

Ward Hadaway – our responsible business review 2024/25

How we're making
a difference to
our communities,
our people and
our planet



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Steven Petrie
Managing Partner

Foreward from Steven Petrie

What are we in business for?

I think that's a question we all need to ask ourselves. It's certainly one which has exercised my mind since I became Managing Partner of Ward Hadaway last year.

We have big ambitions to grow our firm and build on its proud history, continuing to deliver the highest quality legal services to clients across the country as a responsible independent law firm.

But this is only possible by collaborating with the communities in which we live and work, with the expertise and dedication of our people and in the environment which we all share.

That's why this document and the principles in it are central to what we do as a firm and how we operate as a business.

Over the course of the following pages, we outline the work which we have done, and the impact we have had over the course of the financial year 24/25, helping our communities, developing and supporting our people, and protecting our planet.

During the period that this document reports on, we had three offices - Leeds, Manchester and Newcastle. As a firm we now have five, adding Birmingham and Teesside in June and July 2025. So you can expect to see even more activity across a wider geographical footprint in next year's report.

You'll see the progress we've made and our plans to go further - our commitment to responsible business is continuous and runs through everything we do.

Much has been done but there is more to do. And as our firm grows, I look forward to working with colleagues and collaborators to further extend our impact.

Steven

Managing Partner
October 2025

Responsible business in action

As lawyers, we are used to taking responsibility. However, responsibility as a business goes much further.

It's about realising that our impact and influence goes beyond the day-to-day tasks which we perform; that our collective presence and activity has the ability to support our communities, empower our people and protect our planet.

Realising this is one thing - acting upon it is what makes the crucial difference.

Actions not words define the history of Ward Hadaway. From our foundation in Newcastle in 1988 through our expansion to Leeds, Manchester, Birmingham and Teesside, the firm has been about doing rather than saying.



Colin Hewitt
Chair, Responsible Business Board

This ethos also applies to our approach to becoming a good corporate citizen.

Amongst other things we have:

- worked to improve diversity across our workforce
- focused on health and wellbeing initiatives for our people to recognise the pressures of working in the profession
- invested in social mobility initiatives acknowledging that diversity begins by addressing ambition gaps in schools
- sought to understand how we as a business can respond to the increasing climate challenges
- worked with charities to support our communities to tackle challenges such as social isolation, the rising cost of living, health and wellbeing, worklessness and beyond.

This document outlines some of the work we have undertaken over the financial year 24/25, reflecting our commitment to our people, our communities, and the environment, encapsulating what it means to operate as a responsible business.

The restless spirit and quest for better, which has driven our expansion as a firm, is very much present in our approach to responsible business. Whilst we're rightly proud of the progress we have made over the past years, we know that the work is far from finished and we are ready to meet the challenge of going further and faster in the years to come as Ward Hadaway continues to grow.

We are just as ambitious now as we were when our firm was established. It is just as exciting for us to think about the extra things which we can do for our communities, people and planet in the coming years as it is to think about the new clients, new challenges and new opportunities which lie ahead of us.

As Chair of the Responsible Business Board at Ward Hadaway, it is my responsibility to ensure that these considerations remain an integral part of our operations, our culture and our outlook as we move forward into the future.

It is a responsibility which I relish, but one I can only carry out with the support and commitment of the whole firm. We all have our part to play and I am sure everyone will all do their bit both now and in the years to come.

Colin

Chair of the Responsible Business Board
October 2025



Our values



Anna Brown
Director of People

To succeed as a firm and as a responsible business, we have to be able to work collaboratively - with each other, our clients and our supply chain.

That's why one of the key initiatives which we launched over the past year was our values and behaviour framework.

Our values underpin everything we do. Having a set of clearly defined values helps to create a collective culture which everyone can understand and buy into, both within Ward Hadaway and across our current and future clients and collaborators.

The Values and Behaviours Framework was developed by our People Team in partnership with people right across the firm - over 75% of our people actively engaged with the process, giving their thoughts and feedback.

This resulted in a clear set of values which guide our activities and behaviour as a firm:

- Straightforward
- Respectful
- Ambitious

But what do these values mean and how do they manifest themselves?



Straightforward

Straightforward - being clear and straightforward in everything we do diminishes uncertainty and has a big impact on performance. Having and explaining clear roles, responsibilities and rationale for our actions and decisions builds and supports trust both within the firm and with our clients and collaborators.

Respectful - we are an inclusive law firm which recognises, values and harnesses differences. We believe in an environment where everyone recognises and values each other and where people from all kinds of backgrounds and with all kinds of skills and experiences can work together.



Respectful



Ambitious

Ambitious - we strive to be the best and recognise the power of positive change. We're not just ambitious for our success as a law firm, we are ambitious for our people to become the best versions of themselves and for our clients and the communities we work in to succeed and grow.

These values and the behaviours and competencies which accompany them define the culture we take pride in, fostering an environment where our people thrive and feel fulfilled. This creates the foundation for us all to achieve our best, for the benefit of ourselves, our team, our clients and the wider world, as you'll see in the coming pages.

Anna

Director of People
October 2025





Our approach

Our office network is based in a set of thriving, diverse and fantastic communities, each with their own character, their own challenges and their own people.

We are not outside observers of our communities, we are part of them and so we strive to play an active role in achieving better outcomes for everyone involved in them.

We are dedicated to making a positive impact in our communities through charitable donations, volunteering, trusteeships and other active involvement.

Our efforts focus on two key areas that guide our support for charitable organisations:

- Health and Wellbeing
- Young People

Within these areas, our support comes in various shapes and sizes, such as creating opportunities for all, addressing food poverty, driving change through sport and combating social isolation.

So how does this work?

Charitable donations

Our charitable contributions are underpinned by a generous annual budget provided by the firm. Specific donations are approved by the Social Value Committee, which is made up of representatives from across the regions in which we operate.

We support a wide range of initiatives. Some are longer term, such as our sponsorship of three Greggs' Breakfast Clubs in schools across the North. Others are one-offs, like various kit and strips for grassroots sports teams.

Each office has a Charity of the Year to directly focus many of our major fundraising efforts to increase engagement. Our appointed charities run over two years to maximise the impact we can have. We will of course be adding initiatives for our new Birmingham office and continuing the great work already being carried out in our Teesside office.

We also continue our long-standing tradition of contributing to our dedicated funds held by the regional Community Foundations supporting our regions. Community Foundations were chosen because they excel at supporting smaller charities and community groups throughout our communities.

Our Social Committees also raise further funds for initiatives, through events such as Legal Walks and Cake Bakes.





Pro bono work and volunteering

We remain committed to supporting access to justice for those who might otherwise be unable to secure legal representation. As an active participant in a number of pro bono networks, individuals within the firm regularly dedicate their legal expertise to causes that need it most.

