

# CSR firm of the year

WINNER

## Freshfields Bruckhaus Deringer



(L-R) Crispin Hain-Cole and Bea Malleson of Freshfields Bruckhaus Deringer, with *Legal Business* editor James Baxter

**Guy Morton**

### *Leading the way on openness and transparency*

Freshfields Bruckhaus Deringer led the way on corporate social responsibility issues in the legal sector by being the first law firm to produce a CSR report under the Global Reporting Initiative's sustainability reporting framework in January 2006. The report has been widely praised by groups such as The Corporate Citizenship Company, which views it as 'a welcome move towards greater openness and transparency, from a profession in which necessary discretion about client affairs has traditionally extended to privacy about its own operations'. The report puts discussion of relations with clients up front, as well as covering other issues such as communities and the environment.

The firm contributed the equivalent of more than £3m in money, time and gifts-in-kind to the community in the past financial year, with 34% of its staff taking part in one or more of its community activities. In 1995, it was among the first to sign up to the Department for the Environment's 'Making a corporate commitment campaign', which encourages businesses to reduce their environmental impact. More recently, in 2004, Freshfields invested in renewable electricity contracts for its London properties, enabling the firm to reduce its carbon footprint by 8,000 tonnes per year.

Freshfields has also been a strong supporter of human rights group Reprieve, which has taken the lead in fighting for the rights of Guantánamo detainees, providing it with free office space, as well as pro bono legal expertise.

### HIGHLY COMMENDED

**ALLEN & OVERY**

**Guy Beringer**

A&O gave over £12m of its global pre-tax profits to community projects last year. Acting as pro bono counsel for the Human Rights Institute of the International Bar Association, the firm filed an *amicus curiae* brief in the US

the Taskforce on Active Citizenship, established by the Taoiseach.

**EVERSHEDS**

**David Gray**

One element of Eversheds' commitment to CSR activity was signalled when it became a member of the 'One Percent Club' by contributing just under £2m of its pre-tax profits to the community. The firm has long been dedicated to helping those with limited access to justice and promoting equality of opportunity. It has also appointed CSR and environmental managers.

**HERBERT SMITH**

**Richard Brophy**

Richard Brophy oversees a wide-ranging and impressive CSR programme at the firm, which gave £1.74m in community investment last year – a 19% increase on the previous year. The firm's fee-earning staff recorded 5,000 hours of pro bono activity in 2005. The Legal Business Awards judges were also impressed by the firm's involvement in diversity networks.

**WRAGGE & CO**

**Steven Butts**

No inaugural CSR award would be complete without mentioning Wragge & Co, which has been at the forefront among firms outside the City, having had a demonstrable CSR policy in place since 2001 – drawing together initiatives covering the workplace, environment, community and clients.

## Investing in renewable energy has enabled Freshfields to reduce its carbon footprint by 8,000 tonnes.

Supreme Court in the 2004 *Rasul v Bush* case, in support of detainees held at Guantánamo Bay. It has also been taking the lead in urging the government to boost civil legal aid funding to avert a crisis whereby the poorest could soon be denied access to justice.

**ARTHUR COX**

**Pádraig Ó Ríordáin**

By adopting a comprehensive CSR policy – promoting significant pro bono activity, community activities and an environmentally friendly approach to business – as one of the central pillars of its recently adopted strategic plan, the firm is leading the way in Ireland. Ó Ríordáin, as managing partner, has spearheaded consultation between the legal community and

10th  
anniversary

PRESENTED BY

**LEGAL BUSINESS**

An entirely new category for 2007, the inaugural *Legal Business* CRS Firm of the Year award reflects the growing number of leading law firms that are increasingly attempting to balance the pursuit of profits with principles. This award recognises the firms that have distinguished themselves by best achieving this.

The CSR award highlights the law firm that currently has the strongest overall CSR programme with reference to a range of areas, including pro bono and community activities, environmental and workplace initiatives (such as diversity), as well as responsible client selection.

We would like to thank all firms for the number and variety of submissions received for this award, a category that we hope will remain a permanent fixture in our awards line-up.

Submissions for the 2007 Legal Business Awards will open in October 2007, and we look forward to hearing what CSR initiatives firms introduce over the next 12 months.

<http://awards.legalbusiness.co.uk>

