

Responsible business report

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Freshfields Bruckhaus Deringer

Welcome to our responsible business report

This report offers an insight into the recent progress we have made towards our responsible business ambitions, our ongoing priorities and our areas of future focus.

In the pages that follow, we provide a snapshot of the initiatives that have driven positive change during FY23/24 and publish data on our performance and progress.

INTRODUCTION

At Freshfields, our commitment to being a responsible business is ingrained in our purpose and core values, shaping the firm we aspire to be. It is an integral part of our identity and operations – it has been for many years and was one of the things that first attracted me to the firm.

As a large global business, we have an opportunity and responsibility to drive positive change. It is something that the partnership and our colleagues care a great deal about and we take it very seriously. With change a constant in the world around us, it is more important than ever that we sharpen our focus and evolve our efforts, including providing access to justice and opportunity, further reducing our carbon footprint, giving back to local communities and enhancing our inclusive culture.

This report highlights a small selection of the recent projects that our teams have worked on across the globe. Many are new but we are also seeing the increasing impact of ongoing, maturing projects and relationships. In 2023, our Global Sponsorship Programme saw previous sponsored participants become sponsors for the first time. We marked 11 years of two of our flagship programmes – our Freshfields Stephen Lawrence Scholarship Scheme and Legal Outreach – and our work for pro bono clients and on environmental initiatives continues to mature and evolve. Each of our focus areas creates an opportunity for people across our firm, regardless of their skill set, to play a role in a programme or project they're particularly passionate about and where their skills can benefit others.

Connection and collaboration are vital to the difference we make for our clients, our people and our communities. Our holistic approach to wellbeing draws on the power of colleagues looking out for one another and fostering an inclusive culture of high performance and innovation. We continue to build understanding and engagement through our training programmes, awareness-raising (see examples relating to LGBTQ+ inclusion and neurodiversity later in this report), colleague engagement forums and D&I networks, and through engagement with our supply chains.

I continue to do pro bono work while Senior Partner and participate in a number of responsible business initiatives across the firm. It is something that fuels my sense of purpose and, most importantly, helps to drive meaningful progress.

The number of candidates inquiring about our work in this area during interviews continues to grow. We are attracting people who are as motivated by it as we are, giving confidence in the sustainability of our programme now and for many years to come. And that is particularly important, because our work in this field is not done. Together we remain committed to shaping a better, more sustainable future – for our clients, our people and the communities in which we live and work.



Georgia Dawson

Senior Partner

September 2024



Together we remain committed to shaping a better, more sustainable future – for our clients, our people and the communities in which we live and work.

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Our firm



ABOUT FRESHFIELDS

We are a global law firm with a long track record of successfully advising the world's leading national and multinational corporations and financial institutions on ground-breaking and business-critical challenges.

As a people business, we combine the knowledge, experience and energy of more than 5,700 people across 30 offices, to create opportunity and solve the world's most complex legal challenges.

To align with our clients' fast-evolving needs and expectations, we are building on our strengths, including ongoing investments into talent and technology, as well as expanding our capabilities in our core markets.

Leveraging our collegiality and our culture of continuous improvement, we are not just responding to the change around us, but proactively building the firm of the future.

Our purpose, values and behaviours

For us, our purpose – empowering tomorrow – means creating a better future for our clients, our people and the communities in which we live and work. Our commitment to being a responsible business is an integral part of this, informing our core business strategies, our client service and the experience of those working with and alongside us. It encompasses all the areas covered in this report and more. All colleagues from all regions and in all roles play a part.

Each year, we monitor our progress and take action to seek to improve everyone's experience at our firm. Our annual purpose, culture and people experience survey helps us to understand how our purpose, values and Being Freshfields principles are lived across the business, as well as how people are experiencing the different elements of our people proposition. The results identify areas where we are making progress as well as areas where we can improve. They help us to prioritise our efforts and inform firmwide, as well as local, action plans to drive positive change in each of our offices. Our last purpose, culture and people experience survey was run globally in March 2024.

Our purpose

Empowering tomorrow

We enable our clients to succeed by navigating their most complex legal challenges and creating opportunity where others see barriers. We seek to create a better future for our clients, our people and the communities in which we live and work

Our values

Embracing challenge
Promoting collaboration
Redefining excellence

Our Being Freshfields principles

We show respect to everyone
We are there for one another
We are open with each other
We are positive role models

5,700+

people at the firm
across 30 offices

2,800+

lawyers

101

nationalities

75

languages spoken

80%

of our people agree
or strongly agree
we are living our
firm values*

76%

of our people agree
or strongly agree we
are living our
Being Freshfields
principles*

* Data collected as part of our latest annual purpose, culture and people experience survey, March 2024.

UNITED NATIONS GLOBAL COMPACT AND SUSTAINABLE DEVELOPMENT GOALS

Freshfields was the first international law firm to become a signatory to the United Nations Global Compact (UNGC), which provides a universal language for corporate responsibility and a framework to advance societal goals.

We support the 10 principles of the UNGC and the 17 United Nations Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs).

Within our sphere of influence and in our role as professional advisors, we are committed to helping accelerate corporate sustainability and responsible business practice and to embedding the UNGC principles – across human rights, labour rights, the environment and anti-corruption – into our work and operations. Our latest UNGC Communication on Progress can be accessed [here](#).

We have mapped our objectives against the 17 UN SDGs that aim to end poverty, protect the planet and ensure peace and prosperity for all. As a leading international law firm, we have a responsibility and an opportunity to contribute to the UN SDGs and to support our clients and suppliers in doing the same. We focus on the SDGs where we believe we can have the greatest impact.



Our contribution to the SDGs

The SDGs below are those to which we believe we can make the most meaningful difference, driving impactful change in targeted areas.



Promote peaceful and inclusive societies for sustainable development, provide access to justice for all and build effective, accountable and inclusive institutions at all levels.

We provide pro bono legal services to a wide range of clients, from individual asylum seekers to some of the world's biggest charities. We aim to maximise our impact on access to justice and opportunity through our deep pro bono client relationships and by proactively supporting our pro bono clients in addressing systemic issues.

Key targets
16.2; 16.3; 16.6; 16.7; 16.8; 16.10.

Examples of our projects/initiatives
Access to justice and pro bono (pages 17 to 21), the Rule 39 Initiative, Save the Children, UK third party interventions practice.



Promote sustained, inclusive and sustainable economic growth, full and productive employment and decent work for all.

We are committed to combatting modern slavery in all its forms. Anti-trafficking work is a key focus of our pro bono practice and, through our strong relationships with frontline legal services, we focus on systemic work that aims to improve outcomes more broadly. We have also developed a set of operational policies and tools to combat modern slavery, including our Global Procurement Policy, our Responsible Business Procurement Guidelines and Operating Principles and our global business & human rights and modern slavery toolkits.

Key targets
8.5; 8.7; 8.8.

Examples of our projects/initiatives
Access to justice and pro bono (pages 17 to 21), ECPAT UK; MSIN; Transparency in supply chains statement; Responsible procurement (pages 49 to 51).



Ensure inclusive and equitable quality education and promote lifelong learning opportunities for all.

Freshfields' community impact programmes focus on access to opportunity, with an emphasis on social mobility, racial equity and access to the legal profession. We also support educational opportunities and access for disadvantaged and underrepresented groups, such as refugees, women and minorities, through our pro bono and community work.

Key targets
4.1; 4.3; 4.4; 4.5; 4.6; 4.7.

Examples of our projects/initiatives
Pro bono and community (pages 16 to 28), EEF; SIBs and DIBs; Freshfields Stephen Lawrence Scholarship Scheme; Aspiring Professionals Programme; Legal Outreach; OneSky.



End poverty in all its forms everywhere.

We support initiatives that aim to reduce poverty and inequality around the world through our pro bono and community work. We aim to harness our specialist skills to bring about systemic, measurable public benefits.

Key targets
1.1; 1.2; 1.3; 1.4.

Examples of our projects/initiatives
Pro bono and community (pages 16 to 28), Save the Children; Z2K; SIBs and DIBs.



Reduce inequality within and among countries.

We have a global diversity and inclusion strategy that aims to create a culture where all colleagues can belong, engage and excel, regardless of their background or identity. We have six global focus areas, including LGBTQ+ and disability inclusion, where we proactively take steps to ensure equality of opportunity across our global teams. Our pro bono work focuses on promoting access to the rights of our pro bono target groups, which include women, children, LGBTQ+ people, trafficking survivors and refugees.

Key targets
10.2.

Examples of our projects/initiatives
Diversity, inclusion and wellbeing (pages 34 to 40), Freshfields Global Sponsorship Programme; EDGE commitment; BAN network; Stonewall.



Achieve gender equality and empower all women and girls.

We are committed to advancing gender equality at Freshfields. Our targeted initiatives, impactful external partnerships and engaged employee networks help us to build on our inclusive culture and support gender equality and empowerment in the broader community.

Key targets
5.1; 5.5.

Examples of our projects/initiatives
Diversity, inclusion and wellbeing (pages 34 to 40), Freshfields Global Sponsorship Programme; EDGE commitment.



Take urgent action to combat climate change and its impacts.

We aim to demonstrate leading environmental practices as a firm. Our operational priorities include reducing business-related carbon emissions in line with science-based targets; embedding sustainability through our procurement practices, office behaviours, smart travel, catering and focus on waste; transitioning to a modern office network; and maintaining our carbon-neutral status through the purchase of offsets on our way to net-zero and beyond. In tandem, we actively support climate transitions among our clients, assisting with their most demanding regulatory, transactional and stakeholder challenges.

Key targets
13.2; 13.3.

Examples of our projects/initiatives
Environment (pages 41 to 48), REAP; Energy Transition Earthshot.

FRESHFIELDS CLIENT SUSTAINABILITY PRACTICE

As a large global business, our purpose reflects our opportunity and responsibility to drive positive change.

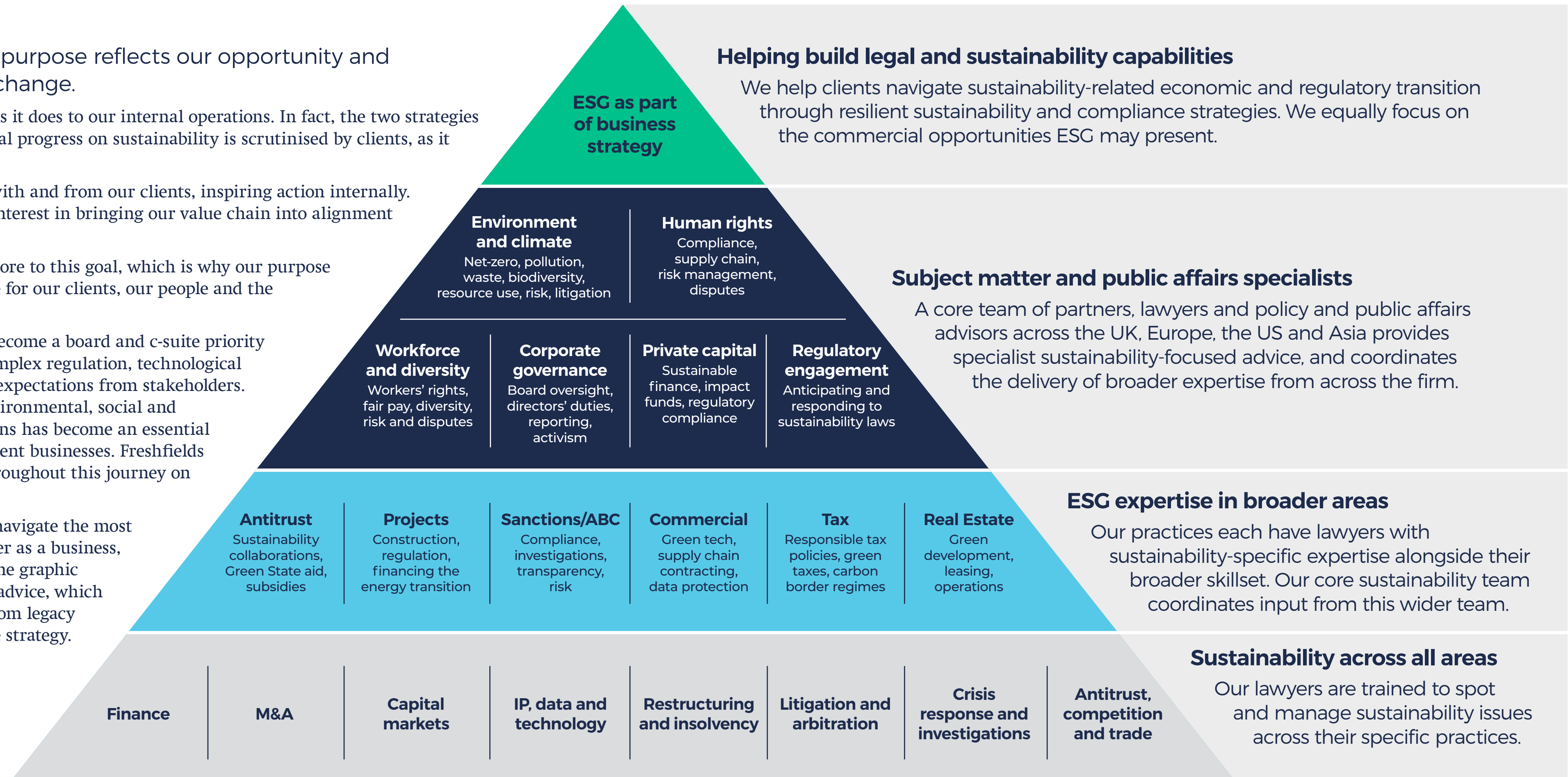
This applies as much to our client work as it does to our internal operations. In fact, the two strategies are necessarily intertwined as our internal progress on sustainability is scrutinised by clients, as it is by our people.

Similarly, we learn about sustainability with and from our clients, inspiring action internally. And, like our clients, we have a mutual interest in bringing our value chain into alignment with sustainability.

We believe that excellent legal advice is core to this goal, which is why our purpose includes the aim to create a better future for our clients, our people and the communities in which we live and work.

Over the last decade, sustainability has become a board and c-suite priority for our clients, driven by increasingly complex regulation, technological innovation, activist influence and rising expectations from stakeholders. Understanding the legal landscape of environmental, social and governance (ESG) issues across jurisdictions has become an essential tool for companies wishing to build resilient businesses. Freshfields is committed to supporting its clients throughout this journey on a truly global scale.

Our sustainability practice helps clients navigate the most significant legal ESG issues they encounter as a business, seizing the opportunities of transition. The graphic shows the areas typically covered in our advice, which spans every stage of the business cycle from legacy risks, to day-to-day operations and future strategy.



FRESHFIELDS CLIENT SUSTAINABILITY PRACTICE

Our sustainability team

Our multi-jurisdictional sustainability team is growing rapidly, integrating expertise across practice groups, from disputes to transactions; regulation to antitrust; tax to people and reward. At the heart of this capability is our Global Sustainability Leadership Group of partners and firm leaders and our establishment of in-depth, firmwide training for lawyers throughout the firm.

The aim is to ensure every team member working on a matter has a strong facility for sustainability issues, accessing dedicated specialists as required. We are privileged to advise clients across every sector on their ESG issues and ambitions, and are working to further integrate sustainability considerations into our client engagement and onboarding process.

The Freshfields sustainability team was formalised in 2018 with the appointment of [Timothy Wilkins](#) as Global Partner for Client Sustainability – Freshfields was a trailblazer among the large corporate firms in appointing a dedicated partner to oversee the firm’s strategy on client sustainability on a global basis. The team has continued to grow throughout the intervening years in response to client need, in both volume and complexity. Many of our lawyers now dedicate their practices to the area and 2022 saw the appointment of [Dr Jake Reynolds](#) as our new Head of Client Sustainability and Environment. Previously an Executive Director of the University of Cambridge’s Institute for Sustainability Leadership, Jake’s appointment adds a unique academic and consultative expertise to the firm’s sustainability offering.

Partnerships and commitments

Aware of the critical role played by the legal industry in supporting the journey towards global sustainability, we have made a number of commitments and participate in collaborations to advance respect for human rights and environmental practices in commercial legal practice. A selection of these is set out below:



Freshfields is proud to have acted as one of the founders of the Business and Human Rights Law Association.



In January 2021, Freshfields signed the ‘Green Pledge’, an initiative led by the Campaign for Greener Arbitrations (CGA) consisting of eight principles to minimise the carbon footprint and wider environmental impact of arbitration mandates. Freshfields colleagues chair the CGA’s steering committees for North America and Africa. In July 2021, we won the [inaugural Green Arbitration Award](#) in recognition of our commitment to carbon reduction and offsetting.



We are also a signatory to the [Greener Litigation Pledge \(GLP\)](#), focusing on minimising printed documents and travel in litigation mandates. Freshfields colleagues sit on the GLP Steering Committee and co-drafted the Greener Litigation Toolkit this year (see box to the right for more information). We have set up internal taskforces to drive progress on both the CGA and GLP pledges.



Freshfields is a signatory to the [Equal Representation in Arbitration \(ERA\) Pledge](#) and [Equal Representation for Expert Witnesses \(EREW\) Pledge](#), by which a cross-section of the international arbitration community (including arbitral institutions, law firms and corporates) has committed to improve the profile and representation of women in international arbitration and to increase the number of female arbitrators on an equal opportunity basis, to seek to achieve a fair representation of women. [Sylvia Noury KC](#), a partner in our London office, founded the pledge and co-chairs its steering committee.



A new Greener Litigation Toolkit

In 2024, Freshfields colleagues sitting on the Greener Litigation Pledge (GLP) Steering Committee were instrumental in helping to draft the GLP’s new **Greener Litigation Toolkit**, which:

- supports the GLP’s purpose of changing the way in which dispute resolution practitioners conduct litigation, so as to reduce the carbon footprint of court disputes
- aims to help members of the legal profession better understand the ways in which they can implement the behaviours encouraged by the GLP in their day-to-day practice at key litigation stages, from document management and travel to procurement and communication, and
- sets out illustrative examples, calculated by sustainability certification organisation Planet Mark, demonstrating the significant carbon savings that can be achieved through the adoption of sustainable practices

The toolkit is now available to all signatories of the GLP and the wider legal community, reflecting the project’s inclusive approach to fostering environmental responsibility across the sector.

FRESHFIELDS CLIENT SUSTAINABILITY PRACTICE

Thought leadership

We have hosted a number of initiatives in collaboration with industry leaders and have been recognised for our thought leadership:



An ongoing partnership with Chapter Zero, a community of UK-based non-executive directors focused on climate transition, has resulted in a series of in-person events delving into the legal implications of climate change for boards.



We maintain a close relationship with the UN Global Compact. In addition to providing a [global analysis of sustainability reporting frameworks](#) for UNGC Germany, we were proud to host the UK network's annual look-forward in February 2024.



Our work has set precedent and shaped policy. We were selected by The Generation Foundation, Principles for Responsible Investment (PRI) and UNEPFI to author '[A Legal Framework for Impact](#)', providing the first ever comprehensive analysis of how far the law permits – or even requires – institutional investors to invest for sustainability impact. The report is helping to reshape legal and regulatory systems to better facilitate the trillions of dollars of funding required to achieve global sustainable development goals.



We have partnered with the UN-founded PRI to prepare a report on the US legal issues related to large institutional investors 'acting in concert.' We also worked with the Global Infrastructure Investor Association on a policy paper outlining the crucial role private investment has to play in making the clean energy transition a reality in the EU.



Our [sustainability blog](#) provides regular articles and briefings reporting on key developments across the sustainability horizon. We provide updates on both a regional and global basis, covering all updates of note from biodiversity and greenwashing, to CCUS, trade and more.



The [Freshfields Sustainability Regulatory Horizon](#) provides an international and in-depth overview of the latest developments across the full range of sustainability issues. From industry collaboration and global trade, to green finance, supply chain issues and human rights, the tool helps readers navigate a fast-evolving landscape with increasing confidence.



Freshfields has a strong profile in M&A, and in June 2024 we published [Transformational M&A](#) to explore the potential for acquisitions, disposals and JVs to drive global decarbonisation at a faster rate in companies than incremental, organic change. The report identifies 10 key trends and assesses investment and deal flows in four major markets.



A further corporate lever for change is remuneration, and in August 2024 we published [ESG Factors in Management Remuneration](#), a market study based on current policies and reports from 100 listed companies in Germany. The study provides insights into the German legal framework and stakeholder expectations, with takeaways for supervisory boards.

FRESHFIELDS CLIENT SUSTAINABILITY PRACTICE

CASE STUDY

Support of UNGC with corporate mapping tool and sustainability survey

During FY23/24 Freshfields helped the UN Global Compact Network Germany (UN GCG) create a sustainability reporting mapping tool and supported a survey conducted on readiness for the Corporate Sustainability Reporting Directive (CSRD).

Drawing upon the expertise of our lawyers and the [Freshfields Lab](#), we created for UN GCG an intuitive, ready-to-use digital [mapping tool](#) comparing global sustainability reporting standards for the UN Global Compact (UNGC) Networks in Austria, Denmark, Finland, France, Georgia, Germany, Italy, the Netherlands, Poland, Spain, Switzerland and Liechtenstein, and the UK.

This mapping tool will be valuable to global companies with CSRD reporting obligations wanting to continue reporting under voluntary sustainability standards. The new tool maps each European Sustainability Reporting Standards (ESRS) data point against corresponding data points in other reporting standards and frameworks such as the UNGC's Communication on Progress or the Global Reporting Initiative (GRI) Standards.

Together with the UNGC, Freshfields is planning to continue to expand the mapping tool over time to cover additional sustainability reporting standards.

Sophie Bense, who led the project for the UN GCG, says: 'The fact that we can offer the tool as a digital product will increase its value and usability for our members.'

Freshfields also supported the UN GCG with conducting a [survey on CSRD-readiness](#). The survey shows that more than two thirds of German UNGC members that completed the survey have already started their CSRD-implementation process. Challenges participants of the study face include complexity, personnel shortages, availability and quality of data, and lack of clarity on reporting requirements. Our [press release](#) has more information.

CASE STUDY

A global baseline to harmonise sustainability-related financial disclosure

The [International Sustainability Standards Board \(ISSB\)](#)'s mission is to create a global baseline of sustainability-related financial disclosure, starting with climate. It was established in November 2021 at COP26 in Glasgow by the [IFRS Foundation \(IFRSF\)](#) on a demand-led basis with the support of the G7, G20, IOSCO and many others around the world.

