



# the Messenger

March 2024

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David Anderson  
takes a look at  
the MLS archive



## Manchester Legal Awards 2024 OPEN!

It's that time of year again! **The Manchester Legal Awards** [↗](#) are back and open for entries.



The awards, now in their 15th year, recognise and celebrate the best legal talent from across the region. Categories cover all areas of law with individuals, teams, firms and chambers of all sizes encouraged to enter. With 21 awards there really is something for everyone!

After a comprehensive judging process the Manchester Legal Awards culminates in a fantastic Awards ceremony at the prestigious Midland Hotel on 6th June. The best and brightest of the Manchester legal sector gather to honour the achievements of their colleagues and peers.

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# MIL AWARDS 2024

# GET YOUR ENTRIES IN!

Thursday 6th June 2024 at The Midland Hotel

For more information:

[www.manchesterlegalawards.co.uk](http://www.manchesterlegalawards.co.uk) @MLAwards

Event host



Manchester Law Society  
Instituted 1838 Incorporated 1871

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# From the President

David Anderson, President

[The Manchester Legal Awards](#) are open for entries! The awards celebrate all that is great about Manchester's legal profession, with categories for every aspect of our diverse profession. The roster of past winners is a who's who of the local (and national) legal community and the event is attended by representatives of almost every firm and chambers in the city.

Taking place on the evening of June the 6th, it has become an unmissable event in the calendar. That is truly the case for me this year, because although St John's Buildings will not be entering the Chambers of the Year category (SJB competing for the award that I normally write and am interviewed for doesn't seem appropriate in my presidential year, particularly when the city is so blessed with exceptional barristers and chambers who do not have such conflicts), I will be on the stage welcoming winners and introducing the Lifetime Achievement Award winner. I am already looking forward to what is sure to be a fantastic event. Visit the awards website and be sure to enter and buy tickets early – it sells out every year!

Life as the President of MLS is not all awards dinners. On January the 26th, I joined a group of business leaders to have lunch (not dinner) with Lucy Powell MP, the Shadow Leader of the House of Commons. This was a chance to begin gentle lobbying on the importance of a thriving local and national legal profession, not just for the rule of law in England and Wales, but also for future international trade and relations. I am looking for an opportunity to do the same with Ms Powell's Conservative counterparts.

“

The awards celebrate all that is great about Manchester's legal profession.”

The lobbying continued when, on Thursday the 8th of February, I travelled to Leeds for the Joint V meeting, hosted by Leeds Law Society. At that meeting we were able to represent the views of local lawyers to the Vice President of the Law Society and to ensure that the concerns we share with Birmingham, Bristol, Leeds and Liverpool law societies are heard and understood. Those concerns include the Axiom Ince saga, SRA fining powers, court delays, next steps in the criminal fees judicial review and CILEX regulation. As a group we are able to debate issues, reach an agreed position and lobby on behalf of members. It is an excellent example of professional collaboration.

In between those two events I attended MLS towers (see article further in this edition about the new office!) to be presented with a gift hamper to thank MLS for our excellent fundraising for We Love Manchester, having raised more than £12k during 2023 and into 2024. My predecessor, Nick Johnson, selected the charity as his charity of the year and I chose to follow his lead having seen their excellent work for Manchester's most vulnerable young people.

On the agenda in the coming days is lunch with the leader of Manchester City Council, the Women in Criminal Law dinner, judging the Birmingham Legal Awards and our AI conference with the Master of the Rolls.

# the Messenger



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### Manchester Law Society

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## Communications Committee

**Fran Eccles-Bech**  
Manchester Law Society

**Carla Jones**  
Manchester Law Society

**Chandre May**  
Manchester Law Society

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St John's Buildings

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April 2024 edition  
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# Upcoming events

6 March 2024

Civil Litigation Committee Meeting

6 March 2024

Communications 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

15 March 2024

Manchester Legal Awards Entry Deadline

19 March 2024

MLS Officers Meeting

20 March 2024

Private Client Committee 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

Manchester Legal Awards Shortlist Announced

19 April 2024

Messenger Deadline

29 April 2024

Membership & Social Committee Meeting

30 April 2024

MLS Officers Meeting

1 May 2024

Communications Committee Meeting

2 May 2024

Employment Law Forum Meeting

10 May 2024

Manchester Legal Awards Judging Day

14 May 2024

MLS Council Meeting

21 May 2024

MLS Officers Meeting

22 May 2024

Private Client Committee 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



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- 26 June 2024  
Regulatory Conference
- 2 July 2024  
MLS Council Meeting
- 3 July 2024  
Communications Committee Meeting
- 4 July 2024  
Employment Law Forum Meeting
- 12 July 2024  
"It's Not The Euros!" MLS Football  
Tournament in aid of We Love MCR Charity
- 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 in aid of Out  
Together
- 04 September 2024  
Communications Committee Meeting
- 10 September 2024  
MLS Council Meeting
- 11 September 2024  
Civil Litigation Committee Meeting
- 18 September 2024  
Private Client 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
- 20 November 2024  
Private Client Committee 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



CLICK FOR MORE INFO

**21ST MARCH 2024**

etiCloud  
INVITES YOU TO...

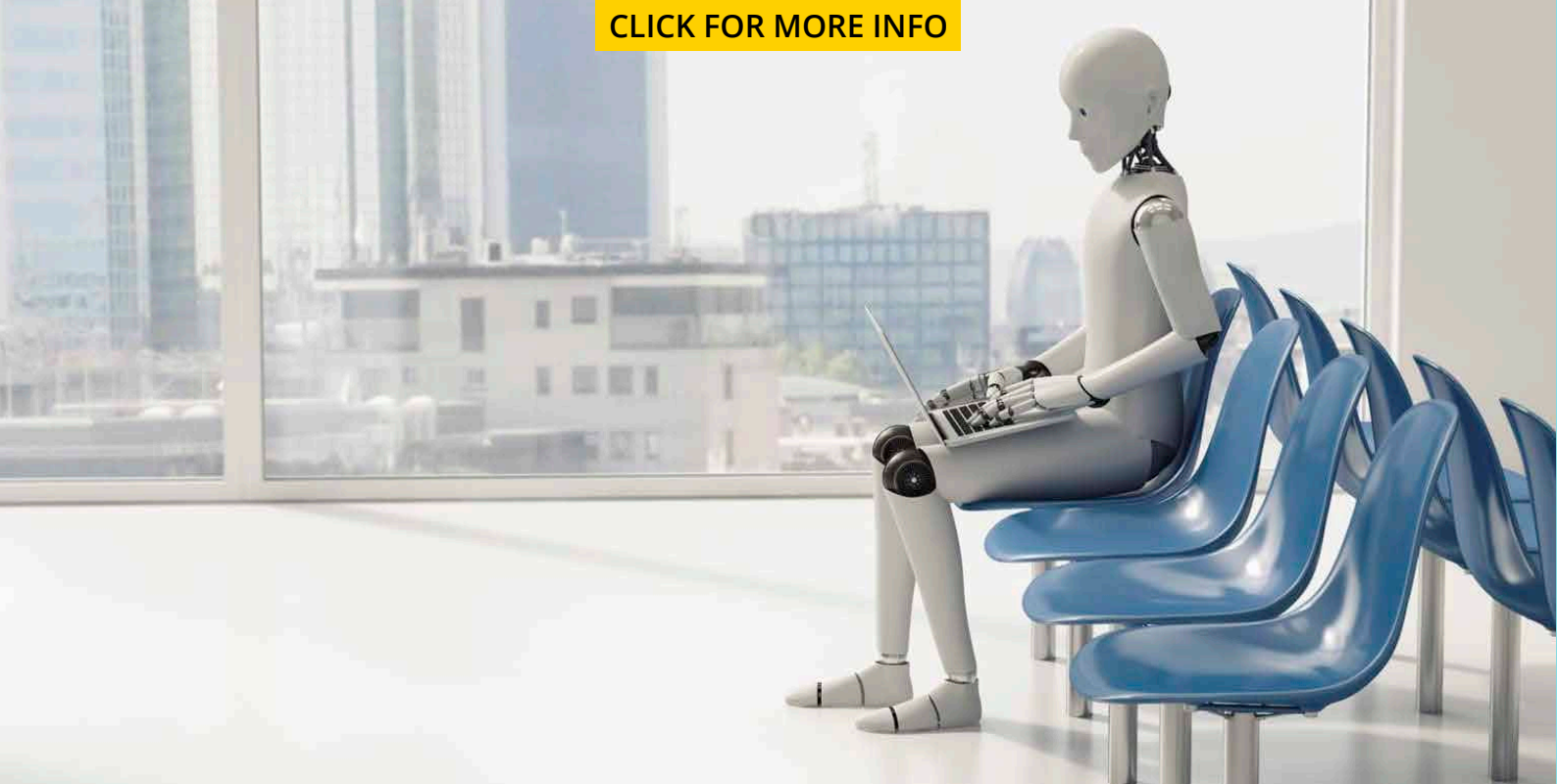
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# AI CONFERENCE 2024

## TRANSFORMING THE LEGAL LANDSCAPE

WITH KEYNOTE SPEAKER THE RIGHT HON,  
THE MASTER OF THE ROLLS, SIR GEOFFREY VOS

8 MARCH 2024

09:30 - 16:00 followed by a networking drinks reception  
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)

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# henchman



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.

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.

**09:30 Registration & Refreshments**

**10:00 Conference Chair's address:**

**AI – Now & in the future**

James Akrigg, Conference Chair

**10:30 Panel Session:**

**AI – a threat or an opportunity? The pitfalls and possibilities...**

Dan Morton, JMW

Shaun Jardine, Big Yellow Penguin

Professor Nadia Papamichail, University of Manchester

Kerrie Machin, Mitigo

And our special guest Panellist – Chat GPT

**11:30 Refreshment break**

**12:00 Plenary Session:**

**AI – in practice**

Tom Rice, Legal Director, TravelPerk

**12:30 Networking lunch**

**13:30 Plenary Session:**

**AI – a vendor perspective**

Justin Borja, Head of Partnerships, Henchman

**14:00 Panel Session:**

**AI – Ethics, regulation and risk: how will it impact lawyers, their firms and their clients?**

Pepin Aslett, St John's Buildings

Steve Kuncewicz, Glaisyers ETL

Dr Joseph Lee, University of Manchester

Ed Boal, ShieldPay

And our special guest Panellist – Chat GPT

**14:45 Refreshments**

**15:05 Keynote Speech:**

**AI – Transforming the work of lawyers and judges**

The Rt Hon, the Master of the Rolls, Sir Geoffrey Vos

**15:50 Closing comments and conference round up**

James Akrigg, Conference Chair

**16:00 Networking drinks reception**

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[Click here to book](#)



## Lyon lawyers links strengthened

**Manchester Law Society's twinning arrangement with the Lyon Bar goes back some 30 years, and, despite Brexit, the relationship remains as strong as ever.**

The Lyon Bar Rentrée is a biennial event marking the Opening of the Legal Year in Lyon and 'swearing in' those lawyers who have qualified in the preceding two years. It's a wonderful, glitzy three-day event, and we at Manchester Law Society were honoured to be invited again to attend.

David Joseph and I attended on behalf of Manchester Law Society, having built up a relationship with our colleagues in Lyon over the course of a decade. This visit held a particular appeal, as it would be our first trip for four years, the 2021 event having been, effectively, cancelled due to Covid.

Our hosts made us extremely welcome, as always. The event began with a welcome reception for all of the international guests, including those from Philadelphia, Lodz, Turin, Frankfurt and Ghent.

The next day began with a half-day conference discussing the different, and changing, ways in which lawyers in the various jurisdictions are qualifying. It became clear that the differences are actually quite stark, with some countries requiring lawyers to study for a lot longer than UK lawyers do, whereas other countries do less academic study and more 'on the job' training. A number of people showed particular interest when David and I explained about the solicitor apprentice route and the SQE.





The other theme of the conference was AI – clearly a subject which is high on the agenda of lawyers of all countries, although it's fair to say that the overriding view was that at the moment not enough is known about it to understand how much of a threat (or indeed an opportunity) it presents.

We then had an excellent lunch at the Franco-British International Business Association. A Christmas quiz also took place, although I'm embarrassed to report that the 'lawyers' table' did not perform well – I blame the jet lag [*Errr... it's a 1-hour time difference!* – Ed].

The formal opening of the Lyon Bar's Legal Year took place in the afternoon, and then in the evening the main party, the centrepiece of the social programme, took place. This was a wonderful event, at which over 600 people attended, including the mayor of Lyon and senior members of the local judiciary. The setting was the Lyon City Hall, a magnificent 17th-century building containing a beautiful, sweeping staircase leading up to a series of ornate, stunning rooms. Even our hosts excelled themselves at this event, with exquisite food and drink to go with the excellent company.

“

The Lyon Bar Rentre is a biennial event marking the Opening of the Legal Year in Lyon and 'swearing in' those lawyers who have qualified in the preceding two years

The next morning, despite feeling somewhat fragile, we went on an organised tour of one of Lyon's most modern museums and then had a farewell lunch on a boat (unfortunately, due to the unusually high river levels, the boat had to stay anchored!).

At the end of our visit, we all reflected that it had strengthened considerably the links between the Manchester and Lyon legal centres. Needless to say, Brexit was never far from people's thoughts, but, as one of our hosts said, good friendship knows no borders.

**Jeff Lewis**  
**Brabners LLP**

## Consultation: Introducing Fees in the Employment Tribunals and the Employment Appeal Tribunal

The government is proposing to reintroduce fees for employment tribunal claims, nearly 7 years after the Supreme Court quashed the previous charging regime; ruling it to be unlawful. The proposals are for a £55 fee to issue any claim at an ET or EAT and there

would be no separate hearing fee. They have said this would help fund the Tribunal Service, incentivise parties to settle and encourage better engagement in Acas early conciliation. The [consultation](#) closes on 25 March 2024

# The Bench Beckons: Empowering solicitors on the road to the judiciary

– a panel discussion, Manchester 13.03.24

The Law Society of England and Wales, in collaboration with Manchester Law Society and The Northern Circuit welcome you to attend our **free** event **'Empowering solicitors on the Road to the Judiciary – a panel discussion'** on **Wednesday 13 March, 6pm-8:30pm** at **Manchester Hall, 36 Bridge Street, Manchester, M3 3BT**.

Join an all-Judge panel from diverse backgrounds as they share their views on the extent to which the modern judiciary is 'representative', and the barriers and challenges to change in our system, particularly for black and minority ethnic aspiring Judges.

We would encourage all members of the solicitor profession considering judicial

appointment to attend. This is an excellent opportunity to develop your knowledge of the judicial application process; understand what makes a successful application; get advice on encouraging greater diversity in applications and network with your peers, aspiring judges and sitting judges from your area.

