

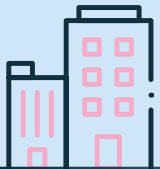
RESPONSIBLE BUSINESS REPORT



Freeths at a glance



1,200+
freethinking employees



13 offices across
the UK



£140million+
turnover



*The
Lawyer Law
Firm of the Year
Awards 2024*
Commended

*The
Times
Best Law Firm
Award 2024*

Legal 500
Green Guide
2024

Certified
B Corp

Welcome to Freeths

At Freeths, doing the right thing runs through everything we do, from fighting for environmental rights in court, to sourcing reusable coffee cups. In our line of work, we all too often see instances of inequity, injustice and rights denied. That's why we are committed to using the power of law to create a better future for people, planet, clients and communities.

We are lucky to have a huge amount of in-house expertise. For example, we are one of the few UK law firms to have a dedicated Clean Energy, Waste and Sustainability practice, a team of around 90 lawyers helping businesses across all sectors lower their greenhouse gas emissions, decarbonise, and work towards net zero. We have numerous social, governance and not-for-profit specialists too.

Many of our people offer their time and energy for free, taking part in pro bono work such as representing sub postmasters in their case against the Post Office (**see page 33**), supporting local charities and advancing equality across the legal sector. We're proud to be recognised as a law firm where social mobility is supported and encouraged.

We are also extremely proud of featuring in the Legal 500 Green Guide since its inception, and of our recent B Corp certification. As the largest law firm in the UK to achieve this mark of excellence, in recognition of our high standards of social and environmental performance, transparency and accountability, it shows we are on the right path. This report showcases just some of the initiatives that helped us get there.



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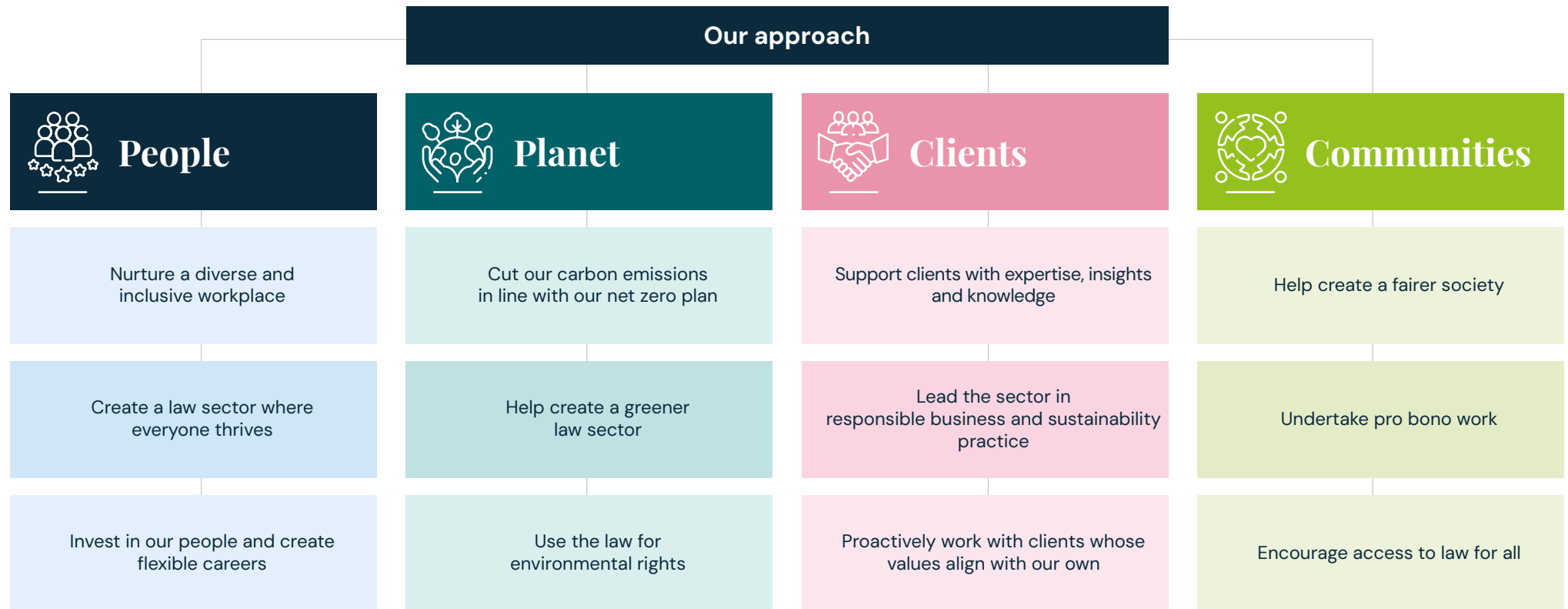


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Responsible business at Freeths

We aim to use the power of law to create a better future for people, planet, clients and communities.



People



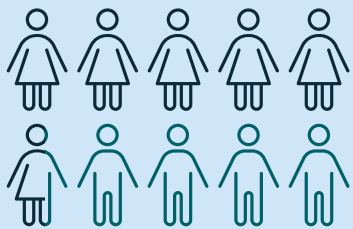
People

We want Freeths to be a fantastic place to work – one where everyone has a fair and equal chance of succeeding. That’s why we are committed to creating a dynamic, diverse, inclusive workplace, where everyone is empowered to be the

happiest, healthiest and best they can be regardless of gender, race, background, sexual orientation, disability, family situation, religious beliefs or any other factor. Our innovative work on diversity and inclusion (D&I) sets us apart from our

peers, and we are extremely proud of our commitment to social mobility, as a result of which almost three-quarters of Freeths employees are state school educated.

HIGHLIGHTS



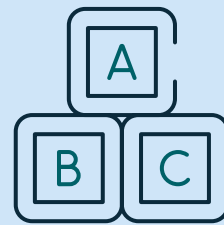
57%

of Freeths lawyers are female, compared to 53% for the sector



50%

almost half our employees attended non-Russell Group universities, compared to a third at the top 50 law firms



