

Responsible Business Report 2022 / 2023

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Introduction from Jonathan Forrester,
Managing Director

I am pleased to share the latest edition of our Responsible Business Report for 2022 / 2023, which is our fifth annual report outlining our progress in relation to our responsible business objectives. As we look back upon this reporting year, we have much to celebrate.

Cleaver Fulton Rankin's heritage tells a story of great success and growth in the heart of Belfast City Centre, as we celebrate **130 years in business in 2023**.

Our responsible business strategy has remained at the heart of everything we do. We have made important strides progressing our objectives, with a focus on environmental, social and governance priorities. We are committed to making a positive impact upon our environment, our clients, our people, and our community by upholding sustainable best practice.

We have strived to become more accountable, from developing a Carbon Reduction Plan to monitor, measure and improve our carbon footprint, to achieving external sustainability recognition. We are proud to have achieved the EcoVadis Gold Medal rating in 2023, surpassing our Silver recognition in 2022, and demonstrating how we have integrated sustainable practices throughout our operations. We also became the first law firm in Northern Ireland to sign the Greener Litigation Pledge.

Our commitment to our people, our clients, our community and our stakeholders remains a key priority. At the beginning of 2023, we started as we meant to go on, making significant strides in our social responsibility plan.

We launched a new Diversity and Inclusion Strategy and shared our journey with our stakeholders, publishing a new Diversity and Inclusion section on our website. With the introduction of a Digital Skills Committee, we launched a new learning and development programme for our team. Our new Digital Skills Programme was recognised at the LawNet Awards where we were awarded the Learning & Development Award.

This executive report, which will only be produced in digital form, outlines the progress we have made during 2022–2023. In the year ahead, we will continue to support our community, advocate diversity and inclusion and integrate sustainability into every aspect of our business, using new technologies to transform our working practices and reduce our impact upon the environment. Our report looks ahead to the future, outlining our plans to implement continuous improvements across our responsible business practices.

Best wishes,

Jonathan Forrester
Managing Director



In 2023, we
celebrated 130
years in business.



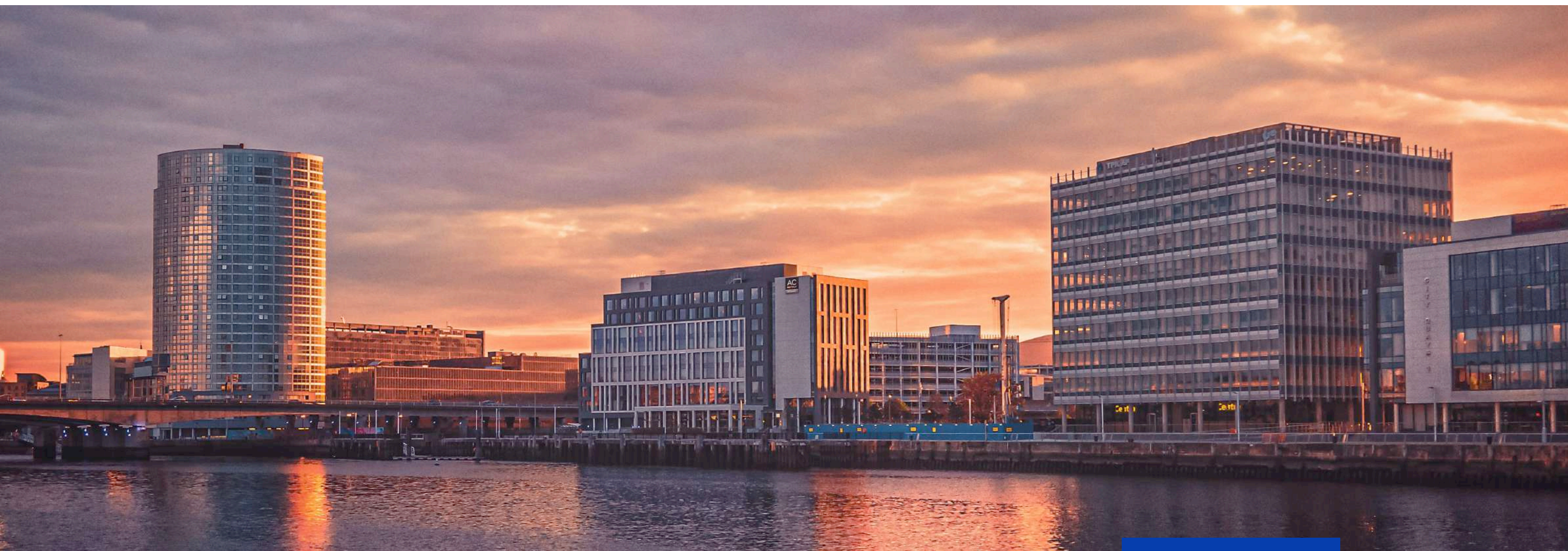
About Us

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Our Business at a Glance

As a leading commercial law firm in Northern Ireland, we recognise the importance of conducting our business responsibly.



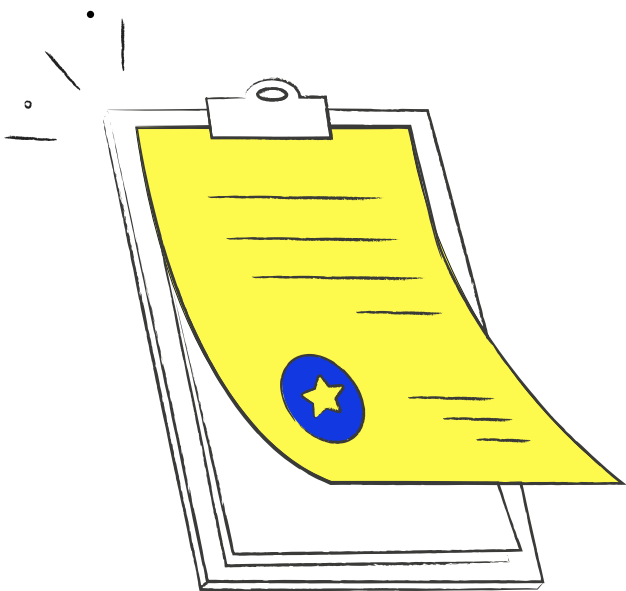
We are committed to driving forward positive social and environmental change.

This includes supporting our clients in the ESG opportunities and challenges they face, engaging and empowering our team to act as a force for good, and inspiring others through communicating and reporting on our progress.

Our responsible business strategy is a key priority at Cleaver Fulton Rankin. Our strategy guides our focus and sets out key sustainability targets to deliver our services with transparency, accountability, and integrity. Our commitment to a responsible strategy is incorporated in our business plan, embodied in our core values and demonstrated through our culture, actions and within our processes. Our responsible business objectives are aligned with the UN Sustainable Development Goals and are intended to uphold good environmental, social and governance standards.

Responsible Business Objectives

Our Responsible Business Objectives are aligned to environmental, social and governance standards. We have set out realistic targets and key priorities as part of our long-term sustainability objectives.



