

Anthony  
Collins

# Powered by purpose

— a journey to a thriving society



Certified  
**B**  
Corporation

# Certified



®

---

# Corporation

**“We believe that being a B Corp goes beyond certification — it’s about taking responsibility for our role in creating a better future for everyone.**

**We’re proud to be part of this movement and we hope our journey will encourage others to do the same.”**

**Matthew Wort, senior partner**

# Contents

|                                                         |    |
|---------------------------------------------------------|----|
| <b>A message from our senior partner</b>                | 4  |
| <b>Our journey to certification</b>                     | 7  |
| <b>Our verified score and goals for recertification</b> | 8  |
| <b>Impact area 1 – Governance</b>                       | 10 |
| <b>Governance in action</b>                             | 12 |
| <b>Impact area 2 – Our People</b>                       | 14 |
| <b>People in action</b>                                 | 16 |
| <b>Impact area 3 – Customers</b>                        | 18 |
| <b>Customers in action</b>                              | 20 |
| <b>Impact area 4 – Environment</b>                      | 26 |
| <b>Environment in action</b>                            | 28 |
| <b>Impact area 5 – Community</b>                        | 30 |
| <b>Community in action</b>                              | 32 |
| <b>A look to the future</b>                             | 34 |

# A message from our senior partner

Firstly, I would like to take this opportunity to thank all the people who work at Anthony Collins (AC) and to all our clients and referrers who, over the past year, continue to place us in a privileged position to deliver our social purpose.

Reflecting on the last 12 months, B Corp has given us a framework so we can continue to move in the right direction and has been the driving force behind several improvements we've made since accreditation. Some of our key highlights include:

- investing heavily in our office space in Birmingham, reducing our carbon footprint, going from a class E to A;
- establishing our baseline emissions data to help inform our net carbon zero journey;
- increasing diversity at Board level with the introduction of a critical friend;
- targeting non-Russell group universities at vacation scheme stage; and
- launching an apprenticeship scheme.

We know that we are on a continuous journey to improve across the five impact areas and there's much more to do. The B Corp framework has allowed us to identify gaps to improve our impact, for example in our supply chain management. We know there's more to do here but we have started a review of our local supply chain and recently launched a supplier CSR questionnaire across some areas of the business.

Our people are our greatest asset, and we have identified that there's more we can be doing to support those who have historically faced challenges in joining the legal sector. We have implemented a social mobility recruitment tool at trainee level and 65% of our first- and second-year trainees now come from under-represented socio-economic backgrounds. We plan to expand on this within our 2024-2027 ED&I strategy.

As key advisors to businesses, we hold a unique position not only to be able to lead by example but to help guide, shape and enable our clients. We are excited to have been working on groundbreaking environmental projects for our clients, such as Newcastle City Council's innovative district heating scheme; a project that's estimated to remove 4,000 tonnes of carbon dioxide emissions each year.

As key advisors to individuals, we have supported families at pivotal times in their lives, such as the family of Dominic Chapman, a young man who sadly died after suffering a blow to the head during a white-collar boxing match. To avoid another tragedy like this, we stepped in to raise awareness of safety failures and campaigned for change in the sport.

I am struck by how much we have accomplished this year, and the positive impact B Corp has had on our firm since accreditation. We continue to look for ways in which we can improve and evolve as a sustainable business with B Corp at our core over the next 12 months and beyond.

I hope this report encourages other businesses to join us on this exciting journey.

**Matthew Wort, senior partner**



***"We continue to look for ways in which we can improve and evolve as a sustainable business with B Corp at our core over the next 12 months and beyond."***

**Certified**



®

---

**Corporation**

# Our journey to certification

## Why we embarked on the B Corp journey

Being a purpose-driven law firm is in our DNA and achieving B Corp accreditation in 2022 was a natural step in our journey as a social purpose law firm.

Having produced our own social impact report since 2018, we were looking for a credible, external, independent certification that demonstrated our commitment to being an ethical, responsible business that aligns profit with positive social and environmental outcomes.

### B Corp met all our needs

Transparency is key for us, and we were confident that becoming a B Corp would verify externally what we were already doing as a firm but also hold us even more accountable to the triple bottom line — people, planet and profit — and grow our impact on lives, communities and society.

## How has B Corp status already helped the firm?

### Attracting and retaining top talent

We wouldn't be where we are today without the people who choose to work with us — our clients and our people, who are increasingly concerned with sustainability and social responsibility.

It's not just businesses that want to work with socially conscious organisations, but individuals too, and our B Corp accreditation is a seal of approval — it's proof that we're held to high social and environmental standards, for our stakeholders, the local community and environment. We believe that this helps us attract and retain a diverse workforce of talented individuals who can benefit our clients by not only bringing technical expertise, but different viewpoints to the work that we undertake for them.

Those in the job market are increasingly prioritising working for purpose-driven businesses that align with their own personal values, and our employees are given a sense of purpose by knowing they are contributing to the well-being of society and the planet by working here at AC.

### A collaborative network for good

We have gained access to a community of like-minded businesses that are using business as a force for good and we've found opportunities for collaboration to help us better grow and improve our impact. For example, invaluable knowledge sharing with fellow B Corps on how we bring our people with us on the B Corp journey and integrate social and environmental performance into job descriptions.