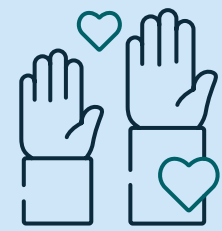
72%

of Freeths employees are state school educated



86%

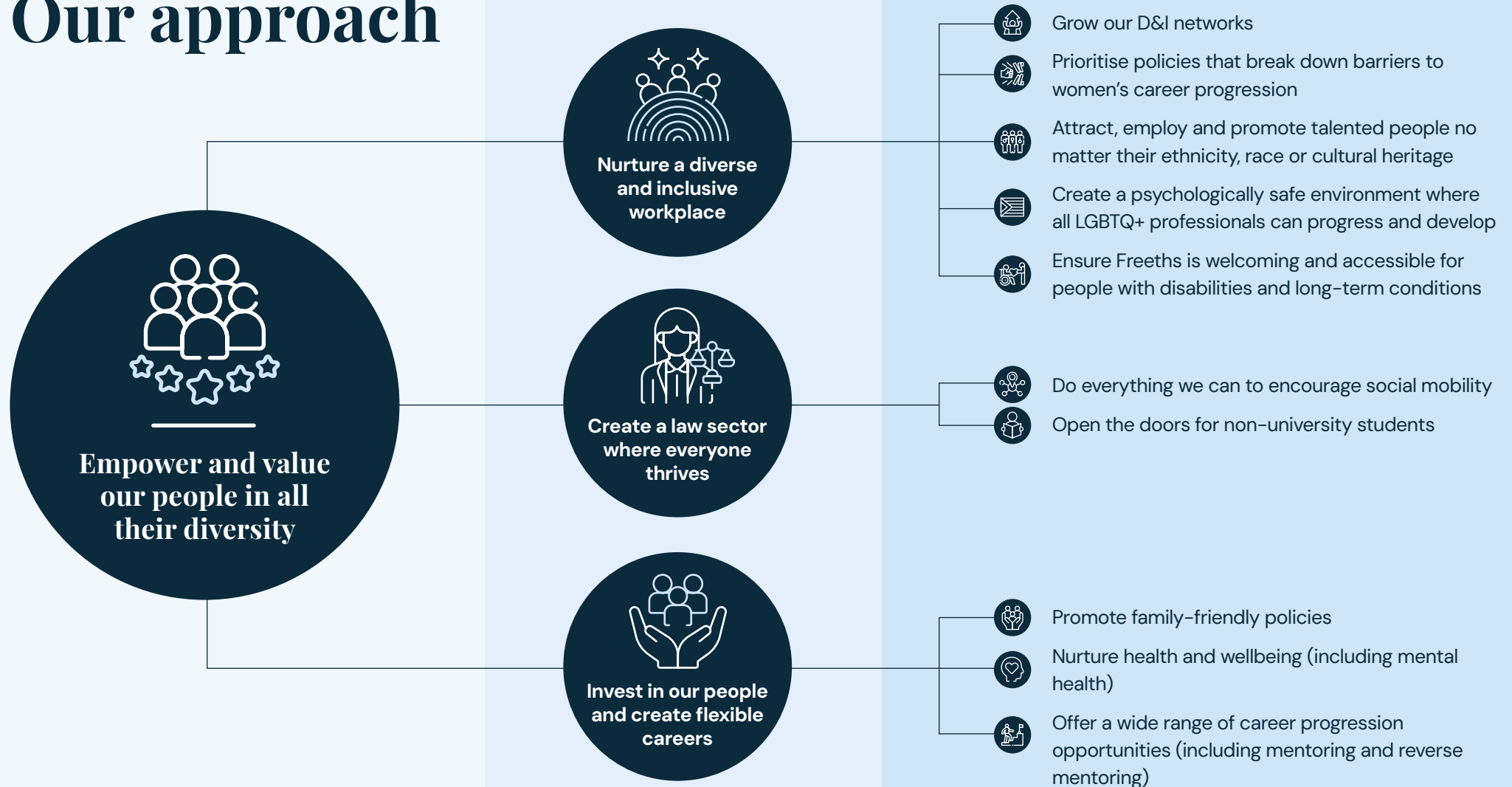
of respondents in our 2023 annual pulse survey agreed they belong and can be their authentic self at Freeths



50%

of the firm signed our D&I Pledge, with 1,270 hours of volunteering recorded – equivalent to three hours for every sign-up

Our approach



Nurture a diverse and inclusive workplace

Our award-winning work on diversity and inclusion (D&I) goes beyond legal compliance to fully embed our commitment within our culture, policies and processes. Over the past few years we have launched a three-year D&I Strategy and a

firm-wide D&I Pledge, expanded our D&I team, established a network of D&I champions in every office and relaunched our Employee Network groups to give staff better opportunities to recognise and drive change.

Freeths' Networks

We finance a vibrant array of networks that support and celebrate differences:

- Black Lawyers' Network: Committed to increasing representation of Black talent and cultural diversity from the top down.
- Disability Network: Committed to removing assumptions and barriers, exploring ways Freeths can improve policies, processes and support to colleagues with disabilities and/or long-term conditions
- Social Mobility Network: Committed to challenging processes, biases and practices in order to make law accessible for talent from every background
- Parent and Carers' Network: Supports all colleagues with parental and caring responsibilities, and provides a critical eye on our family-friendly and flexible working policies
- NEW Network: Providing female colleagues and allies opportunities to network, support and inspire each other to be the best they can be. Through this network we sponsor the Women of the Year Awards
- Balance Network: Facilitates mutual learning and a better understanding of



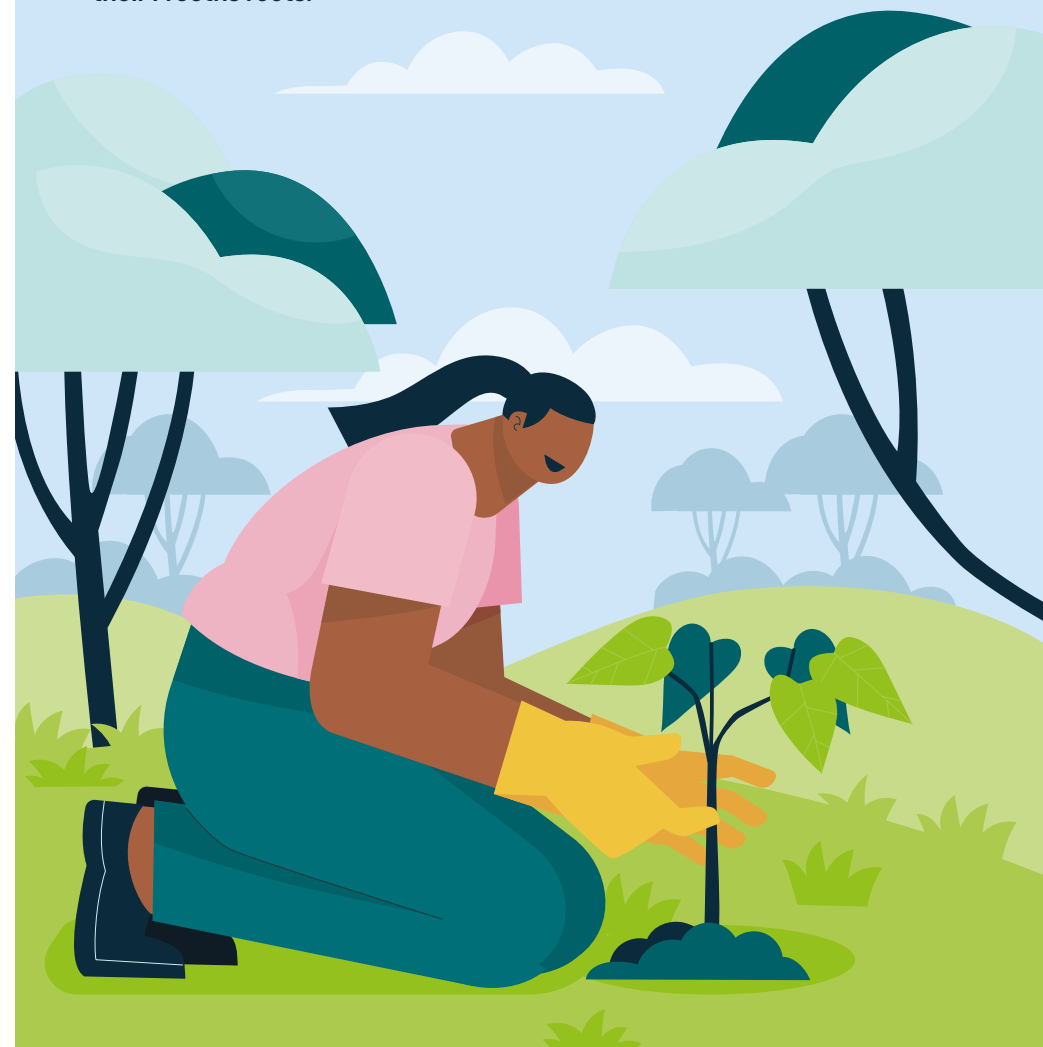
**NEW network event at
Cooking It School in Bristol**

gender equity, in and out of the workplace

- SHINE Network: Committed to creating an inclusive environment where all LGBTQ+ professionals can progress and develop
- Menopause Community: Informal support network any colleague can join to get advice, join discussions and educate themselves about everything to do with menopause.