Environmental

We have a focus on minimising our impact on the environment by making responsible business decisions and implementing sustainable and ethical practices. We are committed to reducing our carbon footprint, embracing new technology, encouraging employee engagement, and supporting clients to achieve their sustainable business goals.

Social

We are committed to embedding social and ethical business practices, adding value to our relationships with our people, our clients, our community and our stakeholders. As a client-focused law firm, we seek ways to share our knowledge, deliver the highest quality services and deliver innovative solutions to meet our clients' complex legal needs in a sustainable way. We believe in setting an example to our stakeholders. Delivering responsible supply chain management allows us to set the standards we expect and value.

Our goal is to become the most inclusive company we can be. We have a focus on investing in our workplace culture and impacting our local community in a positive way. Within our business we ensure fair working practices and equal opportunities, support the learning and development of our people, and foster an environment which contributes positively to our team's health and wellbeing. We are dedicated to supporting our local community through volunteering, identifying collaboration opportunities, and through knowledge sharing.

Governance

We are committed to embedding ethical standards in our business practices and in delivering transparency across our activities with our clients, our people, and our community. We aim to provide the highest quality service to our clients, develop strong relationships, support the individual needs of our clients and stakeholders, and demonstrate ethical business practices.



UN Sustainable Development Goals

The UN Sustainable Development Goals provide a holistic framework to help build a more sustainable future for all.



Whilst the scale and scope of global challenges are unprecedented, all businesses can take action to contribute to the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development. Cleaver Fulton Rankin is committed to focusing on the three dimensions of sustainable development, including economic, social and environmental factors to help achieve transformational change and to build a sustainable future for our people and our planet.

Sustainable development is a strategic priority at our firm, and we continue to encourage business innovation and collaboration that delivers on our sustainable development targets.



We contribute to the following areas, which are aligned to the UN Sustainable Development Goals:

- **Provide quality education**
- **Protect the planet**
- **Support gender equality**
- **Promote mental health and wellbeing**

We set key performance indicators to measure progress against these goals, as demonstrated throughout this report.

Recognitions



LawNet 2023 Awards
Learning & Development Initiative
Winner



Business in the Community NI 2023
Responsible Business Awards
Employer of Choice Shortlist



Workforce Developer at the NI Chamber 2023 Awards
Highly Commended



Women in Business NI 2023 Awards
Best in Professional Services Shortlist



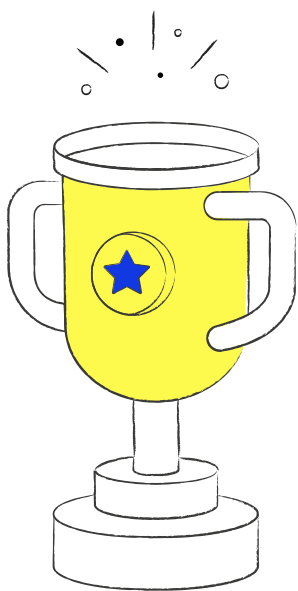
Top 20 UK Employer of the Year
Investors in People Award
Shortlisted



The Northern Ireland
Women's Awards 2023
Winner – Jeanette Donohoe



The Belfast Telegraph 2023
Business Awards
Outstanding Commitment to ESG
and Excellence in Development of
Health & Wellbeing Shortlist



Recognition of Sustainability Practices



EcoVadis

We are proud to have achieved the EcoVadis Sustainability Gold Medal, following an assessment of our business sustainability performance. EcoVadis evaluates how well a business has integrated sustainability into its business and management system across 21 indicators, covering four main themes, including environment, labour & human rights, ethics and sustainable procurement. The assessment has allowed us to prioritise areas for improvement, manage ESG compliance, shape our responsible business objectives, and help support the needs of our clients, our people and wider stakeholders. This has helped us measure our performance, identify action points and formalise our processes to help us meet our responsible business objectives.

FSQS

We have been awarded the Financial Services Qualification System (FSQS) Certificate of Compliance, which is an accreditation standard managed by Hellios. The system is designed to simplify the process for submitting assurance and compliance data to a number of leading financial institutions across the UK, including Banks, Building Societies, Insurance Companies and Investment Companies. For the last four years, Cleaver Fulton Rankin has successfully met the compliance requirements of FSQS across all key risk control areas, including Business Continuity & Disaster Recovery, Anti-Bribery, Operational Risk, Anti-Money Laundering, Health & Safety, IT Security, Cyber Security, Data Privacy, Physical & People Security, Operational Risks, Responsible Business Governance, Diversity & Inclusion and Environment.

Integrity Next

We created a sustainability profile on Integrity Next, and completed a social and sustainability assessment. This has highlighted corrective actions which will help us to improve and strengthen our responsible business practices.

Responsible Business Highlights 2022–2023

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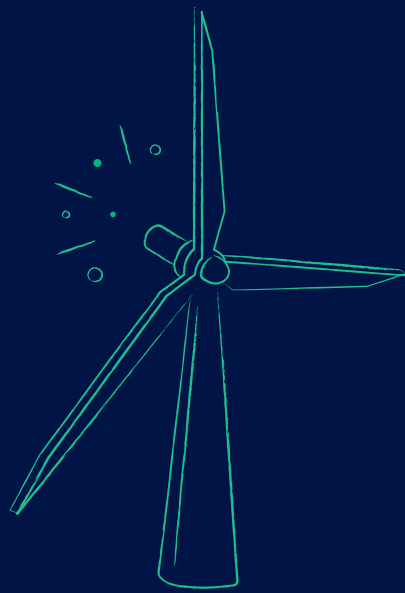
Team members
were promoted

239

Volunteer hours
were completed

12

Charitable causes
& organisations
supported



Delivered an Energy
Roundtable on **Replacing
Fossil Fuels with Renewable
Energy**, in partnership with
Chambre Public Affairs

1,750+

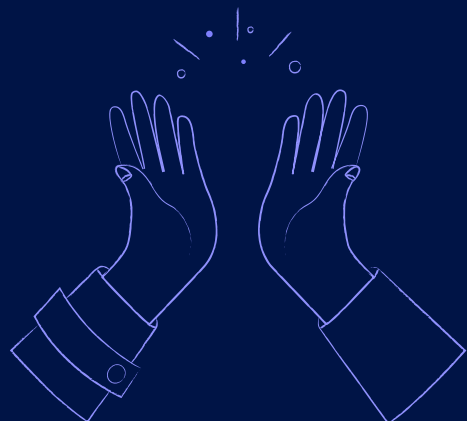
Training hours completed in 2022



Retained the Bronze
Diversity Charter Mark

23

Client seminars
delivered to



6000+

people

Delivered a legal
workshop on the
business case for
**using the UN
Sustainable
Development
Goals**

We signed the
**Greener Litigation
Pledge**

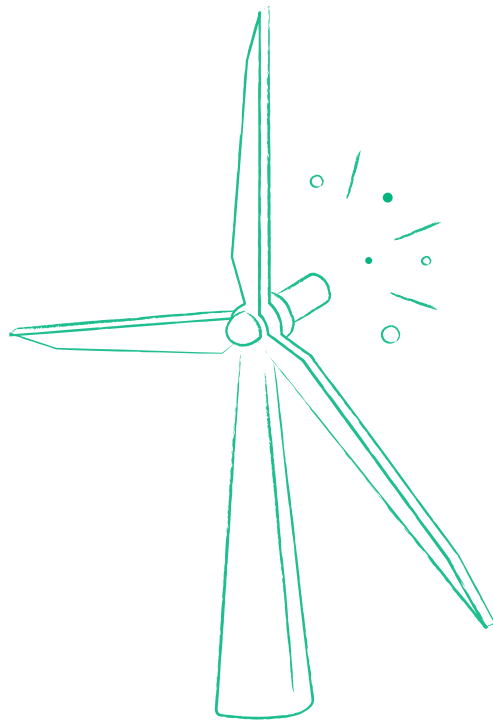


Environmental

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Our climate is changing, and the impact of climate change is more prevalent than ever. As global temperatures continue to rise as a result of human activity, it is important for action to be taken to avoid the most dangerous effects from climate change.



