

# Responsible Business Report 2025-26





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# Foreword

**Over the past year, it has been inspiring to see Russell-Cooke put its responsibilities into action - for our people, our clients, and the communities around us. Responsible business is at the heart of how we practise law and measure our success.**

**James Carroll**

Managing Partner



In a world that often feels fast-moving and uncertain, we believe strongly in the value of a thoughtful approach to law. That means taking the time to listen, to understand the wider context, and to act with care, integrity and empathy. It also means recognising that progress is rarely driven by one defining moment. More often, it is the result of consistent, incremental change – small, considered actions that, over time, create meaningful and lasting impact.

This year's report reflects that philosophy. As one of few Top 100 UK law firms to hold a legal aid contract, our work to support access to justice remains a defining part of our identity. Through our partnership with the Birth Trauma Association, for example, we have continued to help individuals and families navigate complex experiences, ensuring they can access specialist legal advice in a way that is compassionate and accessible. Our ongoing commitment to legal aid work underlines our belief that the law should be available to those who need it most, not only those who can afford it.

Our sense of responsibility extends beyond our legal work and into the communities around us. Over the past year, our firmwide volunteering scheme has gone from strength to strength, enabling colleagues across the firm to contribute their time and skills to a wide range of organisations and causes. What has been particularly encouraging is the way the scheme has brought people together, reinforced our connections to local communities, and demonstrated that everyone has something valuable to offer – whether through professional expertise or practical, hands-on support.

Within the firm, we have continued to focus on creating a workplace that is inclusive, supportive and open to talent from all backgrounds. Progress on social mobility has been a particular highlight this year, with tangible improvements in the diversity of our trainee intake and the introduction of new routes into the profession. These developments reflect our long-held belief that potential, not privilege, should determine opportunity, and that a diverse workforce strengthens both our culture and the service we provide to clients.

We are now in a new strategic cycle, with responsible business firmly embedded in our plans for the future. Our environmental work, shaped by a commitment to steady, practical improvements, exemplifies this approach, as does our continued investment in our people and our communities.

External recognition of our culture and values this year has been very welcome, including being named Law Firm of the Year: The Independents by The Lawyer and receiving the Outstanding Corporate Culture award at the British Legal Awards. These achievements reflect our belief that we can lead by example, showing that a firm grounded in values, culture, and responsible practice can thrive. We're proud to be seen as leaders in these areas, but it is the everyday actions of our colleagues that truly bring our commitments to life and make a meaningful difference.

I would like to thank everyone across the firm who has contributed to the progress captured in this report. Through thoughtful decision-making and a shared belief in doing the right thing, we continue to build a firm that is responsible, resilient and grounded in purpose.





# Our environment

Minimising environmental impact and fostering responsible business practices at Russell-Cooke





## In focus

## The power of incremental change

This year's environmental update highlights how a series of small, practical adjustments are helping to reduce our environmental impact. We spoke with Director of Finance Samuel Allen and legal director and Head of Environment on our Responsible Business Committee, Alix Rejman, about the changes made across our offices and how incremental improvements continue to shape our approach.



**Q** When we talk about 'incremental change' in our environmental work, what exactly do we mean?

**A** Incremental change is the idea that progress often comes from a series of small, achievable steps rather than always from large, transformative projects. In practice, that means continually looking for practical, measurable improvements we can make in each of our office locations within the constraints of each building such as upgrading lighting, reducing standby power, improving water efficiency, or refining our recycling systems. These changes may not seem significant on their own, but together they create meaningful, long-term impact. It's an approach that reflects how most environmental gains are made: steadily, thoughtfully, and by making each part of our operations a little better than it was before.

**Q** Why does the theme of 'incremental change' feel appropriate for the work the firm is doing?

**A** Much of what we do on the environmental side is cumulative. We don't always have scope for large-scale projects - particularly in buildings where we're not the landlord - but we proactively identify and review controllable factors to refine or update. Over time, these smaller steps build up and make a noticeable positive difference. The theme feels true to how we actually make progress: consistently, and often through practical changes rather than major interventions.

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*For me, supporting our environment is about making sustainable and responsible decisions easy and embedding them into our professional culture. By making conscious choices routine, we can use our influence as a firm to support the long-term environmental success of our clients, our firm and our wider community.”*

**Fiona Dos Santos,**  
senior associate

**Q** Several measures around water efficiency have been introduced this year. What has changed in that area?

**A** In Putney, where we have most control over the building, we've installed sensor taps in all the toilets. The aim is straightforward: to reduce unnecessary water use and thereby waste. It's a relatively simple change, but it's effective.

We've also fitted flow restrictors to the showers to reduce consumption and, as a result, the energy required to heat the water. Alongside that, the waterless urinals continue to contribute to lower water usage overall. Together, these measures support a steady reduction in our water footprint.

**Q** What about energy use? What have been the main areas of focus this year?

**A** Energy efficiency tends to be another area where incremental improvements work well. In Putney we already have motion-sensor lighting, which automatically prevents lights being left on unnecessarily.

This year we've expanded LED lighting across the firm. At our Bedford Row office, for example, we've replaced lighting in meeting rooms and staircases with LED fittings, which reduces consumption and requires less frequent replacement.

We've also begun addressing standby power use.



Many devices draw energy even when not actively being used, so we've been busy introducing smart AV sensing power strips that cut power to peripherals like monitors when the main device is switched off. It's a gradual rollout, but it helps reduce background energy waste.

**Q Waste reduction has been an ongoing part of the firm's environmental work. Has anything changed this year?**

**A** Waste is an area where steady habits matter as much as new initiatives. We continue to provide a wide range of recycling facilities – for food waste, mixed recycling, coffee pods, and batteries – and these systems are now well-established across the firm.

We've also kept up efforts to reduce single-use plastics, such as by introducing refillable hand soap dispensers. Alongside that, we're reviewing the sustainability profile of everyday products, such as toilet paper and hand towels, to see where we can make further incremental improvements. This is an example of how we are making sure our existing practices remain aligned with our environmental goals.

**Q The firm has been looking at carbon neutral printing options. How do they work and why are we pursuing them?**

**A** We are committed to reducing our overall printing wherever possible, and ensuring

that any essential printing is done as responsibly as it can be. From October 2025, Russell-Cooke registered as a carbon-neutral print client with its print supplier, Impress Print Services. During 2025, the firm used approximately 106.81 kg of paper for printed materials, resulting in an estimated 60 kg of CO<sub>2</sub> emissions, which were offset through the purchase of carbon credits via the World Land Trust. This activity contributed to the preservation of approximately 11 square metres of land. These figures are indicative and will be finalised through World Land Trust certification. During 2026, all Russell-Cooke print production will be carbon-balanced and accounted for on a full-year basis. This collaboration complements the other incremental steps we're taking across the firm. It's a practical way to reduce the impact of our printed materials and reinforces our commitment to making steady, meaningful improvements wherever we can.

**Q Beyond the specific measures introduced this year, what overarching shift have you noticed in how the firm approaches environmental improvements?**

**A** What's changed most is the level of awareness and consistency across the firm. People are increasingly recognising that environmental improvements don't have to be big or disruptive to be worthwhile. There's a strong appetite for practical, steady adjustments – whether that's choosing more efficient products, paying attention to energy use, or supporting recycling systems already in place. The mindset has evolved: we're more proactive about identifying small



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**Rooftop beehives at the Putney office**



CO<sub>2</sub>

**Carbon-neutral printing offset annually via the World Land Trust**

opportunities and acting on them, and that shift in culture is just as important as the individual changes we make.