You will also receive further information about the Law Society's [Solicitor Judges Network](#) [↗](#), who support aspiring and current solicitor judges and the [Pre-Application Judicial Education programme](#) [↗](#), a joint initiative that helps lawyers from under-represented groups who are interested in becoming a judge feel more confident and about applying to, and preparing for, the process.

**Date and time** Wednesday 13 March, 6:00pm – 8:30pm

**Location** In person at Manchester Hall, 36 Bridge Street, Manchester, M3 3BT

**RSVP** Register to attend [here](#) [↗](#)

**Agenda**

6:00pm – 6:30pm	Arrival and registration
6:30pm – 7:45pm	Panel discussion
7:45pm – 8:30pm	Networking

**Please note this free in-person event has limited spaces available. Please register to attend as soon as you can to avoid disappointment.**

Should you have any questions please get in touch at [MEDiary@lawsociety.org.uk](mailto:MEDiary@lawsociety.org.uk) [↗](#)



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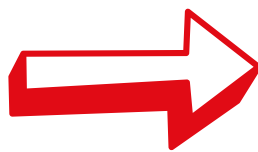
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Manchester Law Society

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# 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



## “Cheer up” suggests Bev Craig

It was a pleasure to attend a lunch hosted by Manchester Law Society on 15th February where Manchester City Council Leader, **Bev Craig** addressed members, partners, and friends of the Society.

Bev explained that the Council have recently spent time engaging with children and young people in the City and asking them directly what they want, with a key message received in response being that the younger generation want us all to “cheer up” and be more positive about the future.

Bev outlined her vision and optimism for Manchester whilst also highlighting the various challenges faced by the city and its residents, particularly the shocking statistics around the number of young people living in poverty. The cost-of-living crisis continues to present a huge challenge, but there are plans in progress to upskill residents to help with future growth.

The overall growth trajectory is positive and ambitions to meet net zero targets, build a mix of affordable and higher end housing and generally to make the city a more attractive place to work, live and visit were all well received by the audience. To attract external investment the Council have also been taking “brand Manchester” into the international arena, where it is good to know that the City has an external image of stability even in the current environment of social and political uncertainty.

Current focus is around economic growth and Bev highlighted how important young people are to the future success of the city. It was good to hear that around 50 % of students who study in Manchester are





choosing to stay. However, the Pandemic negatively impacted the labour market and many 16–18-year-olds coming into the workforce are having to take very low paid work as the opportunities which were available to them pre-Pandemic are currently taken by older workers and a skills gap is making matters worse. A more inclusive approach is needed around all this, with employers being encouraged to pay a real living wage and to ensure recruitment from a diversity of postcode areas.

MLS CEO Fran Eccles-Bech asked what businesses could do collaborate and to help young people to achieve the necessary skills which Bev had outlined. It seems that the Council are setting up a brokerage system whereby Council staff will communicate with the City's businesses to suggest how they can best assist, so we can look forward to hearing more about this soon. Bev explained that it is vital to balance the aspirations of the City's youngsters against the expectations of their parents and communities and schools might therefore

be the best places for businesses to hold these types of discussions.

The Society's new President David Anderson asked about the priorities for Manchester and whilst there are many, housing was raised again and particularly the need to obtain central government backing for regeneration schemes such as Victoria North, plus a general acceleration of building projects. Perhaps the biggest message to communicate is that the city needs to ensure it works across and with national government departments to achieve the best for its regional growth.

Thanks must be given to the staff at Manchester Hall for providing us with such a magnificent venue and a wonderful lunch.

Keep your eye peeled for further events in this series!

**Julie Mogan**  
**Partner & Regional Director**  
**Excello Law**









# Menopause and minority groups

When you are out and about, have a good look around, you will be reminded of how visually diverse women are in terms of their appearance, shape, size, age, and ethnicity. This is before we even get too imperceptible differences such as disability, sexuality, and neurodiversity. But there is a common experience that links all of us at some point in our lives and that is.... the menopause!

What's more if you look carefully at articles on menopause in the UK mainstream media or you google menopause and look at the images returned, menopausal women are typically represented visually as "middle-aged, middle class and white". Yet menopause is experienced by black,

white, and Asian women, irrespective of whether they are married, single, straight or a member of the LGBTQ+ community. Furthermore, it can affect women of any age, it ignores socio-economic status, whether you are employed, un-employed or can't work due to chronic health conditions or disabilities. Menopause truly doesn't discriminate!

Women account for 51% of the UK population, yet we still seem to have sub-groups of women who are not able to access (for whatever reason) the increasingly wide range of support that has become available over the last five years or so. This is clearly seen in research carried out on behalf of the Fawcett Society in 2022 in their report on menopause in the workplace. The research identified that 15% of the women surveyed who were taking HRT were white, whereas only 8% of non-white women were actually taking HRT. Additionally, the NHS Business Services Authority released statical data in July 2022 highlighting that "areas of greater deprivation had the lowest numbers of identified patients who were being prescribed HRT". This was one damning statistic amongst a number when it came to which women find it easiest to access appropriate medical support for their menopause struggles. Obviously these findings don't provide any indication of the numbers of women who are accessing private menopause support either through workplace EAP's, company medical insurance or who have personally paid to see a private menopause GP.

Women of different ethnicities do have variances in their biological and hormonal changes in addition to diverse perceptions

Lisa Wright



and attitudes towards menopause. Cultural factors can also determine a women's approach to her menopause as well as any support she may seek during this time. So, for example the average age of menopause in Caucasian women is 51yrs, for Afro-Caribbean women it is 49.6yrs, for South-East Asian's it's 49.7yrs and for South Asian women (so Indian, Pakistani, and Bangladeshi) its 46.7yrs.

There are also reported differences in the most impactful symptoms that women experience. Caucasian and Afro-Caribbean women often report that they struggle most with vasomotor symptoms (hot flushes, night sweats). Whereas South-East Asian women refer to joint and muscle pains, along with memory issues as being the most bothersome of symptoms they experience. Having recently been involved in some menopause awareness training in Singapore I can testify first hand as to the vastly different level of women's knowledge, understanding and willingness to be open about their menopause struggles across a number of South-East Asian nationalities. Therefore, we really should not underestimate the role of cultural norms and beliefs when it comes to what different ethnic groups of women are prepared to discuss or share when it comes to their menopause experiences. This is despite such women potentially having been born and raised in the UK to first generation parents.

As a member of the LGBT+ community I have experienced for myself the assumption of sexuality when dealing with medical professionals on a number of occasions. I stopped taking it personally many years ago and my way of dealing with it was to be "brutally frank" when asked questions regarding female health issues. However, for many others it can be an embarrassing

situation they find themselves in if the medical professional has made assumptions about their sexuality and perhaps worse still, their gender identity based upon their appearance. There is also a significant lack of research into the menopause experiences of lesbians, trans and non-binary individuals.

We should also not ignore those women who go through a premature menopause, so where menopause occurs naturally before the age of 40 or those who go into menopause as a result of either surgery or as a result of treatment for a medical condition. There are support groups out there for women who may experience menopause prematurely or as a result of surgical intervention or medical issues but it's usually down to the not-for-profit organisations associated with the medical condition (e.g., endometriosis UK) to cover menopause as one part of their information and support offering. Raising the awareness in both women and men that any woman irrespective of her age could be struggling with menopause symptoms as is one of the aspects that I focus on when I deliver my training. I feel passionately about dispelling the perception that menopause is a "white middle-aged woman" thing and I want all groups of women to have appropriate representation and support in this area.

If your organisation is undertaking menopause awareness then I would recommend that your sessions include information for team members who may be in a minority group and do get in touch if this was something you would like to explore further with myself.

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



# The importance of effective supervision

Many people contact LawCare for support as they lack suitable support and effective supervision at work. Hybrid and remote working can make supervision seem more difficult, and many people working in the legal sector have contacted us feeling disconnected from work, their teams and their manager.

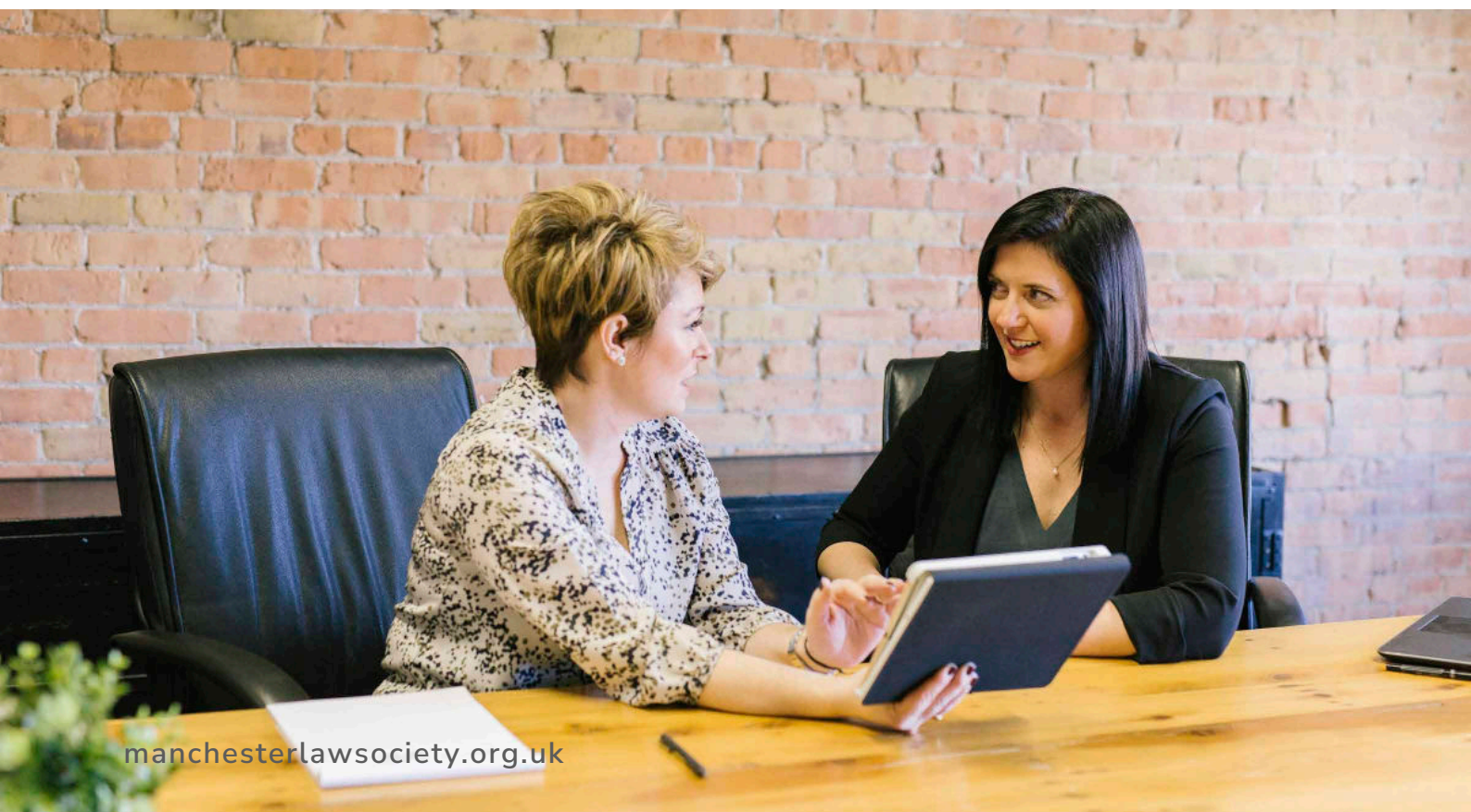
This has been a real issue for junior lawyers and those in training, who have felt particularly isolated and have often felt unable to ask for help on a work or personal issue. The good news is that implementing an effective supervision process is fairly straightforward and can have a hugely positive impact on the culture in a legal workplace.

## What do we mean by supervision?

There are two areas of supervision that are essential. One is an effective line management process, with people having

someone to talk to about their workload and any concerns they have, but also about how they are personally. It's an opportunity for managers to see how someone really is, to offer feedback and praise where warranted, advice on a tricky issue and it also provides a space for lawyers to flag any problems. It's not about being told what to do or being told what you're doing badly, it's an opportunity to share, normalise feelings, strengthen a working relationship and build trust.

In our Life in the Law research into legal workplaces wellbeing we discovered that of a wide range of workplace measures available to support mental wellbeing, from private health insurance to mental health training, regular catch-ups or appraisals were reported to be the most commonly available and also the most helpful. A recurring theme was also simply the desire to be 'heard' and listened to. Having these in place helped to bolster confidence in





personal development and reduce anxiety. It also helps to create psychological safety, an environment where someone can raise a concern, admit a mistake, ask a question, or ask for help, without the fear of negative repercussions.

The effectiveness of regular catch-ups can be improved by ensuring that supervisors and line managers have the skills to effectively undertake their supervisory/managerial roles. This can be achieved through adequate management training. Our Life in the Law research found that less than half of participants who indicated they worked in a position of management or supervisory capacity said they had received leadership, management, or supervisory training. Where training had been provided, 89.4% said it was helpful or very helpful.

The other type of supervision that is needed is with a trained supervisor, counsellor, or psychotherapist, not as a short-term intervention to help with a mental health issue but as a regular opportunity to offload some of the emotional baggage that comes with the law. Allowing some space and time within the working week or month to reflect on their own practice, to share experiences and to learn techniques to cope with the emotional impact of the work.

Everyone working in the legal sector who is regularly in contact with a vulnerable or emotive client group needs a chance to process how those emotions impact on them. The lawyer-client relationship can be complex as lawyers are often working with people at an emotionally difficult and stressful time in their lives when they are facing a loss of liberty, employment, relationships or reputation, managing a death in the family, or selling or buying a house. People working in the legal sector often absorb that emotion, and this can affect you unless you are trained to

recognise and understand these emotions and their impact.

Supervision in this context is about someone taking care of you so that you can do your job to the best of your ability and meet the expectations of your clients and colleagues. You can talk to someone who is really listening, about what is going on with your work and help you get a handle on things. Talking can reflect back to you what is going on and help you identify the different options available to you. Sometimes in the law we can have an invisible armour that we wear, and an image that we have to portray. Supervision is about letting that go and having a safe space to be you.

### **Invest in the process**

It is vital that legal workplaces take supervision seriously and invest in it appropriately. Organisations may need additional support or training in order to provide adequate supervision. They may need to engage the services of a third party such as a counsellor for people working in emotionally difficult areas of law. There should also be adequate time built in for managers to supervise effectively, so it is not overlooked.

In any legal organisation the people are the greatest asset, and to protect those people from burnout, to create a healthy culture, to ensure retention and success, investing in supervision is key.

