

A photograph of a cityscape at sunset, featuring modern glass buildings and a canal. The sky is a mix of pink, orange, and purple, and the buildings are reflected in the water. A bridge is visible in the distance.

# Responsible business

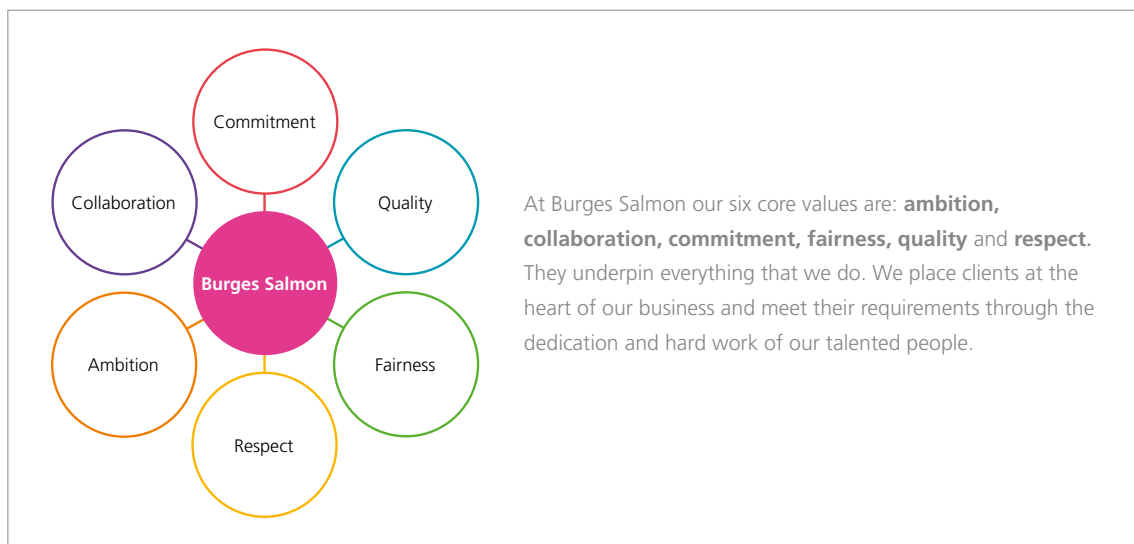
## Investing for the future

## Our people are exceptional; they are the driving force behind our responsible business.

Guided by our values, which lie at the heart of how we operate, they [our people] inherently do the right thing, taking action to deliver a positive impact for our clients, local community and the environment.

Wellbeing, inclusivity and respect matter to us, and make good business sense.

Everything we do is driven by our commitment to our six core values. Our clients, contacts and friends see our values in action when they interact with our people.



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# Our commitment



“In this report, you will see the breadth of our activity and our aspirations for the year ahead. As Chair of the Responsible Business Committee, I invite you to share feedback and any thoughts on further opportunities to collaborate.”



## Chris Seaton, Senior partner

Over the past year, I am happy to report that we have made significant progress as a responsible business building on our long-standing commitment to the community and the environment, by furthering our strategic approach. This has involved the integration of the UN Sustainable Development Goals into our strategy and our ongoing commitment to the UN Global Compact, in alignment with the ten principles for responsible business.

We conducted our first ever human rights review and worked with the award winning anti-modern slavery and human trafficking charity Unseen, to improve our own understanding of modern slavery issues as well as hosting a number of events to connect the charity to other organisations and supporters.

Through the application of the UN Sustainable Development Goals, we

have been able to better frame our own responsible business activities, nurture external partnerships, and consider how our legal expertise is contributing in the wider sense.

This year as a firm we have strengthened our focus on working towards a net zero carbon future – by bringing together our legal expertise across the transport, energy, agriculture and built environment sectors – as well as switching to a fully renewable energy supply in our Bristol head office and agreeing a firm-wide commitment to carbon offsetting.

In this report, you will see the breadth of our activity and our aspirations for the year ahead. As Chair of the Responsible Business Committee, I invite you to share feedback and any thoughts on further opportunities to collaborate.



## Roger Bull, Managing partner

In the past year, we have seen various pressures and uncertainties, particularly in terms of the political arena, declarations of climate emergency and societal expectations for business to do more. In this context, I have been delighted to see our people remain committed and deliver, often above and beyond, on our responsible business agenda.

For us, this is about living our values and making it an everyday part of what we do. This has been evident with an outstanding volunteering rate of 62%, the attainment of 36 award shortlists and wins as well as exceeding environmental objectives such as cutting our carbon emissions in half.

Other important progress has been achieved around our Diversity and Inclusion agenda with the launch of 'BCultured' the firm's BAME network, the launch of disability forum 'BEnabled' and

the introduction of our Blind Recruitment Policy. We remain committed to social mobility and are pleased to be recognised as a Top 75 Social Mobility Employer.

Personally as Managing Partner, I have two particular highlights. Firstly having the opportunity to engage in our Bright Sparks work experience programme encouraging school students from a variety of backgrounds, who are interested in a career in law. Secondly volunteering as part of a citywide project to tackle food poverty in the pursuit that no child should go hungry. This was a tremendous collaboration that saw 13 law firms come together to work with over 100 other organisations to deliver 53,000 meals to over 5,000 young people over the summer holiday, a risk period when children are unable to access free school meals. The positive and direct actions that I see across the whole firm make me incredibly proud

of my colleagues and everything that we are doing together to support our responsible business agenda.

"I have been delighted to see our people remain committed and deliver, often above and beyond, on our responsible business agenda."



BCultured launch



New partners 2019



Stepping Up graduation ceremony



Volunteering at Avon Wildlife Trust



Outstanding client service awards



Feeding Bristol Healthy Holiday programme

# Who we are



Burges Salmon is the independent UK law firm which delivers the best mix of advice, service and value. With offices in Bristol, London and Edinburgh we compete at the top of the legal market delivering the right solutions for clients when it matters.

**We focus on quality.** By focusing on the markets and areas of expertise where we have extensive knowledge and experience, we achieve the best outcomes for our clients who range from large organisations, entrepreneurial businesses and public sector bodies to private individuals and families. We are trusted to help them with everything from their everyday legal needs to their business critical issues and all points in between.

**We collaborate.** We work wherever our clients need us to be, both within the UK and internationally. We maintain a collaborative and cohesive culture which underpins the quality of our work and our client service. In short, we hire, train and retain the best people to work together to serve our clients and provide them with the best possible experience.

**We work across the UK.** We have lawyers who are qualified to work in all three legal jurisdictions in the UK – England & Wales, Scotland and Northern Ireland.

**We work internationally.** Across the world we work with a select number of like-minded independent law firms – our Preferred Law Firm network.

**We are confident in our model.** In a rapidly changing world, our clients instruct us because we offer a different experience: unrivalled expertise, excellent service and exceptional value.

With our range of expertise we contribute to sustainable development in a variety of sectors including transport, renewable energy, public sector, education, real estate and healthcare, amongst others.

## OUR YEAR IN NUMBERS

Facts and figures from around the business

Total number of  
Burgess Salmon people

**780+**

Fee earners  
(including partners)

**450+**

Number of  
partners

**92**

Partners recognised by  
Chambers UK 2020

**64%**

Award wins, shortlists  
and accreditations

**36**

Turnover for the  
financial year  
ending April 2019

**£94.6m**

Total number of CR  
hours volunteered

**3,754**

Hours of pro bono  
advice given

**1,028**

Number of organisations  
donated to

**88**

# Our supply chain

Our supply chain describes the operational scope of our business and outlines some of the key areas in which we can drive responsible action.