Diversity & Inclusion Pledge

To encourage us all to embrace and celebrate our differences, in 2022 we introduced a company-wide D&I Pledge. Colleagues sign up to show solidarity and pledge their time to activities or training. That can be anything from listening to TED talks on disability, to sharing experiences in school outreach programmes. For every signature received we planted a tree in partnership with the Tree Council, meaning 500 new trees are now spreading their Freeths roots.





*Lisa Gilligan,
Freeths Managing
Partner Leicester,
at the 2023
Women of the
Year Awards*

Levelling the playing field for women

We prioritise policies that break down barriers to women's career progression, offering generous incentives to ensure women can access fair and equitable opportunities at Freeths.

- In 2022 we introduced promotion targets to ensure gender and diversity equality as a strategic priority. We also increased our family leave entitlements, established a policy to support breastfeeding mothers, extended flexible working, and established support for women returning to work after a career break.
- We report annually on our **gender pay gap**, and have a strategy in place to reduce, and eventually eliminate, it.
- Our women's network NEW has over 1,000 members inspiring and encouraging each other through regular networking and events that deal with all aspects of female leadership, life and business.
- We are proud to have been key sponsor of the **Women of the Year Awards** for a number of years.
- Our Balance Network provides a safe space for all colleagues, of all genders, to come together to further gender equity within Freeths.



A multicultural firm

We are proud to be a multicultural firm – we employ talented people no matter their ethnicity, race or cultural heritage.

We're committed to protecting and promoting diversity and inclusion, and stand against all forms of racism and discrimination.

- We hosted two members of UK Environmental Law Association's (UKELA) Mentoring Programme in 2023/2024. The environment sector is one of the least diverse professions in the country. In light of this, we worked

with UKELA to develop a mentoring scheme to improve access in the environmental law sector for all, regardless of race, sex, and other protected characteristics.

- We report annually on our **ethnicity pay gap**, going beyond statutory reporting requirements to voluntarily publish our data relating to equity partners and ethnicity pay.
- We have been supporting Birmingham Black Lawyers for many years through activities including sponsorship and

As a person of colour, I feel included in the Freeths community and safe to be myself with my colleagues.” *Pulse survey respondent, 2023*

hosting work experience students. The organisation aims to increase the proportion of Black and other ethnically diverse students successfully entering and progressing within the profession.

- We are members of NOTICED – a group of law firms working together to advance race equality in the workplace – and have offered around 50 mentorships through Young Diverse World Changers, a charity aimed at dismantling the obstacles preventing racially minoritised young professionals from succeeding.
- We place paid summer internships in our London and Nottingham offices through the 10,000 Black Interns Foundation, which creates paid internships for Black students and graduates to improve access routes for Black talent.
- Our Black Lawyers' Network, established in 2020, provides opportunities for our Black and Black heritage colleagues to drive change and influence business decisions, including expanding our graduate recruitment outreach to specifically reach out to Black heritage students.

Birmingham Black Lawyers

“Freeths have partnered with us over a number of years, and we deeply appreciate the consistent support, dedication and enthusiasm they bring to our collaboration. Their unwavering commitment to diversity and inclusivity resonates seamlessly with our own values, fostering a natural and sincere relationship.”

Kishma Bolaji and Tamina Greaves
Co-Chairs of Birmingham Black Lawyers

The 2023 Birmingham Black Lawyer Awards, where Freeths Trainee Solicitor Lasharna Barnett (third from right) was nominated as a BBL Diversity Champion





All ready for Pride at
Freeths' London office

LGBTQ+

We want Freeths to be a place where everyone from the LGBTQ+ community feels welcome and included.

- Our Shine Network works to create an inclusive environment where all LGBTQ+ professionals can progress and develop.
- As a result of our D&I Pledge, 53% of colleagues chose to include their pronouns on their email signature.
- Our London and Nottingham offices hold annual pre-Pride breakfasts for the legal sector. In fact, our Nottingham office started this practice in the city, hosting colleagues from dozens of other firms over the course of many years.
- In 2023 we set out our Trans and Non-Binary Policy, outlining responsibilities and respectful behaviour in the workplace, and ensuring the right support is in place for Trans and Non-binary colleagues.
- We are proud Stonewall Diversity Champions, supporting the organisation with advisory and policy support. In 2024, we received silver-level accreditation in Stonewall's Workplace Equity Index.

In 2023 we set out our Trans and Non-Binary Policy, outlining responsibilities and respectful behaviour in the workplace.”



Royal Vauxhall Tavern win

In 2023 we supported famous LGBTQ+ cabaret venue Royal Vauxhall Tavern to win a dispute with its landlord that meant scaffolding outside the venue was moved so that the tavern could celebrate Pride with a full display of rainbow colours.

Disability

We have a variety of initiatives in place to support colleagues with disabilities.

- To increase understanding of non-visible conditions such as chronic pain, diabetes and autism, we take part in the Hidden Disability Sunflower initiative. Colleagues can wear a sunflower lanyard to share that they have a condition that requires extra support, understanding or time.
- Our Disability Network better the everyday working lives of colleagues with disabilities or long-term conditions by advising on processes and policies to make them fairer and more inclusive, and working to remove assumptions, barriers or challenges.
- We've put in place an adjusted application process for students with disabilities, and worked with the Business Disability Forum to ensure our Early Careers Hub is accessible and attractive to students with disabilities, neurodiverse and/or long-term conditions.
- We are partnering with The Law Society's Disabled Solicitors' Network on Project Rise, which supports people with disabilities by offering part-time training contracts.

In the legal sector, we strive not just for diversity but for inclusion, where every voice is heard, every challenge is met with support, and every individual is empowered to succeed regardless of ability."

Sharon Extance, Disability Officer

Inclusion is not just a value, it is a powerful catalyst for change. I am proud to be a part of that change."

Aimee Revell, Co-Chair, Disability Network





Create a law sector where everyone thrives

"It is important we play our part as individuals and as a business in raising awareness of the opportunities to work in the legal profession, to inspire people from all backgrounds and to make the law accessible."