The Energy Strategy for Northern Ireland and Action Plan for the Path to Net Zero, is now entering its third year. Two key focus areas include energy efficiency and renewable sources. As Northern Ireland continues to work towards achieving net-zero emissions by 2050, as set out in the Climate Change Act (Northern Ireland) 2022, it is noted that a net zero carbon energy system will be a key contributor. Adaptation to climate change is a necessity in Northern Ireland.

The Northern Ireland Climate Change Adaptation Programme 2019–2024, focuses on key priority areas requiring urgent adaptation. Local government, businesses and individuals all have a role to play in combating climate change. At Cleaver Fulton Rankin, taking steps to combat climate change is a key priority. Sustainable practices are embedded within

our strategy and shape the day to day decisions we make. Every small step matters. We recognise the need for innovation and employee engagement to help us do our part in mitigating climate change. We have an Environmental Management System and Environmental Policy to guide best practice.

Our environmental management system increases accountability and identifies opportunities for positive change. In relation to environmental issues, we have identified key objectives and targets, providing a monitoring framework for progress and success. Our key projects are highlighted in this report.

Responsible Business Group

We set up a Responsible Business Group to guide our responsible business strategy, to set key performance indicators and to measure and report on our progress.

Our Responsible Business Group meet on a quarterly basis to review our progress, collaborate and share ideas to enhance our sustainable practices. Our investment in technology has enhanced communications and encouraged our team to consider their environmental impact. We actively encourage our team to consider their carbon footprint when travelling, promoting greener commuting where possible.

Carbon Footprint

We signed the Climate Action Pledge with Business in the Community NI in 2022, and received Carbon Literacy Certification. We are actively working in collaboration with businesses across Northern Ireland to address the climate emergency through the pledge.

We have continued to measure our carbon footprint, including developing a Carbon Reduction Plan to accurately quantify our progress, set out our targets including KPIs related to energy consumption and greenhouse gas emissions, set out our sustainable consumption of products or services, and to outline future planning.

This allows us to conduct an energy and carbon audit, assessing our energy consumption and measuring progress against our targets, whilst helping to identify areas for reduction and continuous improvement. We have promoted our sustainable consumption via our Carbon Reduction Plan on our website.

Our goals are to:

- 1. Reduce scope 1 and scope 2 Greenhouse Gas (GHG) emissions by 50% by 2030
- 2. Measure and reduce scope 3 GHG emissions
- 3. Report company-wide GHG emissions on an annual basis

As we continue to strive towards meeting our three targets, we have taken a number of steps to reduce our carbon footprint. Examples of key initiatives include:

- We issue an annual Carbon Footprint Questionnaire to our team to measure our carbon impact and increase accountability
- Our team are reducing the impact of their carbon footprint through participating in a walking group on Treekly. The challenge sets a goal of walking 5,000 steps per day for 5 days a week. If this target is met, Treekly will plant 1 mangrove tree on behalf of each team member every week. We have currently planted 1653 trees in 2023

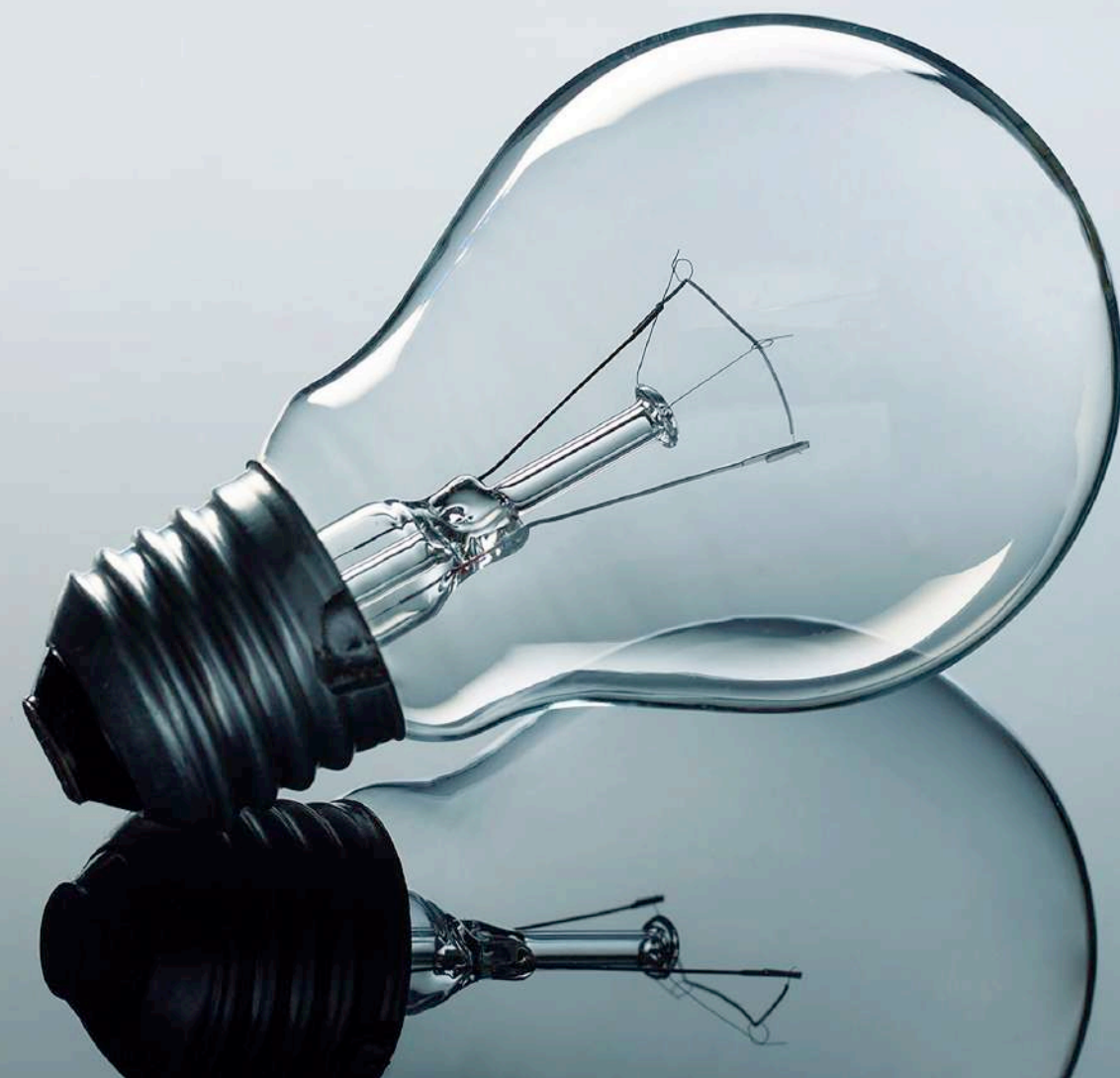
- We are seeking to reduce our overall emissions with a business funded carbon offsetting programme. This will track travel and contribute a fee to counterbalance our climate pollution through investing in an environmentally friendly project
- We support the Cycle to Work Scheme, which encourages our team to cycle to and from work, whilst taking steps to reduce their carbon footprint
- In 2023, we became the first law firm in Northern Ireland to sign the Greener Litigation Pledge. The Greener Litigation Pledge is a commitment to becoming more environmentally sustainable in litigation practices.