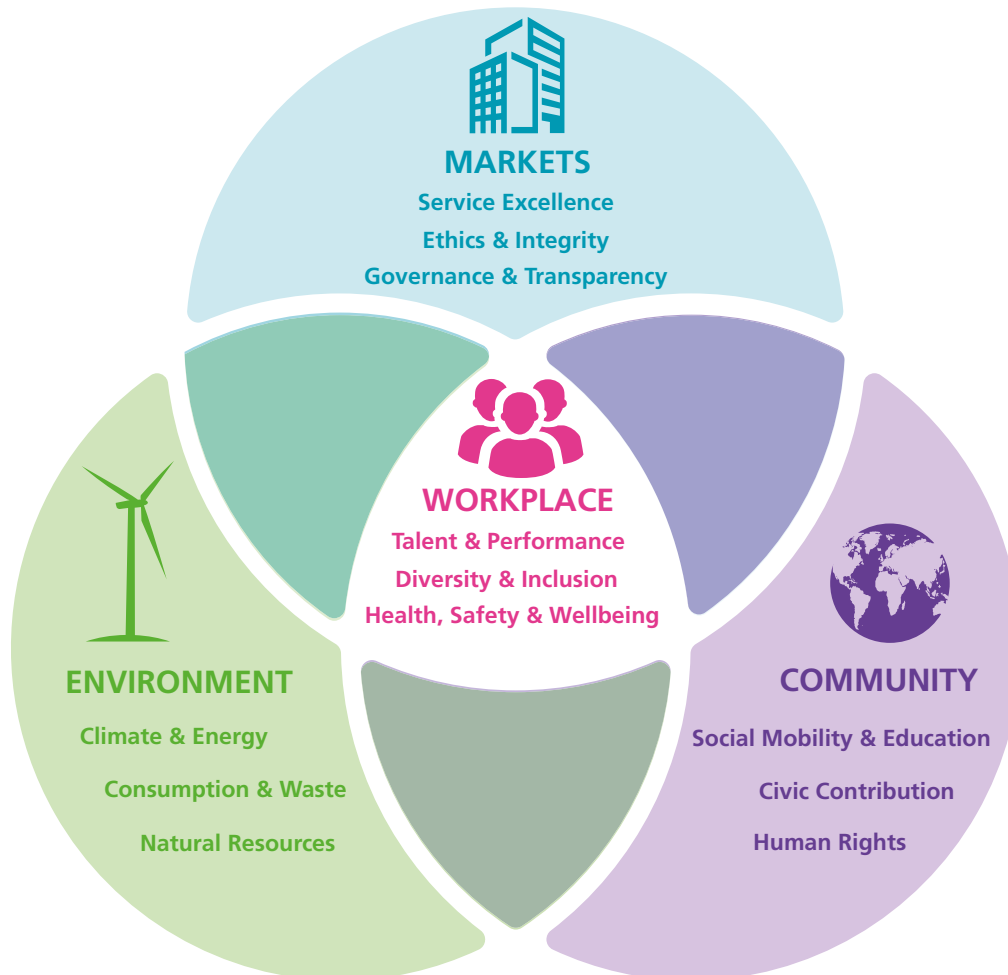
# Our stakeholders

Engagement with stakeholders on important issues, as well as the day to day business, has always been part of what we do. We engage with each stakeholder group in different ways – you can find out more about this in the appendix of this report.



# Our approach

## RESPONSIBLE BUSINESS FRAMEWORK



“Our people, culture and values are central to delivering responsible business through our client work, projects and community engagement activities.”

Responsible business is integral to who we are. It connects how we do business delivering legal services to our clients, our approach to reducing our environmental impact and the wider role we play within society.

Our responsible business framework reflects how our business, people, community and environment interconnect. We set objectives to ensure we play our part in delivering a

sustainable future through our operations, our client work and our community engagement.

The framework allows us to focus on the activities that are most important to our business and our stakeholders. At the centre of the framework is our people; their passion and values drive us forward. By supporting a talented, diverse workforce we provide the right dynamics for innovation and responsible contribution.

# Materiality and guiding initiatives

The Global Compact provides 10 principles for businesses to integrate into their ways of working – and we ensure we reflect these principles in our approach.

**WE SUPPORT**



## SUSTAINABLE DEVELOPMENT GOALS



The UN Sustainable Development Goals (Global Goals or SDGs) are a route map towards a fairer and more sustainable future and are increasingly used by governments, businesses, not-for-profit and civic organisations. They are important to us because they provide a common language to talk about sustainability and outline the action we all need to take to address the global challenges facing us.

We conducted a materiality exercise to help identify priorities. This involved analysing each of the 17 Goals and identifying the most relevant to our business based on our expertise, stakeholder expectations and strategic priorities.

In addition we considered the 169 targets that sit underneath the Goals and selected the most pertinent to help our organisation to progress. Our aligned responsible

business actions help us contribute toward the Sustainable Development Goals and guide us in collaborating with other businesses and organisations.

We are signatories of the UN Global Compact, a collection of 10,000 organisations that have committed to embedding shared responsible business principles into the way they operate.

# Our objectives

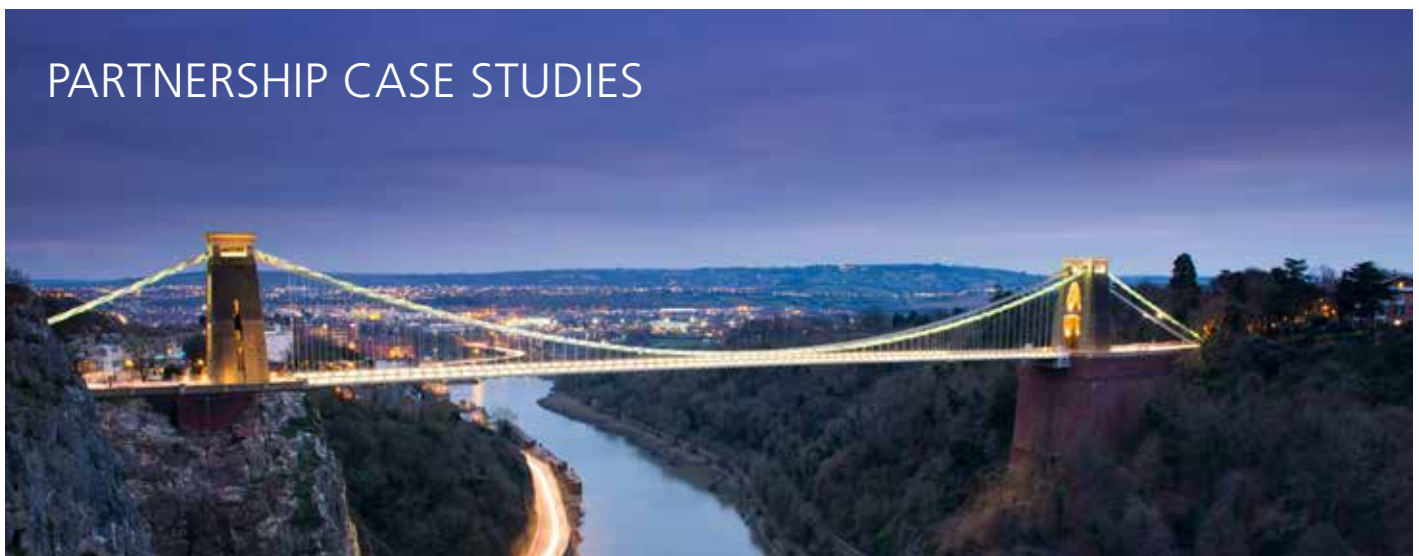
To direct our responsible business approach and galvanise action with our people and through our collaborations we have developed five objectives that describe what we are trying to achieve – reflecting key priorities and the interconnected nature of our framework.

