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# Responsible Business Report

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2025

FREETHS



# Key accreditations



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# Introduction

I'm delighted to introduce Freeths' 2025 Responsible Business Report, our second annual publication and a significant moment in our journey as a certified B Corp firm. This year, we are launching Freeths IMPACT, our responsible business mission to make a positive difference across colleagues, communities, climate and clients.

Freeths IMPACT is not a standalone initiative – it is integral to our wider purpose at Freeths: **Unlocking possibilities through the power of law with people at heart.** It shapes how we operate, how we grow and how we show up for our stakeholders.

Since achieving B Corp certification, we've worked hard to embed these principles into our One Firm, One Future 2030 strategy.

B Corp is our commitment to high standards of environmental and social impact, transparency and governance – and a promise to continually raise the bar.

Our people are at the heart of our success. Their energy, creativity and dedication are bringing our values to life, from helping reduce our carbon footprint to deepening our equity, diversity and inclusion efforts, supporting communities, and helping clients tackle societal challenges. These achievements show what's possible when purpose and professionalism go hand-in-hand.

We know that the external environment is evolving rapidly, and that our response must be agile, evidence-led and authentic. In the midst of change, our B Corp priorities will remain central to our approach:

- **Maintaining a culture of respect and inclusion**, ensuring behaviours align with our values.
- **Integrating responsible business principles** into firm-wide policies and processes.

- **Transparently reporting our social and environmental performance** and embedding accountability.
- **Ensuring ethical alignment** in client and supplier onboarding processes.
- **Conducting regular materiality assessments** to prioritise the most relevant areas of impact.

Effective governance is crucial in this work. As Senior Partner, I sit on the firm's Responsible Business Committee, which is a sub-committee of the Management Board. We ensure that the Board regularly reviews our progress on responsible business, and that relevant risks are flagged immediately to the Executive Committee overseeing our One Firm, One Future 2030 strategy.

Thank you to everyone who has contributed to our progress so far. There is lots to be proud of, and lots to do.

**Philippa Dempster,**  
Senior Partner



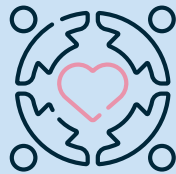
# Freeths IMPACT

We aim to deliver a net positive impact across four key areas:



## Colleagues:

Supporting our people to thrive in an equitable, diverse and inclusive environment.



## Communities:

Sharing our skills and resources to deliver social impact and widen access to law.



## Climate:

Reducing our environmental impact and supporting nature-positive solutions.



## Clients:

Collaborating with values-aligned clients and suppliers to drive positive change.



“At Freeths, striving for a net positive impact means going beyond isolated initiatives to consider every material aspect of our work and operations. It’s about embedding responsibility for people and planet into the way we run our business.”

*Ben Churchill, Director of Responsible Business*

## The Freeths Pledge

To help deliver our Freeths IMPACT objectives, we’ve launched the Freeths Pledge, empowering colleagues to take action in the areas in which they are most interested and have capacity for. From small actions that make a difference to a colleague’s day or help reduce our carbon emissions, to longer-term commitments such as leading a staff network or supporting a charity on a pro bono basis – it all adds up.

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# Colleagues

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# Colleagues

Supporting our people to thrive in an equitable, diverse and inclusive environment.

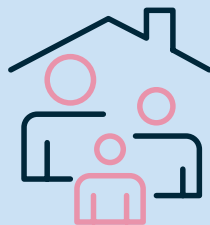
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## HIGHLIGHTS



**Gold**

Investors in People Award 2025



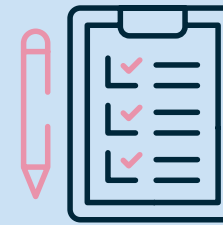
**Top 30**

Employer for Working Families



**Silver**

accreditation in Stonewall's  
Workplace Equity Index



**500+**

colleagues registered across our  
active staff networks



**94%**

of colleagues say Freeths  
is a great place to work

We're committed to making Freeths a place of opportunities for all, where curiosity and fresh perspectives thrive and diversity is a non-negotiable foundation for innovation and sustainable growth.

## How will we measure success?

We are analysing industry benchmarks and our own data and processes to establish robust baselines and success measures, including:

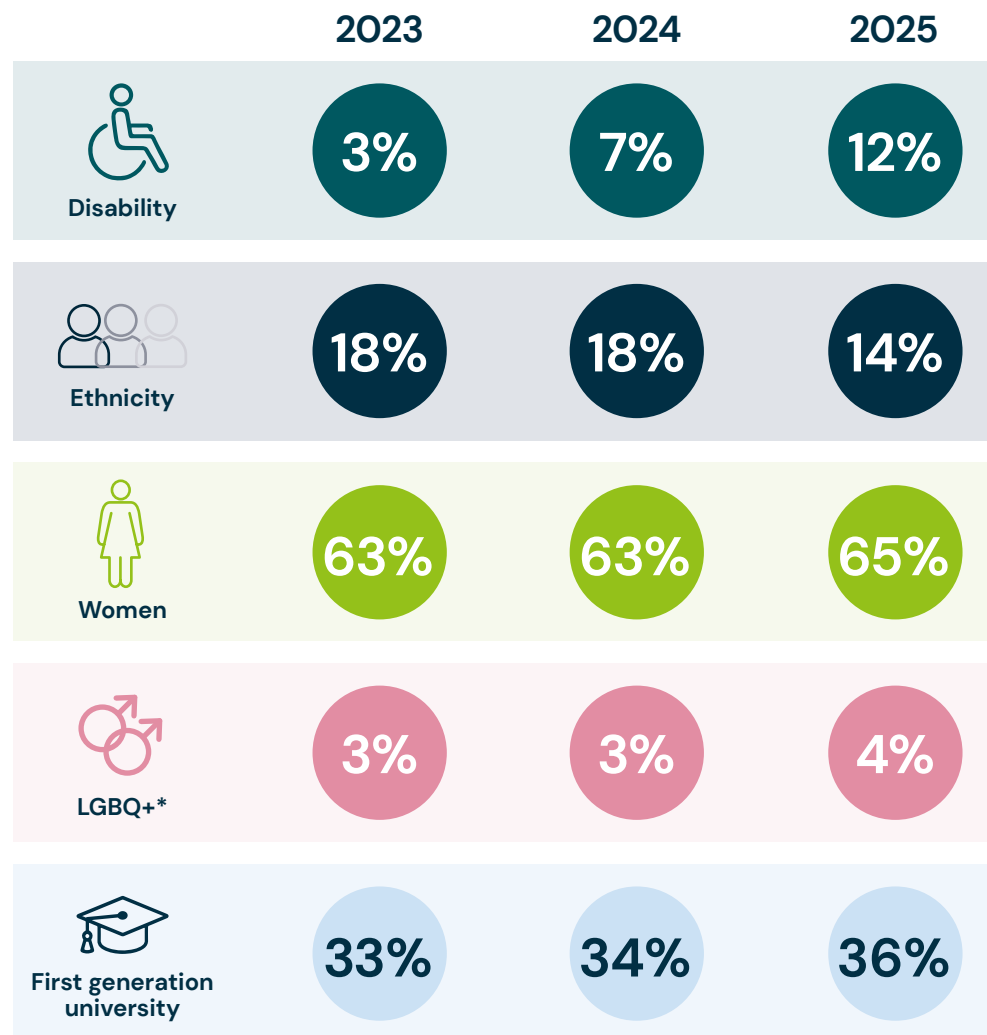
- Increased diversity over time
- Engagement survey and leaver survey metrics
- Colleague and client feedback.

