

Burness Paull
**Responsible
Business Report**
2023



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Introduction



Peter Lawson
CHAIR

FOREWORD

Every organisation makes an impact on the planet and society.

And we all have an obligation to make that impact as positive as possible - through limiting and offsetting carbon emissions, responsible consumption and production, improving equality and wellbeing, and giving back to the communities in which we operate.

This is not just the right thing to do. It is increasingly expected by and influences the decision making of clients, investors, employees, and other stakeholders. And those who get it right will reap the benefits from deeper client relationships, a stronger culture, and better attraction and retention of talent.

As a firm, we are on a journey as we endeavour to become an ever more sustainable and responsible business, and we are committed to always doing better across every facet of ESG - tying in with our human and high-performing ethos.

Our focus up to now has primarily been on benchmarking our current position with the support of independent assessors and setting objectives.

With this now complete, our attention has turned to implementing strategies and initiatives to meet our responsible business targets, which are aligned with UN Global Compact, UN Sustainability Goals, and the Science-Based Targets initiative (SBTi) standards.

These include but are not limited to: achieving net zero by 2050, reducing absolute scope one and two greenhouse gas emissions by 50 per cent by 2030, reducing absolute scope three emissions by 42 per cent by 2030 and increasing the gender diversity of our partnership, including the number of women in senior roles.

This report seeks to offer transparency and accountability by outlining the progress we have made during our financial year ended 31 July 2023 under four key headings: Responsible Business, Environment, Social and Communities.

We are pleased with what has been achieved – including a 47% reduction in Scope 1 & 2 emissions and a representation of 35% of women among our partners – while simultaneously recognising that there is more to do.

Only by making the investments and effort required, and tracking our performance, can we ensure we are meeting the expectations of our clients, colleagues and other stakeholders.

We are always open to hearing how we could do better, so please do get in touch with any comments or questions.





Responsible Business

A man with dark hair, wearing a white button-down shirt and dark trousers, is sitting at a light-colored wooden table. He is looking out a large window to his right with a slight smile. His hands are clasped on the table. The background shows a bright, modern office interior with large windows and a blurred view of a cityscape.

OUR APPROACH

Responsible business lies at the heart of our decision-making. At Burnes Paull, we prioritise our responsibility to our people, our clients and our communities. We believe that this commitment, coupled with the human and high-performing partnerships we establish with each other and our clients, is fundamental to our success now and in the future, both as a leading law firm and as a responsible employer.

In an increasingly regulated environment, compliance with all relevant laws and professional obligations is a given and we expect all of our partners and employees to comply on a personal level.

Our Governance and Strategy Board, led by our Chair, and our Operations Board, led by our Managing Partner, steer the strategic growth and development of our firm, including our market-leading transformation and innovation strategies. Together with our Business Services Function Heads, they have a sharp focus on ESG and all business decisions must support and be consistent with ESG credentials.

This year, our Sustainability and Responsible Business team saw an expansion of roles and responsibilities. Our Contracts Manager has played an integral part in developing our Code of Business and Supplier Code of Business, ensuring alignment with our ethos and a robust strategy. We have also broadened the role of our dedicated Environmental Impact Assistant to better integrate ESG practices and ensure decisions align with our overarching strategy.

We firmly believe that true sustainability and responsible business must remain an integral part of our firm's DNA. To this end, we have implemented various initiatives to infuse these values into our culture. We provide training, foster open communication, and actively engage in programs and initiatives that make responsible business a lived reality within our firm.

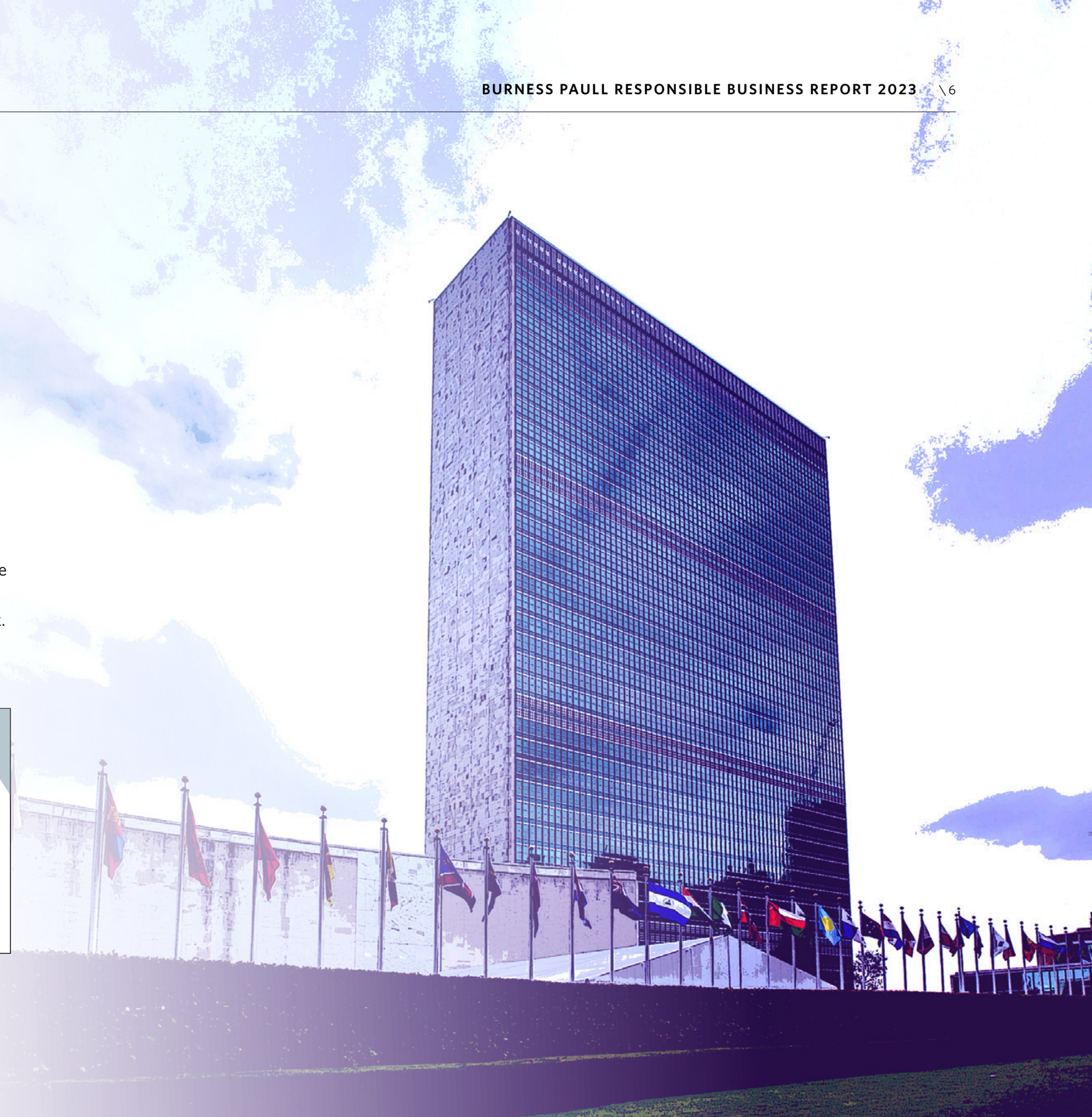
RISK MANAGEMENT

We have a dedicated risk management team which ensures that we remain compliant in all respect with a range of legislative and business requirements including anti-bribery, anti-money laundering, tax evasion, modern slavery, data protection and lobbying.