The table below links our objectives to our framework and the Sustainable Development Goals.

<p><b>Our objectives</b> (What we want to achieve)</p> 	<p>Enable wider engagement in wellbeing with a focus on resilience and mental health</p>	<p>Enable the progression of talent in an inclusive workplace and in the pursuit of social mobility</p>	<p>Take action for an environmentally sustainable future with positive community impacts</p>	<p>Contribute to the provision of employment opportunities that are inclusive and fair</p>	<p>Work together and with others for a greater collective impact</p>
<p><b>Framework elements</b> (The topics we address)</p> 	<p><b>Health, Safety and Wellbeing</b></p>	<p><b>Social mobility and education</b></p> <p><b>Diversity and Inclusion</b></p>	<p><b>Climate and Energy</b></p> <p><b>Consumption and Waste</b></p> <p><b>Natural Resources</b></p>	<p><b>Human Rights</b></p> <p><b>Talent and Performance</b></p> <p><b>Service Excellence</b></p>	<p><b>Ethics and Integrity</b></p> <p><b>Governance and Transparency</b></p> <p><b>Civic Contribution</b></p>
<p><b>Relevant UN Sustainable Development Goals</b></p> 		  	  	 	

# Working in partnership

We have a number of valued partnerships with community groups, industry associations and specialist interest organisations that help us to progress our responsible business activities and keep us informed of good practice.



## PARTNERSHIP CASE STUDIES

### Legal sector collaboration

Through the Bristol Law Society law firms across the city have come together to collaborate on community engagement initiatives. The aim is to promote community engagement activity in the Bristol region, promote best practice and bring various activities together to maximise the positive impact of the legal

profession. We are part of the collaboration and in 2019, this partnership was key to the success of the charity Feeding Bristol's healthy holiday programme. The aim was to feed children and young people across Bristol who might otherwise have gone hungry over the school summer holidays, when free school meals are not available.

This was one of the biggest citywide collaborations to tackle a social issue. The project was led and co-ordinated by Feeding Bristol, however, it was delivered by the collective will of 98 organisations in the city, including businesses, schools, funders and the Bristol City Council (public sector).



# Sustainable Development Goals Alliance

The Bristol SDG Alliance is a collection of organisations across civil society, charity, academic and business sectors, collaborating to facilitate engagement in the Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs). We are a key partner in the SDG Alliance working with Bristol City Council and the University of Bristol to develop research for one of the first 'Local Voluntary Reviews' to evaluate progress against the SDGs in Bristol.

We provided in-kind graphic design support for the production of the report, which was communicated to the Department for International Development and the United Nations.



## Sustainable investment landscape

Investors are increasingly required to be more aware of environmental, social and governance (ESG) factors when considering where to invest. To help our clients in the pensions and asset management industries explore the changing regulatory requirements we brought together representatives from The Pensions Regulator, the Investment

Association and over 50 industry contacts to discuss the recent and upcoming changes regarding ESG and stewardship at our London office.

We have also produced a guidance booklet on ESG to help clients understand what this is and how it might affect them.

## PARTNERSHIP ASPIRATIONS FOR 2020

- To deliver as a member of the Business in The Community South West Advisory Board enabling tangible collective action for social good.
- To build on the initial success of the Bristol Legal Sector collaboration in terms of community impact and pro bono service.
- To support the UN Global Compact UK in its engagement with organisations on the Global Goals.

### Related UN Sustainable Development Goals



# Workplace

We aim to be an exceptional place to work. We want to ensure talented individuals thrive in our workplace by valuing diversity and inclusion and focusing on engagement. Our people are our greatest asset and it makes sense we support them in being physically, emotionally and mentally well.



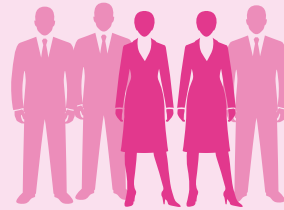
**50%**

Female directors and senior associates



**1%**

Absence through sickness



**40%**

Partner promotions female



Investors in People accreditation

Being a good employer and supporting our people is also about enabling a wider societal contribution through business, personal and community relationships.

## Diversity and inclusion

Diversity and inclusion are integral to our firm-wide strategy and something we take very seriously. Our culture is open, collaborative and inclusive, enabling us to recruit, retain and motivate the highest calibre of people from a wide range of backgrounds. It is important that all of our people feel they have equal access to opportunities and can be themselves at work. Our commitment to diversity and inclusion is reflected across all of our structures and processes, from recruitment to training and development.

In 2019 we launched our new diversity and inclusion strategy, which outlines our objectives in relation to our key priority areas of gender, ethnicity, BAME, disability, LGBT+ and social mobility. Key objectives have been agreed and the firm is working towards these. We have a designated



diversity and inclusion manager who is responsible for delivery. We work closely with our Diversity and Inclusion Group and various diversity networks externally. We are a founder signatory of the Equality Charter, which is working to improve equality, diversity and inclusion.

Highlights from our diversity and inclusion programme this year have included the launch of our award winning BAME network, our sponsorship of and participation in Bristol Pride and an

International Women's Day equality event with a panel of inspirational speakers. We publish our gender pay gap report and firm wide diversity statistics in order to be transparent about our performance. Aligned with our diversity and inclusion agenda we support Stepping Up, a diversity leadership programme for future leaders in Bristol. Our Chief People Officer is on the governance board to help develop a talent pipeline that more meaningfully reflects the city's population.

## Talent and performance

As a responsible business we must ensure that our recruitment and talent processes are fair and provide equal opportunities for all. Unconscious bias is a key topic in this area. In 2019 we began a firm wide roll out of unconscious bias training, starting with our management board and partners, to help limit the role bias plays in our recruitment process. In addition to this we use RARE contextual recruitment practices which take into account data from schools and socio-economic factors to highlight promising candidates from a variety of diverse backgrounds.

Responsible business is closely intertwined with our learning and development approach. Providing quality development opportunities for our people is a priority. This is demonstrated by achieving the Investors in People Gold standard. We have clearly defined contribution frameworks for every role within our organisation and each of these contain specific responsible business objectives.

## Health, safety and wellbeing

In 2018 we launched our wellbeing strategy, which outlines a proactive approach to wellbeing across four areas: physical; mental; financial and emotional relationships. Our aim is to empower our people to prioritise wellbeing whilst also providing a working environment which incorporates wellbeing best practice.

A good example of our ongoing work in this area is our annual Wellbeing Fair. At this event our people can explore a range of experiences, stalls and presentations on topics such as nutrition, work/life balance and mental health as well as understand more about the support services they can access.

To promote physical wellbeing our people receive a free private healthcare assessment every two years and private medical cover for those who want it. In 2019 we began offering an in-house GP service for our people as well as seasonal vaccinations. Our BSocial group promotes fitness through a range of subsidised sports clubs and gym memberships.

