

## CASE STUDY

# SHEPHERD AND WEDDERBURN

Our **10 CEO Commitments on Diversity** have been a flagship Real Estate Balance policy for more than five years.

Setting out 10 inclusive actions that each member CEO agrees to take on diversity, the Commitments are designed to be interpreted and implemented by our member organisations in ways that are most appropriate for them.

We know our members are all at different stages in their journey with the Commitments, so we wanted to showcase some of the fantastic work already taking place and inspire and encourage others to find new and creative ways of engaging with them.

Here, in one of a number of case studies, we look at Commitment 8 and the steps that our member **Shepherd and Wedderburn**, the largest Scottish-headquartered UK law firm, is taking to apply it.



## Commitment 8

# Consider actions to influence your supply chain.

**10** CEO Commitments on Diversity

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# Shepherd and Wedderburn

### Why is this commitment important to you?

Diversity and Inclusion (D&I) is an integral part of our People Strategy and our purpose as a business. Our D&I plan is structured around five pillars, underpinning our internal actions and commitments and also focused on how we can influence the broader scope of D&I with our clients, business partners and suppliers.

Our fifth pillar is **Suppliers and Partnerships**: to engage with our key suppliers and ensure they understand, share and demonstrate our D&I values and commitment to support initiatives such as racial inclusivity in the legal sector and providing opportunities to support social mobility. We don't see engagement as applying only at the start of our supply chain processes, we are committed to ongoing collaboration and the importance of sharing best practice in our commitment to support a more diverse society.

**10** CEO  
Commitments  
on Diversity

### How did you implement this commitment?

We recognised that we work with a broad range of suppliers from single person consultancies to multinational companies and that each business faces different D&I challenges.

As Gillian Carty, our Partnership Chair, said: *"We don't see this as a competition, we understand that we are all at different stages of the D&I journey."*

We wanted to facilitate a cross-sector collaborative approach, to support and benefit our suppliers and use our influence to inform and improve the actions of others, find common ground and learn from successes and good practice.

In November 2020 we hosted our inaugural annual D&I best practice supplier roundtable. With a minimum of five suppliers from different sectors, the format included a panel discussion with speakers, led by our Partnership Chair, followed by an opportunity for Q&A and broader discussion around D&I.

Prior to the event, suppliers completed a questionnaire, helping us to understand

what stages they were at with their D&I activity and to allow them to highlight any specific successes or concerns they had experienced.

The format of the event allowed for all attendees, including ourselves, to learn from the speakers' expertise and provided a safe environment to raise specific concerns and challenges and to share successes and best practice. We adopted Charterhouse rules so the attendees from both large and small organisations felt they could discuss their issues openly and be mutually supportive.

### What's next?

Following the success of our 2020 inaugural roundtable, this event is an annual highlight in our calendar and a significant part of our supply chain programme. D&I is fundamental to our business. We are aiming to build on our success and work with a greater number of suppliers and to develop the discussion to take on broader aspects of ESG.

Planning for our 2022 event is already underway. Our focus this year will be on the practical steps organisations can take to make their cultures more inclusive.