



SHEPHERD+ WEDDERBURN

# CSR REPORT 2023



# WELCOME TO CSR 2023

At Shepherd and Wedderburn, we recognise and embrace our social responsibilities as an employer and a member of the local communities in which we operate.

Corporate social responsibility (CSR) is a cornerstone of our values and I am delighted to share with you our CSR review for 2023, in which we reflect on all the work carried out by our focus groups during the year; our environmental and sustainability impact; and our support to the community.

We're committed to making a positive contribution to our communities and we're proud to see those values come to life in the diverse range of volunteering and charitable activities that our colleagues undertook throughout 2023.

From providing pro bono legal advice and support to our local foodbanks, to fundraising through quizzes, football challenges, walks, and more – 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 those in need is truly inspiring and I look forward to expanding on our CSR efforts during the coming year.

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*We're committed to making a positive contribution to our communities.*

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**Gillian Carty, Partnership Chair**



VOLUNTEERING

Page 03

PRO BONO

Page 10

GENDER FOCUS GROUP

Page 12

RACE, FAITH, AND BELIEF GROUP

Page 13

WELLBEING GROUP

Page 15

YOUNG PERSONS GROUP

Page 16

PRIDE GROUP

Page 17

SOCIAL MOBILITY GROUP

Page 19

SUSTAINABILITY

Page 22

# VOLUNTEERING

Volunteering in our local communities is so important to us that it's built into our processes, with all staff receiving one paid week per year of additional leave to dedicate to taking part in charitable work and volunteering activities of their choice.

We also have a regular annual programme of fundraising events led by our Together Groups across all of our offices. Everyone is encouraged to take part – read more below on some of our colleagues' great achievements over this last year.

## SHEPHERD AND WEDDERBURN TOGETHER GROUP NETWORK

We have six Together Groups:



These groups each have their own focus, but are united in a goal for positive action. Across their activities, we've raised over £4,500 for a range of causes during 2023.

## FOOD BANKS

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For years we've built relationships with local foodbanks and supported them through beans, bucks, and brawn!

In December we ran a focused festive fundraising month, with efforts across the board resulting in a huge:

- £3,000 donation split between the King's Community Foundation (Aberdeen), Edinburgh Food Project (Edinburgh), Glasgow SE Foodbank (Glasgow) and the Bow Foodbank (London);
- 12 boxes of food, toiletries, and gifts to the Edinburgh Food Project, totalling 149.4kg;
- 17 staff volunteering across the Edinburgh Foodbank at New Lairdship Yards and local Glasgow Foodbanks.

This huge effort has allowed us to help many families and those in need through foodbanks. We're grateful for the efforts of staff across all offices.



But these services aren't just important over the festive period – people need this kind of assistance all year round. Due to the cost-of-living crisis, the number of families who rely on foodbanks to put food on the table has increased significantly. We run year-round initiatives to ensure that we keep supporting these vital resources where we can.

## LEGAL SUPPORT TRUST

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The Legal Support Trust is a charity organisation that strives to provide access to legal support, advice, and representation regardless of financial means. This includes access to free legal advice and support for Law Centres, Citizens Advice, and refugee support services.

On 13 June, a team from our London office took part in the 10km London Legal Walk for London Legal Support Trust. Lauren McLeod, Ben Pilbrow, Mateusz Minuczyc, Gabby Ives, Philip Sewell, Alasdair Anderson, Nick Mole, Lisa Renwick, Ella Jordan, Gabriella Gilmour, Alex Dumble, Sophie Brown, Kypros Georghiou, and Alex Roobottom took part and walked alongside the Lord Chief Justice and thousands of other lawyers to raise funds for this worthy cause.



## PILOTLIGHT

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We're proud to have been a business partner of Pilotlight since 2013. This charity brings together the expertise of volunteer business professionals to work alongside charitable organisations to amplify the positive impact of both.



Director Suzanne Knowles has worked with them over the last year and has shared some insight from her experience.

