



the Messenger

February 2024

Inside this issue...

38

We Love MCR
firewalking
event



28

Talking Heads
discusses
pancakes



18

Common barriers
to reaching
out for support



MLS HQ has moved!

As you read this article we will be in our new home in Arkwright House. I think you'll agree the offices are rather swish and we are really looking forward to showing you all round.



Continued on page 26

Members Preferred Partner Group



Legal Awards 2023 Headline Sponsor



President's Charity of the Year



CLICK FOR MORE INFO

MIL AWARDS 2024

GUESS WHO'S BACK!

Thursday 6th June 2024 at The Midland Hotel

For more information:

www.manchesterlegalawards.co.uk @MLAwards

Event host



Manchester Law Society
Instituted 1838 Incorporated 1871

Media partner



Marketing partner



Charity partner





From the President

David Anderson, President

Everyone said it, “You will love being President of Manchester Law Society, but you have to be prepared to put on weight!” That was immediately reflected in the week I became President, in which I attended two evening events, one of which was a black-tie dinner to thank and congratulate Nick Johnson on his year as President.

Writing a speech about Nick made me consider why MLS is such a success. I was left with a sense that it was for two interconnected reasons. Firstly, the people. Nick, like all Council members, was not paid for his role. Already Senior Partner of the firm he has worked for his entire career, he didn’t do it to bolster his CV. He isn’t interested in power or influence. He did it, on my assessment, because he is truly determined to ensure the Manchester legal profession has a long and successful future and has a real and positive impact on society and local people. This is reflected in all those who work with the Society and is why MLS is such a success.

The second is the determination those involved have to ensure the Society is of real benefit to its members. That was evident in the publicity received when MLS, as one of the Joint V, wrote to the LSB, copying in the SRA, inviting them to reconsider capping the use of the Compensation Fund and/or calling on the profession to bail out the fund in compensating victims of the Axiom Ince collapse. Nobody can doubt that the victims of the collapse deserve to be fully compensated, but this cannot be to the detriment of the rest of the profession. Many firms already run on shoestring budgets, providing fantastic legal services to local people. A sudden call on those firms to

fund victims of a scandal in which they had no part could be terminal.

A copy of the letter from the Joint V (Birmingham, Bristol, Leeds, Liverpool and Manchester Law Societies) can be found [here](#) .

Another example of matters of benefit to members is the excellent events that are being planned for 2024. We have already been notified of the coup of the Master of the Rolls addressing the [AI Conference](#) on the 8th of March. An event that is sure to prove very popular, given the stated objective of commencing all civil cases (including family cases) online through a new portal with an eye to online remedies and resolution. Other events in planning include the [Employment Law Conference](#) , with Judge Franey providing the keynote and future conferences in Family Law, Property Law and Regulatory matters. A detailed list of Upcoming Events is available later in this edition or on the Society’s new website at [manchesterlawsociety.org.uk](#) . Please support these great, local events.

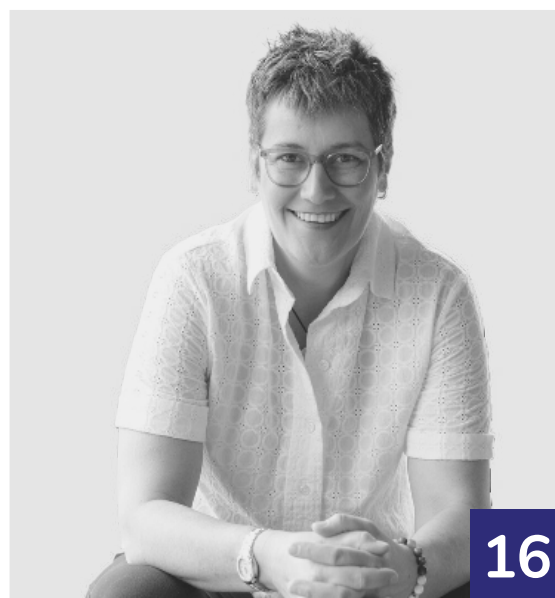
Also available in this edition are details of the Society’s new App, which is coming soon. As we always look to improve the member offering, this is another way in which we hope to interact with members, provide them with important information and to create a forum for communication with colleagues. With my focus for the year being on collaboration, it is great that the year can begin with the launch of a tool that will aid the region’s exceptional lawyers in working together to enhance our national reputation for excellence. When it goes on full release, please download it, and breathe life into it.



the Messenger

In this edition...

- 03 From the President
- 06 News from HQ
- 10 News
- 12 We Love MCR Firewalk
- 14 Mental Wellness
- 20 Potential Unearthed
- 22 Regulation Update & News
- 26 Cover Story – MLS HQ has moved!
- 28 Talking Heads
- 32 Member News
- 38 President's Charity
- 40 Digital Marketing



Manchester Law Society
Instituted 1838 Incorporated 1871

Manchester Law Society

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by following us on social media?





38



28



66

42 Movers & Shakers

47 Manchester Young Solicitors Group

48 ED&I Update

50 MLS Advantage

56 Management Matters

60 Legal Ombudsman Update

62 Legal Costs Update

64 The Solicitors' Charity

66 Pet of the month

Communications Committee

Fran Eccles-Bech
Manchester Law Society

Carla Jones
Manchester Law Society

Chandre May
Manchester Law Society

David Anderson
St John's Buildings

Martyn Best
Document Direct

Lucy Cresswell
JMW Solicitors LLP

Adam Entwistle
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Hill Dickinson LLP

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Paul Johnson
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Glaisyers Solicitors LLP

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The Society welcomes articles and letters from members on any topic and items should be sent to messenger@manchesterlawsociety.org.uk

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Upcoming events

1 February 2024

MLS moves office to Arkwright House

1 February 2024

Employment Law Forum Meeting

6 February 2024

MLS Council Meeting

8 February 2024

Joint V Meeting

14 February 2024

Communications Committee Meeting

15 February 2024

Manchester Professionals Networking Club:
Lunch with the Leader

16 February 2024

Messenger Deadline

27 February 2024

MLS Officers Meeting

28 February 2024

Net Zero and Climate Action Seminar

6 March 2024

Civil Litigation Committee Meeting

8 March 2024

AI Conference 2024: Transforming the Legal
Landscape

12 March 2024

Employment Law Conference

12 March 2024

MLS Council Meeting

13 March 2024

Judicial Appointments Event with The
Northern Justice Hub and The Law Society

19 March 2024

MLS Officers Meeting

21 March 2024

Family Law Committee Meeting

22 March 2024

Messenger Deadline

03 April 2024

Communications Committee Meeting

16 April 2024

MLS Council Meeting

17 April 2024

Property Law Conference

19 April 2024

Messenger Deadline

30 April 2024

MLS Officers Meeting

1 May 2024

Communications Committee Meeting

2 May 2024

Employment Law Forum Meeting

14 May 2024

MLS Council Meeting

21 May 2024

MLS Officers Meeting

24 May 2024

Messenger Deadline

4 June 2024

MLS Council Meeting

5 June 2024

Communications Committee Meeting



6 June 2024
Manchester Legal Awards Ceremony

12 June 2024
Civil Litigation Committee Meeting

18 June 2024
MLS Officers Meeting

21 June 2024
Messenger Deadline

26 June 2024
Regulatory Conference

2 July 2024
MLS Council Meeting

3 July 2024
Communications Committee Meeting

4 July 2024
Employment Law Forum Meeting

16 July 2024
MLS Officers Meeting

19 July 2024
Messenger Deadline

07 August 2024
Communications Committee Meeting

20 August 2024
MLS Officers Meeting

23 August 2024
Messenger Deadline

24 August 2024
Manchester Pride Brunch 2024

04 September 2024
Communications Committee Meeting

10 September 2024
MLS Council Meeting

11 September 2024
Civil Litigation Committee Meeting

20 September 2024
Messenger Deadline

24 September 2024
MLS Officers Meeting

1 October 2024
MLS Council Meeting

2 October 2024
Communications Committee Meeting

3 October 2024
Employment Law Forum Meeting

15 October 2024
MLS Officers Meeting

18 October 2024
Messenger Deadline

5 November 2024
MLS Council Meeting

6 November 2024
Communications Committee Meeting

19 November 2024
MLS Officers Meeting

22 November 2024
Messenger Deadline

3 December 2024
MLS Council Meeting & AGM

4 December 2024
Communications Committee Meeting

11 December 2024
Civil Litigation Committee Meeting

13 December 2024
Messenger Deadline

17 December 2024
MLS Officers Meeting



Manchester Law Society

Instituted 1838 Incorporated 1871

Employment Law Conference

Tuesday 12 March 2024

09:00 - 14:00

Cost to attend:

MLS Members £75.00 + VAT (£90.00)

Non-members £100.00 + VAT (£120.00)

We are delighted to be welcoming back the Employment Law Conference for 2024 and to announce that the keynote address will be given by Regional Employment Judge Franey.

Also joining the event for this year will be Stefan Brochwicz-Lewinski from Nine St John Street taking a look at restrictive covenants and Rosie Kight from Kings Chambers with a case and legislation update.

James Akrigg from Cloudy Software will give an overview of what is happening in AI then we will close the conference with a panel on the impact of AI on employment law.

It is sure to be a really valuable event so please secure your place!

[Click here for more
information](#)

Conference Programme

09:00 Registration

09:30 Welcome and introduction from our Co-chairs

Jo Handler, Senior Associate, Forbes Solicitors

Bryn Doyle, Partner, Squire Patton Boggs

09:45 Keynote address

Regional Employment Judge Franey
REJ Franey will again give us the view of all things Employment Tribunal from the judiciary. We look forward to hearing how recent technical developments have been received by all users of the ET system together with an update and look ahead to what practitioners can expect in 2024 and beyond.

10:30 Restrictive Covenants

Stefan Brochwicz-Lewinski, Nine St John Street

Stefan will take us through the case law and be passing on his top tips and watch-outs for the use and consideration of Restrictive Covenants in the employment context. This session will be of particular use to practitioners having to decipher the complex application of RCs and look ahead to the future use of business protection clauses in a work environment.

11:35 Case and Legislation Update

Rosie Kight, Kings Chambers

Join us as Rosie takes us through the most recent developments in employment law cases together with their interpretation and commercial application. Rosie will also be looking at a number of the major changes in employment legislation which will impact all practitioners in 2024 and beyond!

12:20 What is happening in AI

James Akrigg, Cloudy Software

A fascinating look into the future with James as he gives us a brief reflection of the impact of Artificial Intelligence in the law with a particular lens on employment and the work environment.

12:40 Panel Session: Impacts of AI on Employment Lawyers

Regional Employment Judge Franey
Jo Handler, Senior Associate, Forbes Solicitors

Bryn Doyle, Partner, Squire Patton Boggs

Amy Smith, Nine St John Street

James Akrigg, Cloudy Software

A great chance to quiz our panel of experts on all things AI for employment lawyers. The panel members in private practice will share some of their experiences advising clients in this fast changing area, REJ Franey will give his view on the topic from a judicial perspective and counsel will help to decipher the legal framework. There will also be plenty of opportunity for delegates to share their experiences and quiz the panel on best practice.

13:25 Conference closing remarks

13:30 Networking lunch

Cybersecurity learnings from 2023

By Kerrie Machin, Partner,
Mitigo Group

In its 2023 annual review, the NCSC (National Cyber Security Centre) issued a stark warning that the new “front line” is “online”.

The multi-billion-pound cyber-crime “industry” is attracting new threat actors at an alarming rate and the availability and access to the tools they use is increasing, as is the sophistication of their attack methods. When you add the significant developments in AI to the mix and the fact that more and more law firms are falling victim to costly and damaging cyber-attacks, getting your cybersecurity right is not desirable, it’s an imperative.

But navigating a path through the cyber world is complex. There always seems to be some new technology that promises the world and costs the earth and even then, there’s that nagging doubt that you could still do more. So how can you gain confidence that you’re doing the right things and that you are secure? Only a full cybersecurity risk assessment which identifies your behavioural, business process and technical risks will allow you to put the necessary controls in place. Failure to do this invariably means you will have gaps and threat actors thrive on vulnerability.

You must also consider your legal and regulatory responsibilities. Cyber risk management is a board level responsibility.



In Tuckers, the ICO highlighted certain provisions of the Solicitors Regulation Authority’s Code of Conduct including paragraph 2.1a (the need for effective governance structures, arrangements, systems and controls for compliance with regulation and law); para 2.5 (identify, monitor and manage all material risks to your business); para 3.1 (keep up to date with and follow law and regulation); para 5.2 (safeguard money and assets [including documents] entrusted to you by clients and others); as well as referring to other relevant guidance issued by the SRA. The failure to meet those standards of the Code was regarded as an aggravating factor. UK GDPR articles 5(1)(f), 5(2) and 32 place a statutory duty on firms to protect personal data against unauthorised or unlawful processing and against accidental loss, destruction, or damage, using appropriate technical or organisational measures and require the firm to demonstrate compliance. Clearly this is not a job for your IT firm.

Yes, your IT provider plays a vital role in ensuring the day-to-day functionality of your IT systems, but proper cyber risk management is a sophisticated stand-alone discipline, covering so much more than just technology. It requires a comprehensive programme, with formal risk assessments, policies and procedures, and staff training. Good cyber governance should include obtaining independent assurance from a



cybersecurity specialist – someone who will assess and provide visibility of your cyber risks, determine the measures appropriate to control those risks, and give you ongoing assurance that the controls you have in place continue to be effective.

There are two key aspects to ensuring success:

- **Independence**, because having IT mark their own homework is a nonstarter when it comes to good risk management.
- **Expertise**, because cybersecurity is complex and ever-changing, and you need a specialist who understands your business structure and the current methods of attack, as well as your legal and any regulatory obligations.

In almost all cyber breaches, the common denominator is that the victims have been relying on their IT. The fact is, someone at the most senior level has failed to understand what was required to protect their business.

Another essential element of risk management is to consider what to do if things go wrong. Recent high profile cyber-attacks in the legal industry have demonstrated that this needs some serious thought. What is your plan B? You need a disaster recovery plan and an incident response plan. If you are the victim of a successful cyber-attack, it's going to be stressful, and you don't want to make these things up as you go along. When and what do you tell your clients, staff, press, regulators, and supply chain? How long will it take to get back up and running? Would you be able to continue with day-to-day business with no access to your IT systems? For firms who offer conveyancing services, access to lender portals is often suspended until such time that the firm can

demonstrate their systems are secure, who is going to do that?

This leads into your supply chain management. If you entrust your data to third parties, you must ensure that your suppliers understand their responsibility to protect your data. What process do you currently go through to achieve this?