It is very important that we work with suppliers and partners whose values are aligned with our values. All our suppliers must sign up to our **Supplier Code of Business**, and each is risk assessed to confirm that they meet their own regulatory requirements, as well as ours. This is not just a tick-box exercise: we genuinely care about who we work with and want to understand our partners' values and the work they are undertaking to ensure sustainability of their own business and in the community in which they work.

Practical Policies

Our dedication to responsible business extends far beyond words — it's embedded in the very fabric of our firm. Central to our mission is the development and implementation of a wide range of policies that guide our actions and reflect our unwavering commitment to achieving our ESG objectives. They provide a clear code of conduct and ethical guidelines that hold us accountable for our actions.



UN GLOBAL COMPACT

Burness Paull is a signatory to the UN Global Compact, with its mission to advance sustainable and responsible business. We report on our sustainability progress as part of our UN Global Compact commitment on an annual basis.



UN SUSTAINABILITY DEVELOPMENT GOALS

We actively embrace the UN Sustainability Development Goals (SDGs) and they constitute the focus of our ESG strategy and commitments, providing us with a meaningful framework that consolidates many of our existing initiatives and enables us to identify areas for improvement.



ECOVADIS

The EcoVadis platform is a sustainability ratings tool, helping us understand our performance and drive continuous improvement across all aspects of ESG. For the second consecutive year, we are delighted to have been awarded a gold medal in the EcoVadis rating system, recognising our performance against a variety of benchmarks including environmental impact, diversity & inclusion measures and responsible and sustainable procurement. Achieving this puts us in the top 2% of companies who submit - including leading law firms and other professional services firms.





Environment



NET ZERO

An integral part of our ESG strategy is our commitment to Net Zero.

We have updated our net zero targets to align with the Science-Based Targets initiative (SBTi) criteria, ensuring that our reduction strategy is not only robust but also in harmony with the Paris Agreement’s commitment to limit global warming to under 1.5 degrees celsius. We are committed to achieving net zero by 2050, reducing absolute scope one and two greenhouse gas emissions by 50% by 2030, and reducing absolute scope three emissions by 42% by 2030, all from a 2021 baseline.

These are ambitious targets, but our journey is well underway, led by Environmental Impact Assistant Maggie Stewart and supported by a team of Environmental Champions representing each area of our business and our Business Services Functions Heads.



Maggie Stewart

ENVIRONMENTAL IMPACT ASSISTANT

OUR COMMITMENT TO NET ZERO:

NET 0 BY 2050

50% REDUCTION BY 2030 IN SCOPE 1 & 2 EMISSIONS

42% REDUCTION BY 2030 IN SCOPE 3 EMISSIONS

“Over the past year, we have dedicated substantial efforts to enhance the accuracy and comprehensiveness of our emissions data. Our partnership with Normative, a leading carbon accounting platform, has played a crucial part in this. This collaboration has allowed us to refine our emissions accounting, ensuring that we account for the full spectrum of emissions within our operations.

Following the post-pandemic return to normal operations, we are pleased to report an overall reduction in our emissions. Notably, a 47% reduction in Scope 1 & 2 emissions.

While the pandemic influenced some of our progress, areas like business travel and procurement habits now demand more attention. To make meaningful progress, we are setting clear, measurable objectives and initiating discussions across teams to define short-term targets.

A substantial portion of our carbon footprint originates from what we purchase from others. Therefore, working with our suppliers is crucial in achieving our goals. Collaborative efforts will be centred around addressing the areas where we have the most significant emissions impact. This supplier engagement will be a central focus for us in the upcoming year.”

OUR PROGRESS



OPERATIONS

Beyond tracking our energy consumption and carbon emissions, we monitor various other aspects of our operations, including paper consumption, single-use plastics, event-related impacts, our recruitment processes, and waste management.



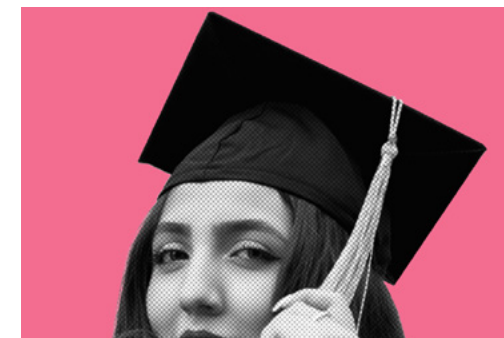
ENERGY

Our offices operate with 100 per cent renewable electricity. We embrace energy-efficient technologies, optimise building systems, and promote energy conservation awareness among employees. **We are actively engaged in phase three of the Energy Savings Opportunity Scheme (ESOS)** to further identify and implement energy-saving opportunities.



WASTE

We divert 100 per cent of our waste from landfill. Through thorough waste management practices, we prioritise waste reduction, recycling, and responsible disposal. Each month, we receive reports on our office waste, including how it's handled, and educate staff about the importance of reducing waste through our policies.



GRADUATE RECRUITMENT

We've been **actively integrating sustainability into our graduate recruitment process** by cutting back on giveaways, reducing waste, and sourcing materials responsibly. As part of our recruitment process, we also inform candidates about our sustainability efforts and encourage them to adopt eco-friendly practices in their legal careers.



TECHNOLOGY

Embracing technology during the pandemic, we transitioned many of our operations online. This strategic move not only significantly reduced emissions associated with paper, energy, and transportation but also streamlined our processes for greater efficiency. In preparing for the return to normal working conditions, we've educated our employees about the benefits of these changes and their role in reducing our environmental footprint.

OUR PROGRESS cont.



TRAVEL

As we adapt to post-pandemic working conditions, we acknowledge the unique challenge posed by the resurgence in business travel. Reconnecting with clients in person after extended periods of remote work has been a welcome change, though not without challenges, such as disruptions from train strikes. These unforeseen events sometimes require alternative travel methods, impacting our overall carbon footprint. Nonetheless, our commitment to sustainability remains unwavering, as we actively explore eco-friendly travel options and revise our policies to ensure environmental considerations lead our business travel decisions.



COLLEAGUES

It's really important to us to involve our colleagues in our efforts to reduce our environmental impact, and so we're always looking for new initiatives to bring everyone together. This year we hosted Earth Day quizzes in each office, celebrating our commitment to a healthier planet in a fun and engaging way, with some potted plants as sustainable prizes. We celebrated a "Green Christmas", sharing tips on making the holiday season more eco-friendly, supporting local businesses and opting for potted Christmas trees. And throughout the summer, we initiated a concerted effort to eliminate single-use plastics. Inspired by "Plastic-Free July," we wanted to reduce our plastic footprint. Our partnership with the Burness Paull Foundation supported "Keep Scotland Beautiful," in recognition of our colleagues' efforts. Together, we undertook this challenge to get everyone involved, sharing small steps that lead to significant change. From addressing the 'coffee cup conundrum' to promoting sustainable shopping, we created awareness and actively engaged in making our world cleaner and greener.