## SUZANNE KNOWLES Q&A:

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### **What project(s) have you been working on?**

*My team of Pilotlighters are working with a charity which champions work- and placement-based learning in higher education. A key aim of this organisation is to advise on best practice and provide training and staff development opportunities for those working in the sector.*

### **Why did you want to get involved?**

*Previous Pilotlighters from Shepherd and Wedderburn spoke really positively about their experiences and I was keen to take on a new challenge. I also wanted to take the skills I have developed as a lawyer and apply them in a different context to hopefully make a positive contribution to the project.*

### **What did you most enjoy about working with Pilotlight?**

*It's been fantastic to work with such a passionate group of stakeholders from the charity who are really committed to developing the organisation and the services it provides. A highlight of the project was being able to attend the charity's annual conference, which was a great opportunity to see first-hand the difference it makes to those involved in work-based learning.*

### **Does Pilotlight make a difference?**

*Definitely. The day-to-day running of a charity can be all-consuming, but the Pilotlight 360 programme supports an organisation to take stock and focus on its broader, strategic objectives. Working with the Pilotlight team also allows a charity to gain a fresh perspective and get input from senior professionals from a range of backgrounds, who they might not otherwise have the opportunity to work with.*

## VOLUNTEERING

### What have you learned working with Pilotlight?

*Working with Pilotlight has given me a really practical insight into third-sector organisations and the factors that contribute to a charity's success and development. I have also learnt a lot about effective collaboration and leadership from working so closely with the Pilotlight project manager and my fellow Pilotlighters, who each bring a different point of view to the table.*

### Would you recommend Pilotlight to colleagues?

*Absolutely. I have found the project to be both challenging and extremely rewarding. The Pilotlight 360 programme provides a really valuable opportunity to contribute to the success of a not-for-profit organisation and, at the same time, has also been great for my personal development.*

“ *I have found the project to be both challenging and extremely rewarding.* ”

Suzanne Knowles, Director





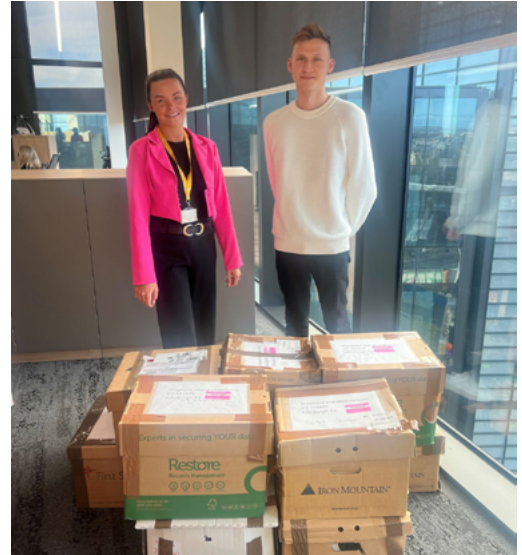
### SMART WORKS CHARITY

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We were pleased to support Smart Works Charity in its mission to provide women with the clothing, coaching, and confidence they need to succeed in job interviews.

Colleagues across our offices in London, Edinburgh, Glasgow, and Aberdeen donated ten boxes of business clothing to this great cause.

This donation was made possible through our Social Mobility Group, who organised the clothing drive to push this mission forward. As of 2023, Smart Works has helped more than 30,000 women get ahead in their interviews.

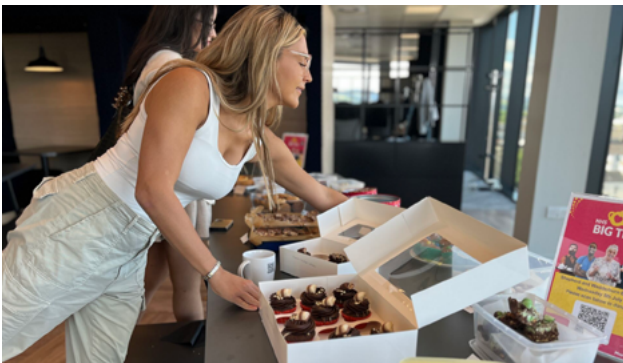


# VOLUNTEERING

## NHS BAKE SALE

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To celebrate the NHS turning 75 years old, we held several successful bake sales across our Edinburgh, Aberdeen, Glasgow, and London offices.



We're grateful to our baking extraordinaire colleagues, as we were able to raise over £1,000 with their brilliant bakes.

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.

### JUSTICE

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A group of trainees – Alanna Buchan, Andrew Johnston, Joanna Rae, Julie Bankier, Matthew Ferguson, and Morgan McSherry – coordinated and conducted a pro bono research project for charity JUSTICE, which was supervised by Gillian Carty. They compiled research which later formed part of a report into Behavioural Control Orders in England, which was published by JUSTICE in September 2023. Some of the group attended a report launch event in London, hosted by JUSTICE.

JUSTICE is an all-party law reform charity which was first established in the 1950s, to strengthen the justice system across the United Kingdom. JUSTICE sets up Working Parties and invites experts to research areas of strategic reform. JUSTICE approached the firm to ask if we would be willing to carry out research and report on the subject of Hybrid Orders from the perspective of Scots law. Hybrid Orders are described as civil orders with criminal consequences and include stalking protection orders, sexual harm prevention orders, and community protection notices. Each trainee focused on two orders and carried out research into that topic, including comparing and contrasting the approach in Scotland and England, obtaining statutes and compiling contact information for people involved in the implementation of these orders.