## People at heart

Equity, diversity and inclusion (EDI) is at the heart of Freeths. We aim to be a place of possibility, where bright minds and bright ideas can flourish and spark off each other. A targeted and focused EDI approach is key to this, and while we know we have work to do, we're pleased to see that our commitment so far is driving positive change across the firm.

The last few years have seen the introduction of a promotion pathway, mentoring programmes, inclusive recruitment guidance, robust staff networks, a role model podcast series, learning programmes and much more. We're working hard to build systems and cultures that ensure everyone can perform, belong and reach their full potential.

## Diversity at Freeths



\*The T in LGBTQ+ is not included as this is a measure of sexual orientation, not gender identity.

## Gender

32% of our Partners are women, a number that has been growing year-on-year thanks to our structured promotion pathway, supported by drop-in sessions and career coaching. We want to maintain this trend, and will continue to review our processes and support to ensure we are minimising any barriers to progression.

We're pleased that our pay gap narrowed by a fifth in 2025. We aim to continue to make progress on gender and ethnicity equity through structured development and promotion opportunities, increased transparency of salary review and bonuses, and enabling Partners to identify their next steps in progression.

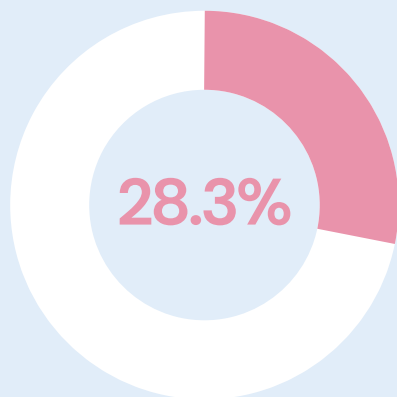
Percentage of colleagues who are women:  
**65%**  
(2024: 63%)

## Employees

Our work is moving us steadily in the right direction. Addressing the pay gap in Business Support will reduce the overall pay gap.

### Median gender pay gap

Our employee gender ratio\* is **70% women** to **30% men**.



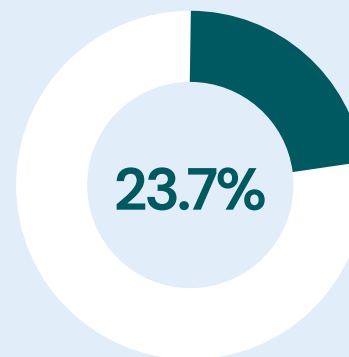
The gap has narrowed by

**7.1%**  
from 35.4%  
last year



representing a **20% reduction** in the pay gap.

36 women were on parental leave and excluded from the calculations. 29 of those have upper-quartile pay rates. Had all parental leave employees been included in the calculations, the pay gap would be:



\*Employees only; Partners reported separately as per pay gap reporting requirements.



Events held in our Bristol (top), and Birmingham (bottom) offices helped us mark International and Birmingham Women's Day 2025.

## Ethnicity

We're proud to be a multicultural firm, building a diverse community where everyone has a fair and equal chance of succeeding. However, we've seen a reduction in the percentage of colleagues from an ethnic minority background over the past year. We're digging into our data and listening to our staff networks to understand the changes and how we can influence this picture through a targeted action plan.

Our Rise Network for Black colleagues and allies and our REACH (Race, Ethnicity and Cultural Heritage) Network help us celebrate and understand different cultures, faiths, histories and backgrounds. They are invaluable partners and critical friends in our progress towards greater equity and representation.

We voluntarily report every year on our ethnicity pay gap, going beyond current statutory reporting requirements. We also voluntarily publish our gender and ethnicity pay gap data relating to Partners.

Percentage of  
ethnic minority\*  
colleagues:

**14%**

(2024: 18%)

*\*We recognise that most language choices are reductive and imperfect. We consulted with our REACH and RISE network leadership, who told us they were content to align with the government's preferred phrase, 'ethnic minority', for now, so that we could shift our focus from words to meaningful action and change.*

## Disability

We're a Level 2 Disability Confident Employer – we go the extra mile to make sure people with disabilities get a fair chance at Freeths. We've put in place specialist resources and disability-inclusive policies and initiatives, including tailored adjustment plans, so we can make recommendations best suited to each individual. We're also creating a self-service catalogue for neurodiverse colleagues who would benefit from software, hardware and other adjustments.

Our staff Disability Network has grown from eight members to almost 60 over the past year.

Percentage of  
colleagues with  
a disability:

12%

(2024: 7%)



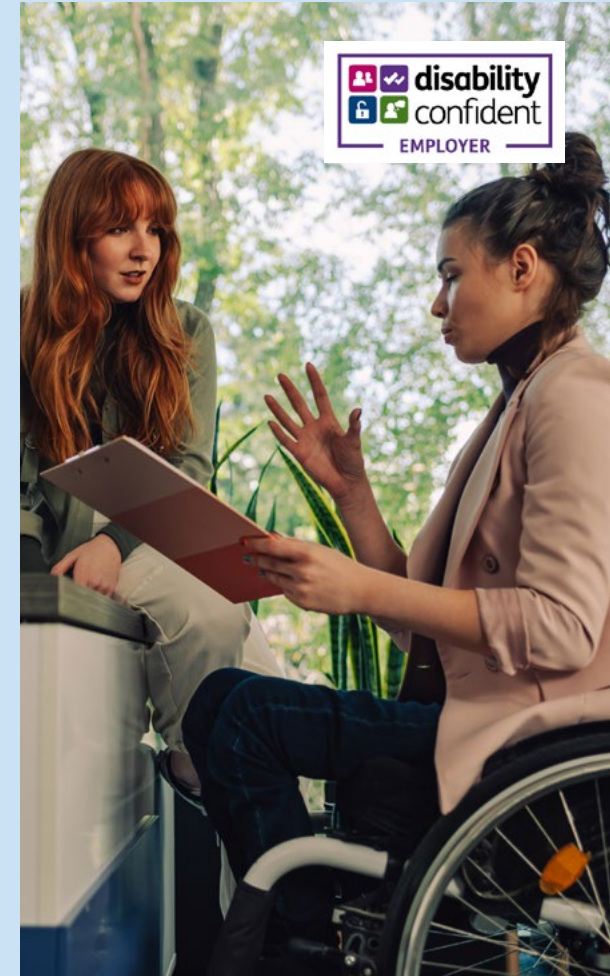
“ We don't ask people what their challenges are. We ask, what are you good at? Whether you're just starting your career or towards the end of it, we do everything we can to make the journey as comfortable as possible so that people can thrive. ”

*Sharon Extance, Disability Officer*



“ For me, being neurodivergent means I look at things a little differently. The firm has been amazing in supporting me. I have had several conversations with HR and the disability team, and they have been absolutely brilliant at talking to me about workplace adjustments. We've also set up a steering group for neurodivergence within the firm. ”

*Jemini Gova, Senior Associate*



## LGBTQ+

All our family-friendly policies are LGBTQ+ inclusive, and we are proud to have achieved a silver rating in the Stonewall Workplace Equality Index 2024. Our Shine staff network helps us regularly review our policies and practices to make sure they are LGBTQ+ inclusive. Several network members are also in a steering group to help craft our 2025 submission to the new Stonewall accreditation, Proud Employers.