Cyber breaches do not result from bad luck. A serious cyber breach is hard to recover from and can result in irreparable firm damage, but if you go through the right process, it won't be you that's the next casualty in this war.

Find out more about [Mitigo's Cybersecurity Services](#) . Email mls@mitigogroup.com or call 0161 883 3083.

Mitigo's experience in protecting professional services firms and other businesses enables Kerrie to highlight common vulnerabilities and explain how to implement a proportionate risk management framework.

Kerrie believes that the challenges of cybersecurity, business resilience and legal & regulatory compliance, needn't keep business leaders awake at night. It's just a matter of matching the right solution to the problem.

He has spent the last two decades helping businesses identify their exposure to risk, and his keen eye for detail has enabled him to deliver robust packaged solutions that provide real protection – allowing them to get on with doing what they do best.

What's it like to walk on fire?

I got back from holiday in September and was told I had been signed up to walk on fire along with Fran, President David Anderson, Immediate Past President Nick Johnson, Honorary Treasurer Mark Fitzgibbon, Joint Honorary Secretary Cheryl Palmer-Hughes and Council members Steve Kuncewicz and Matt Taylor. It is always dangerous to go on leave.

After dutifully setting up my JustGiving page and press ganging people for sponsorship I was a little disappointed when the date was postponed due to storm Ciarán.

However, with a new date, 25th January, and a new venue in St Ann's Square the team of MLS firewalkers had a late push for a bit more sponsorship. And what a result!

At the time of writing we absolutely smashed our target of £1400 and have raised £4112 for the brilliant people at **We Love MCR Charity**. If you'd like to donate you can still do so [here](#). A massive thank you to all those who have donated! You are all super stars!

So what was it like?

Luckily, we have been so busy with our office move, awards prep and all the other usual MLS work I barely had time to think about this daft thing Fran had roped us into.

We arrived at St Ann's Church for our briefing from the brilliant Cliff Mann of Time4Change, although he termed it the "Learn or Burn session". Cliff has been helping people to walk on fire for 30+ years. He assured us that it is real fire, it is really hot, but that he had never had anyone injured.

The main advice was to walk quickly and not dawdle.

All this assurance faded slightly as we went outside to see and feel the actual fire. The heat was very real and frankly worrying!

With some trepidation we went and removed our shoes and socks, rolled up our trousers and queued up for our turn, trying to avoid any debris on the cold, damp pavement of St Ann's Square.





From my spot I had a great view of the fire preparations and the initial walkers. We were counting how many steps it took, checking their technique. Some did it in four big steps, I saw someone take lots of tiny steps. The unnerving bit was when the team manning the walkway put more fuel on the fire!

Fran and David went first from our lot, then Mark, Nick, Steve and Matt. Cheryl and I went together – you can see the [video on LinkedIn](#).

How did it feel?

Well, funny this, but standing on wet paving in January had a somewhat numbing effect on your feet. In a way I was looking forward to the warmth of the fire... Well until I was stood in front of it.

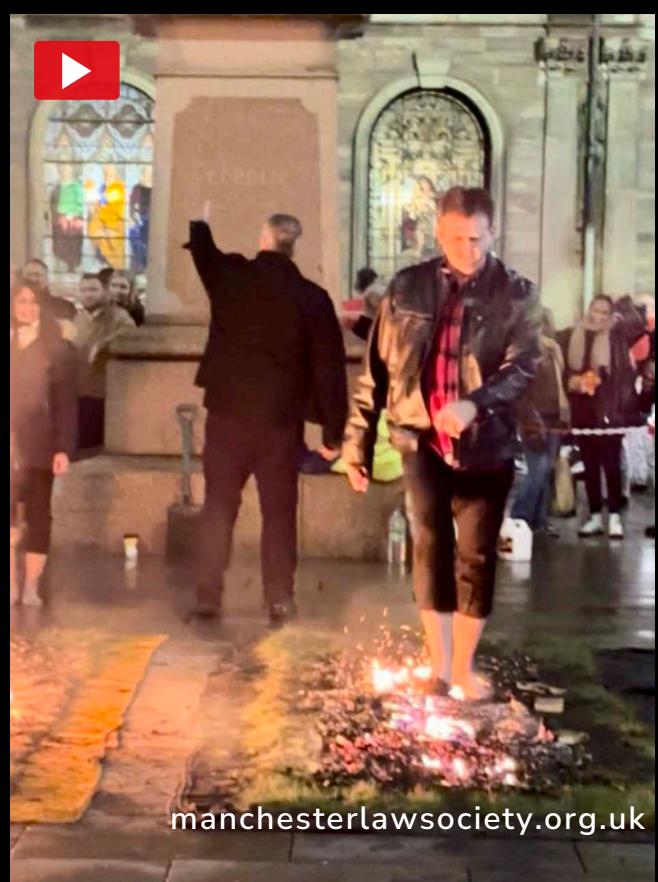
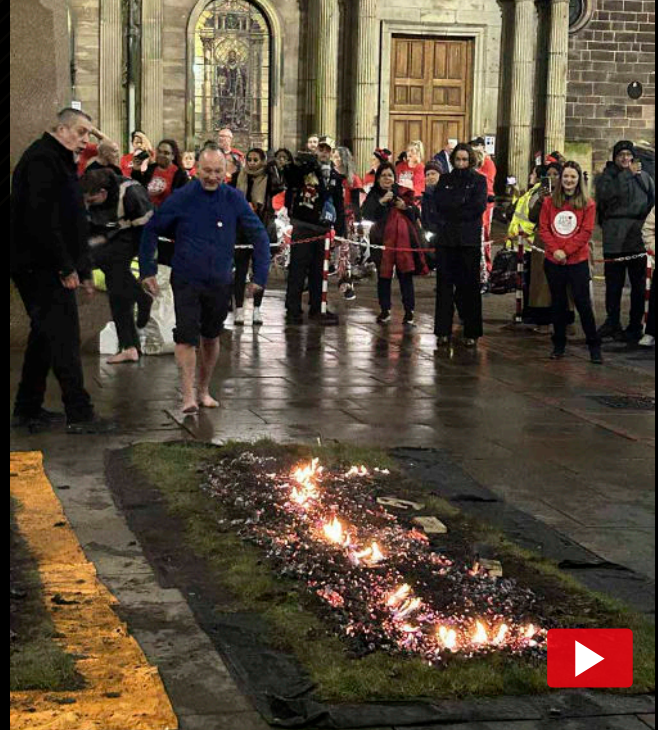
As I watched the person in front of me run across the coals and flames everything became very real... then Cliff shouted "GO!" and I dutifully went. I think I held my breath the whole time, all five steps.

I definitely had a look of concentration on my face from the photos and relief at the end with a tiny dance! It was hot, but so brief that by the time you registered it you were at the other end of the walkway back on the cold pavement, looking at your blackened feet.

Would you do it again?

Perhaps - it was much less scary than anything involving heights!

Carla Jones, Operation Manager
Manchester Law Society



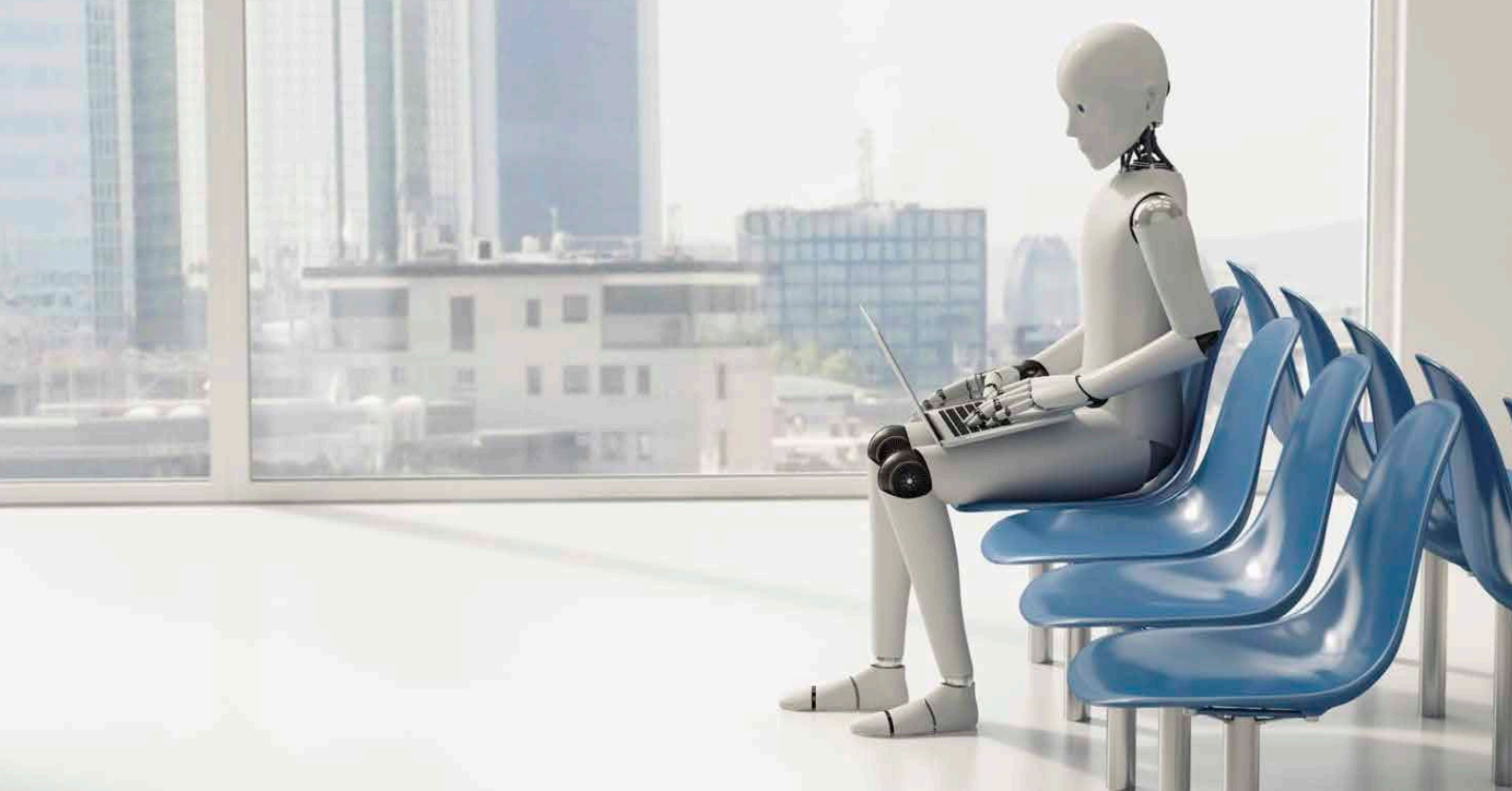
[See more videos here...](#)



Matt



Mark



Manchester Law Society

Instituted 1838 Incorporated 1871

AI CONFERENCE 2024

TRANSFORMING THE LEGAL LANDSCAPE

WITH KEYNOTE SPEAKER

MASTER OF THE ROLLS THE

RIGHT HON SIR GEOFFREY VOS

8 MARCH 2024

09:00 - 17:00

Manchester Hall, 36 Bridge Street,
Manchester, M3 3BT

Cost to attend:

MLS Members £120.00 + VAT (£144.00)

Non-members £160.00 + VAT (£192.00)

Are you interested in learning about the latest developments and innovations in the field of artificial intelligence and how they can impact the legal profession? Do you want to network with other lawyers, academics, and experts who share your passion for exploring the opportunities and challenges of AI in law?

If so, you should not miss the Manchester Law Society AI Conference, the premier event for legal professionals who want to stay ahead of the curve in this rapidly evolving area.

The conference will feature keynote speeches and panel discussions from some of the leading voices and practitioners in AI and law.

Topics will include:

- AI – Now & in the future
- AI – A threat or an opportunity? The pitfalls and possibilities...
- AI – In practice
- AI – A vendor perspective
- AI – Ethics, regulation and risk – how will it impact lawyers, their firms and their clients
- And the Keynote speech from the Master of the Rolls: AI – Transforming the work of lawyers and judges

You will also have the chance to ask questions, share your insights, and exchange ideas with your peers and speakers. Whether you are a seasoned AI enthusiast or a curious beginner, you will find something to inspire and inform you at this conference.

Speakers will include:

- Master of the Rolls the Right Hon Sir Geoffrey Vos
- James Akrigg, Cloudy Software
- Dan Morton, JMW
- Shaun Jardine, Big Yellow Penguin
- Tom Rice, TravelPerk
- Kerry Machin, Mitigo
- Steve Kuncewicz, Glaisyers ETL

[Click here to book](#)

Why men need to be menopause aware

One audience that I hadn't given any thought about working with when I started my menopause awareness business were male employees.

However, after a client session I delivered was really well received by the small number of men who had chosen to attend it. I started to consider the impact of menopause on men and why they might need a greater understanding of it. That particular client subsequently invited me back to speak specifically to their male employees at various different locations, as have a number of other organisation's I have worked with since. If you stop and

think about it, why shouldn't we try to help to increase men's awareness and understanding of menopause. There will be very few men in the world who don't have a significant female currently in their lives, whether she be their mum, sister, wife, partner, or daughter, all of which will either have experienced, may be going through or will experience menopause at some point. This is usually the first question I ask of my male audiences, in terms of do they have "significant" females in their lives? Often it's their "Eureka" moment as to why a session they didn't think was relevant to them might actually be quite useful and if nothing else they get to go home and tell their wives about the session.

As I have written before, menopause isn't just something that impacts upon middle-aged women. Women of any age can experience menopause symptoms as a result of premature menopause, treatments for medical conditions or surgical intervention. This convinces me we should be including men in the conversations around menopause and as with women, their age is irrelevant. This will likely be something that impacts on the significant females in their life at any given point and without much warning. Until their wife or partner started to experience menopause many men I have spoken with had not given a second thought as to how they may be affected or even understood really what menopause was about. For some of these men, the impact of their partner's menopause on them and their children had been far reaching and as a family they were still trying to deal with the issues arising.