PARTNERSHIPS:



OPENING OFFICES:

Where we base our business is key to reducing our environmental impact. While hybrid working is here to stay, it doesn't replace face-to-face connections with colleagues and clients in a shared space. This year we have opened two new offices – in Aberdeen and Glasgow – and are already seeing the impact.

We are enjoying our new office in the heart of Aberdeen, in the prestigious Marischal Square development. The state-of-the-art Marischal Square has the best BREEAM and EPC ratings of any office building in Aberdeen, with sustainability features and technology embedded throughout.

In Glasgow, our move to Atlantic Quay has also been well received by employees, with the fresh, modern building providing amenities to encourage sustainable travel to work such as showers and lockers, and interesting environmental features including solar panels, on-roof beehives, and wildflower areas for biodiversity.

With waste reduction at the forefront of our minds while moving, we donated surplus office furniture to local charities and our longstanding partner Street Soccer Scotland. Any furniture we couldn't donate was restored for resale or recycled.

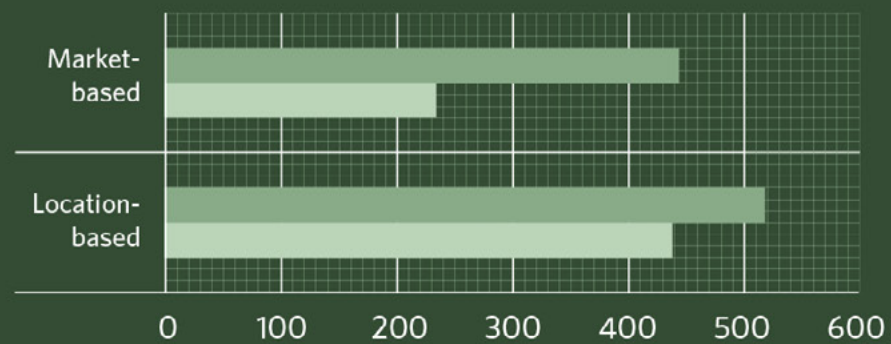


GREENHOUSE GAS EMISSIONS BREAKDOWN

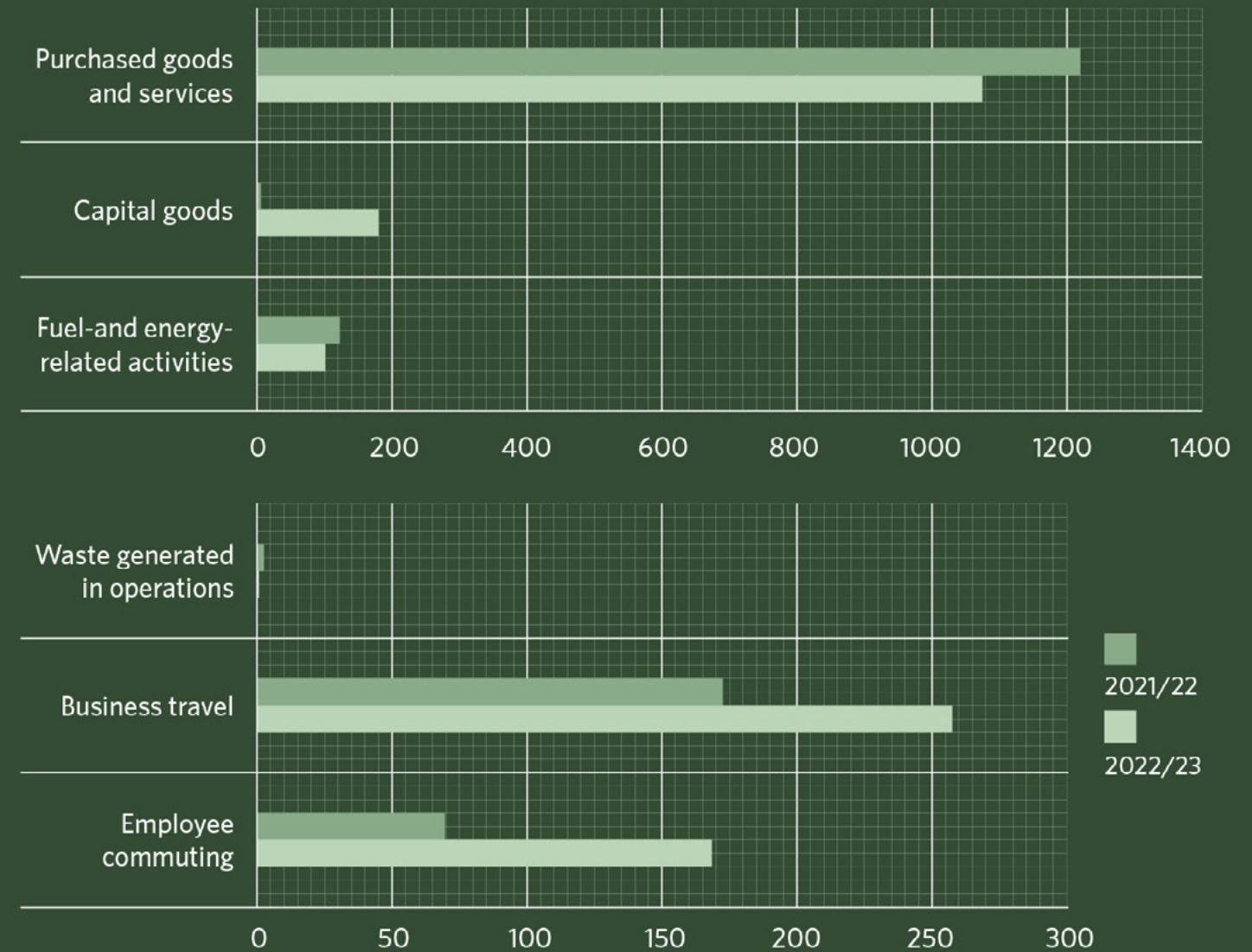
SCOPE 1 - Direct emissions from owned or controlled sources, in tCO₂e.



SCOPE 2 - Indirect emissions from the generation of purchased energy, in tCO₂e.



SCOPE 3 - All indirect emissions (not included in scope 2) that occur in our value chain, in tCO₂e.





SUSTAINABLE PROCUREMENT

Sustainable procurement stands as a core element of our business strategy, recognising that approximately 80% of our total emissions stem from purchased goods and services. Our commitment is guided by a comprehensive sustainable procurement policy that directs our interactions with suppliers, emphasising the following key areas:



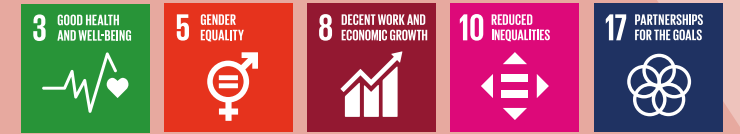
Elitsa Kirilova
CONTRACTS MANAGER

“Our approach involves engaging with suppliers to gather specific emissions data and fostering collaboration to drive reduction. Through transaction and supplier mapping exercises, we identify key suppliers contributing significantly to our emissions, allowing us to prioritise engagement efforts where they are most impactful.