Percentage of  
colleagues  
who are LGBTQ+:

**4%\***

(2024: 3%)

*\*The T in LGBTQ+ is not included as this is a measure of sexual orientation, not gender identity.*



Members of our SHINE Network and allies take part in the 2025 Pride march in Nottingham.

**FREETHS**

Percentage of  
colleagues  
first generation  
university:

**36%**

(2024: 34%)

## Social mobility

We're deeply committed to social mobility and believe that talent and potential from any background can thrive in the right setting. In addition to work by our Future Talent team to widen access to the profession, in 2025, our Social Mobility Network continued to raise awareness and champion progress in this important area, including publishing an internal podcast to mark Social Mobility Day showcasing a range of lived experiences across the firm.

## Staff networks

Freeths is home to a vibrant array of networks that support and celebrate colleagues – these include Rise (our network for Black colleagues and allies), Parents and Carers, Social Mobility and Shine for LGBTQ+ colleagues and allies.

Each network has Executive Sponsors who, alongside our Senior Partner, Chief People Officer and Director of Responsible Business, make up our EDI steering group.

This offers our networks a strategic platform to share their members' feedback, and ensures we can develop in ways that will make the greatest difference to colleagues' everyday experiences.

Our networks grew, on average, by 43% last year, creating safe spaces to connect, celebrate, support and have a strategic voice.

“I’ve changed part of my working pattern to fit around my children’s needs. I’ve been able to do this because of the trust I share with my colleagues; they understand my working pattern and trust that I will make up my hours. I’m conscious that I’m fortunate to manage my time, and my managers understand and promote this approach.”



**Rahul Kotecha, Director and Parents and Carers Network Executive Sponsor**



“The culture is the reason many choose to work and stay at Freeths. Your investments in innovation, diversity, inclusion and responsible business practices are remarkable.”

**Investors in People 2025**

## A top UK employer for working families

This year, we were delighted to be recognised as one of the UK’s top 30 employers for working families by the national charity Working Families, reflecting our strong commitment to supporting colleagues with family and caring responsibilities. This accolade, awarded through the charity’s annual benchmark, rigorously evaluates employers across four key areas of flexible and family-friendly practice.



## A great place to work

In 2025, we were delighted to achieve Investors in People (IIP) Gold accreditation, with its report highlighting our strong, values-driven culture, and inclusive and supportive environment. Feedback from the IIP survey revealed that 94% of colleagues agree Freeths is a great place to work (up 3% from 2022).

We won't rest on our laurels though; we will keep on improving, including:

- Delivering even more consistency in performance management and how we recognise and reward high performance in alignment with individual motivations
- Ensuing more of our senior leaders are engaged in conversations around mental health
- Better understanding of and addressing any barriers to colleagues challenging behaviours that don't align with the firm's values.

## Wellbeing

We recognise that, while rewarding, working in the legal sector can also be demanding.

That's why we prioritise a safe and supportive working environment that nurtures healthy minds and bodies, and are taking steps to evolve our Wellbeing strategy. We regularly assess our people's wellbeing through 1-2-1 Check-ins with their line managers, providing tailored support when challenges arise. This year, we deployed 'burnout and supporting colleagues' training to the whole firm.

To support sustainable mental health all year round, we set up a new Mental Health First Aiders Network and expanded our Employee Assistance Programme, introducing a Total Mental Health package that provides unlimited, confidential counselling and coaching to everyone at Freeths.

We also provide guidance on healthy habits that support long-term wellbeing to help colleagues stay energised, avoid burnout and feel physically equipped to thrive in and beyond work.

FREETHS

## How will we measure success?



Externally benchmarked employee psychological safety



% of staff trained as Mental Health First Aiders



% of staff aware of mental health provision



“The Mental Health First Aiders Network aims to help us all grow in our understanding of others and ourselves and to provide a safe environment in which healthy, kind and supportive conversations are encouraged.”

*Sarah Foster, Oxford Managing Partner*

## Mental Health First Aiders

We've trained 100+ staff in mental health first aid, ready to support their colleagues whenever they're needed. In 2025, we formalised this group into a dedicated Mental Health First Aiders Network,

appointing Executive Sponsors and Co-Chairs to lead mental health and wellbeing campaigns throughout the year.

- 20 staff members devoted 59 hours to mental health first aid in 2025



Freeths' Trainee Legal Executive Maxwell McCartney won Professional Services Apprentice of the Year 2025 at the West Yorkshire Apprenticeship Awards. Maxwell was recognised for his work as a diversity and inclusion representative and particularly given credit for being a Mental Health First Aider, advocating for the importance of men's mental health.

## Wellbeing in practice

Freeths' Wellbeing and Performance Programme helps early-career lawyers build resilience, wellbeing and sustainable performance. Delivered over the course of a year by coach and mindfulness trainer Paolo Karat, it combines mindfulness, psychology and neuroscience with in-house theory sessions and immersive off-site days at Roseland Farm in Oxfordshire (pictured below). Attendees recorded a 26% improvement in wellbeing, including better stress regulation, stronger boundaries and improved work-life balance.



“Since completing the leadership programme, the way we operate has shifted. Recently, we hit a resource bottleneck. In the past, we might have tried to fix it behind closed doors; instead, we ran a whole-team thinking session. The insights we gained were invaluable. We made changes we might never have considered before, and the result was immediate: Pressure eased and morale lifted.”

*Feedback from the Housebuilding and Strategic Land Team*



## Learning & development

Through innovative learning methods and shared expertise, Freeths aims to create an environment where talent can thrive and adapt within a dynamic and supportive workplace. Our leadership programmes take a holistic approach, including wellbeing and self-care to ensure leaders are equipped to lead their teams effectively.

### Our approach:

- Tailored skills workshops via our Freethinking Academy
- Leadership and Emerging Leaders Programmes run by Compassionate Cultures – six months of face-to-face and online workshops, individual coaching, buddy support and practical activities
- Thrive and Grow Index – a diagnostic tool that identifies areas of strength and growth so leaders and teams can work together to deliver stronger performance within a healthy team
- Mentorship through our network of 50+ trained mentors and external coaches, focusing on career development, promotion, gender, social mobility, parental or caring responsibilities and much more.



## Responsible AI

We are committed to harnessing AI in a way that is ethical, transparent and aligned with our values, regulatory obligations and B Corp commitments. We continue to actively work towards ever closer alignment with international standards, including ISO 42001 and the EU AI Act.

Our AI Use Policy sets out clear principles for responsible use, including mandatory training, use of verified tools only and appropriate disclosure of substantive AI-generated content. The policy is overseen by our GenAI Governance Committee and integrates responsible

business considerations, for example encouraging low-energy AI applications and cautioning against bias in HR-related use cases.