LawCare provides free and confidential emotional support, peer support and information for anyone working in the legal sector. If you need support call us on 0800 279 6888, email [support@lawcare.org.uk](mailto:support@lawcare.org.uk) or go to [www.lawcare.org.uk](http://www.lawcare.org.uk).

*We understand life in the law.*

# How safe does your team feel?

Carla has worked in the Family team for 2 years. Carla is happy in the team and gets along with everyone, well, nearly everyone. Her relationship with her own line manager; Martin, can sometimes be a difficult one.

Martin is an excellent Solicitor, admired by everyone in the Firm. He has a good team, with a good team spirit, most of the time.

Whilst Carla feels a sense of belonging, her relationship with Martin means she doesn't feel 100% psychologically safe.

From time to time, she feels she struggles in certain areas of her role and needs training or coaching. She can't ask Martin. She's tried in the past and he's either ignored her request or simply made her feel inferior when she explained what she needs.

Meetings are another issue. Martin is a strong character and always takes the lead in meetings. He asks for opinions but very rarely listens. Carla has spoken up a few times but has been shot down and made to feel stupid.

Carla is one of the more senior members of the team and has ideas and opinions on how the Family team could be improved. She has spoken to Martin about this but again, her opinions were brushed to one side. As a result, she no longer challenges Martin on how the team operates.

Basically, Carla doesn't feel psychologically safe in her team. Martin thinks she does, but she doesn't. Carla isn't ticking any of the 4 levels of psychological safety below:

## Stage 1: Inclusion Safety

Inclusion safety satisfies the basic human

need to **connect and belong**. She feels part of the team with her fellow colleagues, but not 100% with Martin.

## Stage 2: Learner Safety

Learner safety satisfies the basic human need to **learn and grow**. Carla is struggling in some aspects of her role but feels she can't ask for help from Martin.

## Stage 3: Contributor safety

Contributor safety satisfies the basic human need to **contribute and make a difference**. Carla has tried to speak up in meetings but has been shot down by Martin in the past so now keeps quiet.

## Stage 4: Challenger Safety

Challenger safety satisfies the basic human need to **make things better**. It's the support and confidence we need to ask questions such as, "Why do we do it this way?" "What if we tried this?" or "May I suggest a better way?". She's tried this one too, but to no avail!

The consequences of this are that Carla feel shackled and isn't feeling totally safe at work.

How safe does your team feel? Are they ticking all 4 stages? Why not ask them in your next meeting. You never know, you might be like Martin and not even know it!

If you want a chat about how we can help your management/leadership skills, contact Mike on [mike@potentialunearthed.co.uk](mailto:mike@potentialunearthed.co.uk) [Tel 07825301660](tel:07825301660)





# Manchester City Council Vacancy

Senior Lawyer (Housing) (ID:2921)

## About The Role

Working Hours: 35 hours per week

Contract Type: Permanent, Full Time

Closing Date: 21 February 2024

## This role is subject to -

- Qualification – Qualified solicitor, barrister, Chartered Lawyer or Fellow of the Institute of Legal Executives holding a current practising certificate.

The successful candidate will work as part of the Housing Legal Team.

The Housing Team has conduct of a varied caseload arising from the management of the Council's housing stock, anti social behaviour in the community and legal challenges to homelessness decisions. The caseload includes:

- Injunction Applications (including urgent without notice Applications)
- Possession Claims
- Closure Order Applications
- Applications for Committal, including on arrest
- Statutory Appeals and judicial review arising from homelessness decisions.
- Advice relating to succession, assignment and mutual exchange.

## About the Candidate

We are looking for an enthusiastic and hard-working lawyer wishing to use their legal expertise and advocacy experience to work in our busy Housing and Neighbourhood Nuisance Legal team.

You will need to have the ability to conduct proceedings and act as an advocate in the County Court and Magistrates' court dealing with most aspects of social housing law, including ASB injunction Applications, Claims for Possession, Estate management issues, Applications for Closure Orders and Homelessness.

The successful candidate will also be required to provide high level, high quality, legal advice, deliver training and act as a legal adviser to Council departments and other providers of social housing".

*Please note:* The successful candidate will be required to be on standby out of hours duty- Monday to Friday for phone calls and Saturday to cover arrests, on a rota basis (usually every six weeks but flexibility is required)

For further information and to apply, please visit: [jobs.manchester.gov.uk/vacancies/2921/senior-lawyer-housing.html](https://jobs.manchester.gov.uk/vacancies/2921/senior-lawyer-housing.html) 



MANCHESTER  
CITY COUNCIL

# 28 Regulation Update & News

By **Andrea Cohen**, Compli, Weightmans



Once again, 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.

## **SRA guidance on sanctions compliance**

Following the April 2023 sanctions questionnaire, the SRA has written to more than 1,000 firms who do not act in matters within scope of the Money Laundering Regulations (MLR), who had responded to the survey to say they did not have or were not aware of a written firm-wide risk assessment (FWRA), or the process for identifying an ultimate beneficial owner. The SRA said that, based on the responses, it identified a large number of firms that had indicated they had poor controls in place.

The letters include guidance on complying with the sanctions regime, completing firm-wide sanctions risk assessments, and on client identification and screening. The firms written to were also provided with a template for the risk assessments, based on the R18 MLR template it has produced for firms acting in matters within scope of the MLR.

The SRA warns that it will be testing compliance via on-site inspections and a programme of desk-based reviews to test a sample of these firms' controls later this year.

Questions have been raised whether such steps are appropriate for firms outside scope of MLR. While the sanctions regime is applicable to all types of work and breach of

it is strict liability, and it is correct that the SRA advises/warns firms of the obligation to comply, for those firms not acting within scope of MLR, CDD procedures (over and above the need to identify who they are acting for) are not required and there is no requirement for a FWRA. Firms should consider their level of risk in relation to sanctions breaches and may determine that e.g. sanctions screening may be appropriate or additional CDD measures, and consider the correct approach based on the type of work and clients. A record of those considerations and decisions should be kept and reviewed, rather than completing the lengthy, and, depending on the type of work, client etc. largely irrelevant SRA template.

The Compli team is also on hand to aid you in this respect, so please do get in touch if we can help you.

## **Changes to the UK sanctions list**

Staying with the topic of sanctions, more changes have been made to the UK sanctions list, including, as at the date of writing: 8 new designations under the Iran sanctions regime; 6 new designations under the Counter-Terrorism (International) sanctions regime; 4 new designations under the Yemen sanctions regime; 4 new designations under the Myanmar sanctions regime; 4 new designations under the Global Human Rights sanctions regime; 1 new designation under the Cyber sanctions



regime, three variations to the Russian sanctions regime and one to the Libya sanctions regime. As always, the advice is to keep a careful eye on the list, run regular checks, and if you don't already do so, sign up for HM Treasury updates.

### Changes to the high-risk third countries (HRTCs) list

The list of HRTCs is no longer located in Schedule 3ZA of the MLRs 2017, which has been deleted. Firms now need to check for themselves whether a jurisdiction is a HRTC on the Financial Action Task Force (FATF) website.

Regulation 33(3)(a) now defines HRTCs as 'a country named on either of the following lists published by (FATF) as they have effect from time to time:

- High-risk jurisdictions subject to a call for action;
- jurisdictions under increased monitoring.'

The list is subject to change up to three times per year, following FATF's Plenary sessions each February, June and October. Firms should diarise these dates as they appear on the FATF [events page](#) and check whether the HRTC list has changed following each FATF plenary.

### Economic Crime and Corporate Transparency Act 2023 (ECCTA) - update

As we have reported previously, having received Royal Assent on 26 October 2023, the wide ranging changes are being

introduced over time, some requiring secondary legislation, additional funding, further guidance by the Secretary of State etc.

The changes in relation to entity liability for fraud, where a senior manager commits a 'relevant offence' (more limited than economic crime, but includes fraud, theft, cheating the public revenue etc). acting within scope of authority, came into force on 26 December 2023. This could lead to some concerns that a rogue partner or director in a firm could create criminal liability for the practice which may result in a loss of authorisation.

Companies House, in a blog on gov.uk, confirmed that it was aiming to introduce the first set of changes on (but no earlier than) 4 March 2024, including:

- greater powers to query information and request supporting evidence
- stronger checks on company names
- new rules for registered office addresses
- a requirement for all companies to supply a registered email address
- a requirement for all companies to confirm they're forming the company for a lawful purpose when they incorporate, and to confirm its intended future activities will be lawful on their confirmation statement

Continued on page 30





- the ability to annotate the register when information appears confusing or misleading
- taking steps to clean up the register, using data matching to identify and remove inaccurate information
- sharing data with other government departments and law enforcement agencies
- Its policy and operational arrangements for identifying and managing or mitigating risks, including how to reduce the risk that something goes wrong at a regulated law firm that causes harm to clients in light of the increasing number of SRA interventions. To do this, the SRA will look at how it identifies risks in the sector, monitors and approves firms, and the rules and controls around holding client money;

### Post Office Horizon IT scandal: SRA investigation update

In light of the recent significant interest in the Post Office Horizon Scandal and the resumption of hearings at the ongoing statutory public inquiry, [the SRA has published an update on its investigation](#), following on from its October 2022 statement.

The SRA confirms that it has a number of live cases regarding solicitors and law firms who worked on behalf of the Post Office/Royal Mail Group and it is currently gathering information and evidence. The investigation covers 'multiple, multifaceted issues where there may have been potential misconduct'. SRA Chief Executive Paul Philip makes clear that the SRA will take action where solicitors have been found to have behaved unethically, and that those solicitors should 'expect serious consequences'.

### Launch of review of consumer protection in light of sector risks

The SRA has launched its 'Protecting the public: our consumer protection review' with a deadline for submissions of 1 July 2024.

The review focuses on two main areas:

- Compensation fund arrangements in light of the risks identified. In this regard, the SRA will review how to strike a balance between appropriate protections for clients, while making sure its approach does not increase the cost of legal services by too much, e.g. using a cap, or considering if there is a case for reducing the maximum pay out.

Over the next few months the SRA will be meeting with a range of solicitors and representative groups, as well as with consumers and representatives, and looking at the approach of other regulators and sectors.

### SRA considers CILEX regulation

While CILEX's consultation found its members were generally positive about the proposal to move its regulation to the SRA, Anna Bradley, Chair of the SRA Board, commented that some responses to the SRA's consultation raised concerns about dilution of the solicitor brand and consumer confusion.

The Board nevertheless agreed that it remains interested in regulating CILEX members, but further work needs to be done before final decisions can be taken, including e.g. the need to develop and consult on arrangements to regulate CILEX paralegals and students, and the need to



The SRA will take action where solicitors have been found to have behaved unethically, and that those solicitors should ‘expect serious consequences.’”

consider how best to deliver the consumer benefits of regulatory simplification and avoid potential consumer confusion.

### New practice notes and guidance

The SRA and The Law Society have each published one new piece of guidance since our last update.

- SRA: Sanctions regime – firm-wide risk assessments: guidance
- The Law Society: Building Safety Act 2022: a guide for conveyancers

### Disciplinary and regulatory decisions:

There has once again been a large number of decisions reported since our last update. Notable decisions include:

#### Fine for telling client to pay solicitor personally

A decision by the SRA to enter into a regulatory settlement, resulting in a fine rather than referral to the SDT, with a solicitor who told a client to pay fees to his personal account has led to discussion on LinkedIn with questions being raised about the consistency of SRA decisions.

The solicitor received over £14000 over two years and told the client he would only continue to act if payment of a further £12000 was made before the final hearing.

There was no engagement letter and no bills from the firm. The client complained to the firm which repaid the fees plus compensation. The final hearing had to be adjourned so that she could find alternative representation.

The SRA fined the solicitor £10,402, stating in the reasons why a fine was appropriate that: the admitted misconduct was serious; demonstrated a disregard for regulatory obligations and lack of integrity and caused harm to the client, but took into account that ‘this was an isolated incident’ and he admitted he ‘made an error’. It concluded that a fine was appropriate as ‘the admitted conduct was serious but not so serious that sanction by the Tribunal is necessary or proportionate in order to maintain professional standards and to uphold confidence in the solicitors profession.’ As a result of the Agreement, the decision to refer to the SDT was overturned.

#### Fines for AML failures

A firm has been fined £23,216 for various AML failures, including failure to have in place a firm-wide risk assessment (FWRA), policies, controls, and procedures (PCPs), and client and matter risk assessments. The firm agreed to pay costs of £1,350.

Three firms have been fined between £3,000 and £11,000 each for failure to have

Continued on page 32



in place a FWRA and adequate PCPs. One firm was fined £9,750 for the same, along with further failings in relation to adequate client and matter risk assessments on 19 client files.

A solicitor who was his firm's MLRO and COLP was fined £14,099.76 and ordered to pay costs of £1,350 after it was found that his firm did not have in place a FWRA and the risk assessments had not been updated since 2003.

### **£1,500 fine for failure to notify of material change**

A firm has been fined £1,500 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. The amount of the fine was increased after the firm continued to breach this requirement following the issuing of the standard £750 fine.

### **Fines for breaches of accounts rules**

A solicitor, who was also his firm's COLP, COFA and MLRO, has been fined £9,000 and ordered to pay costs of £1,350 for accounts failures including permitting cash shortages to arise and allowing improper transfers from the client account to the office account.

A firm has been fined £986 and ordered to pay costs of £600 for allowing and/or failing to prevent its client account being used to provide a banking facility.

A second firm has been fined £5,899 for holding residual client balances totalling just over £500,000 and dating from as far back as 1995.

### **Two firms fined for breaches of the Transparency Rules**

Two more firms have been fined £750 and directed to pay costs of £150 for failure to publish the information required by the SRA Transparency Rules.

### **Further fines issued for drunk driving**

Two solicitors have each been fined just over £4,000 for driving over the limit and causing damage to property.

A third solicitor has been fined £13,836 for driving when over the limit. This follows the recent trend of large fines being issued by the SRA for drunk driving, which has been heavily criticised by commentators.

### **Rebuke for Facebook posts**

A solicitor has been rebuked and ordered to pay costs of £600 in relation to four posts published on his Facebook account between 2016 and 2018 which were deemed offensive, inappropriate and/or discriminatory.

### **Solicitor suspended for jury internet research**

A solicitor who was previously given a custodial sentence for conducting an internet search while serving on a jury has been suspended from practice for eight years. The SDT acknowledged that there was extensive mitigation but felt that it would not be appropriate to allow her to return to practice before her 10-year disqualification from jury service came to an end. She was ordered to pay costs of £5,000.

### **Solicitor struck off for making false representations about the progress of a case**

A solicitor has been struck off the roll for failing to progress his client's claim and dishonestly making false representations as



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A solicitor who was previously given a custodial sentence for conducting an internet search while serving on a jury has been suspended from practice for eight years”

to the progress of the case to the client, his opponent in litigation and to the client's son (who took over conduct of the case). He was ordered to pay costs of just under £10,000.

