

CSR & Sustainability Annual Report

April 2019-March 2020



Introduction

At Lewis Silkin, our ethos of bravery and kindness is at the core of everything we do. Whether we're working for our clients, our colleagues or our community, our work is always guided by our ethos of bravery and kindness and our values of integrity, clarity, unity and excellence. Our CSR programme is just one example of how our colleagues and community have come together to live these values.

We're motivated and committed to do the right thing and to build a sustainable future for all. For us, this means that we support the next generation of talent through our social mobility initiatives and work towards a more sustainable future by managing and reducing our own environmental impacts. It also means we support and work in partnership with charities and non-profits with values that align with our own and where the skills of our people can make a real difference. We do this through our pro bono, community investment, volunteering and fundraising activities.

We are at an exciting stage of our sustainability and CSR journey. We have a committed CSR Committee working across the firm on a range of initiatives, and broad support across the partnership. This year we've taken it a step further and recruited a CSR and Sustainability Executive. This is the first role of its kind at the firm and is a major part of our commitment to delivering on our social and environmental objectives.

We have a challenging year ahead, and COVID-19 will change the ways we engage with each other and our community. While we were only beginning to see the impacts towards the end of our reporting period this year, it is clear to see that our colleagues are already showing their bravery and kindness to support each other and our wider community with the new and unique challenges it has caused. We're looking forward to sharing more details in next year's report.

Lucy Lewis and Sam Pennington, May 2020



Lucy Lewis
Partner

+44 (0)20 7074 8054
lucy.lewis@lewissilkin.com



Sam Pennington
Partner

+44 (0)20 7074 8113
sam.pennington@lewissilkin.com

Key achievements from April 2019-March 2020



2500+

CSR and pro bono hours
recorded



5/5

All five of our offices
participating in CSR
activities



£20,000

Raised for charity



2023

Net zero carbon
emissions by 2023



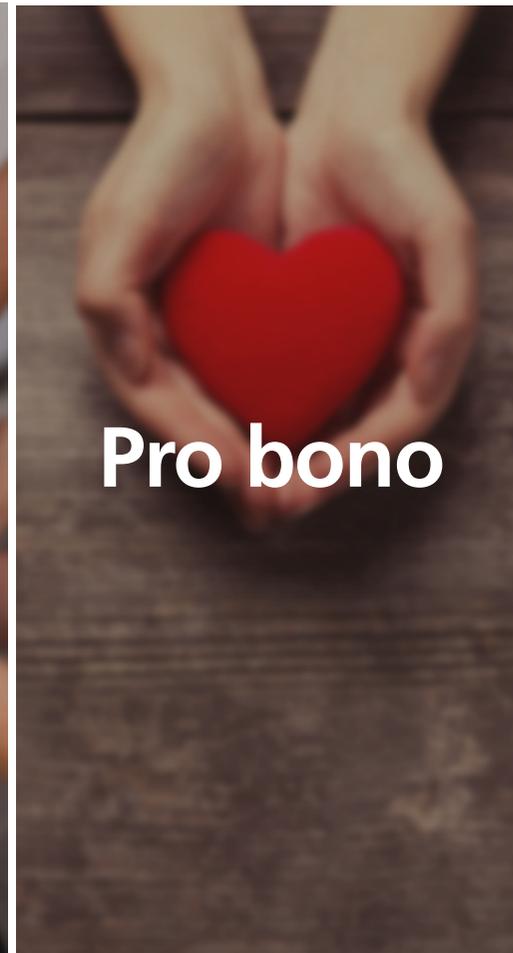
**Created
and
recruited**

a CSR and Sustainability
Executive position

Annual targets supported by the partnership, focusing on:



We support the **UN Sustainable Development Goals**, a set of 17 interconnected goals to support people, planet and prosperity, and build a more sustainable future for all. Lewis Silkin is committed to working to help achieve the goals by 2030.



Charitable Fundraising

Alzheimer's Research UK is the UK's leading dementia research charity, dedicated to making life-changing breakthroughs in diagnosis, prevention, treatment and cure. We're proud to support the charity in their mission to bring about the first life-changing dementia treatment by 2025.



**Alzheimer's
Research
UK**

Make
breakthroughs
possible

"We spend our lives building up memories with our parents and grandparents, and it is these memories that make them who they are. Alzheimer's is a disease where researchers are tantalisingly close to making a breakthrough. They need our support now more than ever."