The recommendations of the report are currently being implemented by JUSTICE in cooperation with bodies such as the College of Policing.



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*We would also like to acknowledge the research contributions made by Shepherd and Wedderburn.*

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## TRUSTLAW MEMBERSHIP

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The firm is a member of TrustLaw, which is proudly the largest global pro bono network. TrustLaw is run by the Thomson Reuters Foundation and connects NGOs and social enterprises with legal teams who can provide free legal advice.

## THOMSON REUTERS FOUNDATION TRUSTLAW INITIATIVE

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The firm's banking and finance team acted for a student housing co-operative in negotiating a loan facility from a lender to acquire further shared accommodation in Scotland. The team was headed up by Patrick Bell, Partner and assisted by James Bulpitt, Senior Associate.



## PRO BONO INITIATIVE

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Trainee Shona Norbash and Senior Associate Lindsay Robinson were asked to help with a pro bono initiative. Shona and Lindsay were tasked with preparing a Country of Origin Information Report (COI) to be used within an asylum claim for a Kurdish-Iranian Christian woman.

The pair researched and provided written responses to support the asylum seeker's claim. "Shona and I were pleased to have been given the privilege to work on preparing a Country of Origin Information Report to be used to support the women's asylum claim." – Lindsay Robinson.

## CORSTORPHINE YOUTH CENTRE AFTER SCHOOL CLUB

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Stephanie Hepburn and Thomas McFarlane in our Dispute Resolution & Litigation team provided pro bono advice and assistance to Corstorphine Youth Centre After School Club in relation to a contractual dispute.

## INTERNATIONAL WOMEN'S DAY (IWD)

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To mark International Women's Day 2023, Gillian Carty chaired a virtual panel, focusing on the topic **All things being equal: Levelling the playing field through equity.**

Our range of brilliant speakers included Celine Ballantine

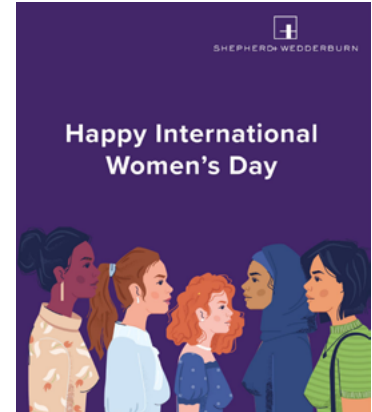
(an advocate for neurodiversity in the legal profession), Laura Macgregor (Chair of Scots Law at the University of Edinburgh – the first woman to hold this position since its inception 297 years ago), and Amanda Millar (past president of Law Society of Scotland, now Chair of Samaritans Scotland).

The panel explored:

- Experiences of equity and how it differs from equality;
- Is equality enough;
- Tools and strategies for challenging a lack of equity; and
- What does a world where gender equity is embedded into the workplace, and everyday life, look like?

Trainee Ella Jordan summarised these issues well in her [accompanying article](#).

As part of IWD, this month was also an opportunity for fundraising. Our well-attended social committee quiz night alone raised a huge £1,932 for Jo's Cervical Cancer Trust.





## COMMITMENTS

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We continue to be a signatory to the Race Fairness Commitment, which aims to establish fairness at work for people of all ethnic backgrounds so that 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.

## BLACK SCOT INTERNS PROGRAMME

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Since 2022 we have worked with Black Professionals Scotland on their Black Interns programme. We offer two placements per year – one placement in one of our legal teams and one placement within our finance team. This programme provides students the opportunity to gain valuable and practical work experience in an area they are interested in progressing their career after their studies.



“Our collaboration with Shepherd and Wedderburn has been immensely valuable, particularly through their participation in the #BlackScotInterns program. Shepherd and Wedderburn actively engaged with Black Professionals Scotland (BPS) in facilitating the introduction of Black interns into their firm, showcasing their dedication to fostering meaningful relationships with our organization and supporting the advancement of diversity initiatives.

The impact of this collaboration extends far beyond the internship experience. Through their support and mentorship, Shepherd and Wedderburn has provided aspiring Black professionals with invaluable opportunities to gain real-world experience and develop their skills within a supportive environment. This not only enhances the career prospects of these individuals but also contributes to a more inclusive legal sector. It is worth noting that one of our interns who interned with them in 2022 secured a permanent role last year, further demonstrating their strong commitment to diversity and inclusion in the legal profession.