**Q What's next?**

**A** We'll continue to build on the progress we've already made, exploring new products and technologies that can help us operate more efficiently and sustainably. Some years may bring larger updates, while others will focus on fine-tuning what we have, but each step moves us in the right direction. Our aim is to keep raising the bar, finding smarter, cleaner ways of working and embedding sustainability more deeply into everyday decisions. As long as we stay curious, proactive, and committed to steady improvement, we can make a meaningful and lasting difference to our environmental impact.





## Case Study

# Buckfast Bees

Our Putney office is enjoyed by more than just our staff and clients; it is also home to two thriving colonies of Buckfast bees. Installed several years ago, these rooftop hives have not only provided us with locally produced honey which we donate to clients and staff, but have also become a small but meaningful contribution to urban biodiversity and environmental stewardship.

The Buckfast bee, a hybrid breed developed by Brother Adam of Buckfast Abbey in the UK, is renowned for its gentle temperament, disease resistance, and strong honey production. These traits make it particularly suited to an urban environment like Putney, where hive management requires a careful balance between productivity and safety. Our resident beekeeper, Deborah Blythe, a consultant in our personal injury and clinical negligence team, oversees the hives with remarkable dedication, and together with a small cohort of volunteers from across the firm ensure both colonies remain healthy and productive.

In the 2025 season, the hives have thrived despite some early seasonal rain. The first part of the year was cool and changeable, but once the sun emerged in May and June, the bees flourished. Starting with a single colony, we quickly saw growth in the population, prompting a “split” early in May. This process involves taking a portion of brood frames and stores from a strong colony and placing them in a new hive to encourage the worker bees to raise a new queen. By early June, the procedure had been successful: the new queen had mated, was laying fertilized eggs, and both colonies were fully established.

At present, each hive houses a robust population of approximately 60,000 bees, with home-grown queens reared from the daughters of previous Putney queens. To accommodate the increasing numbers, we have added an extra brood box to one of the colonies, providing the bees with more space to continue expanding

their activities without risk of swarming. These careful management practices ensure the hives remain healthy while supporting consistent honey production for staff and clients alike.

Beyond honey production, our hives are a small but significant part of our wider environmental strategy. Bees are vital pollinators, and their presence on our rooftop contributes to the health of surrounding urban flora. We have actively cultivated a garden behind our Putney office with pollinator-friendly plants such as lavender attracting not only our bees but also other beneficial insects and birds. The activity in these spaces demonstrates the interconnectedness of urban ecosystems and highlights the positive impact even a few hives can have on local biodiversity.

The presence of bees in a cityscape is more than symbolic. Globally, pollinator populations are declining due to habitat loss, pesticides, and climate change. Supporting bees, even on a small scale, contributes to ecological resilience, urban greening, and sustainable food production. By maintaining our rooftop hives, we provide a safe environment for these essential insects while fostering environmental awareness among our staff and clients.

These hives represent a blend of tradition, science, and environmental responsibility, and are a small but impactful initiative that aligns with our broader sustainability goals and demonstrates our commitment to supporting urban wildlife.

In sum, the Buckfast hives atop our Putney office are more than just honey producers; they are an emblem of sustainability, community, and care for the natural world, thriving in an unlikely but highly effective urban habitat.





**Case Study**

## Cycle to Work scheme

We are committed to reducing our environmental footprint, which includes promoting sustainable commuting options. One of the most successful initiatives supporting this goal is our Cycle to Work scheme, administered through Cyclescheme. In 2025, we sought to further enhance numbers of staff commuting or choosing to travel by bicycle through a collaboration with bike servicing company Fettle Bike Repair, and by reinvigorating the Russell-Cooke Cycling Club. Together, these programmes encourage staff to adopt cycling as a regular, practical, and eco-friendly mode of transport.

The Cycle to Work scheme provides employees with a tax-efficient way to purchase bicycles and safety equipment, typically offering savings of up to 50%. Staff are eligible to choose from a wide range of bikes (from traditional and folding bicycles to electric models) through Cyclescheme's approved retailers. The scheme operates via a salary sacrifice arrangement over a 12-month period, after which Cyclescheme offers further options for ownership at minimal additional cost. Importantly, while the scheme is intended primarily for commuting, bikes can also be used for personal trips, helping staff to reduce their overall carbon footprint while supporting overall fitness and wellbeing.

The uptake at Russell-Cooke has been significant. Since introducing the scheme, a growing number of employees have embraced cycling, leading to measurable reductions in car journeys and associated carbon emissions. Encouraging staff to choose active travel not only aligns with our environmental strategy but also promotes physical health, improves mental wellbeing, and contributes to reduced congestion in the local area around our various office locations.

To further support our cyclists, the Russell-Cooke Environmental Group partnered with Fettle, a trusted bike servicing company with a workshop in Putney, to provide on-site maintenance and tune-ups at our offices. This initiative allowed employees to have their bikes professionally checked by Fettle free of charge with offers for discounted follow-up repairs and maintenance at their workshop. Such events are designed to ensure that staff can enjoy safe, reliable bicycles while encouraging maximum participation. Following the success of these sessions at our Putney office, we are exploring similar opportunities for our Kingston and Bedford Row offices. Our events with Fettle were timed to coincide with the summer months and national events such as Cycle to Work Day in August, helping staff take advantage of favourable weather for commuting.

Additionally, the Russell-Cooke Cycling Club offers staff with an existing passion for cycling, and those who are looking to grow their confidence the opportunity to meet regularly for a safe and sociable group ride. In 2025 we introduced branded cycle tops for staff, fostering a sense of community and visibility while promoting cycling as a practical and stylish commuting option.

The benefits of these programmes extend beyond the environmental, individual health and convenience. By encouraging staff to cycle regularly, we are actively reducing our organisational carbon footprint, supporting cleaner air, and contributing to broader climate action goals. Cycling also strengthens our connection to the local community and urban environment, highlighting the role of workplace initiatives in promoting sustainable, low-impact commuting.

Russell-Cooke's Cycle to Work scheme and collaboration with Fettle exemplify the integration of practical sustainability measures with staff wellbeing. The significant uptake of the scheme demonstrates both enthusiasm and commitment from employees, while the provision of expert maintenance support ensures that cycling remains a viable, safe, and enjoyable choice. By facilitating active travel, we are not only supporting our staff but also taking tangible steps toward a greener, healthier, and more sustainable future.

In summary, these initiatives show how workplace policies can encourage environmentally responsible behaviour, reduce emissions, and enhance staff wellbeing, all while fostering a culture of sustainability throughout the organization.





# Access to justice

Supporting those in need by  
reconfirming our commitment  
to legal aid





## In focus

## Our partnership with the Birth Trauma Association

**This year, Russell-Cooke continued its partnership with the Birth Trauma Association, supporting families affected by birth trauma. Consultant Bernadette McGhie from our clinical negligence team, and Dr Kim Thomas, CEO of the BTA, reflect on the importance of providing accessible legal support, how their collaboration helps families navigate an often overwhelming system, and why they believe this work makes a tangible difference to people's lives.**



**1** you are CEO of the Birth Trauma Association. Tell us about the work you do.

**Kim:** The Birth Trauma Association was founded in 2004 and became a registered charity in 2007, the first in the world to focus specifically on this issue. Our work primarily supports women who've experienced traumatic births, though we also support fathers, as they can be profoundly affected, and NHS support for them is limited.