We also look to go beyond wider industry standards, and support legal sector specific initiatives – for example, through the Litig AI Benchmark Initiative, which aims to develop an open-source, standardised framework to evaluate and improve trust in AI tools in legal contexts, covering transparency, ethical use and performance standards.



“We believe responsible AI adoption starts with clarity, accountability and collaboration. We’ve built a framework that empowers our people to use AI safely and efficiently, aligning with global best practices. And we’re helping shape the future of AI within the legal sector specifically, ensuring the tools we use are not only powerful, but principled.”

*Nick Pryor, Director of Knowledge & Innovation*

# Communities

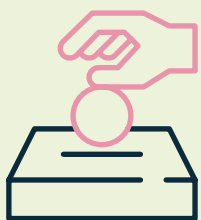


# Communities

Sharing our skills and resources to deliver social impact and widen access to law.

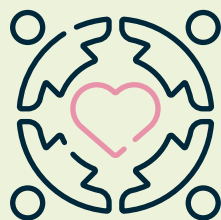
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## HIGHLIGHTS



**£150k+**

donated to national charities since 2022



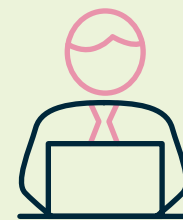
**900**

hours community engagement by Freeths lawyers in 2025



**6**

local charity partnerships across our UK network



**36%**

of colleagues first generation university



**3,500**

students supported through our Future Talent partnership with Connectr

We believe that vibrant communities where everyone thrives can bring out the best in all of us. That's why we seek to share our skills with our local communities, take action to widen access to the legal sector, and support charities through financial and in-kind support. We are refreshing our Community Engagement strategy to guide and focus our work in this area.

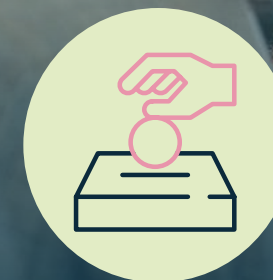
**How will we  
measure success?**



Externally benchmarked #  
pro bono hours and matters



Organisational and  
individual feedback



Total £ donated

# Pro bono expertise

We are developing our pro bono offering and putting policies in place to encourage increased engagement across the firm.

Recent projects include acting for Global Generation, a charity creating innovative youth-focused projects in the midst of the King's Cross redevelopment; advising Launch Foods, a Glasgow-based charity tackling child food poverty through community cafés; and IP support for Museumand, a museum 'without walls' dedicated to celebrating Caribbean heritage, culture and social history.

Freeths' Senior Associate Antonia Williamson was included in the 2025 Pro Bono Recognition List for registering more than 25 hours of legal pro bono across the year. Antonia has volunteered with Liverpool John Moores University's Legal Advice Clinic since 2017, where she has worked on cases involving victims of domestic abuse. She has also accepted direct pro bono instructions from vulnerable clients who would otherwise struggle to access legal advice.

“As part of our longstanding relationship with Freeths, we valued the clear pro bono advice the firm provided Museumand this year. Their support on copyright and trade mark issues is helping us safeguard our work and heritage, and their practical suggestions will help protect the charity's interests moving forward.”

*Catherine Ross, Founder Director – Museumand,  
The National Caribbean Heritage Museum*



“ Ben’s knowledge of commercial development sites, legal skills and ability to address the interests of all parties have provided us with a robust legal foundation, which has enabled us to run projects in exciting and meaningful locations, not typically accessible for youth education work. ”

*Jane Riddiford, Global Generation Founding Director*



## Global Generation

Global Generation has built communal gardens out of old skips, commandeered a canal boat as an educational green space and, with the help of landowners and developers such as Argent, the British Library and Stanhope, reimagined the long-term development of parts of King’s Cross as a community asset. Partner Benjamin Jones has been advising the charity for almost 20 years, often on a pro bono basis, building up a strong rapport

that has helped the charity secure access to funding and partnerships.

Ben has recently advised on Global Generation’s biggest project yet – the signing of a 999-year lease on remediated land in King’s Cross known as the Triangle Site, which will finally secure the charity a permanent home and a community-built garden and educational facility that will provide for generations to come.

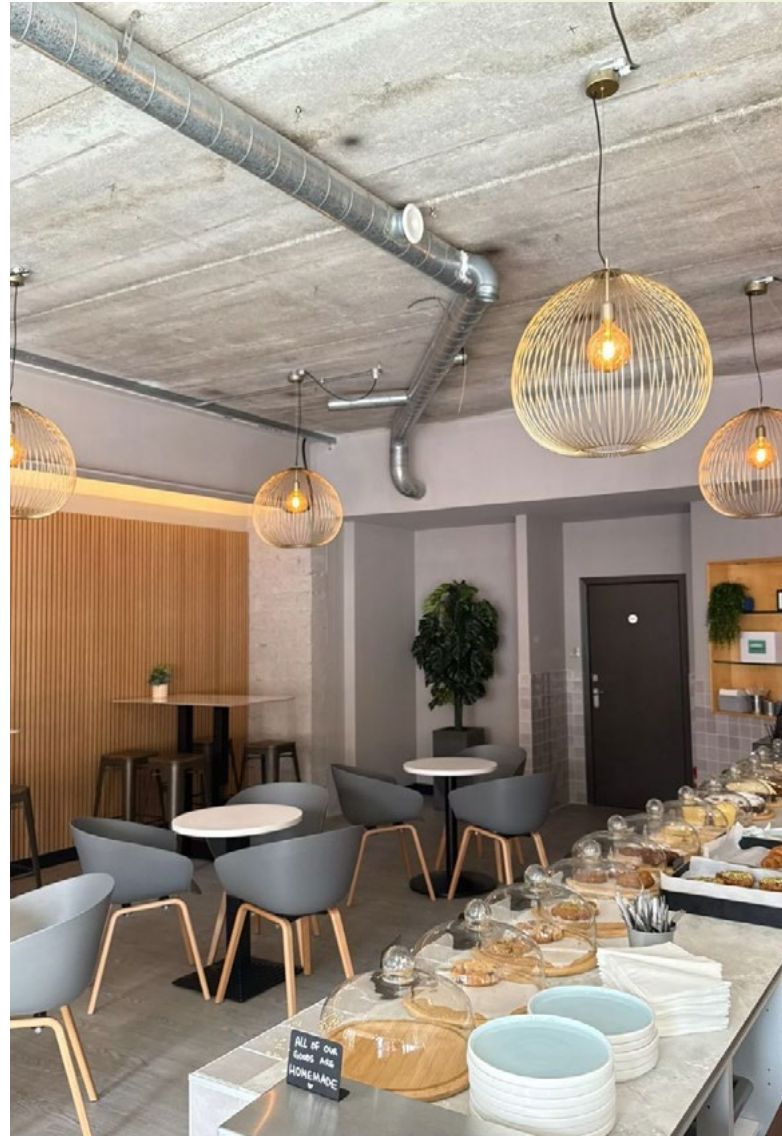
Photos courtesy of Global Generation.

## Launch Foods Foundation

We're proud to support Launch Foods Foundation, a Glasgow-based charity tackling child food poverty through community cafés. Founded by local businesses in 2018, Launch reinvests all profits into providing free, nutritious meals to children across the city – serving over 750,000 meals since it began.