So becoming a B Corp has impacted our business in many positive ways:

- we've seen improvements in employee attraction and retention;
- we have found opportunities for collaboration with other B Corps;
- we are better with staff engagement and transparency; and
- we have gained a better understanding of what it is to be a transparent ethical business.

And that's just the tip of the iceberg. The deep dive into the five impact areas has been the driving force behind a host of improvements that we've made and plan to make going forward. B Corp has brought to the fore areas which may have previously been overlooked, keeping us accountable and driving positive change.

***"By leveraging our legal expertise, law firms can contribute significantly to the B Corporation movement by supporting the growth and development of socially and environmentally conscious businesses. We can help create a legal environment that fosters sustainable and responsible business practices, leading to positive impact and lasting change."***

**Peter Hubbard, managing partner**

# Our verified scores...



**B Corp**  
**81.7**

**Governance**  
**11.2**

**Our people**  
**34**

## ...and goals for recertification

Over the next 12 months, we aim to continue to drive improvements across all five impact areas, striving to increase our impact areas scores. Initially we will focus on:



## Customers 10.3

## Environment 7.2

## Community 19

- Environment and our work with Inteb, gathering data and identifying ways in which we can make Anthony Collins more energy efficient.
- Customers – expanding on the work we currently do for underserved populations and introducing a client insights programme.
- Community – further embedding our social mobility recruitment tool and improving diversity at leadership level, advancing work on our supply chain management and growing our social purpose volunteering opportunities.

# Governance

# 11.2

Our governance score





# Governance

Integrating our social purpose through our entire business.

As a social purpose law firm, becoming a B Corp accredited business was an inevitable next step in our progression to being a better business for our people, our clients, and the planet.

The work has only just begun and keeping us accountable long into the future is what will really count, and that's largely to do with how we govern ourselves.

Holding B Corp status has not only helped us recognise our potential, but also our impact, and we're determined to incorporate it into every element of our business to ensure we continue to be a force for good.

## What we've achieved over the last 12 months

We're currently on a mission to integrate our social purpose with our B Corp commitments. In order to meet this goal, we've spoken to our people, made changes in line with their feedback and are continuing to make improvements in all areas of our work.

Not only that, but we've written our B Corp commitments into our LLP agreement, the very core of how our business is governed and managed by the partnership. Ensuring this is made a reality, at our monthly Board meetings each agenda item is considered in relation to the impact on our employees, suppliers, society and the environment, and we have delivered our first six-monthly Board report on our social and environmental performance.

In an effort to enhance transparency and accountability on our social and environmental impact:

- we've updated the ACessence induction to talk every new recruit through our B Corp commitments and why it's so important, covering everything from our culture to social purpose volunteering opportunities;
- we've diversified 50% of our Board meetings by including an additional observer as part of our critical friend process – we regularly obtain anonymous feedback from our critical friend in order to inform and shape our ED&I strategy and policies;
- we've introduced diverse reverse mentoring for Board members to increase awareness for decision-making at Board level;
- we've created internal steering groups to help drive progress within the B Corp impact areas; and
- we've consulted all of our people about our vision and mission for the next five years, and importantly how we can support them to support our B Corp mission and principles.



Ann Houghton, partner

## What we're planning next

We've set our B Corp benchmark, and we've got our sights on making further improvements in 2025.

We are aiming to increase female representation on our Board with new appointments in 2025, following a formal election process. We're ensuring good representation across all areas, to ensure diversity of thought, experience and management input, allowing us to better represent all of our people in our decision-making.

In a commitment to enhancing our transparency regarding our social and environmental performance, over the next 12 months, we will work towards publishing our environmental targets and performance, reporting results of internal stakeholder engagement with regards to social and environmental performance to the Board, and including social and environmental performance into all job descriptions.

**We are signatories to the Women in Law pledge, Race Fair Commitment, Halo Code and we are a Real Living Wage Employer.**



## A coherent strategy for a diverse workforce

Ownership, authenticity and a dedication to going the extra mile for its people, clients and society are the cornerstones of Anthony Collins' successful ED&I championship.

Our ambitious ED&I strategy evolves triennially, having entered its third cycle in January 2024. It is driven by a vision to create a workplace where everyone feels they belong, can succeed, are respected and trusts they are represented. Key goals include:

- **diversity** – improving representation among the firm's leadership;
- **equity** – improving access to routes into law, and support to all through development and career opportunities and coaching and mentoring options;
- **inclusion** – promoting a fully inclusive workplace where people trust they can have a successful career and truly be themselves.

To implement this, we have a dedicated ED&I committee and five subgroups: ethnic minority, LGBTQ+, gender, health conditions and social mobility.

### Ensuring our people have a voice

The ED&I committee and subgroups publicise an open-door policy and use calls to action in intranet content and email signposting to encourage the workforce to share positive events, dates or sensitive issues with them. This ensures topics are discussed in the subgroups' routine meetings and concerns or areas for celebration raised by groups with protected characteristics or issues with social mobility are not overlooked.

The ED&I committee routinely raises issues faced 'on the shop floor' with leadership through a written and in-person report to the Board, ensuring two-way communication and a fully invested leadership.

In the latest firm-wide ED&I survey, 92% of staff participants believed our ED&I commitments will be achieved.