Mental health has become a big focus area in our wellbeing agenda. In 2018 we raised £75,000 for Bristol Mind and used

“Providing quality development opportunities for our people is a priority. This is demonstrated by achieving the Investors in People Gold standard.”



this partnership to help us further develop our own approach. In 2019 we trained 12 mental health first aiders who are now available to support colleagues as required. We ran pilot sessions of a 'Wellbeing and Managing Pressure' workshop for our people and raised awareness on mental health through lunch and learn sessions, talks from external speakers and at our Annual General Meeting.

As an advocate for wellbeing we have an important role to play in our communities. We co-chair a 'Thriving at Work' task group which is working to identify best practice methods to improve mental health and wellbeing across Bristol city workplaces.

The safety of our people and guests will continue to be a priority for us. In 2019 we completed a high level audit of our Health and Safety Management System, introduced an online tool for reporting accidents and expanded our BSafe working group which coordinates safety best practice across the firm.

## People survey

All of our people are encouraged to feed back to the business through our biennial people survey. The survey measures satisfaction across key areas such as management, development opportunities, culture, communication and the provision of quality, stimulating work. The results of the survey are fed back to senior and departmental management, as well as to our people, and the findings are used to improve our processes and offerings.

### Survey results



**95%**

agree the firm has an open and inclusive culture

**97%**

would recommend a contact / friend to join the firm



## WORKPLACE CASE STUDIES



### City level action

Thrive Bristol is a 10 year programme to improve the mental health and wellbeing of people in Bristol, with a focus on those with the greatest needs. The initiative covers all ages and considers mental health in its broadest sense. It ranges from plans to improve the whole population's wellbeing to interventions for people experiencing mental illness. Our involvement in the programme has been through the Thriving at Work task group.

Patrick Robinson, one of our partners, was co-chair of the task group alongside Tom Hore, director of Bristol Mind (our previous Charity of the Year). The task group brought together over 20 different businesses from across the City to deliver a 2019 report outlining recommendations for corporate mental health approaches. A number of working groups have now been set up to implement the findings and Jamie Cameron, one of our senior associates, sits on the steering group to ensure these actions are realised.

### Mental health support



Promoting good mental health is a vital element of our wellbeing strategy. As part of this we wanted to build expertise within our people to be able to provide peer-to-peer mental health support. After an influx of offers to volunteer, twelve of our people were selected to be trained up as our first cohort of mental health first aiders (MHFAs). They completed a two day certified training course delivered by MHFA England to equip

them with the skills to spot the signs of various mental health issues, develop mental health action plans to help colleagues and – importantly – learn how to keep themselves healthy and safe whilst performing their duties. Our MHFAs are now ready to carry out this role and a communications programme is being rolled out across the firm to make our people aware of this resource and availability of support.

“It is fantastic that Burges Salmon is investing in this course and that a number of people from different areas across the firm are now qualified Mental Health First Aiders.”

**Sarah Morgan**  
People business partner





## Innovative BAME network

BCultured is the firm's BAME network, which was formed in late 2018. Whilst still in its infancy the network has had a tangible impact on the firm's approach to inclusivity and on the wider community. Much of what the group does constitutes innovative and original work for the legal industry progressing BAME initiatives in a local context. The network has held events, to raise awareness both internally and externally about diversity. It has also built connections and collaborated with other groups to maintain an intersectional approach to diversity and inclusion and has played a key role in Burges Salmon's 'working with schools' programme through mentoring, coaching and skills training.

BCultured's launch event in April 2019, entitled 'From Diversity to Inclusion', raised the group's profile and put inclusivity at the front of people's minds, receiving excellent feedback from both colleagues and clients.



Pictured from left to right: Mohammed Saddiq, Evelyn Ofori-Koree, Saida Bello, Annie Budd and Dr Tunde Okewale MBE



"The event was a huge success, the turnout was humbling and the panellists and Chair were exceptional, facilitating a really thought provoking discussion on an extremely important subject."

**Marcus Walters**  
Senior Associate and co-chair of BCultured

## WORKPLACE ASPIRATIONS FOR 2020

- To roll out unconscious bias training to all of our people
- To launch our gender balance network BBalanced
- To identify and train a population of wellbeing ambassadors and undertake a wellbeing audit

### Related UN Sustainable Development Goals



### Related UN Global Compact Principles

- Principle 3. Freedom of association and collective bargaining**
- Principle 6. Elimination of discrimination in respect of employment**

# Community

We have a long-standing commitment to being a force for good in the community and giving back to it. We believe this is the right thing to do; it also supports a positive reputation and engages our people. This also offers us opportunities to address inequalities and where we can to 'live' our own values and those of the firm.



## Social mobility and education

Our social mobility focus is predominately about providing young people from various backgrounds with a wider spectrum of opportunities than they might otherwise have access to. We want to contribute to a fairer society in which talent and hard work are rewarded whilst fulfilling our PRIME commitment (widening access to the legal sector).

We are heavily involved in the Social Mobility Business Partnership (SMBP) with our chief people officer sitting on the national Board and our head of corporate responsibility acting as the regional cluster lead. SMBP supports Year 12 students from low income backgrounds in their pursuit of a career, particularly in law and finance. Elsewhere we provide mentoring support for young people who want to attend university and we run a number of other programmes to further social mobility. In 2019 we ranked in the top 75 of UK businesses in the Social Mobility Employer Index.



Forming partnerships with schools has been a cornerstone of our responsible business activity over the years. We are in the fifth year of our partnership with a local secondary Fairfield High School, our people provide student mentoring, teacher coaching, mock interviews, careers talks and work experience. Through the charity Ablaze (which delivers programmes in schools to tackle inequality of opportunity

for your people), we provide reading and number buddies to Barton Hill Primary School enabling students to visit their buddies at our offices to see their place of work. In partnership with Envision we support an inter school competition to deliver a social action project by providing financial support, mentoring and members for the judging panel. We were delighted to run our Bright Sparks work experience



programme again this year for students aged between 14 and 18. The programme gives students insight into what it's like to work in a law firm, it also meets our PRIME commitment, with over half of the 26 students coming from less advantaged backgrounds. We offer both legal and business professional apprenticeships meaning there are accessible routes into our business without the need for a university degree.

### Civic contribution

Our people are passionate about community engagement, with a record 62% participating in volunteering activities delivering 3,754 hours of time in 2019. Our policy provides a minimum of three days paid volunteering time which they can use individually, as part of a team activity or in collaboration with our clients. Our corporate responsibility adviser works with community groups, charities and schools to identify an ongoing stream of volunteering opportunities and marries these up with the various teams and departments. Activities in 2019 ranged from renovation works, supporting homeless projects at the Wild Goose Café, taking the elderly on day trips via the charity Alive, outdoor conservation projects and helping to support Hannah More Primary School's summer fête and bonfire night.

Our pro bono support comes in three forms. We respond to ad-hoc requests from charitable organisations, we work with long-standing partners such as the Citizens Advice Bureau and we also work with one strategic partner, which in 2019 was The Bristol Music Trust (Colston Hall). In 2019 the firm provided 1,028 pro bono hours which equates to a financial donation of £276,000.

Our 2018 Charity of the Year was Bristol Mind; a mental health resource charity providing information, signposting, counselling and training services. Our people raised an amazing £75,000 for the charity through a combination of events including a comedy night, our Strictly Legal dance competition and donating last hour's earnings. Our partners fund The Burges Salmon Charitable Trust, which raised £54,000 in 2019. One of the main beneficiaries is the Quartet Community

“Our people are passionate about community engagement, with a record 62% participating in volunteering activities.”