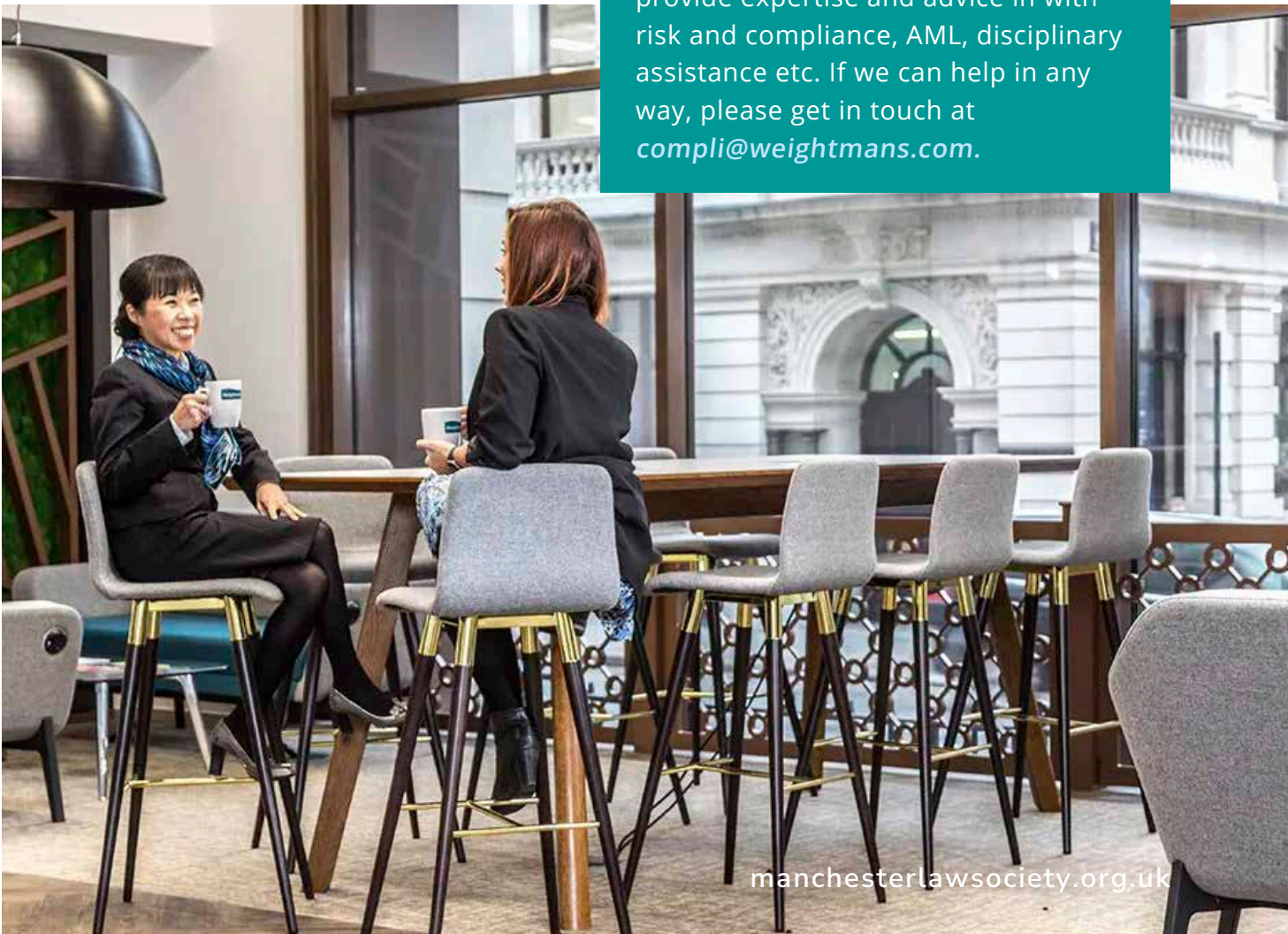
### **Solicitor struck off for misleading firm about loans and referral agreements**

A solicitor has been struck off for various wrongdoings, including: stating he did not have any personal or financial relationships with any clients of the firm, when in fact he received four loans from clients totalling

£630,000; giving an undertaking to a third party to pay funds to them without the consent of the client, and falsely declaring that he had not entered into any referral or introducer arrangements without prior COLP approval. He was ordered to pay costs of just under £30,000.

### **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](mailto:compli@weightmans.com).



Continued from page 1

## Manchester Legal Awards 2024 OPEN! (continued)



Don't miss the band who join us at the end of the presentations to carry on the celebrations into the early hours. And don't book anything too important for the next day...

### Dates to note:

- Deadline for entries 15th March
- Shortlist announced 19th April
- Judging day 10th May
- Awards ceremony 6th June

All entries, with the exception of Lifetime Achievement, will be assessed against four criteria by a panel of judges from the legal and business community.

### The awards are free to enter and there are 21 categories:

- CSR Champions of the Year
- Equality, Diversity and Inclusion Champions of the Year
- Health & Wellbeing Champions of the Year
- Trainee/Paralegal/Apprentice of the Year
- Solicitor of the Year
- Corporate/Commercial Team of the Year
- Crime Team of the Year
- Employment Team of the Year
- Family Team of the Year
- Litigation Team of the Year
- Personal Injury/Clinical Negligence Team of the Year
- Private Client Team of the Year
- Property Team of the Year
- Regulatory Team of the Year
- Barristers' Chambers of the Year
- Barrister of the Year
- Partner of the Year
- Small Law Firm of the Year (1-5 partners nationally)
- Medium Law Firm of the Year (6-20 partners nationally)
- Large Law Firm of the Year (20+ partners nationally)
- Lifetime Achievement






## How are the Manchester Legal Awards judged?

A panel of judges made up of professionals and business leaders will assess all entries against four criteria and award up to 10 marks for each. There is one exception to this, the Lifetime Achievement Award.

Once all marks are totalled, a shortlist will be announced on Friday 19th April 2024 and finalists interviewed by a panel of judges on Friday 10th May 2024.


The Lifetime Achievement nominations will be considered and voted on by the Manchester Law Society Council.

## Sounds like a great night – how do I get tickets?

Tickets are like gold dust; we sell out every year and have a waiting list of keen attendees! Request your places [here](#) .


Please note due to the popularity of the event shortlisted candidates and sponsors are given priority when booking. Make sure

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Tickets are like gold dust; we sell out every year and have a waiting list of keen attendees! Request your places [here](#) 

you get your entry in so you are more likely to be able to join us for the evening!

We will contact everyone who has requested tickets after the shortlist is released to confirm if we are able to honour your application.

For more information visit [www.manchesterlegalawards.co.uk](http://www.manchesterlegalawards.co.uk) and follow [@MLAwards](https://twitter.com/MLAwards) .

There are limited sponsorship and advertising opportunities available. Please contact [FranEccles-Bech@manchesterlawsociety.org.uk](mailto:FranEccles-Bech@manchesterlawsociety.org.uk)  for further information.





## Pearson Solicitors and Financial Advisers makes Milnrow acquisition as part of expansion plans

**Pearson Solicitors and Financial Advisers** [↗](#) has expanded with the recent acquisition of Sarah Dixon & Co Solicitors.

The growth is part of a strategic plan by the firm to move into new areas, develop its service offering into the Milnrow and wider Rochdale area, and bring good quality legal services to individuals and businesses.

Sarah Dixon is a well-respected and trusted local solicitor, and the move has been welcomed by her, and her team. Staff members will be retained, and Sarah will continue to work alongside the Pearson teams, some of whom will be based in Milnrow.

As well as strengthening and expanding the already existing Family Law and Private Client practice on offer at Sarah Dixon, the move will also bring conveyancing, personal injury, medical negligence, and employment law, as well as legal services for business, and financial services to the area.

Based in North Manchester and Saddleworth, this move by Pearson sees the firm now grow to five offices and over 80 staff.

“Taking over this established Milnrow firm is an honour, and we hope to continue the personal service and excellent client care Sarah has developed for her clients,” said Pearson Director, Joanne Ormston.

“Culturally it is a perfect fit for Pearson as we like to think we place the same emphasis on client satisfaction and will build on the solid foundations Sarah has built, whilst at the same time bringing other legal services into the area,” added Joanne.

“This is a significant move for Pearson and one which reflects our ambitious growth plans for 2024 and beyond.”

Commenting on the acquisition, Sarah added: “I have given this a great deal of thought as the business has been built up by me for many years and is personal to me. Pearson are a well-respected firm with generations of clients and traditions, but at the same time ready to take the business forward, and finding a firm with the same ethos as myself was a vital factor.

“I am pleased Pearson has taken on board my staff and are bringing a professional full-service law firm to the area, it’s a great fit and I am sure we have an exciting year ahead of us.”

Sarah Dixon and Co will now form part of the Pearson Solicitors and Financial Advisers firm led by Director Joanne Ormston, and other directors Christopher Burke and Richard Eastwood.



L-R Joanne Ormston and Sarah Dixon



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**Arrival**

3pm arrival

**Drinks, canapes, carnival games and  
entertainment**

3:30pm - 4:30pm

**Welcome speeches, highlights and  
achievements**

4:30pm - 5:00pm

**Entertainment  
and first birthday celebrations**

5:00pm - 7:00pm

**Event ends**

7:00pm

£70 per ticket.

To purchase yours, please contact Chloe Sweeney at [chloesweeney@fs.co.uk](mailto:chloesweeney@fs.co.uk)



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# Advances mean more award recognition for Bexley Beaumont

**Bexley Beaumont** [↗](#) has been recognised for another year of progress with a quartet of prestigious award nominations.

At the start of only its fifth year, the firm finds itself shortlisted in both the Law Firm of the Year and Business Growth categories at the Modern Law Awards, and in the running for the Innovative Law Firm of the Year title at the Legal 500 Northern Powerhouse Awards.

In addition, one of its trainee solicitors, Harry Jenkinson, was one of the final candidates for the Apprentice of the Year honour at the recent Made in Manchester Awards.

The awards' attention follows another hugely successful 12 months, during which Bexley Beaumont topped a ranking of the fastest growing top 200 law firms.

Chief Executive Karen Bexley has described the latest as an indication of the team spirit and contributions made by everyone within the firm.

She also outlined how Bexley Beaumont had launched further strategic initiatives to foster continued development.

"To have the firm shortlisted for its first national Law Firm of the Year award is incredibly exciting and a sign of the progress that we have made so relatively quickly.



Anna Beaumont and Karen Bexley





“We have been able to achieve that not just because we have some very talented individuals but because of the degree of collaboration between them and the team culture which we have managed to establish.

“Every single individual who has joined us is wholly committed to delivering quality work and our collective approach has been instrumental in moving the business forward to date and will be crucial during the rest of 2024 and beyond.

“We have no intention of resting on our laurels, however, and have introduced two new internal ventures - BBCollaborate and BBElevate - which will respectively encourage the cross-referral of work across different specialisms and help our lawyers enhance their individual practices.

“We believe that it all amounts to a recipe for future success and cannot wait to see what it brings.”

Bexley Beaumont is one of five firms vying to be named the Law Firm of the Year title at the Modern Law Awards.

The winner will be named at prize giving ceremony at London’s Hurlingham Club on March the seventh and must have demonstrated substantial progress over the course of the last 12 months in terms of “strategy, growth, financial performance, employee development, diversity and training”.

At the same event, Bexley Beaumont will find out whether it has triumphed from a shortlist of six firms in the Business Growth category.

The organisers have outlined how judges “are looking for a legal services business that has achieved exceptional growth”, while

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Bexley Beaumont is one of five firms vying to be named the Law Firm of the Year title at the Modern Law Awards

“at the same time delivering improvement in client service and profitability”.

If successful in that second category, it will mean that Bexley Beaumont regains a title which it previously won in 2022.

The firm is also chasing a second successive honour at the Northern Powerhouse Awards, which will be decided at the Royal Armouries Museum in Leeds on March the 13th.

Having been named as Boutique Law Firm of the Year in 2023’s edition of the Awards, Bexley Beaumont is among nine firms bidding to be named Innovative Law Firm of the Year this time around.

It follows Bexley Beaumont topping an independent ranking of the UK’s top 200 legal practices’ performance on recruitment during 2023.

Codex Edge concluded that whilst many large firms had struggled to attract talent, Bexley Beaumont had seen its partner ranks grow by 27 per cent year-on-year.

Over the last year, Bexley Beaumont appointed 21 partners across a breadth of specialisms and now has over 50 Partners and five Associate Solicitors.

Its most recent arrival was regulatory and health and safety Partner Emma Evans who joined last month.

## Student art auction organised for law firm's office anniversary tips charity fundraising over £3,600



A student art auction organised by law firm [Trowers & Hamlin's](#) to celebrate the 50th anniversary of its Manchester office has helped boost the total amount raised for local charity Lifeshare to more than £3,600.

The money was raised through the student art auction and a range of office fundraising activities, such as bake sales, raffles and a charity quiz.

Art students at The Manchester College were commissioned by Trowers & Hamlin's to produce six pieces of artwork that celebrate themes that are synonymous with Manchester, such as the cotton industry, Emmeline Pankhurst, graphene and notable regeneration projects.

Established in 1984, Lifeshare is a Manchester-based charity dedicated to helping the homeless and vulnerable across Greater Manchester by providing practical support and assistance to secure accommodation and access initiatives to help them carry their lives forward.

Suzanne Benson, Regional Managing Partner at Trowers & Hamlin's Manchester office, said: "We were really pleased to mark the

50th anniversary of our Manchester office by collaborating with art students at The Manchester College, whose names and work could very well be synonymous with Manchester in 50 years' time.

"Not only does the auction demonstrate to the students that their excellent work is commercially viable, but it was also a means of supporting a local charity that offers so much vital support to homeless people across Manchester. And this, on top of the generosity of colleagues in the office who have been involved in a raft of fundraising activities, means that we will be donating over £3,600 to Lifeshare.

"We are proud of our long-standing presence in Manchester and the part we have been able to play in supporting our clients' projects to transform the city and its surrounds during the last 50 years."

Judith Vickers, Operations Manager at Lifeshare, said: "Lifeshare has seen a huge increase in demand in 2023. We served 12,000 hot breakfasts this year at our respite service compared to 6,000 in 2022. This shows how vital the support is, but also places a great strain on our organisation to fund and deliver this project.



“Companies like Trowers & Hamblins getting behind us makes a world of difference at times like these. Not only have they raised funds, they have also volunteered their time with us so they truly understand the work we do and the wonderful guests we serve. It’s efforts like these that help us show our guests, who are some of the most vulnerable people in our city, that they are cared for and valued. We are incredibly grateful for the support we have received from Trowers & Hamblins thus far and we

look forward to continuing to partner with them in 2024.”

