

Responsible Gateley

Delivering results that delight our clients, inspire our people and support our communities

Responsible
Business Report
2021

Gateley



At a *glance*

What makes us *forward thinking*

- › The first UK commercial law firm to list on the London Stock Exchange in 2015
- › A legal and professional services group which provides advice through the clustering of legal and consultancy services on Platforms directed at our chosen markets
- › Forward thinking about the services that we deliver, helping our clients to solve challenges and to maximise opportunities
- › A responsible business committed to levelling up the world in which we work
- › Being straight talking about what matters, inside and outside of our business; supporting diversity and inclusion, encouraging potential and ensuring a sustainable future
- › Delivering results without ever losing sight of our Gateley Team Spirit values

Working *together*



- › Proud that 50% of Gateley colleagues participate in our Sharesave Scheme vs. a UK average of 25%*
- › Investors in People accredited
- › A Levelling Up Partner and member of the Levelling Up Measurement TaskForce
- › Signatory to the Better Business Act
- › Raised in excess of £1.5m over the past decade for charitable causes within our communities

Room to *breathe*

- › Stonewall Diversity Champions and Law Society Gold Standard for our Diversity and Inclusion Charter
- › Active wellbeing programme and proud to be a signatory to the Mindful Business Charter
- › Engaged staff networks to support diversity and inclusion including Women in Leadership and Working Parents programmes
- › A Halo Code workplace
- › A Disability Confident Employer
- › Sustainable working practices including paperlite, recycling and use of virtual technology

Trusted to do

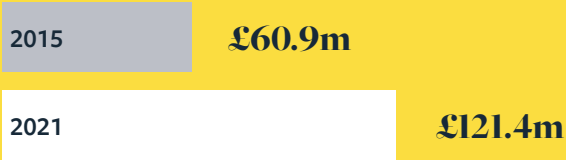
In our last client satisfaction survey, we achieved a **Net Promoter Score of 68**.
The score measures how many of our clients would recommend us, with scores over 50 seen as a reflection of world class organisations.



said that our specialist knowledge was good or excellent.

Ambitious for *success*

Double digit compound annual revenue growth in the last 6 years.



In FY21 turnover was up by 10.5% compared to FY20.

How we *support* clients

Gateley / LEGAL	Gateley / CAPITUS	Gateley / HAMER
Comprehensive legal and business advice for individuals and companies of all sizes.	Specialising in capital allowances on commercial property, land remediation relief and R&D/ innovation tax incentives.	Advice on easements and wayleaves for utilities infrastructure, CPOs, land referencing and public inquiries.
Gateley / TWEED	Gateley / VINDEN	/ ENTRUST
Specialist, multi-jurisdictional advice on reputation, media and privacy.	Specialist corporate advisory, dispute resolution and property services consultancy to the built environment.	An independent trustee to occupational pension schemes.
/ INTERNATIONAL INVESTMENT SERVICES	/ KIDDY & PARTNERS	/ T-THREE
Supporting businesses to realise their international growth ambitions through inward investment consultancy.	Specialists in leadership assessment and development.	Specialists in people and leadership development and behavioural change.



Where you need us to be

With offices in 11 UK locations, and another in Dubai, we have the regional network to provide our clients with the advice they need on their doorstep.

Sources: *compared to other UK businesses offering a similar scheme Link Asset Services, as of 01/01/2018 www.linkassetsservices.com

Our purpose

The global pandemic forced all of us to pause and quite literally, stop. When the economy went into lockdown – something that no Board of Directors could have predicted or planned for – we were all forced to stop what we were doing personally and professionally. For many of us, this has been an opportunity to reflect, recalibrate and reconsider what we do and why we do it.

This was certainly true of Gateley

As a Group, we had already looked at the values that draw us together and captured those in our Gateley Team Spirit. These important values influence the people who join us, the clients we act for and the way we interact with our communities. They are an important factor when we are looking at potential acquisitions. Our values are embedded in everything we do.

However, when it came to purpose and why we do what we do, this was a little more difficult to articulate into a phrase that summed up everything we are and do as a business. We share a client first ethos, being straight talking and forward thinking in the advice that we give. We are people people, easy to work with and for. We value honesty, integrity and transparency. We are a responsible business.

Following discussions within the business we have defined our purpose as:

To deliver results that delight our clients, inspire our people and support our communities.

Delivering on our purpose

We do this by:

- being forward thinking about the services that we deliver to our clients and the working environment we provide for our people;
- being straight talking about what matters, inside and outside of our business; and
- thinking differently about what we do and how we do it.



Rod Waldie
CEO & Partner

Being a responsible business

As a listed business, delivering results is a must. However, for Gateley, delivering results is not just about delivering financial results. As a signatory to the Better Business Act, we believe that we can be a force for good, benefiting our people, clients, communities and the environment whilst also delivering profit. By balancing these needs, we will be an employer of choice, an attractive investment opportunity, an organisation that clients are proud to collaborate with and a responsible business.

We are on a journey

It may sound like a cliché, but we are on a journey when it comes to our responsible business strategy. In this, our first Responsible Business report, you will see how we have aligned our strategy to the UK’s 14 Levelling Up Goals. For each of these goals, we are making good progress, and we recognise that we have more work to do as defined in our action plans. Whether you are considering Gateley as an investment opportunity, a future employer, a supplier or as a community partner, we would like to invite you to join us on our journey.

Our purpose, ambitions & strategic priorities



“Our historical resilience shown through numerous economic cycles and clear and meaningful strategy for the long-term development of our business, demonstrate to staff, clients and investors that their careers, instructions and investments are in safe hands.”

Rod Waldie
CEO & Partner

Our purpose

To deliver results that delight our clients, inspire our people and support our communities



Our strategic ambitions

To diversify, differentiate and incentivise



Powered by

Being forward thinking and straight talking



Delivered through our Gateley Team Spirit

Forward thinking / Ambitious for success / Room to breathe / Trusted to do / Working together

“Unprecedented” a year like no other

2020/2021 has, indeed, been a year like no other. As a Group, we faced significant challenges to transform our business to a virtual operation when the first UK lockdown came into force.

Neil Smith
Finance Director



We successfully supported colleagues to work virtually so much so that in two employee surveys completed in summer 2020 and January 2021, colleagues told us that they felt that they were more effective in delivering a service to their clients since the move to remote working.

Being a responsible business during the pandemic has meant that we have focused on ensuring the financial stability of the business, our operational resilience to continue to deliver to clients who needed our advice and support at a critical time, and the physical and mental well being of our people.

Along with 300 other global businesses employing over 2.5 million people, we signed up to the C-19 Business Pledge to demonstrate our commitment not only to the immediate response to the COVID-19 crisis but also our support of the recovery.



“Our commitment to our investors – many of whom are also employees – was to run a resilient business that made the right choices at very difficult times.”

In summary, we:

- ceased non-essential recruitment at the start of the first UK lockdown.
- deferred the start dates of our 2020 trainees from September 2020 to March 2021.
- reviewed roles that were immediately impacted by COVID and those who could no longer perform their role were furloughed from the beginning of April. This included most of our Client Services, Security, Facilities and Events teams.
- topped up the salaries of furloughed staff to 100% of salary during April and to 80% of salary in May and June. Pension and non-salary based benefits were not impacted by being on furlough.
- encouraged our staff who were placed on furlough to volunteer and support local community initiatives.
- asked all staff (including partners) to take a voluntary 20% pay cut during May and June, whether they were furloughed or not.
- cancelled the shareholder dividend at the start of the pandemic.
- cancelled the annual FY19/20 bonus for all staff.
- did not increase the salaries of any staff, including those who were promoted as part of our annual promotion process.
- used flexible furlough to support a gradual return to restricted office working as activity levels increased.
- asked all staff members earning below £120,000 per annum to take a voluntary pay reduction of 15% from 1 July until 30 October. Those earning above £120,000 stayed on a 20% pay reduction.
- repaired all salaries in March and April 2021.
- repaid furlough monies in relation to those staff members whose roles were made redundant at the end of 2020.

Working together

As Rod explained earlier, our Gateley Team Spirit underpins everything we do and in a time of crisis and change, as we have experienced since March 2020, they are of paramount importance.

Victoria Garrad
Group HR Director



Working together is one of our Gateley Team Spirit elements and, throughout the pandemic, we have stayed true to this value of being ‘one team’ despite the difficult decisions that we have sometimes had to take.

Team resilience

Alongside the financial resilience of our Group, it was important to recognise that we were all facing different challenges at home and at work. Whether this was dealing with caring responsibilities, home schooling, furlough, or the emotional impact of lockdown, we had a role to play in supporting each other and working together.



“Our people and long-established culture are central to the Group’s success.”

In summary, we:

- provided practical guidance to support staff in working from home safely with top tips and best practice on how to achieve a good work-life balance.
- set up WhatsApp communication groups and appointed C-19 Reps to encourage informal communication alongside existing communication channels.
- introduced additional communications on top of our weekly staff newsletter, Grapevine; Workplace Wednesday covers everything from returning to work protocols through to updates on the latest government guidance and we built dedicated areas on our intranet specifically geared towards support and information for staff during lockdown and remote working.
- Ran twice weekly webinars for the first few months to give staff psychological coping tools for crisis and anxiety.
- organised local office Microsoft Teams calls during bank holidays to provide staff living in isolation with a platform to socialise.
- kept things fun with quizzes, coffee mornings and drinks events, photography and baking competitions, charity fundraisers and weekly music playlists.
- promoted the use of our mental health first aiders and access for staff (and household members) to our Employee Assistance Programme through Thrive, our well being network group.
- partnered with a mental training coach to provide staff with exercises to help keep their minds active and switch off from work in a Banish the Burnout programme.
- partnered with The Body Project to support staff in keeping fit, including virtual HIIT classes and a 28-day weight loss challenge, with live workouts and nutrition guidance.
- delivered regular breathing and meditation classes and encouraged digital detox sessions.
- recognised individuals and teams that have excelled in relation to our values through our Gateley Team Spirit Awards delivered virtually in autumn 2020.
- gave every member of staff an extra day off in 2021 and a £100 Red Letter Day voucher to organise an experience on their day off.
- gave every member of staff a 2.5% COVID bonus, including colleagues who had been furloughed during the year.

Levelling up



“Levelling Up is about everyone having the same chance to get on in life, whoever and wherever they are.”

Rt Hon Justine Greening



As the first UK commercial law firm to list on the London Stock Exchange, Gateley is a forward thinking business. We recognised – back in 2015 – that challenging the status quo and the long-established structures of legal partnerships, could deliver a better result for our clients.

It was also an opportunity to level up the equity model within our own business. Traditionally equity partnerships focus ownership in the hands of a few. The float gave us an opportunity to change this by awarding shares to every member of staff within the newly listed business to get everyone started on their journey with us. We dealt with all the tax implications of the award so that it wasn't an obstacle for participation and was truly an opportunity to level up. We are proud that the equity partners made this choice to share their prosperity with every Gateley employee at the time and demonstrated our commitment to incentivising our employees in a forward thinking way.

That forward thinking ethos is now driving our responsible business strategy and the role that we want to play in delivering a positive impact on the communities around us.

To support us to achieve this, we have partnered with ESG Consultancy, This is Purpose. Led by Rt Hon Justine Greening and established with input from businesses, universities, civil society and MPs, This is Purpose have identified 14 Levelling

Up Goals. These goals use the same framework as the UN Sustainable Development Goals and set out clear objectives for the UK's Levelling Up challenge in the wake of COVID-19.

We are working with This is Purpose on a report and action plan which will capture our ambitions of where we want to get to in respect of each Levelling Up Goal. This assessment will consider where we are strong and where we stand out already alongside identifying where there is more work to do and for maximum impact.

In the pages that follow you will see the work that we have done so far in respect of each Levelling Up Goal, categorised as goals which impact on People, Potential and our Planet. We have set ourselves targets on what we will do over the next 12 months to move each of these goals forward and will be measuring our performance against these targets on a quarterly basis.

We also believe in being straight talking and we recognise that we have some work to do in achieving these goals consistently across our Group in a way which is measured and actionable. We look forward to sharing our progress over the coming years.