Lisa Wright



“

We should be including men in the conversations around menopause and as with women, their age is irrelevant

Given the wide-ranging symptoms that women may experience, it is no surprise that the impact of these symptoms have the potential to impact on all areas of a women's life. Research carried out by the [British Menopause Society](#) ** identified that 50% of women responding to their survey had said that their symptoms impacted upon their home life, with 50% of respondents also stating that their symptoms had impacted upon their sex lives as well. If you are struggling with a multitude of physical and psychological symptoms and changes that can be ongoing for anywhere from 6 months to years, whilst also trying to juggle the demands of work and family then it's really no surprise that husbands and partners may well begin to feel the strain. In 2019 in the US, researchers went directly to men to establish their perceptions and attitudes towards their partner's menopausal transition. 77% of the respondents stated that partner's symptoms negatively impacted upon them and referenced that the symptoms caused emotional strain in their relationships. Emotional strain was attributed as follows: arguments, tension, and feeling unappreciated (34%), reduced frequency of sex/intimacy (33%) and impacting upon sleep (10%). Furthermore, the majority of the men who participated in the survey confirmed that they believed the symptoms also negatively impacted on their partners. This survey also found that the respondents' knowledge of what the

menopause entailed and the treatment options available was also very limited, despite most of the men involved knowing that their partner was menopausal.

Whilst the focus on raising menopause awareness for many organisations has been within their female employees (applaudable though that is), we shouldn't forget that the UK employs 17.1m men aged between 16-64. As I have already mentioned the majority of these men with have at least one significant female in their lives, before we even begin to factor in the significant number of those who have female colleagues. If your organisation is undertaking menopause awareness then I would recommend you include sessions specifically aimed at your male employees and team members and do get in touch if this were something you would like to explore further with myself.

Lisa Wright

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**For the purpose of this article where menopause is used it is defined as both the perimenopause and menopause phase of life.*

**thebms.org.uk/wp-content/uploads/2023/01/BMS-Infographics-JANUARY-2023-NationalSurveyResults.pdf

Common barriers to reaching out for support

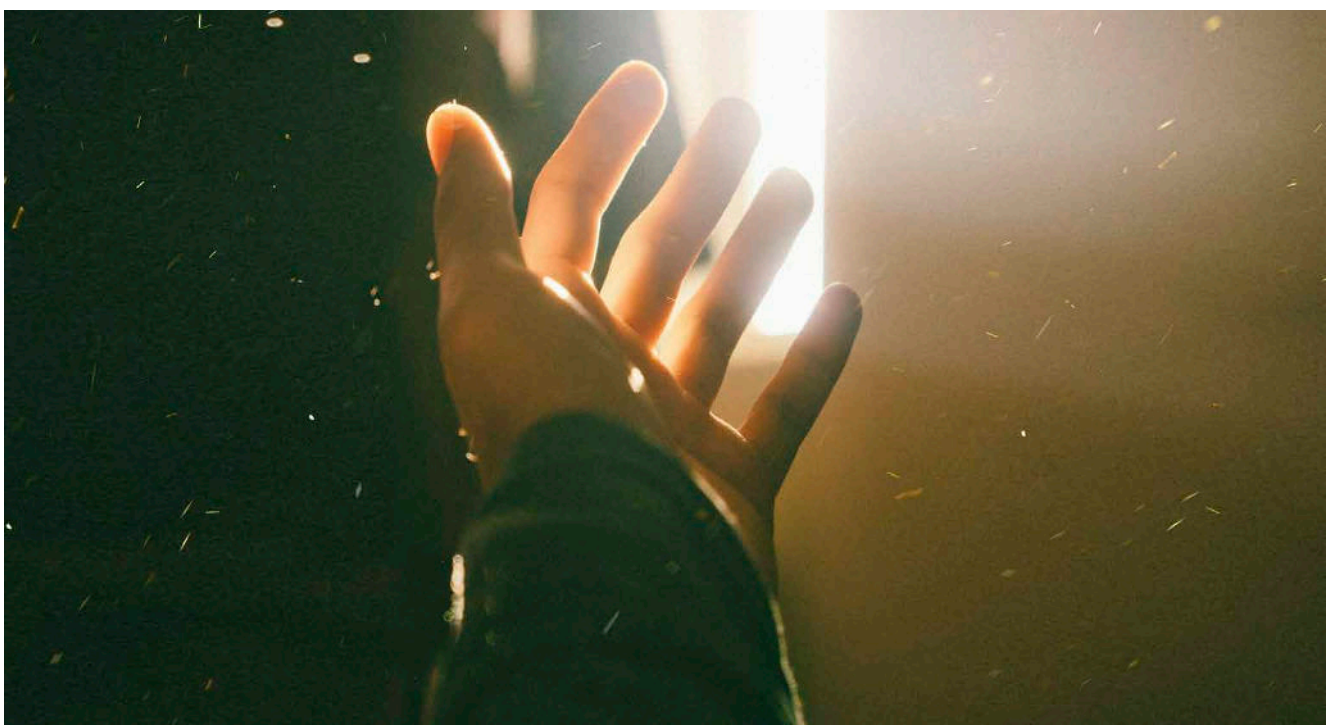
At LawCare, the mental health charity for people working in the legal sector, we know that it can be very difficult to reach out for support when you are having a hard time.

But it's much better to seek help early on, rather than waiting for an issue to escalate, and many people who contact us for emotional support wish they had got in touch earlier.

We want to allay some of the common fears that people have about getting in touch with us:

- **My employer, regulator or professional body will find out**
You don't need to worry; our service is confidential. We won't ask for your roll number or details of your workplace, and you don't have to give your name.

- **They won't be able to talk to me because I'm not a solicitor**
We are here to help all branches of the legal sector from student to retirement: solicitors, barristers, advocates, judges, trainees, paralegals, and support staff.
- **My problems aren't bad enough; I know that other people have it much harder**
Your feelings are valid and there is no minimum threshold for contacting LawCare. We're here for you whether you're having a bad day and just don't feel yourself or if your issue is longer lasting. Please don't deny yourself the opportunity to seek support, don't risk becoming more unwell or unhappy before taking that step.
- **No one will understand what I'm going through**
All of our volunteers and staff have





worked in the law and understand the particular pressures that those working in the profession may experience. We are also able to offer peer support. Our peer supporters have legal practice experience and may have been through difficult times themselves. They can offer ongoing one-to-one support, friendship and mentoring.

- **It won't help**

People often let us know that they feel better after just one chat with us. Sometimes reaching out and getting a chance to offload to someone who can empathise with what you are going through can be really useful to help get you back on track. Our support staff and volunteers are all trained, they will listen and can help you break down your issues and talk through whatever you want to address, taking it one step at a time.

- **I'm so overwhelmed, I might get upset**
Please don't worry, this isn't uncommon and no one will judge you. If you need to take a moment to compose yourself our team will give you that time, there is no rush and there will be no time limit. If you feel that it would help you to instead write down how you are feeling, then maybe you might prefer to contact us on our support email or by online chat.

It takes courage to reach out, seek support and share what you are going through. You can contact LawCare for free and in confidence on 0800 279 6888, email support@lawcare.org.uk or access online chat and other resources at www.lawcare.org.uk ↗

We understand life in the law. We're here to listen. We're here to support you.

News

Manchester Law Society App coming soon!

We are super excited to let you know our MLS member app is almost here!

Currently it is out with our testing group and will be available to the wider membership soon.

It will be a great place to share tips, ideas and news with your colleagues and peers.

There's a secure messaging function, social posting, news and events feeds.

You can follow other members, people in your specialism, or just your mates. Why not start a group chat for your team?



If you are in our testing group please do try it out and give us feedback! It is invaluable to improving the app.

If you haven't been included in the testing group but would like to check it out, please email CarlaJones@manchesterlawsociety.org.uk ↗ for more information.

Presentations – Focus on what you can control

Fran has been asked to deliver a presentation to the board in a few days' time. Fran accepts the challenge with confidence.

In truth, she's putting on a BAFTA nominated performance because inside she has pressed the panic button. Her head is spinning. She thinking about who will be there, how long the presentation will be and about the questions she won't be able to answer... and all this before she's even started to design her presentation!

Fran needs to take a gulp of her coffee, put the brakes on, slow down and focus on her circles of concern and influence.

The things that fall into her circle of concern are the things she can't control, or has very little control over, such as:

Who's going to be attending

- The layout of the room
- The length of the required presentation
- Who is speaking before or after her
- The location of the presentation
- The questions she'll get asked

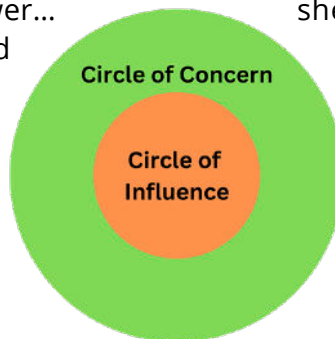
Fran has very little control over any of these things, so there's no point worrying about them.

The things that fall into her circle of influence are all the things she can do something about, such as:

- Her attitude towards the presentation
- The amount of time she spends on preparation
- Where possible, the room layout
- How she manages and control her nerves
- How she opens and ends her presentation

- What her slides and handouts look like
- How much time she spends rehearsing
- Preparing the for questions she knows the answers to, the ones she doesn't and the ones she dreads

There's nothing to be gained from worrying about the things that fall into her circle of concern. Fran should focus her time and energy on the things that fall into areas she can influence – the things she can control.




Here's a little bit more about the circles of concern and influence

We use this model a lot in our courses. Originally made famous in the '7 Habits of Highly Effective People' by Stephen Covey, we use the model to help people put things into perspective. It isn't to say you should completely ignore the things in your concern; for example, where the participants sit may fall into your circle of concern, however, after speaking with the organiser, you might be able to move people around.

It's a really simple model that will hopefully help you to take a step back and calm you down!

Useful Resources

If you're a little nervous about presenting, a great book to read is *Presentation Skills for Quivering Wrecks* – a really down to earth book full useful tips and advice

If you want a chat about how Potential Unearthed can help your management/ leadership skills, contact Mike on mike@potentialunearthed.co.uk 
 Tel 07825301660

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Manchester Law Society

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Net Zero and Climate Action Seminar

**Clyde & Co LLP, 2 New Bailey
Square, Stanley Street, M3 5GS**



28 February 2024



This event is free to attend



16:00 - 17:00



Following our popular webinar on Getting the best environmental position in property transactions on 4th December we are delighted to announce Keith Davidson will be delivering an in person seminar on Net Zero and Climate Action on 28th February.

The event will cover:

- Why Net Zero matters
- Climate change science and legislation
- The rise of mandatory Climate and ESG reporting obligations
- Law society guidance on climate change
- Climate action by lawyers

[Click here for more information and to book your FREE place](#)



22 Regulation Update & News

By **Andrea Cohen**, Compli, Weightmans



As 2024 gets fully underway, we provide our usual overview of what has been happening in the last month in the world of risk and compliance, including recent regulatory and disciplinary decisions.

Money Laundering and Terrorist Financing (Amendment) Regulations 2023

These regulations came into force on 10 January 2024 and amend the MLRs. As a result, UK PEPs are treated as lower risk than overseas PEPs but must nonetheless be subject to enhanced due diligence (EDD). There are however exceptions to this where there are factors other than the nature of their position which increase the level of risk.

The amendments do not mean that no EDD is required for domestic PEPs but, if appropriate, where taking a risk-based approach, the PEP is considered to be low risk, you may, for example, take less intrusive steps to establish source of funds and source of wealth. If you've not already done so, firms are advised to read the amended regulations, review their policies, controls and procedures (PCPs) and FWRA and make changes to them if necessary, including client and matter risk assessments, and document that you have done so, even if no changes were needed. Any changes made should be shared with all those working in scope of MLR.

Changes to the UK sanctions list

More changes have been made to the UK sanctions list, including, as at the date of writing: 2 administrative amendments under the Democratic People's Republic of

Korea sanctions regime; 21 administrative amendments and 4 amendments under the Isil (Da'esh) and Al-Qaeda sanctions regime, and 1 new designation under the Bosnia and Herzegovina sanctions regime.

CILEX reports widespread support for its regulatory reform agenda

[CILEX has published its report](#) on the consultation and public polling it conducted between August and November 2023 which, among other things, consulted on the proposal to redelegate the provision of its regulation to the SRA. All questions relating to that topic achieved at least a 60% positive response among the CILEX members, employers and other respondents.

CILEX will announce its next steps in this regard after the SRA Board has met to discuss the outcomes of its own consultation.

Cybercrime incidents

In response to recent high-profile cybercrime incidents, including the December attack on legal sector IT provider CTS, [the SRA has published a press release](#).

The SRA emphasises that, in the event of a cyberattack on any firm or its clients, this should be reported promptly. There is an obligation to report if there has been a serious breach of the Standards and Regulations under paragraph 3.9 of the Code of Conduct for Firms, but in all cases



where an attack could or has had an impact on clients, it would still expect a prompt report to be made.

Firms should take this opportunity to review cybersecurity arrangements with a view to limiting the likelihood of becoming the victim of an attack and minimising the negative effects of any successful breaches. As part of this, firms should undertake a regular review of any third-party IT suppliers, and vet third parties for their security policies, procedures and any historical security breaches. It is also recommended that firms put in place a business continuity plan to help ensure that essential systems will remain operational in the event of a cyberattack.

Legal Ombudsman change of address

From 22 January 2024, the LeO's PO Box address changed to: Legal Ombudsman, PO Box 6167, Slough, SL1 0EH. Firms will need to update any relevant documentation, such as complaints policy, Terms of Business, client engagement letters, final complaint response and website to reflect the change.

New practice notes and guidance

Law Society practice notes

The Law Society has published one new practice note since our last update:

- [Protection for client accounts](#)

It has also collated its resources, including mental health [guides and advice](#) for supporting vulnerable clients.

Disciplinary and regulatory decisions:

There have been a large number of decisions reported since our last update. These include a significant fine being issued in relation to a failure to conduct proper client due diligence (CDD) further fines for breaches of the SRA Transparency Rules and the first fixed penalties for failure to submit diversity data, prompting the [publication of a press release on the topic](#).

AML breaches

SDT fines top-50 firm £500,000

The SDT has fined a top-50 firm £500,000 and ordered it to pay costs of more than £128,000 for failing to conduct proper CDD on a Liberian shipping company and to conduct adequate ongoing monitoring in relation to 14 transactions. A former partner was also fined £11,900 and ordered to pay costs of nearly £55,000 in relation to the same. The full ruling will be published in the coming weeks.

This is the second sanction levied against the firm in the past seven years. In 2017, the firm was fined £50,000 and three partners £10,000 each for allowing its client account to be used as a banking facility and breaching AML rules.

Fines for AML failures

Another firm has been fined £23,216 for failing, between June 2017 and January

Continued on page 24



2020, to have in place a firm-wide risk assessment, policies, controls and procedures (PCPs) to manage the risks of money laundering and terrorist financing, and the necessary client and matter risk assessments. The firm agreed to pay costs of £1,350.

A solicitor, who was owner, COLP and MLRO of a firm shut down by the SRA after its parent company went into liquidation, was fined £14,100 and ordered to pay costs of £1,350 for failure to have a compliant FWRA in place, despite completing a declaration to that effect in 2020, failure to verify source of funds in conveyancing matters, and the AML policy referred to 2003 MLR. There was no evidence that money laundering had occurred.

