



# CSR review 2018

As one of the largest and fastest growing providers of legal services Stephensons Solicitors LLP are fully aware of, and have a genuine commitment to, Corporate Social Responsibility.

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# Stephensons

## Overview

Corporate Social Responsibility (CSR) provides Stephensons with the opportunity to give something back to the communities we serve, in more ways than one. Every year our staff put forward charities they would like to see become our charity of the year, these are shortlisted by the CSR committee and then voted for by our staff. Throughout the year a number of fundraisers are organised to raise money for them and many other charities which mean so much to our staff and those in the local communities in which we are based. We hold a dress down day every Friday with money raised going to our charity of the year and the funds raised on one dress down day per month donated to another charity.

Many of our fundraisers and initiatives are summarised here in our chronology of 2018, which shows how diverse and far reaching these initiatives can be. People in the firm have the opportunity to donate money but they are also encouraged to donate time to help charities in ways which money cannot.

The CSR committee also discusses ways in which the firm can help itself and the environment around it. Law firms aren't exactly known as being best friends of the environment. Stephensons are working on this and much of it stems from the CSR. This year we launched a plastic free initiative to encourage staff to challenge themselves to go plastic free and to help reduce our impact on the environment. You can read more about this later in the review.

The CSR committee is important for the firm. Stephensons started as a small firm in Leigh and has gone from strength to strength. With a large presence throughout the North West and having expanded to London, our roots remain at the forefront of our minds and the most important function of the CSR committee is to ensure that we continue to help those communities which we have been a part of for so many years. 2018 was another active and productive year for the CSR committee as can be seen in this review.

# Fundraising in January & February

## January

Our fundraising for 2018 was kicked off by a dress down day across the firm on 5th January. Prior to April, when the dress down changed, every dress down day was for a different charity with the last one of the month, and any other Friday not allocated to another charity, being for our charity of year. This particular dress down day was to raise funds for Willow Foundation. Willow Foundation is the only national charity working with seriously ill young adults to fulfil uplifting and unforgettable days for them and their loved ones.

The following week staff donated their dress down money to Forever Manchester, a charity who raise money to fund and support community activities across Greater Manchester. They support a huge range of activities and support people in the local area to inspire them and encourage projects to make their neighbourhoods happier, healthier and safer places to be.

On 19th January we donated our dress down money to another local charity, Wigan Warblers. They are a local community singing group for everyone, but especially for people with breathing difficulties such as COPD, asthma, IPF and other long term health conditions. Kate Sweeney, Clare Gammond and Sarah Masters from our personal injury team joined the group for a few songs in March when they presented them with the cheque of the money staff had raised on the dress down day. The money helped to fund their trip to Blackpool where they performed at the World Health Innovation Summit at the Winter Gardens.



## February

On Friday 2nd February staff dressed down to raise money for Think Ahead Community Stroke Group, a charity who aim to give back the hope and self-respect that a stroke so often takes away.

On Wednesday 14th February staff in the personal injury department held a variety of fundraising activities to raise money for I Love Claims Day on behalf of the Rainbow Trust children's charity. Activities included a tombola, a firm wide quiz, a raffle and a roll the coin game. There was also a bake sale and on Friday 16th a dress down day was held for the same cause. The total amount raised was a fantastic £650 which was greatly appreciated by the charity. They said: "Thank you to all the wonderful staff at Stephenson's for taking part in I Love Claims Day 2018 and donating an amazing £650. Your donation could provide over 27 hours of practical and emotional support to a family with a seriously ill child."



## Fundraising in February, March & April



Also on 16th February, staff from the personal injury and clinical negligence teams held a bake sale in the Wigan office in aid of the 2018 Great Legal Bake to raise money for The North West Legal Support Trust. This charity aims to improve access to justice for the most vulnerable people in our society by raising money and distributing it to those who need legal help but cannot afford it.

At the end of February Jill Rushton visited Wigan and Leigh Hospice to deliver a donation of Easter eggs for their Easter egg hunt which took place in March. The hospice is local to our North West offices and provides palliative care for adult patients across Wigan borough. Stephenson's has supported the hospice through various fundraising activities and donations such as this for many years.

### March

In March Shahina Sakeria from our personal injury team visited a local primary school to present a cheque to Mesnes NRG after staff held a dress down day in aid of the charity. Mesnes NRG is a local charity who provide activities, training and free food for underprivileged children and their families in our community.

On 9th March a dress down day was held to raise money for The Children's Cancer and Leukaemia Group. This charity has been instrumental in developing the training and research methodology that now underpins the fight against childhood cancer in the UK.

Also in March, staff raised funds in aid of Sports Relief by holding a dress down day for the charity. Money raised by this charity is used to tackle critical issues affecting people across the UK and all over the world in the hope that they will be able to live happier, healthier and safer lives.