Freshfields China Chairman and Corporate Partner [Teresa Ko](#), who is a vice-chair of IFRSF and a member of the steering committee that helped to establish the ISSB, explains: 'We have seen an explosion of sustainability-related disclosures, most of them voluntary, and companies can cherry-pick and mix and match, which could lead to serious greenwashing. There remains a need, both locally and globally, for consistency and comparability, as well as for consensus as to what is decision-useful sustainability-related information and assurance of that information.'

The ISSB aims to converge existing and emerging sustainability reporting standards, and to consolidate duplicative disclosure requirements to provide globally comparable, consistent and decision-useful information.

Exposure drafts of two ISSB standards were initially shared for consultation in March 2022. After publication of ISSB's inaugural set of two ISSB standards (S1 on general requirements and S2 on climate) in June 2023, work has begun on two research topics, namely biodiversity, ecosystem and ecosystem services and human capital, to [further strengthen the global baseline of the sustainability disclosure landscape](#).

Within Freshfields, our joined-up approach includes collaboration between Teresa Ko, Global Partner for Client Sustainability [Tim Wilkins](#), Head of Client Sustainability and Environment [Dr Jake Reynolds](#), the firm's wider Sustainability Leadership Group and colleagues across our key markets focused on advancing sustainability transition.



There remains a need, both locally and globally, for consistency and comparability, as well as for consensus as to what is decision-useful sustainability-related information and assurance of that information.

Teresa Ko
Partner



FRESHFIELDS CLIENT SUSTAINABILITY PRACTICE

CASE STUDY

Support of NZBA on governance matters

Freshfields has provided ongoing advice to the industry-led, UN-convened Net-Zero Banking Alliance (NZBA) since 2021.

NZBA brings together a global group of banks committed to aligning their lending and investment portfolios with net-zero greenhouse gas emissions by 2050. NZBA has approximately 144 member banks (representing 44 countries) dedicated to setting targets. NZBA's framework, guidance and peer learning opportunities support members in designing, setting and achieving credible science-based net-zero targets for 2030 or sooner that deliver value for their investors, clients and customers. NZBA is part of the UN Environment Programme's Finance Initiative.

In particular, our advice has related to the navigation of several complex issues, including but not limited to:

- the governance of the NZBA, both in regard to competition and corporate law (set out further below);
- providing training and updates on key competition law developments in the EU and the UK – including delivering workshops on competition law and greenwashing as part of NZBA's recent member conference; and
- multi-jurisdictional advice regarding antitrust regimes and risk mitigation.

In this instance, we supported NZBA with various aspects of its recent refresh of its Steering Group and election of a member of the Steering Group to act as Chair. NZBA's Steering Group consists of 14 member banks, having recently been increased by two to give greater representation for the APAC region, reflecting growth in the number of member banks in that region. At the same time, the Chair of the Steering Group also came up for renewal in accordance with NZBA's governance documents, with First Abu Dhabi Bank taking over from Standard Chartered.



We helped NZBA consider the potential legal implications for its members in respect of joining the Steering Group and, in particular, becoming Chair, in order to discuss these considerations with its members. This included analysing the legal treatment of an alliance such as NZBA from a company law perspective.

Freshfields advised on this mandate globally and our cross-discipline team was able to leverage our expertise across our offices, with particular involvement from the London, Washington DC and New York teams.

CASE STUDY

Advice relating to mitigation of global GHG emissions from the food system

The food system accounts for roughly 30 per cent of global greenhouse gas emissions and is a major driver of biodiversity loss.

We provided separate pro bono competition law advice to the UK arms of two global organisations – Fairtrade and WWF – on two distinct industry-wide collaborations to help mitigate these effects:

- **Fairtrade's Shared Impact initiative** brings UK food retailers together to pool their new Fairtrade sourcing commitments to a targeted group of farming cooperatives. It provides longer-term commitments for producers and enables them to invest in more sustainable farming practices.
- **WWF-UK's Retailers' Commitment for Nature** was originally announced at COP26 in 2021 with five major food retailers committing to work with WWF-UK towards its ambition of halving the environmental impact of UK shopping baskets by 2030. Since then, two more retailers have joined and four more contribute to necessary data collection.

Our advice is at the cutting edge of the rapidly developing nexus of competition law and sustainability. We helped Fairtrade receive the very first informal guidance from the UK's Competition and Markets Authority (CMA) on whether their collaborative initiative could infringe competition law. The CMA's informal guidance provided valuable certainty for all participants and helped Fairtrade launch its pilot with confidence.

Separately, we helped WWF-UK receive the CMA's second informal guidance on a proposed initiative to reduce emissions in the supply chain. Our work with the WWF-UK and the CMA helped the sector understand more clearly how they can collaborate on environmental sustainability initiatives within the confines of the law. We continue to support both organisations in their important work across the food supply chain.



FRESHFIELDS CLIENT SUSTAINABILITY PRACTICE

CASE STUDY

Advice on human rights, supply chain strategy and the EU's Deforestation Regulation

We are advising an international construction and industrial machinery manufacturer on an ongoing basis on its supply chain and human rights strategy and compliance with emerging ESG supply chain legislation.

When advising on strategy, we have advised the client on aligning its approach to human rights due diligence to its broader human rights strategy and salient legal risks. Our advice has covered issues such as due diligence on suppliers, potential engagement with NGOs and other interested stakeholders and public reporting. Similarly, we have advised a number of UK, European and US clients on compliance with the EU's Deforestation Regulation. This has involved a process of working with our clients to understand the scope of the regulation, how that may apply to our clients' businesses and products and then assessing how the regulation's due diligence requirements map onto our clients' existing trade and compliance practices. In each case we have advised on practical ways of ensuring compliance with the regulation's requirements while making sure any additional compliance burden

remains manageable. Our approach has always been to tailor our advice to each client's existing approach to trade and environmental compliance and has usually involved working closely with a range of legal, compliance, trade and customs teams.



Depending on the nature and location of the client and supply chain risk/impact, we frequently work as a cross-border team across our London, European and other offices to draw on relevant expertise in order to advise on these issues, taking account of the relevant regulatory obligations and legal risks in each jurisdiction.

CASE STUDY

Supporting a client with new and evolving sustainability regimes

Freshfields is advising a global sports footwear, apparel and equipment manufacturer on a range of ESG legal developments as part of its ongoing sustainability efforts.

In particular, we are supporting the client on new and evolving EU and national level corporate sustainability regimes. This includes advising on global disclosure frameworks and mandatory corporate reporting rules. We have also provided advice on due diligence regulations such as the German Supply Chain Duty of Care Act, the EU's Corporate Sustainability Due Diligence Directive and the EU's Deforestation Regulation.

We are offering strategic corporate advice on the timing and impact of these obligations on the client's global business, developing risk-based implementation frameworks and working with its other advisors to support comprehensive compliance with these new and developing legal regimes. Given the significant impact of these regulations on the client's operation and strategy, ongoing advice is essential to meet its annual compliance obligations.

As part of our work, we regularly engage with personnel across the business, including legal counsel, treasury and control functions, providing ESG training and support for compliance programmes. We also assist in making strategic ESG decisions, ensuring that the client remains at the forefront of regulatory compliance and sustainability leadership.



This is just one example of how we are helping clients not just respond to developing regulatory obligations, but also developing their broader sustainability strategies and goals to ensure they manage the risks and seize the opportunities presented by ESG. Our work covers a broad range of sectors and businesses, from industrials to financial services as well as those leading the energy transition.

FRESHFIELDS CLIENT SUSTAINABILITY PRACTICE

CASE STUDY

Supporting the next generation of low-carbon nuclear power projects

We are advising on each of the UK nuclear programmes that form an essential part of the UK's strategy to decarbonise its electricity grid by 2035.

As well as supporting the industry's engagement with government to streamline regulatory processes, we are actively advising clients with lead roles on each of the UK's giga-watt scale projects, and on newer technologies including small modular reactors and advanced modular designs.

Civil nuclear power has been recognised in successive Queen's and King's speeches as a central component of the British Energy Security Strategy and Net Zero plan, with ambitions to increase nuclear capacity from around 6 GW to 24 GW by 2050, through the deployment of both large- and small-modular technologies. We are supporting industry to pursue this goal.

Our work is supporting the funding and development of projects that include the UK's largest ever baseload generating station and the UK's first homegrown reactor design. On completion, the fleet could be capable – in aggregate – of delivering dispatchable low-carbon electricity to over 15 million UK homes for more than 60 years, plus significant generation capacity abroad through exported technology.



Our work involves partnering with clients to build innovative solutions to the challenges faced by complex nuclear new-build programmes, navigating the fundamental imperatives of decarbonisation, radiological safety and energy affordability. Examples of this work include support for regulatory approvals of novel designs and the development of a range of government investment and support regimes, including a novel Regulated Asset Base model – the first of its kind globally to support investment in and deployment of nuclear power as part of international decarbonisation efforts.

Our work requires a deep understanding of the complex contractual, regulatory and statutory frameworks that govern nuclear sector projects. Freshfields' leading experience in this industry has been crucial in providing comprehensive support to the industry's strategic options.

CASE STUDY

Advice to Impact Finance Belgium on policy report

Impact Finance Belgium (IFB) is a not-for-profit membership association with an overall goal to increase investments generating positive impact through targeted government actions, legislative changes and fiscal incentives, leveraging government spending and funding to support IFB goals.

Freshfields has been supporting IFB in the preparation of a policy report to promote impact finance. The report will formulate an advocacy strategy containing policy measures to enhance impact finance in Belgium.

A number of Freshfields lawyers in Belgium specialising in funds legislation, finance, debt and capital markets and tax are helping IFB to:

- identify and prioritise potential policy measures; and
- to advise on the legal feasibility in Belgium of these measures.

The policy report will be presented on 8 October 2024 during IFB Members' Impact Day in Brussels, where Freshfields will also participate in the panel discussion on the report.



FY23/24 HIGHLIGHTS

GROWTH, SUPPORT AND RECOGNITION



65,000+ learning hours
recorded in our systems

GROWTH, SUPPORT AND RECOGNITION



2,800+ users engaged with
our **virtual work experience**
programmes

DIVERSITY AND INCLUSION



Global equity partners:
29% women as at April 2024
(up from 12% in 2015)

DIVERSITY AND INCLUSION



78%
of colleagues agreed or
strongly agreed that they work
in an inclusive environment
(up by 5.3 percentage points
year-on-year)

COMMUNITY



1,700+ colleagues volunteered
as part of our community
programmes

COMMUNITY



115+ volunteering and
fundraising projects
organised across the firm

ACCESS TO JUSTICE AND PRO BONO



Over 85,000+
pro bono hours

ACCESS TO JUSTICE AND PRO BONO



541 mandates for
271 pro bono clients

ENVIRONMENT



68% reduction in combined
Scope 1 and 2 emissions
achieved (55% reduction
target by 2027)

ENVIRONMENT



78% of global electricity
from **renewable sources**
(80% target for 2025)

03

Pro bono and community

ACCESS TO JUSTICE AND PRO BONO

We believe access to justice is an essential component of the rule of law. Given the legal profession's unique and privileged position in matters of justice, as a law firm, we have a responsibility – and opportunity – to support access to justice through our pro bono work.

We maximise the impact of our pro bono efforts on access to justice by:

- focusing our efforts on promoting access to the rights of our target groups;
- selecting mandates which either play to our existing core skillsets or, particularly when advising individuals, are in a discrete area of law in which we can build expertise;
- relying on strong partnerships with trusted legal services organisations; and
- building strong, long-term relationships with key charity clients in our chosen areas of focus.

Our areas of focus include child rights, refugee rights, LGBTQ+ rights, women's rights, racial justice and combatting modern slavery/human trafficking.

FY23/24 highlights

Assisted
thousands

of Iraqi and Afghan refugees in a class action with IRAP addressing delayed visa applications

85,000+
pro bono hours

Developed innovative internal global training modules on the topic of 'trauma-informed client care' for Freshfields lawyers providing pro bono advice to individuals who may have experienced trauma

4,100 hours

of pro bono advice to Save the Children International on 39 different mandates relating to institutional support as well as assistance in areas linked to their humanitarian work

1,400+
lawyers took part in pro bono activities

Co-created a coalition of 292 lawyers across 30 firms, establishing an award-winning refugee legal help desk in Brussels, which has assisted over **8,000 asylum seekers** since April 2022

Helped
1,000

women per month to apply to court for protection from domestic abuse with [CourtNav](#)

20,000+
downloads of our global research to support Stonewall's Workplace briefings to date

Participated in the **Duty Lawyer Service's Free Legal Advice Scheme** in Hong Kong

Advised on
25

payment by results schemes, unlocking >£100m in social funding – including advising the British Asian Trust on a development impact bond aiming to enhance literacy and numeracy skills for 4 million children in India

31
interventions and *amicus* briefs since 2013 for charities supporting survivors of trafficking

Reunited a trafficking survivor with her child **10 years** after they were separated

ACCESS TO JUSTICE AND PRO BONO

CASE STUDY

Preventing gun violence in the US

When the US Supreme Court's 2022 decision in *New York State Rifle & Pistol Association v. Bruen* led to an unprecedented number of challenges to firearm safety laws across the United States, Freshfields Partner Jennifer Loeb and Senior Counsel Aaron Marcu knew they had to take action. A partnership blossomed with the Giffords Law Center to Prevent Gun Violence, assisting the non-profit's efforts to develop strategies to defend strict restrictions on the manufacture, sale and use of assault weapons and large-capacity magazines.



The Freshfields team (which includes associates Brandt Henslee, Dan Hodgkinson and Taylor Jachman) researches and drafts *amicus* briefs supporting state and local governments defending their existing laws banning the use and sale of assault weapons and large-capacity magazines. Due to the success of the partnership with Giffords, halfway through 2023, Brady United and March for Our Lives joined the effort as named parties on our briefs.

'Gun control is a hugely significant issue in the US, and this has been a really important and rewarding piece of my practice over the past few years,' says Jenn Loeb. 'I think it's really also a wonderful opportunity for our younger lawyers to get substantive writing and advocacy experience on issues that they care about.'

As of September 2024, we filed more than a dozen *amicus* briefs in cases across five federal district courts and seven federal appellate courts, including the US Supreme Court.

In recognition of these efforts, Giffords chose to honour Freshfields as its pro bono law firm of the year at Giffords' annual gala in San Francisco in June 2024.

We have also filed an *amicus* brief in *United States v. Rahimi*, a US Supreme Court case that was decided in June 2024, and held that an individual who poses a physical threat to another person's safety can be temporarily disarmed. The brief was filed on behalf of several domestic violence advocates, educators and organisations in support of existing federal law prohibiting the possession of firearms by persons subject to domestic violence restraining orders.

Associate Dan Hodgkinson has been working with Giffords since 2022. 'It's a chance to step back from your day-to-day work and dive into a project that continues to make a meaningful impact,' he says. 'Our team really puts their heart and soul into this work.'

Read the [full case study](#) on our website



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Jennifer Loeb
Partner



ACCESS TO JUSTICE AND PRO BONO

CASE STUDY

Protecting vulnerable asylum seeker children

In June 2021, the UK Home Secretary decided to routinely house lone child asylum seekers in hotels outside the local authority care system. Of around 5,400 such children (some as young as nine), over 400 went missing, many of whom are expected to have been trafficked or subject to criminal exploitation.

A Freshfields disputes team represented children's rights organisation [Every Child Protected Against Trafficking UK \(ECPAT UK\)](#) as lead claimant in a one-of-a-kind judicial review.



Contributing over 2,900 pro bono hours during 2023, the team quickly grasped the complex legal framework (using experience from related pro bono work), navigated submissions from multiple parties, marshalled arguments and managed all aspects of an expedited timetable. We mitigated ECPAT UK's costs risk exposure by securing a Cost Capping Order at the earliest opportunity and a novel judicial approach to relief.

A 27 July 2023 [High Court judgment](#) declared unlawful both: the Home Secretary's practice of routinely housing children in hotels; and Kent County Council's policy of denying statutory care to all such children in its area. Since that point, the court has taken the unusual step of scrutinising the defendants' efforts to correct the illegality in a series of relief hearings that have spanned the best part of a year. This case was a significant win for our client: a small charity that had never before engaged in public interest litigation.

Patricia Duff, CEO of ECPAT UK, says: 'Without the pro bono support of Freshfields, ECPAT UK would not have been able to take this case.'

[Ali Sallaway](#) (who led the Freshfields team alongside partner [Chris Pugh](#)) said: 'It has been a privilege to represent ECPAT UK in this important case. Their commitment to the children affected has been unwavering and inspirational.'

[Rob Colvin](#), Senior Associate, added: 'The team has worked brilliantly over the last year or so to provide ECPAT UK with strategic advice and analysis, develop and finalise substantial evidence, as well as navigate all the requirements of these expedited and multi-party proceedings.' Rob was recently awarded the [City's Wig & Pen Prize](#) for his work on the case, and Freshfields won the 2024 FT Innovative Lawyers in Pro Bono Award in Europe for our involvement.

Read the [full case study](#) on our website [🔗](#)



It has been a privilege to represent ECPAT UK in this important case. Their commitment to the children affected has been unwavering and inspirational.

Ali Sallaway
Partner



ACCESS TO JUSTICE AND PRO BONO

CASE STUDY

Freestyle: long-term support for Berlin's vulnerable youth

Freestyle and Freshfields lawyers are partnering to support adolescents facing criminal charges or in precarious life situations.

Berlin-based association for youth welfare, Freestyle, specialises in intensive educational care for children and young people in difficult situations like homelessness, prostitution or crime. Freestyle has around 160 social workers looking after over 400 young people and offers 190 places in communal individual flats.

Berlin-based Principal Associate [Marcel Michaelis](#) says being part of the Freestyle project team provides a great opportunity to create a positive impact, as well as grow as a lawyer. 'We strengthen our skills in and out of court, and broaden our horizons as criminal defence attorneys. For young colleagues, the project is a chance to gain experience in court hearings. Most importantly, the project is helping our clients and fulfilling the firm's social responsibility.'



In the first 18 months, we handled around 60 cases ranging from petty crime and fraud to serious violent offences, both in and out of court. During our work on the project, we have also been involved in several preliminary arrests, public and house searches and, in very sensitive cases, have appeared as witnesses in court to support young people who have been victims of crime. Evaluation of completed proceedings suggests our involvement results in less severe sentences more geared towards young peoples' needs.

The team's recent focus has been on trying to prevent crisis situations by developing materials and conducting workshops with educational professionals on topics such as investigations, juvenile criminal proceedings and police searches in the context of residential youth care.

To further improve effectiveness, we are currently evaluating how additional legal support can address juvenile offenders' long-term educational support needs.

Read the [full case study](#) on our website [↗](#)



We strengthen our skills in and out of court, and broaden our horizons as criminal defence attorneys. For young colleagues, the project is a chance to gain experience in court hearings. Most importantly, the project is helping our clients and fulfilling the firm's social responsibility.

Marcel Michaelis
Principal Associate



ACCESS TO JUSTICE AND PRO BONO

Partnerships and commitments

We partner closely with frontline legal services organisations around the world, which helps focus our efforts where they can make the most difference – and in some cases helps us to train our lawyers in areas beyond their usual practice.

We also have longstanding relationships with leading charities, for whom we act across a range of practice areas. Through deep relationships with these clients, we can help them more effectively, as we have with [Save the Children International](#).

We are signatories to The Global Refugee Forum Legal Community Pledge and the Law Society of England and Wales' Pro Bono Charter, as well as participate in the Pro Bono Institute's Pro Bono Challenge in the US. Further details are set out in [Appendix 3](#).

We are honoured that our teams have been recognised for our pro bono efforts and their impact.

For further detail, please click on the logos below.



Looking ahead

Here are some of our key priorities for FY24/25, as we look to further develop our practice and increase our impact:



Join a new collaborative pro bono project in Europe



Start a new limited-scope clinic in the US



Expand our UK disability benefit appeals project



Take further non-refoulement cases through the Duty Lawyer Service in Hong Kong



Increase participation levels within our transactional teams

For more details, please see our [pro bono pages](#)

ACCESS TO OPPORTUNITY AND COMMUNITY IMPACT

Access to opportunity is a cornerstone of progress and innovation in the legal sector and beyond. Freshfields is committed to outreach that helps to create a level playing field for all, with a particular focus on social mobility and racial equity. Throughout the firm, we work with charity and NGO partners to drive impactful social change.

We also focus on providing opportunities for colleagues to directly work with underserved young people through mentoring, workshops and work shadowing. Our colleagues provide key insights into career paths, skills development and network building, which help beneficiaries to access professional careers.



FY23/24 highlights

11 years

of impactful engagement with underserved beneficiaries across two of our flagship outreach schemes: the [Freshfields Stephen Lawrence Scholarship Scheme](#) and [Legal Outreach](#)

1,150

colleagues volunteered on access to opportunity projects, spending almost **9,500 hours**

Established an international network of colleagues

in 2023, organising access to opportunity initiatives across the firm and put in place a best practice toolkit to support them

24

community organisation partnerships across the firm to promote access to opportunity

3,100

direct beneficiaries of our access to opportunity programmes

Early Careers partnerships

We work with several organisations to ensure a global diverse talent pipeline including Rare Recruitment and its contextual recruitment system

22nd place

in the 2023 UK Social Mobility Index, up 14 places since 2022

£1,145,000+

invested into access to opportunity outreach, made up of cash, time and in-kind contributions

12+ client collaborations

on access to opportunity initiatives with longstanding partnerships as part of the [Freshfields Stephen Lawrence Scholarship Scheme](#); and delivering interactive student sessions with clients for our [Aspiring Professionals Programme](#)

ACCESS TO OPPORTUNITY AND COMMUNITY IMPACT

CASE STUDY

Legal Outreach: helping New York student interns get to college

Since 2007, Freshfields has provided summer internships through [Legal Outreach](#), a non-profit organisation, to prepare students from underserved communities in New York City to be admitted to college.

The programme uses intensive legal and educational programmes as tools for fostering vision, developing skills, enhancing confidence and facilitating the pursuit of higher education.

Annually, more than 50 Freshfields staff and lawyers from around the global network come together to host a week-long internship that centres on a corporate law case study. Almost the entire New York office is involved.



The most recent case study involved a joint venture between two companies, with students undertaking due diligence in two groups and Freshfields lawyers playing different roles. The students experience several rounds of negotiation before making a final presentation to a ‘board’ of Freshfields colleagues with recommendations on whether to proceed with the deal. In previous years, the course has also involved lawyers in Freshfields’ Beijing office in a case study concerning the loan of pandas to Canada.

The Legal Outreach programme coincides with the presence of summer associates (college students getting a taste of Freshfields before they graduate), who work closely with the students. Some summer associates have highlighted the programme as the deciding factor in joining the firm.

