

2024 - 2025

Community Engagement

# Strategy





Mishcon de Reya, as a leading international law firm, and as a collection of committed individuals, takes its responsibility seriously. Our community engagement strategy, outlined in this document is part of a series of strategies forming our responsible business commitment. It reflects our values, our commitments and our challenges.

It is why Lord Mishcon served in the Wolfenden Committee, helping decriminalise homosexuality in 1967.

It is why we defended Deborah Lipstadt in her historic case against holocaust denial.

It is why we fought for Gina Miller, to prevent the prorogation of parliament in 2019.

This belief in the need to play an active role in society is why our core values uphold a culture which thrives on diversity, respect for the individual and acting with integrity. Since the creation of our core values in 2000, we have, amongst other things:

- Founded Pink Law to improve legal access for LGBTQIA+ communities.
- Set up and chaired the SMI Legal Task Force to help make sustainability a reality and a priority.
- Partnered with U-Go in their mission to fund higher education for women in lower income countries.

Responsible business is part of our DNA, with a commitment to create a future that is fair, equitable and environmentally sustainable.



**Matt Meyer**

Partner and Chair of the Responsible Business Board at Mishcon de Reya

# Contents

<a href="#">Our approach</a>	4
<a href="#">Reflecting on our progress over the last three years</a>	6
<a href="#">The next three years</a>	8
<a href="#">Goals</a>	13

# Our approach

**Community Engagement is one of the three core pillars of Mishcon de Reya's approach to Responsible Business and encompasses pro bono, volunteering, fundraising and charitable giving.**

We are committed to delivering a material positive impact on society by collaborating for good in our communities. As a legal profession we are uniquely placed to satisfy unmet needs left by cuts to legal aid and improve access to law in the countries we operate in.



At Mishcon de Reya, our purpose remains rooted in our core values. We have always been driven by an entrepreneurial, tenacious and socially conscious spirit: one that has embraced change in order to stay relevant and shape the future. We have always relished our role in public life and support causes and campaigns driven by our people. From Lord Mishcon's role on the Wolfenden Committee in the 1950s which led to the decriminalisation of male homosexuality in the UK, to our recent pro bono work for Appeal, assisting with Andy Malkinson's two decade fight to have his wrongful conviction overturned. Our commitment is not limited to high-profile cases but also covers the wide range of legal clinics we resource and the charities we support through our volunteering, skills sharing, fundraising and charitable giving.

Our business has changed significantly since we wrote our last Community Engagement strategy. We have merged with Taylor Vinters, adding offices in Cambridge and Oxford, and expanded internationally with a branch office in Singapore an association with Karas So LLP in Hong Kong, opening an office through joint venture in the Kingdom of Saudia Arabia.

We have also grown the portfolio of our MDR group businesses, made our first acquisition in the alternative legal services market by acquiring Flex Legal, acquired the group action claims management company Somos and are investing in more MDR Lab start-ups.

It is not, though, just our business that has transformed; we are living in a world of far-reaching and profound change and new challenges that requires us to anticipate the future and advise our clients by employing an even wider breadth of skills, knowledge and understanding.

We have always relished our role in public life and supported causes and campaigns driven by our people. From Lord Mishcon's role on the Wolfenden Committee in the 1950s which led to the decriminalisation of male homosexuality in the UK, to our pro-bono work for Appeal, assisting with Andy Malkinson's two decade fight to have his wrongful conviction overturned. But our commitment to community engagement is not just limited to high-profile cases; it extends to the wide range of legal clinics we resource and the charities we support through our volunteering, skills sharing, fundraising and charitable giving.

We utilise every opportunity for Community Engagement to develop our people offering a wide range of development opportunities such as: presentation and communication skills, project management, leadership, mentoring. This is in addition to the opportunities created through pro bono, particularly for more junior lawyers to gain experience that they might not see in their day-to-day client matters such as managing their own matters and client interviewing.

