

Our social impact strategy

Revitalising and strengthening our approach

Responsible business | *Empowering sustainable growth*

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Revitalising and strengthening our approach

An ambition to create real social value is a defining part of what Trowers stands for as a firm.

We don't operate in a bubble. Instead, we see ourselves as part of the wider world, determined to have an impact on society through our work, thought leadership, deep links with local communities and, increasingly, through valuable pro bono work.

This philosophy has tremendous buy-in from our people who often say that this is a feature of our culture which first attracted them to Trowers, and which keeps them working here.

It has also underpinned our extensive corporate responsibility programme and has seen us achieve so much, so far.

But recently, we've been asking ourselves: "Could we do more?"

And, by working together in a more streamlined and strategic way, can we have far greater social impact?




The answer, we believe, is a resounding "Yes!" and we have revitalised our approach to corporate responsibility with a new and ambitious, three-year Social Impact strategy to do just that.



Nicola Ihnatowicz,
Partner and Head of Social Impact

A new focus

The strategy, which has been endorsed and is being led by the Strategic Board, is built around three priority areas. They are to:

-  **Ensure fairness and access to justice, in the UK and internationally.**
-  **Advance social mobility and diversity and inclusion in our profession and more widely in society.**
-  **Help build a world that is environmentally and socially sustainable.**

This framework reflects how – as a leading law firm and a responsible business pursuing a challenging environmental, social and governance (ESG) agenda – we can use our skills, connections, knowledge and expertise to create value for all of our stakeholders and society.






We have always recognised the moral case for corporate responsibility. It matches our values, our desire to make a difference and help build a more sustainable world, and our impulse to give something back. It's the right thing to do.

But there's an equally strong business case. It helps us attract talented people, succeed in tenders for clients equally focussed on ESG matters, lifts our profile and our brand, helps to re-enforce our culture, enhances engagement and fosters collaboration between colleagues.

Rolling out the strategy

We will be unveiling more details of the strategy in the coming weeks and months and building on it progressively over the next three years.

Amongst other things we plan to:

-  **Professionalise our whole approach to achieving social impact.**
-  **Make it easier for colleagues to participate in our corporate responsibility initiatives and to bring their skills and experience to a greatly expanded pro bono programme.**
-  **Incentivise and reward the undertaking of social impact activities, including introducing paid volunteering days.**
-  **Track and record time given to community and pro bono work, backed by clear targets.**
-  **Build new partnerships, including through a revitalised Charity of the Year programme, to open exciting new areas where we can apply our knowledge and expertise.**

It's an exciting moment for us and one which fits alongside the wider commitments we have made in our recent Responsible Business report, An Agenda for Change.

We should be leading corporate citizens, making a real social impact.

With this strategy, and with your help, we certainly can be.



Having an impact

We encourage people across all our offices to get involved in our community and pro bono programmes and are lucky that so many colleagues share an ambition to give back to society,

We are never short of suggestions of where we should invest our time and resources.

Charities of the Year

Each year, our offices select a Charity (or sometimes Charities) of the Year to provide their support to. Often, recognising that this is where we can make a much bigger difference, these charities are smaller in size and will address causes which reflect what's going on in the wider world, such as the refugee crisis, mental health and wellbeing, or the human cost of the war in Ukraine.



The charities we currently support include:

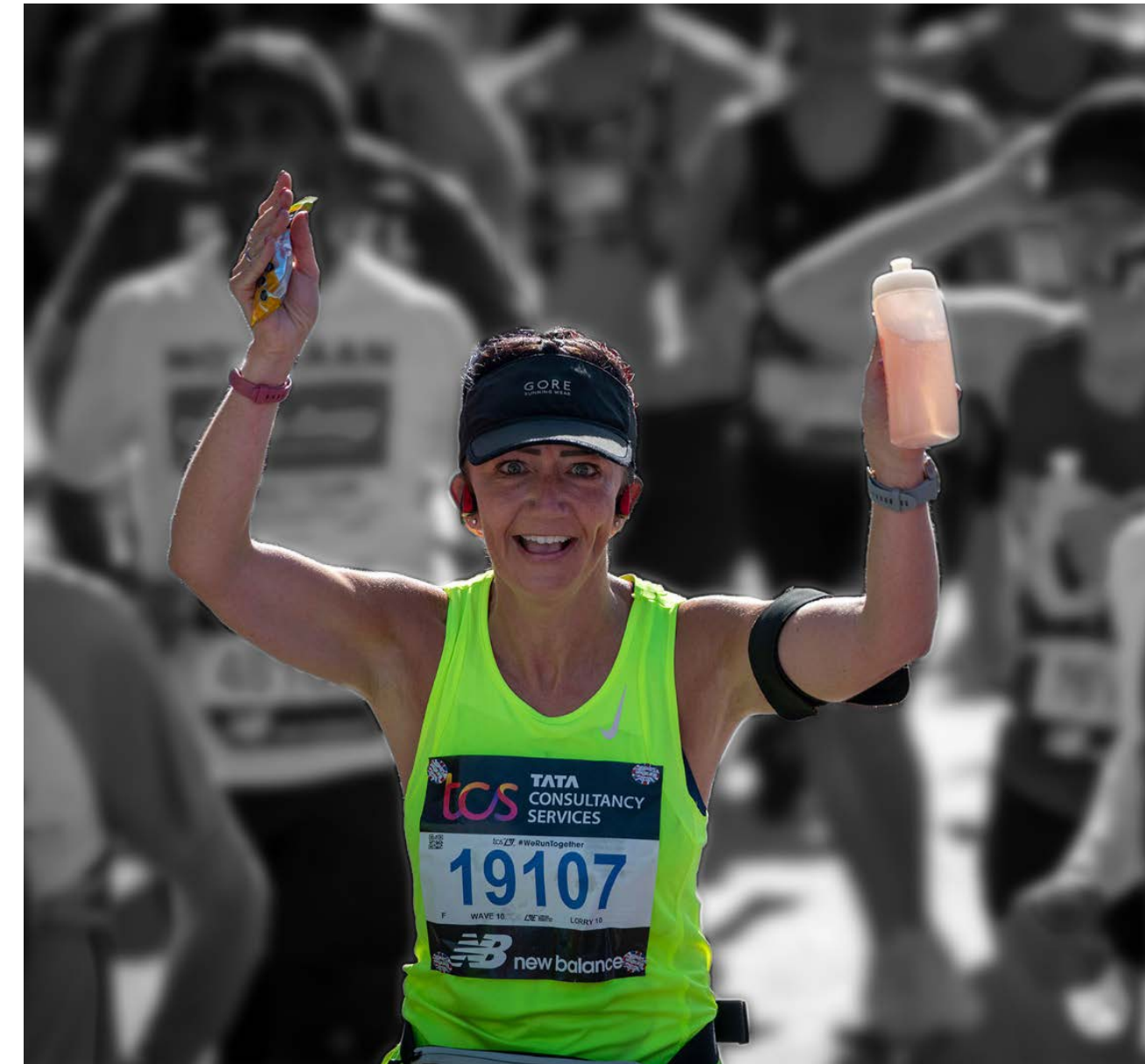
London – **Advance**, a charity providing confidential support for women facing imminent danger from domestic violence; and **The Frank Haines Memorial Trust** providing support to charities working with disadvantaged young people in Tower Hamlets.

Birmingham – We support the **Buddy Bag Foundation** which helps to make a difference to children entering emergency care by providing them with “buddy bags” containing essential items on arrival in emergency accommodation.

Manchester – We continue to support **Manchester Mind**, a partnership of five local Minds around the city, which focuses on reducing the stigma that still exists around mental health.

Exeter – We support the **British Ukrainian Aid**, a charity supporting victims of the conflict in Ukraine.

Internationally – We have raised funds in support of an assortment of local and global charities and initiatives, including **The Sparkle Foundation**.



A changed world

Many of our flagship programmes have been impacted by the pandemic meaning that we had had to suspend our efforts or continue them in more novel ways.

While social distancing restrictions were in place, our volunteers had been unable to visit **Moreland Primary** school with whom we ran our long-standing reading buddy's programme. Thankfully, working with **Inspire**, a local Education and Business partnership, we were able to set up a temporary virtual reading scheme, which saw colleagues offering regular reading support to a small group of children.

While collecting food and clothing proved very challenging during the pandemic, we organised an online drive across our UK offices to raise funds for the **Trussel Trust's** food banks. In Bahrain, throughout the pandemic, colleagues supported **A Box of Goodness** an organisation which delivers food packages to those left vulnerable by the pandemic.



We're delighted that for the first time in three years we've been able to restart **Routes to Work**, one of our most successful programmes. Run in partnership with **L&Q**, one of the largest UK housing associations, this scheme offers a group of people who are out of work or struggling to get back into employment, the chance to complete two, two-week work placements with us over the course of a year.