Lewis Silkin Colleague



We're fundraising to support ARUK promote good health and wellbeing.

£60,000 raised since April 2017

Since 2017, we've raised an astonishing £60,000 for the cause! This is something that's very close to the hearts of many in our community.

Partnership extended until 2023

We're delighted to extend the partnership for another three years until March 2023, so that we can continue to help fund the charities ground-breaking research and transform lives.

Walk the Line

52 miles covered, £18,400+ raised

On Saturday 21 September 2019 we joined together to cover the 52-mile distance of the Central Line by foot. Around 40 walkers and their families set off from either end of the line: Epping in the east and West Ruislip in the west.

After up to ten gruelling hours, we met up again at our London office. Colleagues joined us along the way in varied terrain from rural fields to the bustling streets at Oxford Circus. We stopped at every tube station along the way to take a picture.

Other fundraising

We also organised several other events over the course of the year, including sweepstakes, a pub quiz, a bake-off, and a raffle, a Christmas carol concert and a Halloween dress up day.

'Pie a Partner' was undoubtedly one of the fundraising highlights of last year. A group of partners volunteered to take a cream pie (or three) to the face on one of the hottest days of the year to raise over £300 for our charity partner.

Though most of our fundraising activities support Alzheimer's Research UK, we have also supported several other charities in the past twelve months.

Individual fundraising

We support individuals taking part in fundraising activities close to their hearts by making a matched donation of £100. Last year we donated to a range of charities to celebrate colleagues taking part in events ranging from marathons and sponsored swims to 'live below the line' challenges.

Sponsorship

Support Through Court

We are a corporate partner to Support Through Court, a legal charity that helps people going through court or a tribunal without a lawyer. Sadly, since 2013 there have been huge cuts to legal aid, meaning many people must face courts alone. Support Through Court are based in civil and family courts across the country and train volunteers to provide emotional and procedural assistance.



Sarcoma UK knits and dips

We supported Sarcoma UK by taking part in a 'knits and dips' event, organised by the friends and family of our late colleague Ellen Temperton. Thirty members of the Lewis Silkin team from all five of our offices took part in a combination of knitting and swimming. We knitted over 25 hats and took dips in Hampstead Ponds in London, in the Thames in Oxford, in the sea in Cardiff and in Hong Kong and at a sporting event in Dublin. Some even took their dips in more exotic locations including Bondi Beach, California and paddling pools in their own back gardens. In total, the event raised over £11,000.

London Legal Walk 2019

Twenty Lewis Silkin walkers raised £1000 by taking part in the London Legal Walk, an annual 10km walk to raise money for the London Legal Support Trust. The trust provides much-needed funds to charities that provide life changing legal advice and representation to those in need.

Oxford Legal Walk 2019

Our Oxford team braved some truly terrible weather for the full 8km walk that took them from the Magistrates Court, along a scenic river footpath and through the centre of town. Eight walkers took part to raise £620 for the London Legal Support Trust.

Christmas collections

Christmas can be a tough time for those struggling to afford even the basics, let alone the little luxuries most of us take for granted. To make Christmas a little bit brighter for vulnerable Londoners, we collected £250 in cash donations and food boxes for the Hammersmith and Fulham Food Bank. We also donated to food banks in Oxford and Cardiff.

Football Shirt Friday

One Friday each April we swap our usual workwear for football shirts to raise money for Cancer Research and The Bobby Moore Fund, which funds pioneering bowel cancer research. We raised £370 last year.



Social Mobility

Solicitor Apprenticeship scheme starting
September 2020

Social mobility is a key element of how we operate as a responsible business. We're committed to widening access to the legal profession and are actively taking measures to attract, recruit and retain candidates from a range of backgrounds.

This year, we put a lot of work into getting our new Solicitor Apprenticeship off the ground, and we are looking forward to welcoming our apprentices in September 2020.

Social mobility is also at the heart of our CSR programme. We actively engage with local schools to offer work experience placements to students and to provide volunteers for education initiatives. In March 2020 we signed up to a year-long partnership with XLP, a social mobility charity working across London to support and improve outcomes for young people from disadvantaged backgrounds. More details to follow in next year's report.



We have been accredited as a Living Wage Employer since 2012. A living wage employer ensures that all employees, aged 18 and over, and including certain classes of contracted staff, are paid at least the living wage.