Community Engagement is also an important tool to bring people together across fee earner and business operations roles and across different levels. It is the glue that brings people together and makes different cohorts feel connected. The trainee fundraising challenge and the departmental fundraising initiatives promote teamwork and cohesion.

This is why in 2024 we are as committed as ever to utilising the skills and passion of our people to create positive impact in our local community and wider society through pro bono work, skills sharing, volunteering, fundraising and charitable giving.

# Reflecting on our progress over the last three years



In 2020 we restated our commitment to having a positive social and environmental impact through the creation of our four key areas of focus: Increasing Access to Law, Creating Opportunity, Increasing Diversity in the Legal Profession and Making Sustainability a Reality.

This enabled a renewed focus and has led to some fantastic partnerships, projects and initiatives, such as:

- Commissioning the **Centre for Education and Youth** to conduct research into the importance of Public Legal Education
- Partnering with **Young Citizens** to sponsor the **Big Legal Lesson** and helped them renew their Digital Legal Experts in Schools programme
- Partnering with **The Mix** to deliver their “Know Your Rights” campaign
- Implementing a hard target of **25 hours** for trainees
- Sitting on a **Justice working party** to actively help improve the rights of separating families. Several of the recommendations from the report were incorporated by the Ministry of Justice into planned reforms aimed at improving the resolution of private family law cases following a Government consultation process that was initiated last year. More details [here](#).
- Creating the **Quarterly Pro Bono and Community Engagement awards** to celebrate and recognise commitment to pro bono and volunteering
- Launching a pro bono partnership with the **RCJ Advice Centre**
- Partnering with the **Open University** on a project with St Giles’ Trust to support students to produce handouts containing guidance on setting up a small business to support St Giles’ work with their clients

Our departmental Responsible Business Leads have done an incredible job of championing pro bono, volunteering and departmental fundraising over the past three years and their role remains crucial to the delivery of an impactful Responsible Business programme. Since April 2021, we have recorded 23,254 pro bono hours and 19,383 volunteer hours.

You can read more about our progress in our Responsible Business report.

# The next three years



## The Community Engagement Taskforce



**Alexandra Woolhouse**  
Pro Bono Executive



**Amy Conroy**  
Principal Data  
Scientist



**Bethan Byrne**  
Of Counsel,  
Knowledge Lawyer



**David Leibowitz**  
Partner



**Emma Webb**  
Associate



**Freya Hann**  
Facilities and  
Operations Team Lead



**Hazel Chambers**  
Partner



**Jessica Pellicoli**  
International  
Operations Manager



**John Skoulding**  
Partner



**Kenneth Hoyt**  
Senior Knowledge  
Analyst



**Matt Bowles**  
Partner



**Michael Frost**  
Partner



**Nina O'Sullivan**  
Partner and Head  
Knowledge Lawyer



**Patrick Connolly**  
Academy Director



**Phoebe McLarty**  
Partner



**Robert Lewis**  
Partner



**Ru Mbirimi**  
Talent Acquisition  
Assistant



**Sharon Jewkes**  
Senior Knowledge  
Solutions Manager



**Verity Taylor**  
Senior Pro Bono  
Manager

**Coordinated through the Community Engagement Taskforce, the majority of activity will centre around two key areas of focus:**



**Improving Access to Law** – focusing on projects and initiatives that work to remove barriers to ensure that anyone can access the law, including legal education and using technology to increase access to law. This will be a primary focus of our pro bono activity.



**Creating Opportunity** – playing a crucial and strategic role in unlocking opportunity and driving a level playing field for all people focusing on projects related to social mobility, racial equality, gender equity and empowerment.

We will also support activities related to the other areas of focus relating to Responsible Business:



**Making Sustainability a Reality** – engaging on community engagement related projects such as One Million Hours, Greener Litigation and the Sustainable Markets Initiative.



**Increasing Diversity in the legal profession** – working closely with the EDI Committee and Early Years careers team to support their external impact work.