Since opening in 1973, Trowers & Hamblins’ Manchester office on Princess Street has grown to a team of over 150 people offering multiple areas of expertise, supporting clients in both public and private sectors, with a particular focus on real estate, construction, corporate, commercial disputes, employment and finance.

## Unit Chambers and Complete Counsel Collaborate to Elevate Client Experience

**Unit Chambers** [↗](#) is proud to announce a new partnership with Complete Counsel, a leading provider of back-office chambers support services, aimed at enhancing client satisfaction through improved support capabilities.

This collaboration, overseen by Lisa Edmunds, Head of Unit Chambers and Claire Labio, Practice Manager at Complete Counsel, signifies a joint effort between two North West-based businesses to address a gap in the market and meet the evolving needs of clients and barristers. Claire brings over 24 years of experience working within traditional chambers models and as a result, now recognises the importance of finding proactive solutions within the legal services landscape.

Unit Chambers welcomes this collaboration as a vital step towards their ongoing aim to strive for operational excellence and client satisfaction. As part of this initiative, two highly experienced professionals join the team: Helen Southworth, who has over 32 years of expertise as a Fees Clerk at St John’s Buildings and Emma Wall, with 18 years of experience as a family clerk at the same institution.

Lisa Edmunds, Head of Chambers at Unit, affirms the commitment to delivering unparalleled support and service excellence: “Our collaboration with Complete Counsel marks an exciting milestone in our commitment to delivering exceptional service and support to our clients. By joining forces, we aim to set new standards of excellence in the legal profession, particularly within family law, ensuring that our clients receive the best possible representation and care.”

Claire Labio, Director of Complete Counsel said, “We are delighted to have reached this agreement with Unit Chambers. It is an exciting step for both firms, driven by a desire to continue to provide the best clerking services in the sectors within which we operate. We have a shared vision of the 21st Century Bar. Unit Chambers will benefit from our comprehensive back-office support and the expertise of our clerks, as our current set of barristers continue to enjoy. I believe our combined efforts will drive further growth and deliver stronger client and sector offerings for both firms.”

Unit Chambers and Complete Counsel look forward to advancing together, maintaining the highest standards of representation and care for clients across the realm of family law.



## Law firm tells MPs a Public Inquiry into birth injuries is crucial following ‘surge’ in cases

Hudgell Solicitors, acting for mothers, children and families who have suffered as a result of birth injuries have told a parliamentary inquiry it is witnessing a “surge” in cases.

In a submission to the Westminster inquiry into the reasons behind an increasing number of birth trauma incidents across England, [Hudgell Solicitors](#) has told MPs the number of potential clients who believe their NHS maternity care was substandard continues to increase.

“The number of inquiries we received during 2020 / 2021 increased dramatically,” said [Maria Repanos](#), head of clinical negligence at the firm’s Manchester office.

“This sharp rise in inquiries has also, in turn, led to a surge in birth trauma cases that we have successfully settled during that period,” she added.

### ‘A Public Inquiry is imperative’


Hudgell Solicitors also told the All-Party Parliamentary Group (APPG) on birth trauma that a statutory Public Inquiry into England’s maternity services is now crucial.

“A Public Inquiry is more likely to bring about much-needed indelible change in this matter, which is clearly an issue of public concern,” said Ms Repanos.

“Through our work with clients, we firmly believe that the NHS’s failure to improve maternity safety is so startling that a public inquiry is imperative in order to ensure that women, babies and their families no longer come to any avoidable harm,” she added.

Hudgell Solicitors believes it is apparent from investigations already carried out, such as those undertaken by Donna Ockenden, that basic elements of safe care are not in place in a number of maternity units across England.

The APPG inquiry into birth trauma has been set up to investigate the causes of traumatic birth and to develop policy recommendations to reduce the rate of birth trauma. Research shows that:

A portrait of Maria Repanos, a woman with long brown hair, wearing a dark blue top. She is looking directly at the camera with a neutral expression.

Maria Repanos of Hudgell Solicitors’  
Medical Negligence Team



“

A solicitor who was previously given a custodial sentence for conducting an internet search while serving on a jury has been suspended from practice for eight years”

- 4 to 5% of women develop post-traumatic stress disorder (PTSD) after giving birth.
- This affects around 25,000 to 30,000 women every year in the UK.
- A much larger number – as many as one in three – find some aspects of their birth experience traumatic.
- 53% of women who experienced birth trauma are less likely to have children in the future.
- 84% of women who experienced tears during birth, did not receive enough information about birth injuries ahead of time.

### ‘Recommendations are not enough’

Maternity negligence incidents remain the highest costs of compensation claims against the NHS in England, in addition the Care Quality Commission (CQC) rates around one in four maternity services as either “inadequate” or “requires improvement”.

The birth trauma experiences of women, clients of Hudgell Solicitors, are also included in the firm’s submission to the APPG.

Many came forward wanting to share their stories as part of Hudgell’s campaign for meaningful change.

As one mother, who had an emergency hysterectomy “to save her life” just hours after giving birth, said:

“Recommendations are not enough, because recommendations for change are not evidence of change.”

These women’s experiences detail the significant impact that negligent birth trauma has had on their lives which has left them with physical and psychological injuries, disabilities and had long-term effects on family relationships and finances.

More than 20 women submitted their experiences, saying:

### Client A

“My little girl was stillborn. I was worried about my baby and I wasn’t listened to.

“I felt like I was treated as a pest. I had a condition which can be serious, but no one was concerned. We were that close to having Tilly and then we lost her, and it destroyed us.

“When I go to the cemetery and meet other families visiting their children’s graves, I hear similar stories just like mine.

“I would say to politicians that maternity services need proper staffing, and those staff need proper training, so more babies don’t die.”

Continued on page 44

### Client B

"My birth led to a hysterectomy. I think I will always suffer emotionally from what has happened.

"I received conflicting advice from different consultants about the method of my delivery.

"I have since been told in my birth report that I should have been taken for an emergency C-section because my birth was high risk.

"It took over a year for the report to be completed.

"The decision was made to remove my uterus to save my life. I did not hold my baby until 48 hours after the birth.

"I could not physically care for my baby independently because of my operation or take care of myself when I did come home.

"I was affected emotionally and spent many days and nights crying.

"I would like to see mothers of high-risk pregnancies under consultant care, and to see the same consultant every time."

“

We have supported many parents whose children have sadly been stillborn or died during the neonatal period due to failures of healthcare provision on maternity wards.”

### Client C

"I suffered a miscarriage when 19 years of age.

"I do feel as though I was not listened to when I was trying to say things were not right during my labour.

"I have experienced severe anxiety especially when pregnant with my second son.

"I was not offered any mental health support at all following the birth trauma I experienced, I felt I was made to feel like I was silly for even questioning or asking for support. I would like to see women listened to when they say how their body feels."

### 'Systemic issues within maternity services'

Hudgell Solicitors, which represents clients at The Post Office Horizon IT, the Manchester Arena and the Covid-19 Public Inquiries, believes maternity units must be properly resourced with safe staffing levels and vital training being provided to those working within them.

In order for this to be prioritised, maternity budgets need to increase to support these improvements.

"We have supported many parents whose children have sadly been stillborn or died during the neonatal period due to failures of healthcare provision on maternity wards. We are well versed in understanding these complex issues and we are hugely sympathetic to our resilient clients upon whose lives birth trauma has had a profound impact," said Ms Repanos.





“

“It is our hope that an inquiry dealing with maternity services would address widespread issues so that lessons are learned, and recommendations implemented resulting in significant improvements and positive change.”

“We therefore support the Maternity Safety Alliance’s position that individual national initiatives and policies, although useful, are insufficient to tackle systemic issues within maternity services.

“Upon the basis that the issues affecting maternity services appear to be systemic, a statutory Public Inquiry can create meaningful change so that families who have suffered can be at the heart of any significant decisions that are subsequently made.

“It is our hope that an inquiry dealing with maternity services would address widespread issues so that lessons are learned, and recommendations implemented resulting in significant improvements and positive change.”

### **The All-Party Parliamentary Group Inquiry**

The evidence the APPG gathers will form a policy report which will include recommendations for the UK Government and is due to be published in Spring 2024. The inquiry’s objectives are to:

Identify common features in maternity care (antenatally, during labour and birth, and postnatally) that contribute to birth trauma.

Highlight examples of good practice, both in the quality of maternity care and in providing support to women who have had traumatic birth experiences.

Look at the impact of birth trauma on women’s relationships, ability to bond with their baby and future decision-making (e.g. whether to have another baby, whether to return to work).

Find out whether current postnatal services to diagnose and treat women’s physical and mental health problems are up to scratch. This would include, for example, looking at whether severe obstetric tears are being diagnosed promptly, whether mental health problems are being identified at the six-to-eight-week check, and whether perinatal mental health teams are accepting and treating women within an appropriate time frame.

Develop parameters for understanding the possible economic cost of birth trauma, with a view to informing future research.

Influence government policy by identifying areas where maternity care could be improved to minimise birth trauma and by highlighting ways in which postnatal support can be optimised to meet women’s physical and psychological needs after traumatic birth.”



## Four new legal experts land at Alderstone Solicitors

**Alderstone Solicitors** [↗](#) has expanded its serious and catastrophic injury department by four as the practice looks to future growth.

The firm has appointed another three solicitors and an experienced paralegal to its specialist personal injury and clinical negligence team.

Avyna Walker, Polly Morgan, Joseph Fisher and Amelia Timpany join Alderstone Solicitors as it continues to expand and provide expert personal injury services to its growing client base.

Avyna Walker is a skilled solicitor with a wealth of experience handling and supervising employer's liability, public liability, occupier's liability, road traffic collisions and criminal injuries.

Polly Morgan has been a qualified solicitor for a year and Joseph Fisher joined Alderstone Solicitors as a newly qualified solicitor.

Polly trained with one of the country's largest law firms. She is a winner of The Leicestershire Law Society Prize and specialises in serious injury as well as clinical negligence.

Joseph built-up more than five years' experience within a dedicated personal injury and medical negligence practice before joining Alderstone Solicitors.

Amelia Timpany is a paralegal and comes to Alderstone Solicitors with nearly three years' experience within a UK Top 100 (The Lawyer) firm. She specialises personal injury claims and has already proven a talented asset to the firm.

Avyna, aged 33 and from Bolton, says: "I knew members of the department and they're professional, approachable, and put the client first, so it was a simply decision to work with them and to become part of the specialist team."

Joseph, aged 26 and from Wirral, says: "I joined Alderstone Solicitors to expand my knowledge having recently qualified as a solicitor. The firm has a wide variety of client's who have had their lives changed because of negligence. I wanted to join the team to help them."

Polly, aged 27 and originally from Surrey, says: "I was impressed by Alderstone Solicitor's empathetic and friendly team, the learning opportunities offered and flexible working, which allows us to work efficiently."

Amelia, aged 27 and from Wilmslow, says: "Working here is an opportunity to work alongside experienced solicitors on a varied caseload and on high value cases. I'm able to work directly with clients, which gives me valuable insight and the chance to gain vital, sought-after skills that are difficult to practise."



Avyna Walker, Amelia Timpany, Quentin Underhill, Polly Morgan and Joseph Fisher

Quentin Underhill, Partner, Director and Head of Serious and Catastrophic Injury at Alderstone Solicitors, says: "We hope that these four appointments will play a big part in the future of our firm. They are some of the best lawyers coming through from the next generation. We're committed to nurturing talent and providing a meaningful and fulfilling opportunity for our people to develop as lawyers."

"We're always looking for good solicitors and paralegals to join us. This year we are continuing to build a first-class specialist team for our clients and to secure the long-term vision for Alderstone Solicitors."

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.

## Two Kings Chambers barristers set to be appointed as King's Counsel

**Kings Chambers** [✉](#) has announced that two of its highly respected barristers are set to be appointed as King's Counsel.

Ruth Stockley and Eleanor Temple will officially be sworn in at a ceremony in London in March, taking the total number of KCs at Kings Chambers to 28.

This follows a rigorous process for selection in demonstrating outstanding ability and excellence in advocacy.

A member of the Planning team, Ruth specialises in all aspects of town and country planning, infrastructure, environmental law, compulsory purchase, highways, road traffic regulation, village greens and judicial review.

Widely respected as one of the leading authorities on highways in the UK, Ruth was called to the bar in 1988.

Eleanor Temple is an expert in commercial litigation for both domestic and international clients, with focus areas including insolvency, company law,



Ruth Stockley



Eleanor Temple

partnership actions, banking and finance, civil fraud and contract disputes. Taking the call in 2000, Eleanor serves as the chair of insolvency trade association R3 for the Yorkshire region and also regularly sits as a Civil Recorder on the North Eastern Circuit.

Andrew Singer KC, Head of Chambers, said: "Both Ruth and Eleanor are a credit to the profession and thoroughly deserve their appointments as KCs. The appointments rightly mark their respective expertise and excellence."

"We are delighted that Kings Chambers has two more KCs to add to its list of specialist leading counsel offering legal services of the highest calibre to our national and international client base."





## All Change in Bromleys' Dispute Resolution Team

As part of the growth since joining the MAPD Group, [Bromleys](#) are delighted to announce the appointment of Rachael Frankland as the new Head of the Dispute Resolution department.



L-R: Rachael Frankland and Saqib Kazam

Rachael joined Bromleys in 2012, initially as a paralegal and then as a trainee, and qualified in 2014. She has spent all of her time at Bromleys in the Dispute Resolution team, and has developed expertise in a range of areas, including employment, shareholder and partnership disputes, property and contractual disputes, personal injury and disputes involving individual's estates. She is equally adept at prosecuting or defending claims and takes pride in trying to seek early resolution to disputes before they reach a court or tribunal.

Rachael's appointment coincides with Mark Hirst stepping back to be a consultant after 17 years leading the team, and 10 years as managing partner. Speaking of her new leadership role, Rachael said: "I am honoured, delighted and excited by this

appointment. My team is expanding to deal with the increasing number of instructions coming in, and we are all committed to making a positive difference to our clients."

Paul Westwell, the Managing Partner at the Ashton under Lyne firm, said: "We are absolutely thrilled to promote Rachael. She is and has been since she joined us an absolute asset to the firm.

"With her extensive experience in dispute resolution and employment law, and her practical, pragmatic and commercial approach as well as her passion for helping all of our clients whether they are commercial clients or individuals, we know she will excel as the Team Leader. She has lots of ideas as to how to move the department further forward."

Bromleys are continuously going from strength to strength as they continue to grow. As well as Rachael's promotion, the firm has also hired assistant solicitor, Saqib Kazam, and paralegal Kismet Khaleeq, to support and work alongside Rachael. Saqib has considerable experience in disputes over contracts, property disputes, personal injury claims, settlement agreements, and personal insolvency.