### Initiatives to increase diversity

We undertake unconscious bias training, blind CVs in recruitment and have invested in a social mobility tool at trainee level that independently weights applications based on candidates' backgrounds, which we are planning to extend to other recruitment too. Externally, we engage with universities outside the Redbrick/Russell group to reach a more diverse student demographic with career opportunities.

We recently hosted a women in leadership event attended by 90+ staff, where employees could ask anonymous, candid questions to a panel of three female leaders at the firm.

We have also introduced diverse reverse mentoring at Board level (through which Board members learn from people with diverse characteristics), coaching and mentoring across the firm, and a 'critical friend role' where employees and partners from underrepresented or disadvantaged backgrounds are invited to sit on the Board, ensuring diverse representation.





# Our people

# 34

Our people score



# Our people

Our people are our whole business.

Supporting them to pursue their career and ambitions and encouraging an inclusive culture is fundamental to the way we operate. We have invested substantially and implemented strategies to drive engagement and satisfaction and inspire career development, removing as many barriers that society may create as we can along the way.

## What we've achieved over the last 12 months

The way people want to work and live is changing, and we've set the foundations to ensure we have the right platforms to learn, change and adapt when we need to.

In the last year, we have been making our working practices the best they've ever been. We have:

**Reinvigorated our flexible working policy** transparently promoting how and why to use it via articles and events – from empowering working dads to inspiring women in leadership.

**Upgraded our Maternity and Family Leave Guidance policy** which aims to support employees and equip line managers, as well as adding fertility aspirations into the policy.

**Targeted our social mobility vacation scheme** by increasingly diversifying job opportunities to more non-Russell group universities.

**Invested in our recruitment** utilising a social mobility tool that independently weights applicants' achievements based on their backgrounds to inform fairer recruitment for those who've had under-privileged starts in life.

**Opened accessible opportunities** by launching an apprenticeship scheme in our central management team.

**Created an expanded environment to qualify** by providing routes for alternative legal qualifications, funding training for 16 colleagues this year, and launching a new apprenticeship scheme, which we intend to grow year on year.

**Empowered our leaders** through our ongoing Living Leader programme which aims to equip those who are passionate about motivating and inspiring our people.

**Focused on our managers** our Great Line Management programme focuses on training our managers to put our people first whilst achieving great results. Over 50% of our line managers have completed the modules.

**Supported career development** integrated career planning sessions into six-monthly check-ins to support career paths, identify development opportunities and provide clarity on our promotions framework.

**Promoted health and wellbeing** through our Wellbeing strategy, we support health and wellbeing topics including mental health and financial matters.

**Invested in reward and remuneration** from profit share to salary reviews, we're keeping our offer competitive financially and developmentally.

All the above, combined with our work to build an intentionally inclusive culture that aims to ensure people belong and feel represented, have all had a positive impact on our workforce. This is reflected in our voluntary turnover which sits below 10% this year which compares very well to legal sector averages.



Phil Saunders, head of HR & office services

## What we're planning next

Vital to underpinning our drive to deliver our purpose of improving lives, communities and society is having a thriving workforce. We're committed to understanding each other's needs and doing what we can to make our business as supportive as it can be.

Some areas already on our radar include extending our support to breastfeeding mothers as part of our diversity and inclusion strategy (we've already added dedicated rooms in our Birmingham office refurb for those who would like a little privacy) and reviewing our benefits package to ensure choice and flexibility depending on individual needs. We're also targeting more support to those who want to progress in their careers, and increasing the uptake of our training and personal development offerings across the firm.

For a more thorough assessment, we're carrying out a robust employee engagement survey that will inform our people strategy for the next three years — covering areas from workplace practice and wellbeing to culture and inclusion.

## A spotlight on our management programme — internal and external

We believe that you can't instil lasting change without having managers who put people first in everything they do. We believe that this applies both inside and outside of our business. As a result, we spend a lot of time training and supporting managers to do the right thing.

Our employment team has trained over 500 managers across key sectors, including Health and Social Care, and Social Housing, on their duties under the Equality Act, helping to create workplaces that are more diverse and inclusive than ever before.

Training is varied and can consist of stand-alone webinars or a series of training workshops and follow-ups, all of which can be virtual or face-to-face.

For our own team at Anthony Collins, training is just as important. Having such strong and ambitious people-focused commitments and ED&I goals we know that internal training is just as important for us as it is for our clients.

In the last two years, we've made it our mission to have the strongest people managers in the market. To achieve this, a thorough, involved and considered modular training approach was needed.

We launched the Great Line Managers programme.

### A spotlight on line managers

Our multi-module programme, supplemented with coaching options, is open to all of our line managers. It's a chance for all to improve their people development skills:

- over 50% of our line managers have completed the entire curriculum;
- just under half of the remaining line managers are currently completing modules; and
- our aim for 2025 is to get 60% of all line managers through the course in full.

We also have a variety of Development Programmes that over the last year offered 28 sessions across seven cohorts of colleagues with an average of 19 people attending each session.

Targets for 2025, are to increase attendance at each session by a further 10% to support the progression and career development of everyone in the firm, especially focusing on our managers who are crucial for creating an environment of empowerment and success.

Voluntary turnover rate fell to

**9.66%**

in October 2024  
— the lowest ever  
figure recorded  
at the firm.



# Customers 10.3

Our customers score





# Customers

Our clients are a true reflection of us as a social purpose law firm.