As a signatory, we have pledged to reduce our carbon footprint within our litigation team, and in our law firm as a whole, through incorporating environmental mindfulness into our day to day work. This can include reducing printing and use of paper, walking and using public transport, and hosting meetings virtually where possible in order to minimise carbon emissions. We delivered an internal training video to guide our team through this commitment, outlining actions we all can take to become more environmentally responsible.



Energy Management System

We have an Energy Management System in place to guide and improve energy performance and savings.



Reducing Energy Consumption

We make responsible choices to reduce our energy consumption, including:

- Reducing energy consumption of heating by installing digital timers to all heaters
- Radiators and air conditioning units are on a timer and have set degree limits
- Laptops are set up to go into sleep mode after seven minutes and turn off after two hours
- Using energy efficient lighting and reducing consumption of lighting materials, including having sensor lighting in areas that are not in constant use to save electricity (such as meeting rooms, toilets, offices etc.)
- We use LED light bulbs to save electricity and help minimise greenhouse gas emissions
- Hot water taps are switched off every evening and over the weekend
- We have transitioned multiple business critical services from local to cloud based servers. This has allowed for the removal of several physical servers from the building, significantly reducing our power consumption

Sustainable Resources,
Recycling & Waste Management

We are committed to reducing material consumption, and to facilitate process optimisation of recycling, reusing and waste management.

As a sustainable business, we are committed to responsibly managing our waste throughout our direct operations and supply chain. We have waste disposal methods in place, and take steps to reduce the amount of waste we produce and divert the waste we generate through recycling, composting and donations.



Mixed Recycling

All recycling is collected weekly and taken to a facility to be sorted into separate material streams such as plastic, metal and glass, ready to be used in re-manufacturing.



Product Recycling

We use RiverRidge for all recyclable products, reducing internal waste.



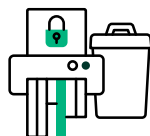
Plastics

Our plastics are transformed into pipes for the agricultural, civil engineering and construction industries by Cherry Plastics at their sites in Crumlin, Lurgan and Dungannon.



Glass

Our glass is re-purposed to make new bottles for local products such as Bushmills and Baileys by Encirc in Fermanagh.



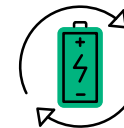
Confidential Paper Recycling

Confidential paper is shredded on-site by 'Shred-Bank' and taken to its accredited facility. Here it is shredded and pulped before being processed into new, closed-loop office paper.



Confidential Data

Confidential data stored on hard drives, USB sticks etc. are also shredded and then incinerated to produce energy.



Electrical Waste

Assets are reused wherever possible and where assets are beyond economical repair, they are recycled in accordance with the Waste Electrical and Electronic Equipment Directive (WEEE). Our printer cartridges are collected and then taken by 'Clover Imaging' who remanufacture, recycle or refurbish them.



Reusing Office Supplies

We have an employee stationary and supply area on each floor, providing opportunities for our team to exchange and reuse office supplies where possible.

Digital Transformation

As part of a wider digital transformation programme, we have fostered an environment which combines technology with traditional working practices to facilitate a more economical consumption of paper.

This allows us to generate waste management reporting to implement continuous improvement. By using the following innovative solutions, we have reduced our environmental impact and wastage of paper:

- Engaged Right Digital Solutions to help us move to a managed print solution. As a result, we are now able to reduce our Co2 emissions by an estimated 65% and have reduced our paper waste by 15–25%
 - Our first report details a saving of 7300 sheets of paper in 3 months
 - Reduction of power consumption by 5.3kW
 - 81% reduction in electricity consumed
- Utilise an electronic signature package called Signable, enabling documents to be signed electronically
- Use document bundling software called Bundledocs to effortlessly create electronic bundles and legal briefs for court
- Utilise digital brochures and newsletters for client communications
- Reduce energy consumption of IT infrastructure



Employee Engagement & Training

Our Employee Engagement Group supports the delivery of our responsible business initiatives. We have recognised awareness days, deliver training and events, and develop new resources to encourage engagement in our responsible business activities, to raise awareness of key global issues and to develop a sense of community around sustainability.

We are committed to providing training opportunities that raise awareness of climate action, energy consumption and waste management, to help our team identify where they can save energy and reduce GHG emissions. We issue energy saving guidance to our team on a regular basis, providing examples of best practice.

Social

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Social responsibility is a key strategic priority at Cleaver Fulton Rankin. We are committed to making a positive impact on our society, including our people, our clients, our community and our stakeholders.



Our People

We pride ourselves upon being a responsible employer. Our people are our greatest asset and each person plays a key strategic role in the development of our services and the growth of our business.

Through our People Plan and Employee Engagement Programme, we deliver processes and activities to facilitate fair working practices, support the mental health and wellbeing of our team, and deliver equal opportunities to all. We provide meaningful training and development opportunities to nurture talent and help our team achieve their full potential.

Investors in People Accreditation (IIP)

In recognition of Cleaver Fulton Rankin’s commitment to excellence across its people management and wellbeing practices, we were awarded the Investors in People Accreditation, surpassing the Investors in People legal benchmark scores.

Discussion Forums

Our Senior Management Team encourage effective communication, openness and feedback, ensuring everyone across the organisation has the right opportunities to share their voice. We facilitate firm-wide staff surveys and provide a forum for discussion via various committees, such as our Marketing and CSR Committee, Diversity and Inclusion Committee, Employee Engagement Group and Responsible Business Group. Our internal communications hub also allows us to deliver responsible business updates, resources and daily communications.

We issue regular HR surveys and an annual Diversity and Inclusion survey to understand the views and experiences of our team, to provide them with a channel to share their voice and involve them in key processes, including improvement actions.

Employee Engagement

Our Employee Engagement Group drives forward responsible business activities, delivers team engagement events, and supports wider sustainable business initiatives and the development of our diversity and inclusion targets. We continue to run health and wellbeing campaigns, develop awareness of key ESG initiatives through our Responsible Business Hub, and organise social activities to continue to build a supportive and inclusive working environment. We hold an annual Employee Appreciation Day to celebrate our team and thank them for their individual contribution.