### April

On Friday 6th April staff dressed down and held a bake sale to raise money for Cancer Research UK. This national charity is the world's leading charity dedicated to beating cancer through research and their groundbreaking work into the prevention, diagnosis and treatment of cancer, which is funded entirely by the public, has helped save millions of lives.

April marks the start of our new fundraising year and so a new charity of the year was selected by our staff. The CSR committee had narrowed down all the submitted suggestions and the shortlist was put to a staff vote. And the winner was local charity, Derian House Children's Hospice.



Derian House provides specialist palliative, respite and end of life care to children and young people with life shortening conditions and helps to support their families. The hospice has a catchment area which covers the whole of Lancashire and the South Lakes and is currently providing specialist care services to more than 300 families and bereavement support for a further 200 families.

Far from being a place of sorrow, Derian House – which celebrated its 25 anniversary this year - aims to create a happy, lively and vibrant environment which ensures quality of life is enhanced for the children and young people in its care. Derian House receives minimal statutory funding and are reliant on the support of partners and the wider community to raise the awareness and funds necessary to meet the needs of children and families throughout Lancashire and Cumbria.

## Fundraising in April & May

At the end of April we presented our cheque of £3,703.76 to Mind, who were our 2017/18 charity of the year. The charity provides advice and support to empower anyone experiencing a mental health problem. They campaign to improve services, raise awareness and promote understanding. Mind works alongside local and regional groups to support more than 390,000 people across England and Wales.



Anna Murray, Corporate Partnerships Manager for Mind, said: "We are hugely grateful to Stephenson's for their support of Mind as their charity of the year and for helping to ensure that we can support the one in four people who experience a mental health problem in any given year.

"Every penny raised over the course of this partnership will allow us to continue to be there for people who need it, when they need it the most and to fight to make sure that everyone with a mental health problem gets the support and respect they deserve."

### May

In May staff from across the firm got together to take part in the firm's spring quiz which was held to raise funds for our charity of the year. The total raised from the quiz and the raffle that also took place on the evening was a brilliant £239.65



On May 18th staff got involved with Hats for Headway during Action for Brain Injury Week to raise funds for the brain injury charity, Headway. Headway provides support, services and information to brain injury survivors, their families and carers, as well as to professionals in the health and legal fields. Staff were encouraged to raise funds by taking part in a competition to make their own hats with the theme being the royal wedding and world cup countries. There was also a tuck shop in the Wigan office to raise extra money.



## Fundraising in May, June & July

Also in May we ran a competition on our social media channels to raise money for our charity of the year. We asked our followers to send us a photograph to show us how they were celebrating the royal wedding to be entered into a draw to win afternoon tea. For every entry we received we donated £1 to Derian House.

### June

In June we held a bake sale and dress down day to raise money for the Alzheimer's Society, the UK's leading research and support charity for people with dementia and their carers.

On June 15th we held our annual summer fundraiser for our charity of the year, Derian House. Activities included a quiz, bake sale, sweet shop, tombola and tug of war. The total raised from the day was a fantastic £593.49.



Also in June, the firm sponsored the Home From Home Walk in aid of Ben's Wish. Ben's Wish is a local charity which was set up to grant a local family their son's wish to go on holiday to Jamaica once he was well enough following treatment for Leukemia. The money raised by the community surpassed this and Ben is now raising money to purchase equipment for the hospital that treated him. The Home From Home Walk took place on 24th June and was a sponsored walk from the Etihad Stadium in Manchester to Leigh Sports Village.

Another dress down day and bake sale was organised by Keira in the SRA team on the 29th June to raise money for her sponsored skydive in aid of The Christie Charity. Keira completed the skydive in September and raised a grand total of £1,373 for the charity who provide enhanced services for more than 44,000 cancer patients treated at The Christie every year.

### July



In July the firm sponsored local triathlete, Mark Turner, who represented Great Britain at the World Championships in Denmark and the European Championships in Spain.

Also in July, Andrew Mountain from the family team took part in a sponsored cycle from Manchester to Blackpool to raise money for The Christie Charity.

On 11th July, Shahina Sakeria from the personal injury team visited a local primary school to deliver a presentation on road safety with the aim to teach the children how to spot hazards and safely use the road. The personal injury team regularly deliver presentations like this at primary schools across the Wigan borough.

# Fundraising in August & September

## August

In August the firm made a donation to Mersey Storm Wheelchair Rugby League team to support the excellent work they do in the community. Mersey Storm are a local wheelchair tag rugby league team made up of both sexes and both disabled and non-disabled players.

On August 10th the personal injury team held a bake sale to raise money for Mesothelioma UK who are a national charity dedicated to providing support and improving care and treatment for all UK mesothelioma patients and their carers.