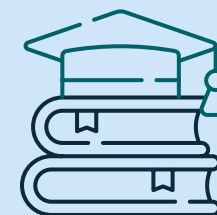
Philippa Dempster, Senior Partner



NOTTINGHAM
TRENT UNIVERSITY

Improving social mobility

We want to make it easy for anyone who has the passion and talent to enter the field of law to do so at Freeths. We offer a huge variety of alternative routes into the profession, including work experience, apprenticeships and foundation programmes. We also work with dozens of universities, education trusts and schools to inspire young people from different backgrounds to step into law.



50%

We are proud to stand apart from the rest of the legal sector, with almost half our staff members attending non-Russell Group universities, compared to a third at the top 50 law firms.

(Near left) Chris Freeston, National Head of Banking and Finance and Managing Partner of Freeths Nottingham signing our strategic partnership with Nottingham Trent University, focusing on providing opportunities to students and exploring key issues such as improving social mobility

Freeths' Skylark Scholarship

In late 2023 we set up Freeths' Skylark Scholarship in memory of Mukesh Patel, former Managing Partner at Freeths Leicester, for law students at the University of Leicester and De Montfort University.

The scholarship offers local undergraduate law students an annual award of £4,000 for three years, with a focus on supporting students from diverse socio-economic backgrounds who aspire to a career in law.

The Freeths' Skylark Scholarship is a generous package of benefits supporting law students facing financial challenges throughout university and beyond. From monetary support to placement opportunities, the scholarship has been developed to offer recipients solid first steps on their way to a successful career in law."

Steve Corbett, Director of Development at the University of Leicester

Into University

We support Into University, an award-winning charity that runs local learning centres that target children and young people at risk of failing to meet their potential to go to university due to economic, social, cultural or linguistic disadvantages.

Each year approximately 125 secondary school students from Oxford and Nottingham attend workshops aimed at encouraging them into higher education. Our Oxford office also held four open offices so students can experience the reality of working at a law firm.



Invest in people and create flexible careers

"Believe in yourself. That's the ethos we want to promote at Freeths. We try hard to showcase role models and inspire people, so they know that they can have the career that works best for them."

Philippa Dempster, Senior Partner





Career progression

We believe in creating a level playing field and supporting our people to have the careers they choose, so they can progress in ways that fit their lives.

- Our flagship Emerging Leaders Development Programme, delivered by personal development coaches

Compassionate Cultures, is the first programme of its kind at Freeths. It helps prepare managing associates for future leadership roles, developing strengths in areas such as delivering strategy and inspiring and empowering people.

- Our firm-wide mentoring programme supports inclusive career progression across the firm, while our Reverse Mentoring Programme provides opportunities to Board members to understand the challenges faced by junior lawyers, and in particular those with different lived experiences.

People-friendly policies

We go above and beyond to make sure our policies are human kind. We don't employ anyone on an hourly wage or contract; every individual is fully employed and eligible for benefits from day one (including part-time employment). We are proud to be a Real Living Wage employer, and our Supplier Code of Conduct requires all suppliers to also pay the Real Living Wage. Many of our benefits are enhanced beyond the statutory minimum, and we actively encourage suppliers to follow suit.

In November 2023 we further enhanced our Family-Friendly Policy with:

- An increase to 26 weeks at full pay for our adoption and surrogacy, maternity and/or shared parental leave packages.
- Doubled paternity leave from two to four weeks at full pay.
- Increased early birth provision for adoption and surrogacy, maternity and paternity leave, with an extra week of leave at full pay for every week from birth up to 37 weeks.
- Five days of paid leave for staff receiving IVF on each treatment.
- Two paid leave days for any staff whose partner is undergoing IVF.
- Any staff who suffer a miscarriage receive two weeks of paid leave.

Health and wellbeing

The wellbeing of our people directly affects the wellbeing of our business. We recognise that law can be a stressful sector, so we go out of our way to create a supportive and caring environment at Freeths.

We partner with Health Assured to provide a comprehensive support network that offers expert advice and compassionate guidance 24/7. In addition to counselling and advice, there is a virtual library of wellbeing information, and a mental and physical health e-hub mobile app. Colleagues can access consultations with a qualified GP at any time through HealthHero's virtual GP service.

Mental health support

Freeths has more than 100 Mental Health First Aiders, trained to recognise mental ill health and help people find the support they need to stay well. We continue to offer this training to new joiners, building a substantial mental health network across the firm, as well as offering all colleagues subsidised access to Headspace app.

Wellbeing is increasingly a concern for society as a whole, and it's particularly acute in law. It's so important that we look after our staff. We make sure we are doing as much, if not more, than others in the sector to provide a supportive framework."

Chris Freeston, Managing Partner, Nottingham



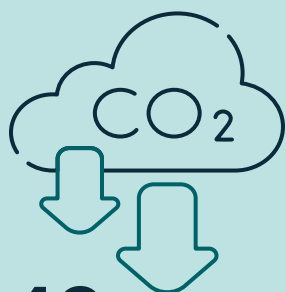
Planet



Planet

Climate change is one of the biggest challenges facing the world. As a certified B Corp, we are committed to doing the right thing wherever possible to measure and reduce our carbon emissions and impact on the planet, accelerating our journey towards net zero.

HIGHLIGHTS



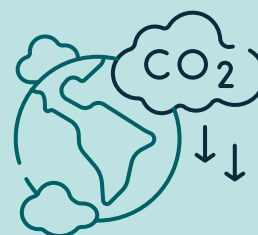
2040

Working with sustainability certification scheme Planet Mark, we're accelerating our journey to net zero by 2040 at the latest



B Corp

We're a certified B Corp – which means we have the highest standards of verifiable environmental targets in place across the organisation



