

gunnercooke

The future of professional services



About gunnercooke

gunnercooke is a high-growth, high-performance professional services firm, with a rapidly growing number of experts spanning legal and other disciplines.

Our purpose is simple: to deliver positive impact for our clients, improve the lives of our people and to leave a better world than we found...

gunnercooke is the fastest growing corporate law firm in the UK and making its mark globally with offices in the US, Germany, CEE, Scotland and England. We are a team of more than 500 professionals, with the depth of experience which makes us genuine experts in our fields. Together, gunnercooke's people have strength across just about every corporate discipline and sector. We provide legal, commercial and strategic advice that delivers real value to the clients we work with, which span from multinational enterprises through to unicorns and not-for-profit organisations. Our breadth of expertise covers some of the most interesting and important emerging disciplines, from ESG and charity law, to blockchain and competition.

An Award-Winning Firm



“

Personal service, excellent knowledge.
Innovative and client-centric.”

Employment Law

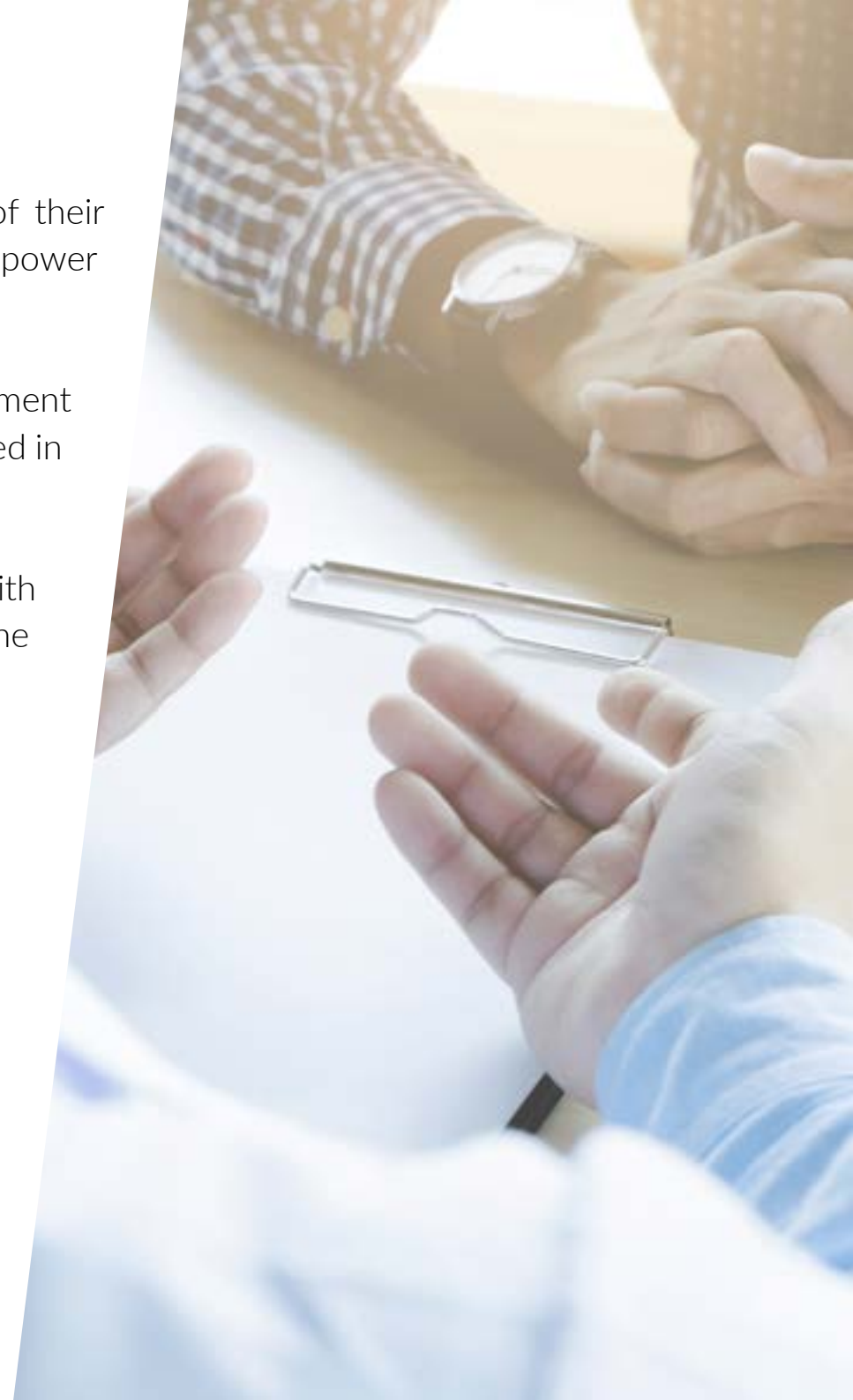
Our strong employment team helps our clients get the best out of their people, whilst worrying less about legal compliance and risk. We empower our clients to get on with their day job.