Pro bono work is a meaningful part of our wider social contribution. We partner with a range of charitable and community-focused organisations such as the Lighthouse Project and the Foundation of Light applying our legal skills to help advance their missions and create lasting impact.

Beyond legal work, we actively encourage our people to give back in ways that matter to them. Each team member is offered a dedicated volunteer day annually—paid time off to support a charity of their choice.

Many also serve as trustees, directors, school governors, or advocates for not-for-profit organisations. We fully support the time commitment these roles involve, offering flexibility around both working and non-working hours.





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CINDY APLEYARD
FOUNDATION



Our impact:

Charitable donations

Donating to charities is a direct and effective way for us to invest in our communities in the areas which need it most, prioritising those good causes which focus on health & wellbeing and young people.

Having set ourselves a target of £45,000 in cash donations for the year, we actually delivered a total of £66,500 to charitable causes in 2024/25, via firm-wide donations, proceeds of our endowment at the Community Foundation North East, and a variety of fund-raising activities carried out by colleagues in all three of our offices.

This includes funds raised for our office Charities of the Year over the past two-year cycle which have been:

Leeds - [Martin House Children's Hospice](#)

Manchester - [The Cindy Appleyard Foundation](#)

Newcastle - [The People's Kitchen](#)

Ward Hadaway in action

Martin House Children's Hospice

Chrissie Kettlewell, Director, Built Environment, talks about Ward Hadaway Leeds' Charity of the Year, Martin House Children's Hospice, which provides family-led hospice care free of charge for children and young people with life-shortening conditions.

"Martin House was nominated by one of the Partners in the Leeds office to be our Charity of the Year as a member of their family had been helped by the hospice and had received such amazing care.

Other charities were nominated, it went to a vote and Martin House was selected. They came in to the office for a lunch and learn session where one of our Partners spoke about their experiences with the charity and that was really powerful because it was something so personal and involved someone at Ward Hadaway. It really energised people which is one of the reasons why we have done so well over the past two years.

We have raised over £11,000 across that time just in the Leeds office.



We have had a lot of fun raising the funds. We had a summer barbecue which included the opportunity for people to throw wet sponges at Partners in the stocks for £5 a time (which was mostly contributed by Partners throwing sponges at each other!), we held a Golf Day where clients sponsored a hole each on the course, we had Christmas raffles and a cake decorating competition, food sales and bake sales at Easter, a Pancake Day fundraiser, a Hallowe'en quiz - you name it, we did it!

As well as raising funds for the hospice, we also gave our time with the Corporate team in the Leeds office volunteering to help out in the garden and grounds at Martin House.

The relationship with the team at Martin House has really grown. We kept in touch, held regular meetings, exchanged ideas about fundraising, they've sent people to events which we've held to talk about the charity. They've been amazing!

Having a Charity of the Year which we have all had a chance to nominate and to vote for has really helped focus our efforts and bring the Leeds office together. It also means that we can have a much bigger impact and make a real difference by raising a larger amount for a single charity rather than small amounts to a number of organisations. We can also develop a much deeper relationship with the charity which we find has a really positive effect on our fundraising efforts. I think having Martin House as our Charity of the Year

has given everyone at the Leeds office a real boost and has helped to bring us closer together with our colleagues.

Seeing the amount we have raised for such a fantastic cause is a real good news story and shows that all our efforts have been worthwhile.

We're now looking forward to adopting a new Charity of the Year for the next two years, raising funds for a good cause and building relationships with another amazing organisation."

Chrissie Kettlewell

Lead on Social Value, Leeds Office

"We're so grateful to the Ward Hadaway Leeds team for their incredible commitment over the past two years.

"The energy, creativity, and generosity they've shown has had a real and lasting impact on the children, young people, and families we support.

"Beyond the vital funds raised, their enthusiasm and hands-on involvement have made them true partners in the care and support we provide every day. Thank you."

Hannah Finan

Martin House Children's Hospice



Ward Hadaway in action

Community Foundation North East

Ross Wilson, Senior Philanthropy Advisor at Community Foundation North East, on how Ward Hadaway is helping to make a difference in communities across the North.

The Community Foundation grows giving and philanthropy, enabling people and businesses to support vital causes across North East England.

We combine our knowledge and reach with donors' generosity to back local charities and community organisations making a lasting difference.

Community Foundation grants are made possible through generous individual, family, and business donors as well as through funding programmes run in partnership with national and local government, the NHS, and other charitable grant-makers.

Ward Hadaway has been working with us for nearly 25 years and has a clear commitment to involving people from across the business in the grant-giving decision-making process.



The firm has also been keen to ensure that it supports all the communities in which it operates, so we have worked closely with them to ensure that charities in Leeds and Manchester, and the North East, benefit from the Fund which they have with us at the Community Foundation.

This representation is clearly very important to the firm and shows strong commitment to supporting the diverse communities in which it operates.

Since the Ward Hadaway Fund at the Community Foundation was established in October 2001, it has made 136 grants and built up an endowment fund of over £200,000. This has helped to make a real difference to organisations and individuals across the North.

Across Community Foundation North East as a whole, we made grants totalling £8.9million in the year ending 31 March 2025. This takes the overall amount awarded by the Community Foundation since being established in 1988 to nearly £170 million.

The £8.9m was distributed over 1,224 grants made to 599 organisations and 38 individuals.

The Community Foundation doesn't only provide grants. Its Sector Support programme has provided support to approximately 400 organisations through pro bono advice and training.

The support provided by firms like Ward Hadaway plays a vital part in everything which we do for our communities and we look forward to continuing to work with them for many years to come.

Ross Wilson

Senior Philanthropy Advisor,
Community Foundation North East



Community Foundation Fund Grants

We are delighted to say that the charities which our Fund contributed to this year were:

- Leeds Baby Bank
- Contact (Morpeth Mental Health Group) Ltd
- Trafford Rape Crisis
- Birkheads Wild CIO
- Aspire Amateur Boxing Club
- Northumberland Domestic Abuse Services
- Love, Amelia
- Perry's Pantry Foodbank
- Staying Put
- Early Essentials UK



The Endeavour Partnership – cut from the same cloth

Our annual review describes the activities which we undertook as Ward Hadaway during the financial year 24/25. However in July 2025 we merged with The Endeavour Partnership, a successful Teesside-based law firm which has been operating in the region for over 25 years. A fundamental reason the merger concluded so successfully was the shared values, culture and approach of the two firms. The Endeavour Partnership has consistently and conscientiously given back to its communities, activities which during the last financial year have included:

- Patron of The Teesside Charity
- Silver Supporter of Middlesbrough FC Foundation
- Sponsored grass roots football club Nunthorpe Blues Under 11s
- Took part in CEO Sleepouts, an increasingly active charity where Nik Tunley, our Head of Corporate, is a Trustee
- Helped to distribute hampers on behalf of CAUSE Foundation, in connection with their Christmas Hamper Campaign





And as part of their own nominated Charity of Year, members of the office raised money for Clean Slate Solutions, raising around £5,000 through a tuck shop, fundraising walks, raffles, wreath making, gingerbread house decorating, egg decorating comp, book clubs, Great North Run entries, Halloween themed lunch and more.