A key part of what we do is our Facebook group, which has been running since 2008 and now has around 20,000 members offering peer support. Some have described it as life-saving. We also have 15 trained peer supporters, including one father, who provide direct emotional support. We're piloting a WhatsApp-based service to allow people to seek help anonymously, with the aim of making it a permanent offering.

We collaborate with academics and clinicians on projects to make birth safer, including the GABI Project, which looks at the impact on women's mental health of giving birth under general anaesthetic, and the Odon Assist project, which explores alternatives to forceps or ventouse deliveries. We also campaign on maternity issues and provide training for health professionals to help them recognise, support, and prevent birth trauma.

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*Enabling access to justice means giving those without means or connections a way to have their voices heard, so they can influence crucial decisions about their family, their housing and their wellbeing.”*

**Caroline Brosnan,**  
senior associate

**Kim and Bernadette: how have things changed in the twenty years you have been working in this area?**

**Kim:** Over the twenty years I've been working in this field, awareness of birth trauma has grown enormously. In 2004, most people didn't believe childbirth could lead to PTSD. Even though PTSD has been recognised since 1980, it took time for people to understand it can result from medical trauma, sexual assault, or childbirth. Today, trauma-specific services and baby-loss support exist, and it's acknowledged that around 4–5% of women develop PTSD after birth. Still, maternity practices haven't changed as much as we'd like, and some women are still being traumatised, which is a reflection of ongoing systemic issues.

**Bernadette:** In recent years, there's been a much greater acceptance that birth can be traumatising. When I trained as a nurse (which included working in adult general nursing, and later in paediatric nursing), women's experiences were often dismissed as “baby blues.” Now, there's more awareness, but the wider maternity system remains concerning. Many units fall below acceptable standards, and midwives face intense pressure with limited resources and poor collaboration and communication across teams. As for women's partners, they've historically been almost invisible in this discussion. In many cases they witness a traumatic birth, are abandoned whilst the focus is understandably on the new baby's and/or mother's needs, and are almost never offered mental health support. Unlike birth mothers, partners cannot be financially compensated for the psychological impact which often means that they



do not have funds to pay for private therapy. Years later they tell of having flashbacks to being left behind surrounded by the aftermath and detritus of a birth emergency including when there has been massive maternal blood loss.

## 2 Russell-Cooke has been a Trusted Legal Partner of the Birth Trauma Association since 2024. How do partnerships such as this help?

**Kim:** For individuals and families affected by birth trauma, access to justice can feel incredibly daunting. We see this every day. So many women come to us – especially in our Facebook group – asking whether they can take action, how to make a complaint, or whether we can recommend a solicitor. One of our biggest worries is that people won't find the right support or will be directed to someone who doesn't fully understand birth trauma.

That's why having Russell-Cooke as a trusted legal partner makes such a difference. It means we can confidently signpost women and families to a firm we know will treat them with empathy, respect, and real expertise. They'll get a good service, they'll be listened to, and they won't be dismissed. It's also essential to us that the people we partner with have genuine experience in clinical negligence.

**Bernadette:** Partnerships like this are vital because people who've experienced birth trauma need solicitors who truly understand what they've been through. The legal process can be stressful, and clients need to feel they can ask questions and be heard. They need to have a solicitor they can feel

comfortable with – someone to whom they can say "this is too much," or "please explain what you're doing," without hesitation. This can help them to regain some dignity and control in their life.

People don't come to us because they want money. Almost without exception, they come wanting to know what happened and wanting to make sure it doesn't happen to someone else. Partnerships like this ensure they receive support from solicitors who respect that, and who will listen to their concerns and guide them through an incredibly difficult process with compassion and understanding. We examine the full picture, making sure investigations were or are thorough, that the right questions are asked and addressed, providing information and explanation with empathy and clarity throughout the process.

## 3 Both: can you share a story or example that illustrates the real-world impact of your collaboration?

**Kim:** Women often tell us that simply being listened to – really listened to – has transformed things for them. Every so often, we receive messages such as "you saved my life." Those moments are incredibly touching. They remind me why this work matters so deeply. It's easy to underestimate the power of a supportive community, but when someone tells you that your organisation made the difference between despair and hope, you realise the very real-world impact our partnerships and our collective efforts have.

**Bernadette:** For me, the most powerful moments come when a client who has spent months or even years not being believed finally gets the validation they deserve. When we investigate their case and are able to show, clearly and objectively, that their concerns were justified, you can almost see the weight lift off their shoulders. That realisation is incredibly healing.

In some cases, we can move beyond validation to securing damages, which can make a practical difference in rebuilding their lives. For example, we've been able to obtain funding for therapy and that can be transformative. The sooner someone is able to access proper treatment, the sooner they can begin to reclaim some sense of normality. Where there are more substantive injuries, for example for brain injured babies, compensation can fund lifetime therapies, care and equipment to enable them to live as independent and full a life as possible.

## 4 This year, Russell-Cooke ran a legal clinic in collaboration with the Birth Trauma Association. Tell us about your experience running the clinic.

**Kim:** This year has been a fantastic first year running the legal clinic with Russell-Cooke, and we're really excited about building on it. We hope to run more clinics, provide more support with content, and expand the range of services we offer. It's also been wonderful to collaborate on fundraising events, which are so important for the sustainability of our work.



# 2004

Year the  
Birth Trauma  
Association  
was founded



# 20,000

Members of the BTA's  
Facebook group



The relationship has been extremely positive. Our members benefit directly from the advice and guidance offered through the clinic, and at the same time, we hope to introduce more people to Russell-Cooke who might need their expertise. It's a partnership that truly works for both of us.

**Bernadette:** The clinic has been an excellent way to connect with clients and raise awareness of maternity safety concerns. Recently, we ran a webinar introducing junior lawyers to issues around pregnancy and birth, and I sat in as a facilitator. It was fascinating to see the next generation of lawyers learning about these challenges given many of them will have little personal knowledge of childbirth themselves although they may have friends or family members with children. This training and our work with BTA will make them more informed as lawyers as well as on a personal level.

Raising awareness of concerns about maternity safety with the purpose of driving change for improvement is so important for everyone and not just those of childbearing age. This is our future generation. If we can play a role in raising awareness, that's fantastic, because it helps create a system where women can have safer births in the future. I want every woman to feel confident walking into a maternity unit, relaxed and able to enjoy their pregnancy and birth, without worrying about the safety of the care they'll receive. Sadly, at the moment, that's not always the case. Initiatives like this clinic are one way we can start to change that by empowering people to ask questions and to challenge poor practice. Change can only be effected by identifying and calling out failures in care.

## 5 Why is this work so important?

**Bernadette:** This work is vital because it addresses real, personal suffering and helps people access the support they need to recover, whether that's therapy, treatment, or practical assistance. When families are supported, the benefits ripple outwards; stronger, safer maternity care affects communities and society as a whole.