Levelling up: *People*

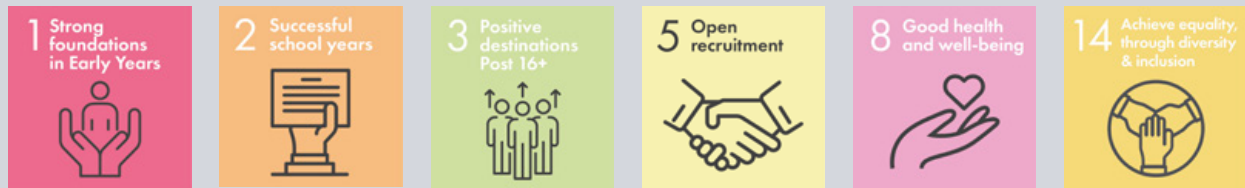
There are six Levelling Up Goals which focus on people.

Goals 1 to 3 and 5 centre around helping talent to flourish and connecting that talent to opportunities:

- 1. Strong foundations in early years
- 2. Successful school years
- 3. Positive destinations post 16+
- 5. Open recruitment

Goal 8 focuses on how we can improve mental and physical health to boost overall well being to allow people to fulfil their potential.

Goal 14 focuses on how we achieve equality through diversity & inclusion.



Helping talent to flourish

As the 2017 DfE Social Mobility Action Plan states “Children with strong foundations will start school in a position to progress but too many children still fall behind early and it is hard to close the gaps that emerge.”

As an employer with a regional footprint, we have an opportunity to have a positive impact on children giving them the best possible start in life and supporting them with the right experiences as they move through the education system.

Connecting with schools and colleges

We have relationships with several clients, schools and community organisations where our staff volunteer or act as a mentor to provide guidance to aspiring lawyers, students and people in potentially vulnerable situations who need some support and guidance. One example is our partnership with the Greater Birmingham Professional Services Academy which you can see more on in the case study overleaf.

Successful school years are a crucial part of not only a young person’s academic development but also their wider personal development. A number of our employees also volunteer in various roles within schools, including as trustees and school governors.

Providing apprenticeship opportunities

We have provided apprenticeship schemes in our Legal, Finance, IT, HR and Marketing teams for school and college leavers. 80% of the apprenticeship involves working with one of our specialist Business Support teams and 20% undertaking off-the-job study and training. We also have a two-year Paralegal Apprenticeship programme of blended learning and hands-on legal work for ambitious school/college leavers seeking a career in the law. This apprenticeship is aimed at bright candidates who have completed their A-Levels but would prefer a more practical route to gaining the qualifications and skills to becoming a solicitor.

Connecting with universities

We have a role to play in encouraging students to consider the law and professional services as future careers. For example, we partnered with Birmingham Law Society when it launched its first Diversity Inclusion Scheme 2020 in conjunction with University of Law and the University of Wolverhampton. The scheme is aimed at helping talented young people from disadvantaged backgrounds and under-represented groups to pursue a career in law.

We regularly hold discussion groups with students at different universities to share experiences of what it is like to work in the legal and professional services sector.

We have sponsored prizes at a number of universities including the commercial litigation elective at De Montfort University, Prize for Client Care at Leeds Beckett University and Excellence in Property law at the University of Law Guildford. This prize is awarded to the top mark in Property Law for students from the part-time course, as these students often come through a slightly more difficult route, often combining their studies with a job and family commitments.



“As an athlete or ex-athlete, to see that help that SportsAid offer, helping the next generation and continuing to support them is invaluable. I remember my first time ever getting support from SportsAid, how big it was and how far it went so it’s important we see that.”

Sir Mo Farah CBE, Long-distance Runner

Supporting talented athletes

During 2020 we supported 10 SportsAid athletes to further their athletic careers. SportsAid supports over 1,000 athletes each year – the vast majority aged between 12 to 18. These athletes are the country’s brightest sporting prospects. Each athlete receives an annual financial award to contribute towards costs such as travel, accommodation, and equipment, as well as access to online workshop support and personal development opportunities. The award acts as a real motivational boost as it is often the first recognition they are given outside of their support network. You can see more on our SportsAid cohort here: <https://gateleyplc.com/sportsaid/>

We have also supported young tennis professional Anton Matushevich since July 2019. Hailed as one of the biggest emerging talents in the future of the men’s game, Anton Matushevich picked up his first Grand Slam victory in 2018 by winning the US Open Boys Doubles title with Bulgarian Adrian Andreev and he also reached the quarter-finals of the Wimbledon Boys singles tournament 2019. You can see more on Anton here: <https://gateleyplc.com/landing/sponsoring-anton-matushevich/>

Supporting Gateley parents

We recognise that we can support our working parents in ensuring that they feel well placed to give their children the best possible start in life. With that in mind, we introduced our working parents programme to provide support to parents across our business. Over the last 12 months that has included the delivery of line manager training on how to support parents by being aware of and supportive of the challenges that they are facing, supporting parents through parental leave coaching and sleep clinics. Over 100 members of staff attended the sleep clinics and over 80% of people on maternity leave have attended parental leave coaching.

During the pandemic, it was also important to recognise that parents were facing the very difficult challenge of home schooling. We offered flexibility so that parents could shape their working day to suit how they were managing home schooling, recognising that every family were facing different challenges. We shared top tips and best practice resources through our weekly newsletter, Grapevine, including signposting free online resources that parents could access.

We organised several virtual events for our clients where we positively encouraged them to attend with their children, for example ‘The magic of Gateley’ magic show. Feedback was extremely popular as it gave attendees the opportunity to meet socially whilst also involving their children. One client said: “I thought it was a great event. It was lovely to be able to attend a family-friendly corporate event, particularly during lockdown. It took some time to truly appreciate how impressive some of the tricks really were, which ensured that they were a talking point for a few days afterwards! Thank you for organising it.”

Open recruitment process

Levelling up recruitment is about ensuring that careers and professions are open to people of all backgrounds through transparent, accessible and open recruitment practices. During 2020 we refreshed our assessment processes for the Gateley Legal trainee programme using the assessment skills of Amberjack to introduce a virtual assessment centre which is designed specifically to improve diversity and minimise unconscious bias in the selection process.

Amberjack have also worked with us on HiPo, our new online assessment tool which is specifically designed to ensure inclusion, using measures and tools that are proven to be more accurate predictors of success in graduate positions than academic achievements at GCSE and A-Level. We are also removing minimum grade requirements at A-Level to be able to apply.

We are currently analysing the outcome of the new graduate recruitment process to see whether it has resulted in an improvement in diversity of our trainee cohort and to see what lessons we can learn from the process to improve it further next year.



Case Study
Greater Birmingham Professional Services Academy (GBPSA)

Birmingham Metropolitan College is home to the UK’s only Business Professional Services Academy: the Greater Birmingham Professional Services Academy (GBPSA). Gateley have been involved with GBPSA for many years led by our Group HR Director, Victoria Garrad.

A unique employer-education partnership, GBPSA’s vision is to become a hub for the Midlands business and professional services community by providing education, training and development to meet the future development needs of the sector and ultimately “future-proofing” the sector through ensuring the supply of a well-educated work force to meet the needs of employers.

We deliver Gateley workshops within the college curriculum which support students with their learning as they move through their college life. We continued to provide a full programme of workshops virtually throughout the pandemic along with training on mental health and well being and resilience.

In April 2020 our Head of Learning & Development, Ruth Heaton judged a ‘Dragons Den’ inspired event where students had to pitch a new business idea to a panel of judges from the Academy and were given feedback and a prize for the best proposition.

GBPSA has a target of supporting 90% of graduates into work, apprenticeship programmes or higher education. Looking at the 2020/21 cohort, 91% of the students that just graduated are going into higher education/apprenticeships immediately or intend to after a gap year.

“As employers, we have an important role to play in levelling up the playing field when it comes to finding the talent of tomorrow. I am proud that Gateley have been involved with the GBPSA for a number of years on their mission to help graduates to achieve their full potential, whichever route they take.”

Victoria Garrad, Group HR Director

Improving mental and physical health

Good health and well being are often a precursor to a person being able to make the most of their talents and potential. To support our people with all aspects of their well being we set up Thrive, an internal network group to focus on well being. Thrive runs a series of events and training programmes throughout the year to raise awareness and to give people the tools and skills they need to take care of themselves and those around them.

We are proud to have signed up to the Mindful Business Charter in 2021. The Charter is aimed at reducing avoidable workplace stress and provides a set of best practice behaviours and guidelines for how organisations should work both internally and externally with clients and other advisers. Elements of the charter promote inclusive practices around staff being able to work in an agile fashion around other commitments and priorities and respecting colleagues through smarter meetings, mindful delegation and rest periods.

Over the next 12 months – as included within our 2021/ 2022 objectives – we will be looking at how we can deliver healthier and more effective ways of working.

Getting support and information

All staff, and their families, have access to an independent Employee Assistance Programme (EAP). There is often a significant impact on an individual when a member of their family is facing a physical or mental health challenge. Being able to offer independent support to family members can make a positive difference to the whole family.

We also recognise that people need different support at different times in their careers. All staff have access to Stress Balance workshops that provide skills and tools to cope with stress and to build personal resilience and there is mandatory “Managing for Mental Health” training for all line managers on how to manage their teams for optimal mental well being. Our career development programmes for newly promoted staff include modules on well being and resilience as standard.

We have supported Ruth Heaton, who leads our Thrive programme, to become a Mental Health First Aider England Instructor and are delighted that we have over 75 mental health first aiders within the business. They have been trained by MHFA England to recognise when someone may be struggling with their mental health and they have the skills to approach colleagues that they are worried about, listen and to signpost that person towards finding the right professional help. They are also able to offer guidance on other supports that someone experiencing mental ill health may find useful.



Encouraging participation

Not everyone has access to well being activities, so we find ways to encourage people to get involved in free-to-attend sessions. Examples include sleep workshops, mindfulness sessions, fitness classes (yoga/ HIIT)/ health and well being webinars, walking sessions over lunchtime and local office running clubs. We have our own Gateley Strava club to encourage each other with our fitness goals.

Our pandemic response

In 2020/21 our physical and mental well being has been tested in a way that we could never have imagined with the pandemic and the national lockdowns. We recognised that Thrive had a huge part to play in supporting people throughout the pandemic and introduced lots of additional activities in to the Thrive programme. We shared on page 9 some of the activities which we delivered during the year.

We delivered twice weekly workshops during the first few months of the COVID pandemic to support staff in dealing with resulting stress and anxiety: “Finding Calm in a Crisis”. Many people struggled as we moved into 2021, particularly with the third national lockdown. We asked managers to make ‘How are you’ calls to all staff during lockdown 3 to check-in on their well being. We also launched the ‘Banish the Burnout’ programme during January 2021 specifically to support staff with managing boundaries and their physical and mental health having recognised that people were spending too much time plugged in to their laptops given the darker nights and poor weather.

We used our weekly newsletter Grapevine to signpost resources and share good news stories, adding a lot of content on to our intranet, FRED.

Listening to our people

We run a bi-annual employee engagement survey to check in with colleagues on all aspects of working at Gateley. This survey was completed at the start of 2020 and the results shared across the Group.

We recognised that we needed to check in regularly with colleagues during the pandemic and completed two further employee engagement surveys, with 89% of colleagues responding to our summer 2020 survey on shaping the ‘new normal’ and 76% in our January 2021 survey.

We shared our Gateley Agile vision for returning to the office with all colleagues in March 2021 and set up a feedback channel so people could give their views on proposals to return to the office.



of people feel that they have been ‘trusted to do’ by their manager whilst working from home



say that they find it helpful to have greater flexibility about how they manage their work schedule when working from home



We are a Halo Code workplace

Achieve equality through diversity & inclusion

Part of the reason for listing in 2015 was to create a diverse business which could respond to the needs of our clients in a more effective way. Six years on and it is important to recognise that diversity remains a key ambition of our Group, not only in the services that we offer but in the people that we employ and the clients that we work with. We are better advisers to our clients because of the diversity of experiences and skills that our people bring. Diversity is about different perspectives and extends beyond gender and ethnicity to sexual orientation, gender identity, social mobility, disability and other challenges that can lead to disadvantage. As a Group which was formed with diversity at its core, we are committed to creating a diverse and inclusive workforce where everyone has room to breathe and can bring their whole selves to work.

