



Berkeley News:

Keeping Berkeley Connected

Staying connected as a firm has been even more important during these difficult months. At Berkeley, we have made a real effort to come up with creative ways to keep connected while we work from home.

At the beginning of the pandemic, we set up drop-in coffee sessions and Friday Zoom drinks that allowed colleagues to catch up and maintain the social culture. This was important for our staff and crucial for our new joiners. We also increased our use of the Slack messaging platform for discussion groups, community news, and more humorous threads such as #PetsOfBerkeley. This proved a great way to speak and catch up with our colleagues informally.

Our monthly get-togethers' increased to fortnightly and included a platform for our consultants to share news about their projects during Covid-19, and also included some light-hearted fun and games with events such as Disco Bingo and our 'Through the Keyhole' charity event, raising money for Refuge and The Trussell Trust. We also said goodbye to a few of our staff, moving on to new ventures in these changing times. A few of our consultants, business services team members and even one of our longest-serving partners, Richard Pavesi, were wished a fond farewell with drinks, laughter, reminiscing, and good company – all virtually using Zoom.

During lockdown we onboarded 8 people virtually, and we did our best to make it as 'normal' as possible. Each person was provided dedicated 1-2-1 time with as many people in the firm as we could, and we tried to ensure it was kept fairly informal; virtual coffees and lunches worked really well.

Well-being and Mental Health have also been at the forefront of our minds during this period. Staying connected to the firm plays an important role in this but we also recognised that something more tangible was needed. As well as providing more regular 1-2-1 time with partners and raising awareness of our Employee Assistance Programme, we invited Dr Bill Mitchell in to do a special firm-wide session at the beginning of lockdown. Dr Bill runs our mental wellbeing training courses which are always very popular, but we felt that a dedicated session to discuss our reactions to lockdown and the global pandemic would be really beneficial. It was a great opportunity to ask lots of questions, get his advice and discuss lockdown coping strategies, including for children and dependents

In these difficult times it's been hard to stay connected. But we've found that with some inventive thinking and commitment to our people and values, you can stay more in touch than ever. Having said that, we're all now looking forward to being able to spend some time in the office in the coming months as we try to return to more normal ways of working.