We provided real estate expertise to support the set-up of Launch Coffee, a Community Interest Company that invests 100% of its profits to support the operation of Launch Foods Foundation. And we've advised on the setup of three Launch Coffee shops to date, including the fit-out for a new café in Glasgow's West End.

*The new Launch Coffee shop in  
Glasgow's West End*



“Freeths’ pro bono advice has been a real help to Launch Foods. Their real estate expertise has supported our growth and enabled us to make a bigger difference for communities in Glasgow.”

*Craig Johnson, Founder, Launch Foods*

## Future talent

We are keen to remove as many barriers to the legal profession as we can, delivering extensive outreach in schools and colleges to engage young people on alternative routes into law, such as our apprenticeship for school leavers.

We offer a variety of ways to welcome a vibrant mix of trainees from both law and non-law backgrounds. Our Future Talent team is always on the lookout for ways to engage with bright candidates from all backgrounds, including those who may not traditionally consider a career in law.

We work with Connectr, a charity empowering disadvantaged young people to shape their own careers, and Young Professionals, an organisation showcasing work experience and apprenticeship opportunities for young people. We also work directly with schools to give potential candidates exposure to the legal profession and partner with NRG Lawyers, an organisation that aims to pave the way for non-Russell Group students and graduates in their legal careers.



## Read to succeed

We partner with the charity ARCH to support children's literacy and confidence through a volunteer reading programme. Freeths volunteers commit one hour per week, spending time with a child in one-to-one sessions. The programme is now in its second year with the same group of children, allowing for consistent, personal attention.



## Charitable giving

Across our offices, we support a variety of local charities with fundraising, volunteering, financial and in-kind support, alongside holding an annual vote for a nominated national charity. In 2025, our chosen charity is the British Heart Foundation, and our summer fundraiser – a virtual race around Europe – saw 40 teams from across the business logging over 35,000 activities: a grand total of 11,000 hours' worth of walking, running, cycling, swimming and more that raised over £10,000. In total, we have donated almost £85,000 to the British Heart Foundation.

## Educational leadership

Freeths' HR Director Carole Wigley BEM retired from the firm this year, after 25 years of service. Carole also stepped down as Chair of Governors at Nottingham College, where for over 20 years she helped steer transformational change – including the creation of the £58 million City Hub – and championed opportunities for thousands of learners, leaving a lasting mark on both the college and the wider Nottingham community. In recognition of her outstanding contribution to further education, Carole was recognised as Medallist of the Order of the British Empire.



*Reflecting on her support for the college, Carole said:*

“Many students at Nottingham College come from challenging backgrounds and have difficulties in their personal lives, which the college helps them overcome – I am extremely proud to have played a part in this endeavour. Freeths' support has enabled me to dedicate my time and energy to the role, and I'm deeply grateful for the firm's commitment to community engagement and education.”



Maymunah (middle) with fellow recipient Umamah Faquirbhai (left) and Leicester Managing Partner Lisa Gilligan (right).

## Mukesh Patel Bursary

In memory of our dear colleague Mukesh Patel, former Managing Partner of Freeths Leicester, we set up a bursary in his name to offer students from the University of Leicester and De Monfort University financial support and a place on our Legal Placement Week programme. Candidates who successfully complete subsequent recruitment stages secure a place as a Trainee Solicitor.

Participating students receive £4,000 a year during their second and third years, as well as mentoring and a paid summer placement.

Maymunah Valimia participated in the scheme this year and has secured an offer to join Freeths as a trainee solicitor in 2027, following a year of full-time study in 2026. Reflecting on the opportunity, Maymunah says:

“I come from a low-income family, but I don’t want that to stop me. I’m determined to become a great lawyer, and I’m up for the challenge.”

# FREETHS



“We’re looking forward to taking our commitment to Oxfordshire Youth to the next level, to help drive positive outcomes for talented and motivated young people who may face barriers to accessing career opportunities.”

*Rebecca Howlett, Partner*

## Oxfordshire Youth

In Oxfordshire, where one in six young people grow up in poverty, we’re a long-term partner to Oxfordshire Youth, a charity supporting the most at-risk young people. In July 2025, we became one of the charity’s Business Guardians, committed to delivering financial support and offering employability guidance and work placements for young people from care backgrounds.



*We proudly hosted our annual charity 5-a-side football tournament raising funds for Oxfordshire Youth in August.*

## Supporting the B Corp community

To help celebrate and promote the B Corp movement, we hosted networking and peer-to-peer learning events in Bristol and Oxford during B Corp Month in March, welcoming guests from sectors including logistics, property and leisure.



Helping 'Bring the Big B' to Oxford to promote the importance of being a sustainable business ahead of the B Corps Louder than Words festival.



Colleagues helping to raise £3,000 for our local charity partner in Leeds, Martin House Hospice.

“ It was a privilege to be invited to attend the B Corp Collective Gathering, where we discussed how to achieve the ambition of ensuring all UK businesses are a force for good within the next 10 years. It was clear that B Corps will be leading the way – from climate action to environmental restoration, to employee wellbeing and inclusive decision-making. ”



**Sofia Tavener, Trusts, Estates and Tax Associate  
and Co-Chair of Oxfordshire B Local**

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# Climate

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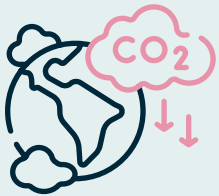


# Climate

Reducing our environmental impact and supporting nature-positive solutions.

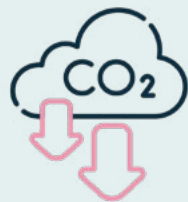
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## HIGHLIGHTS



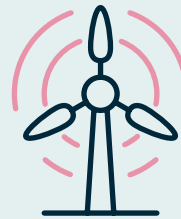
**8%**

reduction in overall emissions



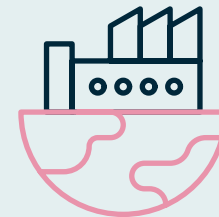
**19%**

reduction in emissions per FTE



**95%**

of colleagues work in offices on  
renewable electricity contracts



**15%**

reduction in energy consumption

# Our journey to net zero

**2015**

Implemented ISO14001 certified Environmental Management System



**2020**

Calculated Scope 1 & 2 carbon footprint for first time



**2021**

Established ESG Committee\*



**2023**

Signed up to the Greener Litigation Pledge



**2024**

Introduced Green Car Benefit Scheme



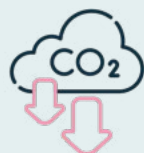
**2024**

Published first Carbon Reduction Plan



**2024**

Partnered with Planet Mark to develop SBTi-aligned Net Zero Transition Plan



**2024**

12 out of 13 Freeths offices on renewable energy contracts



**2025**

Planet Mark-validated 2040 net zero target and Scopes 1 – 3 baseline



**2025**

Formally committed to the Science-Based Targets initiative (SBTi)



\*Renamed to Responsible Business Committee in 2025.