All of which is why we are looking forward to working as one to harness the combined efforts of all our offices, including Teesside, to maximise the impact of our social value work across our regions and beyond.



Our ongoing objectives and commitments

Social value



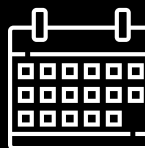
Maintain our focus on health and wellbeing and young people.



To take into account of our additional locations, to increase our annual pledge to £60,000 by way of cash donations to charitable causes during the financial year 2025/26.



To ensure our support reaches across all the regions of our offices.



To offer each person one day per year paid volunteering time and to proactively encourage and promote volunteering and pro bono opportunities across our office network.



Our people



Our people are our most valuable asset. We've dedicated many years to building a business and a team we're immensely proud of, working hard to foster a forward-thinking approach to work.

We strive to help our people reach their full potential, supporting their growth throughout their careers. Our culture is one of trusted leadership, where everyone feels safe, connected, and supported, treated with respect and kindness in alignment with our values; a workplace where people genuinely enjoy coming to work.

The launch of our Values and Behaviours framework last year exemplified our approach, involving everyone in the creation of a blueprint to take our firm forward with a set of commonly held, genuine values and accompanying behaviours. Straightforward, Respectful and Ambitious are more than mere words; they are values which underpin everything we do and which will guide us both now and in the future.

We are committed to eliminating discrimination and promoting equality, diversity, and inclusion throughout our firm. We recognise that individuality and diversity are strengths, enriching our teams, firm, clients, and communities. This commitment is woven into our recruitment, promotion, and development processes.

We also work to provide an environment that celebrates talent and contribution, irrespective of ethnicity, religion, gender or sexual orientation. Our dedication to social mobility focuses on three key areas: outreach to local schools and colleges to inspire ambition, accessible apprenticeship programmes to create new pathways to qualification and equitable recruitment practices that support those from disadvantaged backgrounds.

The health and wellbeing of our people are a top priority. As we navigate an ever-evolving work and life landscape, we are progressing through the second phase of our comprehensive three-year strategy. Part of this strategy centres on fostering an environment that attracts and retains the exceptional talent we value - this is again where the Values and Behaviours framework plays a crucial part.

At our core, we are dedicated to supporting colleagues through times of change and promoting practices that enhance their wellbeing and resilience. Our policies and procedures uphold a zero-tolerance stance toward bullying, harassment and undue stress, empowering everyone to reach their potential and contribute positively.



Our impact

When it comes to supporting our people, we believe actions speak louder than words. So here are just a few ways in which we have worked to make Ward Hadaway a better place to work for the people who make it what it is.

Enhanced Engagement and Wellbeing Survey

We undertake an annual Wellbeing Survey which has been updated to align to our values, with staff invited to share their insights and feed into a firm-wide baseline measure of our values in practice.

The results highlighted several of our strengths, including strong relationships across teams, a sense of trust and reliability among colleagues, and a culture that respects all backgrounds.



Our impact

Areas flagged up for improvement included colleagues worrying about work outside of hours and taking breaks during the day, although scores for both of these showed improvement on previous years. This is a common challenge reported across the legal sector, and the firm has committed to looking at ways to manage the demands and to best support wellbeing.

The survey remains an important part of our ongoing improvement programme and we are always grateful to everyone who takes the time to fill in the survey and provide additional feedback on issues. We'll keep at it!

Open Door

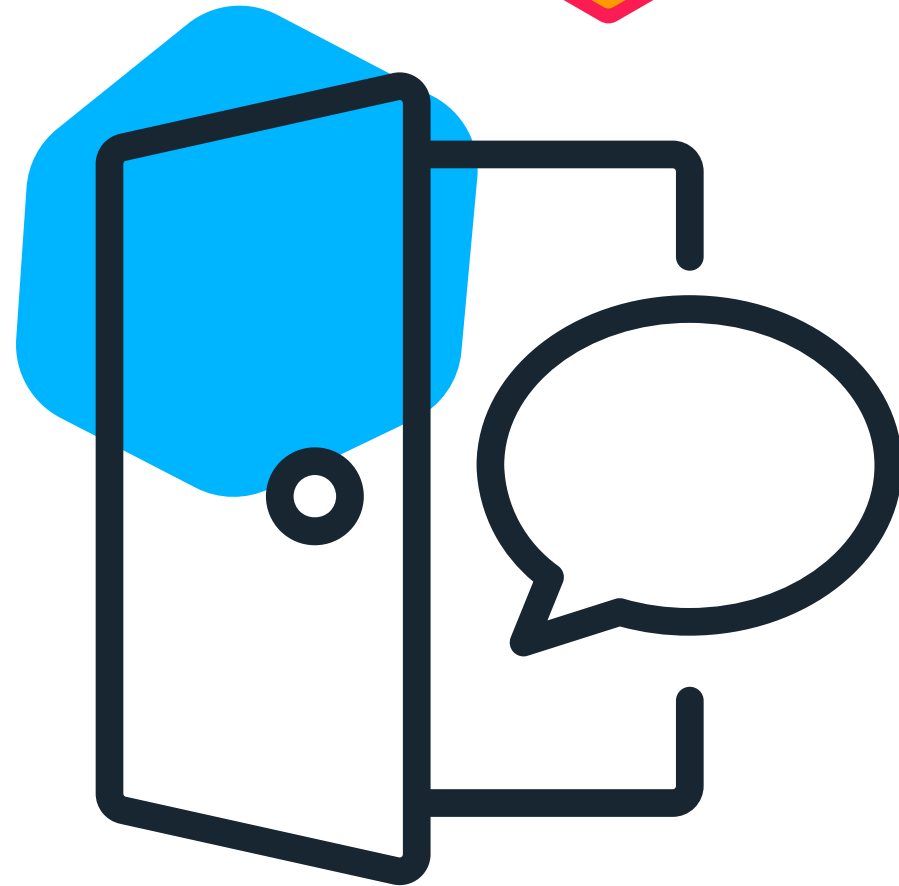
As a result of staff workshops highlighting the importance of open and transparent communication, and aligned with our values, we have implemented 'Open Door'.

This is a confidential channel connecting our people, People Team and management. Open Door is a safe, private space to share thoughts, suggestions, and questions as we drive further positive change.

