and is led by a senior member of the Partnership. Members work with external agencies and other networks to explore a range of issues and initiatives that will contribute to the inclusiveness of our firm.

### **IM Equal**

Our IM Equal group focuses on issues affecting our colleagues and clients in relation to sexual orientation. The group offers support for our lesbian, gay, bisexual and transgender (LGBT+) community and hosts regular internal networking and awareness raising events. As well as highlighting the importance of allies, the group, led by partner Luke Daniels, facilitates our relationship with the LGBT+ rights charity, Stonewall.

### **IM Powered**

IM Powered supports our work on gender equality. Members host events and run initiatives to help break down harmful gender stereotypes and address gender related professional development issues. In 2017 the group, led by partner Alison Eddy, launched a Modern Life project to raise

awareness of our flexible working policies, help those returning from family leave and explore the pressures created by societal norms portrayed in the media.

### **IM Respect**

IM Respect celebrates multiculturalism and helps raise awareness of the importance of respecting colleagues, clients and our wider communities regardless of their cultural or ethnic differences. Thanks to the work of IM Respect, We have won the Excellence in Diversity category at the Signature Awards for two consecutive years (2017 and 2018). As well as helping us mark the occasion, the group, led by partner Amandeep Dhillon, works with universities across the country to help ensure high calibre candidates from all backgrounds have access to a career in law.



### IM Aspiring

IM Aspiring is our group that deals with social mobility issues to ensure we're recruiting from the widest talent pool possible. PRIME is an alliance of law firms and legal departments across the UK, offering high quality work experience to students from less advantaged backgrounds, who will be the first in their families to go to university or who are on free school meals. Thanks to lead partner Tracey Storey, in 2018 the group smashed its target of 25 and instead managed to provide 40 placements across the country.

### IM Age

Our IM Age group explores age related issues which affect colleagues throughout their employee life cycle. Part of the work undertaken by the group, led by partner Akhil Sharma, involves speaking to colleagues of various age groups to draw out the common challenges they face in order to make sure they are fully supported at each stage of their careers.

### IM Able

IM Able exists to help colleagues who are experiencing the affects of mental or physical health conditions. The group also promotes the importance of wellbeing and the different routes colleagues can take to access support. Thanks to the group, we signed up to the Mindful Employer's Charter in 2016.

We also run an award winning disability sports campaign to promote the benefits that sport can have for those who have experienced life changing injuries. Through 'Don't Quit, Do It' in 2017/8 Irwin Mitchell provided £50,000 of grants to 125 individuals and grass roots organisations involved in disability sports. In



2018 members of our HR team also delivered employability workshops for members of The Sheffield Royal Society for the Blind.

### Celebrating our LGBT+ community

Since our internal networking and support group, IM Equal, was launched in 2009, much work has taken place to make our firm somewhere where lesbian, gay, bisexual and transgender (LGBT+) colleagues and clients can thrive. We've developed bespoke legal services for clients who need our help with issues commonly experienced by LGBT+ families and individuals, we've also influenced law reforms around civil partnerships and same sex marriage across the UK. Annually we celebrate equality and Pride events across the UK.

In 2018 over 1000 of our colleagues got involved with our ongoing work to promote the importance of LGBT+ allies and began wearing our rainbow

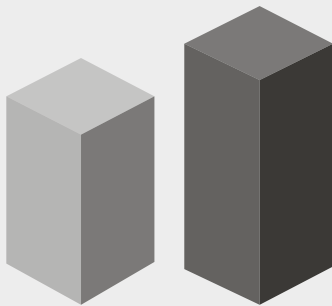
lanyards. In 2017 we were praised for becoming one of the first UK law firms to launch a policy to attract, retain and protect transgender colleagues.

By introducing a 'dress for your day' policy we've also relaxed the dress code to empower colleagues to express their gender identity more freely. Our work has been recognised externally via our performance in the Stonewall Workplace Equality Index, Britain's leading tool for employers to measure their efforts to tackle discrimination and create inclusive workplaces for LGBT+ employees. Following the release of the 2018 index, we were ranked within the top 25 performing firms in the legal sector by Stonewall for the third year running.

This success is testament to the hard work and commitment of IM Equal, who regularly run events to rally support and raise awareness with colleagues, and the Diversity Board, who have continued to champion this agenda at the highest level.