**We're making progress in our efforts to cut carbon emissions and improve the quality of our data. In 2025, we developed our Net Zero Transition Plan in partnership with Planet Mark, and recruited in-house sustainability expertise to strengthen our responsible business team.**

## Our transition to net zero

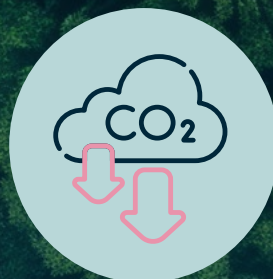
We aim to be net zero by 2040, with near-term 2030 targets in place to maintain urgency and momentum. We have formally committed to the Science-Based Targets initiative and our targets have been submitted for verification.



“Our net zero journey is about focusing on what matters most and where we can make the biggest difference. It's not just about meeting targets; it's about embedding sustainability into the way we think, work and grow.”

*Mark Blakemore, Chief Operating Officer*

## How will we measure success?



annual reduction in  
carbon emissions  
across Scopes 1, 2 & 3



% of top suppliers  
with a verified net  
zero target



% of employees  
reporting strong  
engagement and  
understanding of  
sustainability



annual hours  
contributed to  
sustainability  
initiatives

## Our transition to net zero Scope 1, 2 & 3 emissions

Our 2025 carbon emissions data show progress in reducing energy consumption and carbon emissions, with total emissions falling by 7.8%, in the context of a 15.3% increase in headcount. This reduction has been driven by operational efficiencies and system upgrades, and we have focused on improving data quality year-on-year.

Reductions in energy emissions were helped by seven offices moving to renewable energy tariffs, bringing the total to 12 out of 13 offices. Additionally, our Nottingham and London offices are now on renewable biogas contracts backed by Renewable Gas Guarantees of Origin (RGGO) certification. While these certificates do not reduce our reported emissions under current accounting standards, they play an important role in supporting investment in renewable gas production.

We saw a modest increase in business travel emissions, which reflects both the growth of the firm and improved data collection, providing a more complete and accurate picture of our emissions.

This progress provides a solid foundation for continuing to reduce our footprint, as we focus on the next decarbonisation challenges in key areas such as supply chain and business travel.

## Our carbon footprint

### Carbon footprint comparison: FY2024 (baseline year) vs FY2025

| Scope                          | Emission Category                                    | FY 2024 tCO <sub>2</sub> e | FY 2025 tCO <sub>2</sub> e | FY 2025 % | FE 2025 Change |
|--------------------------------|------------------------------------------------------|----------------------------|----------------------------|-----------|----------------|
| Scope 1                        | Stationary Fuels                                     | 313.0                      | 270.6                      | 5.3%      | -13.5%         |
| Scope 2                        | Electricity (location-based)                         | 156.7                      | 132.6                      | —         | -15.4%         |
|                                | Electricity (market-based)                           | 139.9                      | 66.3                       | 1.3%      | -52.6%         |
|                                | Heat and Steam (location-based)                      | 6.5                        | 6.1                        | —         | -6.2%          |
|                                | Heat and Steam (market-based)                        | 6.5                        | 6.1                        | 0.1%      | -6.2%          |
| Scope 3                        | Category 1: Purchased Goods and Services             | 3,644.9                    | 3,584.8                    | 69.7%     | -1.6%          |
|                                | Category 3: Fuel- and Energy-Related Activities      | 104.6                      | 89.4                       | 1.7%      | -14.5%         |
|                                | Category 4: Upstream Transportation and Distribution | 63.8                       | 11.9                       | 0.2%      | -81.3%         |
|                                | Category 5: Waste                                    | 2.8                        | 2.1                        | 0.0%      | -25%           |
|                                | Category 6: Business Travel                          | 264.2                      | 293.6                      | 5.7%      | +11.1%         |
|                                | Category 7: Employee Commuting                       | 1,037.3                    | 817.7                      | 15.9%     | -21.2%         |
| <b>Total (market-based):</b>   |                                                      | <b>5,576.9</b>             | <b>5,142.4</b>             |           | <b>-7.8%</b>   |
| <b>No. FTE employees:</b>      |                                                      | <b>984.1</b>               | <b>1,135.3</b>             |           |                |
| <b>Per FTE employee:</b>       |                                                      | <b>5.7</b>                 | <b>4.5</b>                 |           | <b>-20.1%</b>  |
| <b>Turnover £m:</b>            |                                                      | <b>148.5</b>               | <b>166.8</b>               |           |                |
| <b>Per £m turnover:</b>        |                                                      | <b>37.6</b>                | <b>30.8</b>                |           | <b>-17.9%</b>  |
| <b>Total (location-based):</b> |                                                      | <b>5,593.6</b>             | <b>5,208.7</b>             |           | <b>-6.9%</b>   |
| <b>No. FTE employees:</b>      |                                                      | <b>984.1</b>               | <b>1,135.3</b>             |           |                |
| <b>Per FTE employee:</b>       |                                                      | <b>5.7</b>                 | <b>4.6</b>                 |           | <b>-19.3%</b>  |
| <b>Turnover £m:</b>            |                                                      | <b>148.5</b>               | <b>166.8</b>               |           |                |
| <b>Per £m turnover:</b>        |                                                      | <b>37.7</b>                | <b>31.2</b>                |           | <b>-17.1%</b>  |

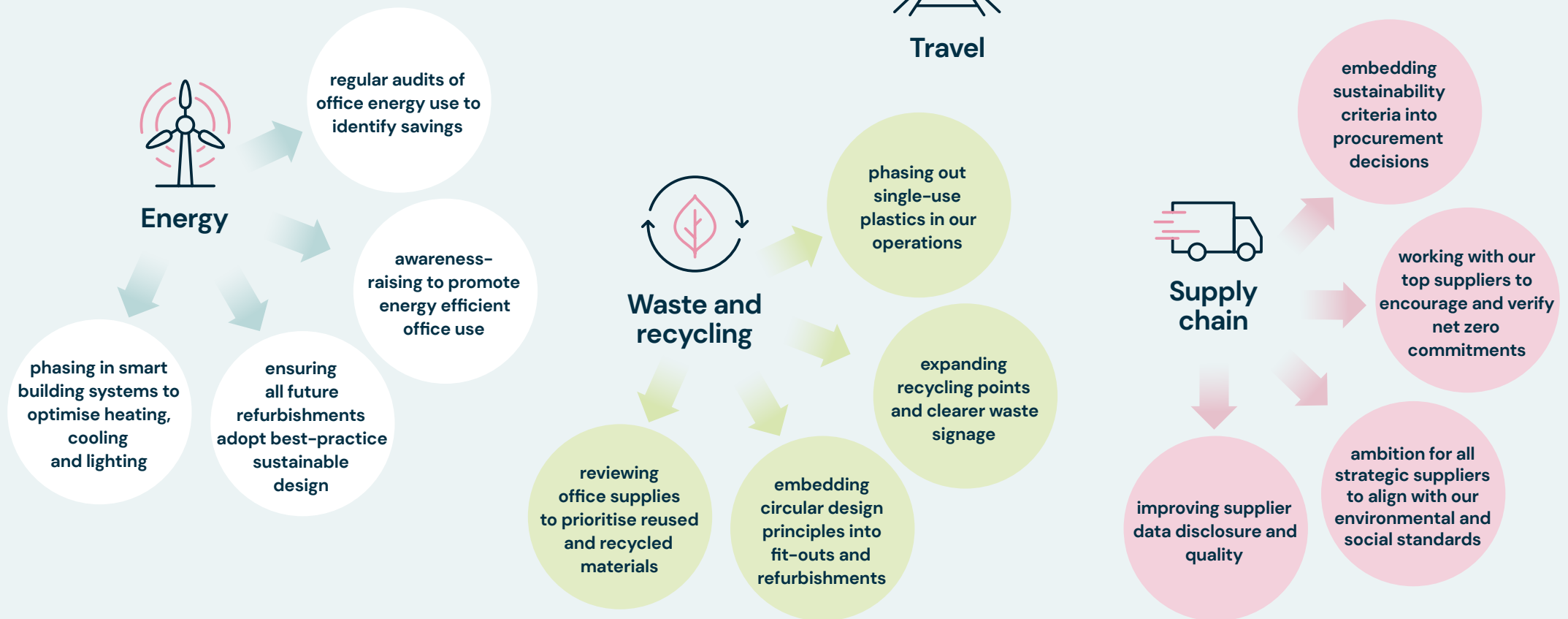
**Scope 1 emissions:** direct emissions from sources owned or controlled by Freeths