It enables people to raise issues, concerns or questions outside of the normal channels and the annual survey, and is a way of exchanging qualitative feedback and information confidentially.

Once a question or a piece of feedback has been submitted, our People Team responds directly via the Open Door platform, ensuring that answers or further information is received via a closed feedback loop.

The People Team also shares questions and feedback with our Managing Partner, Steven Petrie, who can provide a response but fundamentally can review feedback every quarter to monitor particular issues and concerns firm-wide. He also shares the most common questions and feedback topics to ensure total transparency. As the name suggests, this is a genuine Open Door!



Other initiatives



Investors in People

It was a very proud moment for us as a firm to be awarded the Investors in People 'Gold Award' in 2022; reflecting our position as a responsible employer. Following re-accreditation this year, we're even prouder to have retained our Gold award and achieve an upward trend in scores for leadership and living our values. We are purposefully ambitious to continue improving our culture and the conditions for performance as we grow - for our people and our clients.



The Mindful Business Charter

The Mindful Business Charter (MBC) is a charity and a community of employer organisations formed by leading law firms and banks to reduce unnecessary stress in the workplace, with the aim of creating healthier and more productive workplaces.

Since becoming a signatory of the Charter, we have introduced our very own Wellbeing Committee, survey and designated Mental Health First Aiders / Wellbeing Champions.

Other initiatives

Peer-to-Peer Recognition

There are few things better than knowing the people you work with appreciate and value what you do.

Of course, this can be done via informal feedback during the course of the normal working day, but we also think that great work deserves greater recognition.

That's why we have implemented a system of peer-to-peer recognition using our feedback platform, HIVE HR. All of our people can now send 'Hive-Fives' via the platform to celebrate everyday wins and the achievements of our colleagues, however, big or small. Users can choose whether to just share it with the person they've nominated or to spread the news across the firm.

This is a great way to acknowledge great work, build bonds with colleagues and boost the feel good factor and has already proved a hit with colleagues across the firm.

Quarterly Conversations

We recognise that formal annual reviews are not always the best and most effective way to monitor performance and assess progress.

That's why we've revised our approach to analysing performance by encouraging agile and straightforward conversations through regular touchpoints.

Through increased and respectful conversations, we seek to reflect on progress, set goals and continuously strive to be the best we all can be.

Other initiatives

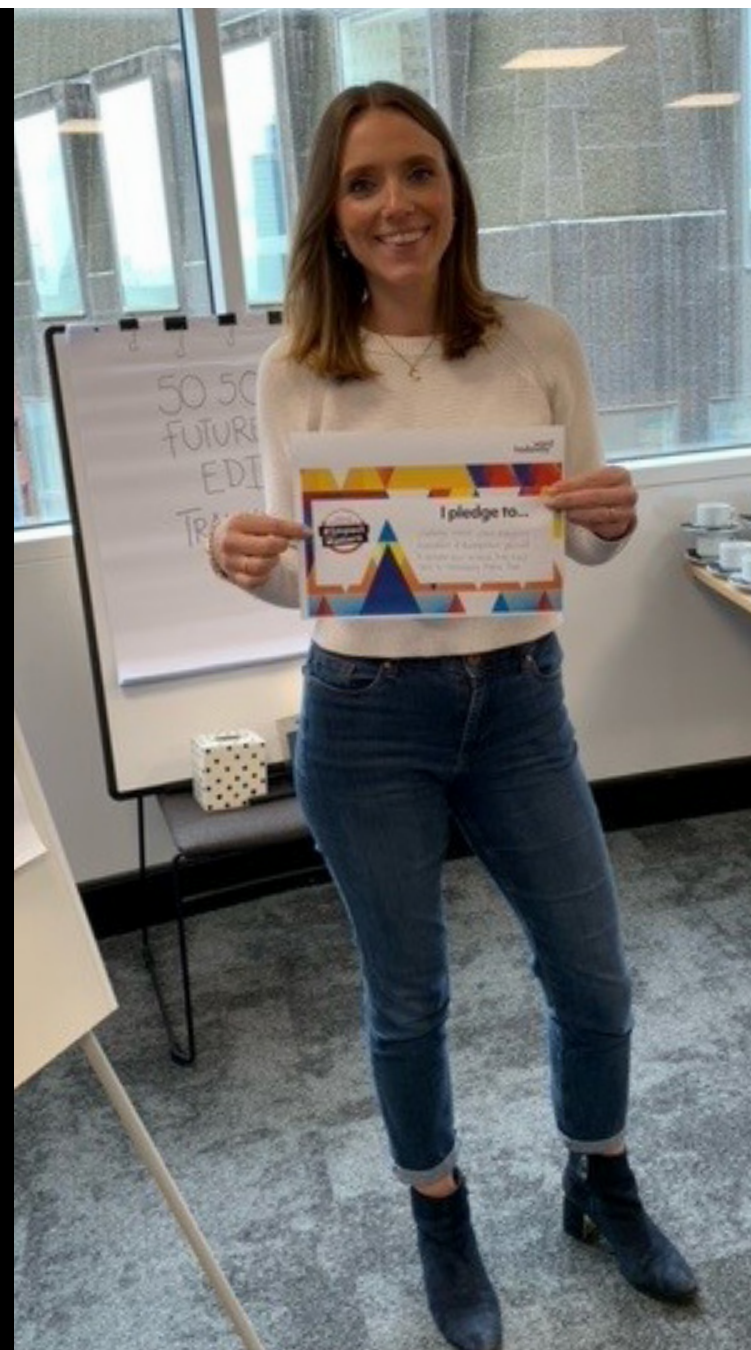
Good Work pledges

As well as making a commitment to continued progress to the people within Ward Hadaway, we also believe in making that public.

That's why we are:

- A supporter of the Greater Manchester Good Employment Charter.
- A signatory of the West Yorkshire Fair Work Charter.
- A receiver of the Standard award for the North East's Good Work Pledge, now known as Shine.

Our ongoing involvement with these organisations reflects our commitment towards making Ward Hadaway a great place to work - and operating as a truly responsible business.



Health and wellbeing

A happier, healthier workforce is not just good for the people within Ward Hadaway, it's also good for us as a business.

That's why we operate a number of initiatives through our Wellbeing Committee to help promote physical and mental wellbeing including:

Mental Health First Aiders

Our Mental Health First Aiders are colleagues who are trained to support any employees experiencing mental health concerns.

This programme is a non-judgemental, empathetic, respectful and private support process designed to provide emotional and practical support – while guiding people towards the correct professional and personal support for their needs.

External Support

We provide free access to a confidential employee assistance programme in addition to applications such as Headspace. Headspace is designed to enhance mental wellbeing, reduce stress and increase focus through guided meditation and mindfulness exercises.