On August 19th a group of staff from across the firm took part in the eight mile Morecambe Bay Walk in aid of our charity of the year.



On 31st August we held a dress down day in aid of Emily's Star. This charity grants wishes to families who have a child or children with life limiting or life threatening illnesses in addition to raising awareness of Edwards Syndrome.

## September

On 16th September the firm sponsored the Wigan and Leigh Hospice 5K Colour Run and a group of staff from across the firm took part in the event.



# Fundraising in October & November

## October

In October we held a raffle for our staff to win a Thomas Sabo voucher worth £100 to raise money for our charity of the year. The funds raised from the raffle were used to contribute towards materials for a Christmas craft session for the children and the families being looked after by Derian House.

In October the CSR committee introduced a plastic free initiative across the firm. Staff were asked to sign up and take part in monthly challenges as outlined below:

Month one - use reusable bags whenever you go shopping

Those of who initially signed up to the charter received a reusable shopping bag.

Month two - start using a reusable drink bottle

In month two we asked people to start using a reusable water bottle preferably made from stainless steel or glass instead of plastic. We ran a competition for people to post selfies of themselves with their reusable water bottle and there was a prize for the best selfie.

Month three - cut out meals that come in containers that have plastic in them

We asked people to bring their own lunch in reusable containers rather than buying food in plastic containers.

Month four - no straws

We asked people to refuse plastic straws and to stop buying plastic straws.

Month five - start using a reusable coffee cup

We asked people to purchase a reusable coffee cup instead of using single use takeaway cups from coffee shops.

Month six - competition

We will run a competition to ask people to put forward three ideas each to move the charter forward.

On the 14th of October the firm sponsored the local Gin Pit 5 mile race and some of our staff took part in the event.

Finally in October, we invited our social media followers to share their favourite Halloween photograph with us to be entered into a prize draw to win cinema vouchers. For each of the first 200 entries we donated £1 to Derian House.



## November



On November 9th a dress down day was held to raise money for Turnpike Community Theatre. The aim of Turnpike Community Theatre, since its formation in 1984, is to foster interest, participation and study of the arts particularly making the arts more accessible and relevant to the community living in Leigh.

In November, staff from our Wigan office donated 17 shoeboxes to the Samaritan's Purse Operation Christmas Child Christmas child appeal. The shoeboxes were packed full of goodies and would be received by children all over the world who may otherwise not receive a gift at Christmas.

On 21st November staff from our personal injury team took part in a 'virtual cycle' as part of Brake's #BikeSmart campaign, the team aimed to cycle a minimum of 100km throughout the day whilst fundraising for this great cause.

Brake work to raise awareness and educate communities about the importance of road safety and reduce the number of people injured or killed on the roads and support bereaved and seriously injured road crash victims and their families.

# Fundraising in November & December

The team smashed their target and managed to cycle a fantastic 500.8km which is the same distance as from the Wigan office to Calais! The team also held a bake sale and managed to raise £220.



At the end of November, staff from across the firm volunteered at a local Tesco store which acted as a collection point for Atherton and Leigh Foodbank.

The foodbank provide three days worth of nutritionally balanced emergency food and support to local people who are referred to them in crisis.

Also in November, the firm donated £200 to the Gift of a Rucksack project which was enough to provide eight high quality sleeping bags and rucksacks to homeless people to help them to be a little bit warmer at night and have somewhere a little drier and safer to keep their possessions.

## December



On 6th December the clinical negligence team hosted a mince pie morning for Headway to raise money to help those affected by brain injury across the UK. They had a “mince pie blind taste test” and volunteers judged shop bought (budget, supermarket and high end categories) and homemade to find out which was best. The remaining mince pies were sold off for donations and £45 was raised. Headway said: “I write on behalf of everyone at Headway to offer our sincere thanks for your brilliant fundraising efforts, totalling £45. We are grateful that you chose to support Headway by hosting a mince pie morning and we hope you enjoyed getting together for a festive treat!”

In December we ran another competition for our social media followers. We asked followers to share a photo of their Christmas tree with us to be entered into a prize draw and for every entry we received we donated £1 to Derian House. Premex also ran a similar competition in which Tom Mooney in the clinical negligence team won £1000 for Derian House.



Also in December, staff were encouraged to make way for Christmas presents by donating clothes, books and toys to Derian House to help stock their four charity shops.

A donation of toys was also made to the KIND Christmas appeal. Since 1975 KIND have been helping to make a difference in the lives of thousands of disadvantaged children and families across Liverpool and Merseyside.

Another donation of gifts was made to Home Instead Senior Care's Santa to a Senior scheme which was set up to collect gifts for seniors who may be lonely or feel unloved at Christmas.