We are proud to have achieved the Law Society Gold Standard for our Diversity and Inclusion Charter and underpin our diversity and inclusion ethos with the support of two of our four network groups: Pride and Unity.

Pride was set up to provide a welcoming, supportive, safe and confidential space for staff affected by sexual orientation and gender identity issues and is a place where they can share experiences, ideas or concerns. It also raises awareness of LGBTQ+ issues across Gateley and ensures enhanced awareness is reflected in a positive, inclusive and fulfilling working environment.

Over the last 12 months, we have shared guidance on how people can be an effective ally to LGBTQ+ colleagues and have shared stories to raise awareness on FRED, our intranet, and through lunch and learn sessions. We celebrated LGBT+ History Month in February and during the month we asked colleagues from across the Group to share their personal and powerful stories on FRED about their experiences, what it was like for them to “come out” and advice they would give. We have included our Head of Pride’s story in the pages that follow.

In celebration of International Women’s Day (IWD), we also asked colleagues to share personal interviews on how they have chosen to challenge, which was the key theme for this year’s IWD. More on this in our section on Potential.

As a result of the ‘Coming out with’ and ‘Choose to Challenge’ campaigns, conversations have taken place right across the Group. Employees feel much more comfortable sharing personal stories because they have witnessed the positive reaction and support provided to colleagues who shared their personal experiences during the initiatives. We have learnt that shared experiences are a great way to open up conversations and are catalysts for an increased level of awareness and understanding of the challenges faced by colleagues from under- represented groups.

We are proud to be Stonewall Diversity Champions and have strong relationships with external LGBTQ+ groups and networks. We have collaborated on projects with local community based LGBTQ+ related charities (including pro-bono work, fundraising, volunteering and mentoring) such as support of the LGBT Centre in Leicester and SupportU in Reading.

Pride also provides opportunities for internal networking; to inform and influence the business on LGBTQ+ issues by providing an effective consultation mechanism for HR, L&D, the Strategic and Operations Boards. The work that we have done has improved our position by 9 places in the 2020 Stonewall Workplace Equality Index to 219 and we increased our score by 12 points to 79. We are now working on our submission for the 2022 Index.

Unity was set up to recognise, celebrate and support employees from all different cultures, religions, backgrounds and those with disabilities. Our Unity network group highlights and celebrates events across all our offices

We were delighted to sign up as a Halo Code workplace, the UK’s first Black Hair code. The Halo Code explicitly protects employees who come to work with natural hair and protective hairstyles associated with their racial, ethnic, and cultural identities. By adopting the Halo Code, we are proactively taking a stand to ensure that no Gateley employee faces barriers or judgments because of their Afro-textured hair.

We provide a rolling quarterly programme of diversity and inclusion training for all staff. Working closely with Unity, we provided guidance to enable line managers to better support colleagues who were taking part in Ramadan. As a result, there is greater awareness of the challenges colleagues who are observing Ramadan can face and a better understanding across line managers of how, as a business, we can support them. It sent a clear message that is okay to have open conversations and they were actively encouraged. Discussions were around minimising the impact that fasting could have and openly discussing what support each individual may need.

One of the successes of the last 12 months for Unity has been the launch of the Reel Deal, Unity’s new film club where films and documentaries which provide insight into diverse cultural perspectives are reviewed and shared on the intranet. A real hit with staff, the Reel Deal has reviewed a diverse portfolio of films from Moonlight to La vita è bella to A 3-minute hug.

Learning from the data

We are also focusing on ensuring we are collecting the relevant diversity and inclusion data at key points to be able to better analyse and review what the data is telling us to ensure we can focus our D&I initiatives accordingly. This has included a review of the language used, giving colleagues the option to state their preferred pronouns and adding in questions around social mobility.

Learning from others

We recognise that we can learn a lot from others in respect of their experiences of creating diverse and inclusive workplaces. We have reached out to clients and, by way of example, our Group HR Director attended the Centrica D&I workshop which was very useful, interesting and a great opportunity to share experiences and gain insight into how other panel firms are improving their diversity and inclusion. Following the workshop, we have committed to three initiatives and are in the process of implementing them.

Coming out: Ken Titchen, restructuring Partner and Head of Gateley Pride, shared his story as part of Gateley’s support for LGBT History Month.



How old were you when you came out?

About 30, maybe a little older. With hindsight I’d known I was gay since I was a teenager but was in absolute denial. I couldn’t admit I wasn’t straight to myself, let alone anyone else, and I couldn’t begin to allow myself to be gay. I just wanted to be ‘normal’, and it wasn’t until late in my 20s that I was able to start to accept who I was and slowly allow myself to be me, and eventually realise that I was ‘normal’ and could be happy.



How did you feel at that moment and were you given support?

Scared, unsure, relieved, scared again. Coming out is something you do time after time after time. I only told two very close friends at first, who were of course amazing and said they’d known for years! Then slowly I let hints out to other friends, colleagues at work before telling them or letting them work it out, and after a long time I did the same with my family. The thought that people would reject me when I was finally being my true self with them was terrifying.



What was it like growing up?

Lonely and confusing. I couldn’t understand what was wrong with me, then why I wasn’t in a serious relationship when all my friends were.



What is the worst thing anyone has said to you?

I can’t pick out anything specific, rather any one of the homophobic comments I heard at a time when I wasn’t able to call them out. People don’t understand how powerful and hurtful they can be.



What one piece of advice would you give to your younger self?

Don’t be so stubborn! You might just be wrong thinking only straight people can be happy and have a great, loving life.



What advice would you give to anyone struggling with their sexuality?

Speak to someone about it and don’t be afraid of what people will think. Your family and friends will still be your family and friends. There is some fantastic support out there which is a lot easier to access now than it was 30 years ago.



Who do you admire?

Sir Ian McKellen. He continues to be a role model for people of all ages and has been an active campaigner on LGBT issues since 1988, when he came out to stand against Section 28.



People *highlights*



Employee survey stats:

88%

of people feel that they have been ‘trusted to do’ by their manager whilst working from home

86%

say that they find it helpful to have greater flexibility about how they manage their work schedule when working from home

Objectives for 2022

- Consider Mindful Business Charter across all aspects of our business, providing guidance to support employees in implementing best practice.
- Maintain Investors in People standard.
- Explore Disability Confident Employer status.
- Launching a language guide for all employees to assist in encouraging employees to have more open conversations around diversity and inclusion .
- Improve our Glassdoor overall ranking from 4.5.
- Raising awareness around neurodiversity by sharing stories internally.
- Explore opportunities to partner more formally with schools aligned to our offices.

Levelling up: *Potential*

There are five Levelling Up Goals that focus on potential and unlocking the right opportunities for people.

Goal 4 recognises that access to the right advice and experiences at the right time unlocks opportunity throughout a person’s life. Work by universities such as Staffordshire University or the Universities of Bradford and Lincoln show what a difference higher education can make to lives and futures in a way that doesn’t just benefit individuals, it benefits us all.

Goal 6 focuses on how business can provide opportunities to their people to help them to feel challenged and learn, to keep growing and moving forward.

Goal 7 recognises that managing money and getting good advice and skills to do so can make all the difference in people being able to make the most of their potential.

Goal 9 wants to embed a social norm of entrepreneurship across our country and in communities where setting up a business is less usual. Enabling people and communities to create their own jobs is perhaps the most powerful way of really driving opportunity on the doorstep.

The digital divide is a gap that we have to close if we’re to really enable equality of opportunity. Goal 9 looks to address the issues around access to hardware, the intranet and training to remove the growing inequality threat for those who can’t take advantage or cope in an online world.



Unlocking potential and removing barriers to success

We all walk a different path to get to where we want to be in life. No one’s journey starts or ends in the same place; we make different choices along the way and find inspiration and support in different ways. Recognising that gave a name to our staff network group: Inspire

Led by our Head of HR, Tina Woods, Inspire has been set up to nurture, develop and provide support to all of our talent with a particular focus on career milestones and enabling our people to successfully carve the careers they want.

Women in Leadership

Through Inspire, we created a Women in Leadership programme in order to support and retain our female talent in successfully carving out the careers they want. The programme is made up of several initiatives: mentoring; skills development and unconscious bias training.

A mentor programme is available to females across the Group at different points in their career. The senior mentoring programme is open to Senior Associates and equivalents as evidence shows that this is a crunch point in terms of career progression for women. We have trained a pool of mentors from across the Group, both male and female, in a half day workshop “Making Mentoring a Mutual Success”.

We have also included a new workshop, “Making it Work”, as part of both our Management Skills Development Course (for Associates and equivalents) and our Developing Leader course (for Senior Associates, equivalents and above). This training module is primarily aimed at women, but men may attend if the content is relevant. The workshop includes guidance on

how to build the skills you need to have crucial and courageous conversations to carve the career you want, setting boundaries and building confidence to hold them, and how to manage competing demands and time poverty.

We have also delivered unconscious bias training to line managers across the business to ensure that everyone in our business is treated positively by their colleagues.

In March 2021, as part of International Women’s Day, we ran a series of interviews with colleagues across the business on the theme “Choose to Challenge.” This included both senior females and males within our business sharing moments when they have “chosen to challenge” throughout their career, how they felt and the advice they would give.

Mentoring

Our Junior Mentoring Scheme is open to everyone in the business at Solicitor and equivalent level across legal, consulting and business support with training sessions run every four months.

To find out more about reverse mentoring, we reached out to one of our clients, Centrica, to learn more about the experience of reverse mentoring so that we can implement a pilot scheme involving members of our Holdings, Strategic and Operations Boards.

Parental support

Returning to work after taking time away can be a challenging milestone. Gateley is committed to supporting our working parents to transition successfully through a return to work and to making it work once back. We have in place a number of initiatives to support our people.

Underpinning our programme of Supporting Working Parents is our continued commitment to support flexible working arrangements for our staff. This was accelerated during the pandemic with the majority of Gateley people working from home. We asked employees how they felt about this and 87% said that they find it helpful to have greater flexibility about how they manage their work schedule when working from home. This has been factored into our thinking on returning to the office after the pandemic which we have captured in our Gateley Agile strategy.

Line managers can have a huge impact on how a person feels about their period of leave and return to work. Second only to flexibility, a line manager that wants their team member to succeed in their career and advocates for this is a key factor for returners. We run group facilitated discussions for all line managers about how best to support people in their team about to go on leave or on their return.

Parental Leave Coaching

Planning for a period of parental leave can be key to making a successful return. For this reason, we offer group coaching for all parents about to take extended leave. This two-hour session will consider topics such as communicating parental leave effectively both internally and externally, how someone wants to be communicated with during their leave and planning ahead for a successful return to work. We also provide a return to work coaching session for all our people to enable them to reach their potential, carve out the career they want and make it work.

Widening access to savings and credit

Professional services partnerships have not historically been the type of businesses that have democratised financial reward. Their very structure is about maximising reward for equity partners, often a small but elite few at the top of the career tree. When Gateley listed in 2015, we were able to offer all employees shares in the listed entity, kickstarting their share saving and encouraging them to participate in the future success of the business. This decision involved equity partners giving a portion of their shares to support their colleagues, a very real example of how we looked to level up financial participation across the Group. This was set up so that no employee had tax considerations to be concerned about as this was taken care of by the partnership too, removing any obstacles (real or perceived) for staff. It was our first step in one of our strategic ambitions of incentivisation.

This has continued since the float and all employees can participate in the Gateley Sharesave Scheme and over 50% of our employees have already done so.

During 2020/21 we have delivered improved communications on our different share schemes: Gateley Sharesave, CSOPs and LTIPs. We have also worked more closely with recruitment consultants, having defined a preferred supplier list, to explain our different benefits and share schemes so that potential recruits to Gateley have a clear understanding from the outset of their recruitment journey with us and how different our approach is to financial reward and recognition.