**Scope 2 emissions:** indirect emissions associated with purchased electricity, heat, steam and cooling

**Scope 3 emissions:** indirect emissions throughout our value chain

# Future focus

Our Net Zero Transition Plan is being finalised, aligned with the Transition Plan Taskforce recommendations. The plan includes the following operational focus areas:



## Sustainability by design

Freeths' Premises Strategy reflects our commitment to environmental responsibility. Office locations are chosen for strong public transport links, supporting reduced carbon emissions in line with our Freeths IMPACT objectives. All spaces are Grade A and, wherever possible, meet the highest standards for build quality, accessibility and environmental sustainability. Smart Building Technology is integrated across our premises to monitor and optimise performance and energy efficiency.

Our new Milton Keynes office at Northgate House exemplifies this approach, holding a BREEAM Excellent rating and featuring:

- Cycle storage, showers, and changing rooms
- Furniture made from recycled materials including salvaged plastic bottles
- EV charging points
- Solar-powered outdoor pods for collaborative working.

## People for planet

We know our people are central to delivering on our sustainability ambitions. By engaging colleagues and empowering them to take action, we can amplify our impact far beyond our operations.

We're proud to be a signatory to the Greener Litigation Pledge, which aims to reduce the environmental impacts of dispute resolution, and we're active members of the Legal Sustainability Alliance, the leading sustainability network for the legal sector. We also work closely with Catalyse Change, a programme that inspires young women to pursue careers in sustainability.

Alongside these external commitments, we are focused on creating opportunities for our people to upskill and contribute directly:

- Actively encouraging environmental pro bono work
- Building a library of UK-based nature restoration projects, giving colleagues the chance to volunteer their time and make a tangible difference to the environment
- Providing targeted sustainability training to upskill colleagues and embed awareness across the firm.

## Championing sustainability

Freeths' lawyers Clare King, Penny Simpson and Kirstin Roberts were named as Green Ambassadors in the 2025 Legal 500 Green Guide, which recognises some of the top legal professionals championing sustainability in major regions and markets across the world.



**30+**

**Sustainability Champions** play a crucial role in helping implement environmental best practice across our offices.

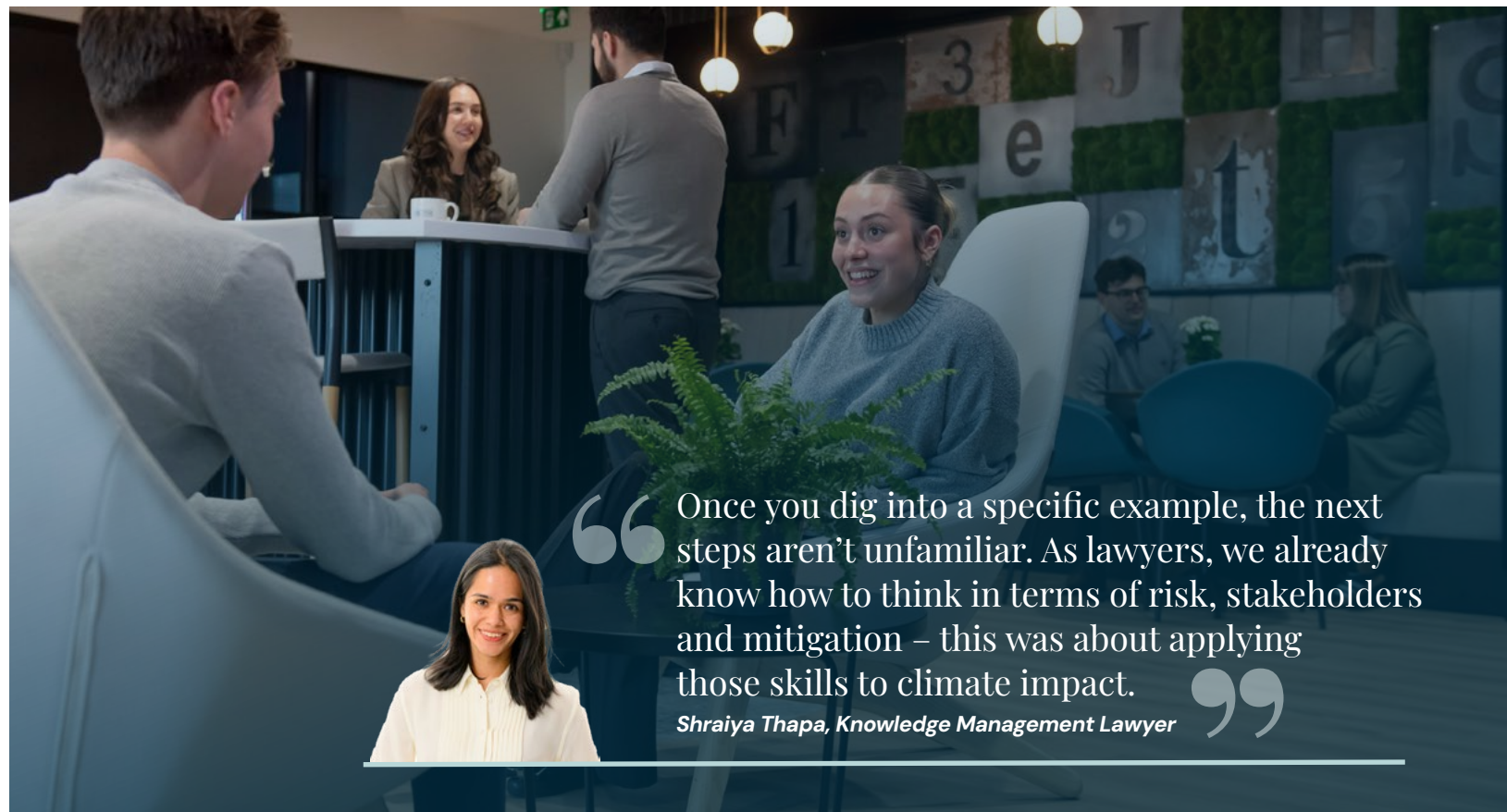
## Tackling climate risk

During London Climate Week, we collaborated with The Chancery Lane Project to explore how climate risk can be embedded into legal practice. Shraiya Thapa from our Clean Energy, Waste and Sustainability team participated in a high-energy hackathon alongside 55

lawyers from a range of sectors, focused on identifying climate risks, mapping legal consequences and developing practical tools and clauses to manage those risks.

