

HERBERT SMITH FREEHILLS PUBLISHES FOURTH ANNUAL RESPONSIBLE BUSINESS REPORT

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Firm news

Herbert Smith Freehills has today published its fourth annual Responsible Business Report. Focusing on steps taken over the past 12 months, this communication on progress demonstrates the firm's commitment to the United Nation's Sustainable Development Goals and the [UN Global Compact](#).

The latest [report](#) highlights how Herbert Smith Freehills has responded to the challenges facing organisations across the globe. Building on the firm's values, it outlines steps taken to engage with clients, colleagues and the communities in which we operate.

The communication on progress recognises the firm's responsibility to contribute to a sustainable future. It reports that, over the past 12 months, several steps have been taken to drive internal and external action on environmental, social and governance (ESG) issues. These include:

- **meeting all three targets of our five-year global sustainability strategy one year ahead of schedule.** This includes a 27% reduction in the firm's carbon footprint (against a target of 15%), a 13% reduction in energy use (against a target of 10%) and a 43% reduction in paper use (against a target of 30%)
- **provision of 75,000 hours of pro bono advice** focusing on social impact investment, international development, access to justice, human rights protections and NGO activity, representing an 11% increase on FY18/19
- **expanding our social mobility programme** to reach 270 young people in the UK, this year using 'virtual events' to minimise disruption to our Networked Scholarship Scheme by Covid-19
- the launch of [Catalyst](#), a campaign exploring how Covid-19 has impacted on key ESG considerations and how businesses can respond.

“This has been an extraordinary year. The human cost and disruption caused by Covid-19 are difficult to overstate. In addition to the pandemic, in the last 12 months we have also seen bushfires devastate large areas of Australia, widespread protests and calls for racial justice following the killing of George Floyd, as well as a mounting international movement pushing climate protection into the global consciousness in a way that we have not seen before. I am proud of our firm’s response to these challenges, which has emphasised our passion for justice and deepened our commitment to our clients, our people and our communities,” says Emma Cooke, head of citizenship at Herbert Smith Freehills.

Highlights in the report also include an examination of our [10 Actions for Change](#) – a framework and measure of accountability on ethnic diversity designed to build a supportive, respectful environment where everyone can thrive. Also noted is our work with organisations such as Rare Recruitment. Fostered to help address barriers to recruitment, this partnership is starting to see positive results, with 48% of our UK training contracts this year being colleagues from Black and minority ethnic backgrounds.

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