We also completed a review exercise during the year of all of our Business Support team employees, identifying job families across the different functions. As we have diversified as a Group and introduced new roles, it is important that we understand how roles sit alongside each other in different teams. New job families were implemented and these have been used to inform a benefit review for all staff to ensure that we reward colleagues consistently. This has seen us increase holiday allocation for support staff as well as offering healthcare for others, including for their families. Feedback has been positive.



Case Study

Law Returners programme

We were delighted to be one of the law firms involved in the Women Returners pilot programme to support all qualified solicitors who had not practised law for at least 12 months to return to private practice for an initial 6 month paid placement, with a view to eventually securing a permanent role if one was available.

The Women Returners’ scheme facilitated introductions between applicants to the programme and law firms throughout Leeds and Manchester, and then coached applicants who successfully secured 6 month paid placements on issues that they may encounter when returning to private practice.

We took on two law returners as part of the programme within our Leeds office: Rakhshinda Nazir and Jayne Addison. Both did an excellent job and we were pleased to be able to offer them permanent roles within our Leeds office. They continue to do well so much so that we are developing our own law returners programme over the next 12 months as part of our Inspire network.

Andrew Johnson, office head for Leeds and Head of Commercial Dispute Resolution, said of the programme: “I am pleased that Gateley has made such a success of the Law

Returners programme. Both joiners have made a fantastic contribution to our business since they joined the Group. We have invested the right development and support to help them transition back into the law and they have brought with them life experience and skills which have proved valuable to us as a business. It’s been a win/win and I am proud that one of our actions over the next 12 months is to pilot a Gateley Returners scheme through our Leeds office.”

Solicitor Rakhshinda Nazir said: “*Competition for roles within the legal sector is so fierce that without a dedicated route there is little opportunity to return to private practice after a career break. The coaching offered by the programme was useful, but it was the support from the Gateley team that was invaluable in helping to ease the move back into practising law after a very lengthy period of time away. Coupled with the business accommodating the flexible arrangements that were required to manage family commitments, I was afforded the best opportunity to make the placement a success.*

I am delighted to be part of the Commercial Dispute Resolution team in Leeds and am pleased that the business is extending the programme to offer others the opportunity for a supported return to private practice.”



Case Study

All steam ahead!

Extending enterprise

As a legal and professional services group, we regularly work with businesses at all stages of their development, whether new start-ups, growing businesses or mature corporates. With the broad range of skills that our legal and professional advisers bring, we are able to provide advice to businesses which isn't solely focused on the legal considerations of running a business but considering these in the round and what support we can provide commercially to help them to meet their objectives.

Part of our brand ethos is around being forward thinking. It's what has driven us to make the bold moves within the legal sector from our original listing through to our acquisitions of complementary professional services. Building on this forward thinking approach is important to us which has seen us get involved with a number of programmes to share insight with businesses at different stages of their lifecycle.

Gateley is proud to be Birmingham City University's STEAMHouse partner. Situated in the heart of Birmingham, at Millennium Point, Birmingham City University's STEAMHouse incubator offers state of the art co-working space and high quality business support. It forms part of STEAMhouse, a large-scale collaboration and maker space set up to support local start-ups/ spin-outs from ideation through to implementation.

STEAMhouse is an organisation driving innovation and research for major long-term growth across the West Midlands region. Set up in early 2018, STEAMhouse supports students, graduates and local start-ups to develop exciting new ideas and products, bringing amazing new ideas to life.

We chose to partner with STEAMHouse in order to support innovation, research and long-term growth across Birmingham, a region with which we have a particularly strong connection. STEAMhouse is driving innovation,

bringing inventors, entrepreneurs, businesses and craftspeople together to develop exciting new ideas and products; an initiative that closely aligns with our forward thinking values.

Being a partner for us is about more than just providing financial support. Over the last 12 months we have provided free webinars to STEAMHouse start-ups on all aspects of running their business, from protecting their intellectual property to understanding corporate structures and employment contracts through to maximising tax reliefs on research and development.

You can read more about our partnership with STEAMHouse here: <https://gateleyplc.com/landing/steamhouse/>



“It was clear after the very first meeting with Gateley that they understood the ethos of both STEAMincubator and STEAMhouse. The partnership will allow us to add real value to the STEAMhouse community which will include regular training and development sessions and one to one legal support for student and graduate entrepreneurs.”

Richard Scutt, STEAMhouse Business Incubator Programme Manager - Birmingham City University

Case Study

From acorns, unicorns can grow

We are proud to have worked with Gymshark for a number of years, supporting in a small way their incredible growth which saw the business valued at £1 billion in 2020. The valuation sees Gymshark join an exclusive list of fewer than 25 British companies to have secured unicorn status since 2001, achieving the feat in just eight years.

Gymshark, a fitness apparel brand, was founded in 2012 by Ben Francis from his garage in his parents' home in Bromsgrove when he was just 19 years old and has grown from a screen- printing operation into one of the fastest growing and most recognisable brands in fitness. Gymshark has won numerous awards, including The Sunday Times Fast Track 100 and The Sunday Times International Track 200. Having achieved exceptional growth since inception and a revenue CAGR of 56% since 2018, Gymshark is now seeing revenues of £250m. It has 1.7 million followers on Facebook and 4.2m on Instagram.

We have worked with Gymshark for six years. The brand has disrupted the athleisure market and the business has a dynamism and ethos that is rarely seen. Their phenomenal success is matched by the humble and co-operative nature of its leadership team and employees.

Partner Tom Rush who worked on the 2020 deal said: “Gymshark's story is not only fantastic for the Midlands, but for the UK as a whole. It shows that any young person who is like Ben can succeed and achieve something extraordinary if they have the drive, vision and an ability to listen and learn from others.”

Ben Francis Gymshark CEO said: “The team at Gateley Legal have been brilliant since our partnership started almost six years ago. I'd like to thank everyone at Gateley Legal for their incredible hard work throughout this process.”



“We have worked with the team for a few years now and on a range of areas as our business has grown. It's been so important for us to have advisers around us that we can not only trust but that will also tell it like it is and Gateley has certainly proved itself to be one of those. We look forward to working with them as we take this next important step in the Gymshark story.”

Paul Richardson,
Executive Director of Gymshark

Potential *highlights*

56
mentors

100%
of staff have the opportunity
to be mentored

Offered to
100%
of maternity returners

 x2
Twice-yearly women in
leadership sessions delivered

Proud partner to



Recruited both

*Law Returners from the
Law Society programme*

Objectives for 2022

- › Pilot law returners programme in Leeds.
- › Capture stories of different routes into our business that colleagues have followed and share these on our website.
- › Continue to support BCU STEAMHouse, exploring other opportunities to add value to their start-ups.
- › Review our links with Universities, identifying opportunities to connect with students across our network.
- › Explore opportunities to support innovation and forward thinking start-ups through our charitable giving and pro bono programme.
- › Support Centrica with a reverse mentoring scheme.

Levelling up *Goals*



Levelling up: *Planet*

It has been said that many organisations have focused heavily on the ‘environmental’ elements of their ESG policies given the nature of their business. The interesting thing with the Levelling Up Goals which focus on the planet – goals 11, 12 and 13 – is that they recognise that people and planet are two halves of the same coin. By considering the environment from a wider perspective, we can see the impact that we can have by improving the way that we live and work, unlocking opportunity at the same time.

- Goal 11** recognises that developing the physical infrastructure that connects people and places to opportunity is essential. Communities that are safe, with a good quality of life and homes people can afford are communities that are sustainable in the long run.
- Goal 12** focuses on how you can build homes and sustainable communities for the long run. For many businesses, a focus on environmental objectives has always focused on making better choices when it comes to the use of energy. Alongside these important practical outcomes from taking a closer look at energy, there is also an opportunity to create it.



Building for opportunity

Whether it is infrastructure projects or building new homes, Gateley is well-placed to influence the agenda as we work for 18 of the UK’s largest housebuilders and are involved in many significant infrastructure projects. We are able – through the professional advice that we give – to support our clients in delivering place strategies which are making a positive impact, levelling up opportunities for communities across the UK, and not just in the affluent South East, to benefit from improved, sustainable infrastructure and regeneration schemes.

Housebuilder specialists

We act for a consortia of major housebuilders on complex billion-pound developments helping to deliver thousands of new homes and communities up and down the country. We are proactively advising our clients on prestigious sustainable developments both regionally and nationally and we are at the forefront of the emergence of government-backed modular homes in place of traditional housebuilding. We are also at the cutting edge of new industry developments advising clients in the private rented and later living sectors. We are proud to work with over 30 Plc clients as well as smaller, independent developers including household names such as Barratt Plc, Bellway Plc, Taylor Wimpey Plc, Vistry Plc, McCarthy & Stone Plc, Ilke Homes Land Limited, Cala Homes Limited and Crest Nicholson.

Case Study

Langley Sustainable Urban Extension

We have been advising a consortium including Homes England, Taylor Wimpey Plc and Vistry Plc on the promotion and delivery structures for one of the largest urban extensions in the UK which will deliver 6,000 new homes, 4 new schools and 3 new local centres.

The Langley Sustainable Urban Extension on the outskirts of Birmingham will take 20 years to build out and is a scheme of national profile in which the Government is investing £100 million through Homes England.

Callum Nuttall, Head of Property, said: “As residential development lawyers, it is exciting to be involved in a scheme of national importance which will create a great place to live. The work that we are doing will help to create a healthy place and flourishing community which will support the needs of the growing population of the city”.



“Langley is an unparalleled opportunity to not only deliver new homes, but to establish a new community and set a national benchmark for development of this scale. It is the chance to create a new place for people delivering an exemplar residential development for future generations. The new community at Langley will be supported by a wide range of infrastructure from new public transport connections, to a network of walking and cycling routes, extensive green infrastructure and public spaces, to education facilities and local amenities. In creating this new part of the City, there is the opportunity to incorporate new built form with the area’s unique assets to create a distinct identity and living environment.”

Councillor Ian Ward, Leader - Birmingham City Council

Case Study

Government-backed ‘first of its kind’ modular homes scheme

Finding new ways to build is an important aspect of how we will develop sustainable communities that balance the needs of the population with the essential requirement to minimise the impact of development on the environment and reduce housebuilding’s contribution to climate change.

We have worked with Ilke Homes Land Limited on its ground-breaking sale and purchase by a modular house builder, the first that it had delivered following major investment from Homes England.

The scheme drew national publicity driven by the Housing Minister, Robert Jenrick, because of the environmentally friendly nature of a modular house builder’s product and Homes England’s investment in delivering a sustainable development. As set out in his speech at the Policy Exchange and Create Streets, the Government is committed to a programme of establishing practical steps to deliver more beautiful, sustainable homes faster through the Future Homes Standard and National Design Code.

The deal is the first time the UK government agency has ever invested directly into a modular housing factory and is testament to Homes England’s dynamic approach to addressing structural issues within our housing and construction industries.



“Modular can certainly lead them down the right path on their journey to innovate house building. By manufacturing offsite, our precision-engineered homes can be delivered twice as fast as traditional methods of construction, while also being 20 per cent more energy-efficient than other new builds – delivering huge long-term cost savings for consumers, as well as a reduction in carbon emissions.”

Ilke Homes press release



Our environmental impact

We are committed to reducing the environmental impact that we have and making a positive contribution to addressing climate change through the choices we make as a business. During the year we identified an Energy Manager to review environmental initiatives as appropriate, beginning with the creation of an energy-saving action plan to identify areas of the business where energy can be saved. We have also implemented changes to reduce our carbon footprint during the year including completing an extensive paper light initiative which has reduced paper usage and paper waste. We have also introduced additional recycling bins in our offices and switched to energy saving LED lights.

COVID has had a significant impact on our energy usage in the year as we saw most of our staff working from home and our offices being used less frequently both by staff and visitors. As a result, we have achieved a notable reduction in the energy usage across all offices. Whilst this will increase as more employees begin to return to the office over the coming months, we are committed to implementing necessary strategies to retain the positive behaviours which will help us achieve our environmental goals.

