



The Weil, Gotshal & Manges team with Siobhán Lewington of Fox Rodney Search

# CSR PROGRAMME OF THE YEAR

Sponsored by Fox Rodney Search

## WEIL, GOTSHAL & MANGES DAVID IRVINE

### USING SOCIAL FINANCE TO CREATE A SAFE HOUSE FOR LGBTI REFUGEES

Weil's London office averaged a very strong 65 pro bono hours per lawyer last year. Integral to this, the firm's novel use of social finance enabled the opening of the UK's first safe house for LGBTI asylum seekers and refugees, developed by Micro Rainbow International (MRI) – a social enterprise operating in the UK, Brazil and Cambodia.

Weil assisted MRI to overcome a number of legal and economic barriers by developing an innovative financial model to make this

project become a reality. A team of 14 partners and lawyers from tax, finance and real estate spent over 265 hours advising MRI. Says MRI founder and CEO Sebastian Rocca: 'Thanks to the efforts of Weil we are thrilled that the first safe house has finally opened in the UK. This project is a game changer for MRI not only because of the high impact achieved but also because it has the potential to make the whole organisation sustainable and less vulnerable to grant funding.'

### HIGHLY COMMENDED NORTH EAST SOLICITOR APPRENTICESHIPS SAMANTHA LEE

North East Solicitor Apprenticeships is a consortium of five law firms and one in-house legal team, created in the summer of 2016, working together to provide solicitor apprenticeships to the North East region. McDaniel & Co, Muckle, North Tyneside Council, QualitySolicitors Smith Roddam, Sintons Law and Womble Bond Dickinson have worked together with CILEx Law School and City Law School to create the first group of regional solicitor apprentices. It is the first time a consortium of law firms have collaborated in this way, offering opportunities to 13 apprentices who joined their respective firms in September 2017.

### COMMENDED ASHURST ELLA BLAKESLEY

In 2017 the firm partnered with arts charity Create in creative:engagement, an artform project that hosts workshops for vulnerable people aged over 65 with dementia or mental health needs. More than 20 Ashurst volunteers have supported the project, which is led by a professional artist every six weeks at the firm's London office.

### DLA PIPER NICOLAS PATRICK

The firm's partnership with Unicef, launched in 2013, protects Bangladeshi children who come into contact with the law. In 2016 this was extended to include pro bono projects in the Gambia, Mexico and Netherlands. Cumulatively, DLA employees have raised nearly \$1.5m and provided 14,400 pro bono hours involving support from 501 lawyers.

### DWF TY JONES

The DWF Foundation was established in 2017 – one of the UK's first and only professional services-owned charitable enterprises. Funds are raised in four strands: education; employability; health and wellbeing; and homelessness. Last year, the foundation raised over £121,000 for local communities, donated more than £96,000 in grants and assisted 61 charities throughout the UK.

### WEIGHTMANS PETER FORSHAW

Weightmans promotes two days' paid leave a year to all staff, enabling them to engage in local volunteering. In 2017, over £51,000 was raised. One nominated charity, Isaac's House – an orphanage in Uganda – has been visited by 42 Weightmans staff, raising over £46,000 - enough to fund its running costs for three years.



FRS has a dedicated in-house legal and compliance practice that works with national and global corporations on their senior legal and compliance resourcing

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