Our experienced partners all have a deep understanding of employment law and are able to bring a commercial approach. Many are recognised in their field and recommended in the legal directories.

We are always calm, professional and discreet. We have worked with some of the world's largest employers, and we never forget that even the biggest people projects can require an individually tailored approach.

Our work in Employment Law includes:

- Contracts, policies and procedures
- Restructuring and business change
- Performance management, sickness absence management, discipline and grievance
- TUPE
- Employment tribunals and other contentious disputes
- Hybrid or remote working
- Discrimination and Equal Pay
- Service agreements and board-level disputes
- Settlement agreements
- Exit strategies



Your trusted adviser



Rebecca Ireland
Employment Law
Partner

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As a highly experienced employment lawyer, Rebecca has extensive technical and commercial expertise, having handled many complex and sensitive matters regarding all aspects of employment law. Rebecca mainly advises employers across a diverse range of business sectors across the UK on both contentious and non-contentious matters.

As well as providing general advice on disciplinary and grievance processes, and day to day Human Resources issues, including proactive performance and sickness absence management, Rebecca's expertise, includes:

- All aspects of TUPE (outsourcing and business transfers)
- Analysing potential enforceability of restrictive covenants and developing strategies to avoid protracted litigation and liaising with gunnercooke Dispute Resolution colleagues
- Guiding clients through sensitive alleged bullying, harassment and discrimination grievances
- Assessing Employment status (IR35, self-employed, contractors, workers, employee) situations and defending claims
- Advising on breaches of national minimum wage legislation
- Bringing and defending employment tribunal claims in which she has used her litigation strategy, project management and advocacy skills.
- Recommending solutions for hybrid working situations which have an international / cross-border aspect to them
- Helping clients handle flexible working requests

For further details of Rebecca's recent experience, click [here](#).

She also supports directors, senior executives and other employees, particularly in relation to grievances and negotiating exit settlement packages, which gives her the tactical benefit of handling issues from both perspectives.

The Chambers and Legal 500 testimonials given by her clients consistently praise her for giving pragmatic and commercial advice: She is accessible, approachable, professional, helpful, tenacious, reliable, *"a superb litigator"* and *"an absolute pleasure to work with"*. She is a trusted adviser to her clients.

Rebecca works closely with her employer clients on an ongoing basis, allowing her to understand their businesses, and proactively advise on the impact of new laws.

Rebecca takes a holistic approach to a situation, looking at the financial, commercial, reputational — both internal and external — emotional, and health impacts. It is more than just about the application of technical law. People are at the centre of everything she does.

As a qualified workplace mediator, Rebecca has a heightened understanding of the emotional, and not just financial, impact conflict within the employment relationship has on both sides. As well as conducting workplace mediations, she utilises her mediation skills when giving employment law advice, to resolve interpersonal grievances before they escalate to formal grievances or an employment tribunal. See [here](#) for more information about workplace mediations.

Rebecca works closely with other gunnercooke lawyers in various legal practice areas, which is testament to her collaborative style.