A solicitor has been fined for failure to conduct adequate CDD in respect of five conveyancing transactions which all had unusual features and signs of money laundering. He further failed to carry out ongoing anti-money laundering and risk assessment checks, and failed to maintain proper files or documentation about the transactions. He was directed to pay £15,000 and costs of £1,350.

Separately, a Chartered Legal Executive failed to carry out the relevant client identification checks in the context of a gift of property to four children, and as a result was mistaken as to who was the owner of the property. He received a written rebuke due to extenuating personal circumstances and the fact he self-reported to CILEX and underwent further AML training following the incident. He agreed to pay the SRA's costs of £300.

Eight more firms found to be in breach of the SRA Transparency Rules

In addition to the three firms fined in November, eight more firms have each been fined £750 and directed to pay costs of £150 for failure to publish the information required by the SRA Transparency Rules.

Fines for failure to submit workforce diversity data

Three firms have each been fined £750 and directed to pay costs of £150 for failing to submit diversity data within the deadline.

Fine for failure to notify material change

A firm has been fined £750 and ordered to pay costs of £150 after failing to promptly notify the SRA of a material change to the information it had previously provided to the SRA about its COFA.

Three solicitors fined for drunk driving

Two solicitors have been fined £1,500 for driving while over the legal limit where the score for the nature and impact of the misconduct added up to five. A third solicitor has been fined an unusually high amount of just over £10,000 where the score for the nature and impact of the misconduct added up to seven. All three were further ordered to pay costs of £300.

Scottish solicitor given section 43 order for sexual misconduct

A Scottish Solicitor working in London has been banned from being employed at a law firm without SRA approval after he touched a female colleague in a sexual manner without her consent at a work event. He was also ordered to pay costs of £600.

Solicitor fined for failures while acting for family friends

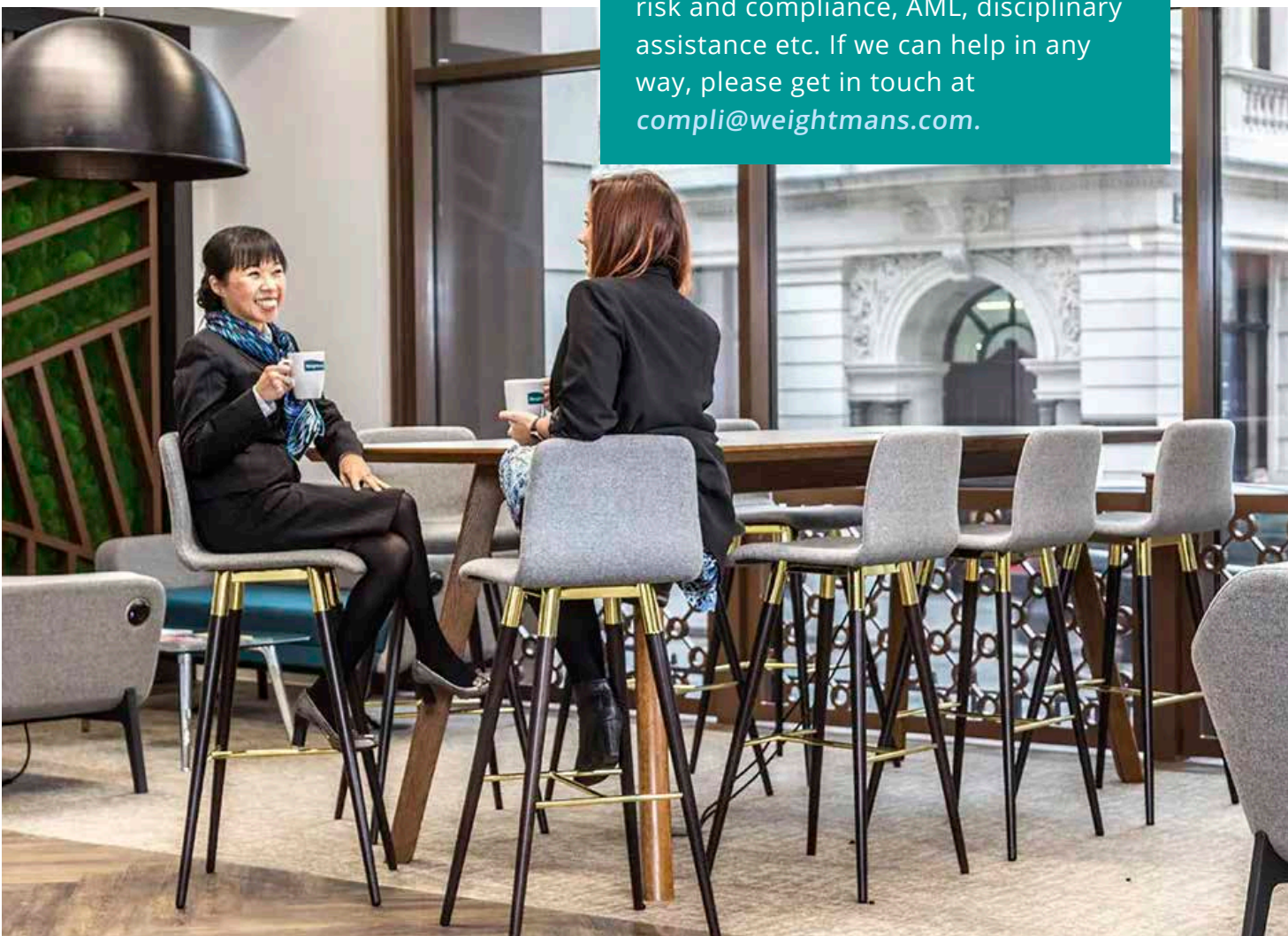
An experienced solicitor self-reported to the SRA in 2021 as she had acted for family friends without professional indemnity insurance under the mistaken belief that this was not necessary where she did not charge for her legal services and informed the clients that she had no such insurance. She said she had not realised that the rules had changed in November 2019, highlighting the importance of keeping up to date in relation to regulatory obligations. In addition, she held client money in accounts that were not designated client accounts. She agreed to a fine of £768 and to pay costs of £4,000.

London solicitor fined £10,000 for unauthorised practice as a sole practitioner

A solicitor has agreed to a fine of £10,000 and to pay costs of just over £4,000 after assisting 'Person A' with civil proceedings. Person A was not a client of the firm she worked for, and she was not authorised by the SRA to practice as a sole practitioner. In the course of the civil proceedings, she made misleading statements to Coventry County Court in stating that she was a sole practitioner and, separately, that she had been appointed to act for Person A.

How Compli can help...

The Compli Solicitor Regulatory and Professional Discipline Team can provide expertise and advice in with risk and compliance, AML, disciplinary assistance etc. If we can help in any way, please get in touch at compli@weightmans.com.





Continued from page 1

MLS HQ has moved! (continued)

We had fifty years at 64 Bridge Street. So many meetings, dramas, good times! We will miss our little corner of the building, but it will be great to have a fresh new space to plan our endeavors and to have some up to date hybrid meeting facilities.

The new offices are located just behind House of Fraser. There are breakout areas for informal meetings and spaces we can book out, with the latest AV set up, for more formal meetings. The meeting rooms are also available to hire to non-tenants.

We are delighted that the Society artefacts – old minute books, photos and other historic items – will be added to the Manchester Local History archive to be cataloged and then be available at a later date to be viewed. Don't worry – the sword of friendship that hangs in the office is coming with us!

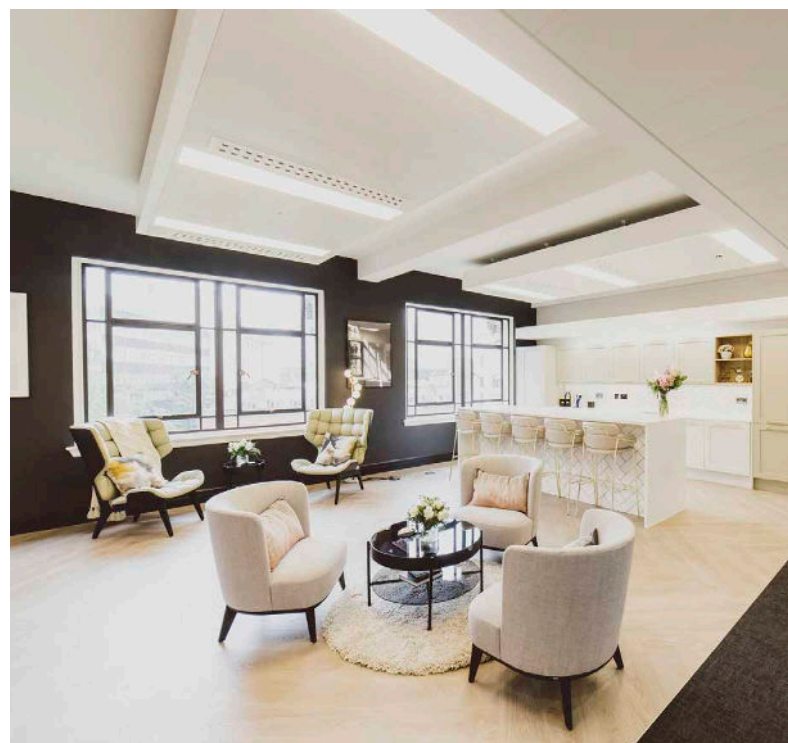
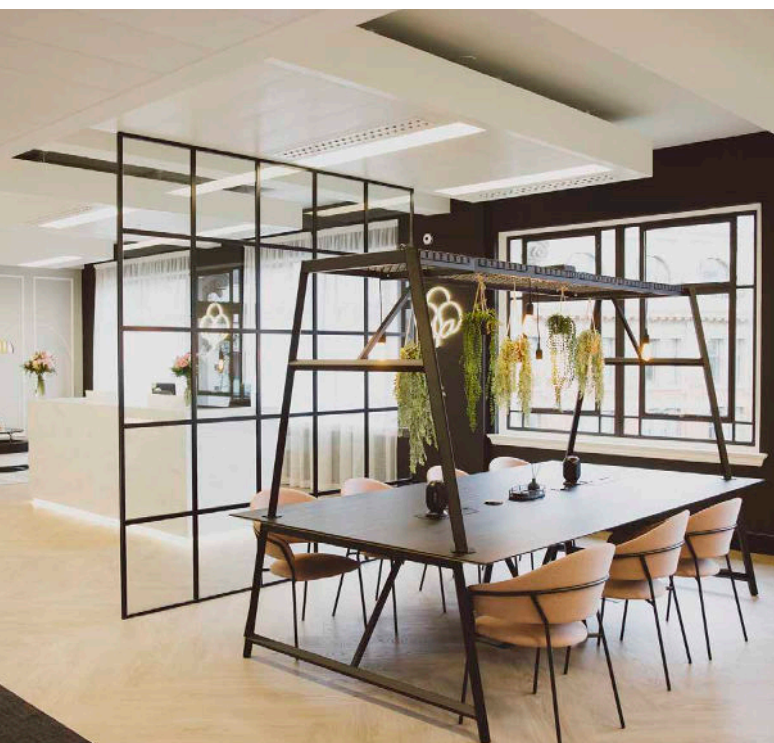
We will be changing not only our address but also our telephone number, both are detailed below, or you can check the website if you need to get in touch. Our email addresses and website will remain the same.

As part of the increased security at the new premises you will need to let us know if you are planning to visit so we can leave your details at reception.

Please bear with us as we settle into our new home – we are bound to hit a few snags!

New address: Manchester Law Society, 4th Floor, Arkwright House, Parsonage Gardens, M3 2LF

New telephone number: 0161 6678086



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Manchester Professionals Networking Club Lunch with the Leader



15 FEBRUARY 2024



11:30 - 14:00



Manchester Hall, 36 Bridge
Street, Manchester, M3 3BT



£40.00 + VAT (£48.00)

includes a welcome drink and lunch

We are delighted to announce that the Leader of Manchester City Council, Councillor Bev Craig will be joining us for our next Manchester Professionals Networking Club lunch.

Bev will tell us about the latest developments and challenges in the city. She will share her vision and priorities for the future of Manchester, as well as the opportunities and risks that the city faces in the post-pandemic and post-Brexit era, the challenges and opportunities of climate change and sustainability for the city, and how the council is pursuing its ambitious goal of becoming carbon neutral by 2038.

Guests will have the opportunity to ask Bev any pressing questions during our Q&A.

A captivating speaker with a real passion for Manchester, this is one not to be missed.

[MORE INFO](#)



Talking Heads

With pancake Day, fat Tuesday, bursting day – whatever you want to call it – rolling round on 13th February we have been asking

“What is your favourite pancake topping?”

Chloe Themistocleous
Principal Associate,
Employment and Labor
Eversheds Sutherland

I have a real sweet tooth and therefore my absolute favourite pancake topping is mountains of Nutella! If I am trying to be good, I throw in a few token strawberries! If I am being really naughty, I throw in some popping candy!

Jason Dixon
CEO, Docutech Office
Solutions
Sugar and Lemon

Quentin Underhill
Head of Serious Injury and
Clinical Negligence
Alderstone Solicitors

Without getting too philosophical, I find that everything in life seems better when you can cut through all the complicated noise and focus on the key elements that work best together. Keep things as simple as possible and cooperate for the best outcome.



That's why its lemon and sugar on my pancake every time. Just two ingredients but the sweet perfectly balances with the sour to give a great flavour.

We don't have to get complicated because these two ingredients come together and cooperate perfectly. Get the basics right and you can't go far wrong.

Catherine Kay
Head of Construction (Manchester), Mills & Reeve LLP

My favourite pancake topping has to be cheese. I always have a second serving with lemon and sugar. I've had funny experiences with pancakes over the years. One was a holiday to Merida, Yucatan (Mexico) where I stayed with a former Sydney housemate who happens to be Parisian. Little did I know that the production of



pancakes would cause such a stir with her neighbours and Australian visitors. It transpires, French crepes are deemed to be somewhat magical and magnificent in equal measure by those partaking in the dish! In addition, we also had French toast and one would have thought the Queen was about to arrive with the amount of fanfare!

When I was in the Brownies, Pancake Day was always a highlight. Most controversial moment was a cast iron frying pan becoming welded to the brand-new carpet in the village hall. The hole remained there for years!

Jason Tetley
Director, Greater
Manchester Law Centre
Another two pancakes 😊



Martyn Best
Managing Director and
founder
Document Direct

Oh pancakes!