Outputs from the event are feeding into new templates and guidance to help lawyers lead the low-carbon transition.

Our ongoing collaboration with The Chancery Lane Project, a global initiative to create legal frameworks for climate action, includes contributing to climate clauses and Shraiya delivering sustainability training on the same to a wide range of practice groups.



“Once you dig into a specific example, the next steps aren't unfamiliar. As lawyers, we already know how to think in terms of risk, stakeholders and mitigation – this was about applying those skills to climate impact.”

*Shraiya Thapa, Knowledge Management Lawyer*

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# Clients

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# Clients

Collaborating with values-aligned clients and suppliers to drive positive change.

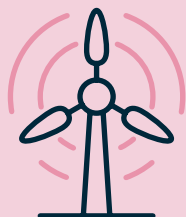
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## HIGHLIGHTS



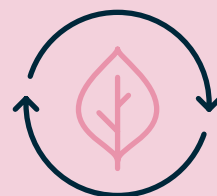
**100+**

lawyers in our dedicated Clean Energy, Waste and Sustainability sector group



**Legal 500**

ranked in The Legal 500 for Renewables & Energy, Project Finance & PFI



**Chambers**

ranked in Chambers & Partners for Power, Renewables & Alternative Energy



**100+**

in-house lawyers trained on ethics and corporate culture in 2025

## Client and supplier alignment

We take an ethics and risk-based approach to working with clients and suppliers to ensure alignment with our standards and values. As Freeths continues to grow, our Risk & Ethics Committee and Responsible Business teams are embedding a due diligence and monitoring process to help minimise any exposure to harmful sectors, based on guidance from B Corp and our own ethical framework.

Our Supplier Code of Conduct sets out our ethical expectations and commitment to working with a diverse range of suppliers, using small, local companies where possible. We ask our suppliers to pay the Real Living Wage, set each year based on the real cost of living.

Freeths is full of committed, passionate lawyers helping our clients succeed and in many cases address key societal challenges. We're one of the few UK law firms to have a dedicated Clean Energy, Waste and Sustainability sector group, a team of over 100 lawyers helping businesses lower their greenhouse gas emissions, decarbonise, and work towards net zero. Our Natural Capital team is packed with renowned expertise in natural law, and we're home to numerous specialists across ESG areas within Corporate Governance, Employment Law and Social Housing.



## Unlocking possibilities through the power of law

We're always looking to share our expertise to drive progress in law and our clients' sectors, offering a dynamic variety of blogs, podcasts, masterclasses, roundtables, panel sessions and Q&As for and with our clients.

After Freeths' Disputes team won the legal battle that 555 sub-postmasters brought against the Post Office over the Horizon scandal, we used our deep experience of

the case to roll out training for in-house lawyers on ethics and corporate culture.

Meanwhile, our Natural Capital legal team runs environmental law training courses for environmental professionals, planning authorities, land owners, strategic land developers and more. High-demand courses include protected species law, water law, introduction to wildlife law and biodiversity net gain law. We also run

regular free webinars for clients and contacts on forthcoming legal changes and natural capital topics such as the key aspects of setting up a habitat bank. We publish regular thought leadership articles on how to stimulate nature markets and attract private investment into nature, recently hosting a popular 'Unlocking Nature Markets' event at the Royal Society.

## Enabling low carbon tech

We were pleased to advise Vital Energi on the rollout of its low-carbon heat network system for the Seaham Garden Village development in Durham in 2025. The system uses water from disused mines to heat houses in the community, which will grow over time to include 1,500 homes and a range of community buildings.





“ Having failed to find legal support for so long, Freeths took the Post Office victims on board and helped to deliver outstanding success with judgments that have changed so many lives. ”

*Post Office justice campaigner Sir Alan Bates*

## Learning from Horizon

Freeths' work supporting sub-postmasters in the Post Office Horizon case demonstrated how legal courage and ethics can deliver justice and systemic change. In 2025, we built on that legacy with our webinar "The Only Way is Ethics", attended by over 100 lawyers and business leaders as part of our In-House Lawyers programme.

The session turned lessons from Horizon into practical tools, with participants exploring ethical considerations, including escalation routes, privilege and actions to strengthen culture and prevent future scandals.



### Post Office Scandal

- 1,000 or so criminal convictions overturned
- Public Inquiry
- 4 Compensation Schemes, involving several thousand postmasters
- SRA: conducted investigation into allegations against solicitors
- Bar Standards
- Metropolitan: 100 investigations



“ The Horizon case showed what happens when governance fails and voices aren't heard. Our mission now is to ensure those lessons drive change, helping in-house lawyers and Boards embed ethical decision-making, so history doesn't repeat itself. ”

*James Hartley, Partner and National Head of Dispute Resolution*

FREETHS



## Spot the signs

Partner Louise Lewis recently became an ambassador for STEP, the professional body for trust and estate practitioners, on its 'spot the signs' campaign to raise awareness of financial abuse.

The campaign was launched following concerns raised by STEP members that financial abuse is widespread and increasing, with 70% of UK practitioners observing instances of actual or suspected financial abuse. This includes hidden abuse that often doesn't come to light until after the person has died.

“ We really love working with Freeths because they share our values, they know what they’re doing and they’re constantly pushing boundaries. We know that however much things change, whether in law or in policy, they are right at the cutting edge of understanding what that means. ”

*NatureSpace CEO, Tom Tew*

**FREETHS**

## Empowering housing associations

Our social housing team is always keen to use its 100+ years of combined experience to help housing associations wherever they can. The team runs free training, including bespoke sessions, to help housing association staff understand legal frameworks so they can deliver a more effective service to their clients.

We have a particularly strong and enduring partnership with Nottingham Community Housing Association (NCHA), with whom we’ve been working for over 25 years. This long-term collaboration has allowed us to develop a deep understanding of NCHA’s needs, going beyond day-to-day tasks to act as an extension of NCHA’s team. Our Real Estate Senior Associate Lorna Trimble recently acted for NCHA on the lease of Sutton House in Nottingham, which will offer 48 independent flats to families in need, giving them a secure alternative to unstable hotels and B&B accommodation.

## Protecting biodiversity

NatureSpace Partnership, which offers an alternative licensing system to help protect great crested newts on development sites, has worked closely with Freeths since the partnership was first formed. Our expertise helped them create a blueprint for a one-stop shop for planning and licensing, saving developers’ time and generating an income to invest in new wildlife ponds for displaced newts.

# Looking to the future

**Through Freeths IMPACT we will continue to pursue our responsible business mission to make a positive difference across colleagues, communities, climate and clients.**



If you'd like to comment or feedback on anything contained in this report, or our future direction, please email [responsiblebusiness@freeths.co.uk](mailto:responsiblebusiness@freeths.co.uk)