With over 50% of our income deriving from charitable organisations, we work in the sectors we know will have the most impact on lives, communities and society.

We want to go beyond supporting our clients with the nuts and bolts of their work and the day to day legal issues they face. Our ambition is to become a key adviser, informing national social policy and being indispensable to them, whether we are delivering services to them as private individuals or where organisations are delivering services across the UK.

## What we've achieved over the last 12 months

As a uniquely social-purpose law firm, we don't see social value as an add-on. Instead, we seek to drive it through all our work with clients. Our long-standing pledge to transform society sets us apart from other firms, with 94% of our work directly improving lives, communities and society in the past year.

Over the last 12 months, we have:

- undertaken fundraising activities for our charity partners — the firm raised over £4,000 during the Child Brain Injury Trust's Glowweek;
- offered reduced rates for charity clients;
- given our clients access to free helplines, toolkits and precedents;
- attended client community days and activities — including employment and pensions team volunteered at the Methodist Homes MHA' Abbey Park in Coventry and spent the day gardening, crafting with the residents, and sharing songs and laughter; and
- given our clients access to a series of free podcasts, ebriefings, blogs, training and webinars, supporting our clients through the changing legal landscape.

## Supporting innovation

Our aim is to also work smarter and deliver outstanding value to clients. Our dedicated innovation team, ACcelerate, has developed a number of digital solutions for our clients to assist them in the work they do which has either reduced their costs, improved their visibility and awareness of legal areas in their sector or created efficiencies in the delivery of their work. Exciting projects are set for 2025, including leveraging AI, to further assist people get the help they need.



**Rankeshwar Batta, head of personal injury and clinical negligence**

# 12%

of our staff are trustees of national or regional charities and community associations



## Pro-bono legal support

We hold a position as a strategic partner with sector bodies including NCF, Care England and the Homecare Association and regularly engage and participate in Practice Forums operated by the NCF and several groups organised by Care England. Over the last year, our team has provided 90 hours of pro-bono support, including practical advice and tools, to over 2,600 homecare providers.

Our regulatory team has been providing pro-bono support for sector bodies Homecare Association, National Care Forum and Care England in relation to their engagement with the COVID-19 public inquiry and we are one of the few top 200 law firms that offer publicly funded legal aid services to private individuals including clinical negligence and personal injury.

## Expanding our reach to those who need it most

With a pre-eminent reputation for childcare law spanning Birmingham and the West Midlands, we opened a new Wolverhampton office in September 2024. From a strategic perspective, the new office hub has not just expanded the reach of our specialist childcare services to people in the Black Country, Shropshire and Telford, but increased the financial accessibility of this type of legal support when other law firms are offering less legal aid.

## What we're planning next

- We're designing a client insights programme that will put the client voice at the centre of how we approach service delivery, design products, and communicate with them.
- To build on our legal aid framework following the launch of our Wolverhampton office and the award of an additional family legal services contract by the Legal Aid Agency.

## Improving the health and safety of white-collar boxing

White-collar boxing — being a contact sport which carries serious risks — desperately needs regulation, as well as the implementation of sufficient health and safety measures. With a people-first approach to improving lives and communities, our team fight for justice for our clients whilst also campaigning to improve Health and Safety standards for all.

### Work that matters

We represented the family of Dominic Chapman, a young man who died after suffering a blow to the head during a white-collar boxing match. White-collar boxing is unregulated, unlike amateur and professional boxing, meaning the safety of participants hangs on the decisions made by companies hosting events. To avoid another tragedy like this, Anthony Collins has stepped in to raise awareness of safety failures and campaign for change in the sport.

The approach:

- We represented the family of Dominic Chapman at the inquest into his death
- The inquest uncovered evidence of significant health and safety negligence on the day of his fight. For example:
  - Participants' weights were incorrectly recorded
  - Boxers were unfairly matched by experience and fitness
  - Boxers were insufficiently trained
  - Medical equipment was incomplete, and medication was missing
  - Some of the medical crew did not have experience in boxing events

Handling such a tragedy requires sensitivity, focus and the continual reminder that improvements must be made to safeguard our young communities. Our work generated:

- achieving a positive outcome for Dominic's family;
- the coroner issuing Preventing Future Deaths reports;
- one of the reports was issued to the Secretary of State at the Department of Culture, Media and Sport directing that there should be a review of white collar boxing;
- the coroner also issued a Preventing Future Deaths report to Ultra Events — the hosting entity of white-collar boxing events, including the one Dominic participated in; and
- the Preventing Future Deaths reports could significantly benefit the safety of future participants across the country.

### What's next?

Our principal goal is to ensure the safety and enjoyment of everyone participating in white-collar boxing events and, following the coroner's reports, we are optimistic for the improved safety of participants going forward.

We feel proud to have contributed to this positive step towards making white-collar boxing safer for everyone while recognising the tragic circumstances Dominic's family have faced.

## Paving the way for a greener future with Newcastle City Council

As well as focusing on our own environmental journey, we support many of our clients on their road to being more sustainable too.

Following £27.5m in government funding to decarbonise public buildings in Newcastle city being granted, a host of works across 32 major sites in the city commenced.

With a focus on decarbonising the public estate, including implementing decarbonisation measures in a number of areas including lighting, heating, energy efficiency and generation and more, our work with Newcastle City Council is innovative, groundbreaking and focused entirely on the green agenda.