Associate [Carolina Romero](#) worked with the students during her week as a summer associate and says it was a great experience. ‘It was really rewarding and enriching to see their progression from the beginning of the week,’ she says.

The programme also provides professional and cultural experiences, which have included meeting with United States Second Circuit Court Judge Lohier, learning expeditions at the Central Park Zoo and an evening on Broadway to see the latest hit play.

As well as bringing obvious benefits to the local community, the initiative is a much-anticipated event internally, offering an opportunity to bring together colleagues who may not otherwise work together.

‘It’s been transformational for the students, many of whom have gone on to great colleges. I also feel the programme transforms us at Freshfields,’ says Global Partner for Client Sustainability [Timothy Wilkins](#). ‘The programme energises our colleagues through the opportunity to work with new colleagues in different parts of the firm and also through the pride in the collective impact their mentoring has in such a short time on the lives of the students.’

Read the [full case study](#) on our website [↗](#)



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Timothy Wilkins
Partner



ACCESS TO OPPORTUNITY AND COMMUNITY IMPACT

CASE STUDY

Aspiring Professionals Programme: insights into City careers



Each year the Aspiring Professionals Programme (APP) – a partnership between Freshfields and the Social Mobility Foundation (SMF) – offers 100 students from lower socio-economic and diverse backgrounds the opportunity to get an insight into a career in the City of London.

The APP looks for participants from the 50 per cent most deprived postcodes throughout the UK – a wide focus to maximise the programme’s transformational impact – with at least 50 per cent of participants identifying as being from an ethnic minority. The programme covers a three-year period, which is distinct from other programmes in both its length and intensity.

‘I think my internship most helped me by giving me a unique point of view from an international law firm,’ says Harry, a recent participant. ‘I would have never been able to have this experience without Freshfields or the SMF.’



Aruba, another recent participant, says that her mentor offered someone to chat to about the legal profession and answer her questions. ‘I felt like I really built a connection with her over time. She did dedicate a lot of time to answer my questions and proofread my answers on applications so I think I had a really good relationship with her.’

In 2023, the APP won The British Legal Award for ‘Standout in DE&I’ and The Lawyer Award for ‘Best Talent and Inclusion Initiative’.

Read the [full case study](#) on our website [↗](#)



Participants have been very positive*:

- **99%** agreed that the placement met or exceeded their expectation
- **86%** agreed the internship helped them make confident and informed choices about their future, including education routes and pathways into work
- **86%** agreed that the placement helped them to demonstrate professionalism in the workplace
- **81%** felt they developed commercial awareness and gained an insight into the legal profession
- **82%** felt they built and demonstrated confidence in their own abilities
- **87%** felt the internship helped them listen actively and ask questions to develop understanding
- **90%** felt they could work more effectively as part of a team following the placement.

Aspiring Professionals Programme in numbers

90%

of the APP 2022 cohort are now at university, with **56%** of those at university at a Russell Group university and **8%** at Oxbridge; **7%** are completing degree apprenticeships; and **3%** are currently on a gap year

More than 3,850 hours

from **328** Freshfields UK colleagues volunteered on APP*

1,216

messages exchanged between mentoring pairs, and **107** meet-ups and phone calls*

* Statistics based on data collected in FY23/24. Outcomes measured through methods including data tracking, student surveys, qualitative student feedback, student observation and mentor feedback.

ACCESS TO OPPORTUNITY AND COMMUNITY IMPACT

CASE STUDY

Legal insights for students with the START Foundation

Since 2009, Freshfields has been offering insights into the legal services industry for people with a migration background in Germany.

The past year has seen two workshops in our Frankfurt office: one general workshop in September 2023 attended by 20 students and a more specialised workshop in April 2024 for 10 students considering studying law. Our Munich office also offered a one-week internship to a student to give an in-depth introduction to corporate law.

Kerstin Risse of the START Foundation says that these encounters with renowned legal professionals inspire young people. 'We are particularly pleased that we have been able to extend this co-operation for our inquisitive young people to other locations. We are extremely grateful for the opportunities young people on the programme have to solidify their professional goals or gain a career-advancing networking opportunity.'



Freshfields Partner [Carsten Wendler](#) has been involved with the START Foundation students for many years. 'We all look forward to meeting these talented students every year. They are full of energy. These students are the future of Germany as an increasingly diverse country.'

We want to show them that everything is possible if they believe in themselves, including a career in big law. That means demystifying the profession, sharing our excitement for what we do, answering all sorts of questions and showing how important it is to give back to the community through our pro bono work.'

We are building on the programme's successes: as well as workshops, the firm invited students to undertake 'work shadowing' from April 2024, offering an embedded experience of life in law. We have also deepened our partnership with START through sponsoring two new scholarships in Frankfurt and Munich. These one-year programmes are upskilling and building professional networks for talented students ahead of university.

Read the [full case study](#) on our website [🔗](#)



We all look forward to meeting these talented students every year. They are full of energy. These students are the future of Germany as an increasingly diverse country. We want to show them that everything is possible if they believe in themselves, including a career in big law.

Carsten Wendler
Partner



ACCESS TO OPPORTUNITY AND COMMUNITY IMPACT

Freshfields is committed to creating sustainable value and positive change in the communities it serves.

The firm invested more than £1.7m in cash, time and in-kind donations in community projects in FY23/24. More than 1,700 colleagues volunteered on access to opportunity and broader projects including environmental initiatives and team-led causes. Freshfields seeks to support colleagues' fundraising efforts and offers a matched giving scheme for colleagues on funds raised. During FY23/24, Freshfields colleagues raised more than £135,000 for charities, with the firm donating a further £95,000 in matched giving. A further £153,000 was donated by colleagues through the Firm's Give as You Earn payroll giving scheme.

The maps on pages 27 and 28 give a taste of some of the initiatives supported across the firm in FY23/24.

Partnerships and commitments

Several partners and colleagues act in governance or contributory roles in industry groups aimed at raising access to opportunity across business, including The Lord Mayor's Appeal (including Power of Inclusion), the BITC Place Taskforce, the Social Mobility Forum and the ProManchester social mobility committee. Please see [Appendix 3](#) for a full list of our partnerships.

To move the societal dial on access to opportunity, we cannot act in isolation and must take an industry-wide approach. Freshfields is a founding member of the [PRIME alliance of law firms](#) determined to improve access to, and socio-economic diversity within, the legal profession. [Molly Lewis](#), a Freshfields associate, sits on the board of PRIME. In addition, the [Freshfields Stephen Lawrence Scholarship Scheme](#) works with participating universities across the UK.



Looking ahead

During FY24/25, our community impact priorities are focused on fostering wider engagement with our communities and colleagues. We aim to create sustainable opportunities for colleagues to get involved in causes that are important to them and ensure a positive impact for years to come.



Collaborate with external partners to advocate for access to opportunity including reputable charities and NGOs, clients and peers across our sector and beyond



Increase geographical coverage of access to opportunity programmes to allow more colleagues to engage directly



Publish internal community investment targets and make public commitments

For more details, please see our [community impact pages](#)

ACCESS TO OPPORTUNITY AND COMMUNITY IMPACT ①②

1 Silicon Valley

We took part in the San Mateo Toy and Book Drive which benefitted local underprivileged children.



2 Washington DC

28 colleagues ran the Lawyers Have Heart Race to raise money for the American Heart Association.



3 New York

Our Juneteenth Essay Contest awards one scholarship each year to a college-bound Senior from Brooklyn College Academy with Freshfields volunteers judging the essay entries.



4 Manchester

Colleagues volunteered on environmental conservation tasks at Trafford Ecology Park with Groundwork.



4 Manchester

Colleagues volunteered with a local school in Salford as part of the National Literacy Trust's Young Reader Programme.



5 London

Colleagues in London chose to support the Felix Project as their Charity of the Year, raising £29,000 and volunteering almost 1,300 hours of time.



5 London

Freshfields Stephen Lawrence Scholarship Scheme is our flagship scheme supporting Black and Black mixed-race law men with potential into large law firms or leading organisations.



6 Paris

We support Association Droit Comme un H! which helps disabled law students to access job opportunities and this year we hosted and provided a judge for its debating competition.



7 Brussels

We hosted a Young Change Makers Masterclass to promote legal careers to young people from minority ethnic backgrounds.



8 Frankfurt

Pen pal project with Wichernschule, supporting students with learning difficulties.



ACCESS TO OPPORTUNITY AND COMMUNITY IMPACT ① ②

8 Frankfurt

9 Berlin

10 Vienna

11 Düsseldorf

12 Hamburg

13 Munich

Job coaching with students from local schools.



10 Vienna

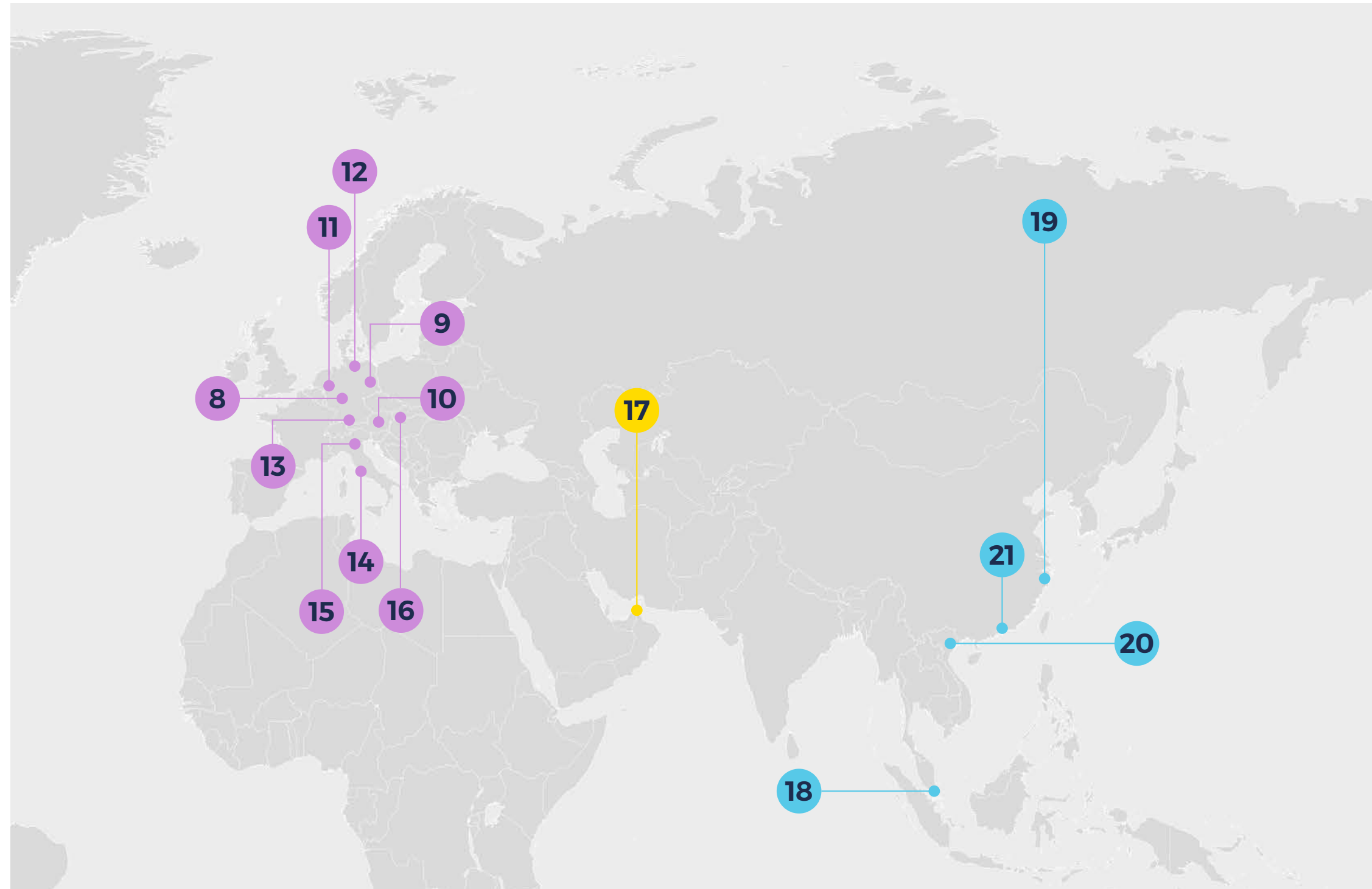
Colleagues volunteered to help cared-for children with pumpkin carving.



14 Rome

15 Milan

Volunteers took part in a food drive for Fondazione Banco Alimentare.



16 Bratislava

Colleagues hosted a charity BBQ to raise money for charity Usmev ako dar.



17 Dubai

Working in collaboration with Companies for Good to create 200 care packages for the workers that keep Dubai running.



18 Singapore

Student mentoring with students from ITE College East, a public vocational education institution.



19 Shanghai

Colleagues completed a 10km walk to promote the Liangshan Volunteer Teaching Charity Project.



20 Hanoi

Planting 500 trees in Ben En National Park which colleagues paid for through fundraising.



21 Hong Kong

Work shadowing for young people from charities supporting disadvantaged groups such as Zubin Foundation, QSA, The Amber Foundation and CareER.



04

Our people



GROWTH, SUPPORT AND RECOGNITION

As a firm, we are committed to continuously evolving our people experience to provide a positive working environment for everyone. This includes ensuring people feel valued and have access to outstanding career development to help them reach their potential.

A fulfilling career journey

We strive to offer exceptional training and development (a combination of virtual, group and individual learning and in-person courses); opportunities to challenge ourselves alongside talented colleagues around the world; and regular, high-quality feedback to support our people's development and skills. Our Learning and Development programmes are linked to our competency frameworks and evaluated by participants. This feedback is used to further enhance and refine our programmes on an ongoing basis.

It all starts with our approach to recruitment

We aim to recruit diverse, talented people driven by excellence, who share the firm's values and principles.

We run summer vacation programmes across the globe for students who are interested in pursuing a career in law giving them an insight into the life of a lawyer at Freshfields. In multiple locations, we also offer other internships throughout the year for those interested in legal and business roles. These opportunities are advertised on the firm website and are marketed actively across social media channels.

How we attract and select talent is important

To attract the best talent, we maintain strong relationships with universities, law schools and students by running seminars, insight days and virtual learning experiences. In FY23/24, 2,841 users engaged with our virtual work experience programmes.

We keep our selection processes under review to help ensure fairness, robustness and consistency, allowing candidates to showcase their capability, attracting talent from a multitude of backgrounds.

We strive to ensure candidates receive valuable feedback after their interview(s) to aid them in their future career development and to remain transparent around our recruitment process. We support all our hiring managers with a toolkit that provides valuable resources (eg unconscious bias training) across attraction, selection, making offers, feedback and onboarding.

Our recruiters will often work across borders, hiring talented individuals from different countries who continue to connect globally in their work at Freshfields.

Ensuring the onboarding experience sets new hires up for success

Over the last year we have focused on improving our onboarding experience for those that join Freshfields.

We have regular touch points with our new joiners before their first day to ensure that they remain connected with the firm and that their starting experience is as smooth as possible. This includes providing valuable insights into life at Freshfields through curated content that brings to life the culture of the firm as well as our goals and ambitions.

Our central onboarding platform enables new joiners to access onboarding activities and information in one central tool, spanning our purpose, values and Being Freshfields principles, our approach to being a responsible business, details of our wellbeing and wider benefits packages, as well as career development, training opportunities and diversity and inclusion.

Internal mobility

We create internal opportunities by advertising our jobs internally and in FY23/24 we placed 11 per cent of our roles through internal moves.

We offer rotations to help people develop their career options. Our trainees are exposed to a variety of different placements to help them better understand the breadth of our practices and our UK Assistant Placement Programme provides opportunities on a part-time basis where assistants can help support various projects to help them stretch and extend their skills.

FY23/24 saw 240 secondments globally, including interoffice, early careers, international client, *StrongerTogether* and mini (short-term) secondments.



In FY23/24:

2,841

users engaged with our virtual work experience programmes

We placed 11%

of our roles through internal moves

There were 240

internal and external secondments globally

GROWTH, SUPPORT AND RECOGNITION

Our approach to reward

Our approach to reward and benefits reflects the relevant market and contribution to the firm, recognising how our people deliver and conduct themselves. We continue to evolve our holistic approach to benefits and reward to support our people's lives and wellbeing, both in and out of work.

Our people policies

We have global HR policies and procedures that apply to everyone across the business, as well as regional policies that are tailored to legal/regulatory requirements for the specific regions and jurisdictions in which we operate, adapted for local resonance. These policies, principles and procedures are regularly reviewed and evolved as appropriate (including in relation to non-discrimination, compensation, wider benefits and leave entitlement, agile and flexible working, respecting downtime and supporting the safety, wellbeing and mental health of our people). Our key global people policies were added to our 2023 Annual Compliance Survey. 100 per cent of respondents confirmed their adherence to those policies in the twelve months ending September 2023.

In addition to our global people policies, in 2024, we have drawn together an overarching document, the Freshfields Code, that brings together our firm values, our Being Freshfields principles and the key professional and regulatory responsibilities set out in our policies together in one place. The Freshfields Code serves as a go-to reference guide providing practical guidance on how colleagues should interact with one another, our clients and our wider communities.

Our engagement forums

In FY21/22, we established two global engagement forums to enhance dialogue and engagement. These platforms are crucial for facilitating open communication between senior leadership and our teams across the firm.

Our Associate and Business Services Advisory (ABSA) Board brings together 10 lawyers and business services colleagues from different teams and offices, ensuring that a diverse range of perspectives is heard from across the business. Members of the ABSA Board sit for a term of nine months and are from all regions across the firm. The ABSA Board members meet with our Global Leadership Team (as representatives for all colleagues across the firm) every six to seven weeks to provide feedback, discuss firm strategy and projects, and explore opportunities for improvements.

Recognising the unique insights and contributions of our business services teams, we have a dedicated global forum that focuses exclusively on our business services colleagues' feedback and concerns. This forum provides a targeted platform for business services colleagues to engage with senior leadership, to raise their specific suggestions and feedback.

Discussion within these global forums covers a broad range of topics. In FY23/24, meetings centred on wellbeing, themes arising from the annual purpose, culture and people experience survey, learning and development, benefits and reward, our pro bono and community impact programmes and AI (among others).

These global engagement forums are supported by eight local and regional engagement forums across the UK, the US, Continental Europe and Asia.

Benefits to support our people

We offer a wide range of benefits to support our people with finance, health and other life priorities. With a continued focus on wellbeing, we are committed to evolving our benefits offering to support our people and their families. Benefits may vary depending on location and local regulations.

Key health and wellbeing benefits may include:



Medical,
dental and
vision



Wellbeing app
for meditation,
sleep and
relaxation



Mental health
programmes
and support



Critical illness
cover



Life assurance
and accidental
death

Other regional benefits may include:

- Wellness allowances and gym memberships
- Locally relevant savings and retirement plans
- Commuter benefits, including season ticket loans and electric vehicle schemes
- Personal carbon offsetting and payroll giving
- Parental leave
- Family-forming benefits, including fertility treatment, adoption and surrogacy
- Menopause support
- Short- and long-term disability support
- Parental coaching

For more details please see our [careers webpages](#)



GROWTH, SUPPORT AND RECOGNITION

FY23/24 highlights

Leadership development



In FY23/24, we focused on enhancing our leadership capability. To support this we have:

- enhanced our leadership development programmes for our key career transition stages. This has included further development of our Transition into Partnership programme, which enables our junior partners to learn from leadership experts and receive executive coaching to help set them up for success; and
- reviewed and updated our leadership career frameworks to ensure they remain up to date and relevant against the backdrop of social, economic and technological change. This has been reflected in the 360-degree feedback tools we use for senior leaders across the firm and for supporting personal development and business planning conversations with our partners, counsel and managing and executive directors. Responsible business contribution and activity is considered and encouraged as part of this.

Performance and development



We are continuing to embed our global performance and development experience. Our refreshed approach:

- has a focus on feedback and development conversations at its core. It is delivered using a new global system that enables colleagues to request and receive feedback throughout the year, and includes the optional ability to document progress and outcomes of development conversations in the same place; and
- includes a consistent approach to evaluation of performance that recognises outcomes and achievements alongside how people deliver and conduct themselves so that results and behaviours are given equal value.

Learning in the flow of work



As part of our ongoing focus on professional growth and development, we:

- launched LinkedIn Learning to all colleagues during 2023. With over 7,000 courses available in a variety of languages, this provides everyone at Freshfields with access to a broad range of development content on demand and the opportunity to learn at their own pace;
- have continued to promote international secondment opportunities for our associate and partner populations. In support of our transatlantic strategy, we launched a new transatlantic secondment programme in late 2023. Piloting in 2024, it will provide the opportunity for associates from the UK and Continental Europe to spend a 12-18 month term in the US; and
- continue to develop our mentoring schemes across our locations. To assist with the set-up of local schemes we have developed a suite of globally available support materials including training and guidance for mentors and mentees. All employees can discuss mentoring needs during development conversations with their managers.

Benefits and reward



We have recently extended a number of our benefits to ensure all colleagues and their family members can access support when they need it. This includes:

- a global rollout of a wellbeing app to all colleagues and up to five of their dependents, to support their wellbeing alongside local benefits available; and
- access to a global Employee Assistance Programme so that all colleagues and their dependents have 24-hour access to a variety of professional support resources and tools.

GROWTH, SUPPORT AND RECOGNITION

A responsible working environment

We expect the highest standards of our people and are committed to providing a safe and supportive workplace where all can thrive. How we work together and behave towards one another is guided by our internal behavioural principles, 'Being Freshfields', to ensure a culture of respect, openness and mutual support which goes hand in hand with our approach to diversity and inclusion and wellbeing. Our global HR policies around harassment, bullying and other misconduct support this culture.



We take behaviour that falls short of our expectations very seriously and encourage our people to speak up if they experience or witness behaviour that is not in keeping with our culture. Our global whistleblowing policy, speaking up policy and Conduct Committee ensures that we deal with matters in a robust, transparent and globally consistent way.



We undertake internal periodic assessments of health and safety risks and look at steps to mitigate and address any risks identified across our offices. Our UK and German offices are also subject to an external health and safety assessment. Colleagues in all of our offices are provided with a range of tools to improve workstation ergonomics, including access to an online DSE training programme, the inclusion of training on ergonomics as part of the induction process for new joiners, ergonomic assessments through a third-party occupational health service provider and assistance with workstation set up.

