



SHEPHERD+ WEDDERBURN

# CSR Report 2022



# WELCOME TO CSR 2022

The previous year has highlighted that the need to support charitable causes is more important than ever. Charities have been playing a vital role in supporting those who are navigating the unique and often long-term challenges brought about by the pandemic and subsequent cost of living crisis. As a leading UK law firm, we recognise our responsibilities as an employer to our employees, as a business having an impact on our environment, and as a member of the local communities in which we operate. Corporate social responsibility (CSR) is a cornerstone of Shepherd and Wedderburn's values, and we are committed to making a positive contribution to the communities in which we live and work.

I am pleased to share with you our CSR review for 2022, in which we reflect on all the work carried out by our focus groups during the year, our environmental and sustainability impact and our commitment to the community. We also share details of the diverse range of volunteering and charitable activities that our colleagues undertook throughout the year. From providing pro bono legal advice and organizing parcels at our local foodbanks, participating in exercise challenges to fantasy football tournaments and charity quizzes, our colleagues have seized a wealth of opportunities to get involved and make a difference, sharing their talents and raising money for good causes that are close to their hearts.

I am incredibly grateful to my colleagues for stepping up to support our chosen charities in their valuable work. Your commitment to giving back to the community and supporting those in need is truly inspiring. I look forward to expanding on our CSR efforts during the coming year, and to continue making a positive contribution to the communities we serve.



**Gillian Carty, Partnership Chair**

## Charities we have supported in 2022



## Our CSR Commitment

Our CSR policy is endorsed by our Board and is regularly reviewed and updated by the management team. Its overarching aims are:

1. To be an employer of choice, recruiting and retaining colleagues of the highest calibre and ensuring that our lawyers are supported by a first class management and business services team who together can deliver the level of service that our clients expect and demand.
2. To pursue our business objectives in a socially responsible and sustainable manner.
3. To recognise that we have a role to play in supporting our local communities.

To find out more, visit the [Corporate Social Responsibility](#) page on the Shepherd and Wedderburn website.

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# VOLUNTEERING

## FOOD BANKS

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Shepherd and Wedderburn has established relationships with foodbanks local to each of our UK offices and we have worked with and supported these organisations for a number of years.

In July 2022, our colleagues contributed to our summer fundraising campaign in support of our foodbank partners. A total of £3,000 was raised, that will directly benefit four local foodbanks we support in Edinburgh, Glasgow, Aberdeen and London.

Our volunteers at the Tesco supermarket in Corstorphine on 30 June collected almost half a tonne (421kg) of food and household provisions for the Edinburgh Food Project.

In December 2022, 37 volunteers used their paid volunteering leave to assist foodbanks in Glasgow and Edinburgh with their Christmas preparations, accepting, sorting, dating and weighing food donations to help those in need.



*“As always the teams from Shepherd and Wedderburn made a huge contribution. This year your teams were in for some of the busiest days of the year and it was great to be able to rely on their capable and enthusiastic support to keep us going.”*

**Sheila Sneddon, Volunteer Manager at the Edinburgh Food Project**

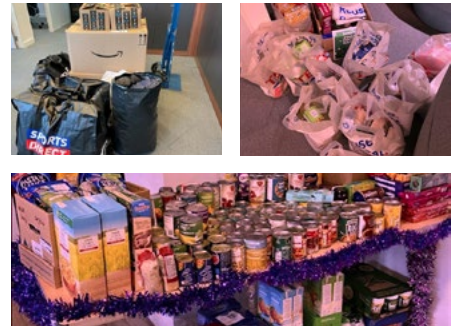
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# VOLUNTEERING

We also supported our four foodbanks with donations at:

- Edinburgh Foodbank
- Glasgow SE Foodbank
- Bow Foodbank in London
- Kings Community Foundation

In total, we raised £6,500 plus Gift Aid.



## PILOTLIGHT

We have been working with Pilotlight since 2013. Pilotlight is a charity that amplifies the impact charities, business and individuals can bring to make a better world. Since 1996, it has helped over 1,000 charities who tackle social disadvantage to ignite change that lasts. A number of colleagues have lent their time to support projects with the organisation.