20 participants have joined us in permanent positions following the programme.

Social mobility

We are really proud to support a wide range of initiatives aimed at improving social mobility and broadening the diversity of young people represented in our sector.

The legal profession still has huge issues around access, with entry to the law remaining very narrow and heavily favouring people from more privileged backgrounds.

This has to change. It's important for justice and the working of society and the economy that lawyers reflect the wider world we are part of and serve.

We were among the firms that founded **Prime**, a profession-wide scheme offering young people from disadvantaged backgrounds valuable work experience opportunities and an insight into life in a City law firm they may not otherwise be able to access.

City Solicitors Horizons is a social mobility programme which each year identifies a number of students from universities across the Southeast of England and offers them the chance to join a three-year programme running alongside their degree courses. Participants enjoy classroom and one-to-one training, individual mentoring and work experience. We are one of a number of leading law firms piloting the scheme, which stems from a partnership between the **City of London Solicitors Company**, the **City Solicitors Education Trust**, the **Legal Education Foundation**, and **The City of London Law Society**.

We are an affiliate partner of **Aspiring Solicitors**, an organisation committed to increasing diversity across all underrepresented groups in our profession by helping disadvantaged young people gain work experience and training contracts. We host open days, attend law fairs and provide mentors for participants.

58% In 2021, 58% of the trainees we recruited were from the Aspiring Solicitors scheme.

We're pleased to be building strong links with **Exeter University** students and we were the first law firm to partner with Exeter University's **Access to Justice Clinic**, a pro bono legal service where law students at the university advise members of the public, providing supervision and guidance to the students.

We were the first law firm to provide support to the **Social Welfare Solicitors Qualification Fund (SWSQF)** which provides funding to support dedicated social welfare workers through the SQE helping to tackle the overwhelming need for junior social welfare solicitors.

“We are proud to be part of an initiative which supports social welfare workers and enables them to continue to support and provide advice for those most in need of legal services.”



Sara Bailey, Senior Partner

Mentoring

Many colleagues volunteer as mentors through the initiatives we support, providing invaluable support to young people and offering them a real insight to working in our profession.

The Girls' Network is a mentoring organisation for teenage girls from low economic backgrounds. We've been involved with this great initiative for six years and have connections with it in London, Birmingham and Manchester. As well as providing mentors, we have also offered work experience places to a number of the young women that have completed the programme.

“Mentoring with organisations such as The Girl’s Network and the Social Mobility Foundation is hugely rewarding. I have mentored with the SMF for several years and my mentees really seem to get a lot out of the scheme. As someone who received the benefit of a mentoring programme before working in law, I know how valuable it is for someone to share their insight and experiences to allow the mentee to be able to make more informed decisions about their future career.”



Robyn Asbury, Solicitor – Manchester

In Exeter, colleagues visit local state schools to speak with students at key points their education to give guidance and offer an insight into the profession. We also offer the students the chance to do summer work placements as part of the **Pathways to Law** scheme.

The International picture

Internationally, our corporate responsibility programme focuses on providing practical support to selected NGOs, not for profit organisations and charities.

In Dubai, we are exploring working with **The Sparkle Foundation**, a UK-based, international NGO carrying our economic development work in Malawi.

We've also worked closely with **Shamsaha**, a women's crisis response centre helping victims of domestic violence.

Bringing our legal skills to bear through Pro Bono

Our lawyers welcome the chance to do pro bono legal work, where they can use their legal skills to bring real value to communities and individuals at home and abroad.

We encourage them to do just that, insisting that the projects they support are carefully monitored and supervised, with their time properly recorded.

We are signatories to the **Law Society's Pro Bono Charter**.

One of our most valued pro bono projects is Advocates for International Development (**A4ID**), a charity that works with leading international law firms to provide free legal advice to NGOs and other development organisations.

We have renewed our partnership with the organisation for another year, and the list of our lawyers signed up for weekly newsletters on A4ID projects continues to grow.

Working with A4ID

Over the last year, we've supported projects for a range of organisations including ActionAid International and Solidarity with Refugees.

A highlight was the support provided to the Rainforest Foundation UK, a UK-based charity whose mission is to support indigenous peoples and traditional populations of the world's rainforests. This year, our Banking and Finance team in Manchester working with the charity to secure additional funding to continue its mission.



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