In FY23/24:

97%

of colleagues using our new global performance and development system recorded their FY23/24 annual performance review

86%

of colleagues accessed learning through our new global human resources platform*

12 hours+

of learning per colleague accessed and recorded across our learning management platforms*

3,249

colleagues globally accessed training content via LinkedIn Learning, with over 53,000 learning videos watched and 1,940 full course completions

* Calculated based on total FY23/24 average core headcount. Core headcount includes all active staff and excludes those on long term absence, client secondment and family leave. Additional learning and development opportunities (outside of our platforms) take place at the firm.

Looking ahead

Alongside a continuing focus on the development of our lawyers, we will focus heavily on the development of colleagues in our business functions through:



Continuing to enhance our learning and development offering, including a review and refresh of our mandatory learning programme



Refreshing our competency framework for our business services teams



Reviewing key benefits to enhance and broaden their cover

DIVERSITY, INCLUSION AND WELLBEING

Creating a healthy, high-performing inclusive environment where diversity is valued continues to be a key strategic focus for the firm. Our priority is to build a culture where everyone can belong, engage and excel. This includes a focus on everyday behaviours, mental health and wellbeing; increasing engagement and collaboration with colleagues, clients and the broader community to drive meaningful change; and helping all colleagues to excel, recruiting, retaining and promoting diverse talent to senior roles.

78%

of colleagues agreed or strongly agreed that they work in an inclusive environment (up by 5.3 percentage points year-on-year)*

130+

external engagements on D&I with clients

New **executive sponsors** for LGBTQ+ inclusion globally

FY23/24 highlights

55%

women on our global board**

Delivered **Mental Health First Aid and refresher training** to colleagues maintaining our pledge to have at least **1-in-25** of our people trained

Implemented **internal global workplace standards**, introduced in early 2023, that consolidate and streamline our workplace strategy and design and construction standards***

500+

colleagues engaged in diverse talent programmes in the last three years

Supported **colleagues with new development opportunities** such as [Mission Include](#) and [Roots Inspire](#) programmes

10+
employee networks/resource groups globally driving change

* Data collected as part of our latest annual purpose, culture and people experience survey, March 2024.

** As at 30 April 2024.

*** These include guidelines around inclusive design, wellbeing, equipment specification and display screen guidelines and workplace security measures.

DIVERSITY, INCLUSION AND WELLBEING

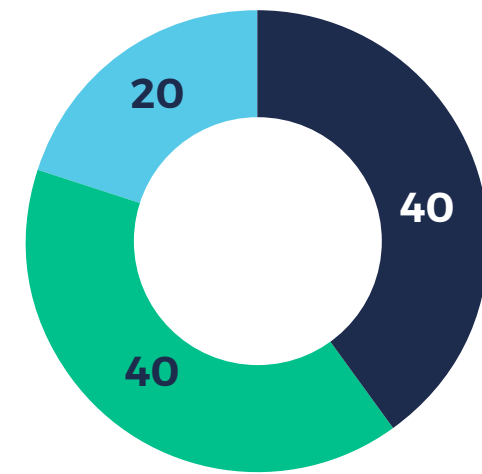
Progress on our targets and commitments

In 2021, we launched ambitious five-year global commitments to diversity and inclusion, setting targets for gender, race and ethnicity and LGBTQ+ representation.

We committed to transparently sharing updates on our progress, reflecting our focus on action as we seek to ensure fair access to opportunity for all. It is encouraging to see that, in a number of areas, we have maintained or built on the progress we have already made. We will continue to review our efforts and work towards ensuring lasting change.

For a summary of our progress against our US and UK targets, please see [Appendix 2](#).

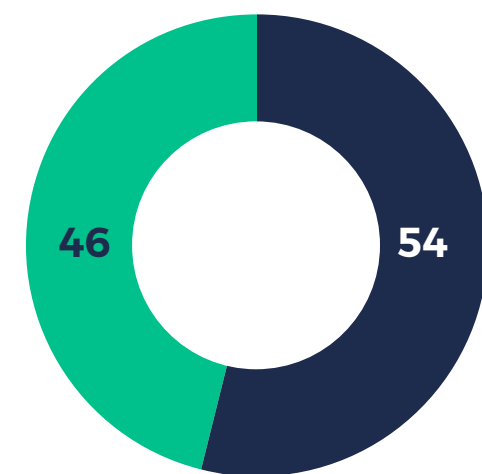
Gender balance: new partners
Target for 2026 (%)



■ Men ■ Women ■ Men/women/non-binary

We have set a global target that, by 2026, our new partners (internal promotions and lateral hires) will be at least 40 per cent women and 40 per cent men (with the remaining 20 per cent men, women or non-binary).

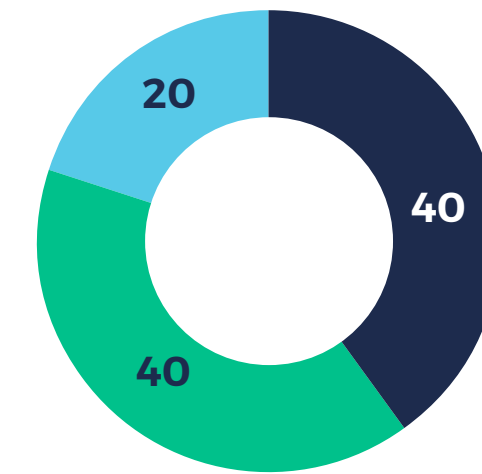
Total – March 2021-March 2024 (%)



■ Men ■ Women

To date, we have made strong progress and are on track to meet our goal, which represents a significant step forward from our historic annual average of 27 per cent new women partners between 2016 and 2020.

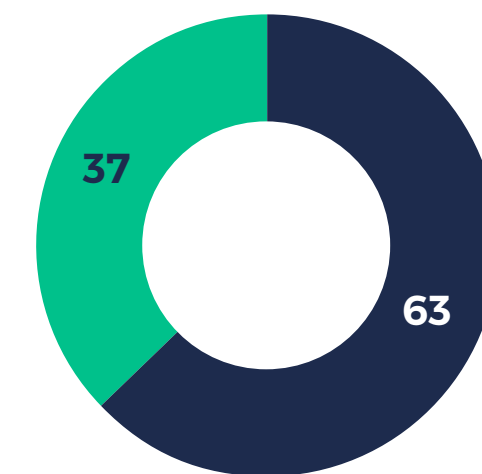
Gender balance: firm leadership*
Target by end 2023 (%)



■ Men ■ Women ■ Men/women/non-binary

Our goal was for our firmwide leaders to be ethnically diverse, and for this group to comprise at least 40 per cent women and 40 per cent men (20 per cent men, women and non-binary) by the end of 2023.

Total – March 2021-March 2024 (%)

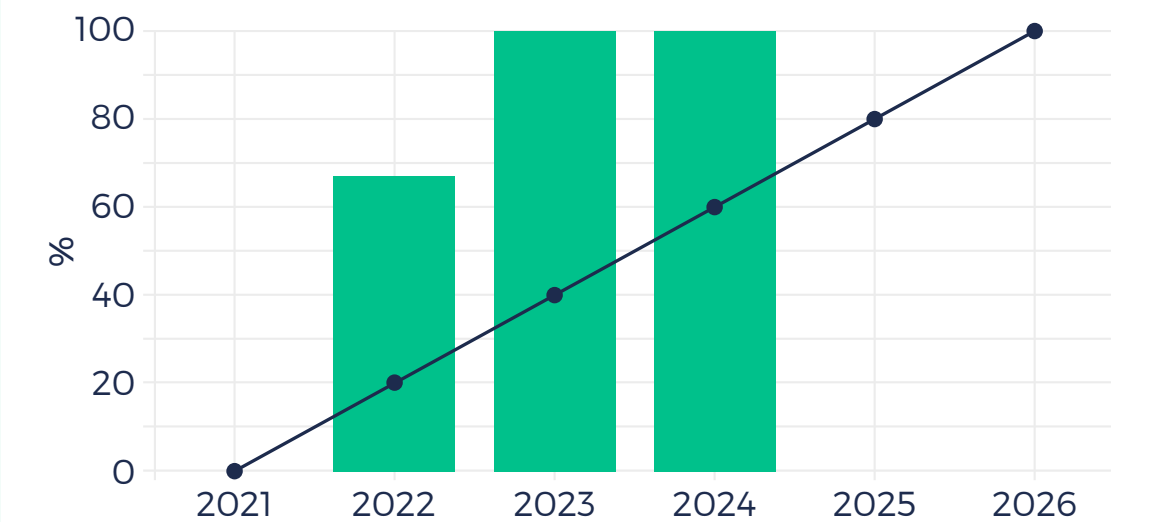


■ Men ■ Women

We have made significant progress on gender diverse representation, just missing our target. We partially met our ethnicity goal and both continue to be a focus.

*Board, sub-committees, Executive Committee and Managing Directors

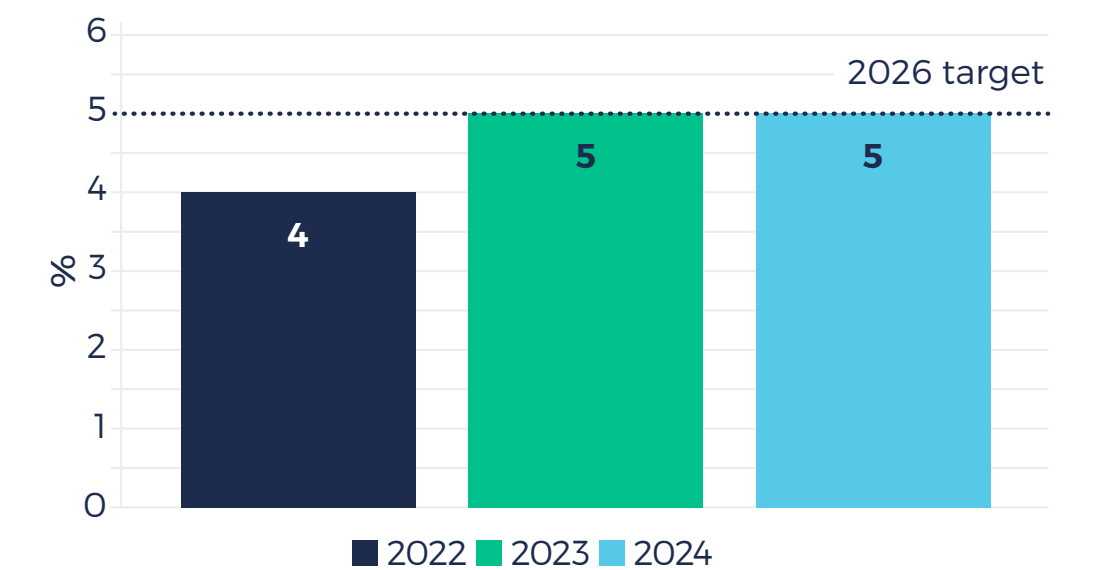
Black associate population**
Target growth vs actual growth (%)



■ Annualised target growth (%) ■ Actual growth (%) **Numbers based on those who self-identify

We aimed to double the number of Black associates at the firm by 2026. We have continued to exceed this target having met it early last year and are focused on our recruitment, retention and development efforts.

Partners identifying as LGBTQ+
2022-2024 (%)



We set a target that at least 5 per cent of our global partners identify as LGBTQ+ by 2026. Following our third global voluntary anonymised partner survey we are pleased to have maintained our progress, having met our target last year.

DIVERSITY, INCLUSION AND WELLBEING

CASE STUDY

Building a sense of belonging: wellbeing at work

Our holistic approach to wellbeing recognises that our mental health and wellbeing is influenced by all areas of our life.

We strive to build a culture that encourages conversations and promotes healthy behaviours around mental health and wellbeing, so our people and business can thrive, grow and sustain high performance.

Our wellbeing framework consists of three components: mind, body and balance, each of which guides the development of our programmes. Our Head of Wellbeing and Inclusion Kristina Adey-Davies says: ‘We continue to focus on building a healthy culture, encouraging connection and continuing to review consistency across our office network.’

Empowering our people

Last year, we launched ‘Fostering High-Performing Teams’ training for senior leaders globally to embed healthy working practices and provide tools to support teams.

Freshfields Partner and Chair of the Global Board [Piers Prichard Jones](#) attended and says it ‘clearly highlighted the fundamental link between good mental health and wellbeing, and the collaborative high-performance culture

that’s so integral to Freshfields.’ Peer-to-peer support through our global Mental Health Support Team is at the heart of our approach and is complemented by our global wellbeing support offerings which we continually review.

In addition to a range of local offerings, all colleagues have access to a wellbeing app that provides tools to support their mental health and wellbeing and access to professional support across a range of areas such as emotional, mental and physical health.

A focus on connection

The importance of ‘connection’ was a key focus in the past year and was the theme in our global panels for World Mental Health Day and International Women’s Day.

Silicon Valley-based Partner [John Fisher](#) was a panellist for World Mental Health Day and says it ‘highlighted the valuable role each of us play in fostering a positive and inclusive work environment.’

Listening to colleagues

Collaborating and listening to our people has been crucial in evolving our approach to wellbeing, helping to ensure that we provide a range of support.

Examples include running regular sessions with our global Associate and Business Services Advisory Board to help us understand how our global approach is understood and experienced, and how we can continue to evolve and improve. We also run listening exercises with our global Mental Health Support Team. Their helpful input has resulted in positive changes that are being rolled out in the coming months including increased connectivity across regions to share best practice and bite-sized expert sessions on suggested topics of interest to the group.

Read the [full case study](#) on our website 



It clearly highlighted the fundamental link between good mental health and wellbeing, and the collaborative high-performance culture that’s so integral to Freshfields.

Piers Prichard Jones
Partner



In FY23/24:

More than
300
colleagues

trained and active in our global
Mental Health Support Team

More than
200
senior leaders

in 17 sessions across all regions including
partners, counsel and Managing Directors
trained in ‘Fostering High-Performing Teams’

A third
of our people

accessed the wellbeing app
offered to all colleagues



DIVERSITY, INCLUSION AND WELLBEING

CASE STUDY

Colleagues driving change

Drawing upon the strength of their connections, our colleagues have been instrumental in driving change within the firm and beyond.

Neurodiversity in the UK

In the realm of diversity and inclusion, the spotlight is increasingly focusing on neurodiversity and the importance of creating more inclusive working environments. At Freshfields, dedicated individuals like James Smither, Global Head of Risk Management, and Laura Minnock, HR Business Partner, are spearheading initiatives both within and outside the firm to drive positive change.



Reflecting on remarkable growth, James Smither, co-founder of the Legal Neurodiversity Network (LNN), highlights substantial progress since its inception in 2023. With over 75 law firms and over 200 individuals now involved, the LNN has expanded nationally and internationally, fostering a community and sharing best practices across the legal sector.



A pivotal moment arrived with the UK government's Buckland Review of Autism Employment, where James spearheaded the LNN's and Freshfields' involvement in the Review and brought together key legal sector stakeholders to address the underrepresentation of autistic individuals in the workforce.

Within Freshfields, the Enabled UK Neurodiversity Working Group, led by Laura Minnock, has worked in collaboration with colleagues to raise awareness and support the evolution of processes, including neuro-inclusive recruitment practices and a new benefit offering access to neurodivergent condition diagnosis.

Looking forward, both James and Laura are committed to advancing neuroinclusion, recognising the shared desire and incredible opportunity organisations have to improve and make significant progress in this space.

Read the [full case study](#) on our website [↗](#)

Supporting LGBTQ+ communities in Asia

Our colleagues in Asia continue to support local LGBTQ+ communities, with impactful collaborations in Hong Kong and Japan.

Freshfields was delighted to be one of the first law firms to sign up to the [World Gay Games](#) hosted in Hong Kong in 2023 and play an active role in encouraging support from other firms. Gay Games HK's Head of Corporate and International Outreach David Chai expressed the 'deepest gratitude for Freshfields' unwavering support.'

Freshfields filled all 25 places for its athletes at the Games, including Head of Asia Recruitment Trish Fong, who competed in running and dodgeball, and Hong Kong Managing Partner [Matthew O'Callaghan](#) who competed in rowing and had championed the Games from the start. 'The games were not only great fun, they brought many of our colleagues together, building new connections across teams,' Matthew says.



Freshfields Senior Manager for Diversity and Responsible Business Amy Tye says: 'Everyone showed what the Games' motto "unity in diversity" is all about, that allyship matters in fighting against discrimination that LGBTQ+ people still face.'



In another collaboration in the region, as part of Freshfields' global partnership with [Out Leadership](#), Tokyo Managing Partner [Takeshi Nakao](#), one of the firm's global executive sponsors for LGBTQ+ inclusion, joined Out Leadership's Asia Summit in Tokyo. Takeshi shared his insights and experience, which was very well received, including a CEO subsequently inviting him to speak at another event.

'So many people are in the closet, so visibility is very important. As one of few "out" senior lawyers in Japan, I want to be a role model for people,' Takeshi says. 'LGBTQ+ people are a minority in every country so support from allies helps change attitudes in society.'

Read the [full case study](#) on our website [↗](#)

DIVERSITY, INCLUSION AND WELLBEING

Expanding cultural awareness in Europe



Our Asian Affinity Network promotes awareness of Asian cultures, marking important celebrations and festivals throughout the year, including the Mid-Autumn Festival for the first time in our Berlin, Frankfurt and Hamburg offices in 2023.

‘Celebrating festivals together with colleagues helps build a culture where everyone feels like they belong,’ says Frankfurt-based Chelsia Tai, Senior Transaction Lawyer, who was involved in organising the Mid-Autumn Festival.

‘By raising awareness and opening up conversation, we can help everyone develop an appreciation for the many different cultures we have at Freshfields.’

Other festivals marked by the Asian Affinity Network include Eid al-Fitr (in collaboration with the Muslim Network), Diwali and Lunar New Year.

Collaboration is a theme across our networks and locations. For example, in the UK the Asian Affinity Network, Freshfields Enabled, London Women’s Network, Muslim Network and Social Mobility Network held an event with Lubna Shuja, the first Asian, first Muslim and seventh female President of the Law Society of England and Wales. Further collaborations are being planned for future events, including a mixed heritage panel jointly hosted with our Black Affinity Network.



Celebrating festivals together with colleagues helps build a culture where everyone feels like they belong. By raising awareness and opening up conversation, we can help everyone develop an appreciation for the many different cultures we have at Freshfields.

Chelsia Tai
Senior Transaction
Lawyer



Our networks

Our employee networks across the firm play an instrumental role in our inclusive culture, connecting colleagues, sharing insights and driving change. We encourage everyone to participate as allies to build empathy, learn and support all of our communities across the firm. Below is a list of our networks that continue to grow and collaborate across locations and teams.

- Asian Affinity Network (UK and CE) and Asian/Pacific/South Asian/American (APSAA) (US)
- Black Affinity Network (BAN)
- Black Employee Resource Group (BERG) (US)
- Campos Frescos (US)
- Christian Network
- Freshfields Enabled (UK and CE)
- Gender Equality Network (GEN) (Manchester)
- Halo (LGBTQ+) and Halo Champions
- Jewish Network
- Mental Health Affinity Network (MHAN) (UK)
- Muslim Network
- Social Mobility Network (UK)
- Valor and Valor Champions (US)
- Women’s Networks

DIVERSITY, INCLUSION AND WELLBEING

CASE STUDY

Women in law: redefining success

As the world of work continues to evolve, we continue to refine and develop our [Global Sponsorship Programme \(GSP\)](#) supporting our talented women associates at Freshfields as they build their careers with us.

Aligned to our D&I priorities, the GSP is an example of the power of bringing people together and redefining what success traditionally looks like.

As Freshfields' year-long flagship tailored learning and development programme, the GSP has been carefully designed to give high-performing women the tools and support to navigate their careers, recognising the importance of the ecosystems in which we work. Between 20 and 40 women participate each year, with 31 women in last year's seventh cohort from across 15 offices, with every practice group represented. To date, more than 210 women have graduated the programme globally.

The GSP has been running since 2015 and we are reaping the rewards of its longevity. The past year saw three former participants from the UK, Asia and Europe joining as sponsors for the first time, providing an extra layer of insight for the new sponsee cohort.

Partner [Theresa Ehlen](#) was a GSP sponsee in cohort three and became a sponsor in cohort seven. She says the GSP is an opportunity to take a step back from day-to-day work to see the bigger picture. 'It shines a spotlight on our female talent, showing them that we value and appreciate them – and believe in them! Helping women grow by expanding their skills, visibility and network, and providing guidance and transparency on their career path and challenges in a safe space encourages talented women to take the next step.'



Feedback from previous cohorts informs the programme's continuing evolution so we can include what is most important and valuable for participants. Changes last year included the in-person delivery of a RADA-led workshop on 'owning the room' with impact and gravitas and an in-person negotiation workshop led by an Oxford University professor. The latest cohort also had a new session on the importance of wellbeing, including managing senior stakeholders and junior colleagues.



Going forward, continuous improvement and intersectionality will continue to be a focus, says Global Diversity and Inclusion Engagement Manager Rachel Brooks: 'We recognise the value that different perspectives bring to the programme, and want to amplify the voices of women with different experiences further in future cohorts.'

Read the [full case study](#) on our website [↗](#)



Helping women grow by expanding their skills, visibility and network, and providing guidance and transparency on their career path and challenges in a safe space encourages talented women to take the next step.