Work experience



As part of our PRIME commitment, we offer work experience placements for students from less privileged backgrounds who might otherwise not have the opportunity to access careers in the legal world. Since our commitment began, we have provided between four and six students with work experience every year. We work closely with Ark Globe Academy in Southwark on this initiative. Lucy Lewis, who represents CSR and Diversity on our strategy board also sits on the board of PRIME.

Community investment

We run several reading schemes with primary school children to help increase their reading level, confidence and range in vocabulary, and therefore to reduce the word gap holding back their learning.

St Alban's Primary School reading scheme

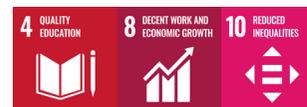
Lewis Silkin volunteers travel to St Alban's Primary School in Holborn each week to read with the children there for thirty minutes over lunchtime. Each volunteer is assigned a child to read with for the term, allowing them to get to know the child they are reading with and monitor their progress.

Pilgrim's Way and Bellenden primary schools

Once a fortnight, we host a group of six children from Pilgrims' Way Primary School in our London office. Each child is paired up with a Lewis Silkin volunteer to read together for around 40 minutes. Because the group of children changes each term, we can support 18 children over the course of the year. Over thirty Lewis Silkin volunteers have given up their time for this over the last year.

Aspire CSR day

In October, our Oxford team spent a day supporting Aspire, a local social enterprise supporting people facing homelessness, poverty and disadvantage and helping them into employment. The morning consisted of legal training to help them set up a recruitment agency to support vulnerable members of the community into work locally. In the afternoon we helped them with one of their work experience projects where they teach their clients how to work in and run a shop, which is open to members of the public.



We aim to reduce inequalities through our social mobility programme, so that young people can fulfil their potential and access the full spectrum of job and education opportunities.

Healthcare

Another area we're passionate about is supporting healthcare charities. As well as fundraising for Alzheimer's Research UK through our charity partnership, we also support healthcare charities through our community investment programmes.



These charities and initiatives work towards goal three, promoting good health and wellbeing.

Ronald McDonald House

In September, colleagues from our Dublin office volunteered with the Ronald McDonald House. Volunteers helped with cooking and serving food to families with a child in hospital.



Noah's Ark donations

In April 2019, Lewis Silkin volunteers from our Cardiff office collected and donated clothes and Easter eggs to the children and families supported by Noah's Ark Children's Hospice.



Alzheimer's Research UK thanking day

In December, 15 Lewis Silkin volunteers helped write cards to sponsors of Alzheimer's Research UK supporters thanking them for their fundraising for the year. Between them they wrote 400 cards, which is more than double the previous year.



Pro bono

2,500+ pro bono and CSR hours recorded this year

We use the specialist skills of our legal teams to support organisations and their clients with pro bono legal advice.

Mary Ward Legal Advice Centre

In London, our volunteers attend regular clinics provide employment advice to clients at Mary Ward Legal Advice Centre. Volunteers pair up with a student from City Law School, giving the students the opportunity to learn from qualified lawyers, as they give face-to-face advice during the clinic. The issues they cover range from unfair dismissal, redundancy, sickness absence, unlawful deductions from wages, disciplinaries and grievances, holiday pay and discrimination. Twenty Lewis Silkin lawyers took part this year.

Citizens Advice Bureau employment advice

Volunteers from our Oxford office provide employment law advice at the local Citizen's Advice Bureau. We run two half-hour sessions a month, handling queries across the full spectrum of employment law issues.

Justice Without Borders

Our Hong Kong team have provided pro bono legal advice to Justice Without Borders, an organisation providing access to legal aid for victims of human trafficking and labour exploitation. Employment lawyers also reviewed their employee handbook.

Cardiff Employment Law Clinic

Many of our lawyers attend the Employment Law Clinic as advisors or administrators, where we support clients with legal advice on employment matters, such as dismissals, long term sickness absence, disciplinary, or any other issues they may have with their employer.

Uplifter Limited

We have given free legal advice to Uplifter Limited, a Hong Kong-based non-profit dedicated to bettering lives and empowering underprivileged communities through online education.

Cardiff Employment Tribunal Litigant in Person Support Scheme

In Cardiff, paralegals and associates volunteered with the Cardiff Employment Tribunal Litigant in Person Support Scheme ('ELIPS') either by assisting litigants to delineate and present their claims at Cardiff Employment Tribunal, or by sitting on the steering committee.