Well, just like there are two sides to a pancake - fluffy, golden brown, and burnt, there are two sides to my preference.

Lent looms, and Pancake Tuesday is the traditional last feast day before 40 days of fasting – and so a topping should really reflect that - do not be light on your topping.

Clearly it should be nutritional, and therefore have warm melted chocolate, with thinly sliced fruit - banana and berries

ideally, then a lashing of thick double cream.

However, whilst multiple pancakes are desirable, try to avoid the first one.

Daniel Weed
Director, Compliance
Partner & Supervising
Solicitor
Burton Copland

Morning pancake – The topping is a bit of health mixed with indulgence. Nutella spread is the indulgence then a fruit combo of strawberries, banana, and blueberries

to help with the New Year health campaign. Finished off with a very small drizzle of maple syrup just to add to the indulgence!

Dessert pancake – After a day at work, the health campaign is suspended and its pure indulgence! Simple but very sweet – Häagen-Dazs cookies and cream ice cream.



Fiona Wood
Partner
McAlister Family Law

As a child in the 70s I thought that lemon and sugar on a pancake was the height of sophistication – sweet and sour all in one mouthful! I also really liked the plastic yellow lemons that contained lemon juice. Not sure why we did not get

real lemons – maybe they were an exotic fruit then?

Having tried a few more varieties of pancake since then, I have to say that my favourite pancake topping is crispy duck. I appreciate that this does not fit with the reason for pancakes, using up leftover food before the start of lent, but they are heaven!





Kirsty Tinsley-Fenney
Partner
Field fisher

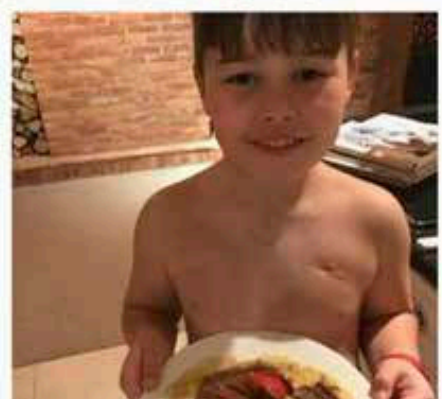
My favourite pancake topping are actually those that my children have made over the years as the fun, laughter and joy a family pancake making session could bring never fails to make me smile. Especially if they were allowed to have a go at flipping the pancakes in the pan first!

The pride the boys had if they managed to flip the pancake perfectly was infectious but it was also more fun when it went wrong as the laughter at the mess they made was clearly more enjoyable to them.

My colleagues and I have just had a little fun as I looked for the pictures to send across with this. By the time I have finished satisfying my boys different pancake orders, I usually don't want one myself but if

I were to choose it would be between a healthy energetic crème fresh, blueberries and strawberries or the most enjoyable indulgent Nutella, strawberries and ice cream crepe.

In all honesty, I pretty much enjoy any pancake topping and when I travelled around Thailand after leaving law school I lived on street seller's banana and chocolate pancakes. They were delightful!



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Recognition as the “Best Law Firm to Work For” and B Corp certification supports significant growth at Brabners

Brabners [↗](#) has delivered a sixth consecutive year of purpose-led growth, with revenues up 15% to £46.8m (2022: £40.5m) in its latest financial year ending 30th April 2023.

In a year of significant milestones, including achieving the firm’s B Corp certification, profit before members remuneration and profit shares also increased by 12% to £15.7m (2022: £14.0m).

The latest results cover a continued period of investment, including its entry into the Yorkshire market in May 2022 and the opening of its Leeds office, which celebrated its first anniversary in November.

Building on its position as a purpose-led firm with a national reach, that is proudly anchored in the North, Brabners continues to support a raft of major regeneration investment projects, in keeping with the national focus on regional development, including Everton FC’s new stadium, Oldham’s £550m town centre regeneration project and the government-backed Eden Project Morecambe.

Major new instructions and panel appointments included supermarket chain Morrisons and Timpson, while its corporate team remained one of the most active dealmakers in the region, including its fast-growing specialism in advising businesses in relation to the establishment of employee ownership trusts (EOTs).

The firm also successfully concluded its representation of Coleen Rooney in the High



Robert White

Court before securing a positive outcome for former England cricket captain Michael Vaughan following the ECB’s investigation into institutional racism at Yorkshire County Cricket Club.

Since April, in keeping with its purpose-led approach, the firm has launched its ‘True North’ network – a group of change-making organisations from across the North – which followed the publication of its True North | Defining Northern Ambition [report](#) [↗](#) exploring practical solutions to the opportunities and challenges that exist within the regional economy.

As well as recently being recognised as the “Best Law Firm to Work For” in the UK by Best Companies, the firm has recently grown to over 500 colleagues, and its investment in the Kingsdale Head peatland restoration project in Yorkshire continues to signify its recognition as a sustainable business.

Robert White, CEO at Brabners, said: “We are incredibly proud to have delivered another set of strong financial results, which show the progress we have made in building a high performing purpose-led firm that is committed to demonstrating that business can bring about positive change.

“These results provide the platform for us to continue to invest in the future of our firm, with a focus on creating opportunities for our talented and ambitious team. Our certification as a B Corp and our recognition as ‘The Best Law Firm to Work For’ in the

UK by Best Companies represent significant milestones in the firm’s more than 200-year history – recognising and formalising our commitment to valuing people, planet and profit as equal measures of success.

“As we head into 2024, with the launch of our True North network, we look forward to playing our part in co-creating a path towards greater prosperity and social impact from the heart of the Northern business community. While always being dedicated to making the difference for our clients, our people and the communities we serve.”

Myerson Solicitors Announced as Official Partner for Manchester Young Professionals

[Myerson Solicitors](#) is delighted to announce its partnership with Manchester Young Professionals (MYP). This collaboration signifies a commitment to supporting and empowering the vibrant community of young professionals in Manchester.

Manchester Young Professionals is a thriving community that connects ambitious individuals across various industries, providing them with opportunities for networking, professional development, and community engagement. Myerson Solicitors is proud to contribute by serving as the official legal partner, offering legal insights, video content, sponsorship, and resources to MYP members.

Chris Wilson, Head of Business Development said: “We are thrilled to join forces with Manchester Young Professionals as their official partner. This partnership aligns perfectly with our commitment to supporting local communities and fostering the success of young professionals. We



look forward to joining the MYP community to empower their members on their professional journeys.”

Throughout the partnership, Myerson Solicitors will actively engage with MYP members through various initiatives, including workshops, seminars, social media, and networking events.

“We believe that this collaboration with Myerson Solicitors will bring tremendous value to our community,” said MYP Representative Rich Tyrell. “Having a reputable legal partner on board will provide our members with valuable resources and support, further enriching their professional experience within the Manchester business landscape.”



Achieving More with Less: IMD Solicitors' Path to a 22% Turnover Growth on 80% Time

Introduction

At IMD Solicitors, we've pioneered a transformative approach to the traditional workweek, crafting a new rhythm that not only enhances work-life balance but also fosters financial growth. Initially rolled out in our Family Department, the transition to an 80% workweek led to a remarkable 22% increase in turnover. This success has propelled us to implement this model firm-wide, aiming to set a new standard for productivity and well-being in the legal industry.

Our Vision

Our journey began not with a simple change of schedule but with a reimagining of what a law firm could be. We envisioned a workplace where efficiency and well-being were not mutually exclusive but mutually reinforcing. By implementing the four-day workweek in our Family Department, we challenged the notion that longer hours equate to more productivity. The results were nothing short of revolutionary – not only did our lawyers report greater job satisfaction and work-life balance, but our department also saw a significant increase in turnover.



Strategic Planning

Strategic planning was the bedrock upon which we built our four-day workweek. We realized early on that a successful transition would require us to rethink our entire operational structure. This meant aligning our internal processes with our new time constraints, ensuring that every minute of our workday was optimized for maximum productivity. We meticulously planned each team member's schedule, ensuring that our clients would always have access to the legal expertise they needed, whenever they needed it.

Streamlined Operations

A key element of our operational overhaul involved reevaluating how tasks were allocated and executed within the firm. We embraced a culture of delegation, ensuring that every member of our support staff was fully utilized and empowered to handle non-chargeable tasks. This not only allowed our solicitors more time to focus on billable work but also fostered a more collaborative and inclusive team environment. We standardized our processes wherever possible, creating a suite of templates and checklists that guaranteed quality and consistency across all our legal documents and correspondence.

Financial Foresight

Financial foresight was critical in our shift to a four-day workweek. We recognized that our billing practices needed to reflect the new efficiency we were striving for. Every fixed-fee arrangement and hourly

billing was scrutinized for profitability, and we remained vigilant, ready to adjust our strategies in response to the changing dynamics of each case. This granular approach to financial management was instrumental in driving our revenue growth.

Technological Leverage

In our quest for efficiency, we turned to technology, seeking out AI tools and software solutions that could take over routine tasks and free up our solicitors for more complex, value-adding work. We utilised state-of-the-art case management systems that automated much of the administrative workload, from scheduling to billing. This not only increased our operational efficiency but also reduced the potential for human error, ensuring that our work remained impeccable.

Uncompromised Client Commitment

Amid these changes, our clients remained our central focus. We were determined that the shift to a four-day workweek would not compromise the quality of service they had come to expect from us. On the contrary, our new working model allowed us to provide more attentive and personalized service. With our solicitors enjoying a better work-life balance, they were able to bring renewed energy and focus to each client interaction, leading to faster case resolutions and enhanced client satisfaction.

Caseload Calibration

As we adjusted to the four-day workweek, we closely monitored our caseloads to ensure they remained manageable. We became more selective in taking on new cases, focusing on those where we could

provide the most value. Regular workload assessments became a part of our routine, allowing us to redistribute tasks as needed and prevent any team member from becoming overburdened.

Continuous Improvement

The transition to a four-day workweek was not a one-time change but an ongoing process of refinement. The significant turnover growth within our Family Department was a powerful validation of our new model. Yet, we did not become complacent. We continued to seek out areas for improvement, leveraging feedback from both our team and our clients to make incremental changes that would enhance our efficiency and service quality.

Redefining the Legal Landscape

Our bold move to a four-day workweek has repositioned IMD Solicitors as a vanguard in the legal industry's evolution. Through strategic planning, committed execution, and an unwavering commitment to efficiency, we have demonstrated that a law firm can achieve significant growth while also enhancing the quality of life for its team members. As we extend this model across the firm, we are excited to lead the charge in redefining what it means to practice law in a modern, forward-thinking firm.

At IMD Solicitors, we're not just practicing law; we're setting a new standard for the industry, proving that a balanced approach to work can lead to unprecedented success.

Marcin Durlak
Managing Partner
IMD Solicitors LLP

JMW courts success with formation of Specialist Padel Team

JMW responds to huge demand for dedicated, new-build Padel clubs throughout the UK with a specialist team advising multiple clients

[JMW Solicitors](#) has launched a specialist Padel team dedicated to serving up legal expertise to the many entrepreneurs in the market for building their own Padel courts and/or opening their own Padel clubs.

JMW's legal experts in the fields of Real Estate, Intellectual Property, Corporate, Commercial, and Employment have joined together to create what the firm believes is a unique offering, and already the team is working on 37 separate projects throughout the UK.

JMW spotted the opportunity last year when its Managing Partner and Padel obsessive Marc Yaffe was invited by a business colleague to play Padel at his home; following a court-side conversation he realised that the desire to develop the sport was widespread, but was not matched by the necessary legal know-how when it came to negotiating on potential sites, protecting IP and drawing up the commercial agreements necessary to monetise such business ventures.

Marc Yaffe said: "The key element of our offering isn't just the legal expertise to be found at our firm, but our determination and desire to work together across multiple specialisms with the aim of delivering a fast, effective and specialised service to those in the fast-growing Padel sector."

JMW has already held its own "Women in Padel" tournament at another Padel Club in Wilmslow; an equivalent men's event



Marc Yaffe, Managing Partner at JMW Solicitors playing Padel

is to follow at Pure Padel in Alderley Edge next month. The firm is also a commercial sponsor of Manchester city centre's first Padel Club, Club de Padel, situated between the iconic towers of Deansgate Square in Manchester's New Jackson neighbourhood.

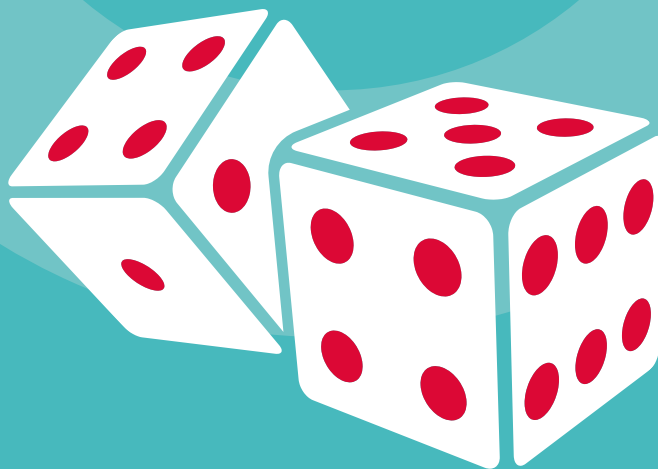
"A particular bonus of Padel is the unique networking it offers," added Marc. "It is a sport that has captured the imagination, not only of those in the Professional Services industry but also the many entrepreneurs to be found in the North West. We fully expect our Padel Project to mature into a key offering of the firm and we intend to have a lot of fun playing the game with clients and contacts alike."



**Still think
cyber risk management is
the responsibility of I.T.?**

**When the stakes
are this high, should you
be gambling?**

Talk to the experts.





Daredevil Mancs raise £25,000 for Manchester causes in city-centre firewalk

On Thursday night, St. Ann's Square saw 70 fundraisers walk across fire for We Love MCR Charity.

The city centre-based charity, known for its mind-over-matter fundraising challenges, asked brave 'soles' to take to the coals for its first fundraising event of 2024.

Crowds gathered at 6.30pm on Thursday 25th January at the historic St. Ann's Square, as We Love MCR's courageous fundraisers prepared to walk across red-hot wood embers in aid of Manchester's communities and young people.

The charity upped the stakes from its previous firewalk in 2021 – the first of its kind in Manchester city centre – by adding an extra lane of fire for brave walkers to conquer. Firewalking expert Cliff Mann from

TIME4CHANGE returned to Manchester oversee the event and coach nervous participants once again.

And, adding to the atmosphere this time was international samba reggae band Batala, whose ferocious drumming served as a dramatic soundtrack to the night's events, giving firewalkers a drumbeat to march to.