Theresa Ehlen
Partner



DIVERSITY, INCLUSION AND WELLBEING

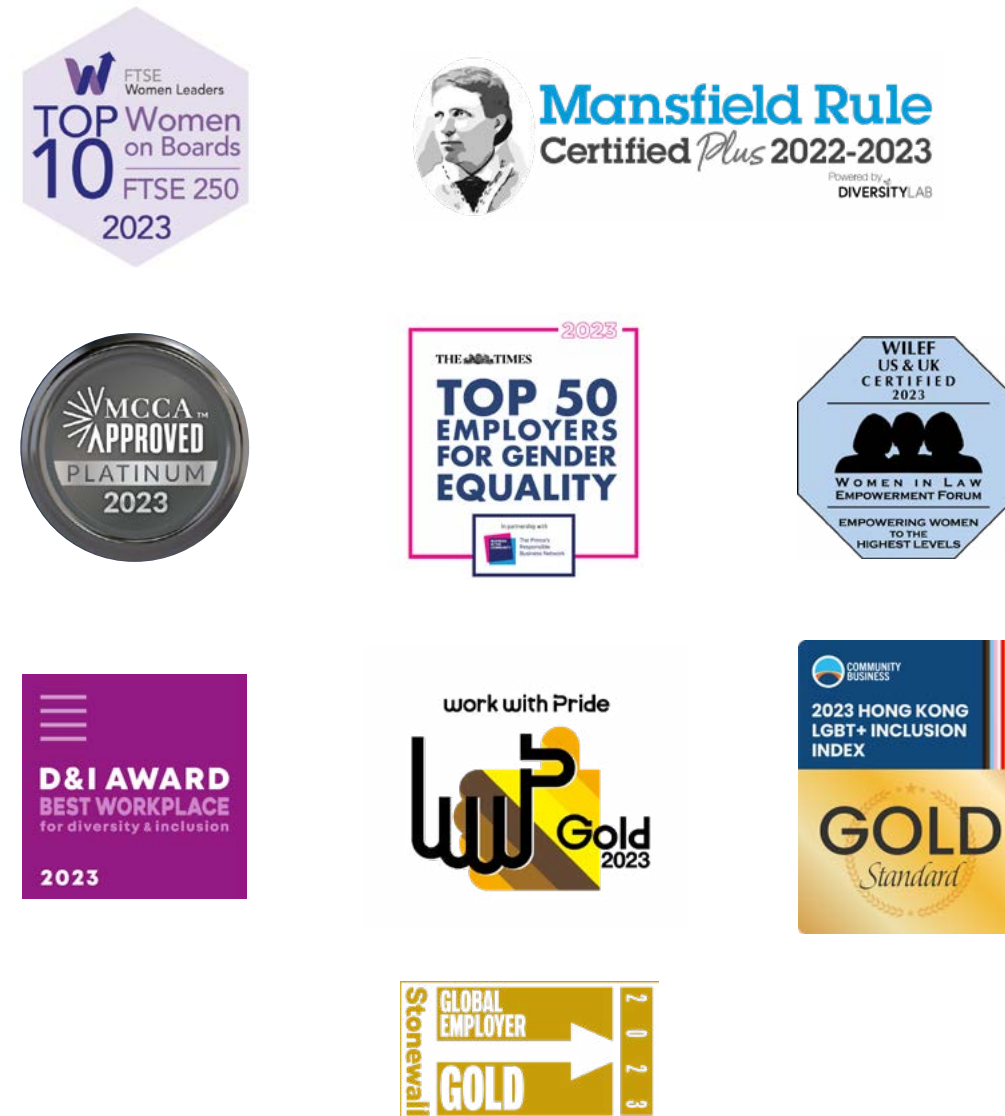
Our partnerships and commitments

Our partnerships continue to provide opportunities for us to collaborate, learn and access resources and guidance to amplify our efforts to drive change. This includes focusing on improving representation and creating a positive inclusive environment for all, recognising different and shared experiences of colleagues.

We work with partner organisations on a global and local level, often focused on particular dimensions of our strategy. Examples include [Out Leadership](#) on LGBTQ+ inclusion, [This Can Happen](#) on wellbeing, the [Business Disability Forum](#) and the [Black Talent Charter](#). [Appendix 3](#) has further detail on a selection of our diversity, inclusion and wellbeing partnerships.

We also partner with different groups as we seek certifications or accreditations, in order to better understand our progress and where we should focus our efforts. This includes being part of programmes such as Mansfield Certification in the US and the UK and Stonewall's Global Employer Index.

We are proud that our efforts have been recognised externally, highlighting our commitment to understanding good practice and evolving our efforts.



Looking ahead

Here is a selection of our priorities for FY24/25, as we continue to drive meaningful progress and foster a more inclusive environment.



Review and refresh of our learning and development offerings, including induction and training for colleagues on maintaining high performance and wellbeing



Tailored local interventions to support our diversity strategy and progress towards targets including senior business services representation in the UK and ambassadors for cultural and ethnic diversity in Continental Europe



Continue to support our networks and resource groups, including refresher training and connectivity for our global Mental Health Support Team



Build connection and understanding through engagement and programming at the global, local and team level



Continue to build out insights and metrics, including deploying new tools and running a self-disclosure campaign



Review annual purpose, culture and people experience survey feedback to inform our inclusion and wellbeing strategy

For more details, please see our [diversity and inclusion pages](#)

05

Environment



ENVIRONMENT

Our environmental ambition is encapsulated in our [global environmental policy](#), which unifies our priorities, focus areas, targets and governance of environmental matters. We are committed to reducing our business-related carbon emissions in line with science-based targets, at the same time maintaining our commitment to carbon neutrality through the purchase of offsets on our way to net-zero and beyond.

As we transition to a modern office network demonstrating high sustainability standards in design, development and operations, our goal is to embed sustainability as a standard way of doing things through our procurement practices, office behaviours, smart travel, catering and focus on waste.

We have offset our annual carbon footprint since 2007, using high quality projects including our flagship [Reforestation in East Africa Programme \(REAP\)](#).

FY23/24 highlights

Made progress towards our **science-based targets** and wider environmental targets

Developed and published a **Global Environment Policy** with input from our **Environmental Delivery Group**

Submitted **Climate-Related Financial Disclosure** as part of our FY22/23 UK statutory accounts

Launched a **new global smart travel policy**

Our flagship offsetting programme REAP continues to exceed all KPIs

now benefiting over 41,000 registered farmers across 180 communities, with more than five million trees surviving since 2015

Celebrated Earth Month and Plastic Free July globally in 2024

and engaged with all office managing partners globally on environmental matters, including single-use plastic reduction, waste reduction and recycling

450

colleagues participated in expert sessions on sustainability during Earth Month 2024

Embedded **green office guidelines** and **green building guidelines****

71%

reduction in paper consumption (target of 40 per cent by 2025)

55%

of our office network (by square footage)* underwent an external environmental or energy audit

78%

of our office floorspace is in a building with a BREEAM, LEED or equivalent sustainability rating

Awarded **Sustainability Initiative of the Year** at The Lawyer Awards 2024

* Our UK (London and Manchester) and German offices (Frankfurt, Munich, Hamburg, Düsseldorf and Berlin).

** Our green office guidelines focus on environmental operations, activities and individual responsibilities across offices, while our green building guidelines set environmental management standards for new offices, office moves and refits.

ENVIRONMENT

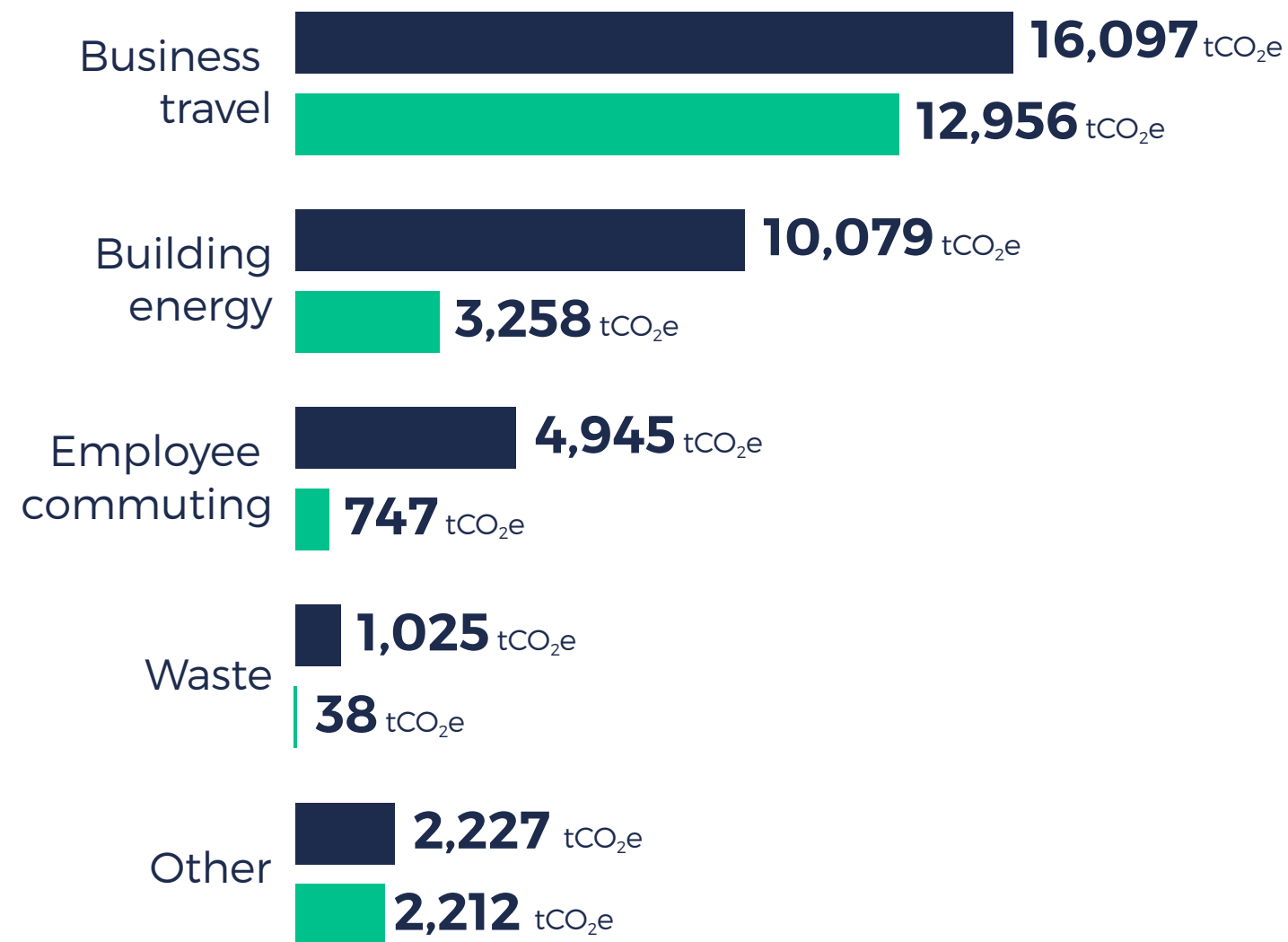
Carbon footprint FY23/24

Our reporting is aligned with the [GHG Protocol](#), the international standard for carbon footprint reporting.

The following categories of emissions have been assured by Carbon Footprint Ltd*:

* For a more detailed breakdown of our carbon footprint, please see our most recent assurance statement [here](#)

- **Building energy:** Scope 1 and market-based Scope 2.
- **Other (fuel and energy-related activities, paper, water):** Scope 3 category 3 and Scope 3 category 1 (paper and water).
- **Waste:** Scope 3 category 5.
- **Business travel:** Scope 3 category 6.
- **Employee commuting:** Scope 3 category 7.



Progress against science-based targets

against a 2018/19 baseline

68%

reduction in combined Scope 1 and 2 emissions (target of 55% by 2027)

19%

reduction in business travel-related emissions (target of 35% by 2027)

2%

increase in fuel- and energy-related emissions not included in Scope 1 and 2 (target of 30% reduction by 2027)**

32%

of our suppliers (by emissions) are committed to the Science-Based Targets initiative (target of 62% by 2027)

78%

of our global electricity came from renewable sources in 2024 (80% target for 2025; 100% target for 2030)

** The firm's energy consumption grew last year due to office expansion, including in the US. We are currently exploring how to reduce our energy consumption in line with this target, principally through energy efficiency improvements and adoption of new spaces with high energy efficiency performance.

ENVIRONMENT

Delivering on our environmental ambition

In early 2023, Freshfields announced near-term science-based targets on emissions reductions, which will deliver progress three years ahead of our closest peers. The Environmental Delivery Group (EDG) was established to deliver on these targets, alongside the firm's broader environmental agenda.

Our Environmental Delivery Group



The EDG is overseen by regional COOs, co-opts functional specialists (including procurement, environment and workplace/facilities management teams) and receives input from representatives from our [Global Green Group](#) of environmental champions. The EDG, which meets quarterly to review progress and identify areas for increased focus, is chaired by our Head of Client Sustainability and Environment, [Dr Jake Reynolds](#), and supported by the Environment team. The EDG reports to the firm's Senior Partner and Global Leadership Team.

Among the first tasks to be tackled by the EDG was a Delivery Plan, comprising more than 40 actions for the upcoming 12-18 months, guiding the firm's performance across workplace, travel, procurement, catering and waste.

The group has subsequently prepared 'green office guidelines' for all Freshfields colleagues, a refreshed global travel policy including software to integrate and analyse our business travel data, and an overarching global environmental policy. Over the coming year, the EDG will explore the development of a long-term net-zero target.

'Sustainability is the ultimate horizontal, an opportunity for everyone to step up from firms like ours, to our clients and our suppliers.', says Head of Client Sustainability and Environment, Dr Jake Reynolds 'Success will be judged by how well the value chain comes together.'



Lynn Johnson of Ripple Effect Images

We regularly communicate with clients on our environmental practices, including their governance and leadership. Over 160 clients expressed interest in this in 2023, providing an opportunity for us to share our ambition, targets and results. This is not surprising of course: our emissions are their emissions, and we have a common interest in environmental improvement.

Under the guidance of the EDG, we have made good progress against our targets and our reforestation programme in East Africa (pictured above) has outperformed all expectations. Winning 'Sustainability

Initiative of the Year' at The Lawyer Awards 2024 is a fantastic recognition of our achievements.

Read the [full case study](#) on our website [🔗](#)

Global Green Group

Awareness raising and training has driven engagement with a range of colleague-led initiatives across our global network in the past year. Our Global Green Group has grown to 45 colleagues with representatives from each of our offices and additional local green groups in Hong Kong, Manchester, London, Hamburg and Amsterdam. Global Green Group members report on each office's activities, collate environmental data and constructively challenge behaviours that create a footprint. Offices across our network and Global Green Group champions run activities and initiatives that support the local environment and often also have a community impact. Many of our local initiatives have centred around waste and its impact on the environment ([see pages 45-47 below](#)).



Sustainability is the ultimate horizontal, an opportunity for everyone to step up from firms like ours, to our clients and our suppliers. Success will be judged by how well the value chain comes together.

Dr Jake Reynolds
Head of Client Sustainability and Environment



ENVIRONMENT

CASE STUDY

A new strategy to drive improvements in waste

Waste is a key focus area for Freshfields. In accordance with our green office guidelines, we segregate waste in all of our offices. Colleagues receive guidance on waste procedures for their individual offices and global communications promote best practices with regard to limiting waste and correct segregation.

We are committed to driving down waste to landfill and increasing the amount of waste that is recycled, organically composted or incinerated for energy.

We expect landfill to drop to below 5 per cent of our global waste in 2024. The firm has also committed to a 40 per cent reduction in paper consumption by 2025 – through implementing digital solutions such as Secure Print, document review software and document sharing platforms including iManage and OneDrive, we have achieved a 71 per cent reduction so far against a 2018/19 baseline. The continued phase-down of single-use plastics (SUPs) remains a priority for Freshfields, with a particular focus on catering, hospitality and refreshment.

Reducing plastic usage

Championing Plastic Free July raised awareness of environmental hazards associated with plastics and the importance of responsible waste management practices both within and outside the office. A cultural shift in waste behaviours, supporting messaging on reducing, reusing and recycling, as well as specific green office guidance, is helping us achieve significant improvements.

Indeed, offices around the world have been breaking old patterns of behaviour and helping improve the local environment in the past year, swapping out SUPs for reusable items.



Our Silicon Valley, Washington DC and New York offices have said farewell to plastic cutlery in favour of personal portable cutlery, which has become a symbol of waste reduction. Similarly, following our Tokyo office's move to 100 per cent renewable energy in April 2023, a number of important changes have been introduced, from prioritising reusable cutlery to providing eco-bags and glass-bottled water. In Abu Dhabi, a simple yet effective shift from plastic to refillable glass bottles has significantly reduced plastic waste, while colleagues are empowered by monthly reports to drive waste reduction further.

In 2023, in Hong Kong, we embarked on the Spare-It Smart Waste Reduction Challenge, a corporate initiative that embraces waste diversion and recycling efforts. By shunning personal rubbish bins in favour of strategically placed points for recycling and compost collection, the office has embraced its competitive spirit and achieved in FY23/24 a 53 per cent diversion rate of waste from landfill.

In FY23/24:

95%

of our waste was diverted from landfill

55%

of waste was sent for recycling

10%

of waste was sent for organic composting

ENVIRONMENT

Local communities

As part of our Dubai and Vienna office moves (in October 2022 and April 2023 respectively), members of our Global Green Group were instrumental in organising the donation of surplus furniture and electronic equipment, with 200 monitors donated to local schools in Vienna and AED 39,000 donated to the Red Crescent from the sale of office items in Dubai.



Following a refurbishment in our Manchester office conference rooms, close to 100 chairs were donated through Chorus Education Trust and have found a new lease of life at Eckington secondary school in Derbyshire.



Our Amsterdam office's unique partnership with a local charity [Plastic Whale Foundation](#) engages colleagues and the local community to tackle plastic waste. The Plastic Whale Foundation transforms PET bottles and other plastic waste fished from Amsterdam's canal network into practical items like foam boards, office furniture and lamps. All remaining waste is separated and enters the recycling lifecycle. Freshfields is sponsoring one of the project's fleet of boats (constructed from fished plastic) for the next three years, allowing colleagues to participate in canal clean-up events and collaborate with clients.

Read the [full case study](#) on our website [🔗](#)

Our infrastructure and service delivery

Our technology infrastructure is essential to the successful delivery of our services. We are committed to reducing the environmental impact of our physical IT infrastructure and the associated footprint of the software we use.

We extend the life of our laptops, phones and tablets by restoring, repurposing and redistributing equipment and peripherals across offices. Partners including Vyta in the UK and AfB in Germany and Austria collect and recycle hardware for parts or repair and sell on for reuse.



Adopting a circular approach to our IT infrastructure further reduces the environmental impact of our global IT operations. Our 'device as a service' strategy, shifting to leased IT equipment and, commencing in 2024, personal equipment, will provide access to the best technology whilst minimising electrical waste.

We are also moving towards a cloud-based strategy, retiring our physical server centres and adopting cloud-based alternatives with a lower environmental footprint.

Many of our IT suppliers have ambitious environmental strategies which align closely with Freshfields' own ambition. Working with these key suppliers we can better understand our digital footprint and Scope 3 emissions and devise roadmaps to reduce the associated environmental footprint of these services.



Freshfields has been a signatory of both the Campaign for Greener Arbitration's 'Green Pledge' and the 'Greener Litigation Pledge' since 2021. Colleagues from our internal taskforces promote 'green protocols' for mandates, including preferences for digital meetings and hearings, reduced travel and printing and offsetting emissions.

The images in this article relate to waste related initiatives run by our Global Green Group.

ENVIRONMENT

CASE STUDY

Environmental initiatives in Germany

Working closely with our procurement team, in FY23/24, our German offices have undertaken a number of recent environmental initiatives to drive progress:



3 million km of business travel by rail instead of air on Deutsche Bahn trains using 100 per cent green electricity with indirect emissions and diesel transport 100 per cent compensated by carbon offsets



Reduced individual printers in German offices and deployed printers to be used centrally



Undertook an energy audit and continued our commitment to supply **all German offices with renewable electricity**



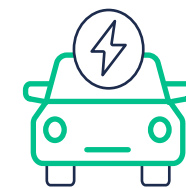
Realised **plastic-free** offices in Germany for food-packaging, drinking containers and cutlery and deployed water dispensers to replace the need for plastic bottles of water



Instituted training for German colleagues on **climate change science basics and action** (mandatory for new joiners in Germany)



Began cleaning offices with **ozone water** rather than cleaning agents in Hamburg



Engaged with **taxi providers** in Germany to prioritise electric vehicles



Partnered with a cleaning company in Berlin that produces its own **sustainable cleaning agents** and has been honoured by the Mayor of Berlin for its sustainability and above-standard pay

ENVIRONMENT

Partnerships and commitments

We understand the importance of collaboration when it comes to achieving our environmental targets.

We work with a range of experienced partners across our environmental management, disclosure and offsetting and, through alliances, our wider engagement with the legal industry. We are partners in several voluntary initiatives that promote sustainable business practices, including transparency in environmental disclosure and target-setting, innovation and best practice.

Examples of our environmental partnerships and commitments are set out in [Appendix 3](#).



For more details please see our [environmental webpages](#) and our [carbon footprint assurance statement](#)

Looking ahead

Environmental improvement is a continuous task. We will be prioritising the following in FY24/25:



Publish a net-zero target for external validation by the Science Based Targets initiative (SBTi)



Continue progress towards our near-term science-based targets, paper reduction and waste improvements



Roll out a global environmental mandatory training module for all colleagues and new joiners



Extend renewable energy supply to additional offices, including in Asia and the US



Draw together environmental performance dashboards at a global, regional and office level for use by colleagues globally



Procurement and Environment teams to deliver a supplier engagement plan on carbon performance

06

Responsible procurement



RESPONSIBLE PROCUREMENT

Our procurement strategy is designed to ensure that our spend with suppliers is managed efficiently, and that the suppliers with whom we collaborate are selected via a transparent process and are aligned with our core procurement principles. These principles set out our expectations of our supply chain and are designed to foster greater collaboration with our supplier network to achieve our shared goals.

FY23/24 highlights

100%

of suppliers within the scope of the German Supply Chain Act underwent an assessment*

62%

of suppliers by emissions to be committed to SBTs by 2027, >50 per cent of whom have committed already and the remaining suppliers have been engaged to discuss commitments to SBTs

Embedded **responsible procurement** principles into our new Global Procurement Policy

Reviewed our **Responsible Business Procurement Guidelines and Operating Principles** and drafted a **new Supplier Code**

96%

of assessed† suppliers confirmed adherence to our Responsible Business Procurement Guidelines and Operating Principles

100%

of our global procurement team completed CDP-certified training on sustainable procurement

* A third-party provider carried out an abstract risk analysis on our German supply chain focused on the ESG risks in each supplier's country and industry. Suppliers identified as high or medium risk, and above a certain spend threshold, were engaged for a further assessment focused across environment, health and safety, human rights and labour and supply chain responsibility. An impact analysis is underway with preventive and corrective actions being put in place.

** Suppliers onboarded in the UK via our procurement onboarding tool.

† Onboarded suppliers that have responded to the Responsible Business questionnaire via the procurement onboarding tool.

†† Suppliers mapped as Tier 1 and Tier 2 based on criticality of service, regulatory elements and other risk criteria.

72%

of targeted** suppliers completed a sustainability assessment

£1m

spent with suppliers in the Heart of the City programme

33%

of contracts with suppliers assessed in FY23/24 as being in Tier 1 and Tier 2†† include clauses on environmental, labour and human rights requirements

RESPONSIBLE PROCUREMENT

Responsible procurement continues to be a priority at the firm. Our thinking on ethical sourcing has evolved during FY23/24 under a new Global Head of Strategic Sourcing, Steve Burgham.

Our refreshed procurement strategy centres on five strategic pillars and sets out a clear three-year roadmap to ensure we continue to improve and adapt our approach, monitor our progress and assess our maturity level on an annual basis.