Rebecca's recent experience

- Urgent instructions from new client on an outsourcing project where TUPE had been 'forgotten about' with only a month before completion, which also involved a pre-completion selection process for retaining certain employees, and **tri-partite settlement agreements**.
- Supported a client in a project to deploy eight UK employees to projects in France, to avoid making them redundant.
- Advised on a sensitive matter involving an employee alleging that the line manager had **discriminated** against the client over many years because of protected characteristics (sexual orientation and disability (HIV)). There were also COVID health and safety concerns to consider.
- Advising on **TUPE** outsourcing which involved tri-partite **settlement agreements** pre-completion to deal with redundancy situation due to change of location.
- Defending a **constructive unfair dismissal claim** based on an alleged permanent variation to the employee's place of work when he relocated overseas during COVID, which was allegedly breached when he was asked to return to the UK.
- Defending multi-party **ET claim** relating to Working Time Regulations rest breaks.
- Advising in relation to the interpretation of an **enhanced maternity policy** where an employee had consecutive maternity leaves.
- Assisting clients with various flexible working requests following a client's decision to encourage a return to the office after the COVID pandemic.
- Instructed to defend allegations by a competitor (former employer) that our client was engaging a contractor (their former employee) in breach of **non-compete restriction**.
- Advised a client in relation to a grievance brought by a senior employee against a director of **bullying and harassment**.
- Acted on a **cross-border** matter (Gibraltar — tax and employment) in which we found a solution to meet the client's and employee's needs, involving mutual termination of the UK employment contract, signing a **settlement agreement** and entering into a **consultancy agreement** with the client's US parent company.
- Regularly reviewing and negotiating the **TUPE** provisions of **commercial agreements**, and advising on the related information and consultation issues arising from winning and losing outsourced contracts.
- Defended against an alleged **constructive wrongful dismissal**, underpayment of National Minimum Wage and holiday pay arrears claims brought by a freelancer, so involving employment status issues. A settlement was reached for a significantly lower figure, avoiding a hearing and public scrutiny of the client's business model.
- Providing urgent assistance to produce the client's Response to an **unfair redundancy dismissal claim** brought during the Covid pandemic where the claimant was challenging her redundancy selection and why she had not been offered furlough.

- Taking **urgent action** where a client suspected a former employee and two existing employees of conspiring to set up in competition and poaching other team members in breach of their duties of loyalty and **post-termination restrictions**.
- Working as an integral part of a wider gunnercooke project team for the seller of a national industrial cleaning company. Dealt with various employment issues arising during the due diligence process (holiday pay, right to work processes, national minimum wage queries and employment status of contractors), drafted the **employment provisions** of the Sale and Purchase Agreement and Disclosure Letter, and negotiated new services agreements for the two main directors, and a Non-Executive Director agreement.
- Instructed to act as a sounding board for any difficult employee relations issues which arise for an education body. Sometimes this includes a **Safeguarding** element, which must be handled very sensitively, and often outside agencies are involved.
- Supporting a client with the **performance management** and **exit strategies** of various members of its EMEA sales team, which involved **protected termination** (without prejudice) conversations and negotiated **severance packages**.
- Acted for a former senior executive in a matter revolving around **sex and maternity discrimination** and **equal pay claims**.
- Issuing **High Court proceedings** after a former employee used confidential information and other company property to set up in competition, resulting in obtaining an **injunction** by consent and an award of damages for our client.
- Defended an **unfair TUPE dismissal** and **age discrimination claim** brought by a former finance director of a business our client had purchased in administration, who had been made redundant before the sale.
- Appointed as the Investigating Officer in relation to a complex complaint raised by an academic employee against her high profile line manager of **bullying and harassment** at a world leading university, which utilised **legal** and **mediation** skills.
- Advised a client in intertwined matters with the assistance of gunnercooke Dispute Resolution colleagues: after an unsuccessful appeal against his **dismissal** without notice for gross misconduct, issuing a **High Court breach of contract claim**, which led to a counter-claim against him relating to alleged financial irregularities; defended an **Employment Tribunal claim** brought against him, and his former employer, of **sexual and disability harassment or victimisation** by a former colleague, which was settled for a nominal amount and minimising the potential reputational damage to him.
- Guided a client through an interlinked **redundancy dismissal and sex discrimination/bullying grievance** process, which included dealing with a wide ranging Data Subject Access Request, putting the company in a strong position to negotiate a **commercial settlement**.
- Advising a Managing Director on exiting his fellow director and shareholder as a result of his potentially negligent behaviour, which involved instigating a disciplinary process, negotiating a **settlement agreement**, dealing with the shares and considering the impact of the FCA Rules.
- Reviewed a client's proposals for resourcing changes throughout the UK, involving a complicated, multi-site, collective **redundancy consultation** (at risk and proposed changes to terms) at all job levels, and the creation of new roles to reflect the new business strategy, and make recommendations to reduce risk and answer specific identified issues.