Simon Wright, the new Head of We Love MCR Charity, took to the coals as his first fundraising event for the charity. He said: "Since joining We Love MCR in September 2023, I've been looking forward to getting involved in some exciting fundraising





“

The funds raised from the firewalk will go towards We Love MCR's life-changing support across the city

events. I couldn't have asked for a better first challenge than a trial by fire right in the heart of the city.

We'd like to thank our brilliant participants for once again rising to the challenge and raising more than £25,000 in aid of Manchester's communities and young people. We truly couldn't do it without your support.”

Joanne Roney CBE, CEO of Manchester City Council, also took part in support of We Love MCR Charity and raised the biggest amount so far, nearly £4,000.

The funds raised from the firewalk will go towards We Love MCR's life-changing support across the city, with its two main grant-giving programmes.

The one-of-a-kind Rising Stars Fund gives disadvantaged young Mancunians the financial support they need to realise their ambitions, changing the lives of 74 young people in 2023. Meanwhile, the Stronger Communities Fund helps fund grassroots community projects, 56 of which We Love MCR supported last year.

For more information, or to sign up for news about We Love MCR's next fundraising challenge, head to welovemcrcharity.org



Click here to view more images from the fundraising event



Keeping your firm on top in 2024

As we start 2024, the digital marketing landscape is still buzzing and ever changing – although there's loads of room for improvement for law firms. The best steps for your firm are those that help you to stay ahead of the competition and remain competitive and relevant.

So, where should you focus your time and budget? Well, let's take a look:


- **Personalised Client Experiences:** More than ever, people want to be treated like people, not just numbers. If you don't already have CRM systems to tailor experiences for your potential clients, then you need to look at how this could be implemented. This means customised content that speaks to their interests and behaviour. This can make a huge difference in getting people engaged and converting them into clients.
- **SEO and Content Marketing:** The mystifying world of SEO has really never been more vital. Creating relevant content that tackles the latest legal problems and provides useful information for clients is the number one way to ensure your site is being seen by those looking for help. And remember, voice search remains on the rise so those long-tail searches can be a goldmine for getting traffic to your site.
- **Video Marketing:** Video is still dominating in terms of the type of content people prefer to consume. Turn it to your advantage short, informative clips about legal topics, client testimonials, and a sneak peek behind the scenes. All of these can help boost social engagement and those informative ones help support SEO.

“

Your website needs to be smooth as butter... and, if it doesn't work well on mobile – you're losing more than half of your potential clients who've moved on to a site that does

- **Social Media Engagement:** Platforms like LinkedIn are your best mates for B2B networking and building your brand. If your firm is mainly B2C then get to grips with a real strategy for leveraging Facebook, Instagram and X and don't sleep on TikTok which is getting some positive results for some B2C firms. Regular updates, articles showing off your expertise, and interactive sessions can establish your firm on these platforms.

What about online performance?

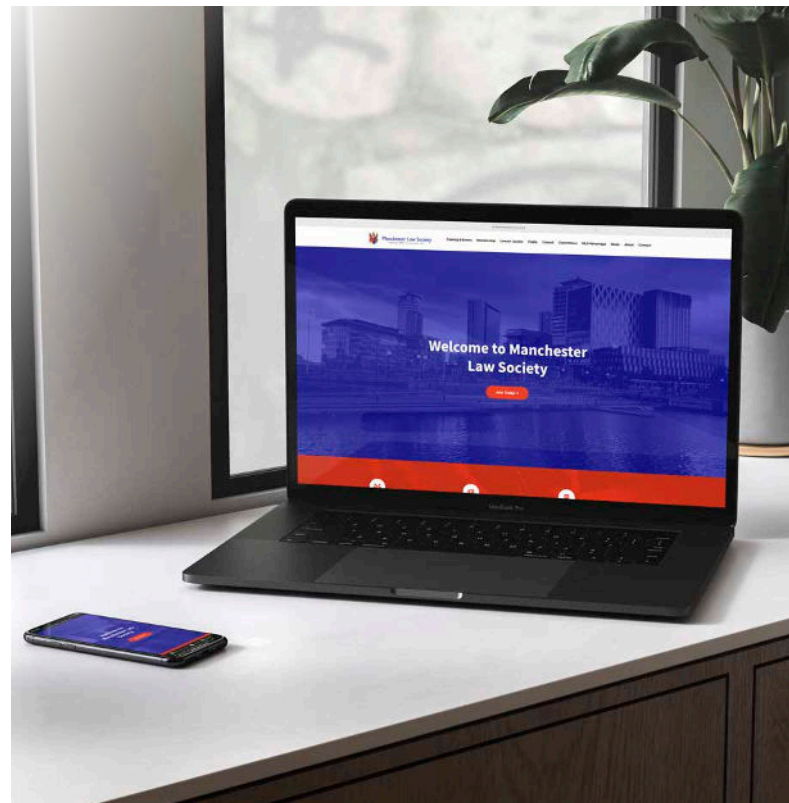
- **Data-Driven Decisions:** Get cosy with analytics tools (like the [Legmark Digital Dashboard](#) , designed just for law firms. Tools such as Google Analytics let you get under the hood of your site and see traffic, user engagement and how well your campaigns are doing. website's performance, user engagement, and how well your campaigns are doing. The Legmark Digital Dashboard can plug this data in to it but will also give you a gauge on how well your site performs, where there are improvements to be made and how that performance stacks up against your competitors. Let data steer your marketing ship.

- **User Experience (UX) Optimisation:** Your website needs to be smooth as butter (just like the [new Manchester Law Society](#) site we recently built, *pictured*). And, in 2024, if it doesn't work well on mobile – you're losing more than half of your potential clients who've moved on to a site that does.
- **Online Reputation Management:** Don't ignore the importance of online reviews and comments. Take an active interest in replying to all reviews and both positive and negative social media comments. Take negative chat offline and offer a public resolution where possible to help maintain reputation and client trust.

AI or no AI?

Try not to run before you can walk. But do be aware of the abilities and benefits of AI tools and work with a strong digital partner to implement them where they may have an impact.

- **Chatbots and Virtual Assistants:** Think AI-powered chatbots on your website and social media. They're like your digital receptionists, handling queries, scheduling appointments, and giving basic legal advice quickly.
- **AI-Driven Content Creation:** Let AI tools help write and produce your content. While all content should be carefully considered from a legal perspective, and by your SEO team, tools like ChatGPT can provide good article outlines or even just generate a raft of ideas for you to turn into content.
- **Automated Marketing Campaigns:** AI can be your useful in automating and personalising your email marketing, social media posts, and ad targeting. It's all about efficiency and relevance.



- **Predictive Analytics:** Fancy using AI to predict trends, client behaviour, and the success of your marketing strategies? It's all possible...

In a nutshell, for UK law firms in 2024, it's not just about keeping up with the latest trends – it's about forming real connections with your clients and establishing a strong online presence. Focus on personalisation, great content, and harness the power of AI to boost your digital marketing game. This will drive growth and keep your clients engaged in this ever-competitive sector.

Legmark is Digital Marketing Partner for the Manchester Law Society – if any of the above has got you thinking about your 2024 digital goals, drop a line to wayne@legmark.com and let's have a chat.

Wayne Blinkhorn
Digital Marketing Manager
Legmark



Bermans Solicitors appoints two Partners as firm continues to grow

Bermans Solicitors [↗](#) is delighted to announce the promotion of two Partners.

The Northwest based law firm, announced that Laura McMorland and James Whittaker would be taking on their new roles, effective from January 2024.

Laura joined the Corporate team at the start of March 2023 from FourSynergy Group where she was head of legal transactions. Laura has very quickly become a key member of the corporate team and has led a number of notable transactions - the standout deal being lead adviser to SCG Packaging Public Limited Company on its acquisition of Law Print and Packaging Limited. Her technical expertise, direct approach and sense of humour has been warmly received by the team and clients alike.

James has been with the company since 2019 and has made a significant contribution to the success of the insolvency team over the last few years. He has also been given Legal 500 "Rising Star" status, which stated: "James Whittaker is a standout individual. He has in-depth legal knowledge and excellent judgment".

Jon Davage, Managing Director and Head of Corporate, said: "I am delighted to announce the promotions of James and Laura. They have proven to be technically excellent, loyal and committed members of the Bermans team. I have no doubt they will achieve great things during 2024, which looks like it will be a year of significant growth for the firm. After a very buoyant Q4 in 2023 across all practice areas, the workflows and pipeline are looking very healthy for Q1 in 2024. Our focus is on the SME market in Manchester and Liverpool and we look to create opportunities and add value to all our client relationships. We are always interested in adding to our legal offering and we are looking at ways to deliver this better, including in new geographic areas."

With the backing of MAPD, Bermans has plans to grow the firm significantly while retaining its brand and keeping in line with MAPD's philosophy. The recent promotions are just one small part of Bermans ever growing firm. In 2023, the company saw 14 new starters join the team.



Hugh Jones Solicitors appoints new associate solicitor

Hugh Jones Solicitors has bolstered its Court of Protection team with the appointment of a new associate solicitor.

Owen Cafferty joins the Manchester-based Court of Protection specialist at a time of significant growth and brings three years of post-qualification experience in finance and property work.

Owen works with a wide range of vulnerable clients, supporting them and their families to manage their funds and budgets.

He said: "I'm passionate about helping improve lives and reduce stress for those lacking capacity and their families. This value exists across the whole firm, and it's inspiring to work somewhere where the whole team is focused on a common goal."

Owen specialises in property and affairs work, including the management of damages awards, and this involves reviewing portfolio reports and regularly meeting with Independent Financial Advisors regarding clients' investments. He works closely with case managers and experts across multiple disciplines, including clients' directly employed care teams.

Hugh Jones Solicitors' specialist employment and HR team provides a full range of services and support for clients, their families and the employed support workers and personal assistants. Owen works closely with these teams in managing employment matters and communicating with employer's liability insurers to deal with any issues that arise.



Owen Cafferty

“

I'm passionate about helping improve lives and reduce stress for those lacking capacity and their families.”

Managing Director Liz Hughes comments: "Owen is a valuable addition to our team – he thoroughly understands the unique challenges that Court of Protection matters present and approaches work with as much empathy as he does expertise. We're thrilled to have him on board."



Growing firm Alderstone Solicitors is joined by a new Partner

Experienced solicitor, Robert Jones, has joined [Alderstone Solicitors](#) as a Partner.

Rob, originally from North Staffordshire, takes up the position within the firm's expanding serious and catastrophic injury department.

He has nearly 25 years of experience in the legal profession and has built-up a wealth of knowledge dealing with thousands of cases of road traffic collisions, workplace injuries, public liability, and fatal claims.

Rob started his career acting for defendant insurers before switching to represent claimants. The experience has informed his strategic and cooperative approach to cases that ensures the best possible outcome for clients.

He is skilled in supporting clients during particularly difficult claims, criminal proceedings, and inquests, which has seen him successfully deal with a wide variety of cases from horse riding injuries to claims under Human Rights legislation following suicide.

Rob says: "I've worked with many of the Alderstone Solicitor's team before and I didn't hesitate when I saw the opportunity to work with some familiar faces again. Alderstone Solicitors is a growing practice with good people and a client focused culture. I'm really excited about the future and helping to further develop a top-class team for our clients."



Rob Jones, Partner at Alderstone Solicitors

Rob is a member of the Association of Personal Injury Lawyers (APIL) and is accredited as a Senior Litigator.

Quentin Underhill, Partner, Director and Head of Serious and Catastrophic Injury at Alderstone Solicitors, says: "I've known Rob for 25 years and worked with him before. His commitment, attention to detail and tenacity will be an excellent asset to the firm – and especially our clients. He is a skilled legal expert, and his principles match our firm's ethos and approach to client care, rehabilitation, and pro-bono work.

"Rob's appointment as Partner is another part of our continued growth and development. We're constantly on the lookout for experienced solicitors and paralegals to join the firm. We are fully aware that a firm is only as good as its people, and we are committed to developing and nurturing the best legal talent."

Alderstone Solicitors is a specialist firm focused on life-changing personal injury, clinical negligence, industrial disease, and asbestos-related diseases. The firm has offices in Manchester, Chester and London and supports more than 500 clients across England and Wales.

Shoosmiths welcomes new partner as construction and engineering specialist joins in Manchester

A new dispute resolution partner has joined [Shoosmiths'](#) national construction and engineering team.

Jody Kite arrives at the law firm from Dandara, where he spent eight years developing and leading the housebuilder and build to rent specialist's construction law and dispute resolution function, while also advising on non-contentious matters and forward funding transactions.

Operating from Shoosmiths' Manchester office, Jody will work as part of the law firm's national construction and engineering practice that is advising leading developers, financial institutions, employers and contractors.

With a further 10 years' experience in private practice, Jody specialises in advisory work, adjudication, arbitration, litigation and the mediation of construction, engineering, infrastructure, energy and related professional negligence disputes. He strengthens Shoosmiths' contentious construction and engineering offering - bringing a substantial pipeline of matters to the firm and collaborating with the national team to support existing clients.

On joining the firm, Jody Kite, construction and engineering partner at Shoosmiths, said: "Shoosmiths has a formidable reputation in the real estate industry, with its construction and engineering practice spearheading some of the UK's most ambitious developments - spanning urban regeneration, major infrastructure projects and investment deals.




Jody Kite

"What attracted me to the firm was the team's entrepreneurial spirit and ability to focus on what truly matters for clients. Having spent time working within a national developer and contractor at board level, I understand the needs of real estate and construction businesses and what they seek from their advisers. Shoosmiths gets it. This is why I'm thrilled to be part of the firm, contributing to its success."

Ian Hardman, construction and engineering partner at Shoosmiths, added: "Jody brings 20 years of experience advising on a range of contentious construction matters across a broad range of sectors. His unique understanding of working within a national real estate developer and contractor will be invaluable to clients that consistently turn to Shoosmiths' construction and engineering practice for legal expertise, but also incisive thinking, and a deep commercial understanding."



Stephensons appoints two new solicitors to its commercial team

Stephensons  has appointed two new solicitors in its commercial department as demand for its expertise continues to grow.

Kelly Heyworth joins Stephensons as a senior litigator in the firm's commercial litigation team. Kelly joins Stephensons from Backhouse Jones solicitors in Clitheroe. In her role, Kelly will act on a range of commercial matters, including commercial contract disputes and shareholder disputes.

Zainab Porbanderwala also joins the corporate team at Stephensons. A recently qualified solicitor, Zainab will be assisting with corporate transactions and helping clients with commercial drafting, ranging from contracts to shareholder agreements.