Your Space

Within our offices there are dedicated spaces for wellbeing, meditation, prayer or quiet time; known as 'Your Space'. Rooms are available to all of our people at times which suit them.



Health and wellbeing

Walk this May

Adapting an initiative first founded by charity Living Streets, 2024 saw our first month-long scheme in support of Mental Health Awareness Week – known as 'Walk This May'. During the event, our staff completed 1,546 walks and raised £2,000 for our chosen charities.

This proved to be so successful that we have now made this an annual event, enabling staff to take a break, reduce stress through exercise and support local causes.



Recruitment

Recruiting and retaining top talent and strengthening our teams is crucial to our ongoing success and to our role as a responsible business.

There are a number of things which we are doing to help ensure we have a diverse, inclusive and successful workforce going forward. Our initiatives include:

Revising our recruitment process

We have overhauled our previous processes to ensure that we maintain a consistent and streamlined recruitment process for different positions right across the firm.

This process is designed to ensure we attract and retain people who align with values of being straightforward, respectful and ambitious, regardless of their background.

Diversity and inclusion charter

We have signed up to the Law Society's Diversity and Inclusion Charter and strive to achieve best practice in our recruitment, retention and career progression practices.

We also support the development of good diversity practice by collecting and sharing examples of practical activities that contribute to progress.

Recruitment

Apprenticeship programme

Recognising that non-traditional routes into the legal profession can foster incredible talent, we operate a range of programmes enabling our People to develop their skills towards qualification.

We have operated a Solicitor Apprenticeship programme for six years and in that time have tripled the number of Solicitor Apprentices in the Firm, offering them a broad range of seats in their first four years and a place on our trainee programme in their final two years.

We have an established programme to empower paralegals and other non-qualified lawyers to work with their departments and line managers to take advantage of the SQE or Cilex routes to qualification.

Our routes are not limited to those in legal roles, as we have also been able to offer a range of non-legal apprenticeships and development opportunities within business services.

Recruitment: Future Talent

Investing in the future is crucial to the success of any business and we put great store by helping to identify, nurture and develop the legal stars of tomorrow via a variety of different routes.

Our dedicated Emerging Talent Team aims to widen access, promote opportunities and bring in talented new recruits.

Our work with schools and colleges

Thinking about careers in the law isn't something which comes naturally to many students, particularly those from less privileged backgrounds. That's why our work with schools starts from an early age and cuts across a range of different areas.

For example, we've partnered with educational organisations to deliver talks on the basics of finance and why it matters as you grow up, encouraging pupils as young as Year 6 to think about their futures and how they can progress.

We've worked with local Further Education colleges on mentoring schemes to support students who have shown interest in a career in the law, helping them to navigate the pitfalls and make the most of the opportunities.

Positive Footprints' Raising Aspirations programme is delivered in primary schools to try to address the problems of poor social mobility. By delivering learning aids, support and training, it supports each school to deliver an addition to the curriculum that helps to raise aspirations, open up the world of work and equip pupils with the skills they need for the future. The programme then remains with that school, leaving a lasting legacy. The Positive Footprints Network creates opportunities for the next generation of leaders, problem solvers and change-makers. We have invested in a number of such programmes across the North of England.

Recruitment: Future Talent



We undertook the Enterprise Challenge schools outreach programme at Christ Church School in Shieldfield in partnership with Vicki Stone of On The Up. The programme is designed to equip young people with valuable business acumen and entrepreneurial skills and our involvement in it saw us win the Best CSR Initiative at the 2024 People in Law Awards.

“

Ward Hadaway played a key role in making On The Up's In-School Business Enterprise Programme award-winning. Their commitment to good corporate social responsibility was brought to life through the enthusiasm and dedication of their trainees, who volunteered at the school. We were so proud to work alongside such a hardworking and good-humoured team. Their support not only enriched the student experience but truly elevated the programme.

”

Vicki Stone, On The Up

Our work with universities

We are very fortunate that our offices are located in some of the real hotbeds of learning across the UK with a raft of excellent universities literally on our doorsteps.

Our Emerging Talent Team has developed a strategy of creating commercial and academic partnerships across our regions.

One of the key initiatives we have been involved with recently in this field is IntoUniversity. This charity offers programmes to support young people from disadvantaged areas to attain their chosen career aspiration, including further and higher education, employment and work-based learning.

IntoUniversity has centres across the country, and our involvement with the programme sees our trainee and more junior colleagues engage with students on the programme in a range of support, mentoring and enrichment capacities.

Across our Leeds and Newcastle offices*, we have already helped over 100 students get to grips with the realities of a career in law, see how their skills can be used in a business setting and inspire them to achievement in their chosen professions.

We have also worked with Durham University's Changemakers programme to fund internships that enable students to support their peers undertaking charitable placements—broadening access to real-world experience and leadership development.

We have also led initiatives such as the Gateshead College Mentoring Scheme and On The Up (as mentioned on the previous page), which are focused on breaking down barriers to opportunity and empowering young people from underrepresented backgrounds to succeed in education, employment, and enterprise.

We look forward to continuing our strong relationships with schools, colleges and universities right across our office network to widen opportunity, increase access and help develop future leaders of the firm.

* Manchester's office has been fully funded by a private philanthropist.

Ward Hadaway in action

Our people

I began my Solicitor Apprenticeship at Ward Hadaway, straight from sixth form at 18 years old, which was a bit of a daunting experience. However, from my very first day everyone was so welcoming and there was always someone to turn to if I had any questions, worries or just needed someone to talk to.

I spent my first two years in the Debt Recovery Team where I gained the confidence to manage my own case load, conduct client meetings and handle a large amount of calls daily from debtors, clients and third parties, some of which were of a difficult nature. I never thought I would be able to do these things at such a young age but due to the supervision I received, I was able to develop these skills quickly. I created strong relationships with clients and received some great feedback when I left the team.

My third year has been in the Commercial Property Team in Real Estate where I am involved in a wide range of transactions such as preparing due diligence enquiries, Land Registry applications, title reviews and drafting documents. I work with a wide range of individuals in the team from paralegals, associates and partners as well as cross department which is helpful to see how other teams work.



Jessica Irving
Solicitor Apprentice

Ward Hadaway in action

Our people

I am now looking forward to moving into the Employment Team for another year before starting my training contract.

As I am a solicitor apprentice, I also attend university one day a week to obtain my law degree. I have obtained high grades in all of my modules so far as well as working on my apprenticeship portfolio for qualification. I was appointed to the Law School Honour Roll for the academic year of 2022-2023.

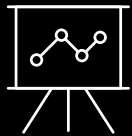
The supportive mentorship has accelerated my growth whilst also being challenged to allow me to progress. I am experiencing first hand client interactions and diving into interesting legal theory. And having no student debt is a great bonus!