When we look at the big picture, the stakes are extremely high. If someone is unable to contribute fully to society, must rely on benefits instead of supporting themselves, or cannot care for their family, the impact is felt by everyone. Every one of us is touched by childbirth in some way, not just as parents ourselves but through siblings, partners, nephews or nieces and members of the wider community. Ensuring maternity services are safe isn't just good for women; it benefits everyone.

Neglecting these problems is not only morally wrong but economically costly. Everyone - not just those of childbearing age - should be campaigning for safer maternity services.

**Kim:** Birth trauma can be likened to a silent epidemic in that it has a huge, often invisible impact. But with awareness, support, and accountability, change is possible.

Every woman and family affected reminds us why this work matters. By shining a light on these issues, we can help prevent trauma, support recovery, and ensure safer, more compassionate maternity services for everyone. Birth trauma isn't a marginal problem; it touches all of us, and we have to take it seriously.





## Case Study

# Gender Equality Law hub

In a rapidly evolving legal environment, it is more important than ever that individuals, organisations and public bodies have access to clear, authoritative guidance on gender equality and the law. To meet this need, the firm launched its Gender Equality Law Hub, a specialist service which demonstrates our commitment to supporting access to justice by making legal expertise more accessible and usable.

We created this hub in response to the landmark decision in *For Women Scotland Ltd v The Scottish Ministers*, a ruling of the Supreme Court of the United Kingdom which clarified the meanings of “man”, “woman” and “sex” in the context of the Equality Act 2010, and generated widespread uncertainty about how organisations, schools, employers and service providers should respond.

The hub is designed to help a wide range of audiences, from service providers running single sex spaces, to employers reviewing inclusive policies, to charities and public sector bodies seeking clarity on how to meet legal obligations while respecting values and rights. Our aim is to help people and organisations understand how the judgment affects their legal rights and obligations, how to revise their policies and how to navigate difficult decisions around single sex spaces and trans inclusion.

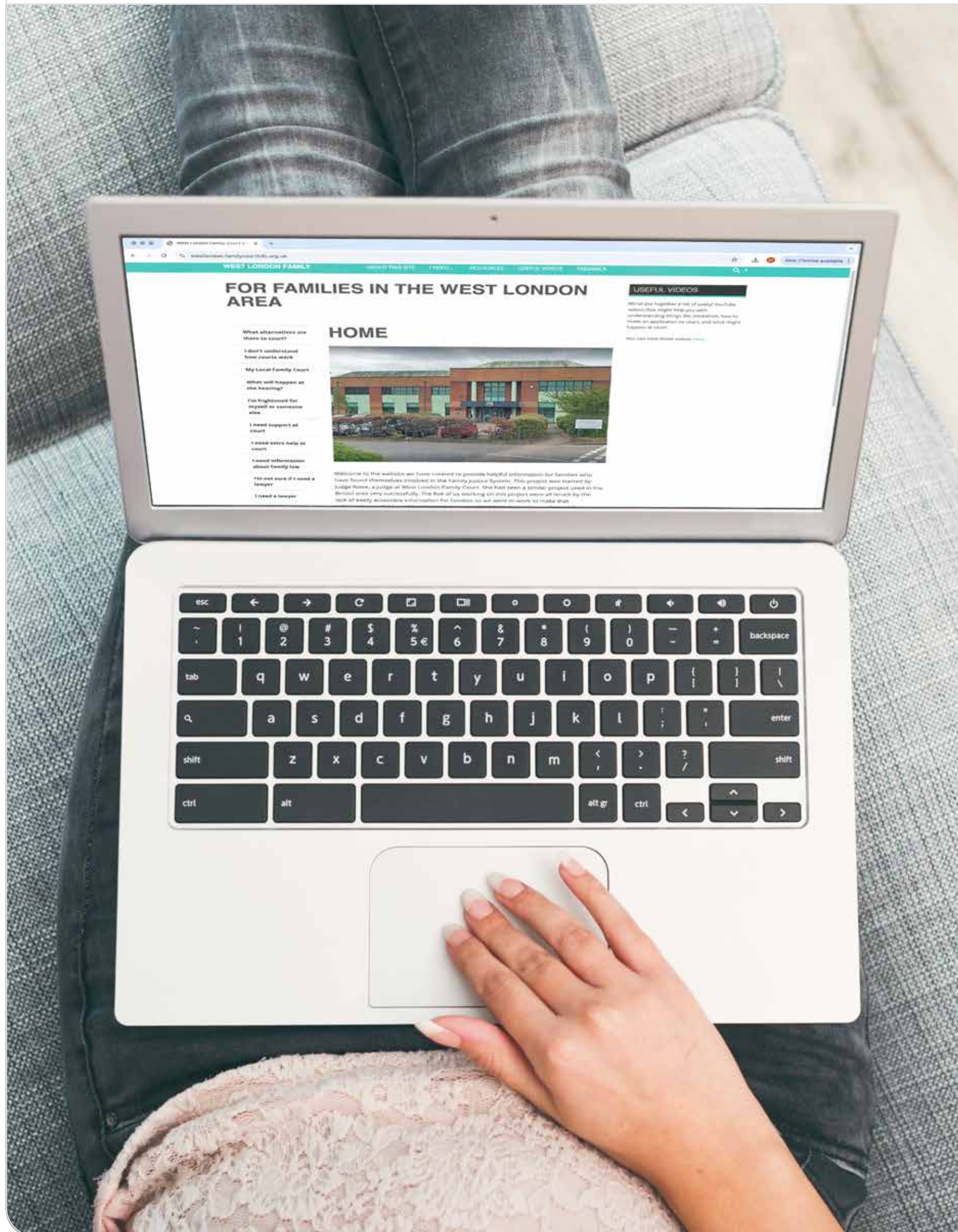
To further help these audiences we have packaged our expertise into a public facing, accessible resource that addresses complexity in a practical way. Rather than simply offering litigation only advice, the hub

provides tailored guidance, policy review support and risk management tools. It draws on our firm’s deeper experience - for example, our public law litigation team represented Amnesty International UK in the *For Women Scotland* case - meaning that the hub is grounded not just in theory but in high stakes legal practice.

This is important as access to justice is not only about the ability to go to court, but about the ability to understand, engage with and act upon legal rights and obligations. For many organisations and individuals, the ambiguity created by recent legal developments posed a barrier to informed decision making. By creating the hub, we aim to help lower that barrier: making legal expertise accessible, helping demystify complicated territory, and enabling users to move confidently from uncertainty to action.

This initiative demonstrates how a professional services firm can play a proactive role in translating law into usable guidance, especially in areas where change is fast and the stakes for equality, inclusion and fairness are high. By helping organisations and individuals to be legally compliant and ethically sound, the hub promotes a fairer, more transparent environment in which justice and equality are more within reach.





## Case Study

# West London Family Court information website

In September 2025, Russell-Cooke supported the launch of the West London Family Court Information website, a freely accessible resource designed to help families understand and navigate the family court system. Many people face significant challenges when dealing with family law matters, including complex procedures, unfamiliar terminology, and the stress of attending hearings. For those without ready access to legal advice or resources, these obstacles can make engaging with the courts feel daunting. The firm contributed to the initiative in collaboration with local authorities, judges, and support services, helping to bring practical guidance to families in a single, accessible place. The project was led by Sarah Richardson, partner in the children law team and the firm's Diversity and Inclusion lead, whose experience in family law and commitment to supporting families shaped the resource.