Our Strictly Legal dance competition helped to raise £75,000 for mental health resource charity, Bristol Mind





“Activities in 2019 ranged from renovation works, supporting homeless projects at the Wild Goose Café, taking the elderly on day trips via the charity Alive, outdoor conservations projects and helping to support Hannah More Primary School’s summer fête and bonfire night.”



Foundation, which awards grants supporting hundreds of thousands of people through local frontline charities and voluntary groups. Throughout the year we have also organised numerous charitable collections for good causes.

Our main provision of in-kind support allows charitable organisations to use our meeting rooms and hospitality for meetings, events and training. In 2018-19 this donation equated to a monetary value of £64,000 with 2,656 community visitors passing through our doors.

## Human rights

We have sought to understand how we may impact human rights. Through our deeper understanding we aim to be better placed to fulfil our commitments as a responsible business, meet stakeholder expectations and to conduct ourselves with the utmost respect for others. The review was guided by the United Nations Principles on Business and Human Rights Reporting Framework. It has helped us systematically assess and evaluate our respect of human rights and identify those most salient to our firm's activities and operations. These are:

- **Right to life** (Safeguarding Health, Wellbeing and the Environment)
- **Right to privacy** (Management of Confidential and Personal Data)
- **Right to non-discrimination** (Equal Opportunities and Fair Treatment for All)
- **Right to adequate standard of living** (Living Wage, Fair Financial Transactions and Economic Contribution)
- **Right to education** (No Child Labour, Social Mobility, Training and Development)

In addition to these five we recognise the 'Right to be free from slavery and forced labour' as a priority. This right is considered specifically within our Modern Slavery Statement, which is published on our website. Our work has primarily identified enhancements for our procurement policy, supplier engagement and communication of performance.

Our lawyers help protect human rights through the pro bono access to justice work they perform. This includes donating



time and expertise with key partners such as the Citizens Advice Bureau (CAB). Our employment team in particular are heavily engaged in CAB work helping members of the public plan the best course of action in employment disputes.

## Modern slavery

We are committed to ensuring that slavery and human trafficking have no place in our business or in our supply chain. Our modern slavery statement outlines our approach to this. We have a recruitment policy, which includes eligibility to work checks for all Burges Salmon people to safeguard against human trafficking and against individuals being forced to work against their will.

Our whistleblowing policy ensures that our people know they can raise concerns

about how colleagues are being treated, or practices within our business or supply chain, without fear of reprisal. Our code of business conduct and supplier code of conduct explain the manner in which we behave as an organisation and how we expect our people and suppliers to act.

In 2019 we rolled out our modern slavery eLearning module across the business and provided training workshops for colleagues whose roles are procurement or labour related.

Burges Salmon is an accredited Living Wage Employer as we believe everyone is entitled to a fair wage. We produce a regular gender pay gap report, which we voluntarily publish for transparency to help the business close the gap.

## COMMUNITY CASE STUDIES

### Social mobility recognition

The top 75 UK employers that have taken the most action to improve social mobility in the workplace were announced in 2019, in what is believed to be the world's first Social Mobility Employer Index.

Employers are assessed on everything from the work they do with young people and apprentices, through to their recruitment and selection processes and how people from lower income backgrounds progress up the career ladder within their

organisations. Burges Salmon was ranked 63 in the Index for the commendable work it has undertaken to enable those from lower socio-economic backgrounds to succeed. Measures put in place by the firm to improve social mobility include working with young people from disadvantaged backgrounds, the provision of apprenticeship opportunities, contextual recruitment practices and a strong focus on an inclusive workplace.



### Access to justice



Bristol Law Centre (BLC) and the Citizen's Advice Bureau (CAB) help thousands of people a year to keep their jobs, homes, income and independence. The advice and representation they offer is completely free to people who would otherwise not have access to justice to challenge unfair decisions and treatment. Lawyers from our employment team regularly donate time to support employment law clinics for

members of the public at both BLC and CAB. They provide advice and guidance to help decide what the best course of action is regarding potential employment disputes and what other options might be available to them in order to avoid the cost and time of litigation. We provide pro bono advice to the Bristol Law Centre itself as well as funding and training for a new trainee employed by BLC.

### Building employment skills



Envision is a charity which supports disadvantaged young people in developing their employability skills through social action projects. With a partnership dating back to 2014 our people have mentored hundreds of young people at schools such

as City Academy and Fairfield High in Bristol – where 40% of students qualify for free school meals. Our people work with students to develop confidence, teamwork and resilience skills, all of which are vital for the world of work. Projects

have tackled mental health, homelessness and body confidence. Students have had the opportunity to visit our offices and learn about the world of work. A young person who has four or more meaningful encounters with an employer is 86% less likely to end up unemployed or not in education or training – so partnerships with organisations like Envision can have a very tangible impact.



## Collaborating against modern slavery

UNSEEN is a charity that works to combat modern slavery and human trafficking. It has a number of safe houses for the survivors of modern slavery, provides practical and emotional support to victims and works with business to raise awareness of the issues.

In 2019 we supported UNSEEN with in-kind support through the use of our facilities. This included hosting its 10th anniversary event attended by over 100 people, providing funding development advice through our Associate Development Programme and by running an Easter chick donation event. We connected UNSEEN with some of our educational contacts as they run a 'Spotlight' programme to alert young people to the dangers of exploitation in connection with drugs and sexual activity.



Images supplied by Unseen



"Burgess Salmon has been an incredible partner to Unseen. We would like to take the opportunity to thank the whole team who have been very supportive and are making fantastic inroads into raising awareness of modern slavery and how we can work together to prevent it."

**Kate Garbers**  
Founder and managing director, UNSEEN

## COMMUNITY ASPIRATIONS FOR 2020

- To achieve 65% employee volunteering
- To deliver a series of fundraising events on our new 'no child goes hungry' charitable theme
- To deliver new work on the curriculum with our partner school Fairfield High

### Related UN Sustainable Development Goals



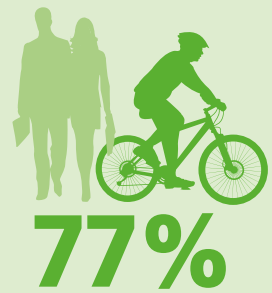
### Related UN Global Compact Principles

- Principle 1. Respect human rights**
- Principle 2. Not complicit in human rights abuse**
- Principle 4. No forced or compulsory labour**
- Principle 5. Abolition of child labour**



# Environment

Our aim is to minimise our environmental impact. We recognise humanity is dependent on the natural world and we must all play our part in moving towards environmental sustainability. This is not just about business, it is about our collective future.



**Green commuting rate for our people**



**Reduction in plastics usage (2019 vs 2018)**



**Reduction in carbon emissions (2019 vs 2018)**



**Reduction in hospitality food waste (2019 vs 2018)**

We aim for continuous improvement in the way that we manage resources and the environment. To facilitate this we have an Environment Committee representing senior management and operational functions. This group set clear environmental objectives towards 2023 and each year we have a specific environmental focus. The 2019 focus was waste and 2020 is set to be travel. To ensure there is rigour behind our approach we hold the ISO 14001 Environmental Management Standard and were successfully reaccredited in 2019.