While most of our centralised efforts will be on these key areas, we will continue to support the passions and interests of individuals at the firm through departmental fundraising, match funding through MishMatch and the Discretionary Fund.

We will continually review our Community Engagement activities, partnerships and canvass opinions from across the firm to ensure our key areas of focus continue to resonate with our people.

We will share best practice, update on progress against targets, assist with resourcing new projects and partnerships and evaluate outcomes from existing partnerships.

## Whole firm approach

We have a whole firm approach to Community Engagement which engages all our offices in the UK and internationally. We will support everyone at the firm, irrespective of where they are based to maximise their Community Engagement potential and record 50 hours of pro bono and volunteering time. We will source opportunities that are available to everyone across our offices to encourage cohesion and collaboration and support cross department and office networking. We will also source opportunities which are local to each office and supports their local community.

## Pro bono

Our approach to pro bono is to ensure we source and resource a wide range of pro bono work, which aligns with our key areas of focus, and provides opportunities for every office, department and level of qualification to participate whilst also maximising our impact.

## Giving

We support departmental and personal fundraising and charities our people feel passionately about through match funding for sponsored events, a quarterly discretionary fund which is decided by a rotating committee and departmental fundraising.

## Central partnerships

Our central partnerships are focused on funding and closely align with our areas of focus. Current key partners include U-Go, with which we are funding 100 scholarships for women in low-income countries to pursue higher education and the Lewa Education Programme, part of the Lewa Wildlife Conservancy in Kenya, supporting Ngare Ndare primary and secondary schools, by funding teacher salaries.

We will continue to run the Trainee Challenge with our first-year trainees. The Trainee Challenge is a fundraising challenge for our first-year trainees to raise £10,000 for a charity of their choice through a range of activities from bake sales to quiz nights and sponsored challenges such as tough mudders. It is a fantastic team building, development opportunity for trainees which helps them develop their internal network whilst fundraising for excellent causes. We will support the trainee cohort to identify charities aligned with the key areas of focus and their collective areas of interest. We will also launch a fundraising challenge for our solicitor apprentices starting in September 2024.

## **Mishcon Foundation**

In financial year 2024-2025 we will investigate establishing a Mishcon Foundation to enable greater governance around our giving strategy and support to charitable organisations in line with our responsible business focus areas.

## **Volunteering**

We will continually evaluate our current volunteering and mentoring opportunities to assess engagement, impact and alignment with our areas of focus. We will drive engagement and celebrate volunteers and impact outcomes as well as continue to source new opportunities which align closely with our key areas of focus and where appropriate consolidate.

We will continue to work with the People team to embed time spent on community projects as a recognised part of recognition, reward and work allocation processes for both legal and business operations teams and as essential to development and progression.

We recognise that our people possess a multitude of professional skills in addition to legal skills. We will work on finding more opportunities to ensure we have a consistent pipeline which fits with the working pattern of our Business Operations teams as well as our Legal Operations teams.

## Goals

- 1** Complete a review of all current projects and partnerships
- 2** Alongside the strategies developed for EDI and Environment pillars, communicate the approach to the firm and increase awareness of opportunities available
- 3** Launch the Community Engagement taskforce
- 4** Work closely with legal departments to identify areas of potential collaboration
- 5** Investigate the creation of a Mishcon Foundation
- 6** Source new pro bono projects which cater to all levels of qualification and jurisdiction
- 7** Further streamline the pro bono matter opening and reporting process
- 8** Engage with departmental Chairs and Responsible Business leads on pro bono and volunteering
- 9** Work closely with the People team with regards to recognition and reward approach

**Mishcon de Reya LLP**

Africa House  
70 Kingsway  
London WC2B 6AH

T +44 20 3321 7000  
F +44 20 7404 5982  
E [contactus@mishcon.com](mailto:contactus@mishcon.com)

[mishcon.com](http://mishcon.com)