- Defending a multi-party claim for underpayment of National Minimum Wage for all “on call” hours (not just when working) because they had to remain on the client's site, which was also where they lived. The National Minimum Wage accommodation off-set was also an issue. A **collective settlement** was negotiated through Acas.
- Representing one of four directors of a UK company against all of whom a **sex discrimination** (including sexual harassment), **whistleblowing victimisation**, **equal pay** and **disability discrimination claim** had been brought by a Canadian contractor based in Canada. This was a complicated case involving multiple case management applications, employment status arguments, whether UK law applied, a restricted reporting order, extensive medical evidence, and advocating at a preliminary hearing. We settled the claim against our client for a modest amount and it continued against the other respondents.
- Heavily involved in all stages of a contentious, but ultimately negotiated, exit of Managing Director, involving mutual grievance between major shareholder and MD, together with **allegations of bullying and negligence**. Considering the company law issues of forcing an exit, including the effect of the shareholders agreement, and the related employment law implications and risks.
- Defending an unfounded **constructive dismissal claim** against a blue chip corporate client brought by a challenging, unrepresented, ex-employee who conducted himself in an unreasonable and threatening manner. The claim was struck out.
- Defending a religious belief **discrimination (harassment, victimisation and constructive dismissal)** claim brought by a Muslim former employee, which was complicated by matters of national security, an application for anonymity orders and **disability discrimination claim**.



'I would recommend Rebecca as an employment lawyer. She provides pragmatic and commercial legal advice.'

'Rebecca is a superb litigator: she is practical and an absolute pleasure to work with.'

'Rebecca is always available, always helpful and also commercially minded in our interactions.'

'Rebecca is very approachable, commercial and practical.'

'I truly value my partnership with Rebecca and her pragmatic and practical advice that she provides me with in a very straightforward style.'



Rebecca's Mediation Services and Workshops

Workplace Mediation

- Resolve difficult 'people' issues speedily and effectively; and
- Optimise working relationships and effectiveness for organisations, teams and key individuals, leading to greater success and wellbeing.

Workplace mediation is a perfect vehicle for encouraging an open and confidential dialogue at an early stage, to avoid the conflict escalating, and perhaps ending up in an Employment Tribunal. Bringing an external mediator into the meeting can improve greatly the chances of achieving a successful, sustainable, outcome by offering a fresh approach to resolve a problem. We can help calm tensions and facilitate transformed ways of working together after 'issues' have arisen. We can bring a dose of common sense from highly experienced specialists who are 'neutral'. For further details, see [here](#).

Employment Mediation

Employment mediation differs from Workplace Mediation in that the employment relationship has already broken down irretrievably, so the process is not about improving the future working relationship of two or more colleagues. Instead, the employer may be on the brink of dismissing the employee, or the employee is threatening to bring, or has brought Employment Tribunal or Court proceedings, but the parties conclude they do not want to be fighting a protracted battle for months to come. Often both parties have 'unfinished business' which a simple negotiated settlement or a full hearing will probably not address satisfactorily at an emotional level. If both parties want to resolve the dispute speedily and effectively, employment mediation is really worth trying, especially as it can often be done in one day.



A global team providing bespoke service

Our innovative way of thinking means we do not simply stick to tradition when it comes to providing the best service. We will make sure we find the most commercial, pragmatic and cost-efficient routes for our clients. We offer a service guarantee and certainty of fees through the option of fixed costs. All work is led by senior entrepreneurial lawyers, who are backed up by a global collective of specialists across every commercial discipline.

