

Corporate Social Responsibility

2021

Co%ownership

Corporate Social Responsibility Report 2021

Our CSR activities are now well established within the organisation and despite challenges due to Covid 19 restrictions we were able to further embed our practices and even introduce some new CSR initiatives.

In 2021, our staff rose to the occasion yet again and delivered a record-breaking fundraising total for our chosen charity. This was achieved through various events which saw good staff participation. Congratulations to all staff on this achievement. The ongoing commitment to our CSR projects during the last 12 months has been a great achievement whilst at the same time we have continued to deliver our services as normal.

We continue to base our activities around 3 key areas:

- **Environment** – reducing the impact of our operations on the environment through encouraging behaviours and introducing initiatives that minimise waste and maximise efficiency.
- **Workplace** – building on our existing activities that support equality of opportunity and diversity both in our dealings with clients and stakeholders and also across the organisation.
- **Community** – encouraging and supporting our staff in volunteering and fundraising opportunities.

Environment

Our aim is to embed environmentally ethical behaviour into our culture and workforce, and we have done this through the following

- Continued to encourage staff to recycle materials such as paper, cardboard, cans and plastic, to further reduce the amount of waste we send to landfill each year. Regular staff newsletters were issued with tips for recycling in the home and at Christmas time along with ways to reduce our plastic consumption.
- Took part in Business in the Community Environmental Benchmarking Survey in 2021 and achieved Bronze status. This process continues to provide a good opportunity to assess the environmental practices we currently have in place and look at how we can improve on this.
- We saved 38 trees by recycling 2250 kgs of paper through our confidential waste.
- We submitted a response to the Department for the Economy's Consultation on Energy Strategy for Northern Ireland.
- We procured a green energy tariff with our electricity supplier.

- A new Gardening and Wildlife group was established which allows participants to share ideas on attracting wildlife into the garden along with gardening tips.
- All staff were sent bee garden seed bombs and encouraged to try their hand at growing from seed.
- Our office planting has continued with the addition of wall planting strategically placed in the photocopier areas.

Workplace

- Our governance framework and policies are reviewed regularly for good practice in terms of meeting the needs of our various stakeholders.
- Our Equality Team continued their work internally with the Annual Progress Report submitted to the Equality Commission in August 2021.
- We are currently undergoing our 5 year review of the Equality Scheme and a 3 year review of the Disability Action Plan to meet our legislative duties under Section 75 of the NI Act 1998 and Section 49A of the Disability Discrimination Act 1995.

- We continued to contribute to consultations on strategy and legislation in the housing arena.
- The business development team continued their outreach and have attended events throughout all of Northern Ireland, free of charge. During the pandemic and lockdown, we were innovative in continuing to deliver information remotely, utilising technology where possible
- Staff were offered a comprehensive health and wellbeing programme which was tailored specifically around their needs during the pandemic and lockdowns.

Community

- Our fundraising efforts continued, and we presented a cheque to the Cystic Fibrosis Trust for £6,186.60 at the end of the financial year. This was another record-breaking amount raised by our staff.
- Following staff consultation, staff voted to support the Alzheimer's Society and we have held a number of virtual and in person fundraising events. These include 5 staff taking part in the Belfast relay marathon, raffles, and virtual dress down days.

- Once again, our staff supported the Barnardo's Bereavement Service Christmas Gift Appeal. The staff response to the appeal exceeded expectations yet again and we were able to support 26 families with Christmas gifts.
- Our annual Community Fund helped support 4 organisations with their chosen projects.
- Along with all our fundraising activities which support the wider community, all staff are encouraged to partake in volunteering and are supported with 1 days volunteering per annum. We have 15 staff members who volunteer with the Age NI Check in and Chat initiative. This involves a ½ hour phone call to an older person who may be feeling lonely or isolated. We began taking part in this over the period of lockdowns and in 2021 our staff gave 320 volunteering hours to this initiative.
- ReachDeck was introduced onto our website to replace Browsealoud. This ensures content is clear, simple, and concise and provides speech reading and translation support tools to improve accessibility.

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