### Work that matters

Having worked with the Council for a number of years, their latest programme of works has led to the removal of 4,000 tonnes of carbon dioxide emissions and will continue to do so each and every year moving forward.

To achieve this, we've supported by:

- advising on Public Sector Decarbonisation Scheme (PSDS) phases 1, 2, 3a, b and c, working with the Council to provide compliant, time and cost-effective routes to delivery;
- advising on the full scope of matters including:
  - the impact of changes introduced under the Energy Act 2023
  - property portfolio improvements, including listed buildings and those with business tenants
  - extensions to existing district heat network
  - subsidy control and compliance with the Subsidy Control Act 2022
  - procurement routes to ensure effective delivery, including through existing partnerships
  - working within a multi-layered joint venture that includes navigating relationships with a host of public and private sector partners.

The success of our partnership approach and working relationship with the Council has depended on our pragmatism, practicality and rapport with everyone involved.

### Where next?

This programme of works is part of the city's Net Zero 2030 action plan. The measures the Council is taking are a shining example of the impact robust sustainability measures can have on a city when there is an ambition to achieve. We'll be working on this well into the future and we're excited by how far we can take it.

## Navigating new landscapes

It goes without saying that the pandemic was uncharted territory, and its handling has been under deep scrutiny. In 2022 a public inquiry into COVID-19 commenced to reflect on the pandemic, consider its management and pave the way for better handling in the event of it, or similar happening again.

For a sector left scarred and marred by the treatment of the pandemic, the inquiry has provided health and social care providers with an opportunity to shine a light on the lessons learned and set the charge for change that will support them to succeed in future.

As part of the inquiry, our regulatory team supported sector bodies Homecare Association, National Care Forum and Care England by providing pro bono work equating to around 75 days. This included helping them:

- achieve core participant status for module 2 (examining political and administrative decision-making);
- provide high-level guidance on their examination of the evidence;
- preparation of questions they could propose to be put by the inquiry team; and
- drafting of opening and closing submissions.

### A focus on social care

This journey of learning provided by the inquiry is vital for the sector, with module 6 of the public inquiry providing the platform to continue this. Key to the sector, module 6 looks at the impact of the pandemic on the care sector and how it responded. We are working with the sector bodies preparing them for their engagement on this.

A significant part of our work so far has involved improving the understanding of the social care sector, convincing the inquiry to broaden its scope to include not only residential care and domiciliary care but also those in supported living, and in turn ensuring a greater voice is given to the impact of the pandemic upon people living with a learning disability.

### Changing the narrative

Change is needed. A better understanding of the sector and the different services it provides will help inform regulation and deliver the best decision-making so that a thriving social care system can be supported in parallel with its healthcare counterpart.



## Cultivating a generation of garden communities

We've been dedicated to creating sustainable, fulfilling communities for over three decades.

For nearly 15 years, this work has focused on establishing and supporting community-based stewardship organisations to own and manage neighbourhood assets as part of large-scale housing developments.

Leicester's Broadnook Garden Village is a prime example — a beacon for the Town and Country Planning Association's principles on the incredible potential of garden communities. Our role includes forming stewardship mechanisms for these communities that will shape their longevity and the value they bring for generations.

### Place-making for social cohesion

Our work for Broadnook Garden Village has been informed by many years of building successful, community-led organisations based on a collaborative, multi-stakeholder model.

Working for lead developers, Cora Homes and Davidsons, our aim was to help them establish a stewardship vehicle that is properly equipped to take care of its community, where ownership and accountability gradually shifts from the developer to representatives of the community.

Putting this experience into practice, our team got to work:

- constructing the governance around the community's stewardship;
- drafting the constitution required for the Board makeup; and
- preparing and negotiating documents with the developers securing funding for stewardship, and approval by the local authority.

These efforts unite for a sole purpose: to cultivate a well-maintained, connected community that is tended to by its people for many years to come.

### Where next?

Broadnook is the tip of the iceberg as we propel our ambition to establish reaffirming sustainable, long-term communities across the UK, enabling more people to live in happier, healthier spaces.

Bert Broadhead at Cora Homes said: "At Broadnook Garden Village we are creating a community where residents are more than just homeowners—they're active participants in shaping the village. The Trust will manage all public assets, ensuring Broadnook evolves as a sustainable, vibrant place to live with the communities' input guiding decisions on how green spaces, play areas, and community buildings are maintained and developed."



## Acting for vulnerable individuals involved in forced marriages

It's been a decade since forced marriages were criminalised and we have been working with both affected individuals and local authorities to protect vulnerable young people identified as being at risk of being forced into a marriage when either did not consent or were unable to consent, to marriage due to not having the capacity to do so.

Driven to protect those who need our help, our family team have a strong reputation for fighting for individuals who lack the mental capacity to consent to marriage.

### Work that matters

The Forced Marriages Unit (FMU), the Government's main delivery arm for dealing with forced marriage casework and policy, gave advice and support on 280 forced marriages and/or female genital mutilation (FGM) cases in 2023. Of these, 67 cases involved a victim with mental capacity concerns.

Known as a hidden crime, the work we carry out plays a vital role in protecting and advocating for the individuals forced into a marriage against their will or without the knowledge to consent due to not having capacity.