Challenges arise as suppliers vary in their ability to consistently provide the necessary information, with limitations in precise emissions allocation. To address these challenges, we are fostering open communication with suppliers and exploring innovative solutions to enhance data collection processes.

Looking ahead to 2024, our main objective is to deepen supplier engagement, aiming for higher participation in our supply chain ESG disclosure programme. To achieve this goal, we will continue to empower our in-house buyers through training sessions, equipping them with the knowledge and tools necessary to make sustainable procurement decisions. Simultaneously, we are planning an awareness campaign tailored for our suppliers. This initiative aims to provide them with an increased understanding of ESG best practices relevant to the goods and services they provide to us.

With these initiatives in place, we are committed to making a meaningful impact, both by reflecting on our actions and taking deliberate steps to align our procurement practices with our values, one decision at a time.”



Social



Emma Smith

INCLUSION &
WELLBEING MANAGER



A RESPONSIBLE AND INCLUSIVE EMPLOYER

“As a responsible employer we are committed to creating a culture that values diversity, inclusion and workplace wellbeing.

Within each of these three key areas we have set out our commitment, our progress and our actions.

We recognise the benefits that diversity brings to our business and we are continuing to strive for equality of opportunity for all and the promotion of a workplace culture where all our people can succeed.

This year, we are delighted to have received a **Gold Award for our Talent Inclusion and Diversity Evaluation (TIDE) submission**. TIDE is a self-assessment and benchmarking tool developed by the Employers Network for Equality & Inclusion (ENEI). This award is testament to the hard work going on across the firm to continue to be inclusive to all.”

DIVERSITY

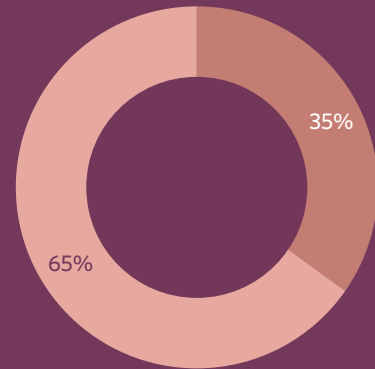
Our commitment:

We are committed to increasing the gender diversity of our partnership and the number of women in senior roles, as well as ensuring our wider workforce is representative of our sector and wider society.

Our progress:

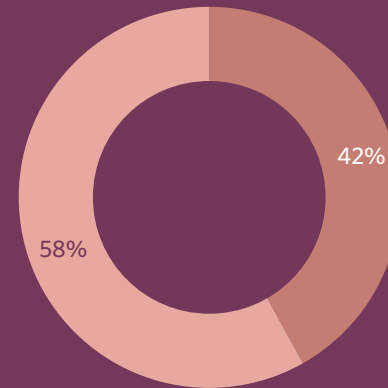
- MALE
- FEMALE/UNREPRESENTED GROUPS

PARTNERSHIP



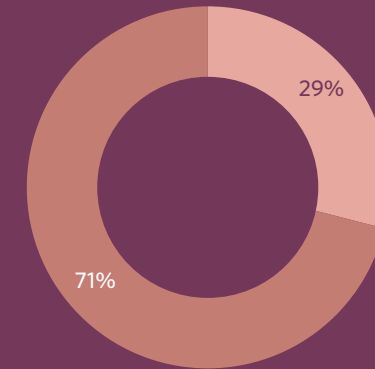
We have made significant progress in improving the **gender diversity of our partnership**. Currently 35% of our partners are women, this is an 8% increase over 5 years.

DIVISIONAL HEADS

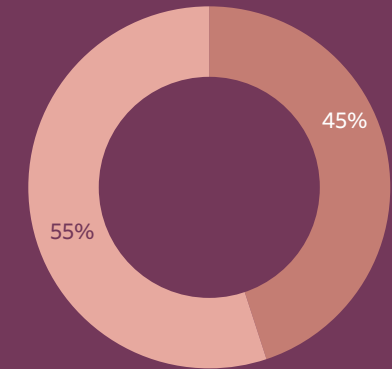


As our business has grown, we have **increased the number of women in senior roles** and over 40% of our Divisional Heads and 70% of our **Business Services Function Heads are women**.

FUNCTION HEADS

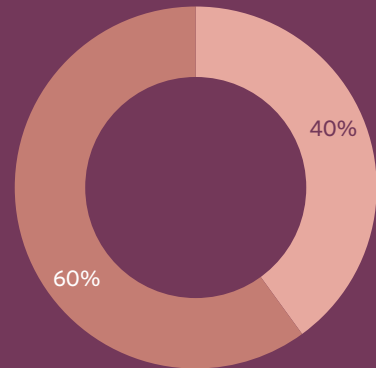


EXECUTIVE BOARDS



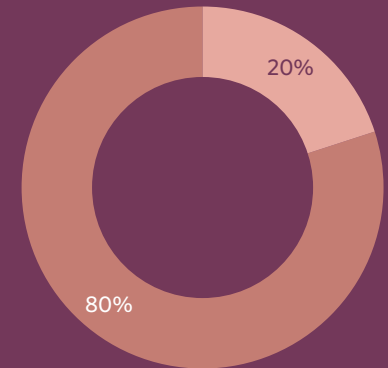
We have also **increased the diversity of our management boards** year on year from 36% to 45%.

PARTNER PROMOTIONS



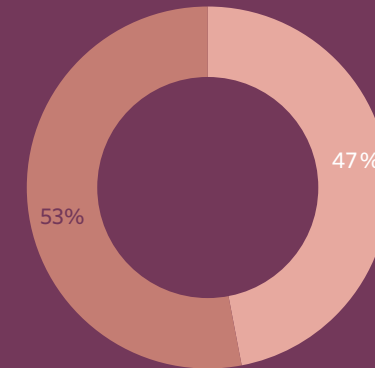
Over the past 5 years, women have made up 60% of our **internal partner promotions**.

BUSINESS SERVICES



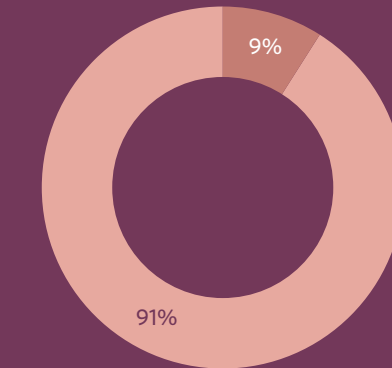
80% of our business services colleagues are from **under-represented groups** (women, LGBTQ+, ME and those with disabilities).

