



MAKING A DIFFERENCE

CORPORATE SOCIAL RESPONSIBILITY REVIEW 2018

CSR - AT THE HEART OF ALL WE DO

AMANDA MASKERY CHAIR OF SINTONS' CSR COMMITTEE

As a well-known business and responsible employer, we take our role of giving back to the local community very seriously. Since 1896, Sintons has been a central part of the North East's business community, and we fully appreciate the role a firm such as ours can and should have in helping to make Newcastle and the wider region a better place for everyone.

We take great pride in our commitment to giving back and going the extra mile for the benefit of others – our CSR focus is a central and fundamental part of our culture and vision as a firm. In the local area, we are well known for our willingness to get involved with charities, community groups and other good causes, whether through charitable giving or the voluntary involvement of our partners and employees, and we are keen to get involved with as many as we can while making a difference to those we support.

Over the past few years alone, we have raised almost

£100,000

for local charities through the fundraising efforts of our employees. We nominate an employee charity which Sintons' fundraising activities are concentrated upon and Partners commit to matching whatever is raised, which helps to show that our CSR commitment runs throughout the whole firm.

We assign **80 employee days each year to volunteering in the local community**, and our partners and employees have turned their hand to everything from gardening and dog walking to painting and decorating, to help improve the lives and surroundings of those who need it most. We have a dedicated CSR committee to plan and co-ordinate our activities, who help shape the future of our role in the local area.

Many of our people at Sintons also give up their time to hold roles such as charity trustees and school governors, as a means of using their specialist knowledge to benefit the community – as one example,



HELPING OTHERS.

I am Chair of Family Gateway, a unique charity which supports vulnerable families in finding ways out of poverty, and am also a Governor of Newcastle High School for Girls.

I am immensely proud of the roles I play with both. Community contribution is at the heart of everything we do and we are very proud of our reputation for doing so over many years.



FIRM CHARITY

At Sintons, we are keen to give back to the community in which we have been based for over 120 years, and support those groups and organisations who could benefit from our help.

Whether through the involvement of employees on a pro bono basis or through charitable giving, we believe it is essential to play a central role in our local area.

GREAT NORTH AIR AMBULANCE SERVICE

Over **£6,300** to help GNAAS operate their three helicopters, 365 days a year across the North East and Cumbria, responding to over 1,000 lifesaving call-outs a year. Grahame Pickering MBE, chief executive of GNAAS, said: "We are hugely grateful to all at Sintons for getting behind us. This money will mean someone can get help in their hour of need, and everyone involved should be proud of what they have contributed. We couldn't keep flying without this kind of support."

MACMILLAN CANCER SUPPORT

Over **£27,000** to help the charity launch its pioneering Care Closer to Home project in the North East, a partnership between Macmillan and Newcastle upon Tyne Hospitals NHS Foundation Trust, which offers treatment in a community setting rather than a hospital. Erin Fairley, fundraising manager at Macmillan, said: "Working with Sintons has been such a pleasure. Everyone within the company has really been behind the partnership and we are absolutely thrilled to have raised so much money to help local people affected by cancer. The team at Sintons have been an integral part of raising funds for Care Closer to Home."

DOWNS SYNDROME NORTH EAST

Over **£12,000** to help support the charity's work in offering support, networking opportunities, events and subsidised leisure activities to people with Downs Syndrome and their families and friends. Anne Webster, chair of DSNE, said: "It has been a pleasure and a privilege to have worked alongside Sintons and we would like to say a huge thank you to all the staff from all the families that DSNE support."

As well as raising such a magnificent sum for DSNE, Sintons has also supported us in other ways to raise the profile of the charity."

TINY LIVES

Over **£11,500** to help the charity's vital work in supporting premature and sick newborn babies and their families on the neonatal unit at Newcastle' RVI Hospital. Carole Meredith, head of Tiny Lives Trust, said: "We know what a lot of time, effort and energy has gone into the wide ranging programme of activities that Sintons produced."

Sintons' help has also been hugely valuable on a practical level when staff volunteered in the Tiny Lives office and helped our tiny team when we were swamped with administration and mailings."

RAISING FUNDS.

Over the past few years, we have raised tens of thousands of pounds for a host of charities in the North East who do such valuable work to support those in need.

Through a ballot of Sintons' employees, the decision is made as to which charity to concentrate our fundraising efforts on.

Currently, we are supporting Daft as a Brush Cancer Patient Care, which provides staffed custom-made vehicles to transport outpatients, free of charge, to and from their chemotherapy and radiotherapy cancer treatment appointments.



ABSEIL

Proving that Sintons are willing to take on any challenge, we held an abseil down the side of our offices, which saw 13 members of the firm – including our firm’s Chairman, Alan Dawson – abseiling down all four floors of The Cube.

The daring feat raised thousands of pounds alone for Tiny Lives and attracted widespread publicity, as well as quite an audience among passing traffic and pedestrians along busy Barrack Road.



OUR PROJECTS.

YOUNG PEOPLE’S DEVELOPMENT

We are very proud to be a long-standing partner of Esh’s Building my Skills, an initiative which helps school children prepare for the world of work by developing their ‘employability’ skills and learn more about what businesses would expect from them. We deliver presentations to schools across the whole

North East region, and conduct workshops and mock interviews with young people, so they can improve the ‘soft skills’ that are so vital in the workplace. We are also pleased to be working with Career Ready, The Social Mobility Foundation and Business in the Community, charities that support young people into the world of work.