Overall, Shepherd and Wedderburn exemplify the positive impact that collaborative efforts can have on promoting diversity and inclusion in the legal industry. We are proud to be associated with Shepherd and Wedderburn and look forward to continuing our collaborations to create positive change in the community”.

Enoch Adeyemi, CEO & Founder, Black Professionals Scotland



# RACE, FAITH, AND BELIEF GROUP

## SUCCESS STORIES

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“Black Professionals Scotland played a big role in opening doors for me, leading to a rewarding internship opportunity in the finance team at Shepherd and Wedderburn. The team’s warmth and friendliness made each workday a joy, creating an atmosphere that not only made me feel comfortable but also fuelled my enthusiasm for finance. Looking back over the past year, this positive experience paved the way for a fulfilling career journey. Landing a job in the same finance team is a testament to the supportive environment fostered by Shepherd and Wedderburn. The encouragement within the team have been instrumental in my professional growth. As I embark on this next chapter, I am filled with gratitude for opportunities offered by Black Professionals Scotland and the incredible team at Shepherd and Wedderburn. Grateful for the journey ahead”.

“ *The encouragement within the team have been instrumental in my professional growth.*

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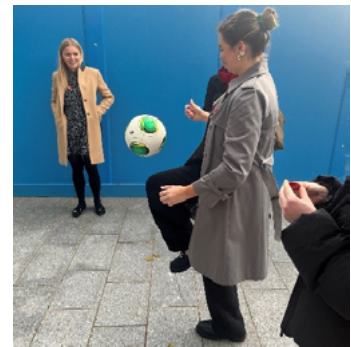
**Amina Simpenzwe**



## BLACK HISTORY MONTH

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This Black History Month we supported anti-racism educational charity Show Racism the Red Card through participation in their Wear Red Day and also a Keepy-Uppy challenge. Our colleagues couldn’t wait to show off their football skills and we raised £525 to support anti-racism education.



## MARATHON IN MAY

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In May, we moved! As part of supporting the Mental Health Awareness theme of Anxiety, for four weeks we participated in the Marathon in May Challenge to fundraise for Anxiety UK. Colleagues were invited to run or walk a marathon distance over this time, with a kind donation for participation.

15 to 21 May 2023

  
**Mental Health  
Awareness Week**



#ToHelpMyAnxiety

*Anxiety UK*



# YOUNG PERSONS GROUP



Our Young Persons Group aims to provide a forum for the young people in the Firm to share their ideas and input to the Firm.

On 30 August 2023 Shepherd and Wedderburn's Young Persons Group raised over £250 for Barnardo's Children's Charity with 5k fun runs at our Edinburgh, Glasgow, London, and Dublin offices.



# PRIDE GROUP



Our PRIDE Group led a number of fundraisers for worthy causes this year. To kick off Pride Month, our group celebrated the lives, history, and culture of the LGBTQ+ community through a four-part series highlighting some of the most inspiring LGBTQ+ icons.



As a part of LGBTQ+ history month the Pride Group organised the Purple Friday Challenge. 50 colleagues and Partners took part, clocking up 45,000 minutes of exercise and smashing their 27,500 minute target. Together they raised £485 for LGBT Youth Scotland.



## PRIDE GROUP

Colleagues from our PRIDE Group were delighted to attend the Proud Scotland Awards and celebrate the wonderful people who are driving LGBTQ+ inclusion and equality in our community and workplaces.



Between June and July our colleagues attended Pride marches across the UK. Colleagues attended Glasgow's MardiGla celebration alongside our friends from Virgin Money's LGBTQ+ Network (Vibrant).

*“ I was really happy to be part of something so joyful and positive. Events like this celebrate and represent the importance of people feeling safe and confident to be their whole selves.”*

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**Emma Guthrie, Partner and member of our Pride Group**





## SOCIAL MOBILITY RANKING

We were ranked 31st in a list of the UK's top 75 employers published by the Social Mobility Foundation. 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.