The use of Microsoft Teams has been further embedded within the business over the last 12-months with additional training delivered. It has been a key platform for us in keeping connected with clients and colleagues whilst working away from the office and we have had positive feedback that many teams have felt more connected during the pandemic because of the introduction of more structured ‘getting in touch’ sessions. During the pandemic we followed government guidance very closely and encouraged people to work from home wherever possible which has seen a significant reduction in travel costs which has resulted in much lower carbon emissions from car, train and plane travel. Going forward, we expect some travel to return but clients and staff have welcomed the use of technology for virtual meetings rather than in-person get togethers and we are encouraging this to continue as part of our Gateley Agile strategy.

An example of this is our Leadership Lunches which took place in-person across the office network, aligned to Strategic Board meetings. The use of Teams for Leadership Lunches has meant that anyone from an office can attend which has made them far more accessible. This is a great example of how a change of behaviour which has a positive impact on reducing our environmental impact has also had a positive impact on our people. Going forward, our Leadership Lunches will remain virtual, and our Strategic Board meetings will not be organised across the office network, further reducing travel obligations.

Planet *highlights*

64.8%
in electricity use

59.5%
in transport usage

48.6%
in total SECR emissions

50%
in tCO2e per employee

53.6%
in tCO2e per £m of turnover

48.8%
in tCO2e per square foot

Objectives for 2022

- › Deliver the priority actions identified in the energy-saving action plan.
- › Maintain reductions in travel through the continued use of Microsoft Teams.
- › Explore “Litter lunches” whereby teams are encouraged to go litter picking at lunchtime with colleagues in the office or individually whilst working at home.

Levelling up *Goals*



Levelling up: *Governance*

Part of the ESG triumvirate, governance underpins all aspects of being a responsible business. Gateley applies the Quoted Companies Alliance (QCA) corporate governance code in order to comply with the AIM rules and its obligations in respect of the corporate governance code. We have included our completed corporate governance code statement in the pages that follow.

Code of conduct

As a responsible business, we value our reputation for ethical behaviour and upholding the utmost integrity. We have a number of policies within the business which respect people, counter corruption, safeguard information and deliver responsible marketing and procurement. These policies have been collated into a Responsible Business toolkit which has been made available to our employees via our intranet and shared with all new starters. Over the coming 12 months we will be reviewing this toolkit to simplify the messaging to ensure that this is accessible to all staff alongside finding new ways to highlight key aspects of the code of conduct, why it is important and what each person can do to ensure that they are supporting our Responsible Business ethos.

By way of example, we are committed to preventing acts of modern slavery and human trafficking from occurring within our business and supply chain and expect our suppliers to adopt the same high standards. We have a zero tolerance approach to bribery and corruption and we ensure all our employees and suppliers are adequately trained to limit our exposure to bribery by setting out clear anti-bribery and corruption policies; providing mandatory training to all employees; encouraging our employees to be vigilant and report any suspected cases of bribery in accordance with the specified procedures; and escalating and investigating instances of suspected bribery and assisting the police or other appropriate authorities in their investigations.

Corporate governance statement

The Group applies the Quoted Companies Alliance (QCA) corporate governance code in order to comply with the AIM rules and its obligations in respect of the corporate governance code. Details of the Group’s compliance with the code are set out below.

Principle 1

Establish a strategy and business model which promote long-term value for shareholders

Our business description explained

The Group provides commercial legal services together with complementary non-legal professional services through 23 business lines, grouped into five operating segments. Dependent on a client’s requirements, any given mandate or assignment can involve more than one business line delivered by professional staff across one or multiple geographical office locations.

In the last 30 years we have grown consistently with an unbroken record of increased profit delivery year-on-year. This has been achieved through an expansion of business services and a focus on a business mix that offers sustainable growth through a variety of macroeconomic conditions.

Gateley employees over 1,000 staff to deliver tailored services from twelve offices across the UK and our office in Dubai to a wide range of clients requiring local, regional and national service delivery. Gateley also maintains informal, non-exclusive, relationships with a number of law firms (30+) around the world, enabling it to provide clients access to a global legal solution.

Strategy

Gateley became an Alternative Business Structure (“ABS”) with effect from 1 January 2014 and joined the AIM market in June 2015. As we enter our seventh year post Admission to AIM, the Board continues to enhance our market share and appeal in an established legal market through the diversification into non-legal services that are closely aligned to the delivery of legal services. The Board concludes that the market for the Group’s services continues to support this strategy.

Non-lawyers are permitted to own and invest in ABS law firms. The Board believes a combination of the ABS structure and admission to trading on AIM provides a platform for the continued profitable growth and future development of the business. It enables the business to differentiate itself from its competition through an enhanced service-offering and (currently) unique career opportunity, to diversify its revenue streams through the acquisition of additional complementary legal and non-legal professional consultancy services businesses and finally to incentivise its people offering wider and earlier ownership to staff of a more modern, dynamic legal business.

Strategy continues to focus on:

- pursuing opportunities to grow Gateley organically;
- making selective acquisitions, including (i) other legal firms which offer geographical expansion or additional specialist services and (ii) professional consultancy services businesses offering complementary services; and

- aligning the interests of shareholders (including employee shareholders) with those of the business through share participation to support retention of staff and enhance our recruitment appeal.

Organic growth strategy

The UK legal services market continues to exhibit growth and clear opportunities exist for us to continue to differentiate our service offering and grow organically, in particular by:

- The retention of existing employees, working together to look after our clients’ businesses as if they were our own;
- Attracting new talent wishing to be part of a pioneering legal and professional services group;
- Collaborative Group-wide and cross service working;
- Continued strengthening of our national network, offering a quality, value-for-money legal service to mid-market clients in the markets in which they trade;
- Continuing to build upon our straight talking mid-market corporate service offering;
- Maintaining and building upon Gateley’s bank panel representation and “own account” work for banks;
- Continuing to extend our relationships with the UK’s leading house builders and in particular in those divisions and regions where Gateley does not currently act;
- Securing further instructions from Pension trustees to act as independent trustee on large schemes with deficits;
- Expanding specialist areas such as regulatory and private client into other geographical areas;
- Extending the expertise in Guildford relating to the sale of UK developments to international clients to other offices;
- Developing our expertise and reputation for the provision of surety and bond advice; and
- Establishing a market leading human capital service offering advice to clients moving employees across international borders.

Over the last 12 months, whilst impacted by the COVID-19 pandemic, our strategy has been to safeguard and retain our people in order to ensure we can service clients adequately once activity levels return after the initial decrease in activity caused by the national lockdowns in the UK. The Group employs a total of 1,138 staff as at 30 April 2021. Recruitment has once again been active during the year at all levels as 23 apprentices joined in March 2021 and the continued recruitment of senior professionals (six new laterally hired partners and consultancy directors joined the Group across offices and disciplines).

Acquisitive growth

Gateley believes that it can strengthen its business by broadening its offering through the acquisition of complementary legal and non-legal, professional consultancy services businesses. A broader set of services creates additional channels to market, increases sales potential, facilitates a more flexible sales model and enhances client retention.

We provide an attractive foundation for target businesses to support their continued growth by drawing upon our established national office network and existing “sales force” of partners and other lawyers and professional services consultants, and by providing back-office infrastructure and access.

Since our Admission to AIM in 2015 we have acquired a number of complementary professional services businesses.

The Board has introduced the concept of “Platforms”. These are market-facing structures within the Group upon which we cluster appropriate legal and consultancy services focused upon specific sectors or markets. The Platforms are a representation of the Group’s diversified and differentiated business model. To date, the Group has created two Platforms via the aggregation of legal and consultancy services for the Property market and for the Human Capital market. The Board’s strategy is to continue to grow these Platforms and to create new Platforms bringing together the Group’s other areas of expertise.

The Board will continue to seek to grow the Group by:

- being well positioned, as a result of its more flexible corporate structure, to take advantage of anticipated consolidation within the UK legal services industry;
- acquiring legal teams or firms offering new niche services, sector specialism, or an opportunity to enter new geographic markets deemed strategic; and
- acquiring complementary professional services businesses (facilitated by the Group’s alternative business structure).

Incentivisation

Gateley has introduced a range of employee share schemes that ensure all staff have the opportunity to acquire shares and participate in the financial success of our business.

The aim of encouraging earlier and widespread equity ownership in the business is to attract, retain and motivate talent and to ensure all employees can benefit from the Group’s longer term success.

Principle 2

Seek to understand and meet shareholder needs and expectations

The Board welcomes discussions with shareholders both formally and informally. Formal opportunities include the Annual General Meeting and twice yearly investor presentations. Following the Annual General Meeting and at other times during the year, the Directors are also available for informal discussions should a shareholder wish.

Many shareholders are employees of the Group and this allows regular dialogue regarding the expectations of those shareholders. Throughout the year, the Chairman is in regular contact with institutional shareholders and the Group has appointed an Investor Relations Officer who seeks feedback on a regular basis from shareholders and potential shareholders. Roderick Waldie (Chief Executive Officer), Neil Smith (CFO) and Nick Smith (Acquisitions Director and Head of Investor Relations) present to city analysts and institutional investors following the interim and annual results announcements as well as on an ad hoc basis (where requested by fund managers). The Group also encourages its brokers to interact with shareholders and provide feedback from those discussions so that the Group can respond accordingly. Shareholder communication is answered, where possible or appropriate, by Directors, the Group’s Financial PR advisers or the Group’s brokers.

The Group supports the availability of independent third party research to ensure information is disseminated effectively. The Group also provides access to video recordings of market presentations, via its website, in order to help keep all its shareholders and potential shareholders informed on the Group’s positioning and prospects.

The Group also endeavours to maintain a dialogue and keep shareholders informed through its public announcements and Group website. Gateley’s website provides not only information specifically relevant to investors (such as the Group’s annual report and accounts and investor presentations) but also regarding the nature of the business itself with considerable detail regarding the services it provides and the manner in which it carries on its business.

The Annual General Meeting of the Group, normally attended by all Directors, provides the Directors with the opportunity to report to shareholders on current and proposed operations and developments, and also enables shareholders to express their views of the Group’s business activities. Historically shareholders have been (and when circumstances permit will be again) encouraged to attend and are invited to ask questions during the meeting and to meet with the Directors after the formal proceedings have ended.

The Group announces the detailed results of shareholder voting to the market, in accordance with recommended practice.

Corporate governance statement continued

Principle 3 Take into account wider stakeholder and social responsibilities and their implications for long term success

Stakeholder Relations

The Board recognises that the Group’s continued growth and long-term success is largely reliant on its relations with its stakeholders, both internal (employees and shareholders) and external (clients, regulators, shareholders, suppliers, business partners and advisers).

Internal stakeholders

As a professional service-led business, our employees are a key factor in delivering successful growth and as such we support open and friendly dialogue throughout our workforce.

Internal communications and engagement have been of utmost importance during the remote working necessitated by the COVID-19 pandemic. We have endeavoured to ensure that all of our staff have appropriate equipment and systems to allow them to participate fully albeit remotely, in all business activities whether client work, training programmes or social activities during this period.

We undertake employee reviews and assessments to identify and assist employees with training and career progression. We aim to keep our workforce informed on our progress for example holding regular discussions in each office that are open to all levels of staff to attend. The Board meets senior executives and heads of departments on a regular basis and through its reporting structures receives information on key clients and supplier relationships at least monthly on an informal basis and more formally quarterly. The Group’s internal intranet system, that was revamped in 2019, has continued to evolve and develop in becoming the prominent method of internal communications for all part of the business. It provides a responsive and interactive source of information relating to the business and helping to keep employees informed on key issues. Employees also participate in the Group’s share option schemes enabling them to have a stake in the Group’s long-term success.

We conduct regular employee engagement surveys and use these to inform many of our decisions, particularly in relation to retention and recruitment.

We hold an annual Gateley Leadership Overview virtual roadshow for each office to share with all staff details of the prior year, future activities and events of strategic significance.

The Chief Executive Officer (CEO) and Chief Operations Officer (COO) report to the Board on all regulatory matters and our Nominated Advisor is in regular dialogue with our Finance Director (CFO) on stock exchange regulatory matters to ensure that any market related regulatory concerns are raised with the Board.

External stakeholders

The Group maintains a regular dialogue with its external stakeholders to drive business development.