Responsible procurement principles are embedded in our new Global Procurement Policy and procedures, and we focus on mitigating risks at both the qualifying and selection stage of our RfP processes via our sourcing and onboarding tool, our standard RfP template and supplier questionnaire.

In 2023, we partnered with EcoVadis through which we have increased visibility of our trading partners' and their suppliers' sustainability performance, we run our own risk assessments on our different categories of spend and we regularly engage with our key suppliers to drive improvements. Our Tier 1 and 2 suppliers have access to the EcoVadis Academy training through our EcoVadis partnership. We also embed responsible business provisions into contracts with our suppliers, and an audit programme has been created to include on-site and off-site audits of suppliers on environmental and social issues based on criticality.

We have established a preferred sustainable supplier list that uses responses to our supplier questionnaire to identify those suppliers who are actively aligned with our sustainability ambitions and are working towards science-based targets and other measurable environmental goals.

By prioritising suppliers who are committed to SBTs and sustainable practices, we will ensure a more resilient, responsible and efficient supply chain.

Our procurement team takes part in mandatory ESG training, including modern slavery, wider labour and human rights, environment, anti-bribery and corruption, information security, diversity and inclusion and sustainable procurement modules. Responsible procurement goals are communicated and embedded in individual procurement professionals' objectives, which are measured, appraised and updated yearly.

Partnerships and commitments

We continue to seek to leverage the large amount of annual spend on our supply chain to drive positive change across our local communities and society at large. We promote sustainable (including diverse) suppliers internally and we partner with [Heart of the City](#), an initiative which provides support and resource for SMEs to consider ESG in their operations and further develop their responsible business efforts.

We are increasing our focus and visibility of the diverse ownership, and related D&I commitments, of our supply chain, whilst also putting in place strategies to promote greater supplier diversity. We continue to partner with external organisations such as [WEConnect](#) to drive this forward and in June 2024, we signed the Manifesto for Gender Equality in the Italian Supply Chain. For further details on both WEConnect and the Manifesto, please see [Appendix 3](#).



Looking ahead

Over the next year, we will continue to focus on the following key sustainable procurement priorities:



Further embed ESG in category management



Continue to evolve and refine supplier diversity and inclusion strategy



Further embed third-party sustainability assessment platform across targeted suppliers



Increase Tier 1 and 2 supplier contracts with ESG specific provisions to >90 per cent by the end of 2025

07

Business integrity



GOVERNANCE, RISK MANAGEMENT AND COMPLIANCE

As a firm, we are committed to the highest standards of governance and conduct our business with the professional and financial integrity expected from a responsible and highly regulated business. This includes a risk-based framework for monitoring and continually improving our internal procedures, processes and systems, adapting to regulatory change and business need.

The firm's governance structure is designed to ensure decisions at the firm are aligned with our purpose and values, to constructively challenge and support senior management and to drive informed, collaborative and accountable decision-making.

As the firm's highest governance body, the Board is responsible for overseeing the firm's strategic direction and the Senior Partner and the wider Global Leadership Team's accountability for delivering the strategy and its stewardship of the firm. The Board is supported by four subcommittees, with our Conduct and Risk Committee and Finance Committee together responsible, on behalf of the Board, for oversight of the firm's risk management and internal controls framework.

FY23/24 highlights

100%

of respondents to our Annual Compliance Survey confirmed compliance with our key global risk policies*

88%

of relevant staff** attended Solicitors Regulation Authority-related training on business ethics issues

98.5%

of relevant staff† completed Information Security accreditation training

80%

of relevant†† new joiners completed Competition Law training

79%

of relevant staff† completed Data Protection training

Completed a comprehensive review and refresh of the **firm's global policy framework**

In-depth review of the firm's approach to risk management, with a **new global principal risks dashboard**

Successful transition from ISO 27001;2013 to the ISO 27001;2022 standard in April 2024 with no findings or observations

Preparation of a **new Freshfields Code**, a one-stop reference guide for all colleagues at the firm that brings together our firm values, our principles and our key professional and regulatory responsibilities

Publication of our **Whistleblowing Survey 2023**, with views on whistleblowing across 13 industries in the UK, the US, Hong Kong, Germany and France, providing insights on whistleblowing best practice and market perspectives

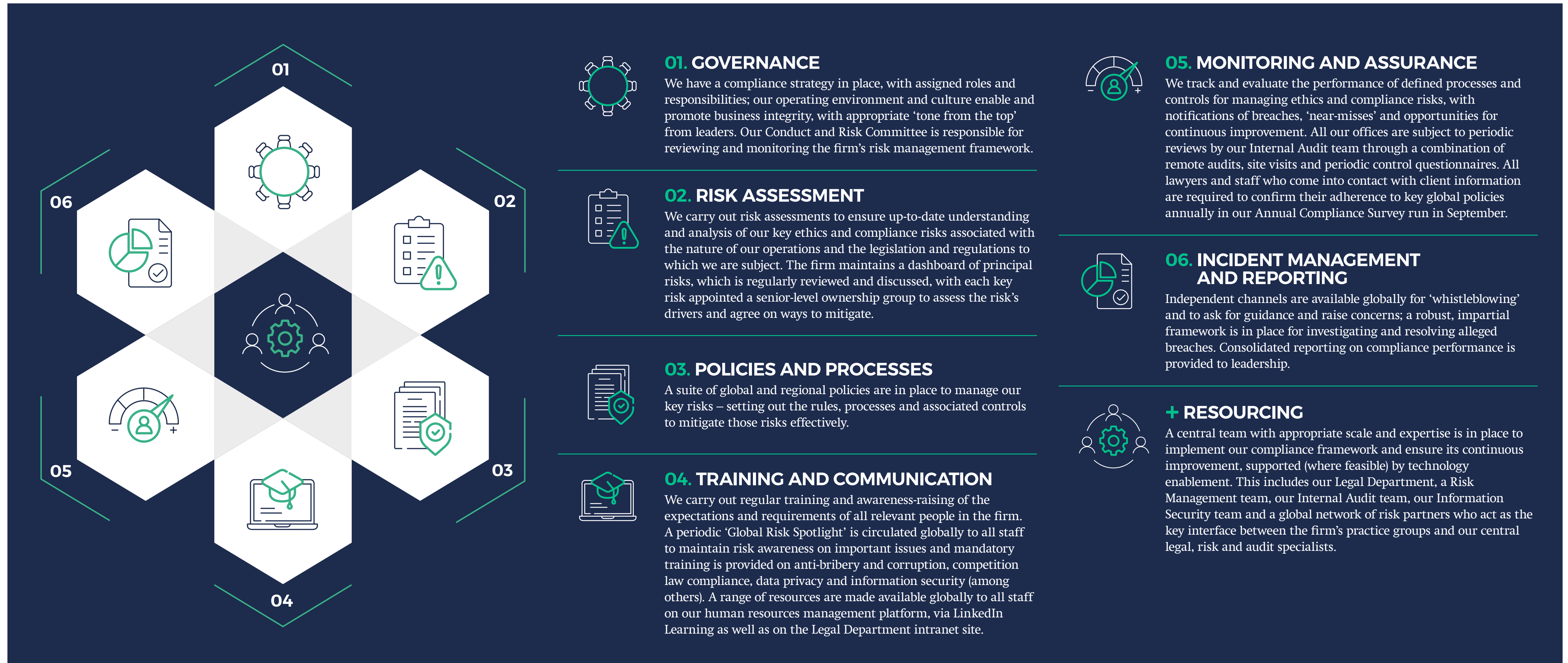
* In 2023, the Annual Compliance Survey covered compliance with firm policies including the IT Use Policy, the Data Privacy Policy, the Anti-Money Laundering Policy, the Anti-Bribery Policy and the firm's key people policies (including our Harassment, Bullying and other Unacceptable Behaviour policy and our Speaking up about personal concerns policy). It is sent to all lawyers at the firm and all staff who are in contact with confidential client information. The 2023 Annual Compliance Survey had an 86 per cent response rate.

** UK-based partners, fee earners and knowledge management/professional support lawyers; all principals and directors whose work relates to the firm's UK LLP; all global employees in our Legal Department with the description "Global", "Chief" or "Head of" in their job title, and all other UK-based business services employees.

† The information security accreditation training and the firm data protection training are sent to all partners and staff excluding contingent workers and those on secondment, long-term absence, students and those without access to a firm PC (eg maintenance contractors).

†† The new joiner Competition Law training module is run monthly and provided to all new joiners globally with the exception of contractors and contingent workers.

GOVERNANCE, RISK MANAGEMENT AND COMPLIANCE



GOVERNANCE, RISK MANAGEMENT AND COMPLIANCE

The firm's approach to risk management and compliance involves a combination of individual, central, local and practice group-specific responsibility. It is designed to meet the firm's regulatory obligations, client expectations and evolving best practice for global professional services organisations.

Financial crime

We take our adherence to obligations in relation to financial crime very seriously. We require all our people to comply with financial crime legislative and other requirements in the conduct of the firm's business, including the UK Bribery Act and US Foreign Corrupt Practices Act. We implement a suite of global financial crime policies, controls and procedures to ensure compliance.



These policies, controls and procedures cover anti-money laundering and terrorist financing, prevention of tax evasion, sanctions, fraud prevention, insider trading and anti-bribery and corruption (including gifts and hospitality, political and charitable contributions, preferential treatment and supplier selection).

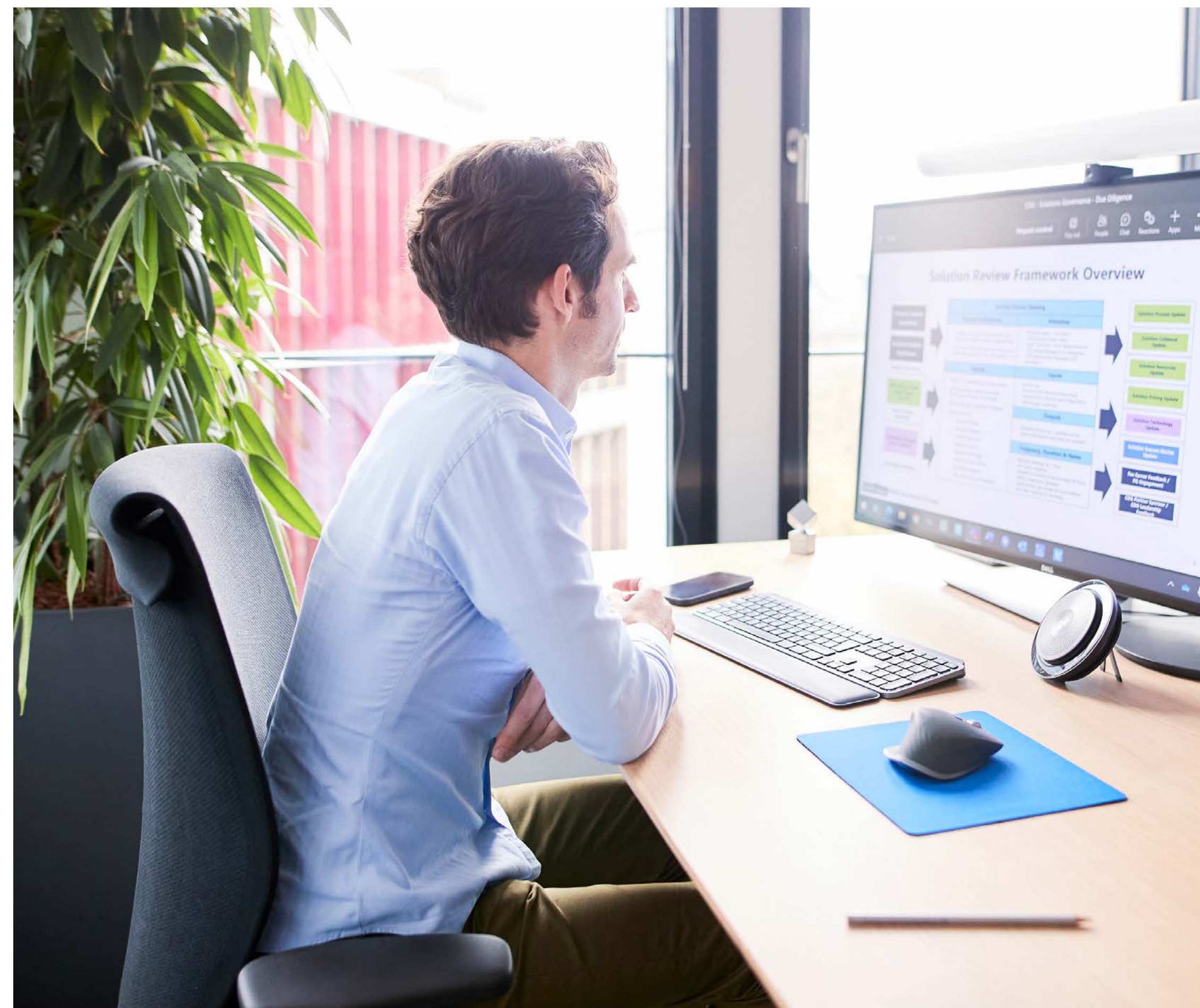
Beyond our legal obligations, we respect and support the UN Convention against Corruption and the OECD Convention on Combatting Bribery and, as a signatory to the UN Global Compact, we are committed to working against corruption in all its forms, including extortion and bribery.

Client and matter onboarding

The firm has well-established systems and processes for client and matter acceptance, including analysis of potential conflicts, reputational and ESG risks and financial crime and sanctions risks. Our Global Financial Crime and Sanctions team sets the standards and requirements for the financial crime and sanctions compliance aspects of business acceptance implemented by our Global Business Acceptance team as part of client due diligence and is an escalation point with relevant subject matter expertise to advise on related risks in connection with new business for the firm. We are prepared to refuse business on ethical, financial, reputational, regulatory compliance and other grounds and to opt out of work already underway if it develops in a direction that no longer aligns with these criteria or our values.

Competition law compliance

We maintain open communication with competition authorities and, through our client work and competition law experts at the firm, stay informed about regulatory changes and enforcement actions. We are committed to monitoring compliance with our Global Competition Law Policy, we train our people on this policy periodically and listen to any concerns raised.



GOVERNANCE, RISK MANAGEMENT AND COMPLIANCE

Data protection

As a regulated law firm, the protection of personal data is a key priority. The Privacy Office, led by our Global Privacy Counsel and Data Protection Officer, maintains the firm's data protection registers, handles data subject requests, provides advice and guidance on application of data protection laws, conducts privacy impact assessments and provides internal training to teams regarding the firm's obligations to respect the privacy rights of our own people, our clients and other third parties. All staff are offered data privacy training and are asked to confirm compliance annually with our data privacy and protection policies.

Information security

We have an 18-strong Information Security group led by our Global Chief Information Security Officer and a comprehensive suite of policies and procedures covering all aspects of security including: human resources, asset management, access control, cryptography, physical security, operations, communication, system acquisition, development and maintenance, supplier management, incident management and business continuity.

We carry out an annual formal risk assessment (risk identification, impact analysis, evaluation and agreeing and reviewing progress against mitigation strategies). Risks are recorded, reported on and reviewed by internal security leadership and oversight committees.

The firm has three security certifications: ISO 27001, Cyber Essentials Plus and CSA STAR One, and aligns with other information security best practices including the Information Security Forum's Code of Best Practice,

Cobit 5 and NIST. More than 180 assessments are conducted annually to evaluate our security position, including internal and external audits, as well as client assessments.

All colleagues receive regular information security awareness training tailored to their specific roles to ensure they are equipped to handle relevant security challenges. Specialist roles, such as IT technicians or high-risk consultants, receive additional targeted training, as needed.

New employees participate in onboarding training where they are introduced to key information security policies. Existing staff are required to complete annual mandatory training to stay updated on the latest security protocols and practices.

Examples of the firm's protections and processes include:

- permanent on-site security, CCTV, intelligence feeds, smart card access and rolling patrols reducing the likelihood and impact of theft, malicious actor or terrorism activities;
- 24/7 monitoring and response teams, modern firewalls, encryption, advanced threat detection, cyber intelligence, vulnerability monitoring/patch management, red team threat assessments, penetration tests and regular security audits;
- deployment and active monitoring of insider threat detection technologies; and
- supplier security assessment (including technical cyber consultancy sign-off for new technology and software), service transition (where applicable), assurance and monitoring capabilities.

Looking ahead

Over the coming year, our focus will be on further development of our compliance training programmes and external certifications.



Establish a Risk Training Working Group to lead on the review and refresh of our global suite of risk training



Coordinate a Compliance Training Month initiative, to be rolled out to staff annually



Apply for UK GDPR certification under the newly created Legal Services Operational Privacy Certification Scheme – a voluntary scheme approved by the UK Information Commissioner's Office, which will include independent verification of a comprehensive set of criteria including privacy governance, data protection record keeping, supply chain and third-party due diligence, data sharing and audits

08

Appendices

APPENDIX 1 MATERIAL TOPICS AND ENGAGEMENT WITH STAKEHOLDERS

This report covers the sustainability issues that are important to our firm and to our stakeholders. They influence the impact we have, and help us to direct our focus and resources where we can make the greatest difference.

In FY23/24, stakeholder engagement has helped to identify our material issues. Examples of recent stakeholder engagement and our responses are set out in the table on pages [59](#) and [60](#).

Our material issues include

- offering the highest quality of client service
- attracting and retaining talent
- promoting a diverse and inclusive workforce
- using our skills to support our pro bono clients
- promoting access to the legal profession
- climate change and minimising our adverse impact on the environment
- navigating geo-political and technological change
- championing ethics and governance
- collaborating to maximise our impact

Our key stakeholders include

- our clients
- our people (past, present and future)
- our suppliers
- NGOs and charities
- local communities
- the legal sector, governments and regulatory bodies

How we interact with our stakeholders

- as an employer
- with clients, intermediaries and other law firms through our work product/services and the mandates we take on (including pro bono)
- with and through our suppliers
- through our community impact initiatives, external collaborations and training and volunteering/outreach activities
- through our recruitment efforts and our alumni network
- through our influence as thought leaders

APPENDIX 1 MATERIAL TOPICS AND ENGAGEMENT WITH STAKEHOLDERS

Stakeholder group	Engagement methods	Feedback provided	Response (examples)
Our clients (including pro bono clients)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Ongoing contact during mandates and projects Regular and ad hoc client meetings and feedback gathering Formal client feedback programme (from February 2024) 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Service needs Growth areas/areas of increasing client demand Feedback on quality and delivery of work Service delivery, innovation and alternative delivery methods Performance expectations across sustainability matters including diverse teams and inclusive practices 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Continuous monitoring and adapting of business practices Continued development and build of our ESG and client sustainability practice with key recent hires in the UK and Germany; further development of our ESG training (both external and internal), of our sustainability blog and of our thought-leadership Investment in technology and innovation in business processes; appointment of Global Chief Innovation Officer Gil Perez and establishment of global cross-practice AI group Completed numerous client surveys, questionnaires and requests for information across a range of sustainability topics (environment, business ethics, data protection and information security, community impact and pro bono, diversity and inclusion and ways of working, among other initiatives); increasing transparency in our external reporting and publication of a holistic responsible business report on progress Collaborating on projects, events and training and sharing best practice in relation to D&I and wellbeing Development of trauma-informed client care training to assist our teams advising pro bono clients who exhibit symptoms of post-traumatic stress disorder and related conditions
Our people (past, present and future)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Annual global purpose, culture and people experience survey (run annually between 2022 and 2024) Firmwide annual culture workshops across the firm (16 run globally during the summer of 2023) to explore themes from the purpose, culture and people experience survey in more depth 6-weekly meetings of global engagement forums with the Senior Partner and wider Global Leadership Team (the Associate and Business Services Advisory Board and the global Business Services Engagement Forum) 10+ D&I networks and the Global Green Group Multiple committees and leadership sponsors for different teams, regions and initiatives (eg LGBTQ+ executive sponsors) Annual commuting survey sent out to all colleagues globally. 1,647 responses received in FY23/24. Direct engagement in August and September 2023 in Continental Europe via townhalls (>500 colleagues) to promote the new business travel policy (including train over plane rules) and provide a refresher for colleagues on the firm's targets and progress One-on-one interviews Ongoing development programmes and work placements Regular communication through the firm's intranet, newsletters, internal conferences and global and regional town hall engagement Regular campus and recruitment events Global alumni programme Firm website 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Areas to build on and also to improve; ideas for innovation in areas of interest (working environment; learning and development programmes; sustainability performance and initiatives, compensation and benefits; colleague wellbeing; AI tech and innovation) More detail on the firm's environmental footprint and initiatives, including our Freshfields REAP programme; encouragement of increased grassroots activities to drive forward environmental performance Refresher sessions on the Being Freshfields principles and their interplay with our firm purpose and values Further support to embed new global appraisal and feedback processes and transition to new human resources management system Suggestions for policy and process updates to enhance colleagues' workplace experience 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Engagement with colleagues during Earth Month, reporting on progress against environmental targets, update on REAP and live learning sessions on sustainability topics with expert speakers Increased focus on environment awareness days, including Plastic Free July, International Day of Forests and World Environment Day; development of global environmental mandatory training module (to be rolled out in FY24/25) Roll-out of Being Freshfields refresher workshops for leaders across the firm, beginning in the UK in early 2024 Partners, counsel and senior leaders across all regions and practice groups at the firm completed 'fostering high performance teams' training in FY23/24, with a focus on supporting teams' wellbeing Set-up of dedicated AI hub and AI Academy training sessions for all colleagues globally Engagement with regional and office managing partners on office cultural initiatives and plans, as well as environmental initiatives, smart travel and waste; key learnings, takeaways and best practice ideas shared across the firm Dedicated support for reviewers and reviewees in key locations to facilitate our refreshed global appraisal process; guidance to all colleagues on giving feedback Set-up of new firmwide community impact group to share best practice across community impact coordinators; launch of comprehensive community impact toolkit to support coordinators and programmes across the business Updated policies, practices and programmes in response to feedback (eg new benefits offered and new talent programmes for diverse colleagues in different locations) New events and awareness activities in D&I and wellbeing to address specific needs or priorities (eg global gender health series in 2023)

APPENDIX 1 MATERIAL TOPICS AND ENGAGEMENT WITH STAKEHOLDERS

Stakeholder group	Engagement methods	Feedback provided	Response (examples)
Our suppliers	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Ongoing dialogue, regular business review meetings and ad hoc meetings, including with landlords, regarding environmental and accessibility items. All London Facilities suppliers engaged on a monthly or quarterly basis to discuss and progress science-based targets, net-zero, energy consumption reduction and reduction of environmental impact Participation in the Heart of the City programme to support small and medium suppliers to further develop their approach to sustainability 	Feedback on improvements in performance in areas of interest (such as payment terms), engagement on responsible procurement	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Drafted new Global Procurement Policy (published in July 2024) and a new Supplier Code Direct engagement on shared priorities with suppliers (eg hosting events)
NGOs, charities and community organisations	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Regular and ad hoc meetings with community investment partner organisations Hosting ad hoc events to enhance dialogue Ongoing strategic partnerships Annual reports and regular updates with project coordinators on our Freshfields REAP programme 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Requests for assistance, feedback on quality and delivery of work/support, recommendations on better performance, ideas for future cooperation Request for customised, appropriate and best practice support for beneficiaries from diverse backgrounds 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Advised and worked with more than 400 NGOs, charities and community organisations worldwide Tailored support: continuous improvement to specific community projects in light of feedback, including: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> development of assessment materials and introducing increased support for neurodivergent candidates as part of our Freshfields Stephen Lawrence Scholarship Scheme introducing additional support for volunteers on our Aspiring Professionals Programme in discussions relating to challenges around socio-economic backgrounds
The legal sector, governments and regulatory bodies	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Ongoing active memberships in legal groups and associations, bar and lawyers' associations and other membership groups Ongoing direct dialogue, participation in working groups and advisory panels, collaboration on policy and position statements Hosting ad hoc events to promote dialogue Responding to consultations Drafting law Legal sector collaboration on sustainability topics (eg Legal Sustainability Alliance, Legal Charter 1.5) and diversity and inclusion (eg GCs for D&I) 	New or amended laws, rules, regulations; sharing of best practices; ideas for collaboration	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Opportunities to drive change across the profession and extend reach of initiatives through collaborations (eg Legal Core and the Legal Neurodiversity Network) Opportunities to collaborate with clients and the wider legal sector through participation in the PILNET forum hosted by our Brussels office, appointment to the board of Pro Bono Italia and organisation of an inaugural pro bono roundtable in Vienna (among others)

APPENDIX 2 NON-FINANCIAL PERFORMANCE METRICS

Diversity and inclusion

Overview*

GRI 405-1**

	FY21/22	FY22/23	FY23/24
% women in the firm	56%	58%	59%
% women in senior managerial positions***	35%	35%	37%
% women partners	22%	26%	29%
% women in new partner promotions	48%	43%	53%
Our people's perception of Freshfields culture†	72%	71%	76%
Our people's perception of Freshfields values†	75%	75%	80%
Our people's perception of inclusive working environment †	71%	73%	78%

* All metrics relating to % women above are calculated as at 30 April (the end of the firm's financial year).