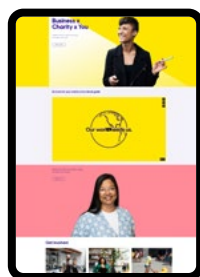
## PILOTLIGHT IN NUMBERS

7

Colleagues have each supported a different charity

10

Years we have been in partnership with Pilotlight



LEARN MORE ABOUT PILOTLIGHT AT [WWW.PILOTLIGHT.ORG.UK/](http://WWW.PILOTLIGHT.ORG.UK/)

# PRO BONO COMMITTEE

## RENEWED POLICY

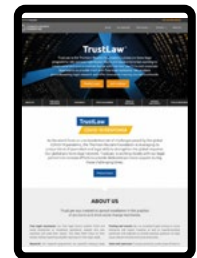
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The firm is keen to support the provision of pro bono legal services as part of our overall approach to supporting the communities in which we operate.

## TRUSTLAW MEMBERSHIP

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The firm is a member of TrustLaw, which is a global pro bono legal programme run by the Thomson Reuters Foundation that connects NGOs and social enterprises with legal teams who can provide free legal advice. We are currently working on our first piece of work through TrustLaw.



## UKRAINE ADVICE PROJECT

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John Vassiliou, a Director in our Immigration team co-founded the Ukraine Advice Project in February 2022 and has logged 208 hours of pro-bono time towards the project, which has proven hugely successful in connecting people fleeing the invasion of Ukraine with free UK immigration advice. Over 600 volunteer specialist lawyers have worked on the project, which has enabled 4,500 people affected by the invasion of Ukraine to obtain legal support. The project received widespread support from all branches of the legal profession throughout the UK, including special dispensations from the Faculty of Advocates in Scotland and the Bar Council of England and Wales to allow Advocates and Barristers to provide direct access advice to individuals via the project.

In an [article](#) with Scottish Legal News John recounts how he and a number of his colleagues in the legal community set up the project.

“Five friends and I set up the service to match Ukrainian people seeking UK immigration advice with specialist lawyers willing to provide free advice. We set it up on 28 February, quite early in the Ukraine conflict. I was travelling to Oxford to visit a friend for their house-warming party. On the way, I felt helpless reading online about all the upsetting things that were happening in the conflict, including people desperate to get out of Ukraine.

People were asking questions about how to get to the UK, but there were no special immigration schemes set up at that point. There were a lot of people online saying that someone should do something, but nobody in the legal sector had actually taken any action. Knowledge on immigration is something I could offer. At the party there were lots of immigration lawyers and I was cajoling them into doing something.”

The following day, the group decided to create a portal which people with questions about emigrating from Ukraine to the UK could access. They moved rapidly and the Ukraine Advice Project website went live the following day.

“I’m very proud and privileged being able to work with such an amazing group of people that helped make this happen. Without everyone coming together, it never would have taken off.”



LexisNexis 2023 Pro Bono Award

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LawWorks 2022 Best New Pro Bono Activity

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Advocate 2022 Pro Bono Initiative of the Year





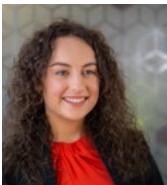
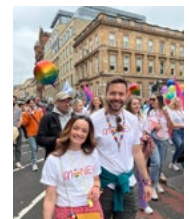
## LGBT YOUTH SCOTLAND

Our PRIDE Group led a number of fundraisers for worthy causes this year. During LGBT History Month, we raised money for LGBT Youth Scotland. Throughout February, 50 colleagues took part in an activity challenge to collectively walk the distance of the outline of Scotland clocking over 740 hours of exercise and raising over £800 to help fund the charity's important work in support of LGBTI youth across Scotland.



To celebrate Pride Month in June, colleagues took part in a charity pub quiz raising £258 for Switchboard - LGBT+ Helpline. We're delighted to support their valuable work in providing a confidential helpline to the LGBTQ+ communities and beyond.

Colleagues attended Pride marches in Edinburgh and London, with over 30 colleagues, family and friends joining Virgin Money for the Mardi Gla Pride march in Glasgow on 16 July.



Olivia Greener, Trainee in our property and infrastructure team discusses Glasgow's support for the LGBTQ+ community and why Pride is both a party and a protest.