## VIRTUAL WORK EXPERIENCE PROGRAMME

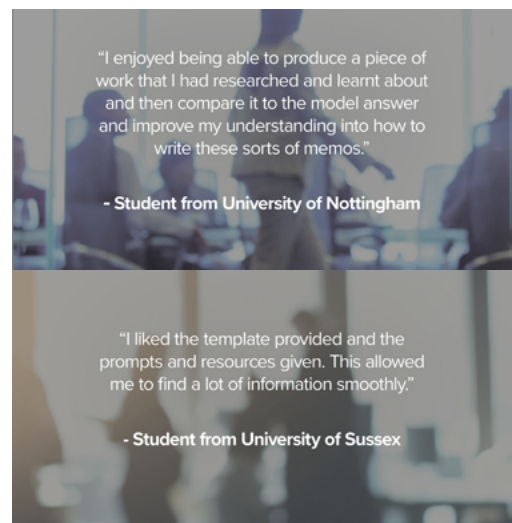
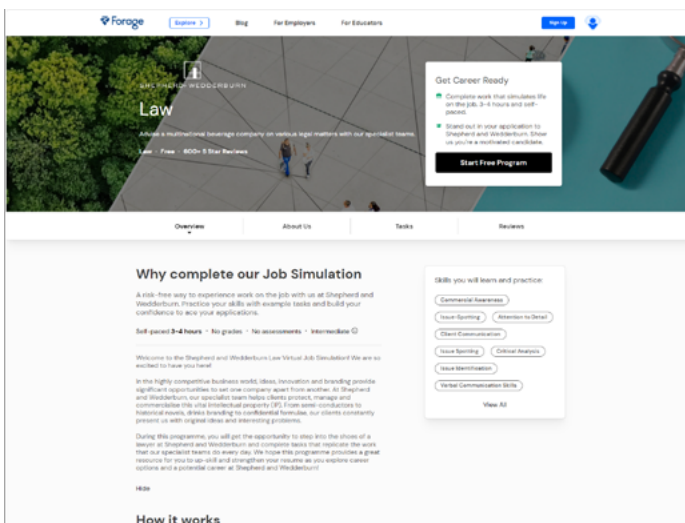
We were delighted to announce the launch of our full virtual work experience programme on the platform Forage.



In the highly competitive business world, ideas, innovation and branding provide significant opportunities to set one company apart from another. At Shepherd and Wedderburn, our specialist team helps clients protect, manage and commercialise this vital intellectual property (IP). From semi-conductors to historical novels, drinks branding to confidential formulae, our clients constantly present us with original ideas and interesting problems.

During this programme, participants have the opportunity to step into the shoes of a lawyer at Shepherd and Wedderburn and complete tasks that replicate the work that our specialist teams do every day.

We are delighted that so many students have taken advantage of this free resource, which offers the ability to gain insight into what it's like to work at a commercial law firm through a series of tasks created by our specialist lawyers.





## WORKINGRITE BAKE SALE

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Workingrite are a charity that provide practical pathways into jobs or apprenticeships for young people, regardless of their academic background or experience.



Through our bake sale our colleagues raised nearly £500 for this valuable cause.

## NATIONAL INCLUSION WEEK

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Joanna Rae, Evie Dransfield and Alannah O'Hara provided their thoughts on the firm's PRIME initiative and school engagement programme in our LinkedIn campaign highlighting the firm's activities to promote social mobility.



## PRIME

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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.

As founding members, we support PRIME by hosting work experience weeks that will give pupils hands-on experiences in different areas of the firm.

In 2023, we provided work experience in our Edinburgh, Glasgow, Aberdeen, and London office for 25 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.

### **A student from one of our Glasgow PRIME weeks shared their experience:**

“My favourite part this week was the mock trial and work shadowing. Both sessions gave me a really good insight into the types of work lawyers do and how they go about it. I’ve gained lots of valuable skills and qualities which will help me later in the future and this experience has definitely confirmed my interest in studying law.”

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## COMMITMENTS

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We're proud to announce that in 2023 we became a "Climate City Champion" as part of the Sustainable Glasgow Green Economy Hub Charter, which aims to promote and celebrate ambitious Glasgow business' goal to achieve net-zero carbon by 2030.

The Green Economy Hub is for organisations who are committed to being leaders in the race to net zero and who are dedicated to delivering a sustainable and circular Glasgow together.

In 2021, we were the first professional services firm to commit to the Edinburgh Climate Compact. This agreement is a series of decarbonisation commitments made by leading businesses and employers in Scotland's Capital to take action within their own organisations and sectors to contribute to a green recovery and radically reduce the city's carbon emissions to reach net zero by 2030.

In signing both agreements, we have committed to undertake decarbonisation action spanning across the central belt of Scotland, reinforcing our commitment to achieving net zero by 2030. Significant progress has already been made by the firm, most recently with the relocation of our Edinburgh headquarters to office space with a grade "A" Energy Performance Certificate rating.

Clare Foster, the firm's Head of Clean Energy, is responsible for driving the creation and implementation of the Edinburgh Climate Compact (as part of the work undertaken by the Edinburgh Climate Commission).





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