5

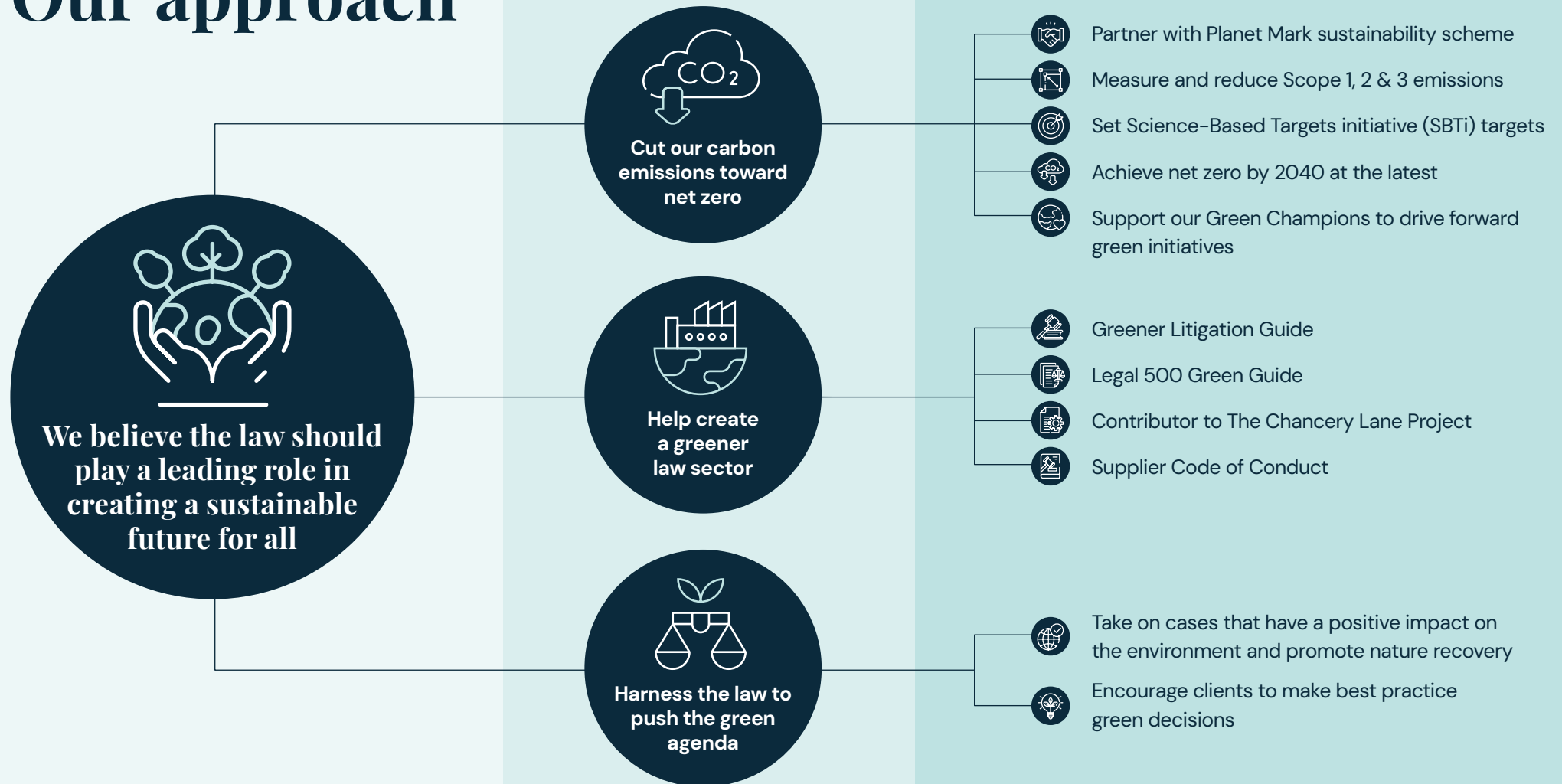
Five Freeths offices have zero energy-related greenhouse gas emissions, and we are working to achieve this in all possible locations



27

We are one of only 27 UK law firms listed in the Legal 500 Green Guide

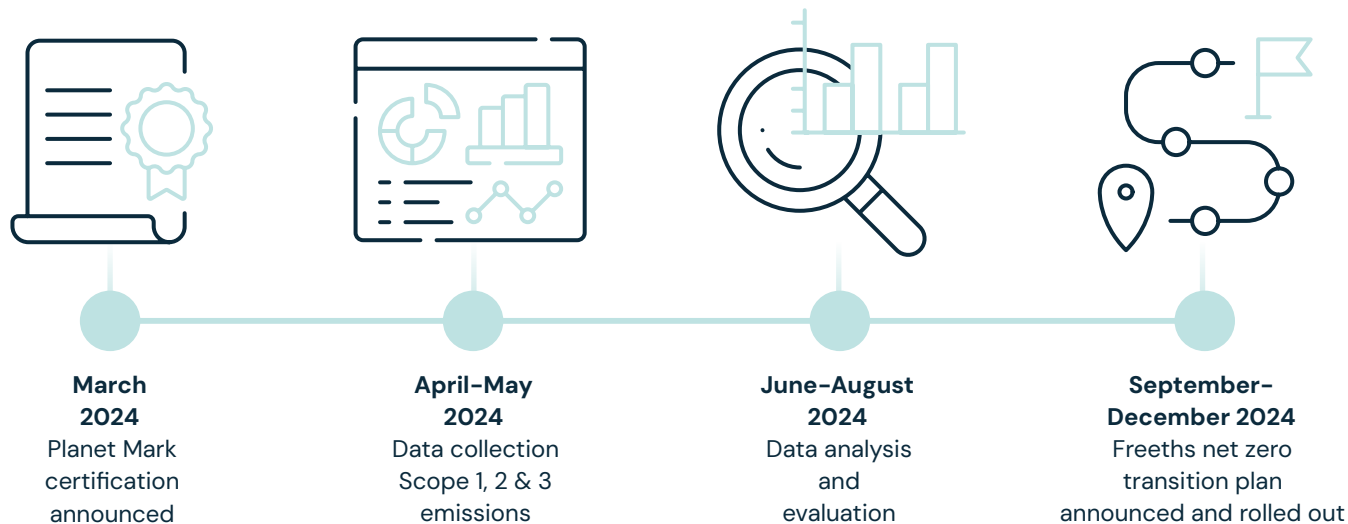
Our approach



Cut our carbon emissions toward net zero

We are in the process of setting concrete targets to help us reach our goal of becoming net zero by 2040 at the latest. In partnership with Planet Mark, one of the UK's most trusted sustainability certification schemes, we are putting in place an effective carbon reduction strategy and accelerating our journey to net zero.

Planet Mark and our journey to net zero: A timeline



B Corp certification



We were extremely proud to become a certified B Corp in 2024, the largest UK law firm to achieve accreditation. As a B Corp, we're part of a global community of businesses that meet the highest standards of social and environmental impact. And as a B Corp in the legal industry, we're counted among law firms that are leading a global movement for an inclusive, equitable, and regenerative economy.

Scope 1, 2 and 3 emissions

We first set targets to reduce our carbon footprint in 2019, in partnership with environmental consultancy Green Element.

Between 2019 and 2022, we reduced our total carbon footprint by 21.6% to 1,809 tCO₂e. A move to 100% renewable energy across five offices helped us get there, and our goal is for all offices to move to 100% renewable energy where possible. Currently, 69% of electricity across all offices is now from renewable sources.

Environmental accreditation

We are proud to hold the ISO 14001 Environmental Management Accreditation, which we first achieved in 2015. This is an internationally agreed standard that recognises that we follow best environmental practice and minimise our impact.

We also developed our Environmental Management System to help reduce our impact. We carry out regular reviews and audits to continually reduce the energy and materials we use and cut waste and pollution.





*Nottingham colleagues
promoting clothing recycling
through the ReLived scheme*

Green Champions

We believe that every small act of kindness to the planet makes a big difference. That's why we have a firm-wide army of Green Champions, who do everything from creating maps to encourage colleagues to walk or take public transport, to approaching local allotment holders to see if our used coffee grounds can help their

plants grow better. Our Green Champions are also in charge of ensuring we reduce waste wherever possible, including segregating food waste for composting, offsetting CO₂ emissions for courier shipments, buying goods and services as locally as possible, and running regular green initiatives for staff.



Green Car Benefit Scheme

All employees are eligible for our Green Car Benefit Scheme, a salary-sacrifice arrangement that promotes an affordable way to own an electric vehicle. Unlike many similar programmes, Green Car Benefits concentrates 100% on EVs; it was by far our most viewed benefit when we launched our new benefits platform at the end of November 2023.