To ensure that we maintain communications with our external shareholders during the constraints arising as a result of the COVID-19 pandemic we have given a series of presentations remotely via Microsoft Teams and provided an opportunity for shareholders to raise questions in those presentations or in anticipation of the Annual General Meeting. Feedback has been sought from shareholders following the presentations and this will be taken into account in future presentations.

Our clients and prospective clients are of course crucial to the growth and long-term success of the Group and we believe in being a service-led business placing client care and interaction at the heart of our business. We conduct regular client surveys and have a client engagement programme; STELLAR, to better understand our clients’ experience of the service we provide. A small but growing number of clients benefit from this extra level of attention and support which is overseen by a dedicated team of non-lawyers who are committed to enhancing the client experience and ensuring our lawyers are delivering a stellar experience that meets – if not exceeds – our clients’ expectations.

We utilise a number of client management tools and processes that we have developed from best practice with other clients and within our industry including regular client listening in order to check satisfaction throughout the client relationship.

We seek to build strong long term relationships with our suppliers working alongside them as business partners for the benefit of all.

The Group works closely with its advisers to ensure it operates in accordance with the market regulations.

The CFO and a member of the Board (our Compliance Officer for Legal Practice) have regular meetings with the Group’s Relationship Manager at the Solicitors Regulation Authority (SRA), the organisation that oversees the regulation of the legal services sector.

Environment, Social and Governance (ESG) matters and Corporate Social Responsibility (CSR)

As a provider of legal and other professional services, the maintenance of the highest ethical standards is core to our business and the services we provide to our clients. But the provision of client focused services does not come at the expense of the needs of the wider society and our environment. The Board takes collective responsibility for ESG and CSR matters. Our policy is to support communities and charities local to our offices but our activities also provide support to national and international communities and charities. We constantly review our practices to better protect the environment and have implemented processes for example to reduce, reuse and recycle materials wherever possible.

Principle 3 – continued

Many of these principles have been formalised and documented in both the staff handbook and our compliance policies.

Where regulations have been introduced we have taken appropriate steps having for example policies relating to Modern Slavery, Tax Avoidance and Bribery all supported by a Whistleblowing Policy. Our annual Modern Slavery Act Statement is published on our website.

Principle 4 Embed effective risk management, considering both opportunities and threats, throughout the organisation

By its very nature the Group is well placed to identify and manage risk. Our employees are predominantly lawyers who have been professionally trained to be aware of risk and to respond accordingly. In addition the business has adopted layers of formal risk management processes.

The Board understands the importance of managing its risks and the necessity to fulfil its compliance obligations. This commitment is reflected in the seniority of people who are the members of our risk related committees and who are appointed to the risk management roles within the business. These are not simply nominated positions administered by others less senior; these functions are carried out in person.

Whilst the Strategic Board considers the strategy and direction of the Group in conjunction with the Plc Board, executives underneath our two main boards also sit on an Operations Board and our Risk Committee. The Risk Committee includes members of the Plc and Strategic Boards, Roderick Waldie (Chief Executive Officer), Michael Ward, Compliance Officer Legal Practice (“COLP”) and Neil Smith, CFO/Compliance Officer Finance and Administration (“COFA”) along with senior members of the business in key risk related roles. The Risk Committee meets quarterly to consider the key risks of the business. The risks are identified and assessed in accordance with the Group’s Risk Policy which includes guidance on categorising risks. All employees of the business are encouraged to raise any risk related items with the Risk Committee for consideration. Risks are recorded in a risk register and reviewed at each meeting of the Risk Committee if there has been no intervening event to require earlier review. The Risk Committee considers each risk and determines whether it must be avoided, can be mitigated or will be tolerated.

Key risks currently identified by the business include COVID-19, compliance with applicable regulatory standards, reputational risk, security of operational IT systems, the effective integration of acquired businesses and the recruitment and retention of highly skilled staff. Each member of the Risk Committee works with other specialist managers in the business (e.g. MLRO, Lexcel Officer, HR Director, IT Director, Head of Learning & Development and Head of Facilities) in relation to these risks and actions are taken to

monitor and manage these. These managers report monthly to our Operations Board where decisions can be made and implemented as appropriate to manage our risks. After each of its meetings, the Risk Committee reports to the Audit and Risk Committee who review and interrogate the risk register. Risk items are included in the agenda for meetings of both the Audit and Risk Committee and the Board.

The Audit and Risk Committee (see principle 5 for members and number of meetings) has introduced an internal audit function within the organisation. Audits have been undertaken in relation to each area of risk identified in the business and as the reports become available, consideration is given to the recommendations of the auditor and actions agreed and implemented. The SRA requires regular audits of legal matters and these audits have recently been revised to focus on particular areas of risk associated with increased levels of remote working.

The Audit and Risk Committee Report describes the internal control functions and the Committee has reviewed and monitored the effectiveness of the internal controls for the year ended 30 April 2021 concluding that there was a satisfactory process in place to identify and manage such risks. It should be noted that the Group’s system of internal control is designed to manage, rather than eliminate, risk of failure to achieve business objectives. It is recognised that such a system can only provide reasonable, but not absolute, assurance against material misstatement or loss.

A comprehensive budgeting process is completed once a year and is reviewed and approved by the Board. The Group’s results, compared with the budget, are reported to the Board on a monthly basis.

The Group maintains appropriate insurance cover in respect of actions taken against the Directors in the course of their roles and in respect of material loss or claims against the Group. The insured values and type of cover are comprehensively reviewed on a periodic basis.

Principle 5 Maintain the Board as a well-functioning, balanced team led by the Chair

The Group operates in complex and challenging areas and as such has put in place a senior management structure that can best provide the strategic advice and leadership required. The senior management structure consists of a Plc Board, a Strategic Board and an Operations Board.

The Plc Board contains a balance of Executive and Non-Executive Directors, including a Non-Executive Chairman who is responsible for dealing with the strategic direction and long-term success of the Group. The Board notes that the Company Secretary is not independent. The Board meets at regular intervals throughout the year and at any other time deemed necessary for the good management of the business. Prior to the implementation of remote working practices to address COVID-19, meetings were held in the Group’s offices on a rotating basis. Due to the pandemic, meetings are now held remotely.

Corporate governance statement
continued

Principle 5 – continued

Gateley has a diverse board with the Directors bringing varied experience gained from working within a range of sectors. There are seven Directors on the Plc Board, three independent Non-Executive Directors and four Executive Directors. The Non-Executive Chairman of the Board is Nigel Payne with Joanne Lake being the Senior Independent Director.

There are three committees of the Board whose members comprise the Non-Executive Directors:

- the Audit and Risk Committee chaired by Joanne Lake;
- the Remuneration Committee chaired by Suzanne Thompson; and
- the Nominations Committee chaired by Nigel Payne.

The members of the Board invite the Executive Directors to attend Committee meetings when appropriate. Where relevant to the subject matter of the meetings of the Board and the Committees, experts from within the business are invited to attend a meeting to present to or advise the Non-Executive Directors – for example the IT Director, Information Security Officer, Group HR Director and Marketing Director have been invited to attend meetings to report on matters such as information security and remuneration arrangements (including the job retention scheme) and brand development. Members of the Board have also attended meetings of Gateley Plc to jointly discuss and consider critical projects for the business. External advice is also sought when required for example from the Group’s auditor and remuneration consultants in relation to remuneration policies.

Notwithstanding any other roles they may have either within the business or externally, the members of the Board believe that they have sufficient time available to fulfil their roles as Directors of Gateley.

The Board has considered the time availability that Nigel Payne has to carry out his duties as Chairman of Gateley (Holdings) Plc. The Board considers that Nigel’s other public company duties as the Chairman of Braemar Shipping Services Plc and as a Non-Executive Director of Getbusy Plc take on average no more than eight working days per month leaving ample spare capacity for him to carry out his duties as Chairman of the Group. This is reassessed on an annual basis. The Board has considered the time availability that both Joanne Lake and Suzanne Thompson have to carry out their duties as Non-Executive Directors of Gateley (Holdings) Plc. The Board considers that Joanne’s other public company duties take on average no more than eleven working days per month leaving ample spare capacity for her to carry out her duties as Non-Executive Director of the Group. Suzanne’s other public company duties take on average no more than ten working days per month leaving ample spare capacity for her to carry out her duties as Non-Executive Director of the Group. The Board reassesses the time availability of both Joanne and Suzanne on a regular basis.

Of the Executive Directors within the Group both Rod Waldie and Neil Smith have full time roles whilst Peter Davies and Michael Ward now work four days a week.

In accordance with the Articles of Association, all new Directors appointed by the Board are required to seek election by shareholders at the next Annual General Meeting of the Company following their appointment and all Directors are required to retire by rotation in line with the provisions of the Articles of Association.

The Board meets throughout the year and in the financial year ending on 30 April 2021 it met ten times as a Board. Details of the attendance of Directors at Board meetings during the period is noted below. Papers relevant to the business of the meeting are provided in advance and include financial, staff, risk, regulatory and development information.

The following table sets out the Board and Committee meetings scheduled and attendance during the financial year 2020/2021:

1 May 2020 to 30 April 2021	Board	Audit & Risk Committee	Remuneration Committee	Nomination Committee	AGM 2020
Number of meetings	10	2	1	1	1
Nigel Payne	10	2	1	1	1
Joanne Lake	10	2	1	1	1
Suzanne Thompson	10	2	1	1	1
Roderick Waldie	10	2*	1*	1*	1
Peter Davies	10	-	-	-	1
Neil Smith	10	2*	1*	-	1
Michael Ward	10	-	-	-	1

Additional informal Board meetings were held early in the financial year to assess the impact of COVID-19 which are not listed above.

Principle 5 – continued

Several informal Board Committee meetings were held during the year to prepare for or finalise and approve substantive work carried out in a formal Board meeting. These are not listed above.

Notes to table
Where an asterisk is shown, that Director was invited to attend a Committee meeting although not a member of the Committee, to make proposals in relation to or to advise on agenda items.

For the financial year ending 30 April 2021 the Strategic Board comprised nine individuals including the Chief Executive Officer, COO, Group FD, Group HR Director and five Executives of Gateley Plc.

The Operations Board comprises ten individuals including the COO, Group FD, Group HR Director and other individuals from across both the professional and support function departments of the Group as deemed appropriate and is responsible for the day-to-day running of the business. The Operations Board meets monthly and reports to the Strategic Board. Two members of the Operations Board stepped down from the Board at the end of the last financial year with two new members joining in their place. The Operations Board provides an opportunity for senior members of the business to gain greater exposure to the management of the business and to develop their management skills.

Succession
Succession planning is an important part of Gateley’s corporate governance and is key to ensuring that the prosperity and collaborative culture of the business are maintained in the long term. The Nomination Committee annually considers the Group’s succession plans, most recently in relation to the role of Chief Executive Officer in view of Michael Ward’s decision to step down as Chief Executive Officer in 2020. This has been undertaken to enable a managed and orderly handover to take place. As part of its deliberations, the Board conducted a thorough review of the attributes required of a new Chief Executive Officer and agreed that an internal appointment was the best way to ensure the continuation of the Group’s sustainable growth strategy, as well as preserving its culture. Roderick Waldie was appointed as Chief Executive Officer and a member of the Board with effect from 1 May 2020. The Nomination Committee has begun to consider succession for the Group Chairman and the Chair of the Audit Committee, both of whom will retire from the Board on or before May 2024 in accordance with best practice Corporate Governance Guidance. A process and timeline for the identification and appointment of replacement candidates has been developed.

The Nomination Committee has also considered the succession of the Group’s Chief Operating Officer who will retire in 30 April 2022. A process has also been put in place for this appointment.

Board independence

In assessing the independence of Non-Executive Directors at the date of this report, the Board took account of their experience, character and judgement, and their dependence on, or relationships with the Group. In all cases the Board felt the Directors were independent in character and judgement. Account was taken of market guidance regarding factors that impact upon independence for example the holding of a previous Executive position within the Group or a material business relationship with the Group including a shareholding, as these are considered to impair the perceived independence of the Non-Executive Director.