We are proud partner with Sintons on this multi award winning programme, a collaboration which is helping to improve careers advice in schools and ‘Bridge the Gap’ between employers and students.

Darush Dodds, Esh



ESH GROUP 

SINTONS’ SINGERS

In recent years, we have assembled a choir, who perform at Christmas in aid of our charity. The group have performed in Eldon Square during one of the busiest shopping days in the run-up to Christmas, and last year held a concert at Daft as a Brush in Gosforth.



FOODBANK CONTRIBUTIONS

We regularly organise donations to the Newcastle West End Foodbank, the UK’s biggest foodbank which helps an estimated **40,000 people** a year in the city. We organise bigger collections around Christmas, comprising both food and gifts, to help families in need.



SECRETS OF THE BEEHIVE

There has been widespread concern for several years now about the decline in honeybee colonies. Bees and other pollinators play an essential role in ecosystems with significant implications for food production if this decline continues.

Whilst the main causes of this decline are well outside our control, we decided we should do something to help on a local basis.

To that end, we have sponsored a bee hive which will be located on the **Northumberland moors** and looked after on our behalf by a beekeeper, Iain Davies. We hope we will see a supply of honey coming to the firm which we will sell/donate as part of our fund-raising activity for our chosen charity, **Daft as a Brush**.

We asked our people to suggest a name for our Queen Bee and received **33 nominations**. Beatrice was the winning name and we look forward to hearing news of our **Queen Beatrice** and her family of bees in the future.



QUIZ NIGHTS

We hold fundraising quiz nights for clients and intermediaries. Our quiz nights are hugely popular features in the Sintons' calendar, and provide an informal means for our people to get to know each other socially, while raising money for charity.

We also organise charity quiz nights for which tickets are sold, generating revenue for the nominated good cause that way. Our quiz in aid of the Child Brain Injury Trust, for which we are the regional legal partner, was a complete sell-out, raising hundreds of pounds for the charity.

DRESS DOWN DAYS AND BAKE SALES

Held regularly in aid of our charity, dress down days allow our employees to come into work in informal dress in exchange for a donation, which helps to raise several hundreds of pounds.

We also hold regular bake sales, for which sweet and savoury treats are baked or donated by our employees, and sold during tea breaks for a nominal sum. These too raise hundreds of pounds for the nominated charity.



TRAINEE COMMITMENT.

We are fortunate to have a hugely dedicated and vibrant Trainee and Solicitor Apprentice group at Sintons, who challenge themselves outside of their legal work by achieving feats of all varieties to raise money for charity.

Our trainees are extremely active in devising fundraising initiatives and regularly engage the whole firm in activities including games of bingo, raffles and bake sales.

They also take on a host of more extreme challenges as a means of raising funds.

The group have completed the 140-mile Coast to Coast (C2C) cycle ride from Whitehaven to Tynemouth, despite some of them never having owned a bike prior to their training for the event.

That achievement alone raised over

£3,000

in aid of the If U Care Share Foundation, a charity which supports emotional wellbeing in young people and offers specialist help to those affected by suicide.

They have also successfully taken on the Three Peaks Challenge, climbing Ben Nevis, Scafell Pike and Mount Snowdon – a combined height of **3,408 metres** – in one weekend, which also raised thousands of pounds for the charity **Daft as a Brush**.

PROUD TO SUPPORT APPRENTICES

Sintons was one of the founder members of the North East Solicitor Apprenticeship, the first scheme outside of London to offer a more accessible route into law. The six-year apprenticeship, which combines practical on-the-job training in Sintons with academic studies at a leading University and academic support from CILEx Law School, has enabled Sintons to recruit some outstanding young people.



ENVIRONMENT.

As a responsible business, mindful of our responsibilities, we are very conscious of the need to minimise the impact we have on the environment.

We are committed to the promotion of sustainability and continually challenge ourselves to improve. Sintons has a dedicated environmental committee which monitors our record and considers initiatives to improve performance.

We have procedures in place to segregate our office waste, including paper, toner cartridges and computers and have them disposed of through approved agencies. We do the same for canteen waste and our policies, procedures and purchasing strategies are predicated with considerations of environmental issues. We are recognised by

Newcastle
City Council 

as being an exemplar firm for our efforts in recycling - currently we recycle over **70% of all the waste we generate.**



TRAVEL

As a means to improve the energy efficiency of our office, we have a transportation policy which encourages the use by employees of public transport wherever possible as well as car sharing. Season ticket loans are offered by the firm, which are currently taken up by around a quarter of our people. We also have an electric car.



WASTE MANAGEMENT

All of our marketing and publicity material is printed on recycled paper. Electronic methods of communication are maximised where appropriate. We use double sided printing as standard.



WATER MANAGEMENT

In our dealings with suppliers we always ensure that the environmental credentials of the goods and services which they supply are considered as a priority. We source consumables and beverages for our people and clients from Fairtrade suppliers. We also have glass refillable bottles for meetings instead of using plastic water bottles.

LEGAL SECTOR ALLIANCE NETWORK MEMBER

We are members of the Legal Sector Alliance, a group of law firms working collectively to take action on climate change and adopt environmentally sustainable practices.



