



# Corporate Social Responsibility (CSR) Policy

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## **1 Introduction**

- 1.1 We acknowledge that running our business has an effect on society. We have a responsibility to our clients, our employees and our contractors as well as to the broader community in which we operate.
- 1.2 We are committed to taking responsibility for our actions and encourage a positive contribution towards improving standards for our clients and employees, minimising our impact on the environment and improving the quality of the local community.
- 1.3 By putting CSR into practice, we are committed, wherever possible, to: improve morale and motivation of staff, and enhancing our standing and reputation to make us more efficient
  - 1.3.1 conducting ourselves responsibly and in an ethical manner
  - 1.3.2 creating a positive and supportive working environment
  - 1.3.3 supporting local communities
  - 1.3.4 improving service levels to clients
  - 1.3.5 acting fairly in our dealings with suppliers and other third parties
  - 1.3.6 minimising our impact on the environment

## **2 Communication**

- 2.1 We communicate this policy to our staff, clients and other stakeholders by means of our intranet and website and various posts on social media as and when relevant
- 2.2 We provide our staff with training on our CSR strategy and this policy and seek to raise awareness of any negative impacts of our business and methods to reduce them.

## **3 Responsibility and review**

- 3.1 Andy Hambleton, Partner has overall responsibility for our CSR strategy and policy implementation working closely with Joshua Eva (COLP). They have a key role in ensuring the systems and controls we have in place are effective.
- 3.2 All members of staff have a role to play in complying with our CSR objectives and are encouraged to make further suggestions in relation to initiatives we could undertake. If anyone has a suggestion, they should contact Andy Hambleton.

- 3.3 We are fully committed to the highest possible standards of openness, honesty and accountability. In line with that commitment, in accordance with our Whistleblowing policy, we actively encourage all staff members who have serious concerns about any real or perceived departure from the high ethical standard that we set to voice those concerns openly. Our Whistleblowing policy can be found on our intranet along with our Environmental Policy.
- 3.4 We are committed to ensuring our policy remains effective. As part of our ongoing commitment, this policy is reviewed at least annually to verify its effective operation. Records of the reviews are maintained and any necessary amendments are made to the policy, as appropriate.

#### **4 Our CSR principles**

##### **4.1 Our conduct:**

- 4.1.1 We aim to adopt the highest professional standards and not to act in such a way as to compromise our firm's integrity.
- 4.1.2 We are authorised and regulated by the Solicitors Regulation Authority (SRA) and comply with all SRA requirements.
- 4.1.3 We actively promote respect between our staff members in their dealings with each other and with clients and other third parties.
- 4.1.4 We have adopted the strap-line "professionals with a human face" because that is how a client described us. We recognise that everyone at Harris & Harris contributes to client care and adheres to our Client Care Policy.
- 4.1.5 We are committed to the improvement of our service through learning, training and personal development.
- 4.1.6 We do not believe in a competitive internal environment but all work together as a team to provide the best service for our clients.

##### **4.2 Our working environment:**

- 4.2.1 We recognise that our staff are our most important resource. We actively seek to offer our staff a positive and healthy working environment and ensure that they have rewarding careers and job satisfaction.
- 4.2.2 We operate a responsible, flexible and non-discriminatory recruitment and employment practice. We also recognise that we are all entitled to a good work life balance.

- 4.2.3 We maintain an Office Procedures manual and Employee Handbook, which set out the rights and expectations of all members of staff. They can be found on our intranet and BrightHR portal.
  - 4.2.4 We seek to ensure that all staff have access to the learning and development (L&D) they need for their own personal development, to meet their regulatory obligations and to ensure they can deliver a high-quality service. Our procedures in relation to L&D can be found in our Office Procedures manual and our Learning and Development policy.
  - 4.2.5 We consider all staff members to be equal and we aim to create a working environment that is free from unlawful discrimination. In this regard, we maintain an Equality and Diversity Policy, which can be found on our intranet and BrightHR portal.
- 4.3 Our community:
- 4.3.1 We are proud to have helped many vulnerable members of the community, particularly with problems concerning children, domestic violence, mental health and employment law. In doing so we have accepted payment at less than commercial levels.
  - 4.3.2 We have also supported community organisations with legal advice or financial contributions. Where we have provided pro bono advice it has not been our policy to publicise that as clients we have helped in this way are entitled to confidentiality as any others.
- 4.4 Our clients:
- 4.4.1 We are committed to delivering a high level of service to all our clients. We understand that our business exists in a very competitive market and in order to retain our clients we need to deliver a professional and courteous service. This is achieved by our Quality Management standards through our Lexcel accreditation. We also carry out client care surveys to gain feedback from all our clients to ensure we maintain a good level of service as well as gaining feedback on any improvements we can make.
  - 4.4.2 Wherever possible, we take steps to promote equal opportunity in relation to access to the legal services that we provide. We take account of the diversity of the communities we serve in order to ensure that, subject to funding constraints, our services are accessible to all clients.
  - 4.4.3 We have a Client Care policy, which can be found on our intranet.

#### 4.5 Suppliers:

4.5.1 We are committed to eliminating unlawful discrimination and to promoting equality and diversity in our professional dealings with suppliers and other third parties. Our Equality and Diversity policy can be found on our intranet.

4.5.2 We endeavour to enter into clear and fair contracts with our suppliers. We commit to the timely settlement of suppliers' invoices.

4.5.3 Wherever possible, we aim to support the local economy by contracting with local suppliers.

#### 4.6 Environment:

4.6.1 We are committed to behaving responsibly and to minimising our impact on the environment.

4.6.2 In considering the environment, we have resolved to minimise our impact on the environment details of which can be found in our Environmental Policy in which we:

- (a) encourage environmental responsibility among our contractors, suppliers and staff and include environmental considerations in our purchasing and procurement processes and in business travel
- (b) minimise our consumption of natural resources and manage waste through responsible disposal and reuse and recycling, including paper, cardboard, plastic, glass, food waste and ink cartridges