Help create a greener law sector

Freeths is one of only 27 UK firms listed in the Legal 500 Green Guide, which recognises internal and external socially responsible and green commitments. We were pleased to again be listed in the 2024 Guide.

We are also a signatory to the Greener Litigation Pledge, which aims to support courts and court users in becoming carbon neutral (and ultimately carbon negative). We undertake many of the processes in the Pledge, including actively assessing each hearing and mediation to see if it can be heard remotely, using electronic bundles instead of hard copies, and avoiding unnecessary travel in relation to disputes.

We are a pro bono contributor to The Chancery Lane Project, a global network that produces open-source clauses for businesses around the world to put their sustainability aspirations into contractual commitments. We regularly train clients for free on how to use the clauses in their everyday business.



Catalyse Change

We have sponsored several candidates through Catalyse Change, a programme that inspires young people aged 18–24 with a passion for sustainability and ambitions to pursue careers in the field. In 2023 we also began offering mentoring to young candidates.

“Freeths has been supporting our sustainability empowerment and green career programmes for over five years. It makes a massive difference to what we can achieve as a small social enterprise. It provides inspiration and confidence to young women and non-binary changemakers from underrepresented backgrounds, helping them get the guidance and support they need to work in the climate and social space. We are very grateful to Freeths for their valued and continuing support.” **Traci Lewis, Co-Founder & Director, Catalyse Change**

Harness the law to push the green agenda

Freeths teams are internationally recognised as some of the best in the business when it comes to environmental credentials. We have a real passion for all things green, and we use our expertise to push the green agenda nationally by influencing policy, and regionally by supporting businesses in their sustainability journeys – from implementing sustainability plans to enable our clients to achieve their net zero goals, to learning how to avoid greenwashing and greenhushing.

Recent work includes assisting SmartParc with its state-of-the-art food production campus, which aims to use energy-sharing infrastructure to create one of the most sustainable food production communities in the country. In another ongoing highlight we are currently

advising on the development of Europe's largest solar farm, an 840MW project in Oxfordshire.

Freeths is also recognised as one of the few firms with experience of acting for Biodiversity Net Gain Habitat Bank creators and brokers providing biodiversity units to developers to meet their legal obligations. Freeths also advises other natural capital providers in emerging natural capital markets, for example the creators of nutrient neutrality credits.

Creating a more sustainable supply chain

Our Supplier Code of Conduct demands that we only work with organisations that share our core values, sourcing from a diverse range of suppliers and using small, local companies where we can. We have a zero-tolerance approach to modern slavery and human trafficking, and we ensure all our suppliers pay the Real Living Wage.



Landmark environmental win

In November 2022 Penny Simpson, Head of Environmental Law at Freeths, won a landmark case confirming that European nature conservation laws remain enforceable in this country despite the UK having left the EU.

The victory meant the Environment Agency was ordered to take immediate action to protect England's rare wetland habitats from water abstraction, as well as tackling damage already done to internationally important wetlands in the Norfolk Broads.

The court applied a little-known legal provision in Brexit legislation that says even though the UK has left the EU, rules in European directives – in this case, the habitats directive – remain enforceable against UK public authorities if those rules have been recognised by a court as being enforceable prior to Brexit.

As a result of this ground-breaking work, Penny was named in the 2023 ENDS Report as one of the top 100 UK environment professionals making the greatest impact in the past two years.

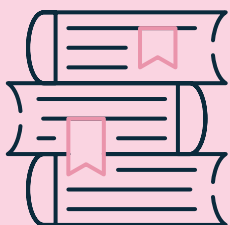
Clients



Clients

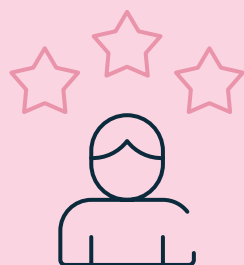
Our work with clients is where we can have the biggest impact. Fighting for justice in the courts is one of the most important – and potentially most transformative – actions any individual or group can take. We are proud to stand alongside those fighting for a greener and a fairer society.

HIGHLIGHTS



FREETHS

Home to an industry-leading national environmental law practice



19

Freeths lawyers were recognised in the 2025 edition of The Best Lawyers in the United Kingdom™



555

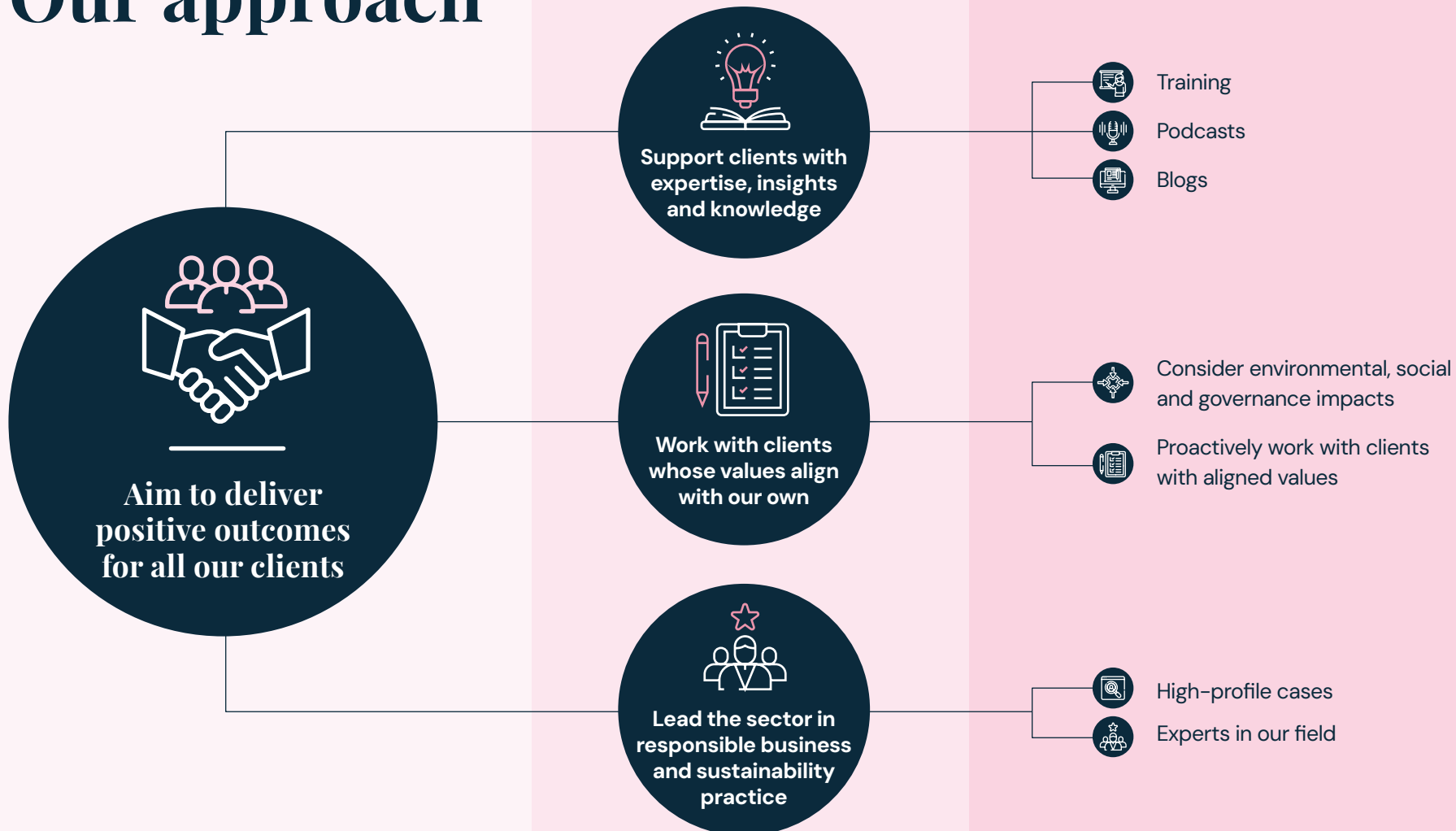
Freeths lawyers successfully fought and won the legal battle that 555 sub postmasters brought against the Post Office over the Horizon scandal