Conflicts of interest
The Companies Act 2006 (the Act) imposes a duty on Directors to avoid a situation in which they have or could have a conflict of interest or possible conflict with the interests of the Group. Directors are aware of their duty to promote the Group’s success and are required to disclose all actual and potential conflicts of interests to the Board as they arise for consideration and approval. “Declarations of Interest” is an agenda item at every meeting of the Board. If an interest is declared the Board may impose restrictions or refuse to authorise such conflict if it considers that it conflicts with the interests of the Group. Only Directors not involved in the conflict or potential conflict participate in the decision process. A register of such interests is maintained.

All Directors of both Gateley (Holdings) Plc and Gateley Plc are reminded annually of their obligations to notify any changes in their statement of interests and also to declare any benefits received from third parties in their capacity as a Director of the Group.

Each new Director on appointment is required to declare any potential conflict situations.

The register of conflicts is formally reviewed annually and the Board has concluded that the process has operated effectively during the period. No Director has declared receipt of any benefits during the year in his capacity as a Director of the Group.

Principle 6
Ensure that between them the Directors have the necessary up-to-date experience, skills and capabilities

The Group operates in a complex and challenging professional environment and the Board is mindful that in order to deal effectively with the challenges of the business and to maximise its growth opportunities it has to incorporate a broad range of skills and diversity.

The members of the Board have considered the skills and experience that the Board requires to enable it to manage the business effectively.

Corporate governance statement
continued

Principle 6 – continued

These are set out below:

Board skills matrix

General experience	
Leadership	Successful leadership at a senior executive level in a large business
Strategy and growth	Senior executive experience in developing and delivering successful strategies and meaningful business growth outcomes in a large business
Financial acumen	Senior executive experience and understanding of accounting, financial reporting, corporate finance and financial controls in a large business
Governance and risk management	Senior executive experience in a large business that is subject to rigorous governance, relevant regulatory risk and general business risk management standards
Specialist experience	
Industry experience	Senior executive experience in a professional services people business
Client service, marketing and innovation	Senior executive experience in client relationship management and delivering growth through commercialising innovative services and solutions
Stakeholder management	Senior executive experience in stakeholder management within a large business
Mergers and acquisitions	Successful track record of delivering strategically sound and value adding mergers and acquisitions as an enabler of corporate strategy
International experience	Senior executive experience of a range of geographic, political, cultural, regulatory and business environments
Experienced Chief Executive Officer	Successful track record as a Chief Executive Officer of a listed entity or an equivalent large business enterprise
Remuneration	Board Remuneration Committee membership or senior executive remuneration experience in a large business enterprise

Members of the Board are believed to possess these skills and to have the necessary experience. Details of the Directors including brief biographies are set out at <https://investors.gateleyplc.com/home/board-of-directors/>

The Executive Directors participate in all of the regulatory training programmes of the Group and the Non-Executive Directors are invited to participate as appropriate.

The Board maintains a skills, diversity and experience matrix which is detailed below, and which will be periodically reviewed at Board meetings to evaluate current and future requirements. The Board and its committees will also seek external expertise and advice where required.

Tenure (years)

0-3 3-6 6-9



Age (years)

40-50 51-60 60+



Gender (%)

Male Female



Principle 7

Evaluate Board performance based on clear and relevant objectives, seeking continuous improvement

The Board considers evaluation of its performance and that of its Committees and individual Directors to be an integral part of corporate governance to ensure it has the necessary skills, experience and abilities to fulfil its responsibilities. The objective of the evaluation process is to identify and address opportunities for improving the performance of the Board and to solicit honest, genuine and constructive feedback.

The Board considers the evaluation process is best carried out internally at this stage of the Group’s development. However the Board will keep this under review and may consider independent external evaluation reviews in due course as the Group grows.

The internal evaluation process includes:

Board evaluation	
Review	Period
Board composition in terms of skills, experience and balance	Annually or as required
Board cohesion	Annually or as required
Board operational effectiveness and decision making	Annually
Board meetings conduct and content and quality of information	Annually or as required
The Board’s engagement with shareholders and other stakeholders	Annually
The corporate vision and business plan	Annually

Committee evaluation	
Review	Period
Composition in terms of skills, experience and balance	Annually or as required
Terms of Reference	Annually
Effectiveness	Annually

Individual Director evaluation	
Review	Period
Executive Director performance in executive role	Annually
Executive Director contribution to the Board	Annually
Non-Executive Director performance and contribution to the Board	Annually
Non-Executive Director’s independence and time served	Annually
All Directors’ attendance at Board and Committee meetings	Annually

The Board will, as a whole or in part as appropriate, undertake the evaluation process aided by the Chairman, Chief Executive Officer and other Non-Executive Directors or external advisers as necessary. The Chairman is responsible for ensuring the evaluation process is ‘fit for purpose’, as well as dealing with matters raised during the process. The Chairman will keep under review the frequency, scope and mechanisms for the evaluation process and amend the process as required.

Where areas for development are identified these will be addressed in a constructive manner. Where necessary individual Directors will be offered mentoring and training. If areas for development are identified within the Board as a whole, then changes or additions to the Board will be considered in conjunction with the Nominations Committee.

The evaluation process will focus on the improvement of Board performance, through open and constructive dialogue and the development and implementation of action plans. The Board will report on its evaluation and actions in its Annual Report.

The Chairman carries out an annual appraisal of the Board, the Committees and the individual Directors including a review of the fees paid to Non-Executive Directors. The Board (excluding the Chairman) meets annually to consider the fees of the Chairman. The formal evaluation process is supported by regular contact between the Chairman and the other Directors to allow any matters to be addressed in a timely way. The appraisal of the Chairman was led by Roderick Waldie (Chief Executive Officer) who sought the views of the other Directors. The findings of the evaluation process (including the review of the fees paid to the Non-Executive Directors) were reported to the Board in September 2020 and January 2021. It was agreed that the Chairman should continue to oversee succession plans for the Board over the next five years. Succession planning is a vital task for boards and the management of succession planning represents a key measure of the effectiveness of the Board and is a key responsibility of both the Nominations Committee and wider Board.

Corporate governance statement continued

Principle 8 Promote a corporate culture that is based on ethical values and behaviours

The business operates in a highly regulated sector with demanding professional standards. The legal profession requires all of its members to maintain high ethical standards and to comply with its code of conduct. In addition, the business has been accredited with the Law Society’s quality standard, Lexcel, with which all legal and where appropriate, non-legal parts of the business are required to comply. Gateley Plc has also sought and received CQS, LMS and Cyber Essentials accreditations. Members of the Group have other accreditations including ISO27001 and ISO9001 as required for their business.

The Group has established formal risk management processes and is embedding an internal audit function to report upon risk management.

The Group maintains a register of the interests of staff outside the business which includes those of the Directors to help it manage potential conflicts of interest. The Directors do not hold any external positions which conflict with the duties owed to the Group. Disclosure of any potential conflicts of interests is invited at each meeting of the Board.

The Group’s success is largely dependent on recruiting, retaining, and developing the best professionals. To achieve this the Group seeks to ensure that working conditions are of a high standard and has in place good and effective management and staff communications, with the ability for staff to engage in decisions. The Group also encourages participation in the success of the business through share options and has a range of benefits to support staff, including ill health protection and life cover. The Group is committed to equal opportunities for promotion, with appropriate consideration being given to applications for employment from disabled persons.

The Group aims to remunerate staff in line with market practice, to provide development opportunities and to encourage staff motivation and retention.

Diversity, inclusion and well being (DIW) is an important part of our culture and the values that underpin it. We are committed to a fully inclusive, diverse and healthy working environment where staff can develop and contribute fully without discrimination on the basis of gender, sexual orientation, age, race, nationality, disability or political or religious beliefs. We have established four internal employee networks; Unity, Inspire, Thrive and Pride.

- Unity recognises, celebrates and supports employees from all different cultures, religions, backgrounds and those with disabilities. Our Unity network group highlights and celebrates events across all our offices to ensure we have an environment where all employees have room to breathe and feel comfortable bringing their full selves to work;
- Our Inspire network group has been set up to nurture, develop and provide support to all of our talent with a particular focus on career milestones and enabling our people to carve the careers they want successfully;

- Our Thrive network group supports the health and well being of all employees to promote high levels of performance both physically and mentally across the Group. Thrive runs a series of events and training programmes throughout the year to raise awareness and to inspire our people to take care of themselves and those around them; and
- The Pride network group provides a welcoming, supportive, safe and confidential space for staff affected by sexual orientation and gender identity issues.

Principle 9 Maintain governance structures and processes that are fit for purpose and support good decision-making by the Board

The Board sets the Group’s strategic aims and ensures that necessary resources are in place in order for the Group to meet its objectives. All members of the Board take collective responsibility for the performance of the Company and all decisions are taken in the interests of the Group. Whilst the Board has delegated the day-to-day operational management of the Group via the Strategic and Operations Boards to the Executive Directors and other senior managers, it has formal terms of reference identifying those specific matters which remain subject to decision by the Board. These include the appointment and removal of Directors, terms of reference for Board Committees and membership thereof, approval of strategy including acquisitions and disposals, annual financial budgets, investments and capital projects, projects of a capital nature and all significant contracts. The Non-Executive Directors have a particular responsibility to constructively challenge the strategy proposed by the Executive Directors; to scrutinise and challenge performance; and to ensure appropriate remuneration and succession planning arrangements are in place in relation to Executive Directors and other senior members of the Management team.

The Chairman is responsible for leadership by the Board and ensuring its effectiveness in all aspects of its role. The Chairman with the assistance of the Chief Executive Officer sets the Board’s agenda and ensures that adequate time is available for discussion of all agenda items, in particular strategic issues.

The Chairman promotes a culture of openness and debate by facilitating the effective contribution of Non-Executive Directors in particular and ensuring constructive relations between Executive and Non-Executive Directors. The Executives enjoy open access to the Non-Executive Directors. The Chairman is also responsible for ensuring that the Directors receive accurate, timely and clear information. The positions of Chairman and Chief Executive Officer are held by different individuals.

The Chief Executive Officer is responsible for running the business and implementing the decisions and policies of the Board. The Chief Executive Officer is also responsible for ensuring the Group’s communication with shareholders is timely, informative and accurate with due regard to commercial sensitivity and regulatory requirements.

Principle 9 – continued

The Group FD is responsible for the Group’s finances and the COO is responsible for the operations and technical requirements of the Group. The role of Company Secretary is undertaken by the Group FD.

The Non-Executive Directors are appointed to provide independent oversight and constructive challenge to the Executive Directors but have been specifically chosen as a result of their ability to provide strategic advice and guidance.

All Directors are able to allocate sufficient time to the Group to discharge their duties. There is a formal, rigorous and transparent procedure for the appointment of new directors to the Plc Board. The search for Plc Board candidates is conducted, and appointments made, on merit, against objective criteria and with due regard for the benefits of diversity on the Board.

The Board is responsible for ensuring that a sound system of internal control exists to safeguard shareholders’ interests and the Group’s assets. It is responsible for the regular review of the effectiveness of the systems of internal control. Internal controls are designed to manage rather than eliminate risk and therefore even the most effective system cannot provide assurance that each and every risk, present and future, has been addressed. The key features of the system that operated during the year are described below.

The Board has a formal agenda of items for consideration at each scheduled meeting but will also meet at additional times when required. It receives detailed papers in advance of meetings and verbal reports at each meeting from the Executive Management covering the financial performance of the Group, updates on share performance, people matters, business development, matters affecting the general trading conditions and operational issues, including risk and compliance. The Board also receives verbal reports from the Chair of each Committee on matters which relate to the Committee’s responsibilities. Since the onset of the COVID-19 pandemic, the Board, the Strategic Board and the Operations Board have increased the frequency of their meetings to enable them to regularly review the situation and its impact on the business and to determine appropriate measures in response. Meetings have been held remotely and Board papers continue to be circulated electronically in advance.

The Board has established the following Committees to assist with oversight and governance carrying out the necessary work required for the business to operate effectively and efficiently, and to comply with all the regulatory requirements. The Board has delegated certain specific areas of responsibility to each of the Committees. The Board sees minutes of all Committee meetings and the Chairman of the Committee reports to the Board on any significant matters.