Our People

“Diversity and inclusion is a key strategic priority at Cleaver Fulton Rankin. We are an equal opportunities employer and are committed to fostering a culture which supports the unique and diverse needs of our people, clients and stakeholders.”

Our Senior Management Team are committed to providing responsible leadership and progressing our diversity and inclusion agenda on our journey to becoming the most welcoming and inclusive company we can be.

Diversity & Inclusion

Diversity and Inclusion continues to be a core focus within our business plan and objectives. The achievement of the Bronze Diversity Charter Mark has been a key milestone on our journey to achieving our vision. This has shaped three core diversity and inclusion targets and our objectives moving forward, with a focus on gender inclusion in the workplace. We have a Diversity and Inclusion Committee with representatives from across the business who drive forward our D&I objectives and help shape our approaches. Our team members each have a responsibility to ensure the successful implementation of our targets, and in championing diversity and inclusion.

In 2023, we launched a Diversity & Inclusion Strategy and held a team celebration with guest speaker Emma Lyttle, from Diversity Mark, to speak about the importance of equality, diversity and inclusion in the workplace. Furthermore, we introduced a new diversity and inclusion webpage to externally communicate our vision, values and focus areas. Our focus areas include gender, age, LGBTQIA+, mental health and wellbeing, social mobility, disability and race & ethnicity. We have a Diversity and Inclusion Learning Programme in place, which includes annual Equality, Diversity and Inclusion training, completed by all employees.

Find out more about our Diversity & Inclusion Strategy [here](#).



Our People

We are committed to supporting our team’s health and wellbeing.



Health & Wellbeing

We continue to develop our policies to ensure that we support our team and meet their needs, deliver a CSR volunteering programme and organise employee engagement activities to nurture a positive working environment. Our activities include:

- Delivering campaigns, information and events which focus on improving mental health and stress awareness
- Utilising external support by encouraging our team to attend events focused on health and wellbeing, delivered by local charities and experts
- Offering our team discounted gym memberships
- Providing health services such as BUPA health care and Specsavers eye care
- Offering a CSR Day where each employee is entitled to spend one day each year volunteering during working hours
- Providing all team members with LawCare membership, an organisation that provides support to individuals working in the legal community
- Hosting socials every month for our team to engage with one another
- Having a hybrid working policy in place to enable our employees to achieve a positive work-life balance
- Offering a competitive employee benefits package

- This year, we became the first law firm in Northern Ireland to complete RevivR CPR training, delivered by the British Heart Foundation
- Our team arranged internal fundraising events to raise money to purchase a defibrillator, which is now installed in our office and available to use by our team and the public, in case of an emergency
- We signed up to the Chest, Heart and Stroke ‘Work Well Live Well’ programme, issued a health and wellbeing survey to our team to identify how we can support health and wellbeing at work, and developed a health and wellbeing action plan, based on findings from our survey results
- Two team members attended training facilitated by Chest, Heart and Stroke to become the firm’s ‘Health Champions’, and are responsible for implementing our Health and Wellbeing Plan



Our People



Digital Skills Programme

Cleaver Fulton Rankin launched a Digital Skills Programme as a unique and innovative learning & development initiative. This provided a bespoke platform for career development across all roles, equipping our team with the necessary digital skills to enhance their confidence, upskill and complement our innovative strategic direction. This will ultimately help digitalise and streamline our internal processes.

Our Digital Skills Programme is facilitated by an online training platform called Logic Earth, and offers bespoke sessions delivered by our internal experts, consisting of a combination of live and recorded training. The Digital Skills Programme requires all of our employees to complete 12 hours of digital skills training. Once completed, our team will receive a certificate of completion, recognising this achievement and development of their digital skills.



Learning & Development Programmes

We are committed to supporting the learning and development of our team, including nurturing talent, developing specialist skills and knowledge, and empowering our team to achieve their full potential. We have a CPD Committee dedicated to driving forward continuing professional development, including coordinating a firm-wide training programme with internal and external training opportunities, and managing our training resource hub. In 2022, our team completed over 1,750 training hours.

Our legal professionals are members of specialist industry groups, and collectively contribute to a knowledge-sharing environment. As a progressive law firm at the forefront of legal developments, our specialist teams also regularly provide bespoke client training and are often invited to share their knowledge at key industry events.



Our People

Cleaver Fulton Rankin delivers a learning and development programme for Trainee Solicitors, supporting the next generation of future lawyers.

Each year we recruit up to five trainees who complete a two-year training programme with the firm. In both 2022 and 2023, we recruited five new trainees.



Our People

Labour & Human Rights

We have documented policies and procedures detailing our commitment to labour and human rights and in conducting our business in a sustainable way. This includes procedures in relation to modern slavery and human trafficking, wages and benefits, fair working practices, ethical recruiting, non-discrimination and harassment, diversity and inclusion, and rights of minorities and indigenous individuals.

We have implemented the necessary processes and procedures, including:

- Health and Safety Policy to manage and address any health and safety issues responsibly, including providing risk assessments, covering areas such as stress and identifying any health and safety risks

- Conducted a Health and Wellbeing Survey to report on consolidated data on employee wellbeing and health & safety
- Employment Policy demonstrating our commitment to responsible working conditions, covering labour relations, career management, pay, working hours, recruitment and promotion, diversity and inclusion, actions to prevent discrimination, and our grievance mechanism
- We have a whistleblowing policy which sets out the process for employees to report any concerns confidentially
- Employee Benefits Booklet, outlining various social benefits, health checks, family friendly initiatives and other general benefits such as dress for your day
- We have a hybrid working policy in place to offer flexibility for our team, to support families and those with caring responsibilities, provide autonomy over where they work, and empower them to work to their strengths
- We have various policies supporting our family friendly initiatives, including a paternity & maternity policy, menopause policy and more, helping our team balance their work and family time
- Learning & Development Programme to support career management across on-boarding and retention practices
- Modern Slavery and Human Trafficking Statement in place, demonstrating our commitment to preventing forced labour and child labour within company operations and in our supply chain
- Diversity & Inclusion Policy to support equality and inclusion of all employees, to prevent discrimination, promote inclusion of employees with disabilities, promote the inclusion of minority, disadvantaged and vulnerable groups, and a remediation process
- Conduct an annual Diversity & Inclusion survey, collecting data on diversity and inclusion in the workplace, including demographics, the attitudes, feeling and opinions of our team, and to assist with the future development of our diversity and inclusion targets. This provides important feedback on our current progress, including effectiveness of our training programme
- We have a diversity and inclusion learning programme, enabling our team to develop their knowledge on diversity and inclusion, including preventing discrimination and harassment in the workplace
- Supplier Code of Conduct and Client Charter, demonstrating our commitment to human rights across our supply chain, and recognising the impact of company operations on our stakeholders
- Absence management booklet covering absence due to illness, fitness for work, and short and long term absence
- Issue regular HR surveys, such as an employee satisfaction survey, exploring engagement, morale and satisfaction at work
- Appraisal policy, setting out the firm’s procedure for performance management and review, conducted at least on an annual basis
- Training procedures policy, covering training and development, including creating a plan of action for career and personal development. This supports the firm’s delivery of tailored training programmes, providing opportunities to develop relevant knowledge and skills specific for our team’s work
- We have a separate induction policy, where specific training is provided and introductions to key departments in the firm are provided
- Training record in place to report on consolidated data on employee career development, including the management of mandatory training
- As part of our Terms of Retainer, external stakeholder human rights are addressed, such as rights to security

Our Clients

We are committed to delivering our services to our clients in a responsible way. Our vision is to become the most client-focused law firm in Northern Ireland.