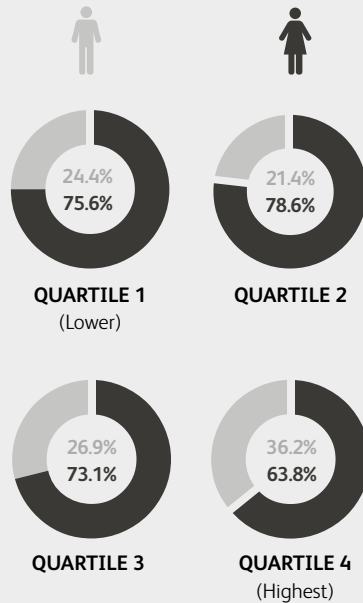
## Gender pay gap report 2018

### Pay Data



Mean 12.84% Median 15.97%

Difference between gross hourly earnings for all men and women (pay gap)



This shows the gender distribution at Irwin Mitchell when colleagues are placed in four equally sized quartiles based on pay.

## A great place for women to work

In 2018 we embraced the introduction of gender pay gap reporting for businesses with over 250 employees. Not only were we one of the first law firms to publish its data, in the name of transparency we went over and above our legal requirement to become one of the first law firms to publish our data at partner level. While we acknowledge there is work to do, we were proud to have the seventh smallest gap out of 109 law firms who reported in 2018, and saw a slight improvement on that position in 2019.

The results of our continued efforts for gender equality have been reflected by an increase in the amount of women taking up senior roles here. In 2018 for the first time 30% of our executive board was female, with 44% of our partners also female.

Through IM Powered's Modern Life and New Parents projects we have also promoted our flexible working policies and provided more support for colleagues on issues such as returning to work after maternity leave, family planning, fertility treatment, miscarriage, caring responsibilities and menopause.

In 2017 we were given the silver award in Citywealth's Powerwomen Awards for Best Black, Asian & Minority Ethnicity (BAME) Employer. This follows our success in the Black Solicitors' Network's 2015 Diversity League Table in which we finished top in rankings of female associates, 3rd in ranking of firms for female trainees and 5th for the number of female partners.



### **A Dementia Friendly Law Firm**

As part of our work to become more inclusive for clients and colleagues affected by dementia, in 2017 we trained over 500 colleagues across our offices as Dementia Friends. Ran by the Alzheimer's Society, the Dementia Friends initiative aims to give a million people a better understanding of the condition.

### **Wellbeing**

The wellbeing of our people is a top priority. Throughout 2017 we developed a new wellbeing strategy which is now being implemented across our offices. Part of this work involved researching the issues affecting colleagues, and identified that our efforts should be channelled into improving work/life balance and reducing negative stigmas associated with mental health. Through our Modern Life project, colleagues shared their first-hand accounts of using our flexible working policy to empower others to take advantage of options available.

In early 2018, over 60 colleagues signed up to training delivered by Mental Health First Aid England to enable them to offer front line peer-to-peer support. Over 160 line managers signed up to receive additional training to help them better support their teams. Colleagues also bravely shared their own experiences with obsessive compulsive disorder, stress, anxiety, panic attacks, depression, post natal depression and caring for a loved one experiencing poor mental health, to help break down the barriers which prevent people from seeking the support they need.

We've also taken measures to raise awareness of support on offer through our Employee Assistance Line and the free counselling that comes with it.

Along with offering discounted gym membership to encourage colleagues to reap the benefits of exercise, we have a Bike Scheme offering up to a 42% reduction on the cost of a bike to use as part of their commute. Our volunteering allowance, which gives colleagues up to 14 hours per year pro rata, to help in the community and a variety of fundraising activities, also offers colleagues the chance to feel the wellbeing benefits that helping others can have.

### **Making the unconscious, conscious**

In 2018, we were pleased to become one of 11% of law firms to consistently offer unconscious bias training to all colleagues in our bid to unlock the power of inclusion by highlighting the hidden biases we all have. To help embed the concept into our culture, more in-depth training was also made available to those with line manager responsibilities. We've also taken steps to remind colleagues about unconscious bias as part of the recruitment and on-boarding process.

Our efforts on this front followed the release of the results of the largest international survey of women in law, released by the Law Society of England and Wales in March 2018. Of the 7,781 respondents, the main barrier to career progression was identified as unconscious bias (52%); however, only 11% said unconscious bias training is consistently carried out in their organisation.

### **Making the difference through mentoring**

In 2018 we re-launched the mentoring programme and in doing so made sure all colleagues can access mentors in specific relation to any protected characteristics they may have. We recognise the benefits that having someone more senior, but with shared experience, can have for colleagues in terms of supporting personal and professional development. Encouraging a culture where people want to help others succeed is key to ensuring our success. IM Mentoring is an opportunity to become even better, whether the colleague is an experienced member of the team, new into the role, or simply looking for development opportunities.