A key aspect of tackling the environmental challenge is raising awareness of the issues and solutions. Our grassroots BSustainable employee forum, put together a calendar of events each year to do just this. Green Week, monthly email tips, a sustainable Christmas fayre and a talk demystifying the climate emergency are just some of the examples of the excellent work undertaken by BSustainable in 2019.



## Climate and energy

All of our offices are BREEAM Excellent buildings. Our Bristol office features dock water building cooling, rainwater harvesting, efficient lighting control and as of 2019 now runs on 100% renewable electricity.

Since 2016 we have achieved a year on year

reduction in our carbon footprint, despite the growth of the firm and the opening of the Edinburgh office. Our 2019 carbon emissions were 769 tonnes, down 54% from the previous year. We are committed to reducing emissions further, however as some emissions are unavoidable we are taking steps to offset these.

One way we can improve our performance is through collaboration. Burges Salmon is one of the founding members of the Legal Sustainability Alliance (LSA), a movement of law firms committed to working together to improve the environmental performance of the industry. Through this organisation we share best practice and commit to reporting our industry carbon footprint annually and sit on their leadership group.

Travel currently makes up around one sixth of our carbon footprint. In 2019 we launched a new video conferencing tool to minimise unnecessary travel across the business. In the first six months of operation thousands of miles of travel were saved. A travel campaign is planned for 2020 to further reduce our impact.

Through the client work we deliver we have become industry leading experts in fields such as electric vehicles, renewable energy and nuclear. We utilise this knowledge to innovate and help drive forward these rapidly developing industries to collectively deliver a more sustainable future.

### Consumption and waste

Our 2019 environmental focus was on waste and our people have risen to the challenge. A campaign saw the firm adopt reusable coffee cups, with paper cup usage reducing from 45% to 0% in just a few months. We have worked closely with our facilities team and suppliers to reduce our overall plastic usage by 41% and have achieved a 39% reduction in hospitality food waste in partnership with BaxterStorey our catering provider. At a city level we are supporters of Bristol's food sustainability ambitions and have been recognised as a Going for Gold champion.

### Natural resources

In 2019 our paper usage remained steady at around eight million sheets per annum. We are encouraging a reduction in paper use through a phased removal of personal bins in offices and provision of laptops with touch screen pens. Disappointingly our water usage increased by around 14%

“We aim for continuous improvement in the way that we manage resources and the environment.”



Volunteering at Avon Wildlife Trust



in 2019 and we are currently investigating the cause of this in order to develop a mitigation plan. Anecdotal evidence suggests this may be a knock on effect of our successful plastic waste reduction programme, where our people are now washing their reusable coffee cups rather than using disposables.

Our impact on biodiversity is through partnerships with local wildlife organisations. Working with Avon Wildlife Trust and Bristol Zoological Society we are involved in sponsorship and community activities to improve access to and education about nature.



Green Week initiative

We have contributed to the work of a range of environmentally focused organisations this year such as Bristol Green Capital and have hosted key events such as the Festival of Sustainable Business.



## ENVIRONMENT CASE STUDIES



### Expertise in renewables

The renewable energy sector will play a crucial role in helping the government achieve the UK's target of net zero carbon emissions by 2050. Our environment and energy teams have been working closely with the sector to ensure the finance, funding and deals required to make this happen. In 2019 a cross-firm team advised Statkraft in its acquisition of a UK onshore wind developer, moving them a step closer to their target of generating 600MW of wind and solar in the UK by 2025.

Elsewhere we advised Reactive Technologies on a deal with National Grid ESO, to supply a technology that will help manage the increase of renewable power coming into the national grid. These are just two examples of where our sector expertise is helping the UK transition to a net zero carbon future.

In 2019 Burges Salmon advised BayWa.r.e., a leading renewable energy developer, on a long term agreement to provide Tesco with renewable energy from their new wind farm site in Inverclyde, Scotland.

“We chose [Burges Salmon] for their track record in corporate Power Purchase Agreements and the Energy team’s in-depth knowledge of the UK market.”

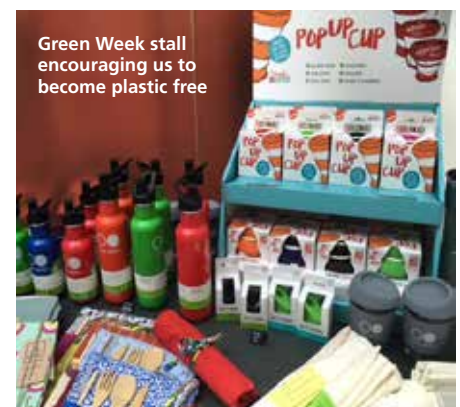
**Gordon MacDougall**  
Managing Director,  
BayWa r.e. UK Limited



### Green Week

Our people sustainability network BSustainable promotes environmental good practice with a focus on what our people can do at work as well as at home. For the past ten years we have held an annual Green Week with a programme of talks, events and activities around environmental issues and 2019 saw us focus on a key theme for each day. 'Meat Free Monday' was combined with a talk on the firm's environmental plans, 'Better Travel Tuesday' saw free bike maintenance

sessions and free breakfasts for green commuters, 'Waste not Wednesday' included a drive to remove office bins, 'Thoughtful-provoking Thursday' featured a talk on the impacts of single-use plastics and on 'Farming Friday' our local charity partner, Chew Valley Farm, visited the Bristol office. This annual focus is one of the ways in which we foster a culture of environmental awareness and respect amongst our people.



## Small cup, big impact

It was estimated that up to 40,000 disposable coffee cups were being used by our people each year. It's a reflection of a wider societal problem where 2.5 billion cups are being thrown away in the UK annually. The plastic lining that keeps cups waterproof is not reusable so they cannot be recycled with normal cardboard waste. Our environment committee launched a campaign to tackle the issue and encouraged our people to adopt reusable cups, with the firm providing a variety of options.

The results have been outstanding – with sales of drinks in reusable cups increasing from 45% to 100%. The scheme has worked so well that our hospitality provider, BaxterStorey, are using Burges Salmon as a case study to share the good practice with other businesses.



## Digital technology reducing miles

As a skills based business face-to-face time is critical for clients, however, it is important to consider travel to determine how we can minimise our environmental footprint whilst not compromising the client experience. Our IT team took up this challenge and in 2019 they delivered a powerful new video conferencing system

for the business. This allows our people to easily add video conferencing facilities into a standard Outlook meeting invitation.

Dedicated video conferencing rooms were set up in all three of our office locations and a mobile video conferencing pack was created for use by employees without laptop or webcam access. In the first

six months of use the software has saved thousands of miles of travel. One third of our people have become regular users of the technology and the Environmental Committee is planning a sustainable travel focus in 2020 to ensure further adoption.