We are committed to putting our clients at the heart of everything we do. Our innovative and forward-thinking legal professionals continue to develop our services to meet client needs, enhance relationships and increase efficiency.

ESG Hub

ESG continues to be top of the agenda for many businesses as stakeholders expect higher ethical standards and a greater sense of corporate responsibility. We offer an ESG Hub to support clients with legal matters related to Environmental, Social and Governance standards in business, and continue to provide advice and share knowledge on sustainable business solutions. Our team of lawyers have expert knowledge on a range of legal matters related to ESG issues in business, such as sustainable finance; green business loans; energy and climate action; environmental and planning; sustainable real estate; sustainable construction; data privacy; supply chain management; public procurement; and responsible employment practices.

Our ESG offering helps businesses respond to legislative and regulatory change through delivering multidisciplinary expert advice and services on a range of key legal areas.

Find out more about our ESG Hub [here](#).



Our Clients

“Over the last year we have delivered 23 free legal seminars, webinars and workshops, and shared 57 legal insights and 7 podcasts through our digital channels.”



Knowledge Sharing

Our commercial law experts provide knowledge sharing to our clients through delivering specialist legal training and workshops, legal insights, legal briefings and continuous improvement measures.

We provide access to an innovative online learning platform covering topical business areas which offers convenient and inexpensive training to clients. We have a relationship with a third party e-Learning provider to facilitate this platform, offering bespoke training options and development of key business skills.

We partnered with the Northern Ireland Chamber of Commerce to deliver Learn Grow Excel Legal Workshops to SMEs, focusing on topics which address the latest opportunities and challenges faced by Northern Ireland businesses. Most recently we delivered a legal workshop on the business case for using the UN Sustainable Development Goals, with discussion points focused on emerging technologies, ethical banking and investment, employment and HR practices, green leasing and the Climate Change Act NI.

Energy Policy Eye Roundtables

In partnership with Chambre Public Affairs, we are involved in a series of energy roundtable events to discuss progress on the Northern Ireland Energy Strategy Action Plan.

Our first event took place in November 2023, focused on the Energy Strategy objective of ‘Replacing Fossil Fuels with Renewable Energy’, held in partnership with Chambre Public Affairs and the Electricity Association of Ireland (EAI). Leaders from across the renewable energy sector, including representatives from prominent energy suppliers, industry associations, the Department for the Economy and the Utility Regulator attended this event. We discussed and considered the challenges and opportunities we face in meeting the Energy Strategy objective of replacing fossil fuels with renewable energy, as well as considering the key actions currently being progressed by government in Northern Ireland. A summary report of the discussion will follow this event, shared with roundtable participants, policymakers, and influencers within Northern Ireland and beyond to help inform policy makers and industry.

Upcoming events will discuss the other objectives of the Energy Strategy: **‘Do more with less’; ‘Create a flexible, resilient and integrated energy system’; ‘Grow the green economy’ and ‘placing the consumer at the heart of energy future’.**

Our Suppliers

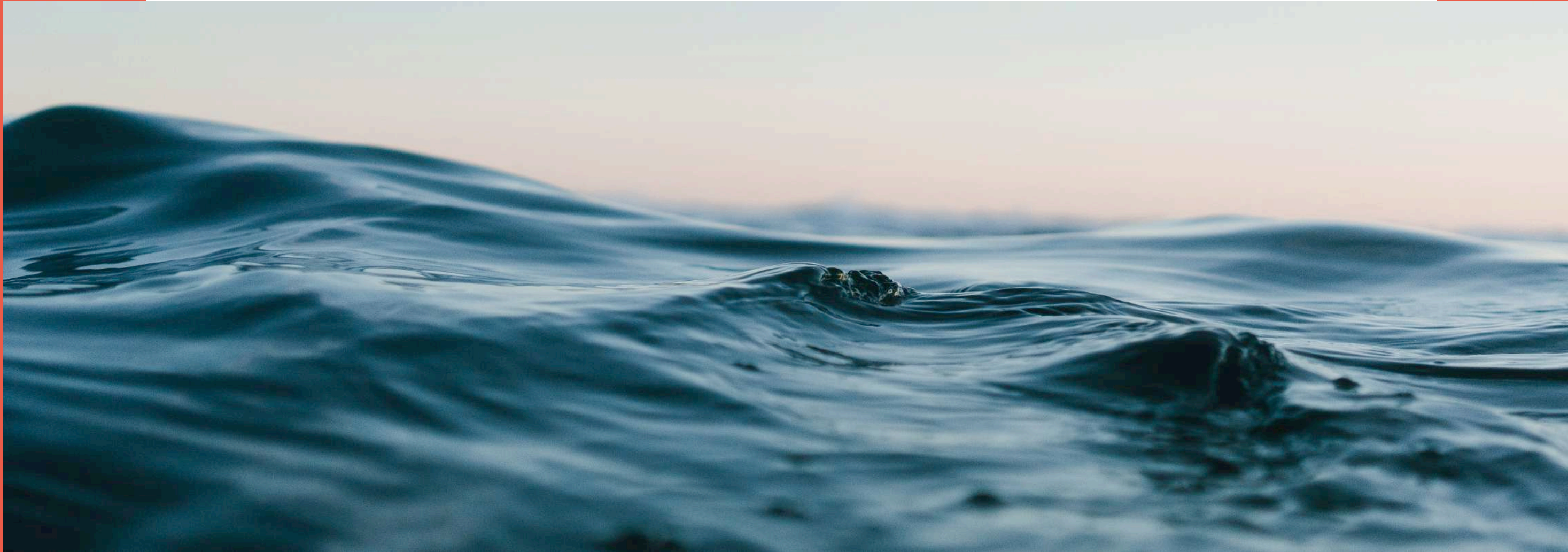
Our Supplier Code of Conduct details our commitments to sustainable purchasing processes and use of suppliers that meet our code of conduct. Our Code of Conduct forms part of our supplier contract.

Sustainable Procurement & Supply Chain Due Diligence

We have a Sustainable Procurement Policy in place to demonstrate our internal sustainable procurement commitments. This allows us to integrate our environmental priorities into our supply chain to encourage best practice, and responsible social and environmental action.

We place an emphasis on selecting suppliers that embrace and demonstrate sustainable, environmental and ethical standards. We use a preferred supplier database and check-in with our suppliers at least on an annual basis to ensure delivered services comply with our Code of Conduct.