The website offers clear explanations of family court procedures across multiple boroughs, helping users understand what to expect at each stage. It outlines the roles of professionals involved in proceedings, the documents needed for different hearings, and presents complex legal information in straightforward language. It also highlights local mediation services, charities, and other support networks, giving families options beyond court proceedings and helping them connect with relevant services in their area. Video tours of courtrooms allow users to familiarise themselves with the environment before attending, helping reduce the anxiety that can accompany a first visit. By making practical guidance widely available, the site helps families prepare and approach the court process with confidence, without needing prior legal experience.

Sarah's leadership on the project reflects a recognition that access to justice extends beyond legal representation. Understanding the process and being able to make informed decisions can be as important as formal advocacy, particularly for those navigating the system alone. The website gives families tools to engage more effectively with the courts, while also encouraging alternatives such as mediation, which can lead to earlier and less adversarial resolution. In this way, it offers practical support while helping reduce pressure on the system itself.

The initiative also strengthens the wider community by giving people reliable information at a time of uncertainty. By drawing on insights from judges, local authorities, and community services, the website presents the court process in terms that are understandable and practical, rather than purely legalistic. Families who use it can feel more informed and less isolated when facing difficult situations, and can make better decisions about how to move forward.

The West London Family Court Information website illustrates how the law can be made more approachable and understandable. This initiative encapsulates the firm's approach to responsible practice: offering support and clarity where it can make a real difference. By helping families navigate the courts with greater confidence and understanding, the website quietly demonstrates that access to justice is not only about representation but also about providing knowledge and guidance when it matters most.





# Our people

Celebrating our culture and looking to the future





## In focus

## Turning access into opportunity

**This year, 82% of our incoming trainee cohort attended UK state schools, up from 56% the previous year. Partner and Diversity and Inclusion Lead, Sarah Richardson, discusses why social mobility is central to Russell-Cooke's culture, what we've achieved so far, and how we're widening access to the legal profession for the future.**



### Q Why is social mobility such an important focus for Russell-Cooke?

**A** The legal profession remains one of the least socioeconomically diverse sectors in the UK. For us, widening access isn't just about ticking a box; it's fundamental to who we are as a firm. The law should reflect the society it serves, and that means removing the barriers that prevent talented people from all backgrounds from entering and progressing in the profession.

We also believe fairness converts to strong performance. Diverse teams bring broader perspectives and better outcomes for our clients. When people feel that they belong and can succeed regardless of their background, everyone benefits.

### Q How is social mobility embedded into the firm's strategy?

**A** We strive to facilitate social mobility at every stage of our people strategy, whether that is in our recruitment processes, how we support individuals to progress or what we do to encourage strong retention rates. We collect socio-economic background data to understand where barriers exist, and we act on what the data tells us. For instance, we use Rare Recruitment's Contextual Recruitment System to ensure we consider applicants' achievements in context, not just their grades.

We've also redesigned our recruitment process to eliminate bias. Applications are assessed blind by a diverse panel of fifteen trained reviewers, with no access to candidates' personal details. All of our

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*Our people are at the heart of our firm. By working hard to embed wellbeing into everything we do, we create a workplace where everyone feels recognised, supported and genuinely valued, all of which underpins our unique culture.”*

**Katie Longmate,**  
partner

opportunities are openly advertised, and every internship is paid, so financial means never dictate access.

### Q What results has the firm seen from this work so far?

**A** The progress has been really encouraging. For example, 82% of our 2025 trainee cohort attended UK state schools, up from 56% in 2024. That's a tangible shift in one year.

We're also seeing strong retention, which is just as important. Over the last decade, 83% of lawyers who qualified with us and would now be five years PQE or more are still with the firm. That tells us we're not just opening doors, but creating an environment where people want to stay and grow their careers.

### Q Russell-Cooke undertakes several specific initiatives to support social mobility. Can you share some highlights?

**A** We're proud partners of the 10,000 Black Interns programme, offering participants meaningful placements and potential routes into permanent roles. We have also committed to the 10,000 Able Interns programme for future years to extend that impact.

Beyond recruitment, we're focused on progression. For example, we run a Women's Networking Group, a Working Parents and Carers Group, and a menopause policy to support our



people at all stages of their lives and career. Women now make up 45% of our partnership, up from 35% in 2014, and 72% of our fee-earners.

We're also proud to actively encourage career changers. Many of our lawyers have come to law from other industries, and that diversity of experience adds huge value. One of our education team leaders, for instance, began in the crime team and was supported by leadership to set up a new department that's since flourished.

### Q The firm has recently introduced new entry routes into the profession. What prompted that change?

A The traditional training contract model can exclude talented people who may not have the right academic profile or financial support to take the conventional route. So, in 2024, we launched a Qualifying Work Experience (QWE) pathway for existing legal assistants. We fund their SQE courses and exams, providing an alternative route to qualification. Three assistants began this pathway in September 2025.

The next major project we are exploring is solicitor apprenticeships aimed at local school leavers who may not have the opportunity to go to university. We want to offer a direct path into the legal profession while earning and learning and, over time, to extend apprenticeships into other business areas such as IT, HR, facilities and marketing.



*Supporting our people means compassion, openness and teamwork. By listening and working together, we create a culture that underpins our success, our client service and our strong work-life balance."*

**Shabnam Ali-Khan,**  
partner

### Q How do the firm's networks and committees help sustain progress on social mobility and inclusion?

A Our employee-led Responsible Business Committee is a vital mechanism in that it keeps the agenda moving and ensures accountability. The Working Parents and Carers Group fosters an inclusive culture for those with caring responsibilities, while the Women's Networking Group offers mentoring and visible role models.

What's distinctive about our approach is that we co-create our three-year strategy with staff at all levels. Everyone has a voice in shaping our inclusion agenda. That shared ownership really drives engagement and authenticity.

### Q How does Russell-Cooke measure the success of these initiatives?

A We look at both quantitative and qualitative measures. Recruitment and retention figures are important, but so is how people feel. In the 2025 RollOnFriday survey, we received an "outstanding" rating, ranking joint-sixth for culture and first for work-life balance. Our internal engagement surveys show that pride, teamwork and management support all score above 5 out of 6.

In November 2025, the firm was named winner of the Outstanding Corporate Culture Award at the 2025 British Legal Awards, a recognition of our sustained efforts: from inclusive recruitment

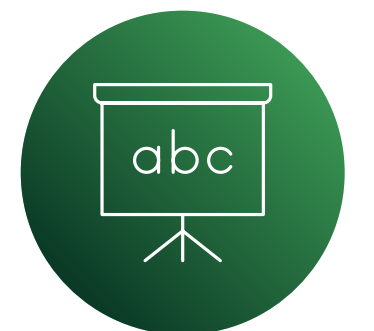


and fair progression practices, to strong retention, robust support networks and a culture where staff feel valued and empowered to thrive.

These results and recognition reinforce that inclusion and wellbeing are not separate goals, but go hand in hand.

### Q What's next on the firm's social mobility agenda?

A The next stage is deepening the impact of our initiatives and tracking outcomes over time. Our new apprenticeship pathway will be a major milestone, but we're also focusing on sustained mentorship and career progression support for those already in the firm.