Jessica Irving

Solicitor Apprentice

Our ongoing objectives and commitments

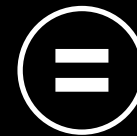
Our people



Create a new wellbeing strategy using the feedback from our recent wellbeing and engagement survey to ensure our support is current and reflective of the needs of our people.



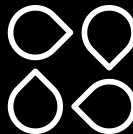
Expand our outreach in schools and colleges, whilst engaging with future talent about career opportunities within Ward Hadaway.



Create a dedicated equality, diversity and inclusion strategy, to ensure every individual feels valued, respected and empowered to contribute their best. This will be through making data-informed decisions, eliminating barriers, and fostering inclusion and belonging in the workplace.



Strengthen engagement in responsible business through elected committees and firm-wide initiatives.



Continue to increase key engagement metrics to support a positive work environment.



Our planet



Protecting the planet is the responsibility of everyone and it is only by working together that we can make the changes that are needed.

As a founding member of the Legal Sustainability Alliance and accredited to ISO14001, we are keen to play our part.

So how does this happen?

Our Environment Committee scrutinises all aspects of our operations to minimise the impact that our activities have on the environment.

Allied to this, we are working hard to calculate our yearly emissions to monitor progress so that we can continually chart our progress and make changes to our Carbon Reduction Plan to achieve our objectives.

This is not something which will be accomplished overnight.

It will take a concerted effort right across the firm with all of us playing our part, but it is something which we are determined to do - not just because it's the right thing to do but because it is the only thing to do for any responsible business.

Our actions

Our journey towards achieving Net Zero consists of myriad different actions large and small in all areas of the business.

These include:

- Cutting down on paper usage. Our war on waste means that we already have paper-lite and paperless operations in a number of departments with more to come
- Recycling all possible materials. We know there is no such place as 'away' so we set great store on ensuring that anything we use can be used again where possible, from drink bottles and cans to cardboard and food.
- Minimising travel. As a firm with offices across the North and now Midlands, our footprint covers substantial distances but we encourage our people to minimise travel where practical, and have put in place the technology to make this possible. We are monitoring our travel to be able to better guide usage and alternatives going forwards.
- Creating flexible working patterns. Using modern technology and communications helps us to cut down on unnecessary emissions from activities such as printing, electricity use, commuting and travel. It also makes client service delivery better and colleague working easier.
- Encouraging sustainable transport. We have updated and upgraded our Cycle to Work scheme to allow colleagues to purchase electric bikes as well as conventional cycles via the programme.
- Expanding environmentally-friendly facilities. We are working with our landlords to promote electric charging points in our car parks so colleagues and clients with EVs can travel with confidence.
- Reviewing the merchandise we offer a firm. We have ensured we look at this across each piece's entire lifecycle, finding ways to responsibly source, responsibly share, and responsibly recycle (where that is in our control).
- Being founder members of the Legal Sustainability Alliance. This is the only not-for-profit sustainability network run by law firms for law firms and it informs, equips and empowers law firms to take effective action on the climate and nature crises at home, at work and through their practice.

Our actions

- Scrapping single use business cards. These have been replaced with cards which digitally transfer contact details to a recipient's phone, where possible reducing waste.
- Digitising client update communications. Wherever possible, our client updates are sent electronically. Although minimal, we also use QR codes across any printed literature to reduce paper usage, and enable updates to be made to information without reprinting.
- Being active members of the Sustainable Recruitment Alliance. Amongst other things, this means that we won't clutter the world with unnecessary pens, post-it notes and other paraphernalia when we're recruiting for emerging talent for the firm.



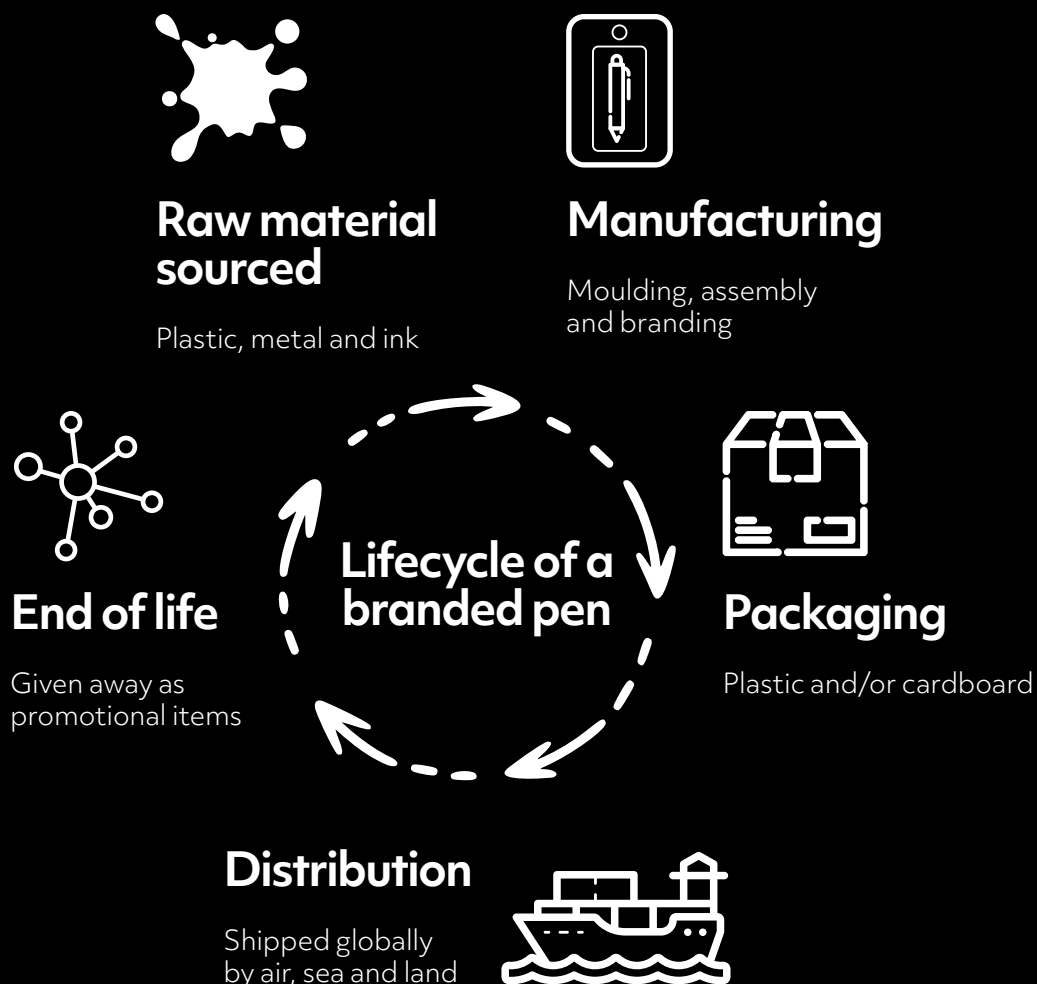
A case study

Sourcing our pens

As a firm who run seminars, host clients, attend exhibitions and much more, we have historically got through a lot of branded pens!