# Pro bono and access to justice

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

We provide free legal advice and representation to individuals, small non-government organisations (NGOs) and community groups who would otherwise not be able to access justice – either because they can't afford it or due to lack of public funding.

With cuts to legal aid and people being denied access to legal advice throughout Britain, the demand for pro bono work is increasing.

To counter this, the majority of our offices across the country provide pro bono support via local advice clinics.

We believe that we can use our legal expertise to 'give something back' to our local communities. Quite simply, our aim is to ensure access to justice for all.

In 2017 we signed up to The Law Society's Pro Bono Charter to demonstrate our commitment to improving access to justice. The move also allows us to work together with co-signatories to help further develop best practices and increase the effectiveness of our pro bono work.

Over the past 10 years, we've been proud to have donated almost £100,000 to LawWorks, a pro bono charity that connects volunteer lawyers with people in need of legal advice. In December 2018 we were recognised for our contribution in this important area at the LawWork's Pro Bono Awards.



“Pro bono has become more important as public bodies do not have the funding and resources to ensure people’s needs are met. The most vulnerable in our society are the ones who lose out and often don’t know how to access the right information. As lawyers, we have invaluable skills which we can use to help people use the law to challenge situations and to access what they’re entitled to, regardless of our practice area, time restraints and resources.”

**Rosie Banks, Public Law and Human Rights solicitor  
- winner of the Birmingham Law Society’s Pro Bono  
Award 2018**

## Who we work with

We're proud to provide support to a number of community initiatives throughout the country, from Southampton and Chichester to Newcastle and Glasgow.

The majority of our offices provide free legal advice to a Citizens' Advice Bureau (CAB) office or advice centres, but we also provide pro bono support to a range of other organisations:

We work with seven other local law firms to run Sussex Legal Services (SLS), which offers free legal advice to over 400 people each year. Our team has helped local residents on a variety of legal issues and when SLS was threatened with closure due to funding cuts, our colleagues successfully spearheaded a campaign to save the organisation.

Colleagues from our Birmingham office work with the city's Rape and Sexual Violence Project (RSVP) to provide free legal advice to those using the services. The charity provides access to a broad range of legal topics, including civil claims. Since the service launched, over 50 people have been provided support.

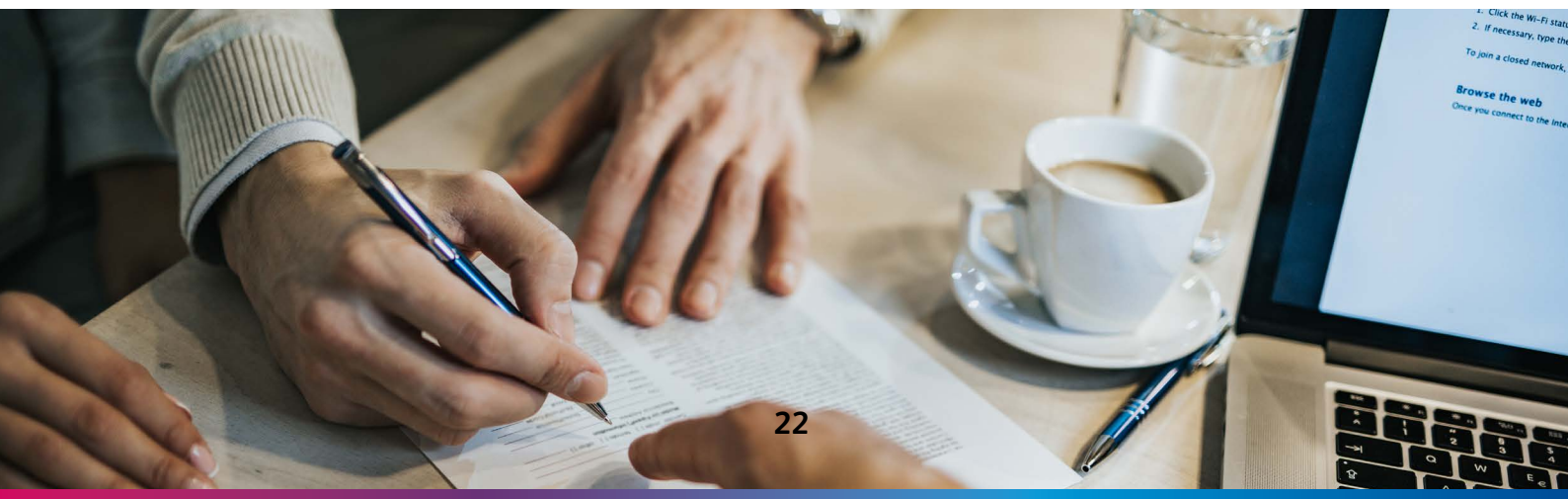
We support a charity called Leeds Irish Health and Homes by providing monthly free legal advice clinics. We also run monthly clinics at the Birmingham Irish Association and have assisted over 200 service users of the charity since 2013