Mr Westwell added: "Our team of legal experts will be able to deliver clear, concise legal advice, and that in turn will enable our clients to achieve the best possible outcome as quickly as possible. They all work closely together. To have the team expanding and growing is great news, both for the firm and for those seeking to use our comprehensive range of services. The expansion of this team is the first of several developments which are currently in the pipeline. It is an exciting time for both the Dispute Resolution team and the firm generally."

## New partners for Clarke Willmott's Manchester office

**Clarke Willmott LLP** [↗](#) has expanded with the appointment of two new starters for its property division.

Billy Poulter and Kevin Richardson both join as partners in the firm's leading commercial property team.

With a particular focus on housebuilding and real estate development, Billy brings a wealth of experience to the growing team, having worked for two other law firms as well as the Homes and Communities Agency (now Homes England).

Billy has advised developers/housebuilders, public sector and Registered Provider clients on acquisitions and sales of land for development purposes. He has particular experience in acting on development sites with a collaboration between the public and private sector.

Also joining Clarke Willmott is Partner Kevin Richardson, who further bolsters the firm's

commercial property team, having recently sold his own law firm.

Kevin specialises in all aspects of property law with experience working in-house for property developers and within property teams at several other law firms.

The appointments highlight the strength of the Manchester office's property offering which includes four well-respected senior partners with extensive experience across all aspects of commercial and residential property.

Ed Foulkes, head of Clarke Willmott's Manchester office, said: "We are excited about this double partner appointment for our fast-growing commercial property team in Manchester, which demonstrates the commitment we have to the sector.

"Both Billy and Kevin join with impressive credentials and we look forward to seeing them in action for our clients."



Billy Poulter



Kevin Richardson



## Hugh James welcomes Nina Roland with acquisition of The Roland Partnership

**Hugh James** [↗](#) is pleased to announce the completion of the acquisition of The Roland Partnership, welcoming founding partner **Nina Roland** [↗](#) to the firm.

Set up by Nina Roland in January 1997, with her brother Trevor Roland joining her two years later, the Chester-based serious injury and clinical negligence firm has an excellent reputation in the Northwest of England and is ranked for its expertise by the Legal 500 and Chambers guides to the UK's leading law firms.

As the two firms join forces, Trevor is set to retire following 24 years at the helm alongside co-managing partner Nina, who joins Hugh James' award-winning Manchester practice on a consultancy basis with immediate effect.

Nina brings decades of experience to the firm's top ranked serious injury and clinical negligence department. She is regarded as being at the very top of the profession with

a "Hall of Fame" ranking in the Legal 500.

The strategic partnership is an exciting venture for Hugh James, supporting the firm to further to grow its award-winning serious injury and clinical negligence practice in the Northwest of England. The move also sees fellow former Roland Partnership legal professionals relocating to the Manchester office alongside Nina – supporting a smooth transition for their clients.

Speaking of the acquisition, Head of the Individual Client Services Division at Hugh James, Stephen Webber, who oversees Hugh James' leading serious injury and clinical negligence departments, commented:

"The Roland Partnership is an excellent and well-run firm, with great expertise and a friendly culture that closely aligns with our own. We are delighted that Nina and her colleagues are joining us so that we can continue to provide the excellent service their clients have come to expect and look

## Hugh Jones Solicitors on New Year recruitment drive

**Specialist Court of Protection firm Hugh Jones Solicitors is recruiting for several new positions to cope with growing demand.**

The multi-award-winning practice is the UK's leading firm of independent Court of Protection solicitors in the country and was founded by Hugh Jones, a nationally recognised leader in the field with over 30 years of experience.

Hugh Jones Solicitors supports vulnerable people, particularly those with mental incapacity, their families, and their advisers. Experts also advise local authorities and other solicitor firms.

Legal vacancies include private client associate, Court of Protection executive, and residential conveyancing paralegal.



forward to working together to strengthen the work we do in the Northwest.

"I'd like to wish Trevor all the best as he steps down from his successful role at The Roland Partnership and express my gratitude for all the hard work both he and Nina have put in to make this transaction go so smoothly. I'm confident that their legacy and the clients are in good hands as we embark on the next chapter."

Nina Roland, now consultant at Hugh James, added: "I am thrilled to be joining such a prestigious and forward-thinking firm. I know our ethos of "client first" is mirrored in the way Hugh James conducts its cases, and having already met several of their team, it is clear that my colleagues from The Roland Partnership and I are going to very much enjoy working with them."

The news of the new partnership comes as the firm has established its brand in Manchester, unveiling the Hugh James name at the city's Commercial Street office in December 2023, one year following the

The firm is also growing its unique HR and employment team, which provides a full range of services and support for clients, their families, employed support workers, and personal assistants. In this department, available roles include HR manager, HR advisor and compliance assistant.

Speaking of the recruitment drive, managing director Liz Hughes said: "2024 has kicked off with a bang and with lots of new work in the pipeline, we're searching for more specialists to join our ever-growing team. We passionately believe that making Hugh Jones an enjoyable place to work is essential.




Nina Rowland and Stephen Webber

successful collaboration with serious injury firm Potter Rees Dolan.

Hugh James' Managing Partner, Alun Jones, commented: "We're proud of our growth strategy to date which has seen us partner with firms who share our values and culture. Adding The Roland Partnership to our award-winning and now UK-wide serious injury and clinical negligence departments, we believe the acquisition is a perfect strategic fit for us – continuing the excellent work we do for our clients and strengthening our presence across England and Wales."

"Our people are the driving force behind our success and future growth. As our headcount continues to rise, we're dedicated to supporting each of our colleagues to strike the right work/life balance, and hybrid working plays a major part in this. We look forward to hearing from prospective employees ready to take on a new challenge with the firm."

For more information on the vacancies, visit [www.hughjonessolicitors.co.uk/careers](http://www.hughjonessolicitors.co.uk/careers) 



## Homegrown talent the key as PCS doubles in size

**Private Client Solicitors** [✓](#) has revealed that a surge in casework has led to its staff numbers almost doubling in the course of the last year.

Despite only opening its doors at the start of 2022, the boutique firm has quickly become one of the country's leading specialists, advising some of the UK's most high-profile business owners and wealthiest individuals alike.

The arrivals of Associate Solicitor Jaima Mistry and Office Manager Atola Tamika-Fearon have taken the number of Private Client Solicitors' employees from 17 to 32.

Managing Partner Tasnim Khalid has described how the extra personnel have made an immediate impact, helped by a "significant investment" in technology to support the rising caseload.

She added, however, that the firm was determined to develop its own legal talent and not just make further progress due to external recruits.

"The last year has been truly remarkable, not just in terms of growth but the degree to which our good reputation has extended across the UK and overseas.

"That has meant clients seeking us out for assistance to deal with some of the most sensitive issues they're ever likely to encounter, such as estate planning, contentious probate or business succession.

"A further benefit, though, has been the fact that some of our legal peers at other firms recognise the quality of our work and want to join what is a very accomplished, vibrant team.

"We have not lost sight, however, of our desire to also help young lawyers develop their careers in keeping with the very high standards that we have set. Getting that balance right is an essential part of our future plans.

"Despite still being a relatively young firm, we have seen clear benefits of our decision to focus on really sharp and ambitious



L-R: Charlie Caine, Jaima Mistry, Atola Tamika-Fearon and Melissa Copple

individuals already paying off, giving us real strength in depth at all levels.”

Ms Khalid said that the “strategic” appointments made over the last year had enabled Private Client Solicitors to achieve its early objectives even faster than anticipated.

As well as Ms Khalid and her fellow partners, Paul Gotch and Nicola Walker, the firm has been able to attract a number of notable fee-earners, including Senior Associate Lucy Fairey and Associates Naomi Isherwood, Michelle Tonge and Jaima Mistry.

The recruitment of Mrs Tamika-Fearon - who brings many years of experience in the legal and financial services industries - adds to a burgeoning support staff which already boasts Client Relationship Director Ryan Lewis.

Its ranks include Melissa Copple, who was awarded Private Client Solicitor’s first training contract and Charlie Caine, the firm’s Junior Solicitor Apprentice.

Much of its workload is made up of complex probate work, business succession and estate planning but it has also quickly become recognised as the North West’s foremost authority on sharia-related private client law.

Even though its client list features many of the region’s wealthiest individuals and most notable entrepreneurs, its recent cases have extended across several different jurisdictions, including Spain, Hong Kong, the Middle East and North America.

Along with growth in its fee income and staff roster, Private Client Solicitors has cemented its place among the UK’s top practitioners over the last year.

“

The last year has been truly remarkable, not just in terms of growth but the degree to which our good reputation has extended across the UK and overseas.

Just weeks before being commended as one of the country’s best 250 law firms by The Times, the Legal 500 rankings identified it as boasting “leading advisers”.

As well as her legal capabilities, Legal 500 said that Ms Khalid was the “powerhouse behind this business and....an exceptional businesswoman”.

That followed Private Client Solicitors being placed in the top tier of Band One of the Chambers and Partners High Net Worth Guide for the second successive year.

Ms Khalid was among a handful of experts to achieve Chambers’ Band One status, while Mr Gotch and Ms Walker made up half of the lawyers in Band Three for Manchester and the surrounding area.

Chambers concluded that Private Client Solicitors’ service was “second to none” and has “a particular ability to handle diverse issues across the team on Shari’a law and international assets and estates”, with no client being “too big or too small”.

Ms Khalid was also named among a “new generation” of 100 female entrepreneurs listed by the *Daily Telegraph* and NatWest.



## Hat trick of heavyweight new appointments

**JMW** continues its programme of growth with a hat trick of heavyweight hires designed to both underpin and expand the firm's comprehensive legal offering.

John Burns joins as partner and Head of Brands in the Commercial team: he brings with him significant experience in non-contentious Intellectual Property matters and is widely regarded as one of the UK's leading legal experts in the brand licensing industry. He also works extensively in the sports world, including advising on high value sponsorship, and naming rights agreements, as well as acting for a wide range of franchisors and franchisees in relation to non-contentious matters.

David Easdown, partner in the Corporate team, has worked with many of the region's best-known businesses. He has particular focus on high growth, often technology-focused businesses and the funders of them. His client base is wide, and includes development capital funders, family offices, owner-managed businesses and David has expertise in advising management teams receiving private equity investment ahead of executing buy-and-build strategies.

Neil Armstrong comes to the firm as partner and Head of Construction. With a background in Mechanical Engineering he brings unparalleled insight and expertise to JMW's construction practice, his advisory scope spanning transactional and procurement arrangements, and engineering and development projects within the construction industry.

John said: "JMW is a truly entrepreneurial



firm and I am pleased to be joining such a successful Commercial team. I'm looking forward to working with the team and bringing new clients into the business."

David added: "I'm delighted to be part of a law firm with such a strong reputation for excellence and a genuine commitment to its chosen markets. In a sector as traditional and conservative as law, JMW's progressive, entrepreneurial approach and commitment to investment in both its people and its clients made the decision to move here an easy one."

Neil said: This is a unique and exciting opportunity to further develop the JMW Construction offering. There are many challenges facing the sector, but also numerous opportunities; the team's industry expertise and sound understanding of the sector means we deliver the highest level of legal advice to clients old and new."

Marc Yaffe, managing partner, said of the three new hires: "I am extremely pleased to welcome John, David and Neil. They bring with them the rare combination of expertise and human perspective that is the key to the success of JMW. I know they will make a significant contribution to our programme of strategic growth as well as further developing our reputation as one of the UK's leading full-service law firms."

# MYSG Annual Charity Quiz

MYSG's Charity Director, Maddy Langmead from JMW Solicitors, organised the now much-anticipated annual charity quiz which took place on 15 February at Revolution on Oxford Road. The quiz was in aid of raising funds for Wood Street Mission, MYSG's charity partner of the year. MYSG are delighted to continue to support the charity given the amazing work they do for underprivileged families across Greater Manchester.

Huge thanks are also due to BCL Legal who sponsored the quiz for a second year running – Maddy accidentally thanked them by incorrectly announcing they had come in bottom place to the whole room... BCL – sorry, if you're reading this! The wooden spoons were quickly gathered back up and it was agreed to never speak of it again.

The event once again sold out to 50 attendees and participants sat down with their welcome drink to break the ice by tackling a particularly tough round featuring famous fictional lawyers – everything from To Kill A Mockingbird's Atticus Finch to the lawyer in The Simpsons' fictional world of Springfield.

Maddy decided that for this year's theme she was going to try extra hard to annoy the general knowledge buffs who had carried out some high-brow preparation for the evening. She executed this by inserting rounds among the quiz such as "Cheese or Motorway Services?" and "Who Tweeted This?". It certainly isn't a quiz without some good old-fashioned mocking of celebrity.



The quiz ended with the top three teams having only 1.5 points between them – a fact made all the more tense after the controversial disallowing of concrete, cement, rubber and "the blue one" as answers for the type of surface on which tennis tournament The Australian Open is played. Turns out, golfers really don't know anything about other sports.

Raffle tickets were also sold to raise further funds for Wood Street Mission and special thanks go to Revolution, BCL Legal, Byrom Street Chambers and St John's Buildings for donating prizes. MYSG are so glad to have made several hundred pounds for Wood Street Mission on the evening and to have facilitated some networking among Manchester's legal community while doing so.

Watch this space for the forthcoming MYSG committee elections for 2024/25 as the end of the year with the current committee approaches!





# Ten Years (In)Justice: GM Law Centre collaborates on an exhibition to campaign for access to justice

In January and February 2024, Greater Manchester Law Centre (GMLC) curated a public exhibition showcasing the lack of access to free and affordable legal advice for large sections of the community. The original exhibition was hosted at Manchester Museum's Social Justice Hub and attracted over 200 people.

The exhibition focused on the experiences of people seeking access to justice in the 10 years after the Legal Aid, Sentencing and Punishment of Offenders (LASPO) Act 2012 came into force. GMLC commissioned 10 artists to produce original works of art

that capture ideas, emotions and thoughts about the legal system to be shown along the individual stories. Amongst the artists were individuals who had had their own experiences with the legal system, such as Jolanta Dolewska (work pictured).

The event was filmed and we screened the film including public reaction to the issues raised as well as the exhibition itself for anyone involved or interested in Access to Justice on Wednesday 21 February.

The aim of the events was to raise awareness of the importance and value of free legal advice, and to show the harm that can be caused by reducing access to justice for ordinary people – encouraging people to get stuck in campaigning for access to justice. Lawyers attending the event were encouraged to get involved with GMLC's pro bono network – you can contact us on [development@gmlaw.org.uk](mailto:development@gmlaw.org.uk) if you are interested in hearing more about this.

If you are interested in getting a copy of the brochure or seeing the film, please visit [www.gmlaw.org.uk](http://www.gmlaw.org.uk) .