## ENVIRONMENT ASPIRATIONS FOR 2020

- To achieve re-accreditation to ISO 14001 and close out 100% of improvement actions
- To analyse business travel and consider how to reduce its impact
- To identify a suitable forestry partner to achieve net zero carbon through renewables, energy efficiency and offsetting for the firm offsetting partnership

### Related UN Sustainable Development Goals



### Related UN Global Compact Principles

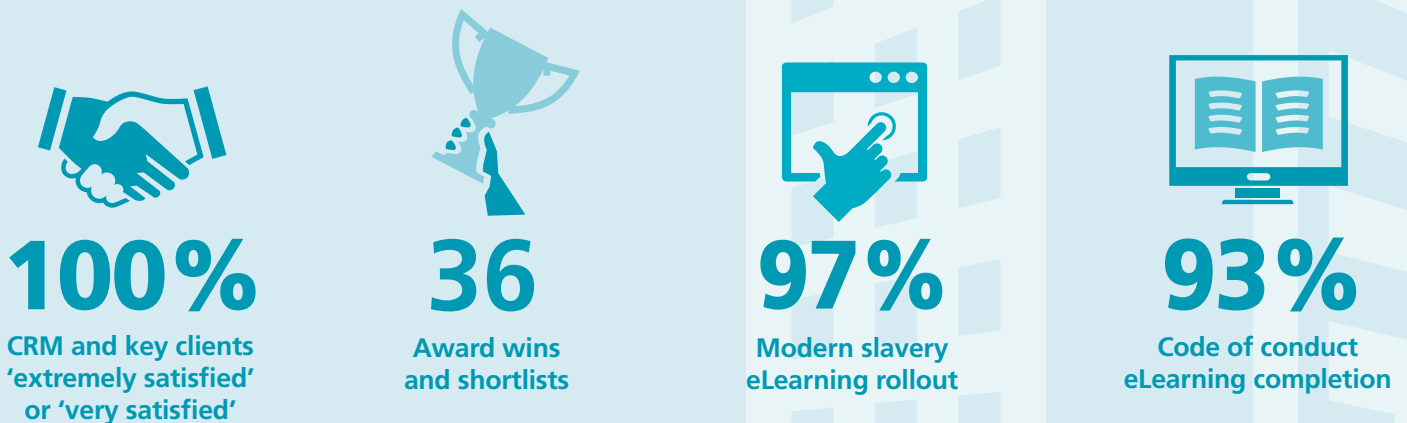
**Principle 7. Precautionary approach to environmental challenges**

**Principle 8. Promote greater environmental responsibilities**

**Principle 9. Diffusion of environmentally friendly technologies**

# Marketplace

We work to deliver sustainable and positive impact through our expertise and high standards. We focus on service excellence, integrity, governance and transparency.



## Service excellence

Excellent client service underpins all that we do. Our ISO 90001 quality standard is central to this, from client pitches to matter management and gathering feedback. We constantly work to deliver an outstanding service framed within our responsible business values. One area that demonstrates service excellence is innovative service delivery. We utilise technology and software to enhance the client experience and help solve client problems, for example through collaborative online working spaces or custom built client applications. Our innovation teams go above and beyond the client brief to deliver service excellence.

Applying reputable standards is an important way in which we can drive continuous improvement in our business. In 2019 we were successfully reaccredited to four ISO standards – environmental management, quality, business continuity,



and information management. They demonstrate the rigour we apply in these areas; both in terms of the way we manage our business and how we deliver for clients. We are extremely proud to hold

the Gold Investors in People standard, which is testament to the inclusive culture we have at Burges Salmon and our ongoing investment in the skills of our people and excellent service delivery.



When clients require advice in other jurisdictions we work with like-minded leading independent firms around the world. This is our Preferred Firm Network – a network of law firms which we have assembled over many years, who share our values and provide expert advice and excellent service in their jurisdictions. We invest considerable time and resources in developing and maintaining these relationships which enables us to provide a seamless service to our clients.

A collaborative relationship with suppliers is essential in developing a successful business. We incorporate responsible business requirements into our supplier selection process and have a supplier charter which guides how we should work together. Our annual supplier engagement events provide an opportunity for our suppliers to learn about our values and responsible business priorities from our senior management. We also run learning sessions with the most recent sessions including a briefing on modern slavery and a simulated learning exercise on business continuity.

## Ethics and integrity

It is our policy to conduct all of our business in an honest and ethical manner. We take a zero-tolerance approach to bribery and corruption and are committed to acting professionally, fairly and with integrity in all our business dealings, wherever we operate. We uphold all laws relevant to countering bribery and corruption in all the jurisdictions in which we operate and remain bound by the laws of the UK, including the Bribery Act 2010.

We have undertaken a risk assessment and have addressed the areas of risk flagged by implementing appropriate measures and in 2019 we went through a detailed process to update our corporate risk register. We have an anti-bribery and corruption policy in place and all our people are trained on the implications of the Bribery Act. All of our people are required to undertake mandatory elearning training on anti-bribery, anti-money laundering, cyber security, information security and modern

“Applying reputable standards is an important way in which we can drive continuous improvement in our business.”



slavery to ensure our business mitigates risk in these areas.

Our people are encouraged to raise concerns about any issue or suspicion of malpractice at the earliest possible stage. Our people are required to declare all hospitality or gifts accepted or offered above a specified level to our risk and best practice team. From a client perspective, we have comprehensive client ‘take on’ procedures to identify and flag any clients who may present a higher bribery or corruption risk and refer these to our risk committee for consideration.

## Governance and transparency

Having a strong governance structure and robust risk management processes helps us build a resilient business. Each of our governance bodies has a well-defined role which is communicated across the business, allowing us to effectively work together towards our strategic aims whilst also identifying and mitigating risks. Our partnership committee is the highest governing body and provides clear direction for the business through its three year strategy cycle. Performance against the strategy is communicated via a series of annual strategy briefings for our people, our firm-wide annual



general meeting and regular update emails from our managing and senior partners. Our risk team is headed up by our general counsel and consists of experts in best practice, regulation, anti-money laundering, due diligence, audit, data protection and information security all working together to protect our clients and our business. As a business we are regulated by the Solicitors Regulatory Authority (SRA), the Scottish Law Society and the Law Society of Northern Ireland. We work to ensure their ethical and professional standards are met by our business and by our people at all times.

## MARKETPLACE CASE STUDIES



### Giving back together

Joint volunteering allows us to support our local communities whilst building closer relationships with our clients. Our banking team and client, HSBC, recently engaged in a organic ecological food project run by a local wildlife trust. The six acre site is full of thriving wildlife and is used for wellbeing activities, conservation and a food growing programme for individuals who would otherwise struggle to afford fresh produce.

Our volunteers undertook a wide range of activities from weaving wooden trellises, laying woodchip paths and weeding the community gardens. They were rewarded with a nutritious lunch and fresh produce to take home. The day was a great success and concluded with a mindfulness session to reflect on the experiences gained.

### Zero emission vehicles

The need to rapidly reduce harmful emissions from transportation is becoming increasingly clear. With over 280,000 taxis and private hire vehicles in England alone, taxis can help pave the way to a cleaner transport mix in the UK. With this in mind Burges Salmon's Energy and Infrastructure team advised Octopus Group on a Shari'ah-compliant financing product that funds zero and ultra-low emission taxis for drivers.

Working with Octopus, the firm's Banking and Energy specialists structured and documented the innovative finance product. Offering a 'pay as you drive' payment structure, the product moves away from traditional vehicle finance options, such as hire purchase or leasing, and by also making it Shari'ah compliant, finance is available to a broad base of potential customers. Key to the finance package is its availability only towards 'green' energy vehicles and in bringing the product to market, Octopus partnered with the London Electric Vehicle Company (LEVC), enabling finance only for zero-emissions capable vehicles.