200

We work with more than 200 public sector bodies including schools, education providers and NHS Trusts

Our approach



Post Office Horizon scandal

Over a 14-year period, the Post Office prosecuted more than 700 postmasters for theft and false accounting. Its evidence came principally from data produced by the flawed Horizon computer system. Victims faced criminal convictions, were left financially ruined, and ostracised from their families and communities.

Post Office denied any wrongdoing for many years. However, after James Hartley, National Head of Dispute Resolution, heard a piece about Sir Alan Bates – the founder of the Justice for Sub postmasters Alliance – on Radio 4, he contacted Mr Bates, and shortly afterwards his team took on the mammoth task of fighting the Post Office through the courts, working day and night for a year with no fees.

The team successfully fought and won the legal battle on behalf of 555 sub postmasters. Post Office eventually settled the case and issued a formal apology, paying £57.75 million in compensation and agreeing to a compensation scheme. The historic case led to a public inquiry and quashing of hundreds of wrongful convictions. It was dramatised in ITV's *Mr Bates v The Post Office* in early 2024, which was watched by more than nine million people.



FREETHS

A first-class firm that came to the aid of a major victims' group when all else failed."

Sir Alan Bates, founder of the Justice for Sub postmasters Alliance

Support clients with expertise, insights and knowledge

Our Environmental team is keen to share its expertise with clients and industry.

- Our 'green breakfast' webinars on topics including bioenergy and sustainability regularly attract up to 200 attendees and receive great feedback from clients and industry leaders.
- In February 2024 we hosted our first sustainability networking event in Bristol for those interested in speaking to experts on the topic of decarbonisation.
- We developed an ESG checklist for businesses to quantify and improve how they are performing on environmental, social and governance indicators.
- Our Natural Capital team runs a suite of interactive practical environment law training courses for environmental consultants, planning professionals and planning authorities. High-demand courses include protected species, habitats regulations assessment, water law, wildlife law and biodiversity net gain.
- We frequently deliver bespoke in-house, day-long training sessions for ecological consultancies, planning

professionals, local planning authorities and industry bodies to provide formal training on legal requirements and forthcoming changes in environmental law.



Meet the team



Led by Penny Simpson, the Environmental team contributed to us being named one of the best law firms in the country by *The Times* newspaper in 2024. The team has worked on high-profile cases including Hinckley Point C and HS2.



Richard Broadbent, Planning and Environmental Director (previously Head of Legal at Natural England), regularly lectures in environmental law.



Leading environmental lawyer Ben Derrington helps businesses reduce their environmental impact in the context of environmental permitting, and supports clients in the waste sector to achieve their circular economy and recycling objectives.



Director Sarah Philips advised on the first Biodiversity Credit Scheme to be set up in England and Wales.



Helen Mitcheson was listed on the inaugural ENDS Power List of 100 environmental professionals. She is a Member of Council for the UK Environmental Law Association, and an active member of its Nature Conservation Working Party.

Work with clients whose values align with our own

In line with our commitments as a certified B Corp, we amended our Members' Agreement in 2023 to require the Board to consider the long-term consequences of our decisions on the interests of all stakeholders *and* the environment; and to maintain high standards of business conduct and fairness among all members of the partnership. This means that environmental and other responsible business considerations are now written into our constitution, and must be assessed before any large business decisions are made, including taking on new clients.



Lead the sector in responsible business and sustainability practice

Freeths is widely recognised for our expertise in environmental, social and governance issues. On a daily basis, our teams work on large-scale projects including advising on green loans to fund developments such as a sustainable hub for health innovation, working with local authorities to repurpose town centres to become more accessible and people-friendly, supporting special needs facility construction for schools and education providers, and remediating former collieries into sustainable employment spaces. Partner Clare King has been recognised as one of the Top 40 Women Leaders in Energy Storage – storage

being an essential tool in the large-scale deployment of intermittent renewable energy generation, such as solar and wind.

We are increasingly called on to advise clients wishing to attain B Corp status, helping them implement the activities they need to undertake to achieve certification: As a certified B Corp ourselves, we understand the process that goes into certifying high standards of verified performance, accountability and transparency on factors from employee benefits and charitable giving to supply chain practices and input materials.



Communities



Communities

We can trace our lineage back to 1825, when George Freeth gave his name to our first office in Nottingham. We may have grown over the past 200 years, but we remain rooted in our local communities. Helping those around us thrive is a vital ingredient in the Freeths ethos.