We are delighted that the Manchester Museum's Social Justice Unit agreed to collaborate with us on the exhibition and the filming of the public reaction to the stories and art and would thank our headline sponsor Leigh Day for their support for this event. We also thank University of Manchester Justice Hub, Clyde & Co and Glaisyers solicitors for their financial support toward the cost of the exhibition.



Jolanta Dolewska's artwork 'Without Apparatus' on show at the exhibition at the Manchester Museum in January 2024.



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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?

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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.

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# Management Matters

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



## This Month

- **Law firm's initiative with key suppliers**
- **Resourcing alternatives**

## The future of the practice

Relevant to this month's article are two previous [November 2023](#) and [January 2024](#).

## Getting IT Suppliers to Support their Law Firm Clients

Since the November article where I challenged the behaviour of the three main groups of PMS/CMS suppliers there has been a great deal of communication about the commercial behaviour of some and the client relationship essential solutions delivery from all. There are of course also the possible new boys on the block who seem to be well considering added value.

One of the main challenges for client law firms is that missing is real clarity on the future developments of the acquired products – Continuing? Enhancements? Infrastructure and Added Value needs. There has been insufficient recognition of the current demands and essentials for law firm success and survival.

Some positive movement can now be recognised following dialogue, with two of the suppliers with more openness in terms of the necessary client communications plus more communication with added value suppliers that can immediately enhance the products with the right technology links. Areas like on boarding, secure client portals, client communication, MI and BI,

regulation and compliance. Plus of course IT infrastructure and security

## Law Firms demand a Face to Face with PMS/CMS Suppliers. Take the Initiative

I would like to see law firms take an initiative and seek a meeting with their account managers from the major suppliers supported by a senior manager with a responsibility for client support and awareness.

Firms have bought the software, paid for the conversion and implementation, paid annual maintenance for support and enhancements to meet business needs. So there is a reasonable expectation of being fully aware of the way forward.

The agenda should be

- What is the strategy and timescale for product enhancement and development
- How and when can we achieve the necessary added value priorities – supplier's delivery or supplier connectivity to added value
- What is the supplier's infrastructure solution – hosted current or cloud – if and when?
- What is the ideal size for the supplier's product – how will they cope with enhanced volumes – particularly with hosted/cloud



Firms, like it or not are having to deal with


- Strategy
- Realistic perpetual forecasting and recovery where necessary
  - Profitability
  - Cash Flow
- Adept management and decision making
  - The right MI & BI
  - Right team and individual objectives and performance
  - Keeping and motivating the right staff
  - Outsourcing balance
- Client communication and empathy
  - Status of live matters and next actions
  - Updating client needs (e.g. Wills)
- On boarding management
  - Speed and effectiveness – measurement of success
- Effective business development
  - Existing clients
  - New business priorities
- Regulation and compliance challenges
  - Right AML and workflow processes/ authorisation
  - Right forms and registrations
  - Pii insurance renewals and price
- IT strength and security
  - Reduction of e-mails
  - Secure portals

All of these items are affected by the availability of the right PMS/CMS products being used effectively. The challenges are there and it is reasonable for a law firm to ask the PMS/CMS supplier on the added value that is needed.

The meeting with the suppliers should not be regarded as an IT exercise and should involve accounts, line department managers, IT and the suppliers need to be challenged on how their solutions meet the needs of the business, where they are going forward and when and in the interim what third party interfaces and API can bring an immediate solution.

Any feedback will be well received.

### **Law Firm Resourcing**

In [February 2024](#)  I covered some major challenges and potential initiatives around resourcing – again what is becoming clearer for the response to this plus discussions with PMS/CMS suppliers and multiple law firms the need for the right consideration of outsourcing actions and tasks is growing massively.

Irrespective of size, shape -work types and geography all law firms cannot avoid the essential skills and resource volumes – the latter being more and more challenged by the very unpredictable market. We might know that if we sell Will updates to our current database, we are likely to get a 20% success rate – law firms please don't ignore this statistic – let alone selling LPAs to current Will owners.

**Continued on page 66**





“

For many years there have been outsourced suppliers of document production through transcription – it is still growing with time delays (no longer acceptable) and accuracy

Without doubt the potential outsourcing of activity and skills has to be on the agenda. We need to demonstrate to clients, skills, activity and at the same time ensure our bookkeeping is done, billing, financial management data, MI and BI (cash flow and profitability) along with the necessary compliance needs – failure is affecting many firms in terms of fines and PII renewal.

For many years there have been outsourced suppliers of document production through transcription – it is still growing with time delays (no longer acceptable) and accuracy. Global 24 x 7 supplies. There is a growth in legal skills resource needs as clients expect more from the team. There is a demand for actual case management support because of unpredictable levels of business and potential short term absences of staff. Big with Conveyancing. There are now opportunities to outsource database and new client business development, something that many lawyers are reticent about but available to do the work – technology through portals is a great new aid. The other big growing area is in managing the bookkeeping activities if there are skill or resource shortage with smaller firms (even bigger ones now) where you have to comply. Get your billing out, collect the money and provide the MI and BI for the firm to continue.



Irrespective of the size of the law firm because we operate in a commercial arena – profit and cash flow – but also have amazing

challenges with regulation and compliance, the need to plan and activate business development, ensure our IT is going to operate and be secure.

There are specialist businesses available, even some accountancy firms are becoming more proactive offering part time FDs, there is compliance consultancy available and even some specific consultants that can aid business development, IT workflows.

This is a massively growing new topic needed for all firms. Much could also be on the agenda with the PMS/CMS debate as there is an increasing need for them to collaborate with the third parties – bookkeeping/accounting, documents, on boarding, client communications.

Experience and feedback would be great.

Bill Kirby is a director of [professionalchoiceconsultancy.com](http://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](mailto:billkirby@professionalchoiceconsultancy.com)  and [LinkedIn](#) 

# We Love MCR Charity 2024 Event Calendar



We Love MCR are proud of our events track record over recent years, seeing incredible fundraising efforts and unforgettable moments!

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J  
A  
N

Thursday  
25th



## Sponsored Firewalk

- St. Ann's Square
- Mind-over-matter
- Team + individual fundraising opportunity

M  
A  
Y

Sunday  
26th



## Great MCR Run 10K + HM VIP Experience

- Cross-city route
- FREE tickets + facilities
- Team + individual fundraising opportunity

A  
U  
G

Friday  
9th



## Olympic Cycle Challenge

- National Cycling Centre
- Olympics 2024 fever!
- Team fundraising opportunity

Friday  
23rd



## Ghyll Head Trekking Challenge

- Lake District
- Stunning views
- Team + individual fundraising opportunity



## Website performance data – page speed and a keyword ROI tool

How important is website page speed?

A Google study showed that a one-second improvement in page speed had up to a 27% increase in conversion rate.

So if your website isn't superfast, you're leaving money on the table, and potential clients will head off to a competitor.

The concerning thing is that the average page speed score for websites in the legal sector is just 55 out of 100. This is based on analysis of over 5,700 law firm websites on our Digital Dashboard at [reports.legmark.com](https://reports.legmark.com) ↗

Go and find out how yours compares to your competitors and the software will tell you what things need to be fixed on your site to improve the score.

One of our software customers has been using the software and the AI supported instructions to steadily increase their page speed following a new site launch from 19/100 up to an all-time high of 82 (see Figure 1).

There's typically no reason why you can't improve your score quite quickly, it doesn't mean building a new website, just tweaking the code, maybe finding a new host, but it all impacts the bottom line.

Figure 2 shows what a nice healthy page speed score should look like:

This is the Legmark website, while the new Manchester Law Society website we recently launched is also super quick – the best performing law society website on the Internet now as it happens (Figure 3)!

[manchesterlawsociety.org.uk](https://manchesterlawsociety.org.uk)



Figure 1

If you're in the process of engaging an agency to build you a new website, make sure to include the page speed scores as part of the contract. You should be aiming for a minimum of 85, and there's no real reason why that can't be achieved quite easily by any agency.

### Now – just how much can you make from your website?

Moving on to an ROI on SEO – just how can you determine the value to the business of investing in search engine optimisation?

It's a question we were asked so often by law firms, we decided to build a tool to model the ROI for individual search terms. We've added this tool into the Digital Dashboard for you to use as much as you can.



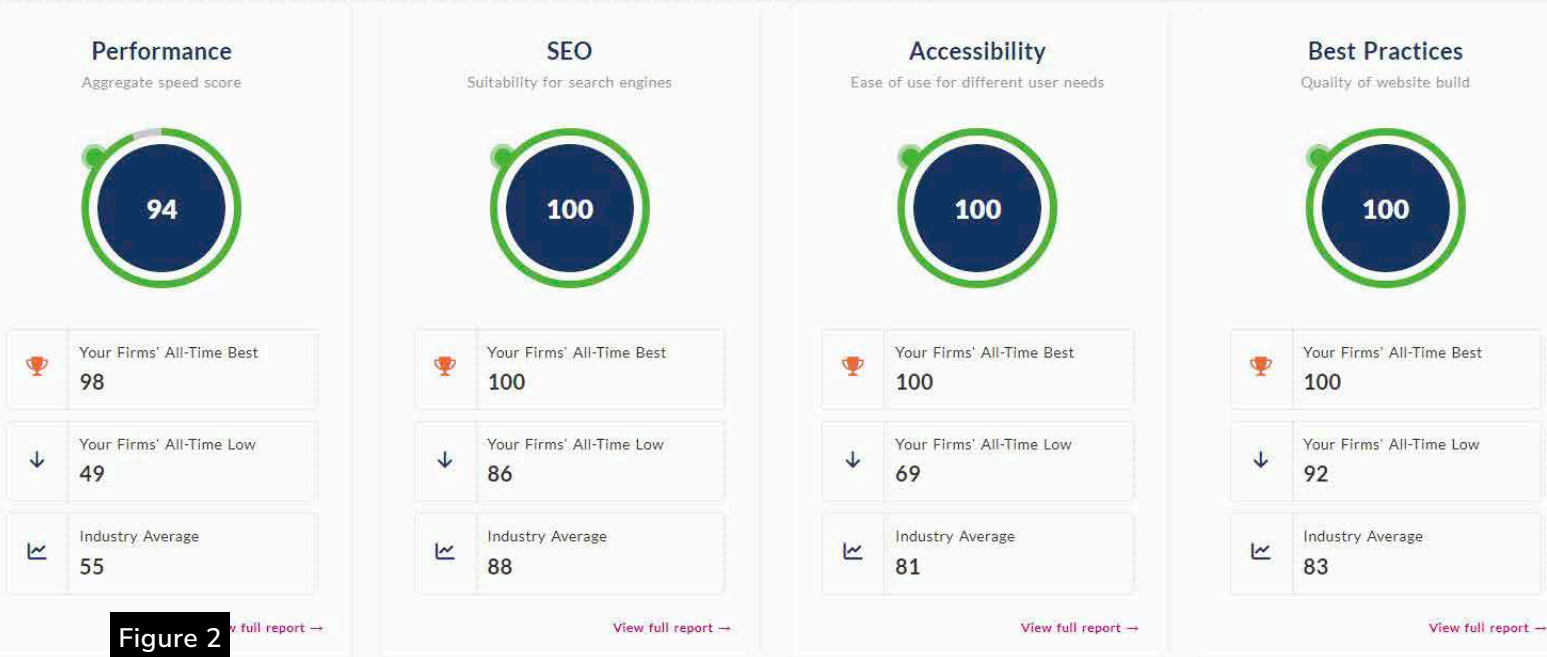
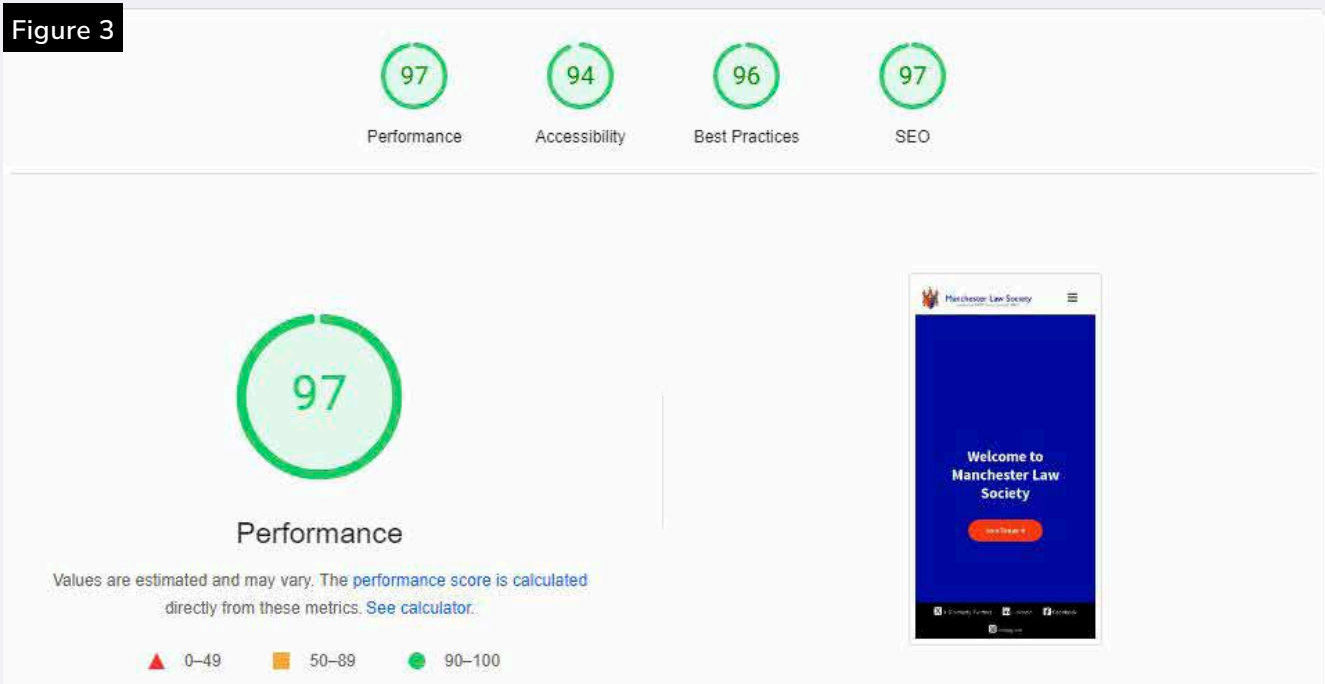


Figure 2 [View full report →](#)

Imagine knowing exactly how much value there is in ranking for terms like “accident at work claim” or “divorce solicitor Manchester.” You get to see real-time data on search volume, click-through rates, and project your revenue based on where you want to rank on Google. You can tweak your targets and see how it affects your potential earnings right away.

With the Keyword ROI tool, you’re getting a clear picture of how your online efforts can translate into real financial gains. It’s about making informed choices that align with your goals, making sure your investments in digital marketing really pay off.