In the last year, we have issued court proceedings to protect five individuals after being instructed by local authorities, who had been made aware of these situations. Through our strong working relationship with our communities and our local authority connections, we have been able to represent local authorities in urgent applications to obtain Forced Marriage Protection Orders. In all five cases, the individuals were vulnerable adults with no capacity to consent to marriage and, in some, they were due to imminently travel abroad.

Our involvement included:

- advising the local authority whether applications for Forced Marriage Protection Order could be made;
- applying for Forced Marriage Protection Orders;
- preparing statements on behalf of the applicant; and
- representing the local authority at court hearings.

### Where next?

We put people at the heart of our work and are driven to leave them in a better place than when we first met them. By working with local authorities, we have been able to apply for orders to safeguard vulnerable people and prevent them from being forced into a marriage that they did not consent to and providing them with protection for the future.

## Partnerships driving social and affordable housing

The development of truly affordable homes is of urgent need in the era of a growing housing crisis. The West Midlands Combined Authority (WMCA) and five of the leading housing associations in West Midlands have joined forces, recognising their position and joint power to tackle the housing dilemma through a collaborative partnering agreement.

We have supported the five housing associations, Bromford Housing, Citizen Housing, GreenSquareAccord, Midland Heart and Walsall Housing Group, collectively the Homes for the West Midlands LLP (HWM LLP), in its partnership with the WMCA.

### Accelerating the delivery of affordable homes in the West Midlands

With more than 6,500 households waiting for affordable and social housing in the region, the collaboration has the potential to build 1,000 new homes over the next decade, starting in Sandwell.

In order to reach this first collaborative project, our work with both HWM LLP and WMCA included:

- establishing and drafting the HWM LLP deed;
- drafting the collaborative partnering agreement; and
- drafting the property and the construction documents for the initial project in Sandwell.

We also provided advice on governance, procurement and subsidy control. For the ongoing project at Sandwell, we will be supporting the partnership with commercial, property and construction advice.

### Unlocking development

Social housing is a key sector in our firm and through this innovative partnership, we are helping the acceleration of affordable housing in the region, unlocking new sites for development, and supporting the government's renewed focus on housebuilding.

## Making charity status accessible to all

Our charitable work, and our work with charities, is core to our purpose of leaving the planet in a better state than when we joined it. With the charity sector under increased pressure, and more people crying out for support, making charity registrations accessible for all is central to our social value work.

Working with a range of sectors from construction to faith-based organisations, we have supported charities across the entire spectrum – from the most cash-strapped start-ups to multi-million-pound corporations already operating on a national scale – ensuring our work doesn't discriminate.

With the Charity Commission rejecting around half of all registration attempts, we are proud of our near-100% success rate. We help individuals and organisations weigh up their charitable status options, support with governing documentation and effectively register them to ensure they can deliver on their charitable aims and interests. We even help high growth charities to ensure they have the right corporate structure for future success.

### What we're doing about it

With most charities already feeling the squeeze on their budgets, it is more important than ever to look at where opportunities may lie for them and it goes beyond simply registering them correctly for example, reviewing contracts and seeking income generating solutions. With a 'can do' attitude, we believe nothing is beyond the scope of our imagination for our charity clients. We make, create and encourage charities to set-up, give and grow wherever possible.

### This year we have:

- Grown our charity work by 247 new clients
- Achieved nearly 100% success rate in registrations
- Averaged more than one registration per week

### Looking to the future

We are receiving more enquiries now than ever from people seeking registration assistance and we can say with confidence that the volume of enquiries is only going to increase in the next 12 months. We take the work we do for all our clients very seriously, especially when charity service users are in grave need of support. Whether small start-ups or national, well-established charities, we look forward to continuing to push boundaries on their behalf.

We have no doubt that we are going to see continued growth in the future. This work is so important, and we're determined to keep charity registrations accessible for all.

## Helping to overcome financial exclusion

With 'inclusion' improvements in different areas high on the agenda for many, financial inclusion and its role in helping people who have experienced financial hardship, can sometimes be overlooked.

Our work with a not-for-profit organisation aims to improve access to credit and borrowing for those who need it the most when they need it the most.

With many individuals facing financial vulnerability, we helped this organisation in its mission to increase the financial resilience and well-being of people in vulnerable circumstances, in particular those in difficult multiple debt situations.

### How this is being achieved

In a bid to consolidate cases of multiple high-interest debts for those who have found themselves on the wrong side of financial good fortune, the organisation wanted to invest in a credit union in order to support loan consolidation. In doing so, it aimed to help people get back on an even footing and better manage multiple debts in one loan repayment at a sensible rate of interest - paving the way for a better, more secure future.

Our work has included:

- advising on the mechanisms of how to invest in credit unions;
- how you can invest and importantly what you can't do in this highly regulated space;
- negotiating for the client with the credit union;
- supporting and advising on the subsequent subscription agreement; and
- securing and completing the investment

### Future for financial and social justice

This financial inclusion mechanism is one example of how much impact access to fair finances can have on the lives of those who just need a helping hand. Financial inclusion afforded by partnerships between credit unions and not-for-profit organisations takes society one step closer to transforming lives and communities with great effect.





# Environment

# 7.2

Our environment score



# Environment

As a social-purpose business, sustainability is not just a tick-box exercise, it's in our DNA.

We understand that we have no choice but to take radical action to meet our environmental goals. We aim to be a carbon net-zero business by 2030 – a full 20 years ahead of the mandated 2050 deadline for the UK.

