

HERBERT SMITH FREEHILLS EXPANDING ROUTES TO EMPLOYMENT FOR AUTISTIC PEOPLE

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Firm news

Herbert Smith Freehills today announces a new UK internship programme with Ambitious About Autism, a charity supporting autistic people into work, and a partnership with auticon, a social enterprise which recruits, trains, and employs adults on the autism spectrum for lifelong careers in technology.

The internship programme with Ambitious About Autism offers an autistic graduate from the University of Sussex an opportunity to work at the firm for 8 weeks with teams in its risk, compliance and in-house legal function. The internship is part of the Employ Autism Higher Education Network, a ground-breaking higher education employability programme run by Santander through Santander Universities UK which aims to unlock the potential of autistic students and graduates and help them into full-time work.

As a result of the partnership with auticon, one autistic consultant has already been placed in the firm's London-based IT team, focused on global IT security projects.

With both the internship programme and auticon partnership, it is hoped that further opportunities for autistic candidates across the firm's business functions will be developed.

A core element of the initiatives has been to develop bespoke training within the firm to enhance awareness of neuro-divergent talent and to ensure appropriate support is in place so that the needs of autistic individuals are met, increasing their opportunity to succeed at work.

"Figures show that too few autistic adults are in full-time roles, despite the overwhelming majority wanting to work. Being neuro-divergent should not be seen as an impediment to employment and our new partnership is one way in which we can help build a more inclusive society. What matters is whether individuals have the skills, the talent and the desire to succeed; our aim is to create an environment where that is possible for everyone," says Haig Tyler, Chief Information Officer at Herbert Smith Freehills.

These initiatives are the latest in a series of partnerships developed by Herbert Smith Freehills to create supportive and inclusive working environments for autistic people. It follows a successful initiative with AS Mentoring which saw two people placed within the firm and a mentoring and training programme organised in conjunction with Aspiring Solicitors.

MEDIA CONTACT

For further information on this news article, please contact:

**MIKE PETROOK, COMMUNICATIONS
MANAGER**

LONDON

Tel: +44 20 7466 3939

Mob: +44 7850 516 778

Email: mike.petrook@hsf.com