Clients benefit from flexible options on fees to suit their needs, access to a wider network of senior experts throughout the relationship, and legal advice which is complemented by an understanding of the commercial aspects of running a business. Additional group services are designed to strengthen and enhance the core legal offering. These include an Operating Partner practice, which offers experts in senior management consultancy, and a legal technology arm driving process innovation and efficiencies.

gunnercooke partners are at the top of their game and leaders in their fields. With a market leading Net Promoter Score (NPS) score of +89, 70 award nods and 45 rankings in Chambers and Legal 500, we are confident the market agrees with us! 57% of our lawyers have worked in a Top 50 law firm, and 21% are ranked in legal directories. Your lawyer or advisor has control over how they run their practice, meaning they can offer a bespoke service that puts you first and offers greater personal accountability throughout. Most importantly, *our advisors truly care about the impact of their work.*

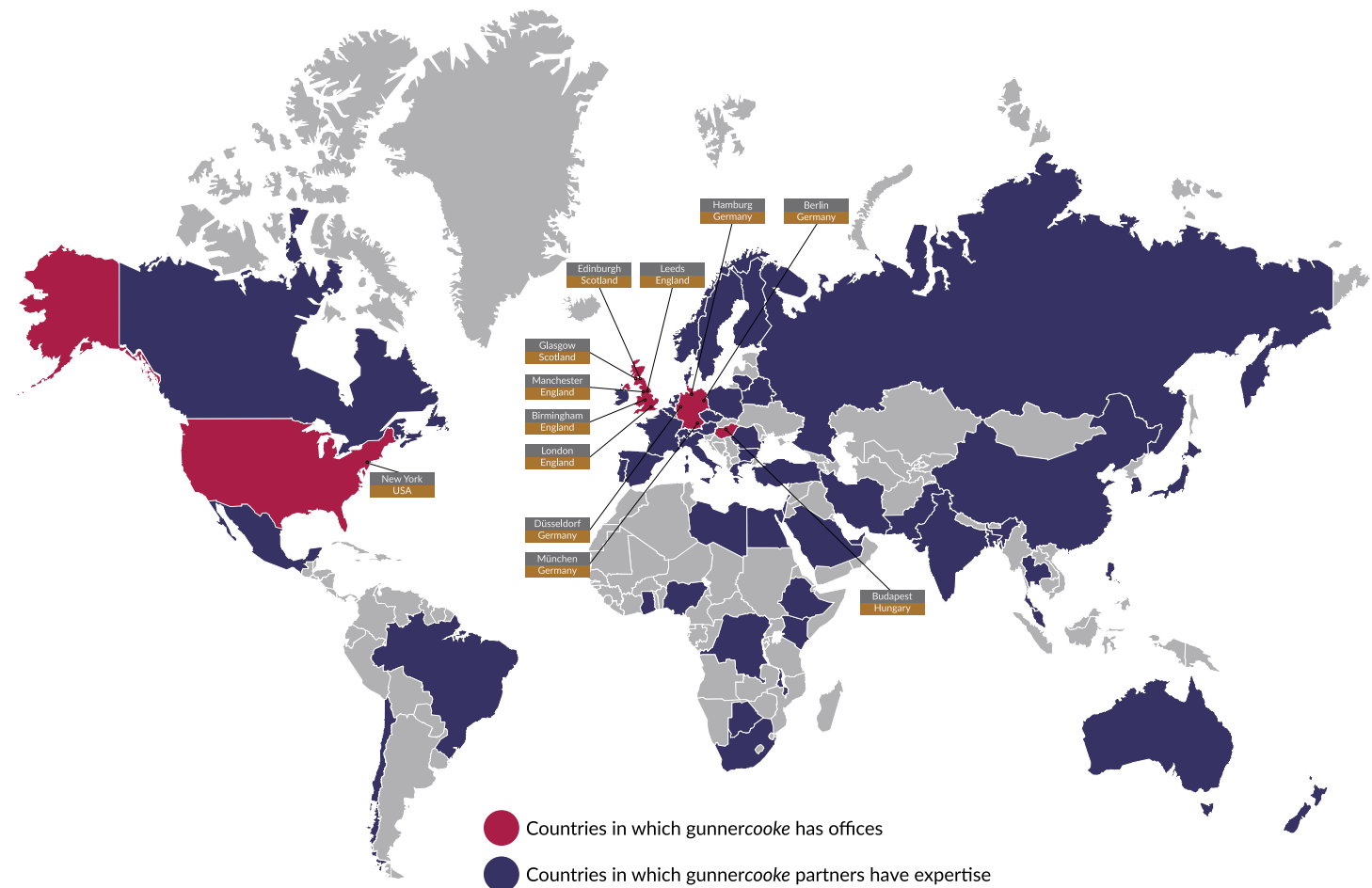


An international firm

Over the past decade, gunnercooke has grown into one of the leading fee share firms in the UK. We are now an international firm, with **12** offices globally including the US, Germany, CEE and Scotland, and with further plans for growth in the coming years. These offices have enhanced the existing in-house capability of our dedicated international teams and dual qualified experts that cover China and Hong Kong, Spain, France, Italy, Brazil and Portugal. Our team has experience working across **101** different countries, speaking **30** languages and are dual-qualified in **15** jurisdictions. Our expertise and reach see our multi-discipline teams regularly carrying out complex cross-border matters for major international clients.

Dedicated teams across:

- Germany
- New York
- China & Hong Kong
- Spain
- France
- Italy
- Brazil
- Portugal
- Scotland



A multi-disciplinary, full-service practice

Corporate & Banking	Real Estate	Dispute Resolution	Private Client	Transport Group	Employment & Pensions	Intellectual Property	Tax
Treasury & Derivatives	Engineering	Business Crime	Family Law	Aviation	Tribunals	Data Protection	HMRC
Capital Markets & Structured Finance	Infrastructure	Civil Fraud	Wills and Probate	HNW	Immigration	Trade Marks	Business Tax
Project Finance	Commercial Real Estate	Cost & Funding	Charity and Philanthropy	Infrastructure	Pensions	IT	Business Investigation
Commercial Contracts	Real Estate Finance	Insolvency Disputes	Trusts and Estates	Ports and Marinas	TUPE		
International Trade Finance & Commodities	Planning	Mediation		Rail			
Competition & Antitrust	Construction	International Arbitration		Shipping			