** We have noted in this Appendix 2 data points relevant to a GRI disclosure (whether in full or in part).

*** This is calculated based on senior leadership positions at the firm, to include our Executive Committee members, our Board and Board subcommittee members and our Managing Directors.

† We launched the current iteration of the firm's purpose, culture and people experience survey in February 2022. This has run once annually for the past three years. The above figures are based on the % of respondents to the survey in each year who 'agreed' or 'strongly agreed' with statements that our people had, over the previous 12 months, lived the firm's Being Freshfields principles (our culture), lived the firm's values, and that they had worked in an inclusive working environment at the firm.

Our global board

GRI 405-1

	FY22/23	FY23/24
Total board members (#)	10	11
Male (%)	40	45
Female (%)	60	55
Non-binary (%)	0	0
Under 30 years old (%)	0	0
30-50 years old (%)	50	45
Above 50 years old (%)	50	55

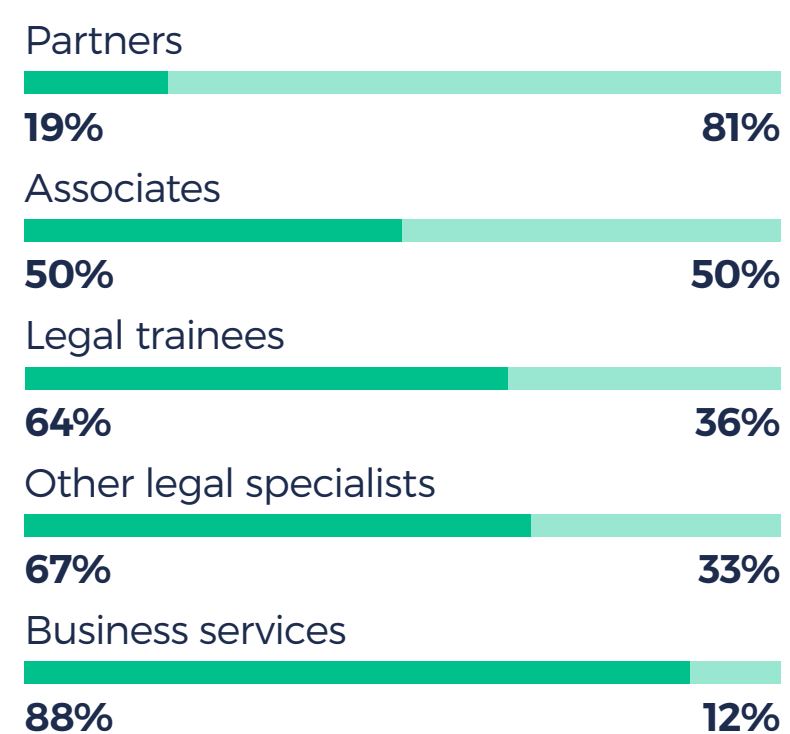
All above metrics are calculated as at 30 April (the end of the firm's financial year).

Gender diversity across our regions††

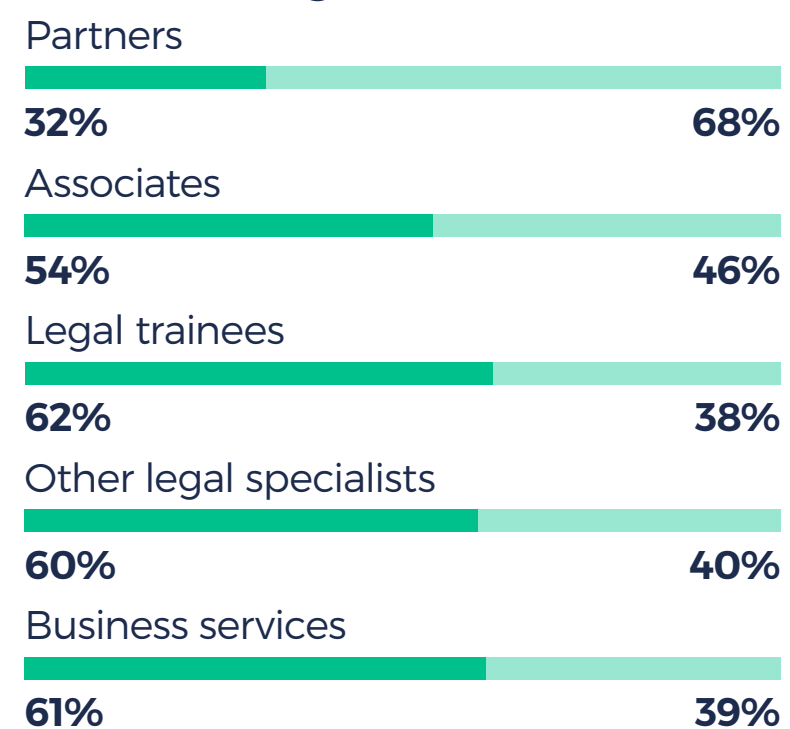
GRI 405-1

● Women ● Men

Asia

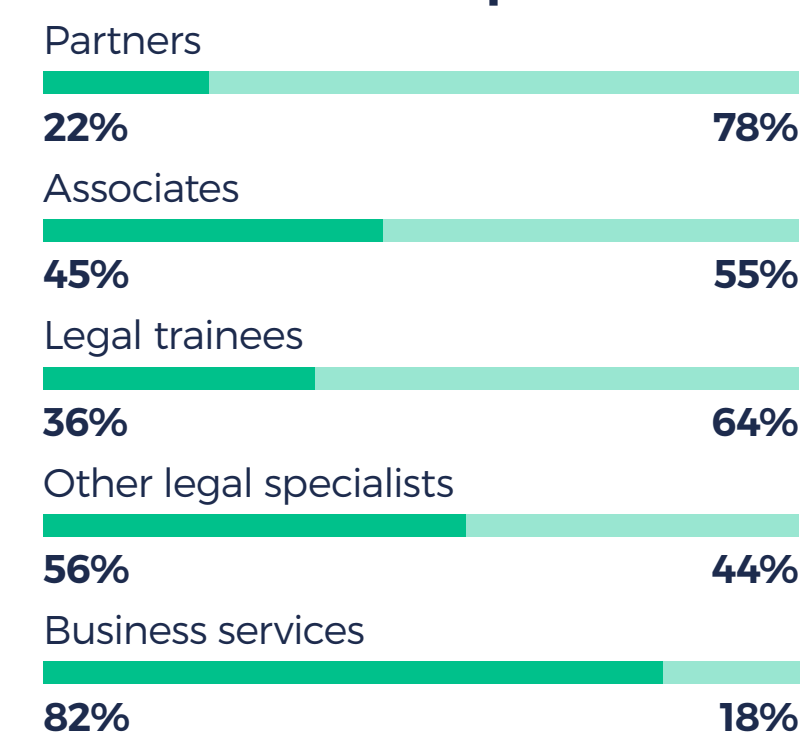


United Kingdom and Ireland

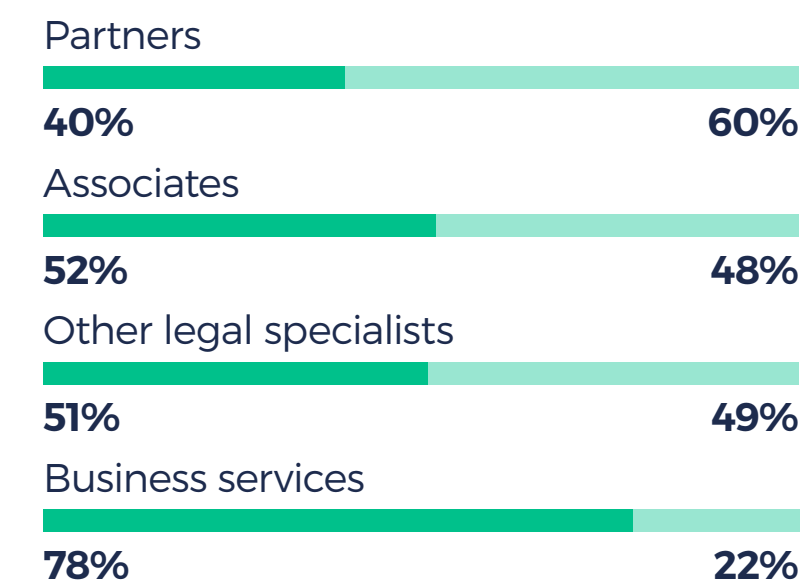


†† Calculated as at 30 April 2024

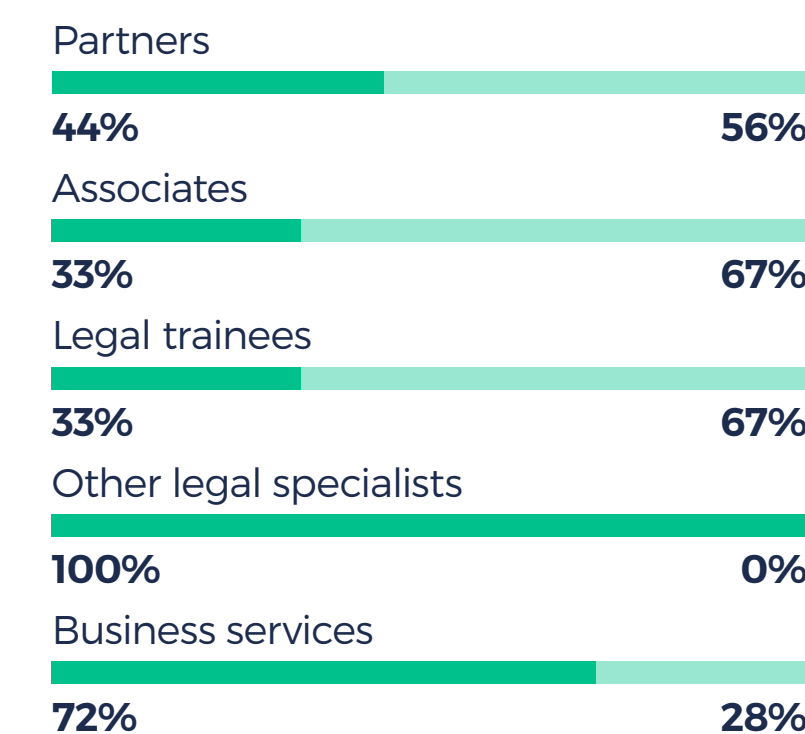
Continental Europe



United States



Middle East and North Africa



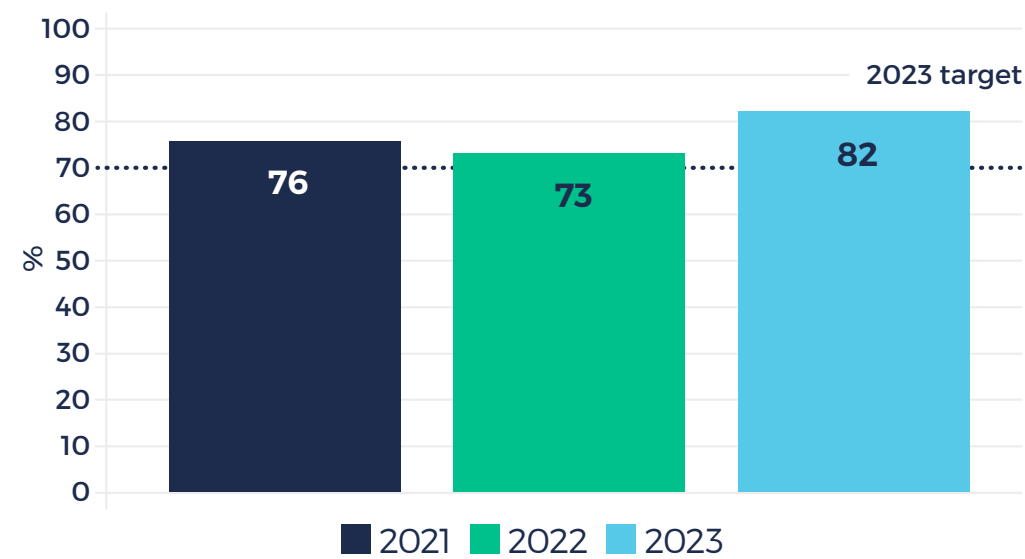
APPENDIX 2 NON-FINANCIAL PERFORMANCE METRICS

US targets

We have seen sustained progress in the US and continue to evolve our efforts as we grow.

Diversity*: US summer associates

2021 – 2023 (%)

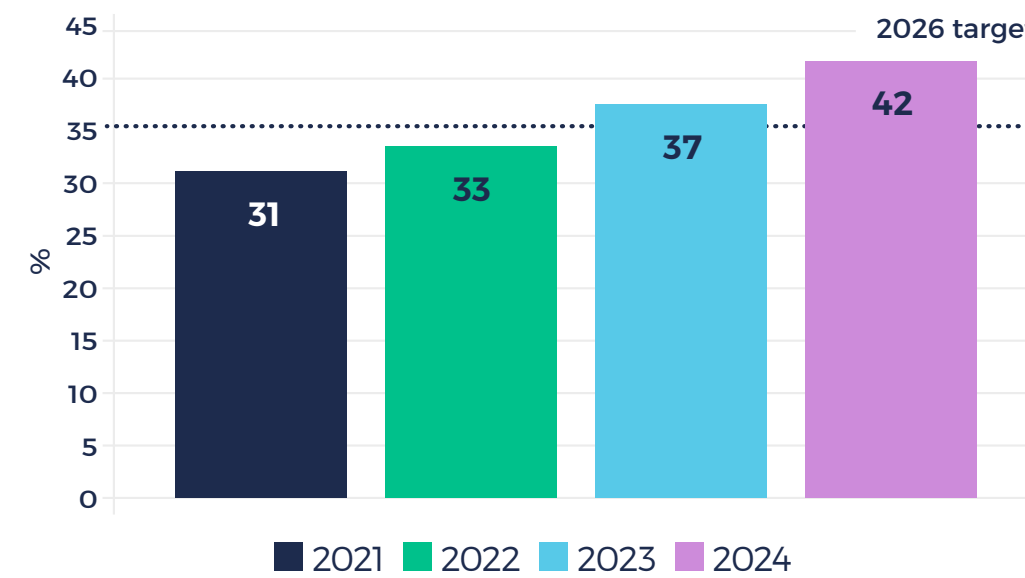


We set a target that by 2023, at least 70 per cent of our summer associate intake in the US will be diverse. We have outperformed our target.

*Includes women as well as racially/ethnically diverse, LGBTQ+ and disabled individuals. We monitor representation in and across each of these groups.

Diversity and inclusion: US senior associates

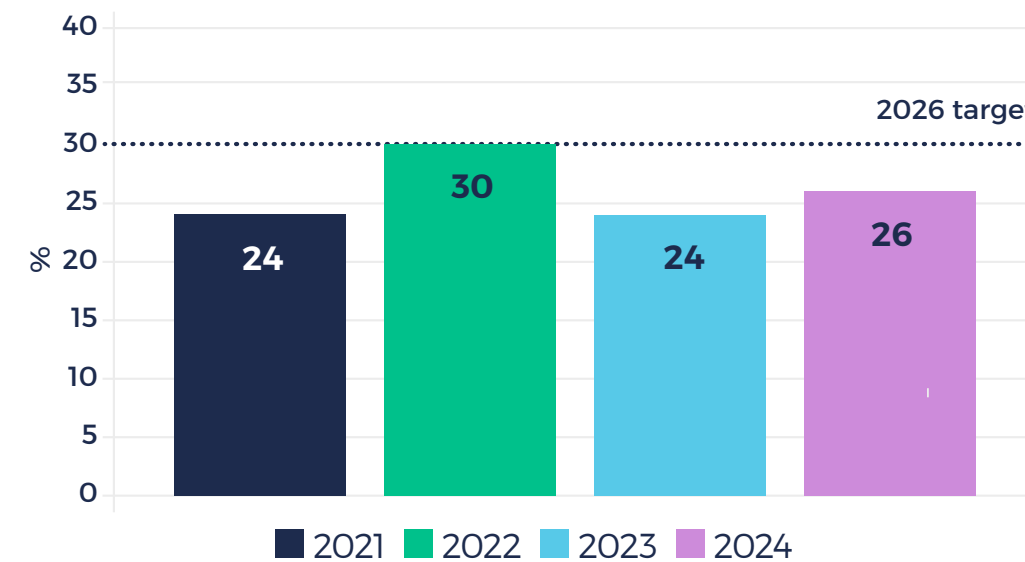
2021 – 2024 (%)



We have exceeded our target to increase the representation of racially and ethnically diverse senior associates in our US practice to 35 per cent by 2026.

Diversity and inclusion: US snr. business services

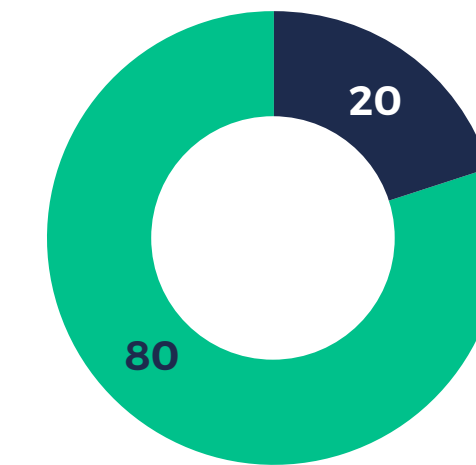
2021 – 2024 (%)



We set a target to increase the racial and ethnic diversity of our US senior business services teams to 30 per cent by 2026. We have seen a slight increase in representation this year and continue to focus on this.

Diversity and inclusion*: US new partners

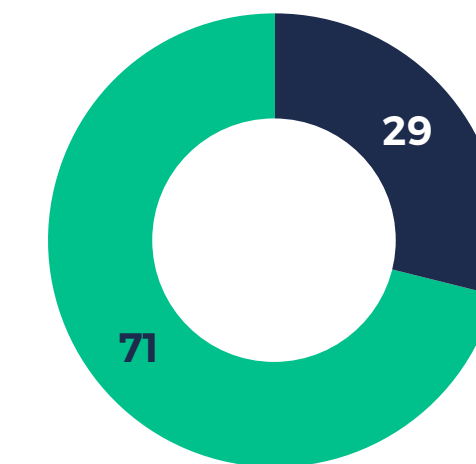
Target by 2026 (%)



■ Racially/ethnically diverse ■ Non-diverse

Our aim is for at least 20 per cent of our new US partners between 2021 and 2026 to identify as racially/ethnically diverse.

Total – March 2021-March 2024 (%)



■ Racially/ethnically diverse ■ Non-diverse

We have exceeded this target thus far and need to continue advancing to ensure we meet our long term goal.

*Based on those who self-identify

APPENDIX 2 NON-FINANCIAL PERFORMANCE METRICS

UK targets

We are focused on progress in the UK and continue to review our efforts as we work towards our goals.

In 2021, we committed to working to eliminate any retention gaps between colleagues in different racial and ethnic groups across our UK legal and business services teams, including proportionate representation in offers to newly qualified (NQ) trainees.

To date, we have met this target for NQ offers (based on those who self-identify) although, as you may expect, there have been fluctuations across different cohorts.

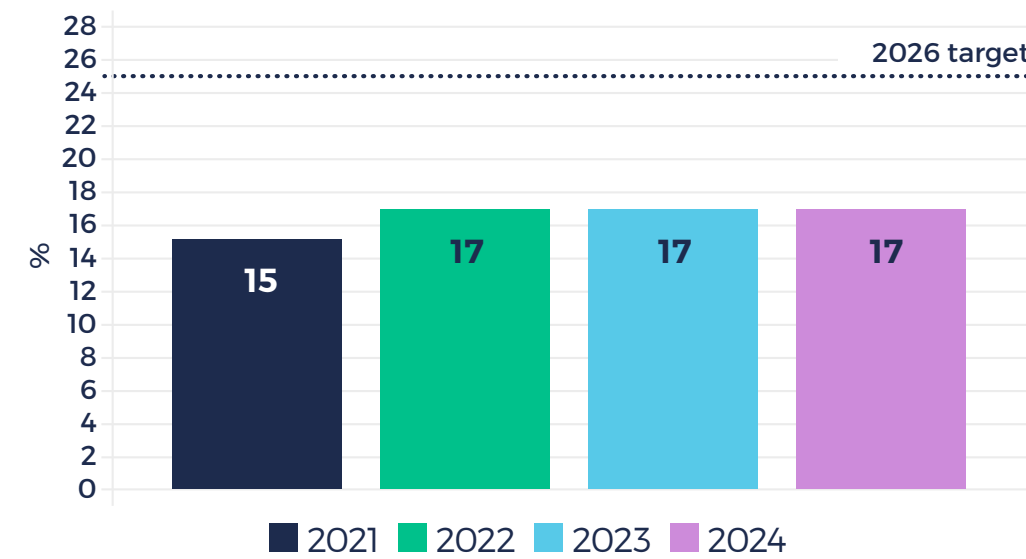
This year, we have taken part in the Rare Race Fairness Commitment research again and continue to focus our efforts to support retention of talent.