We have therefore taken action to reduce the numbers – by joining the Sustainable Recruitment Alliance, therefore no longer taking any to student milk rounds, by managing the distribution across our offices, and taking a more measured approach to merchandise at our key exhibitions for instance.

However we have decided there is still a need for some branded pens, so we wanted to minimise the impact of this procurement. We therefore looked at the life cycle of those pens to better understand the core factors in our decision. And that looks like this:



A case study

Sourcing our pens

Therefore these are some of the considerations we wanted to take into account:



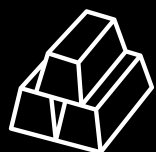
Carbon footprint

Fossil fuel extraction, plastic production and transport = high emissions.



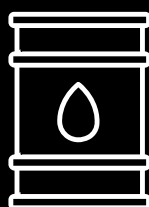
Waste generation

Billions of pens are discarded yearly and non-biodegradable pens can take hundreds of years to break down.



Resources

Relies on non-renewable resources like oil and metals, high water and energy use during raw material processing.



Pollution

Ink and plastics can leach chemicals into soil and water, small parts can be ingested by wildlife. Microplastics from degraded pens may enter ecosystem.

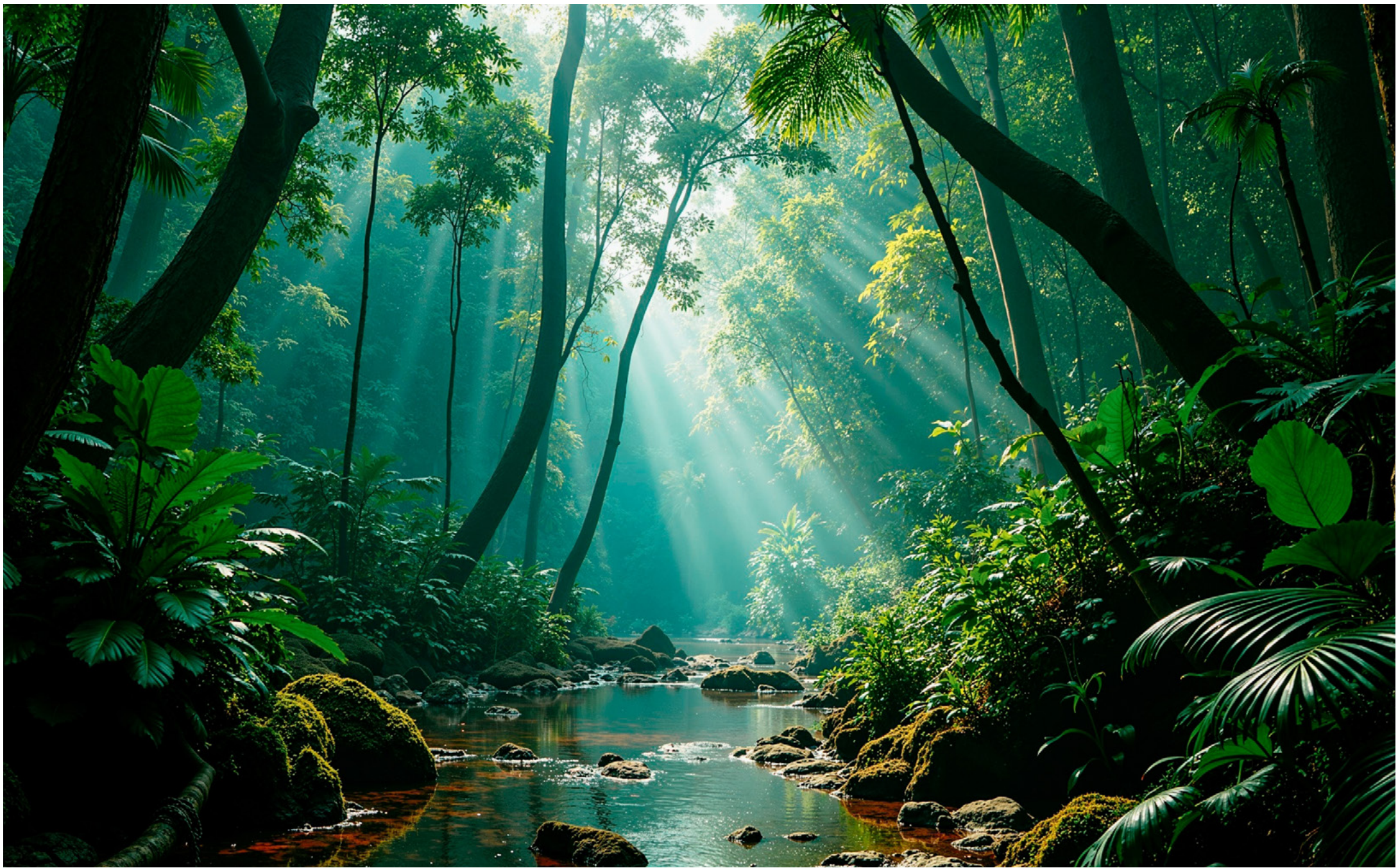


Recyclability

Limited due to mixed materials and ink contamination.

Taking all this into account, we spoke to our suppliers to end up with the following: a pen made from 100% recycled plastic, produced in a climate-neutral production facility run on 100% green electricity, supplied in Bio foil bags made up of 80% renewable raw material, and 100% recyclable.

We put a lot of effort into finding ways to achieve our commercial goals whilst minimising our carbon footprint. This is just one example of how we have tried to do that.



Our ongoing objectives and commitments

Our environment



To maintain and annually publish an up-to-date Carbon Reduction plan.



To continue to keep paper usage at under 50% of pre-pandemic levels.



To develop and deliver a firm-wide environmental training and awareness campaign to influence personal and professional behaviours.



Identify and implement energy saving measures across office estate, including appropriate recommendations from annual ESOS reports.



Our rating

Our impact

How are we doing?

EcoVadis is a globally trusted provider of business sustainability ratings with a network of more than 150,000 rated companies across the world.

We annually commission EcoVadis to run the rule over our operations and conduct a sustainability benchmarking review on us. This assesses aspects of our firm relating to the environment, labour and human rights, ethics, and sustainable procurement.

We have achieved the EcoVadis Bronze rating putting us in the top 35% of all organisations in our sector.