[Read here.](#)



Zachary Stewart, Trainee in our corporate team answers the question: why do we still need Pride in 2022.

[Read here.](#)



Alexandra Dumble, Trainee in our corporate team discusses the evolution of Pride in London.

[Read here.](#)



Throughout 2022, we hosted a number of LGBTQ+ inclusion training events including LGBTQ+ Bystander and Non-Binary awareness sessions. We also held lunch-and-learn events to help colleagues understand how to best support LGBTQ+ colleagues with their mental health and how to deliver an LGBTQ+ inclusive service.

## INTERNATIONAL WOMEN'S DAY AND INTERNATIONAL MEN'S DAY

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In celebration of IWD 2022 we held a live webinar looking at Conquering Imposter Syndrome. The virtual event was attended by over 240 clients, contacts and Shepherd and Wedderburn colleagues.

Gillian Carty chaired a panel discussion with award winning barrister and public speaker Sally Penni MBE; Head of Coaching at Kissing with Confidence Nicky Denegri and Senior Associate and Assistant Chief Guide at Girlguiding, Emma Guthrie. This insightful discussion demonstrated how important and engaging this topic is.

In support of International Men's Day 2022, the group collaborated with our Healthy Working Lives Group and Andy's Man Club to address the subject of mental health, in particular high suicide rates among men. Andy's Man Club creates a safe place for men to come together to discuss their issues and problems.

Additionally, in November a team of Shepherd and Wedderburn colleagues represented the Firm at the [Business Fives](#) football tournament in Edinburgh raising £225 for [Andy's Man Club](#).

The group also celebrated Carers Week in June, recognising that many colleagues also take on roles as unpaid carers. We developed a Carers Information hub providing information about support available and local contact groups in all our office areas.





## BLACK HISTORY MONTH

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We celebrated Black History Month in October 2022 by running an internal campaign around the theme of Time for Change: Action not words, where our Race Faith and Belief group released a number of blogs, training and other educational resources every Monday throughout the month.



We are also proud to collaborate with #10000BlackInterns, an initiative working to transform the prospects of young Black people in the UK by offering paid work experience across a broad range of industries, and Black Professionals Scotland, which is dedicated to the empowerment of Black and ethnic minority professionals and students living and working in Scotland, to offer three summer placements to Black students in 2022.

## COMMITMENTS

We are a signatory to the Race Fairness Commitment, which aims to establish fairness at work for people of all ethnic backgrounds – so everyone has an equal chance to succeed. We are also a member of [Legal CORE](#), a collaboration which aims to tackle the underrepresentation of Black, Asian and minority ethnic groups in the legal sector. And we are working with [SEMLA](#) (Scottish Ethnic Minorities Lawyers Association), offering a programme of skills sessions to support aspiring Solicitors.

# YOUNG PERSONS GROUP

This group was formed during 2022 to provide a forum to give our younger colleagues a voice in the firm.

For Stress Awareness Day in November the group developed a 'Stress playlist' of resources with tips and advice to manage stress and achieving a work life balance.

The group also organised a Future Career event in December for young people interested in a career in law. This included students who had participated in our PRIME work experience weeks.



## SOCIAL MOBILITY EMPLOYER INDEX RANKING

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We were ranked 28th in a list of the UK's top 75 employers published by the Social Mobility Foundation, rising twenty-two places from the previous year's index and demonstrating our progress in fostering a diverse and inclusive workplace. The Social Mobility Employer Index assesses UK employers across six key areas: working with young people, routes into the company, talent attraction, recruitment and selection, data collection, progression, and advocacy.



This achievement has deepened our commitment to furthering our inclusion policies and to working with clients and other organisations to increase recruitment and provide progression opportunities for people of all backgrounds. For example, we have adopted RARE contextualised recruitment as part of our legal summer placement and graduate recruitment processes to enable us to recruit in a socially responsible way.

## DIPLOMA FUNDING

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Shepherd and Wedderburn's social mobility initiatives extend to part-funding the diploma costs for a number of trainee solicitors. Two of our recent recipients share how this impacted their lives.

## WIDENING ACCESS

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We continue to actively support the Lawscot Foundation, PRIME and the Social Mobility Foundation, and are a signatory of the Race Fairness Commitment all of which seek to widen access to the workplace.