We monitor the performance of suppliers through audits, key indicators and benchmarking, where appropriate on an informal basis. We have developed a self-assessment questionnaire to monitor high risk suppliers, covering key areas such as human rights and working conditions, business ethics such as anti-corruption and bribery, environmental factors, social factors, supply chain responsibility, and health & safety. By carrying out due diligence on our suppliers, we can monitor their sustainable practices, understand any risks associated, and help identify areas for improvement. Therefore we can monitor how our suppliers integrate our environmental and social priorities into their supply chain.



Our Community

Through our volunteering programme, community investment and pro bono services, we actively seek ways to positively impact our local community through sharing our time, knowledge, and skills.

As a responsible business, we are committed to supporting our local community and our people, empowering our team to actively become involved in causes that are important to them.

Social Value

We are committed to delivering positive social value initiatives to benefit our local economy, communities, and society. We have a focus on contributing positively across core themes, including increasing secure employment and skills; building ethical and resilient supply-chains; working towards delivering carbon zero and promoting wellbeing.

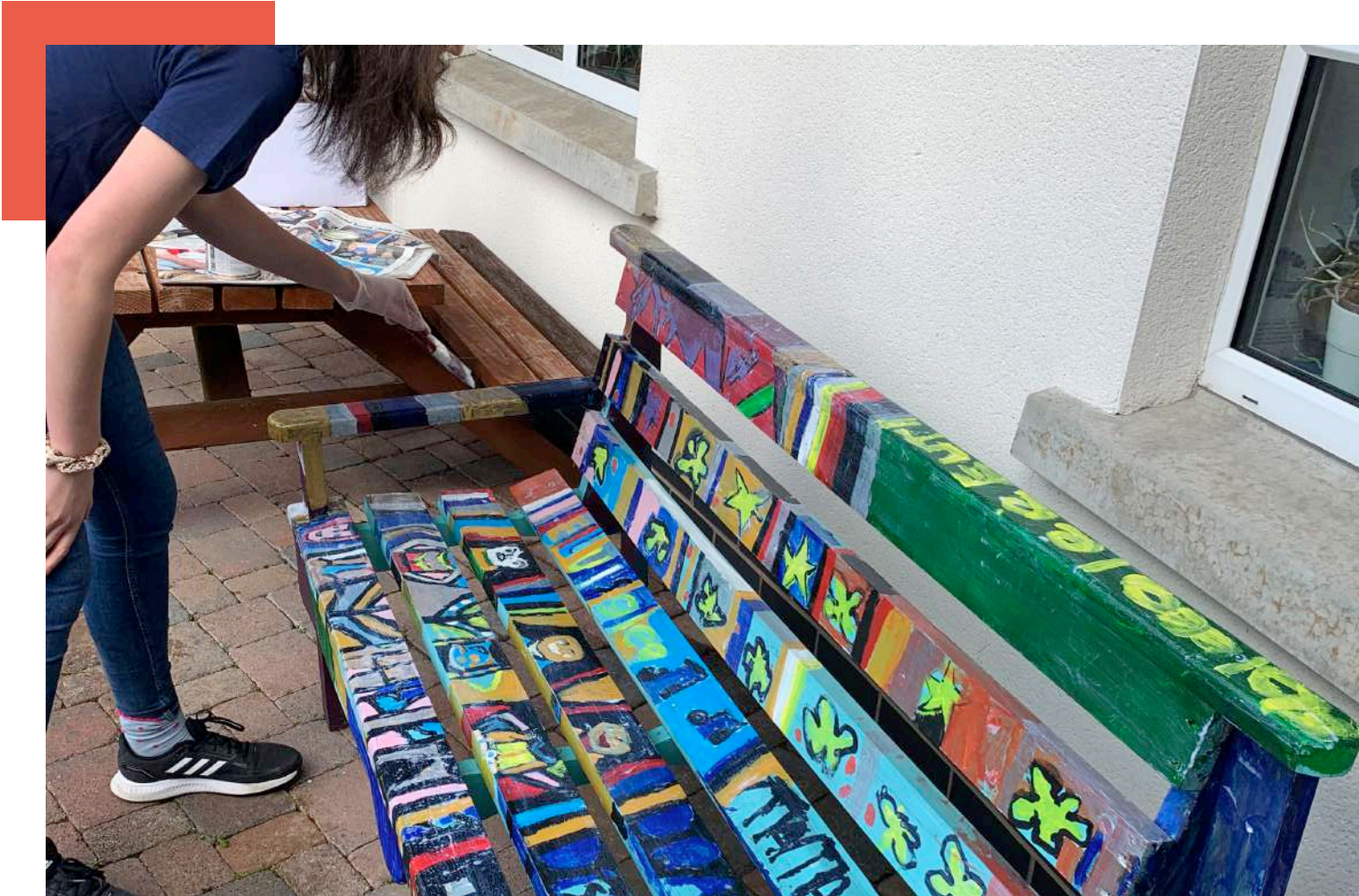
The Procurement Policy Note (PPN) outlines a model to deliver social value, including policy themes and actions, while providing a helpful framework to measure social value outcomes. As a responsible business, we are committed to delivering social value initiatives that make a positive impact across priority areas, while supporting our clients in achieving their objectives and identifying opportunities to collaborative and share best practice.



Education & Employability

We seek to share our skills and expertise to enhance the employability skills of those within our local community through our involvement with local schools and universities, our work experience programme and Trainee Solicitor Programme.

Our lawyers have conducted mock interviews for local secondary school pupils at Methodist College Belfast and St Colm’s High School, Lisburn, and participated in a careers event at Dromore High School, amongst others.



Our Clients

“We have close relationships with responsible business networks, charities and businesses in the local community.”



Supporting Our Local Community

We have invested in our local community through supporting a number of charitable causes through our CSR Day initiative. Our volunteering programme encourages firm wide participation in volunteering opportunities, to benefit both our people and our community.

Over the last year, our team has volunteered over 239 hours to support 12 charitable causes. This has included beach cleans, carrying out essential maintenance work, preparing welcome packs for individuals in temporary housing and more.