Audit & Risk Committee	Nominations Committee	Remuneration Committee
Joanne Lake (Chairman)	Nigel Payne (Chairman)	Suzanne Thompson (Chairman)

Audit & Risk Committee	Nominations Committee	Remuneration Committee
Nigel Payne	Joanne Lake	Nigel Payne
Suzanne Thompson	Suzanne Thompson	Joanne Lake

Audit & Risk Committee
The Audit & Risk Committee is chaired by Joanne Lake, and also comprises Nigel Payne and Suzanne Thompson. The Audit & Risk Committee has agreed terms of reference and assists the Board in discharging its responsibilities for corporate governance, risk management, financial control and internal controls by reviewing and monitoring risk and internal controls throughout the business.

It oversees and reviews the Group’s financial reporting and internal control processes, its relationship with external auditor and the conduct of the audit process together with its process for ensuring compliance with laws, regulations and corporate governance. It is composed entirely of Non-Executive Directors but other individuals such as the Group’s FD and Chief Executive Officer and representatives of the Finance team are invited to attend all or any part of any meeting when deemed appropriate. The Group’s external auditor is invited to attend meetings of the Committee on a regular basis.

Remuneration Committee
The Remuneration Committee has general oversight of all remuneration arrangements for Executive Directors and it considers all material elements of remuneration policy, remuneration and incentives with reference to independent remuneration research and professional advice. Recommendations are made to the Board on the framework for executive remuneration including the design and implementation of equality based incentive schemes.

Nominations Committee
The Nominations Committee is responsible for all aspects of the appointment of Directors, succession planning and appointments to the Board, considering and recommending the reappointment of retiring Directors of the Group together with evaluation of Directors’ performance and effectiveness.

In addition to the above sub Committees, the Group has an operational Risk Committee. Members include the Chief Executive Officer, the Group FD, MLRO, Lexcel Officer and individuals responsible for the oversight of key risk areas. The purpose of the Risk Committee is to perform centralised identification and oversight of risks affecting the Group and risk management activities and to provide communication to all Group Boards regarding important risks and related risk management activities.

As complementary professional services businesses join the Group, separate “new” company Boards are formed, with suitably experienced individuals from the Group and the newly acquired business being appointed as Directors. The primary role of these boards is to oversee the transition into the Group for the benefit of all stakeholders. The minutes of each Group company’s monthly Board meeting are shared with the Operations, Strategic and Plc Boards.

Corporate governance statement continued

Principle 9 – continued

The Group has established management committees to address specific areas of the Group’s business activities. Details of these Committees and their functions can be found on the Group’s website www.gateleyplc.com

Principle 10

Communicate how the Group is governed and is performing by maintaining a dialogue with shareholders and other relevant stakeholders

The Board is committed to maintaining good communication and having constructive dialogue with all of its stakeholders, including shareholders, providing them with access to information to enable them to make informed decisions about the Group. The Investor Relations section of the Group’s website provides all required regulatory information as well as additional information shareholders may find helpful including: information on Board Members, Advisers and Significant Shareholdings, a historical list of the Group’s Announcements, Financial Calendar, Corporate Governance information, the Group’s publications including historic Annual Reports and Notices of Annual General Meetings, together with Share Price information and interactive charting facilities to assist shareholders analyse performance.

Results of shareholder meetings and details of votes cast are publicly announced through the regulatory news system and displayed on the Group’s website and suitable explanations of any actions undertaken as a result of any significant votes against resolutions will be included when relevant.

Information on the work of the various Board Committees and other relevant information are included in the Group’s Annual Report.

The Board and its committees

Board composition and independence

The Board consists of four Executive Directors (the Chief Executive Officer, the Chief Operating Officer and the Chief Finance Officer), the independent Non-Executive Chairman and two further independent Non-Executive Directors. The Non-Executive Directors are considered by the Board to be independent of Management and are free from any relationship which may materially interfere with the exercise of independent judgement. At the Annual General Meeting of the Company held on 30 October 2020 Michael James Ward and Suzanne Frances Allison Thompson offered themselves for re-election as Directors, both were re-appointed with immediate effect. Roderick Richard Waldie was also appointed as a Director and Chief Executive Officer.

Operation of the Board

The Board meets regularly throughout the year, as well as on an ad hoc basis as required, to consider all aspects of the Group’s activities. A formal schedule of matters reserved for the Board includes overall Group strategy, acquisition progress, operational review, committee updates, governance and risk and approval

of major expenditure. The agenda and relevant briefing papers (which include reports from the Executive Directors and minutes of subsidiary Board meetings) are distributed on a timely basis in advance of each Board meeting.

All Directors have access to the advice and services of the Company Secretary who is responsible for ensuring that Board procedures and applicable rules and regulations are observed.

The Board has considered the time availability that Nigel Payne has to carry out his duties as Chairman of Gateley (Holdings) Plc. The Board considers that Nigel’s other public company duties as the Chairman of Braemar Shipping Services Plc and as a Non-Executive Director of Getbusy Plc take on average no more than eight working days per month leaving ample spare capacity for him to carry out his duties as Chairman of the Group. This is reassessed on an annual basis.

The Board has considered the time availability that both Joanne Lake and Suzanne Thompson have to carry out their duties as Non-Executive Directors of Gateley (Holdings) Plc. The Board considers that Joanne’s other public company duties take on average no more than eleven working days per month leaving ample spare capacity for her to carry out her duties as Non-Executive Director of the Group. Suzanne’s other public company duties take on average no more than ten working days per month leaving ample spare capacity for her to carry out her duties as Non-Executive Director of the Group. The Board reassess the time availability of both Joanne and Suzanne on a regular basis.

Remuneration Committee

The Remuneration Committee comprises Suzanne Thompson (Chair), Nigel Payne and Joanne Lake. The Remuneration Committee is responsible for all elements of the remuneration of the Executive Directors and the members of the Strategic Board. The Committee also oversees the operation of the Group’s share option schemes. The Chief Executive Officer is invited to meetings of the Remuneration Committee to discuss the performance of other Executive Directors but is not involved in the decisions. The Remuneration Committee may invite any person it thinks appropriate to join the members of the Remuneration Committee at its meetings.

The Remuneration Committee has placed focus on the dilution of the Group, challenging the methods of remuneration for senior executives and partners. As a result the Committee has driven the changes made to the share incentive plans in use by the Group, primarily the introduction of the new long-term incentive plan.

Further details of the Committee are included in the Remuneration Report.

Audit and Risk Committee

The Audit and Risk Committee comprises Joanne Lake (Chair), Nigel Payne and Suzanne Thompson. Joanne Lake and Nigel Payne are Chartered Accountants and the Board believes the Committee is independent with all members being Non-Executive Directors. The Committee meets, together with the Group FD, Neil Smith, at least twice a year. It is responsible for ensuring the financial performance of the Group is properly reported on and monitored.

Principle 10 – continued

The Committee reviews the interim and annual accounts, reviews reports from the auditor, monitors the Group’s risk register and the adequacy and effectiveness of the systems of internal control, and reviews annually the effectiveness of the auditor. The auditor, previously Grant Thornton UK LLP, now MHA MacIntyre Hudson following their appointment at the AGM held on 30 October 2020, attends meetings at the request of the Chairman and the Committee meets with the auditor without Executive Directors being in attendance for part of the meeting.

With the assistance of skilled partners within the business the Audit and Risk Committee have worked to put practices in place that will allow an internal audit division to deliver appropriate and meaningful results.

Nomination Committee

The Nomination Committee comprises Nigel Payne (Chair), Suzanne Thompson and Joanne Lake. The Committee is responsible for monitoring the size and composition of the Board and the other Board committees. It is also responsible for identifying suitable candidates for Board membership and will monitor the performance and suitability of the current Board on an on-going basis.

Succession planning is an important part of the Group’s corporate governance statement and is key to ensuring that the prosperity and collaborative culture of the business are maintained in the long term.

Communications with shareholders

Communications with shareholders are given a high priority by the Directors who take responsibility for ensuring that a satisfactory dialogue takes place. The principal methods of communication with private shareholders remain the annual report and financial statements, the interim report, the AGM and the Group’s website (www.gateleyplc.com) which has been updated in the year to provide more meaningful and insightful information to investors and other stakeholders. In addition to the formal channels of London Stock Exchange communication through the regulatory news service, the Company utilises its brokers research services to support its engagement with private shareholders. The Group has also engaged with other brokers and advisers with a focus on delivering more frequent, quality communications with investors from a number of alternative research analysts.

It is intended that all Directors will attend each AGM and shareholders will be given the opportunity to ask questions. In addition, the Chief Executive Officer, Group Finance Director and Head of Investor Relations meet with institutional shareholders following the announcement of interim and final results and at other appropriate times. The Chief Executive Officer and Group Finance Director are also in regular contact with analysts who publish reports on the Group’s performance.

Internal control

The Board is responsible for the Group’s systems of internal control and for reviewing their effectiveness. The Board regularly reviews the process for identifying, evaluating and managing any significant risks faced by the Group. The Audit & Risk Committee discusses the

effectiveness of the systems of internal control with the auditor. The committee continues to work on the implementation of a supporting Internal Audit function.

Systems of internal control continue to develop as the Group’s activity expands. The internal controls in the businesses acquired by the Group are, where appropriate, the same as those in Gateley Plc.

The operational functions (professional practice, finance, IT, HR, training, business development, support services and compliance) operate within an established management structure. The managers within the trading businesses have specific responsibilities and authority to manage risk effectively and report monthly either directly to the Operations Board or via their respective committees. Decisions made by the Operations Board are reviewed monthly by the Strategic Board and the Board.

The operational Risk Committee meets regularly to review financial, operational and compliance risks for the businesses and reports to the Audit & Risk Committee. Processes to embed risk management throughout the Group will continue to be reviewed and implemented as appropriate, as will reviews of social, environmental and ethical matters to ensure that all significant risks to the business of the Group arising from these matters are adequately addressed.

It must be recognised that any system of internal control is designed to manage rather than eliminate the risk of failure to achieve business objectives. Any such system of internal control can at best provide reasonable but not absolute assurance against material misstatement or loss. The Board is committed to operating in accordance with the Code as far as it is appropriate to do so in view of the current stage of development of the Group.

Slavery and Human trafficking statement

Gateley (Holdings) Plc is committed to preventing acts of modern slavery and human trafficking from occurring within its business and supply chain, and expects its suppliers to adopt the same high standards. As part of our commitment to combating modern slavery, we have a specific modern slavery policy and we expect all of our suppliers to operate modern slavery and human trafficking policies.

Gateley (Holdings) Plc’s slavery and human trafficking statement, made in accordance with section 54(1) of the Modern Slavery Act 2015 for the financial year commencing 1 May 2019 and ending 30 April 2020, can be found on its website, www.gateleyplc.com. The statement for the financial year commencing 1 May 2020 and ending 30 April 2021 will be published in due course.

On behalf of the Board



Nigel Payne
Chairman

19 July 2021

Performance summary

People	
Headcount	1107
Female partner promotions (% of total promotions)	44%
Female partners (% of partnership)	20%
Female representation across our three Boards	32%
Position of highest rank in the Stonewall Equality Index	79
Time lost through sickness absence (% of working hours)	0.67%
Trainee retention rate	89%
Glassdoor overall ranking	4.5
Potential	
Awards shortlisted or won (number)	25
University prizes awarded by Gateley	3
March 2021 trainee intake privately educated (% of intake)	24%
March 2021 trainee intake educated in the state sector (% of intake)	76%
March 2021 trainee intake educated at a Russell Group university (% of intake)	59%
March 2021 trainee intake educated at a Non-Russell Group university (% of intake)	41%
Planet	
Electricity usage	1769 thousand kWh
Gas usage	1260 thousand kWh
Transport	126 thousand kWh
Total SECR emissions	855 tCO2e
Files recycled out of storage	10,084
Governance	
Quality Standards secured/ maintained	9
Modern slavery e-learning completion rate	100% completed course 84% completed refresher course
New suppliers that have completed MSA/ Bribery Act compliance during 2021/21	170



Gateley /