GRAD HIRES - SOCIO ECONOMIC BACKGROUND



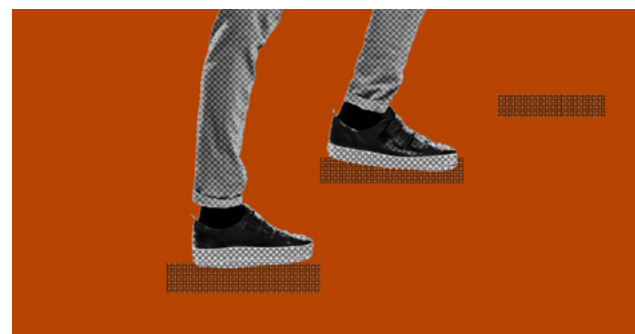
We have been working hard to **increase the diversity of our graduate population**. In 2023, we saw a 9% increase in hires from socially disadvantage backgrounds from 44% to 53%.

GRAD HIRES - ETHNICITY

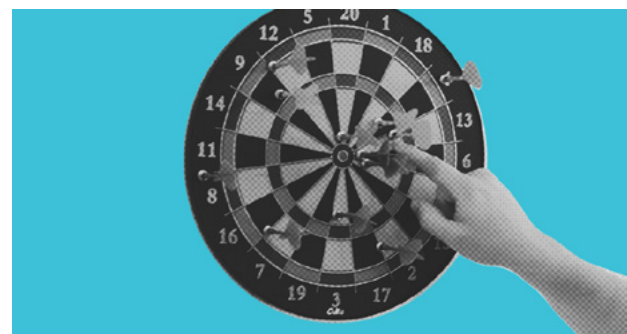


We have also seen an **increase in the ethnic diversity of our graduate hires** from 6% to 9% of successful hires being from minority ethnic backgrounds.

Our actions:



This year our **Boards undertook leadership training** designed to examine the personal and institutional hurdles that can often prevent progress to the top. This is in addition to our firmwide D&I training.



In addition to the contextual recruitment system, we have **invested in Candid, Rare's applicant tracking system**, allowing us to effectively track the diversity of our hires and measure adverse impact throughout each stage of our lateral and graduate recruitment processes.



This year we have included **social mobility indicators as part of our annual equalities monitoring process**. This is an important step which has enabled us to see where we are and start to measure progress in this area.



We **collaborated with SEMLA** (Scottish Ethnic Minority Lawyers Association) to deliver skills sessions to their members.



We launched an **inclusive recruitment guide** for hiring managers to complement our unconscious bias training.



We **increased our PRIME work experience programme** to include our Glasgow office.



We were **proud sponsors of the international "It Takes All Kinds of Minds"** conference in Edinburgh, facilitating workshops and panel sessions aimed at promoting workplace best practice in relation to neuroinclusion. This follows on from our partnership with them on Scotland's first neuroinclusion at work project, and is part of our efforts to lead the way on neurodiversity in the workplace.

INCLUSION

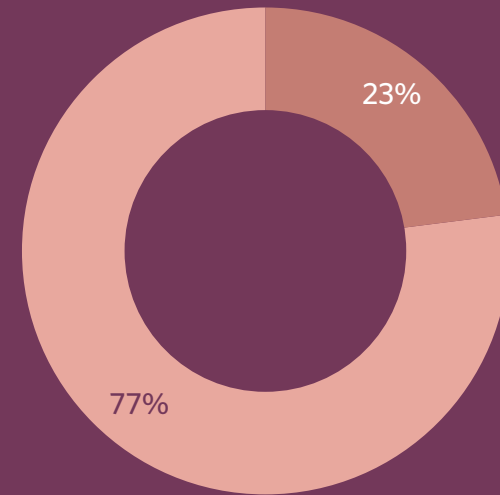
Our commitment:

We are committed to ensuring that our policies, processes, and behaviours promote an inclusive culture which values difference and where all our colleagues feel supported to reach their full potential.

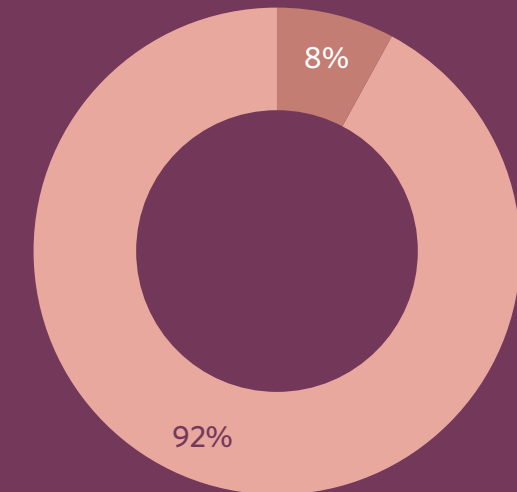
Our progress:

We are proud that respect and inclusion has been the highest ranking factor in our employee engagement survey for three consecutive years. We believe that the following practical steps and initiatives contribute to this:

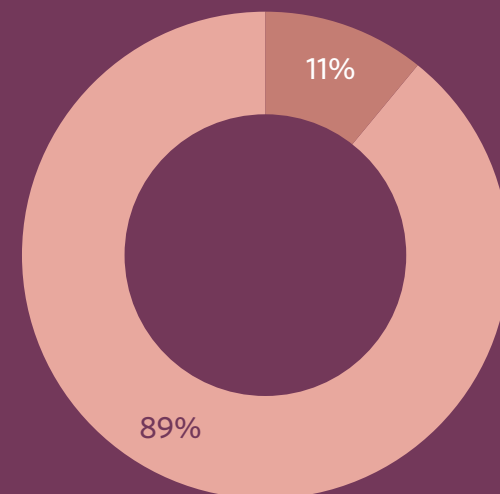
OVERALL
ENGAGEMENT
SCORE:



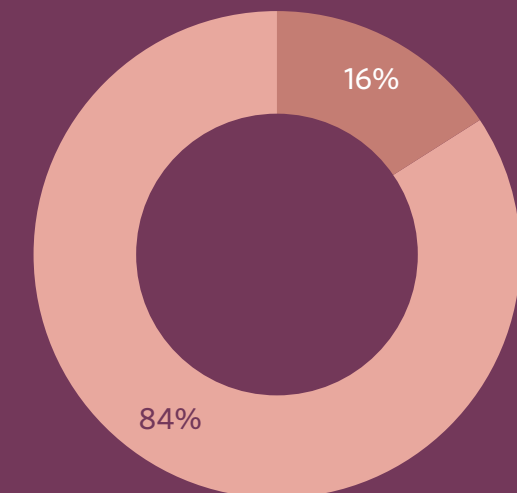
I FEEL
COMFORTABLE
BEING MYSELF
AT WORK:



I FEEL RESPECTED
AT WORK:



PEOPLE FROM
DIVERSE
BACKGROUNDS
CAN SUCCEED
HERE:



● FAVOURABLE ● NEUTRAL/NEGATIVE

Our actions:



We've been **at the forefront of promoting neuroinclusion in the workplace**, collaborating with The Salvesen Mindroom on Scotland's first 'neuroinclusion at work programme' aimed at increasing awareness and removing barriers for neurodivergent colleagues and applicants.