Commenting on the appointments, Louise Hebborn, partner and manager of the

commercial department at Stephensons said: "I am very pleased to welcome Kelly and Zainab to the team. Both solicitors bring with them a wealth of talent and experience that will complement existing strengths within the department. As we enter 2024, demand for our services continues to grow so I am delighted to be able to support our clients with both Kelly and Zainab on board."

“

Both solicitors bring with them a wealth of talent and experience that will complement existing strengths within the department.”



Zainab Porbanderwala and Kelly Hayworth

MYSG Charity Quiz for Wood Street Mission

Manchester Young Solicitors Group are pleased to announce the return of their annual Charity Quiz (back by popular demand!) which will be held at Revolution (Oxford Road) on Thursday 15 February at 6pm.

Tickets are available to purchase for £10 per person [here](#) . Sign-up is on an individual basis, but we are looking for teams of 4-5 people so please send an email to madeleine.langmead@jmw.co.uk after you and your friends have signed up, to confirm who you would like to enter as a team.

The event is kindly sponsored by BCL Legal and will be an exciting evening with plenty of thrilling trivia, drinks on arrival plus food halfway through the quiz. There will be a charity raffle with the chance to win some amazing prizes including vouchers for activities in and around Manchester. Our fantastic hosts from last year are returning with more wacky rounds of questions than last year! In addition to having a great deal of fun, we hope to raise even more funds for charity in the process, and we look forward to seeing many of our members there - in their teams with pens at the ready!

Manchester Young Solicitors Group's Charity of the Year, Wood Street Mission is a Salford-based charity providing support for children and families living on low income across Manchester and Salford, by providing much needed advice, help, items or funds needed to improve children's welfare and education. They can be a source of items such as clothing and books where needed and uniforms for families which can't afford them, to make sure children going to school are not made to feel different from their

“

In addition to having a great deal of fun, we hope to raise even more funds for charity in the process

classmates. They also run holiday book clubs to encourage continued education of children and use communications and events to raise awareness about child poverty in Manchester.



Wood Street Mission accepts both financial donations and also donations of items such as clothing, shoes, books, highchairs, prams and buggies, toiletries, bedding, school bags and stationery. More information on ways to donate can be found on their website: www.woodstreetmission.org.uk

The Manchester Young Solicitor's Group has been proud to partner with Wood Street Mission for our fundraising events for the past two years. We have already raised around £1,500 so far this year for Wood Street Mission, and plan to make this an even bigger sum with the upcoming Charity Quiz.

If you are a solicitor or legal executive with up to 10 years PQE, make sure that you [sign up to our mailing list](#) and follow our [LinkedIn](#) and [Instagram](#) pages, to be the first to hear about our upcoming events.



LGBT+ History Month via the lens of the UK vs Uganda

As we celebrate LGBT+ History Month this February, we look at how much progress has been made in respect of LGBT+ rights in the UK and will be contrasting that progress with the rights of the LGBT+ community in Uganda.

United Kingdom

In the United Kingdom, LGBT+ History Month serves as a significant time to reflect on the transformative legislative changes that have shaped the rights and recognition of the LGBT+ community. The journey towards equality began in earnest with the decriminalisation of homosexuality in England and Wales in 1967. The Sexual Offences Act marked a crucial milestone, decrying the unjust persecution of individuals based on their

sexual orientation. However, progress was gradual, and it wasn't until the turn of the 21st century that further legislative strides were made to address discrimination.

The early 2000s saw significant advancements, notably with the repeal of Section 28 in Scotland in 2000, and subsequently in England and Wales in 2003. This divisive legislation had prohibited the "promotion" of homosexuality in schools, stifling education and reinforcing harmful stereotypes. The new millennium also witnessed the introduction of civil partnerships in 2004, providing same-sex couples with legal recognition and rights akin to marriage. The culmination of these changes laid the groundwork for further groundbreaking developments in the following years.

A watershed moment occurred in 2014 when the Marriage (Same Sex Couples) Act was passed, legalising same-sex marriage across England, Wales, and Scotland. This landmark legislation granted LGBT+ individuals the same rights and privileges as their heterosexual counterparts, symbolising a significant step forward in the pursuit of equality.

Uganda

In Uganda, the LGBT+ community is discriminated against in a number of ways to include:

- Criminalisation of same sex sexual activity.
- No recognition of same sex union.
- No equal age of consent.



Matt Flanagan-Roberts

- No anti-discrimination laws in respect of employment, provision of goods and services or other areas to include indirect discrimination.
- Not allowed to adopt.

This is despite a poll in 2017 where 59 % of Ugandans agreed that LGBT+ individuals should enjoy and have the benefit of the same human rights as non-LGBT+ individuals.

Homosexuality is currently illegal in Uganda. From a legislative perspective and under the Anti Homosexuality Act 2023, it prescribes:

- Up to 20-year imprisonment for the promotion of homosexuality.
- Life imprisonment for homosexuality activity.
- Death penalty for aggravated homosexuality.

In 2014, a similar law was passed but was struck down as being unconstitutional. This came following the slashing of aid to Uganda by international donors.

Whilst the latest legislation enjoys broad support in the country which is largely very conservative, it has been challenged in the Constitutional Court of Uganda as it is one of the world's harshest anti LGBT+ laws. It is claimed that it violates the fundamental rights guaranteed in Uganda's constitution and its commitments under international human rights laws.

The current legislation criminalises the vaguely worded "promotion of homosexuality" which means that anyone advocating for the rights of the LGBT+ community could face up to 20 years imprisonment. Quite rightly there has been global outrage at the passing of such draconian and inhumane legislation. It has triggered criticism from the United Nations,



Samantha Labor

the European Union and the United States of America and they have suggested the following measures to try to persuade Uganda to revisit its legislative position towards the LGBT+ community:

- World bank halting new loans.
- United States of America imposing visa restrictions on key Ugandan officials.
- The USA has said that Ugandan goods will stop receiving preferential access to its markets.

This challenge was heard in December 2023 by written submissions only but no date has been set for the ruling.

This article puts into sharp focus that despite the great strides we have made in the UK, the fight for LGBT+ rights equality worldwide remains at large. The struggle for complete inclusivity on a global basis continues, and ongoing efforts are crucial to dismantling remaining barriers and fostering a society that truly embraces diversity in all its forms.

Written by ED&I Committee members Samantha Labor, Partner at Fletchers Solicitors and Matt Flanagan-Roberts, Associate at Squire Patton Boggs.

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Continued on page 44



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Continued on page 46



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As part of the UK's largest property and land data business, Landmark Information supports the entire value chain of the property industry.

With more than 25 years' experience, we provide real estate lawyers and property conveyancing professionals with accurate and relevant land and property data. We work closely with property lawyers to provide a dedicated personal approach, supporting the transaction risk and due diligence process. Our data, reports, software and services are in line with the Law Society and SRA requirements. They include environmental reports for both residential and commercial transactions such as, RiskView Residential, Argyll's SiteSolutions Combined, Landmark Flood, Landmark Planning, Landmark Coal and RiskHorizon for ESG due diligence.

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MLS Member Benefit: Chamber Space Access

Greater Manchester Chamber of Commerce HQ is based at Elliot House, Deansgate, right in the heart of Manchester City Centre. Over the course of the pandemic, the Chamber doubled the size of the Members' Lounge and added a hot-desking facility, so why not pop in, grab a free coffee and network?

As members of Manchester Law Society, you're welcome to use the facilities there, just notify a member of staff on

arrival. The Chamber also has a suite of 16 meetings rooms at Elliot House from conference facilities, boardrooms through to gallery rooms – and members of the Chamber get 20% off.

To find out more, visit:

www.chamberspace.co.uk  If you're interest in Membership, the Members' Lounge or Chamber Space, then feel free to get in touch with the team on benefits@gmchamber.co.uk 

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Management Matters

By **Bill Kirby**, director of Professional Choice Consultancy



This Month

- **People... people who have people... and the right ones in time and place are much more than lucky. Cannot rely on luck.**


So many law firms at the moment are struggling to recruit and retain staff. Only a few have the right plans in place to ensure strategy achievement (geography, work -types, client types (new, retained, developed) efficiency, profitability, cash flow) all needing the right image, operations, empathy and demonstrable social conscience.


A few years ago, the prime recognition for law firms was very much the legal profile of lawyers. There has been a great change since the Legal Services Act because as well as that it has become increasingly important to ensure efficiency and cash flow, strong client relationships and empathy, a positive image for the business in terms of staff relationships and social contributions to the community. Not everyone is facing this challenge.


This is dependent on the right people in the right place at the right time and their perpetual development and management and communications. Law firms now need to make it clear to their staff and to the outside world that they fully embrace this challenge.


It is time to put the whole thing into perspective. There are many elements of this – starting with the firm’s business strategy, the motivation and objectives of the owners and managers, the right job descriptions and profiles for recruits but



also for existing staff and their development and motivation, honesty and positive communications between managers and staff, the right provision at the right time of performance statistics and on-going action plans for recovery and exploitation of opportunities, the right social conscience of the firm these days and its image internally and externally.

Over the last couple of years, I have dealt with multiple aspects of this you can see the archive of articles [here](#) .


[January 2024](#)  - covers the strategy, owner and manager stocktake, proactive management, staff communication and management, image and brand, community awareness and resourcing.


[March 2022](#)  - covers Staff opinion and impressions given by management, candidate profile essentials, proactive audits of existing staff, appraisals.

[October 2023](#)  - covers annual resource reviews and the right coaching

[June 2023](#)   - covers business challenges, seniors needs and the rest, the right skills resourcing

[September 2022](#) - covers staff communication and development including some great third parties - [Weekly 10](#), [Wider thinking](#) and [Your 2050](#) 

[November 2021](#)  - covers equality and diversity and bullying impacts

[September 2021](#)  - covers the right managers and approaches



Starting Point

All firms need to have a clear stock-take in terms of who they currently are – background in terms of where they have come from and their nature, style, philosophy and priorities and then the dimensions and scope – short term history of changes, growth or shrinkage. This with a clear statement of staffing levels by job type and profile – a year ago, now, and in two years. Headcount analysis by location and work-type including major clients, sources of business – any major stand outs.

Next the **Three-year business strategy** – main objectives, targeted areas (geography and work-types). The business priorities and challenges – leverage, efficiency, staff mix, business process and revenue, clients retained with more penetration and new. Risk management and compliance included with clients lost, lock up, pricing and demands.

Where does the business actually sit in terms of performance and where do we want it to be and what needs to be done to get there. Have we the skills and infrastructure to get there, what are the major challenges – what are we going to do and when?

This three-year strategy has to be recognised as identifying the budget for the next 12 months and needs a full review every year. What is also critical is that flexibility needs to be imbedded on a monthly basis during the budget year and revised monthly to take account of recovery needs, exploitation of particular successes and the state of the commercial

market (transaction volumes, inflation or depression, availability of working capital, compliance and client and staff satisfaction levels.

We then need an **Owner and Manager stock-take** Key managers need to be up front in terms of desire/plans to stay in post, the roles they are most comfortable in whether it be skills demonstration or management contribution and where their motivation really is. Can they be developed to enhance contribution to the business or do we need a replacement programme at the highest level?

As well as making decisions to resource internally or move to outsourcing to up performance, skill levels and diminish risks. Is the succession plan in existence and being operated – partners need development and coaching as does everyone else.

Once our top-level strategy is in place (and constantly reviewed) all job roles in the business need enhancement in terms of **job descriptions with key accountabilities** understood. But in addition to that the ideal profiles for the personality and skills of individuals doing those roles need to be very clear. Some firms do this for recruitment reasons but not all – very few constantly review existing staff against the requirements during monthly assessments or even appraisals. The result unmotivated staff, not communicating with one another and clients in the right way – **performance and satisfaction impact**

Continued on page 58

- **Communication skills needed** – reading, writing, presentations but also empathy with for example clients or other staff members and questioning ability to identify issues. Does the person need to be able to get favours from non-line managed people?
- **Intellectual skills needed** – goes beyond qualification but includes the ability to assimilate the needs and then select and present the relevant solutions from the portfolio. Plus, to ask for and handle objections
- **Management skills needed** – people yes maybe but also a case file or a project on time and within budget
- **Motivation factors** – is the person turned on by exceeding targets and the potential reward or by client satisfaction, team work or social and community involvement, personal development desire
- **Emotional factors** – is the person available to be able to work within the environment, changing all the time at the moment, commit the hours and the travel necessary to do the job.

When in the recruitment market it is essential that these additional factors are covered in interviews with open questions needing much more than a yes/no answer. Very few people are 100% which is absolutely fine but it enables the firm to be aware of slight adjustments to management and supervision plus training and development.

Appraisal systems and output need this analysis to help define the communication and performance by managers as well as the organisation of personal development

programmes across the firm for best effect and the best ROI.

We cannot forget that recent surveys identified that as many as 65% of millennials within firms are seeking to leave and 42% of live matter clients are dissatisfied with lack of information and communication.

Most firm's **appraisal systems** need to be reviewed and updated and taken much more seriously and clarity is certainly needed for performance delivery against job specifications but also enhancements through the year. It needs to cover the essential personality profiles. The appraisee should complete a submission ahead of the face to face and ratings should come out of the sessions and then signed off by the management team for balance and commitments to a planned and budgeted development and training programme – or even job changes. The idea is to enhance performance to the business needs – so can cover time management, IT usage, motivation, client and other staff communication.

Diversity and Equality now has a major effect on staff motivation and morale and firms need to have a clear policy in place. It goes in line with the right approach **social conscience and community awareness**. This is being enhance recently with ESG and B Corp certifications. Increasingly important for staff retention (and clients) but with the right brands and profile – **best law firm to work for and best client relationship** – really does need a policy and strategy. This can be topped up with the people with the right profile internally – being the interfaces to the right profile's client and colleague – covering communication skills, intellectual skills, management and motivation. The idea is to avoid clashes and demonstrate



understanding of issues and empathy.

Another significant assessment that is needed and staff trained and developed is client relationships and communication, and that applies to everyone in the firm. We do not want to hear “the solicitor was great but everyone was so rude in the reception area – I am not going back” Assessments and plans are available from third party experts.

Summary

It is essential that every firm has in place a great belief in the existing staff and performance to meet strategy and business priorities. It requires policies, procedures, communication. It requires decisions made on the resourcing of skills and capacity. Good staff management and motivation. The right image and brand will then aid profile with the customer and new client targets and switched on staff will remain, develop skills and commitments and be very attractive to potential recruits.