Through ongoing measurement and assessment of our progress, we aim to show full transparency and accountability, make improvements and set targets to plan for the future. We know we have a long way to go, but making lasting change is within our grasp.



## What we've achieved over the last 12 months

### Making Anthony Collins as energy-efficient as possible

Over the last year, we have invested heavily in our Birmingham office space driven by our sustainability goals and feedback from our Great Place to Work survey.

We now have an improved, modern workspace for our people and have reduced our carbon footprint, going from a class E to A. During the refurbishment, we worked with Business Moves Group on an extensive asset inventory and donated unwanted furniture to Uplands Manor Primary School & Nursery's library.

In October, we signed a new agreement to replace our existing fleet of printers across all offices with the goal of reducing our carbon emissions and resource depletion. The Remanufactured devices (instead of new ones) support the circular economy, minimise electronic waste, and significantly cut CO2 emissions compared to new models – we estimate that our new printers will reduce our energy usage by between 22 – 30%. We've also planted more trees than we've printed through Forest Positive printing program, PaperCut Grows.

### We can't manage what we can't measure.

Working with sustainability specialists Inteb, we've been gathering data (scope 1 & 2 ESOS) to help measure our baseline energy usage and identify areas for improvement which will go on to form part of our net carbon zero action plan.



*"As soon as we started working with the team at Anthony Collins, we could see that they were eager to do the right thing and this had to start with data collection and accuracy. For many firms, this is such a laborious, but necessary step to build all future improvements from. The team have taken it in their stride, and it's clear that they're very forward-looking in their approach to making environmental improvements. We're there to ensure the efforts are put in the right places."*

**Tom Kelly, managing director at Inteb**

## What we're planning next

- Measure scope 3 emissions and draft a carbon net zero plan.
- Create an Environmentally Preferable Purchasing Policy (EPP).
- Actively monitor water usage and waste production.

Our new printers could save over

**5.5**  
tonnes CO<sub>2</sub>e

equivalent to six return flights  
to Athens or 32 return journeys  
in an average-sized petrol  
hybrid car to Paris!



**Vikash Mistry, IT support manager**

## Committed to becoming net-zero carbon by 2030

Doing the right thing runs through every element of our business, and our approach to environmental improvements is no different. We've partnered with sustainability specialists Inteb on a three-year ambitious programme focused on achieving our net zero target. This partnership is helping us to understand our environmental impact, track progress, set targets and design a clear roadmap to get there.

Our ambitious three-year programme includes:

### This year

We've established our baseline. We've been assessing where we currently are by collecting data and information across every part of our business. This has given us a true picture of our impact, our biggest opportunities and our biggest gaps.

This means:

- we've been assessing emissions across scopes 1 and 2 to ensure we know where we stand and where to make the biggest impacts;
- we've carried out ESOS audits across our office footprint to find out our total energy consumption and made quick adjustments, such as smart technology where possible;
- we've invested in software to support better data collection and data accuracy for the future; and
- we've introduced a series of training resources to support our people to support our planet.

### Next year

Now we know our carbon facts and figures, we can be laser-focused on target setting. With the help of our environmental partners, Inteb, we'll be putting in place our net-zero carbon action plan. But we'll only be as good as our data, so rolling out advanced, sustainability measurement software, Ecometrica, is a top priority for keeping us honest.

### The future

Our action plan sets out our detailed commitments, and we'll need to assess and adjust it each year to ensure it remains fit for purpose and in line with our 2030 goals. We're aiming for SBTi (Science Based Targets Initiative) certification too — a leading climate action organisation that pairs net-zero targets with scientific backing.

It's not all about us. We recognise that understanding our scope 3 emissions is going to take a little more time to crack. We're aiming to better understand our supply chain and vendors to help them on their carbon reduction journey too.



# Community 19

Our community score



# Community

Building a better business through our communities.

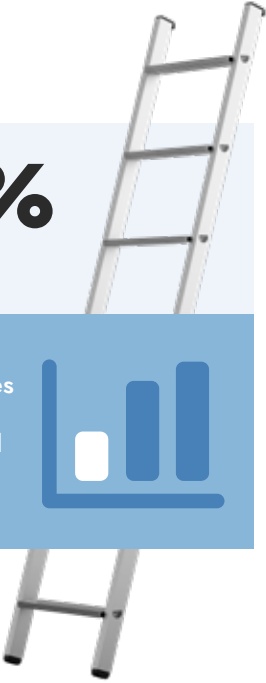
From diversity targets to supply chain management, we're acutely aware of the role businesses play in the communities around them, and it's a role we take extremely seriously.

As a firm focused on doing social good, we use our influence to make a positive impact on the people and places near our offices, through our volunteering and charity work, and importantly, through our commercial activity.

We know our community activity can be far-reaching, and we're working to create more opportunities for our people and our clients to work together, as well as increasing the transparency of our activity and associated impact.

*"Research consistently shows that diversity strengthens businesses – it's proven to drive profitability. For us, it's not only about the bottom line; it's about the impact on our people and clients – profit fuels our purpose. We work with communities and clients from diverse backgrounds and having a team that reflects that diversity enables us to give more insightful, innovative advice."*

**Ann Houghton, partner and ED&I lead**



# 65%

of our first- and second-year trainees now come from under-represented socio-economic backgrounds.

