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For the third year running a MORI public opinion poll has ranked Boots in the UK's three most socially responsible companies

Key initiatives

£4.6m of cash, merchandise and gifts in kind to community and charities

Boots Science Award

Boots Family Learning Project

250 staff in UK's largest volunteer tutoring scheme

Boots Books for Babies

In an annual MORI survey, the public rated Boots as one of the top three companies for taking its corporate social responsibility seriously. An unprecedented 100 per cent of those that knew about our community activities had favourable views of Boots – an important factor when customers are choosing where to make their purchases.

In total our businesses contributed £2.9 million to the community during the year through charitable and educational donations and sponsorships. The Boots Recycling Project gathered £1.7 million of surplus goods from all our retail businesses and distributed them throughout the community – this activity extends nationally and internationally. For example, shopfittings were sent from a Boots store to Bosnia to create a desperately needed pharmacy. All stock would otherwise have been consigned to landfill. During the year we made 1,545 donations of recycled stock to charities around the country as well as giving 'tombola bags' to 2,000 community groups to support their fund-raising.

Teams from Boots businesses worked with community partners helping their own personal and professional development, while raising their business profile. The Boots Employee in the Community Award, now in its third year, was won by a Southend-on-Sea employee for voluntary work with her local scouting movement. The Boots Charitable Trust made donations totalling £500,000 to support work in Nottinghamshire on healthcare, economic development, education, and family, maternity and child welfare issues.

Support for better health We partner a wide range of health-related charities, involving our stores nationwide in initiatives such as National Pregnancy Week, National Eczema Week, Back Ache Prevention, brittle bone disease awareness, the Sight Savers/ Restore Your Specs Appeal, the Breast Cancer Campaign and Cancer Research Campaign, Sunsafe and the Drugs and Alcohol Awareness Campaign.

To mark the 50th anniversary of the NHS we sponsored the NHS Confederation Conference and seconded staff to health-related projects.

Support for education We are committed to the principle of lifelong learning and foster links between educational institutions and the world of work. In addition to work experience for students and teacher placements, the Boots Science Award helps all 100 Nottinghamshire secondary schools to raise standards in science excellence and build positive links between industry and education.

Throughout the year some 250 employees worked with the Success for All programme, helping schoolchildren in a deprived area of Nottingham to improve their reading skills. Over the next three years the Boots Books for Babies project will provide all nine-month old babies in Nottinghamshire with books, nursery and action rhymes, and advice to parents on reading to under-fives. This is a partnership involving Library Services and health visitors.

During the year the chairman opened the Nottingham Trent University Boots Library, a 24-hour facility for students and the business community. Our support for the University of Nottingham's Institute of Pharmaceutical Sciences has enabled it to establish a centre of excellence in the Boots Science Building.

Promoting safe, caring communities We have a long tradition of ensuring equal opportunities for all our staff and aim to help create safe, vibrant and thriving communities. During the year BHI supported a project to identify and reduce the barriers that prevent people from fostering children. The Boots Family Learning Project encouraged parental involvement in education through workshops for children and their parents or carers such as grandparents. And we sponsored Operation Respect, a multi-agency strategy led by Nottinghamshire Police to help tackle juvenile crime through a mix of education, diversion, prevention and enforcement.