Some potential contributors to delivery

- widerthinking.com
- www.your2050.org
- www.weekly10.com
- [Quest for excellence UK Ltd](http://Questforexcellence.co.uk)
- thinkbrandnotbland.co.uk

Bill Kirby is a director of professionalchoiceconsultancy.com offering advice to firms on business issue from strategy, planning, business development, the effective use of IT applications and IT hosting for compliance, business continuity and DR. He can be contacted at billkirby@professionalchoiceconsultancy.com and [LinkedIn](#)

News

Joint V letter to the LSB

The Joint V Law Societies (Birmingham, Bristol, Leeds, Liverpool and Manchester) have submitted a letter to the LSB, which can be found [here](#) .

The letter addresses two key issues:

a) Review of the SRA's role in relation to Axiom Ince Ltd; and

b) The potential call on the profession for contributions to the SRA Compensation Fund.

This was also covered in The Law Society Gazette [here](#) .

60 Legal Ombudsman Update

By **Jason Chapman**, Ombudsman, LeO



Our approach to offers made at first tier

When a consumer first brings a complaint to us, one of the first things we do is to establish whether the service provider has made an offer to resolve it during their own complaints procedure.

If this is the case, and we think the service provider's offer is reasonable in the circumstances and remains open for acceptance – or indeed has already been accepted by the client – then we wouldn't investigate the complaint. We can make this decision under 5.7 (c) of our Scheme Rules, which sets out that we can dismiss a complaint where we consider that the service provider has offered a fair and reasonable remedy if it remains open for acceptance.

But what is a reasonable offer? Our approach, when things have gone wrong, is to put the complainant back in the position that they would have been in had the service been reasonable, insofar as we are able to do so.

Our advice to service providers is to take the same approach when dealing with complaints where things have gone wrong. Try and put things right – perhaps offer a refund or discount off the costs billed to the client, or offer a reasonable sum to compensate them for any upset, frustration or inconvenience caused.

“

Our advice to service providers is to take the same approach when dealing with complaints where things have gone wrong

So how do we determine whether the offer is reasonable or not? We look at the complaints raised and consider what we would direct to put matters right if we were to uphold them – and then compare that to what the service provider has offered to the client. It is important to note that at this stage, we don't ask for or review any evidence.

To form our view, we first list anything that could be considered a detriment, taking into account any detriment the complainant themselves has said they've experienced. We then consider what an appropriate remedy would be if we upheld the complaint in exactly those terms. And then we turn to what the service provider has done or offered, and compare it to what we would award in the circumstances.



If the service provider's offer is in line with or more than what we would have directed if all complaints were upheld, we are likely to dismiss the complaint.

Quite often, the appropriate remedy would be a payment of compensation. Service providers sometimes ask us how much they'd need to pay for us to decide that the offer was reasonable. This will of course depend on the individual circumstances. Our approach to remedies is set out in 'Our approach to putting things right', which can be found on our website www.legalombudsman.org.uk and which sets out our rationale when awarding compensation.

We have three levels of compensation – 'modest', which is between £50 and £250, 'significant' which is between £250 and £750, and 'exceptional' which is for sums over £750. We would make an award in the modest category where the impact was minor and short lived and no longer exists: for example, a failure to respond to a request for an update or a small delay in dealing with a matter. A significant award would be directed where the impact was serious but not permanent: for example, where the client has had to repeatedly chase the service provider for updates, or where the impact was exacerbated by poor complaints handling, or where the poor service took place over a long period but was then resolved.

We would only direct an award in our exceptional category in circumstances where we determined that the effects on the client had been serious and took place

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Service providers sometimes ask us how much they'd need to pay for us to decide that the offer was reasonable

over a long period, to the extent it had a serious impact on the client's wellbeing or life. For example, where there has been avoidable exposure to particularly stressful situations or financial liabilities.

As an ombudsman, I appreciate that it is sometimes difficult for a service provider to decide on what an appropriate remedy might be. We are here to help – and if you do investigate a complaint and find that things have gone wrong, and you want to take steps to put things right but aren't sure what this should look like, please contact our Technical Advice service at technical.advice@legalombudsman.org.uk [↗](#).

We can then provide advice about whether, in principle, we would consider the proposed offer to be reasonable, or suggest an alternative. We'll respond within five working days, so this shouldn't hold up your complaints handling process, and it may lead to the complaint resolving without our involvement.

Legal Costs Update



By **Nick McDonnell** (left) and **Colin Campbell** (right)

Here, in **Kain Knight Costs Lawyers'** regular monthly legal costs update, we focus on those cases which we believe are likely to have a practical relevance for its members. We welcome feedback and if there is an area, topic or case you would like us to address, please let us know.

The most important case this month by a mile is the judgment of the Court of Appeal in **Kenig v Thomson Snell & Passmore** [2024] EWCA Civ 15, the case being yet another involving the Solicitors Act 1974. If ever a reminder was needed of the words of Vos MR that *"I have no doubt that the 1974 Act is in urgent need of legislative attention"*, Kenig must be it. One reason for that is that the judgment draws heavily on a Victorian authority (*Re Brown* (1867) LR4 Eq 464 and even a decision given under King George III, *Hazard v Lane* (1817) 3 Mer 285! Surely in 2024, the profession should no longer need to be relying on authorities going back to the days of the horse and cart? In Kenig, the issues, in a nutshell, concern whether, and to what extent, it is open to a beneficiary of a will to challenge legal fees approved by an executor and charged by solicitors to the estate for administering it. This Court of Appeal decision concerns an interlocutory point as to whether the beneficiary is entitled to an order to have those legal fees assessed.

Upholding Master Brown's decision below, to order the detailed assessment of eight bills on an application by a beneficiary, the Court of Appeal found that he had been right to draw a distinction between s.71(1)

(which permits a person other than the party chargeable with the bill, to apply for an order for assessment) and s.71(3) (which enables "any person interested" such as a beneficiary, to obtain an order for assessment where an executor is liable to pay a bill).

That distinction had not been drawn by Sir Timothy Lloyd in *Tim Martin Interiors v Akin Gump* [2012] 2 Costs LR 325 and his assumption that there was none, had been wrong. It followed that the beneficiary could have bills of £54,410.99 assessed (against estimates given of £10,000 -£15,000). The importance of this result is that even if executors have approved the charges, they are still answerable to the beneficiary, as an "interested" person, since the larger the bill, the greater will be the sum by which any testamentary gift will be diminished. That is in contrast to s.70(1) under which the third party (such as a borrower under a mortgage or a tenant under a lease) cannot make any inroads into the fees charged if the party chargeable (such as a bank or landlord) has approved the solicitor's bill.

Next Part 36. In [Morton v Morton](#) [2023] EWHC 3223 (Ch), HHJ Halliwell declined to

award the offerors of a successful and effective Part 36 offer the benefits under CPR 36.17(4). The offer had been made at a very late stage of the proceedings, several months after judgment following trial, and on the eve of the taking of accounts. Moreover, it had related to the whole of the proceedings and not merely to the taking of the accounts and was plainly tactical. It followed that it would be unjust for the offeree to pay the additional benefits under the rule, so the Judge declined to allow them.

For a case illustrating the importance of who terminates the retainer as between the solicitor and client, in **Sellars v Simkins** [2023] EWHC 3296 (Costs), Master Gordon-Saker, gives interesting guidance. The client had terminated a Conditional Fee Agreement “lite” before the case had been concluded by a win (or loss) and gone elsewhere. That gave the solicitors a choice, to “twist”, in which case the firm’s charges would be limited to the costs recovered from the opponent on a win (there was no success fee), or to “stick”, and to claim their costs straightaway. The firm had done the latter, which meant that their fees were not restricted to the amount which might subsequently

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The most important case this month by a mile is the judgment of the Court of Appeal in **Kenig v Thomson Snell & Passmore** [2024] EWCA Civ 15

be recovered from a losing opponent. It followed that, subject to a s.70 Solicitors Act assessment of those costs on the indemnity basis, there was no cap on what the firm could charge its former client.

Finally, for a case on pre and post judgment interest where the relevant currency was euros, see **Phones 4U Ltd v EE Ltd and others** [2023] EWHC 3378 (Ch). Roth J held that the rate of interest applicable should be related to the currency in which the judgment was given, and that the appropriate rate for borrowing in euros should, accordingly, be the European Central Bank rate.

As always, these are a selection of the principal recent cases which are likely to be of use to practitioners and if any further information is required, please contact either Nick McDonnell or Colin Campbell at Nick.McDonnell@kain-knight.co.uk or Colin.Campbell@kain-knight.co.uk

The Solicitors' Charity partners with Pennysmart, the Money Advice Specialists, for Solicitors in Need

- The Solicitors' Charity is now able to offer more support to solicitors struggling with low income, financial hardship or problem debt.
- Clients can get access to free budgeting, benefits and regulated debt advice.
- On-going support with achieving financial goals now offered through dedicated caseworkers.

The Solicitors' Charity is pleased to announce a significant expansion in its support initiatives for solicitors with the introduction of an impactful partnership with [Pennysmart](#) .

This collaboration extends the charity's current offering, giving solicitors the unique advantage of ongoing expert caseworker support from Pennysmart. This represents a substantial enhancement in the charity's ability to provide tailored and continuous assistance, ensuring solicitors have a dedicated resource to effectively manage their finances over the long term.

Pennysmart provides free-to-client, impartial, confidential money, and debt advice either by telephone and/or digitally, dependent on the client's needs.

In addition to its new financial support partnership, The Solicitors' Charity continues to provide a multifaceted range of support, addressing various aspects of solicitors' well-being, professional development, and personal challenges.

The Solicitors' Charity's CEO, Nick Gallagher said: "I'm pleased to be able to provide solicitors with an additional level of support through Pennysmart. This collaboration will serve as a lifeline for numerous solicitors



The Solicitors' Charity CEO, Nick Gallagher

seeking financial guidance, offering them the tools to regain control of their finances. Pennysmart is not only offering expertise on a range of financial topics, it is also providing one to one support to assist clients in achieving their money management goals. Implementing a plan can be easier when that support is in place and someone is in your corner."

This strategic partnership is great news for the legal profession, offering solicitors throughout England and Wales access to a comprehensive range of financial support and expert debt advice.

Jayne Bellis, CEO of Pennysmart, expressed enthusiasm about the collaboration with The Solicitors' Charity, stating: "We are delighted to partner with The Solicitors' Charity to extend our services to solicitors in need. Our advisory services aim to empower clients in achieving financial resilience by optimising income, minimising expenses, and navigating debt-related challenges through access to effective debt solutions."

If you, or a solicitor you know, needs support, get in touch with The Solicitors' Charity today. Find out more about the charity by visiting thesolicitorscharity.org .

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Pet of the month

Name: Carla Jones

Firm: Manchester Law Society

Pet Name: Bluebell

Pet Nickname: Bluebs, Bluebelly, BumCat, le Floof, Queen Bluebell, Furface and many more

What kind of pet do you have? A super fluffy black cat

Is your pet Male/Female: Female

How old is your pet: 7ish

Favourite Toy: My hand, any toy with treats in it or the "jumping bean" a furry toy on a string with added ribbons that is hunted, bitten and dragged away to a suitable hiding place. Failing that a tinfoil ball or cardboard box are fascinating.

Favourite Activity: Hide and seek, ideally in a place she can attack unsuspecting ankles. Or eating treats.

Favourite Treat: Spider plant, lick-e-lix, Dreamies or really anything she can get her hands (paws/mouth) on!

What would your pet say, if they could speak, to the following -

My perfect day would be... having the whole bed to myself without those pesky humans who join me at night, having treats brought to me at regular intervals, watching the birds out the window, maybe a bit of play time in the bath with my jug of water and a good game of jumping beans before more sleeping.

My favourite thing my parents do... bring me treats, especially if they do it on time and I don't have to go to the effort of mithering them. I sometimes like it when they pick me up and give me a cuddle and it is occasionally agreeable to be combed if I'm in the mood.

Is your pet the perfect poser? Whether you have a cute cat, delightful dog, fabulous fish, gorgeous guinea pig, happy horse, brilliant bird, smart spider, luscious lizard - you get the picture - whatever animal you own we want to see and hear about them!

Each month we'll pick a couple of 'Pets of the Month' for the next edition so keep a look out to see if your pet has made it, modelling in *The Messenger* magazine!



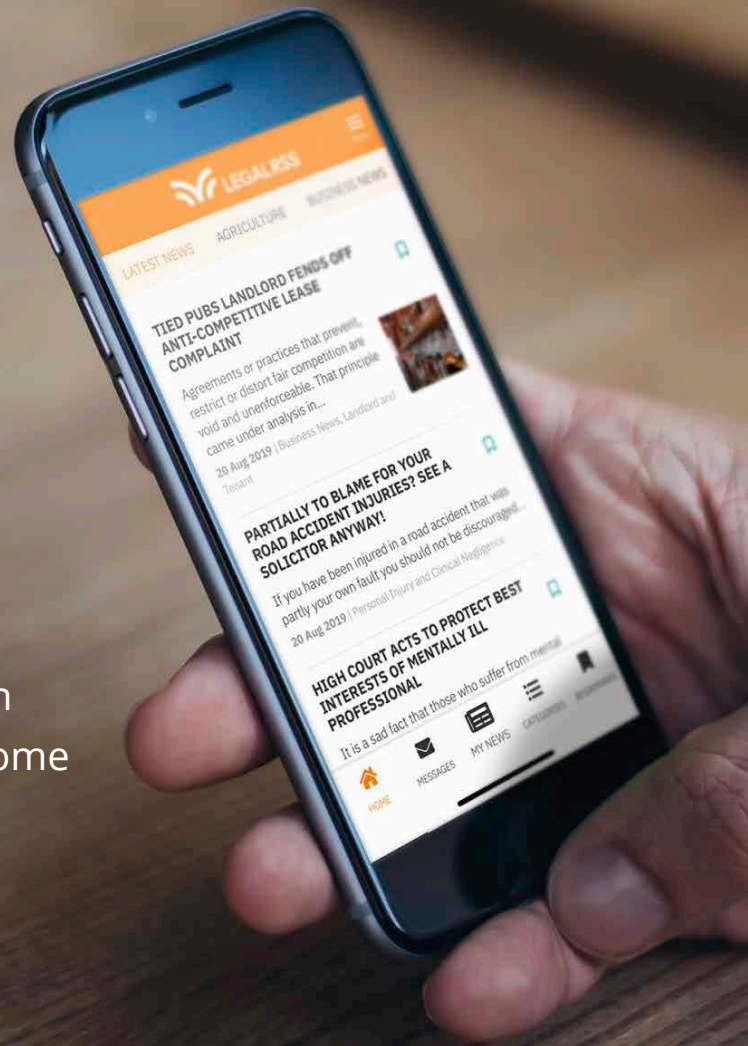
You can download a copy of the questions [here](#) then send your answers and photo to Messenger@manchesterlawsociety.org.uk

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