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Magrath Sheldrick

Corporate Social Responsibility

Our Corporate Social Responsibility (CSR) policy is integral to the firm's strategy and at its core, it guides how we conduct our core business, how we develop and support our people, and how we foster closer collaboration with our clients and the wider community.

Policy elements

We strive to be a responsible business that meets the highest standards of ethics and professionalism.

Our CSR strategy has three key pillars: people, community and environment. At its heart is our commitment to our stakeholders – our clients, our people and wider society.

We promote good practices in relation to ethics, professional standards and risk management, reflecting those values and issues that our clients have told us are most important to them.

We strive to create a safe and inclusive workplace, and broaden the skills and experience of our people.

We support our communities through partnership and widening access to justice and education.

We are committed to managing our environmental footprint and contributing to sustainability.

Protecting the Environment

Magrath Sheldrick LLP understand the need to protect the natural environment. We are committed to reducing the environmental impact of our business operations and to continually improve our energy efficiency by embracing systems and initiatives that support better use of energy and resources and reduce CO2 emissions.

Our main areas of focus for improvement are:

- Energy consumption
- Methods of business travel
- Responsible use of resources, including suppliers
- Waste disposal
- Staff training.

Our Environmental and Energy Policy provides further information on our specific efforts to protect the environment and improve our energy efficiency.

Protecting People

We are committed to creating a safe and inclusive workplace, and broadening the skills and experience of our people. Inclusivity, diversity, professional development and wellbeing are central to our strategy.

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We believe that the best teams are diverse and inclusive, and that people flourish in an environment where they are supported in expanding their careers and developing their resilience. Our focus on inclusivity, development and wellbeing enables us to deliver better understanding and better advice to our clients, and ensures that we continue to attract, retain and develop the highest calibre of people.

Our employees are free to practice their religious beliefs freely and without discrimination and come from a range of ethnic classes. We are committed to increasing diversity within the firm. Women make up over 50% of the Partnership, which demonstrates our undertaking to promote gender balance within the firm.

Employees are encouraged to participate in learning and development initiatives to further widen their knowledge and strive for continuous self-improvement.

We realise that working in a law firm can be a pressurised and demanding environment. Our wellbeing agenda aims to ensure our people are able to recognise and appreciate the importance of maintaining good mental health and in building their resilience and ability to operate healthily and successfully. We provide independent advice and support to our staff.

Promoting a healthy lifestyle is another focus. We support our people in making healthier choices and encourage them to view exercise as social activity. We have facilitated in-house yoga classes and walking groups during lunchtime, and now that we are back in the office following the COVID-19 pandemic, are seeking to re-introduce a working partnership with Fruitful Office to have fruit delivered to our offices on a weekly basis.

Our COVID Return to Work Strategy

The safety and protection of our employees is paramount. We have conducted a full risk assessment exercise to ensure that the return to work following lockdown is updated and full measures are put in place to protect employees and others from the risk of coronavirus infection. This includes regular communications with our staff, increased cleaning and hand sanitising stations in common areas, proper ventilation and a clear requirement for those who are presenting COVID-19 symptoms to self-isolate.

Supporting the Community

We are committed to supporting the communities where we do business by widening access to justice, education and finance. We collaborate with charities to deliver these community outreach and pro bono services, with partner-led, client-focused teams.

Volunteering

The firm will actively encourage its employees to volunteer. Our employees volunteer their time and services to assisting with a number of pro-bono initiatives and we are constantly striving to increase our efforts as a firm in this arena. Employees are also encouraged to undertake sabbaticals which focus their efforts at raising funds for global community projects and initiatives.

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The Tower Hamlets Business Education Partnership

Following a thorough review of our community support strategy, we are delighted to partner with The Tower Hamlets Education Business Partnership (THBEP) a leading education charity with over 25 years' experience of delivering successful business supported programmes in London and beyond.

THBEP work with employers and schools to increase social mobility by building young people's confidence, improving their skills and raising aspirations for the future.

The THBEP deliver a broad range of programmes in schools which improve the employability and life chances of young people who face multiple disadvantages. All programmes bring volunteers from local employers into contact with young people. They have a strong track record working in partnership to:

- engage primary and secondary school students and volunteers
- support delivery of national government strategic priorities
- meet curriculum and Ofsted requirements.

Our staff have participated in their 'Head-to-Head' Interview workshops, providing mock-interviews and feedback to 16-17 year olds seeking to apply for entry into further education and the recruitment market. Subject to the easing of the pandemic, our employees are also looking forward to commencing regular mentoring and support to a group of high school students for the 2021/2022 Academic year.

We are also committed to offering regular aid to a diverse range of charities throughout the year.

These aim to

- Advance the arts, education and community initiatives.
- Alleviate those in need across a range of areas from providing pro bono legal support to focusing on children, the elderly, the LGBT and the wider community.

We have been participating in the London Legal Walk since its inception and have held regular in-house social events aimed primarily to raise funds for charity. These include Macmillan Bake Sales, raising funds to aid further research in cancer and raffles throughout the year. We have implemented a food bank collection, making regular collections for the Trussell Trust.

Our employees participate in a range of activities to actively fundraise for charity. This has included cycling 300 miles over 3 days from London to Paris in aid of the Back Up Trust, which provides people who have suffered from spinal injuries and their families with much needed support. Other activities involve carrying out a bungee jump for the Evelina Children's Hospital at St Thomas and Guys Hospital, who focus on improving care for sick children with a variety of health conditions.

Pro Bono Initiatives

Our pro bono clients in this area range from individual members of the community, to not-for profit organisations, fighting human rights and civil liberties cases in court, and undertaking advocacy services.

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Our fee-earners will regularly provide employment, immigration and data protection pro-bono advice to charities and individuals. These have included assisting charities and individuals within the LGBT community with immigration applications who would not otherwise have had the means to cover the costs associated with being represented in these cases.

Widening access to justice is a key priority for Magrath Sheldrick. As a firm we will aim to take on several cases per year at significantly reduced fees to assist individuals who would otherwise not be able to afford specialist legal support.