## What we've achieved over the last 12 months

We have:

- strengthened our commitment to zero tolerance of racism with the adoption of the Halo Code accreditation, explicitly protecting our people who come to work with natural hair and protective hairstyles;
- invested in our recruitment strategy with the addition of a social mobility tool that independently weights trainee applications based on candidates' backgrounds to inform fairer recruitment;
- updated our supplier list and created a CSR supplier questionnaire which has been rolled out to our IT and risk and compliance suppliers. Our office services team are next in line for the rollout; and
- grown our social purpose volunteering hours to 605 – a 16.6% increase from last year.

## What we're planning next

- We want to look at ways to broaden the rollout of our social mobility recruitment tool from trainees to use more widely across the firm.
- Improve business diversity by making progress towards our 2030 target of a minimum of 50% of key leadership roles to be filled by women and at least 20% of key leadership roles to be filled by people from ethnic minority backgrounds.
- Advance our supply chain management project by initiating our new approach to onboarding suppliers and ensuring that their values reflect ours.
- Increase our impact on local communities by improving the take-up of our Social Purpose Volunteering (SPV) days and ensure that they have a positive impact on the communities our offices operate.

Our June 2024  
Social Impact Report  
confirmed we donated

**£83k**

to charity last year



## A snapshot of our fundraising efforts

Our work extends beyond the day-to-day and into strategic charity partnerships that enable us to grow our reach as a social purpose law firm.

Each October, we support the Child Brain Injury Trust's annual GLOWeek with a range of fundraising and awareness-raising activities, including a well-being day for parents and carers, and this year we raised over £4,000. We also hosted a well-being day for parent carers of children with brain injuries.

We staffed St Basil's charity's pop-up shop in Birmingham city centre and supported fund-raising events including the Woof Run, Hike for Homelessness and our trainees organised a fund-raising lunch club.

### AC50 – celebrating our 50th year

In line with our purpose that has driven our social impact over these years, we dialled into three key areas this year: well-being, community and productivity, and set 50 challenges that our people have risen to over the last 12 months. From seeing how much we can litter pick in our communities, to gathering items for our food collection, our monthly challenges delivered some fantastic results:

- dedicated 72 days to social purpose volunteering;
- collecting 35 bags of rubbish from our local communities;
- donating 370 gifts to vulnerable clients at Christmas;
- collecting 29 bags of unwanted clothing for charity; and
- donating 787 items to local food banks.

It didn't stop there, we've also been spreading joy through 60 random acts of kindness.

### Impacting our communities

As part of our social purpose volunteering programme, many fund-raising initiatives have been run by staff throughout the year – everything from art evenings to garden tidies and abseiling. Volunteering hours in 2024 were 605 hours – a 16.6% increase on last year. We also received a Payroll Giving Gold Award for fostering a culture of philanthropy in the workplace by making Payroll Giving available to all employees.

## Touching all corners of our community

Community runs at the core of our firm, including fostering close, productive and ethical links with businesses up and down our supply chain. We hold ourselves to high standards and expect the same from those we do business with, which is evidenced by our commitment to continually improve our supply chain management processes.

### A deep dive into our supply chain

Proactive supply chain management is the basis of any successful business and we're conscious that this isn't something that's a one-off activity – it has to be ongoing and constantly improved.

Over the past year, we've undertaken an extensive supply chain management exercise, including:

- creating and maintaining an up-to-date supplier list to show who we're working with, and where they're based;
- developing an extensive supplier questionnaire that is being sent to our current suppliers. This will be done in tranches covering nine supply areas: Finance, Human Resources, IT, Innovation and Transformation, Knowledge and Information, Marketing and Business Development, Office Services, and Risk and Compliance:
  - the questionnaire covers five topic areas: corporate environmental footprint, manufacturing environmental footprint, employee conditions, data protection and security and business continuity;
  - creating a brand-new onboarding policy for new suppliers, with a heavy focus on good governance and compliance, as well as a strict emphasis on positive practices; and
  - assessing our supply chain vigorously with a view to increasing our commercial engagements with suppliers from within a 20-mile radius of our offices where possible.

### Continuous supply chain improvement

Carrying out a dive into our supply chain and engaging with our suppliers through our questionnaire gives us the ability to make impactful decisions, choose suppliers that align with our values and allows us to work together to make a bigger impact in our communities and society.

The work isn't over though, this is an ongoing project which will require careful management from our procurement team in 2025 and beyond, to make sure that we are working with the best of the best. This includes analysing our questionnaire responses and launching our new onboarding policy next year.

# A look to the future

2024 has been an important year for Anthony Collins – a year of expansion, financial achievement and the delivery of expert legal services for clients in the sectors we serve – all whilst also working to improve the way we do business.

Over the past 12 months, we've laid solid foundations to further build on our impact areas and feel inspired to share our expectations to not only do the right thing as a business but to do right by our people, clients and the planet too. This builds on our deep commitment internally to our purpose and understanding that we want to be a good business that makes a positive difference in society.

I look forward to another year of the firm's profitable growth, with B Corp at our core, as we build financial capacity to invest in colleagues, technology and markets so as to increase our ability to deliver social purpose outcomes for our clients and communities – doing more good, more often.

**Peter Hubbard, managing partner**



**Anthony**  
**Collins**

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