M&A		Insurance and Reinsurance					
Private Equity		Property Litigation					
Restructuring & Insolvency		Mines and Minerals					
Blockchain & Cryptoassets		Waste & Energy					
		Environmental Law					

“

Personal service and going beyond the call of duty to get deals done make *gunnercooke* an outstanding legal partner. A refreshing change to the legal profession.”

“The *gunnercooke* approach to the service needed is to find the best suited person to deal with instruction and then agree a sensible fee basis.”

Our group

Additional group services are designed to strengthen and enhance the core legal offering.

gunnercooke Operating Partners are professional services consultants made up of experienced leaders and operators. The team creates capability and bandwidth to get the critical projects done. They work across various sectors, with a specific focus on manufacturing, support services, construction, retail e-commerce and business services.

www.gunnercookeop.com

gunnercookeOP

gunnercooke Legal Tech provides the global gunnercooke network and its clientele with state-of-the-art legal tech solutions. The team offers a comprehensive set of services, including consulting, software development, implementation support, resourcing and data analytics.

gunnercookeLEGALTECH

gunnercooke | FOOTBALL

gcTrustees



Community focussed

As a leading firm, with a growing global presence, we have a responsibility to not only look after our people and our clients, but to look beyond the square mile of our business at our wider communities. A key part of our vision and purpose is to 'create a better world than we found'.

We believe that businesses possess all of the tools, networks and resources to help solve the world's problems. And we believe that by working together, we can 'do good faster'.

Our charitable arm, the gunnercooke foundation enables us to directly engage with communities on social issues. Through numerous projects, we work with the CEOs of more than 100 small charities, helping them grow their impact through free access to expert mentoring, connections and resources. Charities are supported through group coaching and facilitated learning, which helps them to set up profitable aspects of their operations. In December 2022 we also launched our first bookshop, House of Books & Friends, in Manchester, to spearhead a campaign against social isolation and loneliness. The bookshop was set up as a community interest company and as well as offering a place to connect over books, every penny of profit goes towards projects aimed at combatting loneliness and social isolation in the community. Our aim is to have bookshops and associated initiatives in every location where gunnercooke operates from.





HOUSE OF
BOOKS & FRIENDS



gunnercooke

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