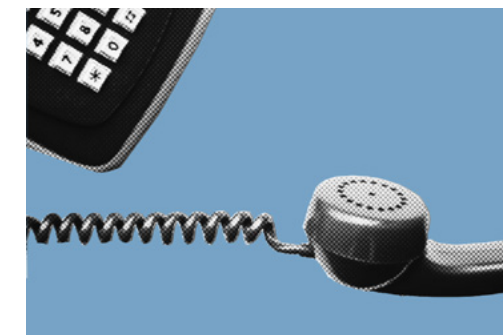
In addition to our existing networks, we launched **BeDiverse, our new employee network** which is aimed at raising awareness of the various faiths, religions and cultural heritages across the firm.



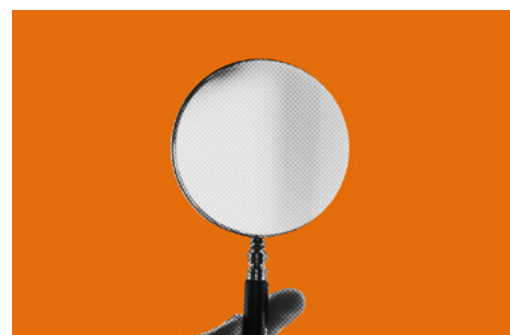
Our **employee networks** have continued to showcase diverse voices from across the firm and wider sector.



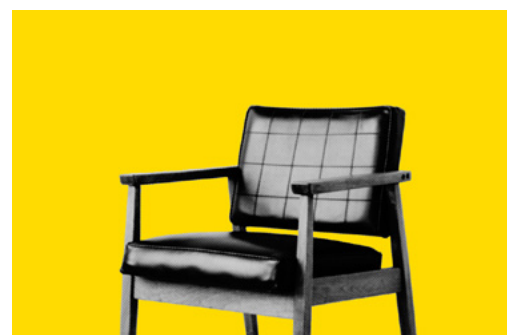
We have retained **Social Mobility Index Top 75** employer status.



We have introduced **reasonable adjustments passports** to encourage open conversation around disability and long-term health conditions.



We have **introduced an inclusive technology guide** to raise awareness of available assistive technology.



Each of our offices has a **dedicated prayer space** and we offer additional flexibility to accommodate religious observance.



We have **continued to expand our firm-wide mentoring scheme, BeMentored**, to encourage colleagues to form relationships with colleagues from outside their own teams to support them through the stages of career development.



Our **introduction of additional leave for armed reservists** helped us to progress to a silver level Armed Forces Covenant award.

HEALTH & WELLBEING

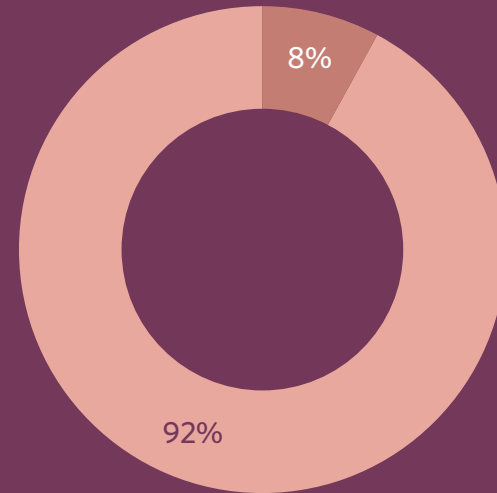
Our commitment:

We take a holistic approach to employee wellbeing and our strategy covers mental, physical, financial, and social wellbeing. We are committed to creating a psychologically safe culture that supports positive mental health and healthy lifestyle choices through awareness raising and education and by engaging our colleagues in a range of activities and initiatives that support overall wellbeing.

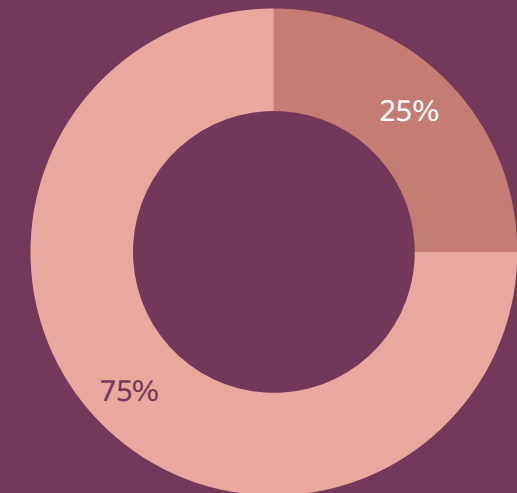
Our progress:

● FAVOURABLE ● NOT FAVOURABLE

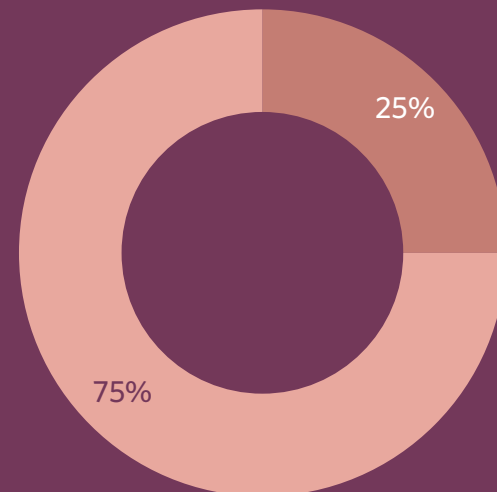
“IT’S OK TO ADMIT MISTAKES”:



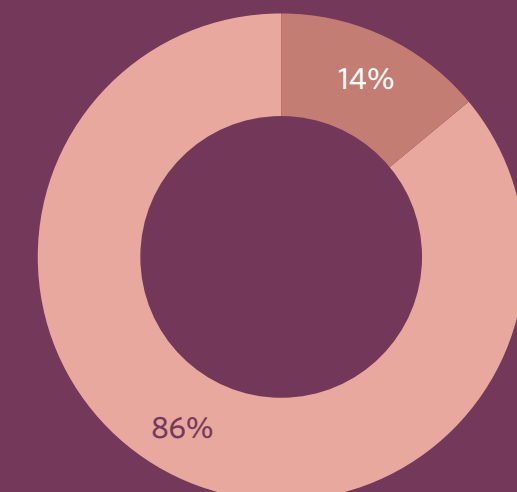
FLEXIBILITY TO MANAGE PERSONAL AND WORK DEMANDS:



WELLBEING IS A PRIORITY AT BURNES PAULL:



MY MANAGER GENUINELY CARES ABOUT MY WELLBEING:



Our actions:



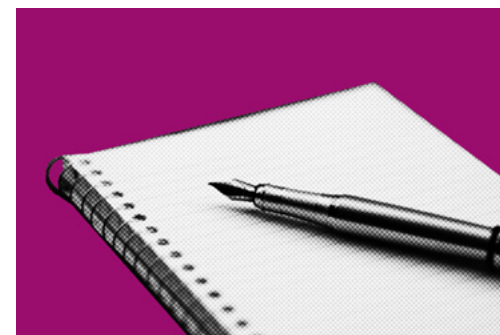
We have introduced access to **dedicated employee wellbeing and mental health counsellors** twice monthly.