# 82%

**Of the 2025 trainee cohort attended UK state schools**





We'll continue to share stories of people who've built unexpected, successful careers here because they show that there's no single way to succeed in law. Ultimately, our goal is for Russell-Cooke to be known as a place where potential, not privilege, determines opportunity.

### **Q** And personally, what motivates you in this work?

**A** My commitment to social mobility is also deeply personal. I'm a real-life example of what's possible when barriers are removed and potential is recognised. I went to a mainstream school in Australia, and I didn't graduate with a first-class degree in either my undergraduate degree or my law conversion. No one else in my family works in law, and I didn't follow a traditional or privileged route into the profession.

I began my legal career as a paralegal and worked my way forward step by step. Today, I'm a partner at Russell-Cooke and have been recognised with an award for outstanding women in the profession. That journey wasn't linear or pre-determined, but it shows that talent exists everywhere - opportunity does not.

That's why this work matters so much to me. Social mobility isn't an abstract concept or a policy objective; it's about real people and real careers. If we can create pathways that allow more individuals to progress based on their ability and determination, rather than their background, then we're not only strengthening our firm - we're helping to reshape the profession for the better.



## Case Study

## PRIDE at Russell-Cooke

At Russell-Cooke supporting LGBTQ+ inclusion is a key part of our commitment to equality, diversity, and inclusion (ED&I). Each year, Pride Month provides a focal point to celebrate LGBTQ+ communities, reflect on progress, and consider the work still needed to ensure equal access and opportunity for all colleagues. Pride is both a celebration and a reminder of the activism that has secured rights for LGBTQ+ people, including the Stonewall riots of 1969. Visible recognition of Pride helps signal that the firm values authenticity, safety, and belonging in the workplace.

The firm's ED&I group coordinates a range of activities during Pride Month, creating opportunities for learning, reflection, and connection. Recent events included a reception with guest speaker Dame Julia Hoggett, who shared her experiences entering male-dominated professional spaces as a young lesbian, highlighting the importance of inclusive leadership. Staff also participated in a networking event at the Inner Temple, enabling engagement with senior figures across the legal sector and reinforcing the value of inclusive professional networks. In addition, colleagues attended a film screening and gallery exhibition exploring LGBTQ+ history, including "The Lost and Loved Venues of Gay London," which underlined the importance of cultural preservation and community visibility.

Beyond Pride Month, Russell-Cooke's efforts to support LGBTQ+ colleagues are embedded in everyday practice. The firm fosters an inclusive workplace culture, where policies, training, and networks are designed to ensure that all staff feel safe, visible, and able to contribute fully. Through internal support networks, awareness-raising initiatives, and participation in wider industry diversity forums, the firm encourages open dialogue, mentorship, and learning around LGBTQ+ issues.

Supporting Pride and LGBTQ+ inclusion is about more than celebration; it is about access, belonging, and opportunity. When colleagues can bring their full selves to work, they are able to participate fully in professional networks, develop their potential, and contribute their ideas and talents without fear of exclusion. As one ED&I reflection noted: "Allowing people to feel safe at work by being their true selves ... has a positive impact on work ethic, loyalty and productivity."

Russell-Cooke's ongoing efforts demonstrate that creating inclusive environments benefits everyone, supporting both individual potential and the wider organisational culture. By embedding visible support, learning opportunities, and inclusive networks into everyday practice, the firm ensures that LGBTQ+ colleagues have the access, representation, and opportunity they need to thrive.







## Case Study

# 10,000 Black Interns Programme

The 10,000 Black Interns Foundation provides paid work experience for Black undergraduate and recent-graduate talent. Its goal is to tackle barriers to professional careers by offering meaningful exposure to workplaces that students might not otherwise experience. Access to such opportunities can be decisive in shaping career paths, helping students gain confidence, develop skills, and better understand professional environments.

Russell-Cooke supports the programme because we believe access matters as much as ability. Without structured opportunities, talented students from underrepresented backgrounds may miss out on experience, networks, and insight that are often prerequisites for professional roles.

Moriah Joseph-Brown, a penultimate-year law student who interned with us in August 2025, described her experience as transformative: "Nowadays a lot of industries want individuals who have experience, but most experiences are hard to come by unless someone is advocating for you."

During her placement, Moriah worked across several departments, including litigation, family law, and trusts & estate disputes. She highlighted how the supportive environment helped her explore new areas of law and clarify her career interests: "From day one I felt welcome and accepted... the partners' offices are always open and inviting."

Temi Ojengbede, graduating in Law and Criminology, also valued hands-on exposure during her internship with us in September 2025: "Seeing cases unfold in person made the work feel very real and showed me how much of an impact lawyers can have on people's lives."

Rotating across departments allowed Temi to consider areas she had not previously explored, such as private client work and children and family law. She emphasised that curiosity and willingness to learn were as important as technical knowledge: "You don't need to know everything straight away to succeed... Law is as much about people as it is about rules and procedures."

The experiences of Moriah and Temi illustrate why programmes like 10,000 Black Interns are crucial. They show that access to work experience can broaden horizons, build confidence, and support informed career choices. Structured, paid internships help to level the playing field, offering tangible opportunities for talented students to gain professional insight, skills, and networks that might otherwise be out of reach.

In supporting initiatives like this, organisations contribute to a more inclusive future, where career potential is shaped by talent and ambition, not by who has prior access to experience.





# Our community

Giving back to our communities and building meaningful relationships





## In focus

## Our volunteering scheme a year on

Since its inception in 2024, Russell-Cooke's firmwide volunteering scheme has given colleagues the chance to contribute to a wide range of community initiatives. From supporting local charities to preserving historic sites and helping refugees gain skills, volunteers have embraced the scheme with enthusiasm. We spoke to some participants about their experiences, what they learned, and the highlights of their volunteering days.



### Wormwood Scrubs Pony Centre (Janice Gardner)

#### Q What drew you to volunteering at the Centre?

A I've been involved with the Pony Centre for about ten years, and it has a very personal significance for me. My youngest daughter has a rare chromosome disorder, and horse-riding has been a vital part of her development and played a significant part in her learning to walk aged 6.

The centre focuses on children and young adults, particularly those with disabilities, mental health and behavioural problems and those on the edge of exclusion from education.

Seeing people who struggle to find their way in the world gain confidence and self-esteem through their connection with the pony centre is incredibly moving.

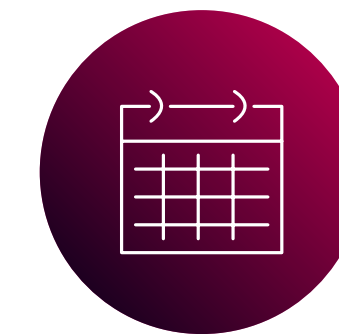
#### Q What did a volunteering day look like for you?

A I volunteered alongside partner Sarah Towler. On the day we volunteered, I worked with the CEO drafting a grant application, putting together something tangible which, if successful, will make a real difference to the charity over the next few years. Between office tasks, I even managed a short ride out on Wormwood Scrubs Common on one of my favourite horses, Marcel. It is important that the horses get time out on open land as they spend a lot of time in their stables in winter or being very patient and gentle with their disabled riders.