## PRIME INITIATIVE

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PRIME is an alliance of law firms across the UK and Republic of Ireland which aims to improve access to, and socio-economic diversity within, the legal profession.

April 2022 saw the return of our first PRIME work experience week since the start of the pandemic. We provided work experience in our Edinburgh, Glasgow, Aberdeen, and London offices for school students aged 16-18 from lower socio-economic backgrounds. This involved students carrying out a series of activities to increase their understanding of how a law firm operates. The weeks included work shadowing, case studies, a range of work based activities with Partners, other colleagues and also some key clients to enhance their employability and skill development.

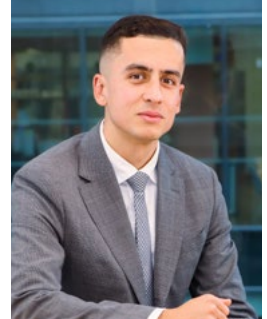


# SOCIAL MOBILITY GROUP

## YASER RAZOUK

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“As a recipient of Shepherd and Wedderburn’s financial support during my diploma, I am extremely grateful for the opportunity to have had a more focused and fulfilling academic experience. The part-funding of the diploma fees and the monthly living allowance allowed me to prioritise my studies and dedicate more time to achieving better grades, without having to worry about financial burdens. With the assistance of the firm, I was also able to reduce my part time working hours during busy periods of assessments, which enabled me to get more out of my final year at university. I believe that the firm’s commitment to supporting aspiring legal professionals reflects its strong sense of social responsibility”.



*“The part funding of the diploma fees and the monthly living allowance allowed me to prioritise my studies and dedicate more time to achieving better grades”.*



## SHONA NORBASH

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“Whilst completing the Diploma in Professional Legal Practice, I was very grateful to receive a significant contribution towards the diploma fees and a monthly living allowance from Shepherd and Wedderburn. These financial contributions meant that I did not have to rely on family or take out expensive student loans. This financial support gave me peace of mind at what is a very difficult time financially for many aspiring solicitors. I could therefore concentrate fully on my studies and achieve my best results.”



*“This financial support gave me peace of mind at what is a very difficult time financially for many aspiring solicitors”.*



## THOMAS MACKIE

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“Shepherd and Wedderburn offered to pay for a large part of my diploma fees in addition to providing me with a living allowance. As I did not qualify for student loan support this was an immense relief without which I may not have been able to pursue a career in law.”



# HEALTHY WORKING LIVES GROUP

## JANUARY

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We re-launched our Healthy Working Lives internal resource to help colleagues easily access all the benefits and activities the group has to offer.

With improved navigation colleagues can easily access:

- Tips and resources to help take care of physical wellbeing, including online yoga classes and flu vaccinations;
- Tools and services that support mental health and wellbeing, such as signpost to our Mental Health First Aiders and other counselling services; and
- A full calendar of our upcoming events and initiatives that colleagues can support or take part in.

## MARCH

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The Healthy Working Lives held a Mindfulness for sleep workshop in March.

In this Mindfulness for Sleep workshop, [Dr Kitty Wheeler](#) explored common cognitive patterning around sleeplessness. A number of techniques were demonstrated to help colleagues get more fulfilling sleep and lay the daytime seeds of good night rest.

Sleep is perhaps one of the most overlooked factors contributing to good health and wellbeing. We know it's important to eat well and lead an active lifestyle, but do we really understand the importance of getting a good night's sleep?

## MAY

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- The Healthy Working Lives Group hosted a raffle in support of the charity, Andy Man's Club which raised a total of £537.50 for this worthy mental health charity.
- We championed Mental Health Awareness Week from 9 to 15 May, promoting the year's theme of loneliness, affecting more and more of us in the UK and having impact on our physical and mental health during the pandemic.
- Alex McClintock, Project Development Champion of charity Andy's Man Club hosted a live online session in May as part of our support for Mental Health Awareness Week.
- We also launched our Health and Wellbeing policy. This new policy confirms our commitment to promoting good health at work, encourages initiatives that support wellbeing, and adheres to the principles of our Healthy Working Lives Gold Accreditation. The policy also guides colleagues on how to seek confidential support for any additional assistance to carry out roles, for example if colleagues have a disability. The firm is a Disability Confident Employer and is happy to make reasonable adjustments to support colleagues in their roles.