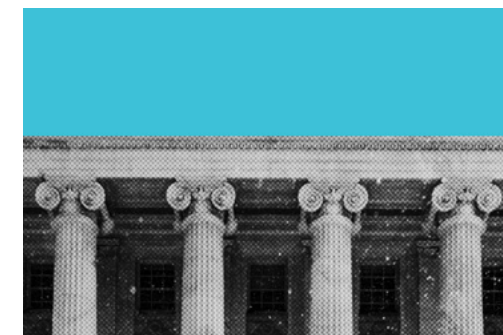
We engaged a new and **improved occupational health provider** with specialist expertise in areas such as neurodiversity and menopause.



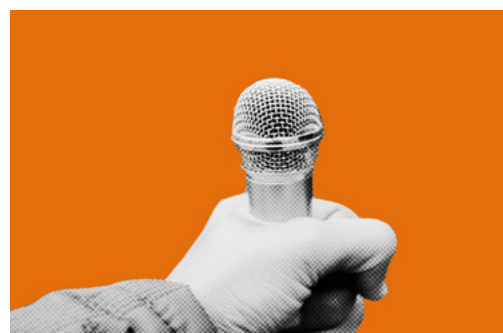
We have retained our **menopause-friendly accreditation** and improved the support we offer to include CBT for menopause.



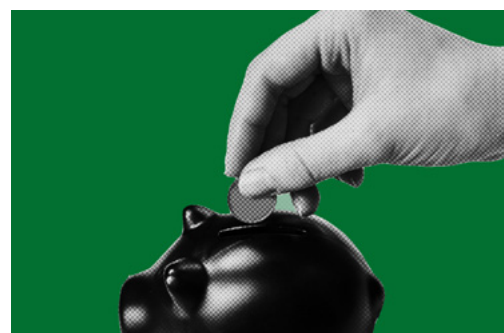
Through **employee health checks and wellbeing surveys** we have continued to evaluate and respond to qualitative and quantitative data relating to the mental wellbeing of employees and partners.



We have continued to focus on embedding healthy working practices using the principles of the **Mindful Business Charter**.



We co-ordinated relevant **awareness raising sessions with internal and external partners** e.g. health charities such as Andy's Man Club, Bowel Cancer UK, Cancer Card, Salvesen Mindroom Centre and benefits providers.



We **launched a new benefits platform**, held one-to-one and group financial advice sessions, and introduced a dedicated financial wellbeing resources hub.

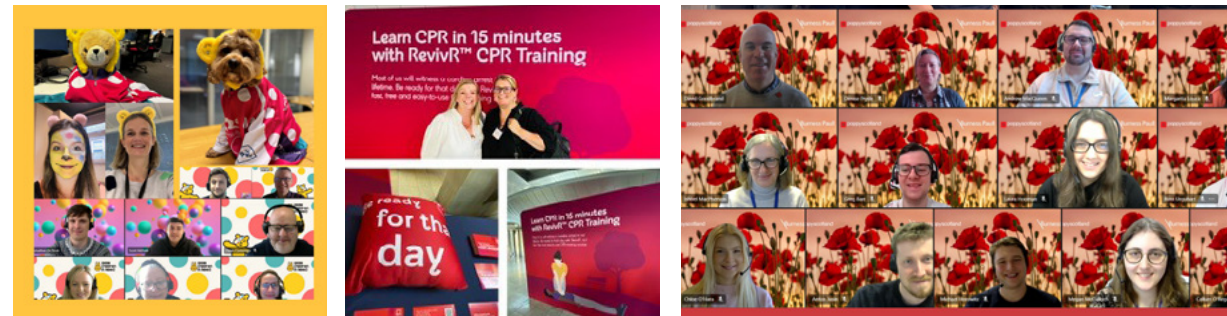


We introduced **online support groups and shared interest communities** across our offices.





Communities



BURNESS PAULL FOUNDATION

At the heart of our corporate social responsibility offering is the Burness Paull Foundation, a registered charity established in 2016 and funded by the firm.

The Foundation’s key objective is to promote the charitable work of the firm on a collective basis as well as the individual efforts of employees - making financial awards to help them fundraise for worthwhile causes of their choice.

In the past 12 months the Foundation has made donations to 43 individual charities. This includes granting individual awards to the fundraising activities of 28 colleagues, each carrying out their own charity challenge.



Jackie Robertson
FOUNDATION MANAGER

“Throughout the year the Burness Paull Foundation is committed to helping charities who make a real difference, by both supporting colleagues in their own efforts and joining up as a firm for our annual appeals and activities. It’s fantastic to see the generosity and commitment colleagues put in to help organisations doing really important and valuable work in our communities and I’m delighted the Foundation can play a part in making this happen.”



STREET SOCCER SCOTLAND

Central to the Foundation's activity is the support of the firm's longstanding partner Street Soccer Scotland. Throughout the year we have proudly sponsored both the Scotland men's team entering the Homeless World Cup, and the Scotland women's team entering the Nations Cup women's tournament.

We also hosted our annual corporate tournament in Aberdeen, fostering relationships between Street Soccer and the business community.

Our colleagues actively engaged in volunteering opportunities, including helping out with bucket collections during the festival season and regularly attending Street Soccer training sessions. We also facilitated informative sessions with Street Soccer Scotland staff at our offices, strengthening our partnership.

Perhaps most excitingly, this year we have collaborated with the Traverse Theatre to support the production of "Same Team - A Street Soccer Story," taking the charity's message to the stage and a wider audience. The play was written with the input of some of the Street Soccer female players and is based on their own experiences. This is a groundbreaking partnership bringing together sport, the arts and business for social change - one that we believe will leave a legacy for years to come.



FIRMWIDE FUNDRAISING

As well as supporting individual initiatives, we also regularly come together as a firm throughout the year to take part in challenges, appeals and awareness days, all supported by the Burness Paull Foundation. Some of the highlights of the last 12 months include:



As part of a Wellbeing Month of activities in January, **the Foundation sponsored employees for a fitness challenge**, with each office choosing the cause to get fit for. We donated to VSA (Aberdeen), B Health Together (Edinburgh) and The Beatson Cancer Charity (Glasgow).



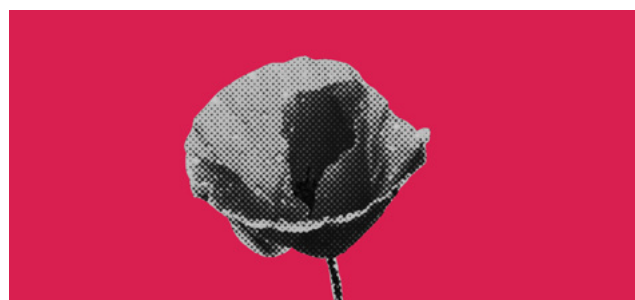
In response to the devastating earthquake in Turkey and Syria, the Foundation made a **financial donation to the British Red Cross appeal** and co-ordinated a goods and supplies drive across all our offices. We also responded to the disastrous floods in Libya with a supply drive and donation.