We were just one of the 100 firms and legal experts who responded to the Law Society's call for pro bono support for those affected by the Manchester Arena bombing of May 2017. Since then we've been giving free legal representation to 18 survivors.

In 2013, our family law team in our London office partnered with the University of Bloomsbury to deliver a family law advice clinic. Since then, a fantastic 250 cases have been advised on by the clinic.

Our PLS and BLS teams in Southampton and Birmingham work together to help cancer charity, The Pink Place. Our colleagues provide talks to the charity's members, produce and print leaflets about legal issues that affect people diagnosed with cancer, and attend and support their events.

Since 2018, almost 40 of our colleagues have been taking part in the 'Missouri Project' on a pro bono basis for the charity Amicus. This is a statistical analysis of all the homicide cases in Missouri to work out what factors are taken into account when sentencing a defendant to death. US attorneys expect to use the data as evidence to provide insight into the fairness of the application of the death penalty.



In addition to working directly with pro bono clients, our colleagues also:

Support Personal Support Units (PSU) in Birmingham and Sheffield. PSU have volunteers who provide free advice and guidance to laypersons attending court, and we help provide training and mentoring initiatives.

Work with students. Many of our offices support local law students, who are then equipped to give free legal advice to fellow students.

Offer free legal advice clinics. We work with community groups and charities around the UK to provide a range of regular free legal clinics.



### Take part in Legal Walks

Our colleagues across the country take part in sponsored walks to raise awareness and funds for legal aid charities. Since 2015 we've helped raise £26,500 for the Access to Justice Foundation through pro bono cost orders and fundraising.

### Supreme Court

Working on a pro bono basis, in 2018 our public law experts helped a national children's charity get the green light to intervene, and then helped prepare their submissions in a landmark Supreme Court case to decide whether unmarried parents should be granted access to vital financial support when their partners die.

With our help the National Children's Bureau (NCB) have been allowed to input important evidence into the case, which is related to the so-called 'widowed parent's allowance' and aims to ensure families get access to the support they need. The ruling means in future, children will not suffer a further disadvantage because their parents chose not to marry.

## Supporting National Pro Bono and Justice Week

Since the initiative launched in 2001, each year we proudly support National Pro Bono Week to raise awareness of the different types of free legal advice that law firms and lawyers make to individuals and NGOs.

The events celebrate the breadth and impact of pro bono work undertaken by the legal profession, and throughout the week we run a number of activities to encourage future generations of lawyers to continue this important work.

Last year, we marked the week by holding two free legal advice clinics in partnership with the Sheffield and District African Caribbean Community Association (SADACCA), shared case studies of the great pro bono work Irwin Mitchell colleagues provide on an ongoing basis, and featured a Q&A with our national head of pro bono, Alex Rook. In 2018, we celebrated Justice Week for the first time, and helped raise funds and awareness of the need to ensure that justice is accessible to all.

### Recognition – just one example of how our pro bono work makes a difference

Rosie Banks, a public law and human rights solicitor in our Birmingham office scooped an award in March 2018 for her pro bono work running free legal advice clinics at a children's hospice in Worcester.

The Birmingham Law Society presented Rosie with the award for setting up a scheme where she and other Irwin Mitchell colleagues attend the hospice on a monthly basis to provide pro bono advice to families of life-limited children.



“We have a proud history of undertaking pro bono work and it is a fundamental part of who we are and how we give back to the communities we operate in. Through our work in this area, we’re committed to ensuring that this important tradition continues for generations to come.”

**Alex Rook, national head of pro bono and member of our Corporate Social Responsibility Board**





# Environment

While there is more to do, we're working to reduce our environmental impact; from environmental campaigning, to ensuring all of our locations meet the required energy standards. It's about getting everybody working together to drive the small changes which make a big difference.