*"I'm proud to be part of a firm that takes time to give back and make a meaningful difference to the communities it supports, particularly those who are vulnerable."*

Grace Burney, legal assistant



## Monthly

Community and fundraising activities planned and delivered across the firm

The pony centre is small, with around 20 horses, but there's always a role for every volunteer and the mantra is "it's not what you can't do, but what you can do," which is empowering.

Many people might be put off from volunteering somewhere like this because they might think they don't have the physical skills to work with the horses, but running a stables is like managing a small town and there is an enormous amount of admin and paper work for those who might feel safer in an office.

Sarah worked with the CEO for the day, using her IT skills to set up some admin systems and get the centre more organised administratively.

#### Q What stood out about the experience?

A It's the impact you see first-hand. Children rigid with tension, begin to relax and move with their pony. Those struggling with depression or low self-worth find confidence and self-esteem through their learning and contribution. I've learned a lot from my time at the Pony Centre: patience, interacting with diverse groups, and problem-solving under pressure. And there's a feel-good factor; it's energising to do something concrete that helps others.



## Q What have you taken away from the experience?

A Volunteering at the centre reinforces the idea that everyone can contribute in some way. Even small tasks like administrative support are invaluable to a charity that works with limited resources. It's empowering, validating, and good for the soul. The positivity, skills, and perspective you gain, feed back into your day job too.

## Migrateful (Our real estate and corporate and commercial teams)

## Q What attracted you to Migrateful?

A Migrateful supports refugees and asylum seekers by helping them become cookery teachers. Many face huge challenges finding work when they arrive in the UK, and the charity gives them confidence, social connections, and practical skills. We wanted to help participants and learn from their stories, while supporting a meaningful cause.

## Q What did a volunteering day look like?

We worked with Chef Akram from Sri Lanka, helping set up cooking stations, support participants during their classes, and tackle the inevitable mountain of washing up. Chef Akram taught us a full Sri Lankan feast - fish cutlets, Parippu (lentil dhal), beetroot

curry, pineapple curry, chicken curry, and coconut rice. After all the cooking and cleaning, we finally sat down to enjoy the meal, which was delicious.

## Q What stood out about the experience?

A The combination of skill-building and cultural exchange was amazing. You're not just helping out; you're learning patience, teamwork, and empathy while seeing the results of your work. Watching the participants grow in confidence as they prepare to teach their own classes is inspiring.

## Q What have you taken away from volunteering with Migrateful?

A We've learnt that volunteering is a two-way street. You give time and energy, but you also gain insight, new skills, and a real sense of connection. It's personally and professionally enriching, and seeing the direct impact of your support is very rewarding.

## Fulham Palace Trust (Sarah Lawless)

## Q What drew you to volunteer at Fulham Palace?

A The Palace is a historic site near our Putney office and also a longstanding and valued client. The Trust preserves the house and gardens while engaging the community through education, conservation, and sustainability initiatives. Volunteering was a way to give back to a local

institution and support something that matters to the community.

## Q What did a volunteering day look like?

A We took part in the 'Deck the Fulham Palace Halls' event, preparing decorations for the festive season. Head Gardener Lucy Hart explained the work carried out at the Palace and how volunteers contribute. We then made decorations using natural and sustainable materials grown in the Palace gardens. Our creations included paper Christmas trees, garlands, and floral centrepieces - all of which will be displayed throughout the Palace during the festive season.

## Q What stood out about the experience?

A The creativity and teamwork required were brilliant. It was hands-on, fun, and directly impactful. We could see how our efforts enhanced the experience for visitors, and there was a great sense of satisfaction in contributing to something so many people would enjoy.

## Q What have you taken away from the experience?

A It highlighted the importance of volunteering in maintaining local cultural and historical institutions. It was also an opportunity to work with colleagues in a creative, collaborative environment outside the office, strengthening team bonds and giving back to the community.

## Reflections on the scheme

**Chris Rowse:** The Russell-Cooke volunteering scheme has been a tremendous success because it's inclusive, flexible, and meaningful. There's a place for everyone, whether you enjoy hands-on work with children and animals, cooking, or creative projects - and every contribution, no matter how small, has real impact. The scheme bridges professional skills and charitable work, allowing colleagues to apply what they do in the office in ways that genuinely benefit the community, while also learning new skills themselves.

Over the past year, we've seen how volunteering fosters teamwork, builds confidence, and strengthens connections. From organising a filing system or helping with washing up, to supporting children at the Pony Centre or assisting refugees in the kitchen, every action matters and makes a difference.

A year on, the scheme has brought our people together, reinforced the firm's commitment to the local community, and further embedded social responsibility into our culture. It's energising, rewarding, and a clear example of how small acts of volunteering can have a lasting impact, both for those we help and for our colleagues taking part.

Staff have developed new skills, built connections, and contributed meaningfully to their communities. As one volunteer put it: "There's always a way to help, and when you do, the rewards are as much yours as theirs."





## Case Study

# Fundraising and Outreach Committee

The Fundraising and Outreach Committee, previously the Trainee CSR Committee, recently received a fresh identity following the arrival of a new trainee cohort. The committee's new name reflects its purpose clearly and directly, capturing both its fundraising and community engagement activities.

Membership is made up entirely of trainees, with numbers varying each year depending on interest. This year, eight trainees make up the team. The committee thrives on collaboration, with second-year trainees stepping into leadership roles to share their experience, while everyone pitches in with ideas and initiatives. Leadership rotates across events, keeping things fresh and giving every member a chance to take the reins.

The committee follows a calendar of annual events, meeting monthly to plan and coordinate. Traditional activities include the Macmillan Coffee Morning, the Kingston Gift Appeal, and the London Legal Walk, while more recently the committee has organised initiatives such as a Clothes Drive in partnership with TR Aid and Smartworks. Proposals for new initiatives are drafted collaboratively, often including rationale for alignment with the firm's values, before being shared with the wider firm-level committee.

Beyond the year's milestone events, the committee is experimenting with ways to tie activities to trainee awareness days and wider initiatives, keeping the firm engaged year-round. Leadership is shared across events: one trainee might take the lead on the Coffee Morning while others handle communications and logistics. This keeps responsibilities manageable while giving everyone a chance to contribute meaningfully.

The committee plays a key role in demonstrating the firm's commitment to community involvement, offering more than traditional legal work and providing a rewarding way to contribute locally. Activities such as Smartworks illustrate this impact: supporting individuals in preparing for job interviews by providing professional clothing directly connects community engagement with real-world outcomes.

At its core, the Fundraising and Outreach Committee reflects the firm's values, balancing professional excellence with social responsibility. It offers trainees a meaningful avenue to engage with the local community, reinforcing that the firm is more than a legal service provider and anchoring the firm's presence in London while making a tangible difference beyond the office.



## Case Study

# Our partnership with the Ethical Property Foundation

Our partnership with the Ethical Property Foundation (EPF) reflects the firm's long-standing commitment to responsible business and to strengthening the voluntary sector through access to expert legal knowledge. In 2025, we celebrated our third year of this partnership, which is focused on improving charities' understanding of property matters and supporting them to make informed, sustainable decisions about the spaces they occupy.

The Ethical Property Foundation is the UK's only charity dedicated solely to providing free property advice to voluntary and community organisations. Through its specialist advisors, EPF supports charities and social enterprises facing complex property issues, including leases, rent reviews, dilapidations and relocation. For many organisations, property is one of their largest costs and greatest risks, yet access to professional advice is often limited by budget constraints. The Foundation's work therefore plays a critical role in helping charities remain resilient and focused on their core missions.