# HEALTHY WORKING LIVES GROUP

- We offered colleagues the chance to take part in 10 online yoga classes every Tuesday.
- As part of our ongoing commitment to Healthy Working Lives, and in an effort to stop the flu virus spreading amongst colleagues, we provided a refund to any colleague who had a flu jag up to the value of £16.99.



## SEPTEMBER

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We became a member of the Neurodiversity in Business Forum, an industry group for organisations to share good practice on recruiting, retaining and empowering neurodivergent people. As part of our commitment, we are aiming to raise awareness of neurodiversity and what we can do to support neurodivergent colleagues and recognise their strengths.





# OTHER FUNDRAISING

## COLLECTIONS

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The group organised a clothes collection in April for OutfitLike, a charity providing workwear for people on low or no income. We collected over 20 boxes of clothes and accessories across all our offices.

The group also raised over £500 for WhoCares? Scotland (a charity supporting care experienced people) by running a bake sale in two of our offices.

## PAYROLL GIVING

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Throughout 2022, the firm offered staff this simple and tax-efficient method for making monthly donations to the charity of their choice via the payroll.



## COLLEAGUES' CAUSES

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We have continued to make ad hoc donations to causes important to our colleagues, for example supporting John Morrison, Partner in our Corporate team in his fundraising efforts to support the MS Society and Rachel Brooks, Solicitor in our Media and Technology Team with fundraising for Maggie's Centre in Edinburgh.

# SUSTAINABILITY GROUP

## THE ROUTE TO A MORE SUSTAINABLE FUTURE

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In line with our route map to net zero, we are fully committed to reducing our carbon footprint and to working with our colleagues, clients, suppliers, and other third parties to that end. In addition, our Sustainability Policy is focussed on three key areas: our clients, our people and our business and we are working hard on all three, recognising the importance of playing our part in creating a sustainable and resilient future.

### OUR CLIENTS

Our Green Recovery campaign, launched in April 2020 in response to the socio-economic impacts of COVID-19, continued through 2022, aligning with government objectives to get the UK economy back on track by pursuing a green recovery. Green Recovery Champions representing each of our practice groups continued to identify how and where we can help clients to play their part in creating a more sustainable future. This is not only about the work being done by our Clean Energy team - the opportunities and challenges associated with achieving a green recovery traverse the whole economy and affect all sectors and all clients. Through our campaign, we seek to support clients' strategic objectives to decarbonise and help build a robust and sustainable economy.

### OUR PEOPLE

Through training and engagement, the firm is promoting a more sustainable mindset among colleagues. Our internal Sustainability Group produces a monthly newsletter, sharing planet-friendly recipes, top eco tips, "deep-dive" blogs into topical sustainability issues, and reviews of books, films and events. The newsletter features contributions from colleagues across the firm.

Early this year, carbon literacy training was delivered to all colleagues which was well received and provided valuable feedback to the management team. Through these learnings, the future sustainability learning platforms will be tailored to achieve maximum impact on and engagement with colleagues to embed sustainability into our daily operations.

### OUR BUSINESS

Our Carbon Production plan, which came into effect in August, outlines our ambitions to achieve Net Zero emissions by 2030 – 20 years ahead of the 2050 target set by the UK Government under the Climate Change Act. In 2022, our total greenhouse gas emissions decreased by 76.47 tCO<sub>2</sub>e, which is a reduction of 6.9% in absolute emissions. We will continue to monitor our emissions and implement policies and procedures to ensure we stay on target. Additionally, in line with our commitment to environmental sustainability, we are moving to a brand-new office from 1 May 2023 at Haymarket Square, Edinburgh. In support of our commitment to achieve net carbon zero by 2030, our new office is designed to be both a great place to work and to reduce our carbon footprint. To maximise sustainability, features of the building include:

- An EPC rating of A,
- Expected BREEAM certification 'Very good' or higher,
- Roof mounted photovoltaic panels,
- Energy efficient design and low or zero carbon equipment,
- Designated recycling areas.





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