### **Using technology to reduce our footprint**

In recent years we've made strides in terms of using technology to reduce our negative environmental impact. From reducing the amount of paper we use, to improving our IT equipment to reduce business travel, we're continuously assessing ways to be greener.

We've already made changes to the way we print in our offices, going double sided by default. We encourage all of our people to avoid printing altogether, when digital communication or even phone calls are suitable alternatives.

In addition, all of our offices are now fitted with video conferencing equipment, reducing the need for travel between offices when needing to work together from around the country.

### **Thinking Green to reduce waste and save energy**

In 2018, we launched our firm wide 'Think Green' campaign, encouraging everybody to make small changes to their daily routines, so collectively we can make a big difference.

The campaign focuses around the 'Three Rs' of reducing waste and energy consumption – reuse, reduce and recycle. Working to get everyone's attention with posters, desktop backgrounds on our computers and other internal engagement strategies, we've started to see an increase in the amount of waste we're recycling.

In just one year, the volume of paper we recycled through data destruction company, Shred-It, saved the equivalent of 900 trees, 132 cubic metres of landfill and over 72,000 litres of water.

**“We've made some fantastic progress over the past few years, but our work continues and we're looking further into the future to ensure we have the infrastructure in place to achieve our responsible business and environmental goals.”**

**Sarah Ball, director of operations**

We also teamed up with 'Eco School', Hunters Bar Infants school in Sheffield, to mark World Water Day 2018. The children designed posters to help raise awareness of the need and techniques to conserve water.

### **Legal Sustainability Alliance**

We're proud to be one of the founding members of the Legal Sustainability Alliance (LSA), formerly the Legal Sector Alliance.

The LSA is a movement of legal firms and the Law Society who together are committed to taking action on climate change by improving their environmental sustainability and reducing their carbon footprint.

Reports back from the LSA show that Irwin Mitchell is an environmentally aware and sustainable business compared to other large law firms.

### **Cycle to Work scheme – or get discounted public transport**

For several years now, we've provided a Ride to Work scheme, which allows any of our permanent employees to acquire tax-deducted cycling equipment with a value of up to £1000.

Encouraging our people to cycle to work has a range of benefits for both the environment, in terms of reducing air pollution; and our people, from a wellbeing perspective. Savings on tax and National Insurance as part of the scheme provide a great incentive for our colleagues to be greener. In the years since the scheme was launched, we've seen fantastic uptake from our people – regular cyclists and beginners alike.

For those who aren't able commute by bicycle, Irwin Mitchell also offers all colleagues an interest-free loan of up to £10,000 to help fund public transport season tickets over the course of a year, making sure that environmentally-friendly commuting options are as accessible as possible.

All of our locations now have facilities for visitors to attend our offices by bike.



### **An environmentally conscious cuppa**

18 water systems across our offices are supplied by Aqua Aid – an organisation which uses a portion of its profits to fund vital water pumps to communities in impoverished areas of Africa.

Our purchase of these water systems has so far allowed Aqua Aid to provide eight ‘elephant pumps’ to communities in Zimbabwe. Each pump provides around 10,000 litres of water per day, accommodating roughly 300 people, so Aqua Aid have helped us to provide water for up to 2,400 people across Zimbabwe.

Providing clean water to areas often lacking a reliable source, the pumps can be used not just for drinking, but also washing and watering livestock and maintaining vegetable gardens.

It’s not just the water which matters when making a good cuppa, it’s also the vessel you drink from. In recent years we’ve replaced paper cups with mugs which are reused every day, resulting in a reduction of 312,000 cardboard cups.

In 2018, we also changed the material used in our reusable coffee cups distributed at events, switching plastic for biodegradable bamboo fibre for a real “green tea” experience.

If you’re a fan of ‘dunking’, profits from the Bronte biscuits we buy to provide in our meeting rooms go towards aiding deforestation projects and orangutan protection charities in Borneo.

### **Environmental management system**

Don’t just take our word for the good environmental work we’re doing – In summer 2018 we achieved the latest ISO 14001:2015 and ISO:5001-2011 standards, a framework used by organisations to achieve the intended outcomes of environmental management systems, providing value for the environment, the organisation itself, and any interested parties.



Together  
we will  
make a  
difference

## Contact

If you'd like to find out more information about Irwin Mitchell's CSR programme, please contact:



**Kate Rawlings**  
CSR Manager, Irwin Mitchell Group  
E: [kate.rawlings@irwinmitchell.com](mailto:kate.rawlings@irwinmitchell.com)  
T: 0114 274 4238