We run an **annual school uniform appeal**, donating school supplies and financial contributions to organisations helping families in our communities. The charities partnered with for this year's initiative were Abernecessities, Edinburgh School Uniform Bank and Back to School Bank East Renfrewshire.



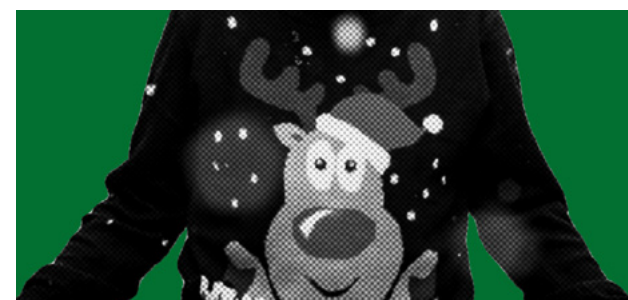
The **Macmillan Coffee Morning** is a chance for bakers across the firm to shine, with colleagues enjoying a cake sale organised by the Foundation, which also donates to the total raised.



The **Royal British Legion poppy appeal** is one close to the hearts of many, and the Foundation donates in recognition of acts of remembrance across the firm.



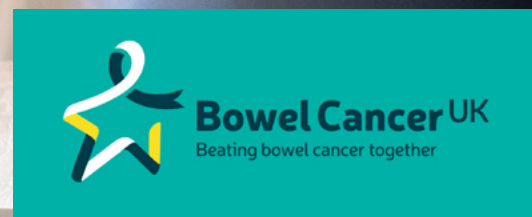
Children in Need and Red Nose Day give everyone the chance to be creative. We encourage teams across the firm to get involved, with donations made for selfies in support of the campaigns, art competitions where families can join in, and costumes very much encouraged!



Our **flagship Christmas appeal** brings together colleagues to support our communities throughout the festive season. Each year we take part in the Save the Children's Christmas Jumper Day and collect donations and make financial contributions to local charities. Our last appeal raised funds for food and fuel banks Cyrenians in Aberdeen, the Trussell Trust in Edinburgh and Glasgow, and the Fuel Bank Foundation.

Another important focus for the Burness Paull Foundation is working closely with our Inclusion and Wellbeing Manager Emma Smith, providing helpful resources to our employees and their families and giving charities a platform to educate and inform.

In the last 12 months the Burness Paull Foundation has financially supported the following charities who have also spoken to our employees about their work and how they can support employees, their families and the wider community.



PRO BONO

We are proud to have been able to make a tangible difference to a number of charities and organisations by providing pro bono advice. It's part of our commitment to engaging with our communities and forming partnerships for positive change. Here are some of the organisations we have supported:



We are working with The Lifescape Project, as their Scottish law firm pro-bono partner. Their purpose, to create a sustainable environment through the creation, restoration and protection of wild landscapes, is one that is very much aligned with our values, and we are delighted to be able to provide them with the advice on their varied and innovative initiatives.



We undertook pro bono work for Family Journeys, putting in place a lease in relation to their new premises. Family Journeys is a charity that offers support to separated families, and in particular facilitates supervised contact sessions between children and parents, and mediation between separating couples. The new premises has been a fantastic resource to enable Family Journeys to offer a modern service to the families they support. Like all charitable organisations, every penny counts and so funds otherwise spent on legal fees can now be used to support the families Family Journeys look after.



SCOTLAND: The Big Picture is a charity which works to drive the recovery of nature across Scotland through rewilding projects and educating the public on challenges relating to climate breakdown and biodiversity loss. We have supported this important work with pro bono advice across a number of practice areas, including in relation to the provision of funding to support nature recovery and the production of films to support the charity's work.

"We are grateful to Burness Paull for the support provided to SCOTLAND: The Big Picture. We believe in the importance of forging partnerships with likeminded organisations, and the team at Burness Paull joining us on our journey has supported us in our mission to drive nature recovery across Scotland."

JAMES NAIRNE, SCOTLAND: THE BIG PICTURE





We acted on behalf of Feeding Britain (a registered Charity) in relation to the taking of a sublease of the Rear Unit at Nitshill Shopping Centre, 409 Nitshill Road, Glasgow which operates as Threehills Community Supermarket. This property acts as a hub for the community, providing an affordable supermarket, café and community resource facilities. The aim is to provide immediate financial relief for households on low incomes by improving their access to good quality food at affordable prices, while addressing some of the underlying issues which may have left these households vulnerable to hunger.

Ukraine Advice Project

Our specialist immigration team have been involved in the combined efforts of the country’s immigration lawyers through active participation in the Ukraine Advice Project. This was a national advice service set up to provide pro bono immigration and visa advice to Ukrainians fleeing the conflict. All of our firm’s immigration lawyers participated in this project, giving free advice to those in need.

We are proud to be members of JUSTICE, a law reform and human rights charity that strives for a fair, accessible equal UK justice system, with a focus on the most vulnerable and marginalised in society. Supporting their work in Scotland, we currently have one of our colleagues on a part-time pro bono secondment, helping with practical project work as they advocate for reform in both the criminal and civil space.



Lauren Kane
TRAINEE SOLICITOR



“To be given the chance of a secondment while a trainee was always going to be a fantastic opportunity, but I hadn’t anticipated I’d get such a unique experience as joining JUSTICE on a pro bono basis. Their focus on access to justice and human rights is so significant for society, and I’m really proud to have been able to get involved so early in my career.

My main work has been in relation to the Victims, Witnesses and Justice Reform (Scotland) Bill. I spent considerable time reviewing the Bill, considering commentary from stakeholders including the Law Society of Scotland, other practitioners, Scottish Government, and victim support organisations. Burness Paull hosted a roundtable, chaired by Shelagh McCall KC and attended by the Cabinet Justice Secretary on Justice and her Bill team, to collate views across the legal professional and NGO sector about the proposed legislation currently in Parliament. We worked on a report to be presented to the Criminal Justice Committee at the Parliament. I attended the roundtable and produced the first couple drafts of the report which has been submitted to the Committee. I have learned so much, it has been a privilege to have been able to play a part in JUSTICE’s work.”



Lindsay Wallace

HEAD OF SUSTAINABILITY

Having laid the foundations for improvement, we are accelerating our progress across all areas of responsible business during this current 2023/24 financial year – using short-term targets as stepping stones to our overarching, long-term goals. We are confident we will see continued improvement during 2024 and beyond.

Specifically, we aim to further reduce the firm’s carbon emissions. This has been helped significantly by our moves to new and considerably more energy-efficient offices in Glasgow and Aberdeen. The impact will be felt fully in this current reporting period and beyond.

We also anticipate continued advancements as our sustainable procurement and travel policies embed, data gathering improves, and supplier contracts are reviewed as they come up for renewal.

Diversity and inclusion and widening access to the legal profession remain priorities. We expect to see further results from established initiatives – such as our enhanced family and wellbeing policies, our use of the contextual recruitment system, and partnership with the Robertson Trust – as well as newer ones like the firm’s partnership with the Salvesen Mindroom Centre and our participation in its Neuroinclusion at Work programme.

Outlook

 Burness Paull