Through our pro bono work, we support organisations working towards a range of SDGs and we promote partnership for the goals. We provide a lot of employment advice, which focuses on goal 10.

Sustainability

This year, we have made huge progress in making our office more efficient, have offset emissions from some of our 2019 business flights and commissioned a carbon audit. We've still got a way to go and will be building on these measures to further reduce our environmental impacts and to become net zero by 2023.



As members of the **Legal Sustainability Alliance**, we are engaging with the broader legal community to promote and pursue environmental best-practice



Measure, manage and reduce our carbon emissions with the view to become net zero by April 2023



Promote policies and practices which reduce waste and energy consumption, both internally and within our supply chain



Support and empower our community to make sustainable choices, both at work and in their daily lives.

We are concentrating our focus on three main areas where, as a business and as individuals, we can make a positive difference.

Carbon Management

We have commissioned our first carbon audit from Carbon Footprint. We undertake to reduce our emissions in line with Carbon Footprint's recommendations with the view to becoming net zero by April 2023.

In order to reduce our carbon emissions, we've taken steps to increase the efficiency of our offices and put energy reduction policies in place. Examples include switching to LED lightbulbs in our toilets and a commitment to using LED lights to replace old light fittings. We have also automated the shutdown of PCs to help save power.

As a service provider, business travel makes up a large proportion of our total carbon emissions. We have a comprehensive travel policy to keep non-essential business travel to a minimum. We offset the carbon for some of our business flights. In our first year, 2019, we offset 52 tCO₂e through verified carbon reduction projects and in addition we planted 52 trees in London, making a positive impact closer to the office.

52 tCO₂e from air travel offset in 2019

Community Investment

We engage our community with environmental initiatives through our community investment programme.

Thames 21 Big Bottle Count

In October, four people took part in the Thames 21 Big Bottle Count near Hammersmith.

This is an annual and initiative to monitor and investigate the impact of single-use plastic on the River Thames. After spending an afternoon picking up and counting all the plastic bottles and logging what brands and shops they came from, volunteers sorted the waste into recyclable and non-recyclable bags and disposed of it appropriately. Over 1,700 plastic bottles were counted and removed at 17 sites along the Thames that day.



Waste management and reduction

We have a robust recycling and waste management system. This includes a zero per cent landfill policy in London, the largest of our offices, which has been in place for seven years. All waste is disposed of by registered carriers and removed to registered disposal sites.

We are continually looking at ways to reduce waste. We have removed bins from desks and moved to centralised bin stations, saving over 57,000 plastic bin liners per year. We endeavour to incorporate reuse and circular economy principles into our supply chain wherever possible. We use refillable soap bottles in all our London office bathrooms, and when upgrading our firmwide IT system this year, we opted for leasing rather than purchasing new laptops.

We also support colleagues in their sustainability journeys. We provided reusable bamboo cups to those who requested them and introduced an Ecover refill station where colleagues can refill their washing up liquid bottle in exchange for a donation to our firm charity partner.

No waste from our London office goes to landfill



We're working on our sustainability policies to promote sustainable consumption and to take action against climate change.

Ethical and sustainable sourcing

We evaluate the environmental impact of any new products we intend to purchase, and favour more environmentally friendly and efficient products where possible.

In London, we've been sourcing food solely from local producers since 2006. Where the produce is not fresh (e.g. tea and coffee) we source from Fairtrade suppliers. We have increased the range of vegetarian options in our London office canteen, making it easier for people to adopt more eco-friendly eating habits.

We also aim to source from social enterprises. For example, we use the Soap Co, an organisation employing people who are blind and disabled, in our client bathrooms. Their products use less harsh chemicals than your usual soap and come in recycled bottles that we can refill.

Biodiversity

We installed bee hives on the roof of our offices in 2011 to help the declining city bee population and to engage with our local community by working with St Mary's Secret Garden, a community garden in Hackney. As well as providing an inner-city home for our pollinators, this project enabled Lewis Silkin staff to participate in weekly bee hive inspections and learn about bees and biodiversity. Volunteers also take part in the annual honey harvest in autumn. We sell the honey in our staff canteen and all money raised is re-invested or donated to the firm's nominated charity.