Figure 3



If you haven't already accessed the legal sector's biggest digital marketing database, then check it out at [reports.legmark.com](https://reports.legmark.com)

# 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.

An eclectic mix of cases this month. But first, by the time this goes out, the Supreme Court will have heard *Hassam & Anor v Rabot & Anor* UKSC 2023/0025 and considered how Courts are to assess damages for PSLA where the claimant suffered a whiplash injury which comes within the scope of the Civil Liability Act 2018 and attracts a tariff award stipulated by the Whiplash Injury Regulations 2021, but also suffers additional injury which falls within the scope of the 2018 Act and does not attract a tariff award. We will write about the outcome as soon as judgment is handed down as we know there is a significant amount of interest in the decision.

In the meantime, we start with the costs in Prince Harry's action against MGN, albeit that his own costs have yet to be addressed as his action had not ended at the time that the judgment was handed down. For the three other lead claimants in *Duke of Sussex v MGN Ltd* [2024] EWHC 274 (Ch), Fancourt J's judgment deals with the complicated incidence of costs where all three had succeeded in their generic claims (Did MGN hack their 'phones and then deliberately try to conceal that fact?), one claimant won damages of £31,650 in his personal claim but failed to beat a Part 36 offer, whilst the other two claimants lost due to a limitation defence. The costs orders went both ways: MGN was ordered to pay the claimants' costs of the generic trial issues on the indemnity basis due to its attempts to conceal the extent of the unlawful hacking activity, together with the successful claimant's costs to the date that the offer should have been

accepted. Most other costs (the judgment must be read for full details) were to be paid by the claimants in respect of their personal claims, plus their share of common costs (excluding the generic trial costs and some discrete "authenticity challenge costs"). In rough numbers, that meant that in terms of money actually changing hands, MGN would be paying the claimants around £1.5m in interim payments on account, pending detailed assessment!

Next, security for costs. In *Lazarichev v Lyndov* [2024] EWHC 8 (Ch) HHJ Keyser KC ordered security where the claimant, a Belarusian national, was living in Poland, a State bound by the Hague Convention on Choice of Court Agreements 2005. "Resident" in CPR 25.13(2)(a) was to be given its ordinary meaning, that a person was resident in the place where they dwelled permanently or for a considerable period where they had their settled or usual abode. The defendant's appeal against the order below refusing security was, accordingly, dismissed.

Also dealing with security for costs, but this time in the Family Division, see *L v O* [2024] EWFC 6. Cobb J held that although the husband in 2023 had spent more time in London than elsewhere, on the facts, he was resident out of the jurisdiction for the purposes of the Family Procedure Rules 2020 Part 20 (2)r.20.7(2)(a)(i), so the jurisdictional gateway provision had been satisfied. The wife had sought security in the sum of £637,882. Taking a view which reflected the uncertainties of litigation and any potential

reduction on detailed assessment, 75% of that sum was appropriate. That meant security would be ordered for £480,000.

The Solicitors Act never lets us down in terms of regular judgments, but Richie J's decision in *Lone v Petrou* [2024] EWHC 153(KB) has an interesting twist, in that it deals in depth with permission to appeal against decisions taken below on a s.70 assessment. In dismissing the former client's application to appeal on 14 grounds, and in doing so, certifying that the appeal was to be marked "totally without merit", the judge gave some useful guidance about practical matters on such an assessment, such as charging for incoming letters, whether conceded items should count under the "one-fifth" rule, the correct starting point for working out the amount disallowed and "special circumstances" for departing from the rule. Helpful though they are, it should be noted that on a permission application, the judge's comments, whilst very helpful and informative, are obiter.

Next reference must be made (space permits only in outline) to the problems created by PACCAR, that litigation funding agreements ("LFAs") fall within the definition of "damages based agreements" for the purposes of section 58AA Courts and Legal Services Act 1990, and are unenforceable in (1) opt-out proceedings pursuant to section 47C Competition Act 1998 and (2) in any proceedings unless they comply with section 58AA and the Damages Based Agreement Regulations 2013. Thus, in *Commercial and Interregional Card Claims 1 Ltd v Mastercard Inc* [2024] CAT 3, the CAT was asked to rule on revised funding arrangements to be relied on (if compliant) by the proposed class representatives (PCRs). The Tribunal ruled that the opt-out and opt-in arrangements (including ATE policies) had effectively become aligned and that the submissions

advanced by the Proposed Defendants as to what were called the "Proceeds Point" and the "Cap Point" were rejected. The contingency elements in the Priorities Agreements were not contrary to public policy and the funding arrangements for the proposed collective proceedings were enforceable for the purposes of section 58AA. Good news for the PCRs, but the government is looking at the entirety of the problem arising from PACCAR, so it is a case of watch this space.

For helpful guidance about what to order as a payment on account where costs budgeting has taken place, see *Lifestyle Equities v Royal County of Berkshire Polo Club Limited* [2023] EWHC 2923 (Ch). Mellor J awarded 80% of the receiving parties' incurred costs and 90% of the budgeted costs. Notably, however, he allowed nothing for the costs of attending a consequential/form of order (FOO) hearing (claimed at £58,551) because CPR PD3D paragraph 10 and the table beneath it listed out the assumptions as to what was to be included and excluded in each phase, and that the trial phase automatically included 'Dealing with draft judgment and related applications'. No application had been made to vary the budget under CPR 3.15A. Accordingly, it would be for the costs judge to decide at detailed assessment whether there was "good reason" to depart from the costs budget as regards the FOO costs or some part of them.

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](mailto:Nick.McDonnell@kain-knight.co.uk) or [Colin.Campbell@kain-knight.co.uk](mailto:Colin.Campbell@kain-knight.co.uk)



# Using Artificial Intelligence for legal work

By **Rory O'Keeffe**, Technology and AI Lawyer, Partner at Matheson LLP; Trustee at The Solicitors' Charity

Artificial Intelligence – or as we all say, AI – is the buzzword of the moment.

Use of AI digital software has skyrocketed over the past few years with easy, and often free access, available to everyone – from individuals to world leaders; small businesses to large multinational companies, across all sectors. It has revolutionised the way we collect and impart information on a global scale.

The legal profession is no exception. Generative AI technology, such as ChatGPT, Copilot and Gemini, have become a real game-changer for legal teams working on matters that require increases in accurate

content, now created with savings in both time and money.

AI tools help further automation of repetitive tasks, such as document review, contract analysis and legal research, allowing legal professionals to focus on more complex and strategic work.

AI-powered legal research tools can sift through vast amounts of legal information, providing lawyers with more relevant data for case preparation. Likewise, AI algorithms review documents with speed and precision, identifying key information and potential issues. This leads to more thorough due diligence processes in mergers and





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acquisitions, minimising the risk of human error.

The explosion in AI usage by lawyers has increased efficiency and delivered more effectual legal services. However, as with any transformative technology, AI in law firms also carries pitfalls, such as reliability, data and intellectual property risks, bias and ethical considerations.

For instance, AI can inadvertently throw up biases present in historical data, leading to discriminatory outcomes, this requires regular monitoring and adjustments to algorithms and sourcing synthetic and/or quality data to rectify these biases.

AI systems can also fail to understand the nuances of human emotions, cultural context, and complex legal arguments, limiting its effectiveness in certain legal tasks.

The key to successful and ethical integration of artificial intelligence in law firms is to strike a balance between capitalising on the benefits of AI, while maintaining the human touch with a careful overview and checks of all AI generated work.

It is paramount that the ethical considerations around the use of AI by legal teams are constantly monitored, which may be challenging because of the need to maintain independence, partiality and confidentiality.

The AI tool is not infallible - reliance on the work produced by generative AI can result in legal inaccuracies, with the fallout leading

to a loss of reputation, trust and costly damages for the law firm involved.

For example, Donald Trump's former lawyer Michael Cohen admitted to citing fake, AI-generated court cases in a legal document that was presented to a US federal judge last year. Cohen used Google's Bard (now Gemini) to perform research after mistaking it for search engine rather than an AI chatbot.

With the question of AI generated liability and possible accusations of misconduct hanging over the legal profession, the adherence to 'Responsible AI' and 'Explainable AI' is even more crucial. The practice of designing, developing, and deploying AI with good intention to empower employees and businesses, and fairly impact customers and society, will allow legal companies to engender trust and scale AI with confidence.

AI was high on the agenda yet again at this year's World Economic Forum in Davos with the 'AI for Good' message to 'invest with care' as the technology continues to evolve.

This applies more than ever to law firms embracing the latest developments in AI - the advantages of time and cost savings; improved quality and accuracy, and increased access and inclusion are of huge value to law firms.

So, unleash AI's potential incrementally. Each step forward should be deliberate, mindful, and guided by ethical principles.

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## Pet of the month

**Name:** Seraphina Wilkins-Tolliday

**Firm:** TLT

**Pet Name:** Saffy

**Pet Nickname:** Gremlin

**What kind of pet do you have?**  
Longhaired mini dachshund

**Is your pet:** Female

**How old is your pet:** 2

**Favourite Toy:** Squeaky lobster

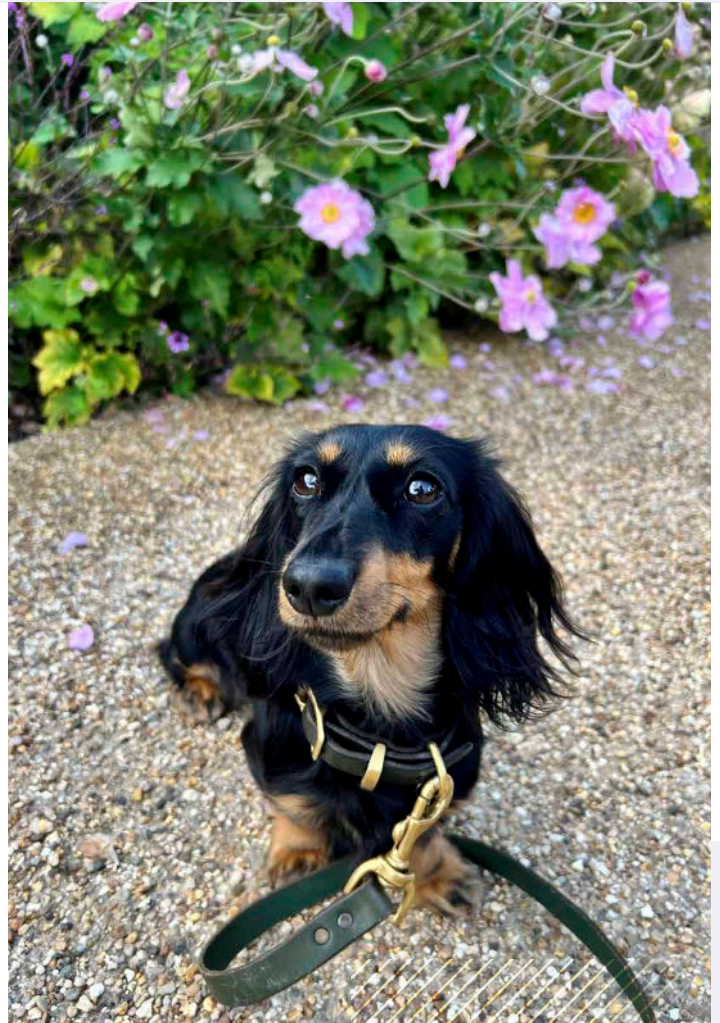
**Favourite Activity:** Chasing squirrels

**Favourite Treat:** Chicken

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

*My perfect day would be* a long nap in the morning (on the sofa under a pile of blankets), followed by a walk to the park at lunchtime to chase some birds, squirrels, leaves – whatever I can find! In the afternoon I like to wait for the postman / amazon delivery man / window cleaner and have a good bark to let them know I'm queen of the house. In the evenings I like to go to the pub so I can have extra treats for sitting nicely and not causing a scene. I like to finish the day by annoying my brother, Digby, by stealing his toys and hiding them under the sofa.

*My favourite thing my parents do* is spoiling me rotten! They never get annoyed with me even when I try something extra cheeky.



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!

Simply send us a photo that captures your pet/pet's individual personality and complete the questions – you can download the form [here](#) !

Send your answers and photo to [Messenger@manchesterlawsociety.org.uk](mailto:Messenger@manchesterlawsociety.org.uk)

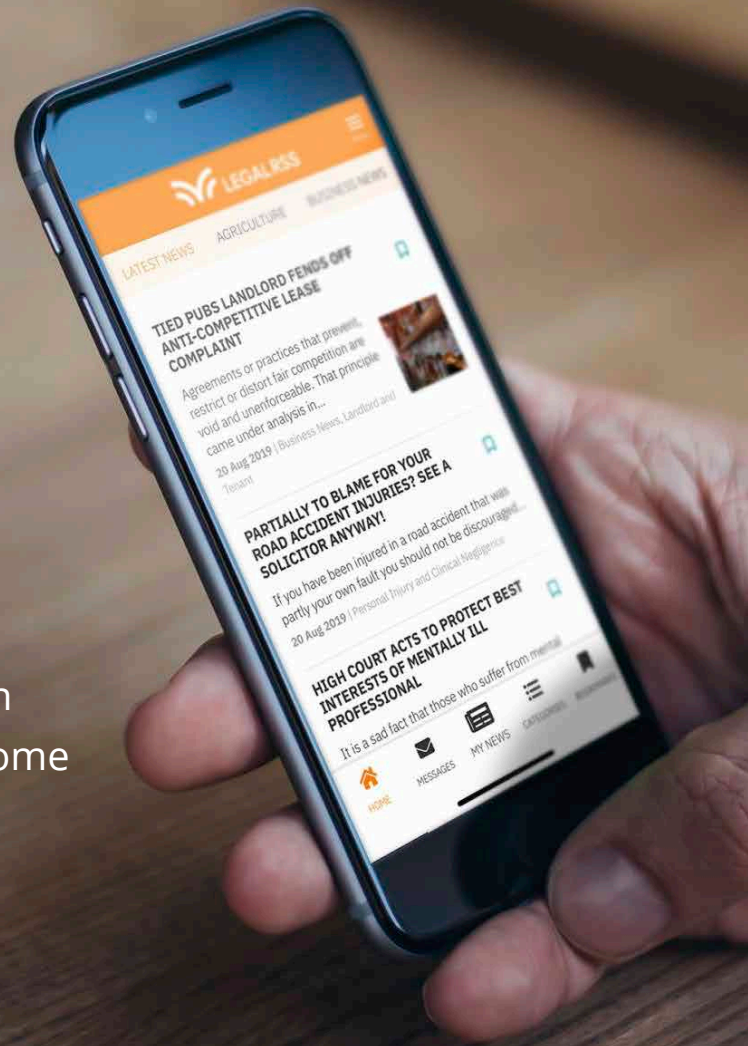


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