We have supported EPF's work since its establishment in 2003, and the current partnership builds on this long-standing relationship in a more structured and strategic way. Rather than acting solely as a sponsor, the firm contributes legal expertise, time and resources to deliver practical learning opportunities for charities across the UK. This approach aligns closely with our responsible business strategy, which prioritises knowledge sharing, collaboration and meaningful community impact.

As part of the partnership, members of the firm's specialist charity property team regularly contribute to EPF's educational programme. This includes participation in podcasts designed to demystify legal processes

and help charities understand how to work effectively with lawyers. Our lawyers also deliver free webinars on core topics such as understanding commercial leases, offering accessible and practical guidance tailored specifically to the needs of voluntary organisations. These sessions are designed to build confidence and capability, enabling charities to engage more proactively with property decisions that affect their long-term sustainability.

The partnership also includes in-person engagement through annual property clinics and the Charity Property Forum series hosted at EPF's London offices. These events provide charities with the opportunity to receive live advice, ask questions in a supportive environment and connect with peers facing similar challenges. By removing cost barriers and creating open access to expertise, the partnership helps ensure that charities of all sizes can benefit, regardless of their resources.

Through our ongoing collaboration with the Ethical Property Foundation, we aim to address a critical skills gap within the voluntary sector at a time when financial pressures and uncertainty remain high. The partnership demonstrates how professional services firms can use their expertise to deliver tangible social value, supporting organisations that contribute significantly to communities across the UK. By embedding this work into its responsible business agenda, we are continuing to show how long-term partnerships, grounded in shared values and practical action, can create lasting impact.





# Our commitments



Commitment	Target / timeframe	Commentary	Status
Remain carbon neutral	Ongoing	Registered as a carbon-neutral client with print partner Impress Print, who offsets the carbon impact of all commissioned printing via the World Land Trust, with annual certification provided.	New
Reduce the environmental impact of firm printing	Ongoing	Commitment to reducing overall printing and ensuring essential printing is carbon-neutral through the firm's print partner.	On track
Maintain carbon-neutral or renewable electricity tariffs	Ongoing	Maintaining carbon-neutral or renewable tariffs for electricity across its offices.	On track



















Commitment	Target / timeframe	Commentary	Status
Our environment			
Improve energy efficiency across office locations	Ongoing	Introduced motion-sensor lighting, expanded LED lighting (including meeting rooms and staircases at Bedford Row). Rolled out smart AV sensing power strips to reduce standby power use.	New New
Replace gas boilers	By 2030	Long-term commitment to replacing gas boilers, recognising constraints in buildings where the firm is not the landlord.	On track
Reduce water consumption	2025–26	Installed sensor taps in all Putney office toilets and fitted flow restrictors to showers to reduce water use and associated energy consumption.	New
Reduce waste and increase recycling	Ongoing	Firmwide recycling facilities for food waste, mixed recycling, coffee pods and batteries are well established and continue to be embedded.	On track
Eliminate single-use plastics where possible	Ongoing	Introduced refillable hand-soap dispensers. Continued to review everyday consumables to improve sustainability profile.	New On track
Ensure responsible procurement	Since 2025	Embedding procurement policy across firm activities, with ongoing review of products and suppliers.	On track
Support local biodiversity	Ongoing	Maintaining Buckfast bee hives on the roof of the Putney office and pollinator-friendly planting to support urban biodiversity.	On track
Encourage sustainable commuting	Ongoing	Operating a Cycle to Work scheme through Cyclescheme, supported by collaboration with Fettle and the Russell-Cooke Cycling Club.	New
Promote an environmental culture of incremental change	Ongoing	Developing an environmental strategy that focuses on small, practical, measurable improvements supported by increasing staff awareness and engagement.	On track



## Access to justice

Commitment	Target / timeframe	Commentary	Status
Maintain commitment to legal aid	 Ongoing	Remaining one of few Top 100 UK law firms to hold a legal aid contract, described as a defining part of the firm's identity.	 On track
Support individuals affected by birth trauma	 Since 2024  Ongoing	Serving as a Trusted Legal Partner of the Birth Trauma Association, providing specialist and empathetic clinical negligence expertise.	 New
Provide accessible legal advice through clinics	 Introduced 2025  Ongoing	Ran a legal clinic in collaboration with the Birth Trauma Association to provide advice and guidance to affected individuals.	 New
Improve public understanding of gender equality law	 Ongoing	Launched the Gender Equality Law Hub to provide accessible guidance following the Supreme Court decision in For Women Scotland Ltd v The Scottish Ministers.	 New
Make family court processes more accessible	 Launched 2025	Supported the launch of the West London Family Court Information website, a free public resource explaining family court procedures and support services.	 New
Reduce non-financial barriers to justice	 Ongoing	Focus on access to justice as including understanding, information and confidence, not solely legal representation.	 On track





Commitment	Target / timeframe	Commentary	Status
Widen access to the legal profession through socially inclusive recruitment	Ongoing	82% of the 2025 trainee cohort attended UK state schools, up from 56% in 2024, following redesigned recruitment processes.	On track
Ensure recruitment is fair and bias-aware	Ongoing	Applications assessed blind by a diverse, trained panel and supported by Rare Recruitment's Contextual Recruitment System.	On track
Ensure internships are accessible regardless of financial means or background	Ongoing	All internships are paid and openly advertised to ensure access is not determined by financial background.	On track
		Partnered with the 10,000 Black Interns Programme for the third year running.	On track
Support alternative routes to qualification	Introduced 2024	Introduced a Qualifying Work Experience (QWE) pathway for legal assistants, funding SQE courses and exams.	New
Explore solicitor apprenticeships	Planned	Solicitor apprenticeships to be explored as a future pathway.	New
Foster an inclusive workplace for LGBTQ+ colleagues	Ongoing	Pride Month activity, inclusive policies, internal networks and awareness initiatives embedded into everyday practice.	On track
Support staff retention and progression	Ongoing	83% of lawyers who qualified with the firm and would now be five years PQE or more remain at the firm.	On track





## Our community

Commitment	Target / timeframe	Commentary	Status
Operate a firmwide volunteering scheme	Ongoing	Firmwide volunteering scheme enables colleagues to contribute time and skills to a wide range of community initiatives.	On track
Support local and national charities through volunteering	Ongoing	Volunteers supported organisations.	On track
Encourage skills-based volunteering	Ongoing	Colleagues contributed professional skills such as grant drafting, IT support and administrative assistance.	On track
Engage trainees in fundraising and outreach	Ongoing	Trainee-led Fundraising and Outreach Committee organises events including the London Legal Walk, Macmillan Coffee Morning and Clothes Drives.	On track
Support charities through access to legal expertise	Ongoing	Long-standing partnership with the Ethical Property Foundation, providing free webinars, podcasts, property clinics and education.	On track
Build long-term community partnerships	Ongoing	Ethical Property Foundation partnership focuses on sustained knowledge-sharing and strengthening the voluntary sector.	On track



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Best Lawyers Award 2025  
Wealth for Good Award 2024  
STEP Philanthropy Team of  
the Year 2023