HIGHLIGHTS



We undertake extensive pro bono work across the firm

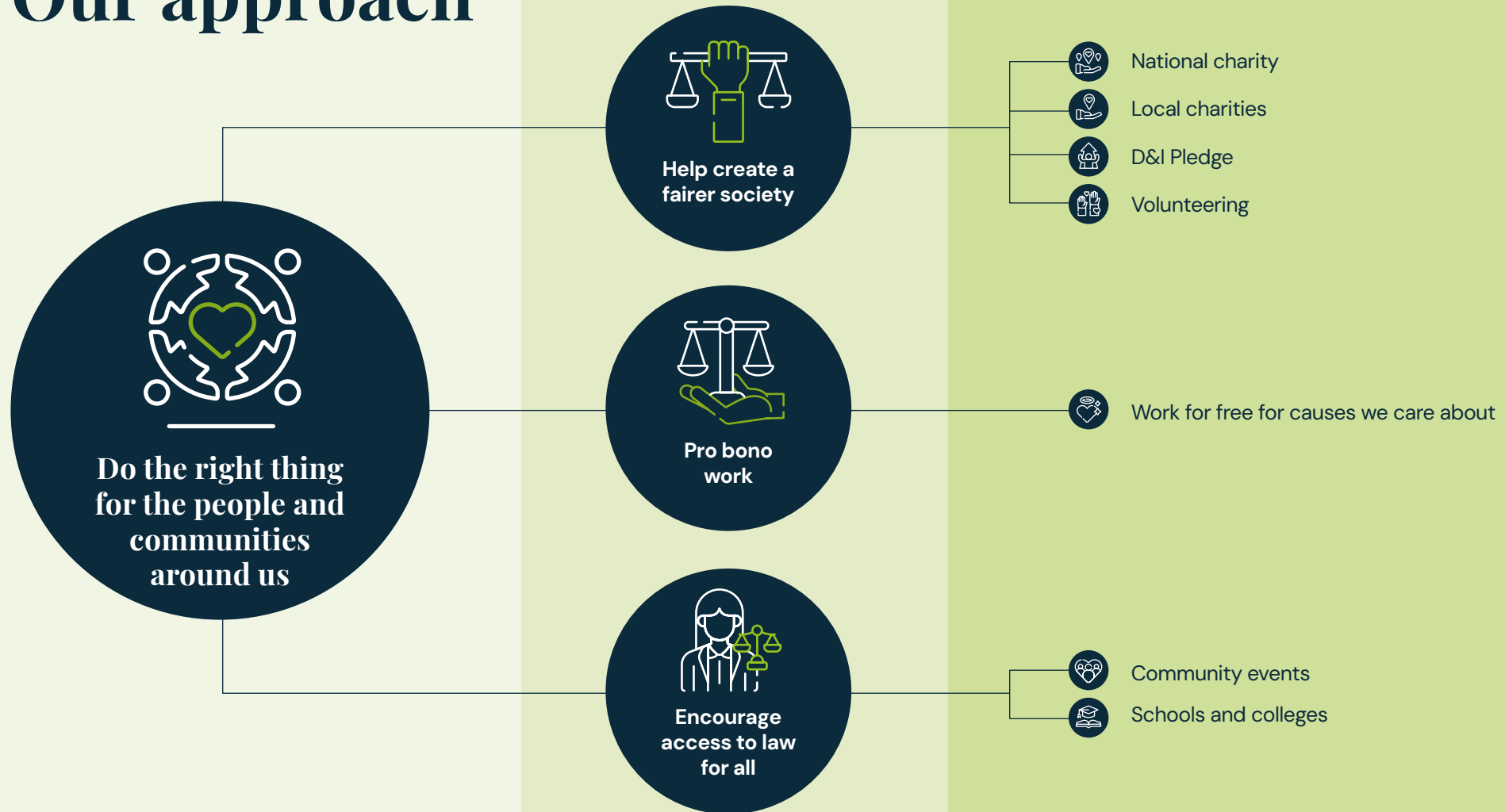


Wide variety of short- and long-term charity partnerships



Local causes supported by Freeths offices across the country

Our approach



Help create a fairer society

It would be impossible for us to work in the area of law and not want to help create a fairer society. It's something that resonates with our core values, and Freeths is alive with individuals, teams and offices going above and beyond to raise money for good causes, give their time volunteering, share knowledge and expertise to inspire and nurture, and support communities and individuals in need of a helping hand.



The Oxford charity five-a-side team, who recently made it out of the group stages for the first time ever and raised more than £700 for Oxfordshire Youth

**Senior Associate
Veena Velani
completes the Bath
Half-Marathon in
support of FareShare**



Below: Colleagues volunteering in FareShare's bustling Birmingham warehouse



National charity

Every year, Freeths colleagues vote on the national charity they want to support. In 2023 it was FareShare, a charity that changes lives by redistributing good-to-eat, surplus food to charities and community groups (which has the added benefit of aligning with our sustainability goals as it reduces waste). Colleagues have been up to all sorts to support this hugely worthwhile charity, including sorting food donations and taking part in charity auctions.

We have also supported charities including Mind (colleagues raised more than £50,000 by doing crazy things including abseiling 100 feet down Birmingham's Custard Factory) and Cancer Research (Tour de Freeths, a 454-mile cycle tour of all our offices, raised £11,000).



Freeths Leicester redecorates the offices of local charity Afro Innovation Group



Helping break the Guinness World Record in support of Milton Keynes food bank

Local support

Every Freeths office has lots of ways of supporting local causes, chosen by them because they are close to their hearts.

- Volunteers from our Liverpool office got their hands dirty planting more than 250 willow trees and an orchard in a local school playground. Colleagues from Glasgow took part in The Big Kiltwalk in support of local charity the Doing it for Daniel Foundation.
- Nottingham worked with the charity Action Tutoring to help disadvantaged students with their maths and English skills. Milton Keynes offered a bursary and paid work experience for young people.
- Leicester colleagues volunteered their Sunday to redecorate the offices of local charity Afro Innovation Group, which supports BAME refugees and those from lower-income families.
- On World Food Day 2023, Milton Keynes joined local businesses, community organisations and residents to break the Guinness world record for the longest line of food cans. More than 100,000 cans later (102,447 to be precise) the record of 44,966 was well and truly broken, and Milton Keynes food bank had more than half the food it needed to support the local community for a year.

Billy Shaw and Natalie Bullin, volunteer Ulaw mentors

Billy and Natalie have both been volunteering for over a year to mentor students at the University of Law (ULaw), at the same time helping small businesses and charities.

Offering their skills as banking and finance and property lawyers respectively, Billy and Natalie advise small businesses and charities in need of legal advice, but who can't afford it. At the same time, students sit in on the advice clinics, learning from the pros what advice to give in particular situations.

"I've seen so many people try and get a start in business but not have the funds or support to do it. I'm pleased I can help people in that situation now," says Billy. Natalie adds, "I get to help small businesses while supporting students, and it's also really great for my development and that of my team. It gives me a great sense of satisfaction."

The scheme was nominated for an award for Best Pro Bono Partnership at the 2023 LawWorks Awards.

Pro bono work

We pride ourselves on the variety of pro bono work we undertake, including cases for accident victims, advising charities and small start-up enterprises, and supporting businesses to become more sustainable through our work with The Chancery Lane Project. Perhaps our most famous pro bono case was building a case alongside sub postmasters and mistresses against the Post Office at the height of the Horizon scandal, but this is just one of many hundreds we take on every year.



Encourage access to law for all

Community links

As our first office and headquarters, Nottingham has long-established links to the local community. For example, 6% of applications to work at Freeths come from students at Nottingham Trent University, thanks to our long-standing partnership offering mentoring and work placements.

Meanwhile, our Oxford office was the first law firm to sign up to the Oxford Economy Inclusion Partnership, helping tackle some of the region's biggest inequalities to create a fairer environment for all.



Louise Lewis, Berks, Bucks and Oxon Lawyer of the Year 2023

Louise is Partner and National Head of Trusts, Estates and Tax. Described in her 2024 Legal 500 entry as, "an outstanding, highly articulate and dedicated lawyer passionate about supporting her clients and providing solutions and value," Louise embodies the Freeths spirit with her passion for community empowerment.

In the space of just a few months, Louise gave a talk for A-Level students, hosted an open afternoon on solicitor apprenticeships, helped found the Oxford Inclusive Economy Partnership, and handed jelly babies to the Freeths' team running in support of Oxfordshire Youth at the Oxford Half-Marathon. These are just a few of the reasons we are proud to say Louise was named Lawyer of the Year at the Berks, Bucks and Oxon Law Society's Legal Excellence Awards 2023.

Looking to the future

We will continue to put responsible business at the heart of Freeths, ensuring we do the right thing for people, planet, clients and communities. It's important to us, and it's important to our business. Our B Corp status ensures we have a clear path to follow, and we look forward to continuing to make a difference over the coming years.



If you'd like to comment or feed back on anything contained in this report, or our future direction, please email responsible.business@freeths.co.uk