Whilst we are pleased to compare favourably to our industry peers, we are aware there is more to be done. In the coming year, we are focusing on sustainable procurement practices in particular.

Our rating

We were delighted to receive recent recognition that Ward Hadaway was named in the top 10 most highly recommended of the LB100 law firms.

The findings from Legal Business collated the responses of nearly 80,000 law firm clients to determine their satisfaction. This is quantified using the Net Promoter Score (NPS) benchmark, whereby clients were asked – “on a scale of 1–10, how likely are you to recommend this firm?”

This recognised Ward Hadaway as the 7th most highly recommended out of the LB100 – a ranking of the UK’s top 100 law firms by turnover – with an NPS score of 79.9%.

This further validated our own research earlier in the year which rated our clients’ likelihood of recommending us at 83%. When broken down into our core values, our clients rated us at 84% for straightforwardness, 95% for respect and 79% for ambition.

As reported in the press, Managing Partner Steven Petrie said:

“

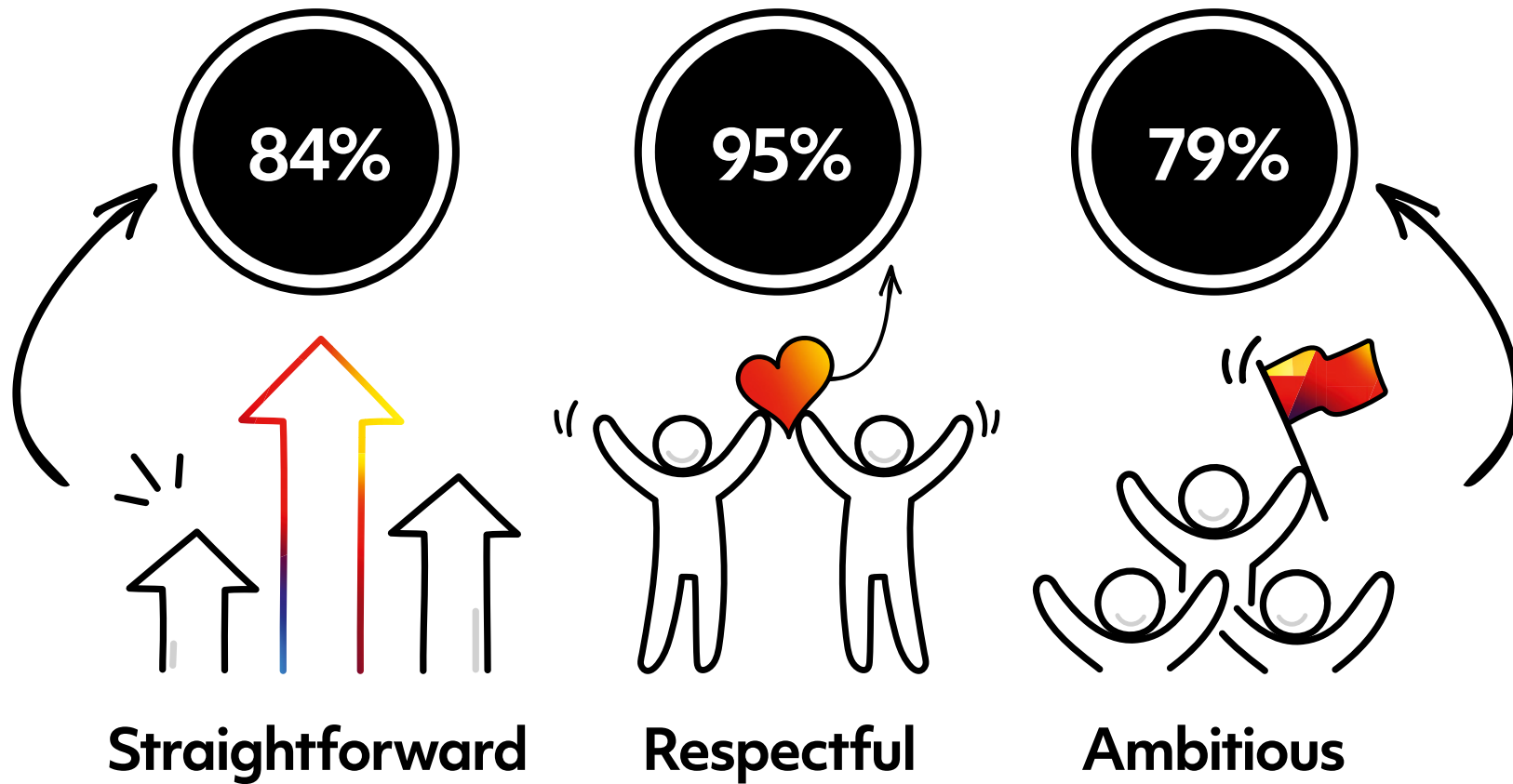
We are delighted that our clients can see the value of the hard work and expertise demonstrated throughout our team and we are grateful for the level of trust they continue to have in Ward Hadaway.

These rankings give further credence to the strategic investments we have made over the past year and the platform this has given to elevate our ability to deliver exceptional results for our clients in a way that encapsulates our core values.

”

Steven Petrie, Managing Partner

Our clients' likelihood of recommending us





Predicting the future is a notoriously difficult thing to do, as all of us have seen over the past five years.

From the global pandemic to the rise of AI, the world is changing at an increasingly rapid rate.

However, I can say with confidence that the values which drive our firm - being Straightforward, Respectful and Ambitious - will be central to everything which we do in the years to come.

We have exciting plans and have set an ambitious target of growing our turnover by 50% by 2029 and 100% by 2034.

We are clear and straightforward in our purpose of becoming the best independent law firm we can be by providing high quality legal advice to our clients.

And we can only do this by respecting and rewarding the different skills, outlook and experience which each member of our team brings to the table.

I hope you will see that when we say that our values are more than mere words, we mean it.

As we continue to grow with our new office in Birmingham and our merger with The Endeavour Partnership on Teesside, we look forward to working with even more communities across the country and playing an active role in their development and enrichment.

And as our operation expands, we will continue to work hard to reduce our environmental impact.

Of course, all of this would not be possible without the dedication, skill and determination of every one of our people. It is our people who make this firm what it is and it is their hard work which is highlighted and celebrated on every single page of this Responsible Business Review.

We thank all of them for the exceptional contributions which they have made and continue to make. And we know that it will be them who will drive our ambitions going forward and help make further improvements to our collective impact on our communities, people and planet. I am sure everyone within the firm will continue to do their bit now and in the years to come.

While it is true that the future is unwritten, we're determined that our approach to being a responsible business will be on the front page and never confined to the margins.

Steven

Managing Partner
October 2025

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