Diversity and inclusion: UK trainee recruitment 2024 (%)



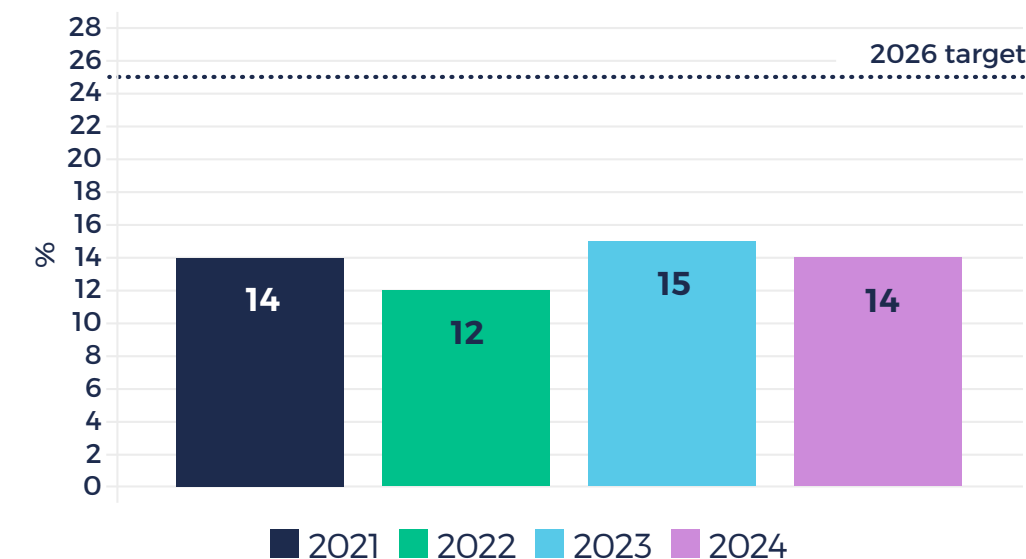
In the UK we set a target that, from 2021, we would recruit at least 35 per cent racially/ethnically diverse trainees, of whom at least 10 per cent would be Black. Once again this year, we have exceeded our goal for recruitment.

Diversity and inclusion: UK senior associates 2021 - 2024 (%)



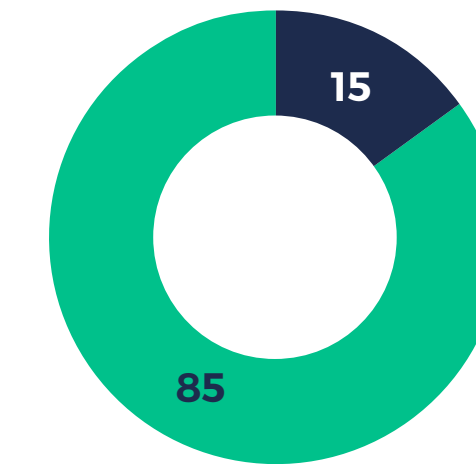
Our goal is to have 25 per cent representation of racially/ethnically diverse senior associates in our UK practice by 2026. We have maintained our percentage representation this year but need to further our progress in the years ahead.

Diversity and inclusion: UK snr. business services 2021 - 2024 (%)



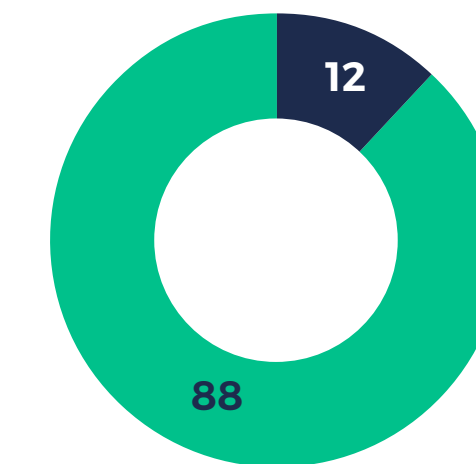
We have a target to increase the representation of racially/ethnically diverse senior business services professionals in the UK to 25 per cent by 2026. We have seen a slight decline this year and are working with leaders to review our progress and actions.

Diversity and inclusion*: UK new partners Target by 2026 (%)



Our UK target is for new partners between 2021 and 2026 to include a minimum of 15 per cent who identify as racially/ethnically diverse.

Total - March 2021-March 2024 (%)



We need to continue to work to ensure a diverse pipeline of talent in our promote and lateral cohorts

*Based on those who self-identify

APPENDIX 2 NON-FINANCIAL PERFORMANCE METRICS

Occupational health and safety

GRI 403-8

	FY21/22	FY22/23	FY23/24
Workers covered by an occupational health and safety management system			
% of employees and workers covered by externally audited OHS system*	21%	23%	22%

* Our London office's occupational health and safety management system is certified to ISO 45001: 2018 standards.

	FY23/24
Risk assessments, audits and certifications	
% of offices by headcount covered by an annual external health and safety risk assessment or audit	54%**
% of offices by headcount covered by a health and safety emergency action plan	100%
% of people represented in formal joint management-worker health & safety committees	52%

** Our London and German offices undergo an external H&S assessment/audit. Other offices undergo periodic internal health and safety assessments.

Environment*

GRI 305-1 to GRI 305-4

	FY21/22	FY22/23	FY23/24
Scope 1			
Total gross Scope 1 GHG emissions (tCO ₂ e)	671.57	583.25	543.87
Scope 2			
Total gross Scope 2 GHG emissions (market-based) (tCO ₂ e)	4,713.52	2,334.02	2,714.12
Total gross Scope 2 GHG emissions (location-based) (tCO ₂ e)	5,934.40	5,388.84	5,913.60
Scope 3			
Total gross Scope 3 GHG emissions (tCO ₂ e)	6,131.67	12,308.31	15,953.38
Total gross Scope 3 Downstream GHG emissions (tCO ₂ e)	0	0	0
Total gross Scope 3 Upstream GHG emissions (tCO ₂ e)	6,131.67	12,308.31	15,953.38
Energy			
Total energy consumption (MWh)	14,820	16,272	16,473
Total renewable energy consumption (MWh)	13,702	13,349	12,958
Waste			
Total weight of hazardous waste (metric tonnes)	0	0	0
Total weight of non-hazardous waste (metric tonnes)	1,339	669	871
Water			
Total consumption of water (m ³)	60,388	44,704	40,988
Paper			
Total weight of paper purchases (metric tonnes)	84	98	93

* The above includes data for Scopes 1 and 2 as well as Scope 3 categories 3, 5, 6, 7 and 1 (paper and water only). The data for these categories are taken from our assured carbon footprint data (see our [responsible business reporting pages](#) for our assurance statements).

APPENDIX 2 NON-FINANCIAL PERFORMANCE METRICS

Purpose and impact

	FY21/22	FY22/23	FY23/24
Purpose			
Employee perception of purpose*	n/a	68%	73%
Pro bono and community impact			
No. of pro bono clients	255	257	271
No. of pro bono matters	453	471	541
No. of pro bono hours	73,893	80,734	85,255
% of lawyers involved in pro bono	51%	51%	53%
Total hours contributed to community programmes	11,786	11,510	13,340

* We launched the current iteration of the firm's purpose, culture and people experience survey in February 2022. This has run once annually for the past three years but purpose questions were first introduced in 2023. The above figures are based on the % of respondents to the survey in each year who 'agreed' or 'strongly agreed' with statements relating to the delivery of the firm's purpose and our people's perception of their opportunity to contribute to it.

Governance and business integrity

GRI 205-3, GRI 418-1

	FY21/22	FY22/23	FY23/24
ISO 27001: major non-conformities raised	0	0	0
ISO 27001: minor non-conformities raised	0	0	0
Annual ISG training response rate	78%	79%	98.5%
No. of confirmed information security incidents*	0	0	0
No. of confirmed data breaches**	0	0	0
No. of reports made via our speak-up hotline***	1	2	2
No. of confirmed corruption incidents****	0	0	0
% of offices for which an internal audit/risk assessment concerning business ethics issues has been conducted*****	100%†	100%††	100%†††

* No confirmed information security incidents with identified losses of customer data.

** No breaches notifiable to supervisory authorities and/or data subjects.

*** None of these reports covered business ethics matters.

**** No breaches notifiable to supervisory authorities.

***** Calculated as % of total number of operational offices at the time of the relevant audit.

† Included a global audit of group treasury control processes.

†† Included a global audit of client account, anti-money laundering (AML) and procurement processes.

††† Included a global AML audit. An internal audit in relation to banking and payment controls was also carried out covering 87 per cent of the total number of our operational offices at the time of the audit. The remaining 13 per cent had been covered in the prior reporting period.

APPENDIX 3 PARTNERSHIPS AND COMMITMENTS

See below for additional detail on some of the firm's partnerships and commitments.

Partnerships	
Aspiring Solicitors	Freshfields is one of the five founding member firms of Aspiring Solicitors, a legal talent development platform with over 85,000 members. Our decade-long collaboration aims to increase diversity, equity and inclusion within the profession and improve the recruitment and retention of diverse legal talent from underrepresented groups. Alumni from programmes run with Aspiring Solicitors have gone on to be successful with Freshfields Early Careers opportunities including the First Year Scheme, Summer Vacation Scheme and Trainee Associate Programme.
Association Article 1	Association Article 1 works for a society where guidance, success in studies and professional integration do not depend on social, economic and cultural origins. To do this, they support more than 100,000 young people each year to achieve their potential, to emancipate themselves and to take power over the future. We partner with Association Article 1 to offer mentoring to some of the young people with whom they work.
Business Disability Forum	We are a Partner-level member of the Business Disability Forum, a not-for-profit organisation that helps to build disability-smart organisations.
CareER	CareER is the first non-profit organisation in Hong Kong to provide charitable job-matching services for employers and candidates with any type of disability and special educational needs (SEN). Each year Freshfields partners with CareER to offer a work experience placement to one of the young people with whom they work.
Carbon Disclosure Project (CDP)	CDP is an international non-profit organisation that helps companies, cities, states, regions and public authorities disclose their environmental impact. Freshfields completes an annual submission to CDP to share details of our carbon emissions, progress towards our science-based targets and allocation of our emissions to requesting clients.
Climate Group	The organisation behind RE100, a commitment for businesses to adopt 100 per cent renewable electricity, of which Freshfields is a member.
Climate Impact Partners	Our current carbon offset partners, supporting Freshfields on the design of REAP, as well as participating in various client webinars.
Education Endowment Foundation (EEF)	The Education Endowment Foundation is an independent UK charity dedicated to breaking the link between family income and educational achievement. Set up in 2011 with an endowment fund of £125m from the Department for Education (DfE), it utilises an evidence-based approach to supporting schools, nurseries and colleges to improve teaching and learning for young people. Our long-standing pro-bono collaboration with the EEF has enabled it to tackle education inequality and improve the educational attainment of children from less economically privileged backgrounds. See more here .
General Counsel for Diversity and Inclusion (GCD&I)	We are a founding law firm member of GCD&I, a joint collaboration between in-house legal functions and law firms committed to improving diversity across the legal profession. We are actively engaged with multiple workstreams including the Disability and Social Mobility Communities and are part of the Metrics Taskforce.
GROW	We partner with GROW, a registered charity, to foster inclusivity and accessibility in the legal industry through mentorship. We have connected 19 aspiring lawyers (mentees) with mentors from Freshfields (in capacities such as but not limited to incoming trainees, current trainees and associates), as well as organising an insight day for mentees at our London office. This initiative provides mentees with valuable insights into life at Freshfields and creates a pipeline of exceptional applications from mentees for opportunities including the Summer Vacation Scheme and Trainee Associate Programme.
Heart of the City	We partner with Heart of the City to support small and medium suppliers to develop their responsible business approach. To date we have sponsored four of our SME suppliers through the 12-month Heart of the City Foundations for Responsible Business programme and two of those suppliers enrolled for a second year in FY23/24. Since the programme started in FY22/23, Freshfields suppliers have attended 19 sessions as part of the Heart of the City programme. Through the programme, these suppliers have access to a dedicated Heart of the City programme manager (for 1:1 sessions), 3x surgery sessions and 4x workshops – covering people (diversity and inclusion, culture and mental health and wellbeing), community and environment– 6+ lunch and learns (covering a range of responsible business/sustainability topics), 2x in-person networking events, as well as coffee and chat pairings. The programme also gives the suppliers access to 100+ other SMEs, which encourages cross-learning and sharing of best practice between different industries as well as a responsible business health check tool to help establish the suppliers' sustainability baseline and to help them monitor their progress over the course of the year.
International Association for Volunteer Effort (IAVE)	The IAVE nurtures and grows volunteer leaders across the world, promoting ideas and values for volunteering as the foundation of civil society.
Institute of Technical Education (ITE) College East	ITE College East is a public vocational education institution that provides pre-employment training to secondary school graduates, and continuing education and training to working adults. Freshfields has partnered with ITE for a number of years and most recently offered mentoring for students.

APPENDIX 3 PARTNERSHIPS AND COMMITMENTS

Partnerships	
Law & Society Association	A leading professional association focused on the place of law in social, political, economic and cultural life.
Leadership Counsel on Legal Diversity (LCLD)	LCLD is an organisation committed to ensuring all talent thrives, with the ultimate goal of building a more equitable and diverse legal profession. We collaborate with LCLD including on development programmes and through our leadership pledge.
Legal Charter 1.5	Freshfields is a 'Dialogue Partner' in Legal Charter 1.5, contributing to its advised emissions work and leading a working group on strategic offsetting. Legal Charter 1.5 brings together law firms to promote collaboration to cut greenhouse gas emissions in line with the Paris ambition.
Legal Core	Legal Core is the first leadership-led, cross-firm collective aimed at tackling the underrepresentation of Black, Asian and minority ethnic groups across the legal industry in the UK. We are a founding steering group member.
Legal Neurodiversity Network (LNN)	Co-founded by our Global Head of Risk Management, James Smither, LNN is a network of neurodivergent employees, partners and allies working in the UK legal services sector, which aims to raise awareness of neurodiversity within the UK legal industry and to promote practices that ensure the industry is more neuro-inclusive. For more details, see page 37 .
Legal Outreach	See Legal Outreach case study .
Legal Sustainability Alliance (UK)	We are active members of the Legal Sustainability Alliance, including participatory members in working groups for TCFD/TNFD, Scope 3 supplier engagement and business travel.
Lord Mayor's Appeal	The Lord Mayor's Appeal aims to create a better city for all by finding solutions to the most pressing societal issues in London and beyond. We are corporate partners of the appeal and actively support initiatives such as We Can Be and Power of Inclusion.
Mission Include	Mission Include is a cross-company mentoring programme aiming to support and advance underrepresented talent. We take part in this programme to develop and support high potential individuals from underrepresented groups from across all levels of the career pyramid.
National Literacy Trust (NLT)	NLT empowers people with the literacy skills they need to succeed in life. We have partnered with NLT to deliver their Young Readers Programme at a school local to our office in Salford, UK.
Neurodiversity in Business (NiB)	NiB is a business-led forum to share industry best practice on neurodiversity recruitment, retention and empowerment. We have attended NiB conferences to build connections and share best practices.
Out Leadership	Out Leadership is a global LGBTQ+ business network for professionals. We have co-hosted events and Freshfields colleagues have attended development programmes and leadership forums around the world.
PRIME	Freshfields is a founding member of the PRIME alliance of law firms determined to improve access to, and socio-economic diversity within, the legal profession. Molly Lewis, a Freshfields associate, sits on the board of PRIME.
Purple Space	We are a member of Purple Space, a community supporting disability network leaders. This provides support to our Freshfields Enabled network, including insights from other networks and events to build connectivity.
Rare Recruitment	We work closely with Rare Recruitment, a multi-award-winning diversity organisation, on an array of initiatives such as but not limited to the Rare Articles Programme (students of Black African, Black Caribbean or Mixed Race with Black African and Black Caribbean Heritage) and hosting the Vantage (Rare's platform connecting students and graduates with legal employers) Virtual Webinar Series. We also utilise Rare Recruitment's Contextual Recruitment System to identify exceptional talent by providing us with contextual information regarding a candidate's achievements through a lens of socioeconomic and personal circumstances. Alumni from programmes and initiatives run with Rare Recruitment have gone on to be successful with Freshfields Early Careers opportunities, including the First Year Scheme, Summer Vacation Scheme and Trainee Associate Programme.
Roots Inspire	Roots Inspire is a leadership development platform to increase representation of ethnic minorities at the most senior levels of organisations. We collaborate with Roots Inspire across Continental Europe to provide opportunities for colleagues to build their networks across firms with access to workshops and mentoring.
Science-Based Targets Initiative (SBTi)	A coalition of the WWF, WRI, CDP and UNGC, helping organisations set ambitious carbon emissions reduction targets.

APPENDIX 3 PARTNERSHIPS AND COMMITMENTS

Partnerships	
Social Mobility Foundation (SMF)	SMF is a charity that works with ambitious young people who face structural barriers in education and work because of their socioeconomic background. We partner with SMF to deliver the Freshfields Aspiring Professionals Programme .
START Foundation	See START Foundation case study .
Stonewall	We are a global founding partner of Stonewall and have collaborated with them on multiple pro bono projects in support of LGBTQ+ people.
The 30% Club	We are part of the 30% Club, a group of business leaders who believe gender balance on boards encourages improved leadership and governance and contributes to better all-round performance. We are founding members in the UK, the US, Hong Kong and Italy. See more here .
The 93% Club	The 93% Club is a registered charity aiming to empower state-educated people to realise their ambitions by leveraging the power of community. In 2023, we collaborated with the 93% Club by sharing our opportunities with their student societies on their national forum board and presenting at their seminal events 'Level Up' in Manchester and 'The Social Mobility Factory' in London.
The International Small Group and Tree Planting Programme (TIST)	TIST is the NGO behind Freshfields REAP .
This Can Happen	We are 'friends' with This Can Happen, which supports employers and employees across the world to create a positive environment for good mental health in the workplace.
WEConnect	We signed up to WEConnect as a global member in 2021 as part of our efforts to increase spend with diverse suppliers (women-owned businesses). WEConnect supports women-owned businesses by linking them with corporate buyers. WEConnect offers women-owned businesses access to large member buyers, matchmaking events, posted procurement opportunities, business acumen training and workshops, as well as giving them exposure to new markets and the opportunity for regional recognition.
Zubin Foundation	Zubin Foundation's mission is to improve the lives of Hong Kong's ethnic minorities by reducing suffering and providing opportunities. They do this through direct outreach into the community and by driving systemic change. Each year Freshfields partners with Zubin Foundation to offer a work experience placement to one of the young people with whom they work.

APPENDIX 3 PARTNERSHIPS AND COMMITMENTS

Commitments	
Black Talent Charter	<p>The Black Talent Charter aims to increase the number of Black professionals in senior positions in financial and professional services firms in the UK.</p> <p>As a Signatory of the Black Talent Charter, businesses pledge to promote Black talent by:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • committing to work in good faith to enhance Black representation and inclusion • creating and maintaining an environment where Black talent can be identified, developed and promoted • developing an action plan with details specific to improving Black inclusion, recruitment and career progression, and setting ambitious internal targets for Black representation.
Diversity Lab's Disability Inclusion Commitments	We have committed to Diversity Lab's 10 actionable steps to cultivate more inclusive and equitable cultures for people with disabilities in the legal profession.
Green Pledge and Greener Litigation Pledge	See page 9 above.
Equal Representation in Arbitration Pledge	See page 9 above.
Equal Representation for Expert Witnesses Pledge	See page 9 above.
L'Autre Cercle Charter	L'Autre Cercle is the leading non-profit organisation for LGBTQIA+ inclusion in the workplace in France. By signing the Charter, organisations commit to treating LGBTQIA+ individuals with respect and furthering LGBTQIA+ inclusion within their workplace.
Manifesto for Gender Equality	The Manifesto for Gender Equality aims to support gender equality, employment and professional growth for women. Our Italian offices signed the manifesto in June 2024 confirming our commitment to promote Gender Equality Certification (UNI/PdR 125:2022) across our Italian supply chain. Certification defines guidelines for gender equality in organisations and explains how to set performance indicators inherent to gender equality policies.
Mansfield Commitment	Mansfield is a year-long structured certification process designed to ensure all qualified talent at participating law firms has a transparent, fair and equal opportunity to be considered for advancement into leadership. The focus is on opening the door wider and ensuring that opportunities for advancement are inclusive for everyone, including women lawyers, lawyers from underrepresented ethnic groups, LGBTQ+ lawyers, lawyers with disabilities, and lawyers from lower socio-economic backgrounds.
Mindful Business Charter	The Mindful Business Charter is a collaboration between banks and leading law firms committed to fostering better working practices for mental health and wellbeing.
Social Enterprise UK	Social Enterprise is a UK membership body comprising the world's largest network of social enterprises. It leads the Buy Social Corporate Challenge – a group of high-profile businesses aiming to collectively spend £1bn with social enterprises through their procurement. Freshfields joined the Challenge in July 2024.
The Global Refugee Forum Legal Community Pledge	In 2023, we signed The Global Refugee Forum Legal Community Pledge, an initiative to unite the legal community around a shared goal of working with refugees and other forcibly displaced people to advance their access to rights, justice and lasting solutions to their displacement.
The Law Society of England and Wales' Pro Bono Charter	We are signatories to this Charter and endorse the UK joint pro bono protocol, which includes commitments to high standards in pro bono work.
The Pro Bono Institute (PBI)'s Pro Bono Challenge	We participate in the US in the PBI Pro Bono Challenge. In FY23/24, we met its 3 per cent of billable hours challenge.
Valuable 500	Valuable 500 is a commitment to disability inclusion at the highest level, focusing on representation, reporting and leadership. We are one of 500 global organisations who have made specific public commitments to disability inclusion.
Women in Law Empowerment Forum (WILEF)	We participate in certification in the UK and the US with WILEF, a leading organisation for women in the law.

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