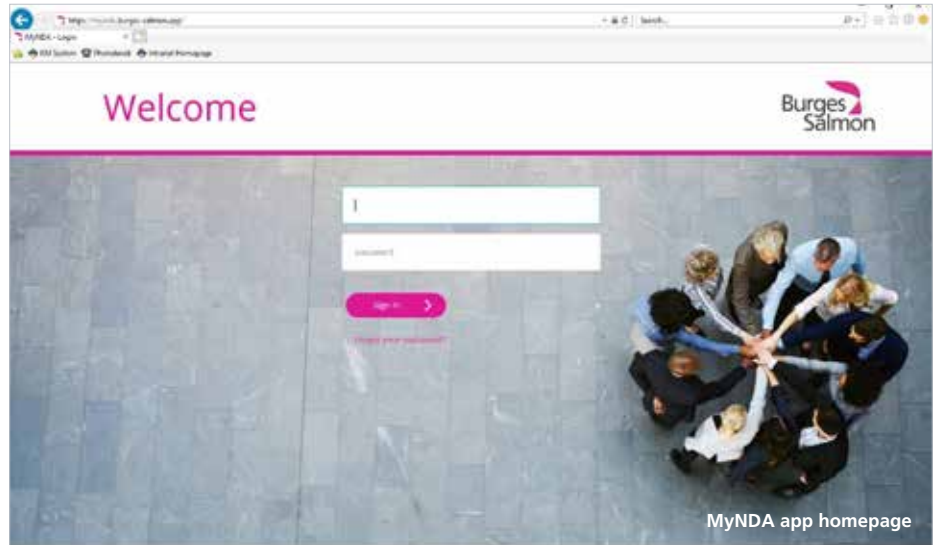




## Streamlining client processes with tech

Our business solutions team are utilising the latest technologies to solve client problems quickly and effectively. A good example is our client, FirstGroup, who approached us with a problem they had in creating and managing non-disclosure agreements with their suppliers and third parties. To solve the problem we held an initial workshop with the senior legal team to map out and streamline the existing manual process. Together we explored the idea of developing a web application where an employee with no legal knowledge could answer an intelligent questionnaire to determine what type of NDA they needed, look up accurate company information and generate the first draft quickly. We agreed with FirstGroup what the initial version of this product would look like and our innovation team delivered an app named MyNDA. Feedback processes were built into the app and our commercial lawyers drafted the terms and conditions and advised on other legal aspects.

The app was delivered to the client in three months and within just four weeks of its launch FirstGroup had already used MyNDA to successfully create over 100 NDAs with ease.



“Working with Burges Salmon’s business solutions team was a refreshing experience. They took the time to understand our current challenges and we worked together to develop a practical, appropriate technology solution delivered in a remarkably fast time-frame.”

**Christy Baker**  
UK Legal Director, First Group



## MARKETPLACE ASPIRATIONS FOR 2020

- To review our supplier audit process and engage our suppliers on the issue of Modern Slavery as part of a Supplier Engagement Day
- To further advance the firm’s cyber security in terms of understanding and awareness of our people and the application of technology
- To progress the roll out of our enhanced client feedback programme in respect of pitches, existing clients and post matter reviews

### Related UN Sustainable Development Goals



### Related UN Global Compact Principles





**Principle 10. Work against corruption and bribery**



## APPENDIX

# Our key performance indicators

We have identified key performance indicators to measure our progress against each of the areas of our responsible business framework. Figures are collected throughout the year and collated annually. This assists us in continuous improvement, objective setting and targets.

Framework Area	Key performance indicator	2019 performance
<b>ENVIRONMENT</b> 	Electricity use (KwH)	2,734,452
	Gas use (m <sup>3</sup> )	115,166
	Business travel emissions (tCO <sub>2</sub> )	336
	Total CO <sub>2</sub> emissions (tCO <sub>2</sub> )	790
	Green commuting (% of employees)	77
	Water use (m <sup>3</sup> )	11,289
	Paper use (sheets)	8,493,739
	Plastics usage (items)	103,417
	Hospitality waste (kg)	1,141
<b>MARKETPLACE</b> 	ISO standards (number)	4
	Awards shortlisted or won (number)	36
	Percentage of key clients either 'extremely satisfied' or 'very satisfied' (%)	100
	Code of conduct elearning completion rate (%)	93%
	Modern slavery elearning completion rate (% in first six months)	56%
<b>COMMUNITY</b> 	Volunteering (% of total workforce)	62
	Hours volunteered (hours)	3754
	Pro bono hours (hours)	1028
	Community investment against operating profit (%)	2.18
	Total charitable giving (includes Burges Salmon Charitable Trust, financial equivalents for pro bono volunteering and in-kind, other charitable donations and cost of FTE dedicated head) (£)	699,000
	Student beneficiaries (number)	963
	Charity and educational trusteeships (number)	374
<b>WORKPLACE</b> 	Female partners promotions (% of total promotions)	40
	Female directors and senior associates (% of total workforce)	50
	Absence through sickness (% of working hours)	1
	Percentage of our people who would recommend the firm to a contact (%)	97
ALL	Number of employees	833

# Stakeholders

The following table captures our key stakeholder audiences and the different mechanisms we use to engage with them.

Stakeholder group	Engagement mechanisms	
<b>Clients</b>	Pitch meetings Client review meetings Client Space	Client events Client relationship communications
<b>Our people</b>	People engagement survey Team days Annual general meeting Personal reviews Wharfside (internal newsletter) Intranet People briefings	Internal networks People team BProud (LGBT+ group) BCultured (BAME group) BEnabled (Disability group) BSocial
<b>Suppliers</b>	Supplier review meetings Supplier engagement workshop	Supplier questionnaires Procurement team
<b>Community groups and representatives</b>	Partnership review meetings Event hosting Networking and event forums Volunteering Trusteeships	Corporate memberships CR team Community engagement BEngaged (community group) CR partners
<b>Environmental groups and representatives</b>	Legal Sustainability Alliance Partnership review meetings Networking and event forums	Facilities management BSustainable (sustainability group)
<b>Legal sector bodies and competitors</b>	Law Societies International Bar Association Collaboration meetings	Networking and event forums Legal sector media channels
<b>Preferred firms network</b>	Annual review Relationship meetings	Conference interactions International Bar Association
<b>Regulators and governance bodies</b>	Solicitors Regulation Authority	External audits and close out meetings
<b>Business community</b>	Business events Networking forums	Corporate memberships

Our engagement activities inform our operational decisions and strategic direction. To build upon our current engagement approach we have developed a programme to gain feedback on our

responsible business. We identified priority stakeholders to consult through a stakeholder mapping exercise with Business in the Community and verified this with key internal representatives. A series of

stakeholder interviews and consultations will run throughout 2020 to ensure our responsible business framework remains relevant and impactful.

# Regular updates

For regular updates on our responsible business activities follow us **@BurgessalmonCR** 





“2019 has been a tremendous year for delivery on our responsible business agenda. The thing that really strikes me at Burges Salmon is how everyone gets involved to make a difference and delivers across the board. Participation is strongly encouraged and enabled by our senior leaders, which makes a huge difference.

Next year we have ambitious objectives for net zero carbon, mental health, social mobility, inclusivity and collaboration. We and our stakeholders have high expectations and we’ll do all that we can to achieve a fairer, greener and prosperous future.”



**Kirsty Green-Mann**  
Head of corporate responsibility  
Burges Salmon



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We welcome comments and feedback on our Responsible Business Report, please contact a member of the Corporate Responsibility Team or email us at [corporate.resp@burges-salmon.com](mailto:corporate.resp@burges-salmon.com)

[www.burges-salmon.com/about-us/responsible-business](http://www.burges-salmon.com/about-us/responsible-business)

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