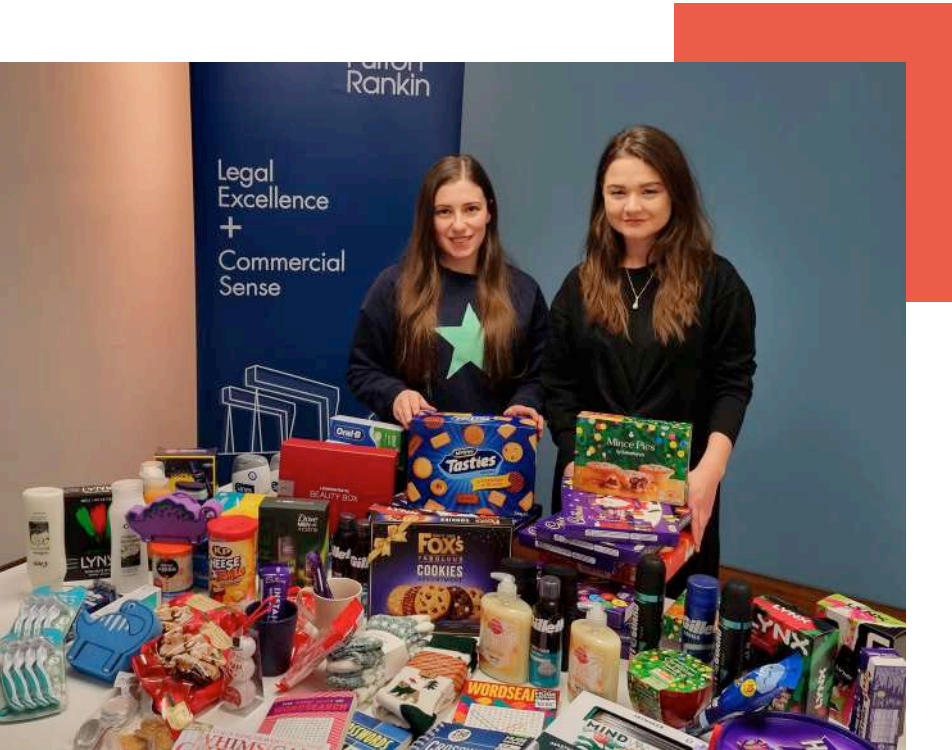
In both 2022 and 2023, our team have participated in the Business in the Community NI ‘Cares at Christmas’ campaign, donating essential food items to the Simon Community, which is a local charity which helps homeless people. We also donated toys to the Belfast City Mission’s 2022 Toy Appeal.

Partnerships & Memberships

We have strong ties with Will to Give, which was established to promote charitable giving or gifts through wills. Michael Graham, Director and Head of Private Client at Cleaver Fulton Rankin, was a founding member of this charity and hosts regular online training sessions for members.

We are members of Business in the Community NI, which consists of a network of responsible businesses, and are accredited by Diversity Mark, demonstrating our commitment to diversity and inclusion. We are members of the Belfast Rotary Club and actively participate in their environmental and community initiatives.

Through our memberships, our team have supported and attended various training sessions, covering Age Inclusive Recruitment, LGBTQIA+ Inclusion in the Workplace, Suicide Awareness, Supporting Disability in the Workplace, and wellbeing sessions on areas such as Enhancing Resilience & Mental Toughness.





Pro Bono

Pro Bono allows us to make a difference in our local community, empower our people and offer opportunities to collaborate. Our legal professionals sit voluntarily on the boards of a number of local charities, such as PIPS Suicide Prevention, Volunteer Now, and Positive Futures, amongst others, providing valued support and advice. Our lawyers also provide pro bono legal services to help those in need of legal advice but are unable to cover the costs of legal fees.

Our pro bono work is directed at clients who we consider to be very deserving or who face legal issues that we believe are especially important to our communities or to society as a whole. We apply our legal expertise to assist small charities with issues such as lease negotiations and advice on administrative responsibilities.

Governance

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At Cleaver Fulton Rankin, we are committed to conducting our business in an ethical way, delivering transparency and accountability across our business operations.

A robust structure for good governance, risk management and regulatory compliance is an integral part of our business operations. Sustainable practices are embedded into our governance framework, and we are committed to delivering the highest standards of professionalism and client service.

Code of Conduct

Our Code of Conduct outlines the legal and ethical framework in which we operate, identifying the responsibilities, standards and actions we expect from our people and suppliers.

We deliver annual training on our code of conduct and business ethics, covering social, ethical and environmental aspects. Our Office Manual contains our Code of Conduct, including policies and procedures for example, Anti-Money Laundering, Anti-Corruption and Bribery, Data Protection & Cyber Security and Diversity & Inclusion.

Risk Management & Compliance

We oppose corruption and financial crime in all its forms, and do not tolerate it in our business or from those with whom we work. We take our obligations under the Money Laundering Regulations very seriously and have robust policies, procedures and systems in place, and arrange mandatory firm wide training to ensure compliance, whilst adhering to the requirements set out by the Law Society of Northern Ireland.

We have an electronic system to facilitate Anti-Money Laundering (AML) checks and have updated our Anti-Money Laundering Policy and Risk Assessment procedure. We continue to support our team in adhering to our policy and procedures, with regular AML training and guides to deliver best practice.

Quality Assurance

We strive to provide our clients with the highest quality service and legal advice. We are quality accredited to ISO 9001:2015, providing further assurance to our clients that we have robust quality management processes in place.

As part of our continuous improvement measures, we issue clients with a Client Satisfaction Questionnaire to manage quality outcomes and to gain valuable feedback. All feedback is discussed at monthly meetings with senior management.



Business Continuity

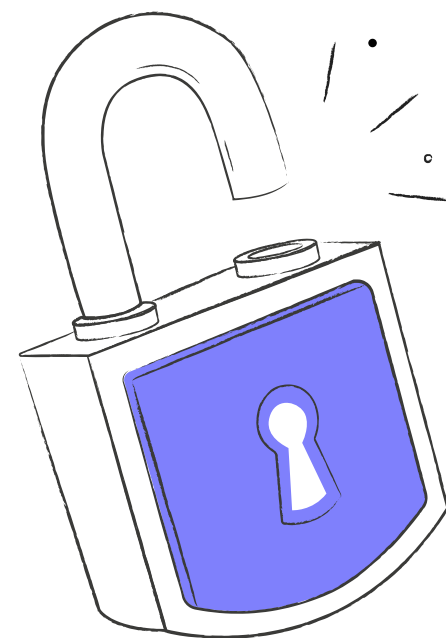
The ISO 22301 certification is the international standard for Business Continuity Management, providing further assurance to our clients that we have a robust framework in place to effectively mitigate disruptions and ensure business resilience.

Cleaver Fulton Rankin has retained the ISO 22301 Business Continuity Management System (BCMS) accreditation. We became the first law firm in Northern Ireland to achieve the standard, demonstrating our commitment and best practice approach to business continuity.

Data Security

We have robust security management processes and accreditations in place, ensuring the effective management, security and confidentiality of the personal data of our clients, our people and our suppliers.

- We comply with Data Protection and UK GDPR regulations
- We continue to educate our team through data protection training, having a dedicated IT team on-site and through providing regular guidance on responsible practices and risk management
- We have a Data Protection Officer registered with the Office of the Data Protection Commissioner
- We retained the ISO 27001, UK Cyber Essentials Plus and IASME certifications, delivering robust internal quality control and security management procedures



Technology & Sustainable Development

We are committed to managing technology in a secure way, including supporting our clients in relation to legal and regulatory considerations associated with emerging technologies.

We have embraced new technology and digital solutions to deliver an exceptional legal service and added value to our clients, and to drive forward sustainable practices. We continue to adopt the latest innovations in legal technology, investing in our IT systems and security processes to deliver robust and accredited security management systems.

The firm’s Legal Technology Group consists of legal project managers, solicitors and legal professionals, who deliver eDiscovery services and managed document review to nearshore law firms and support to our specialist legal teams in the delivery of legal services to our clients.



Responsible People.
Responsible Business.

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