



June 2024

# the Messenger

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# MIL AWARDS 2024

# GOOD LUCK ON THE NIGHT!

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

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# MIL AWARDS 2024

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# From the President

David Anderson, President

**Ex-President of Manchester Law Society, Jeff Lewis, once told me “It will be one of the best things you do as President” when discussing the Manchester Legal Awards judging day and he was not wrong!**

On the 10th of May, 16 judges gathered at 8:30 am, each of whom had already considered and shortlisted entries in 5 categories and each of whom was now to sit on one of 4 panels and pick a winner in 5 different categories. My panel judged CSR Champion, Corporate/Commercial Team, Trainee/Paralegal, Private Client Team, Regulatory Team and Medium Firm of the Year and saw stellar candidate after stellar candidate, all of whom were deserving of individual recognition.

It gave me a real sense of pride to be the President of Manchester Law Society, a society that has such incredible talent within its membership. In the medium firm category alone we saw 3 incredible firms each of which specialised in different areas of law (family, crime and serious personal injury) and each of which has done fantastic things for its client and staff, facing some challenges that were shared, but also some that were unique to their area of specialism. Separating them was an almost impossible task and the debate spread into every break.

By the time the last candidate left at 6pm I was both exhausted and satisfied that the people of Manchester and beyond would receive an exceptional service from dedicated experts who truly excel at what they do. Those who don't win this year will undoubtedly succeed in future years and at other events.

Manchester first is one of my two themes for my presidential year, with a goal of encouraging colleagues to always use Manchester legal professionals and Manchester based suppliers first and not assume you need to go elsewhere (particularly London) for expertise or resource. The awards highlight just how vibrant and capable we are at delivering on that theme.

From the awards judging it was straight on to the Manchester Claims Association annual dinner. This dinner highlighted my second theme, which is that of collaboration. In the room were solicitors, barristers, legal and claims technology experts, underwriters, rehabilitation experts, forensic accountants, medical experts, claims investigators, loss adjusters and even salvaging experts. It was a true example of how our industry collaborates to serve those we represent and this event was an opportunity for those claims professionals to come together and socialise and raise money for an excellent charity. It was a great Manchester event, and I am grateful to Tony Morrissey of Nine St John Street Chambers and Ann Lomax of Exam Works for inviting me. I'm just sorry I was too tired for dancing – unlike Fran Eccles-Bech and Carla Jones, who did their bit to maintain the reputation of the society for enjoying a great party! It will soon be time for the next great party, the Manchester Legal Awards. See you all on the 6th of June!

# the Messenger



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### Manchester Law Society

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## Communications Committee

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Manchester Law Society

**Carla Jones**  
Manchester Law Society

**Chandre May**  
Manchester Law Society

**David Anderson**  
St John's Buildings

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The views and opinions expressed in The Messenger are those of the individual contributors and not of the Manchester Law Society



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# Upcoming events **Meetings**

4 June 2024

MLS Council Meeting

5 June 2024

Communications Committee Meeting

12 June 2024

Civil Litigation Committee Meeting

18 June 2024

MLS Officers Meeting

2 July 2024

MLS Council Meeting

3 July 2024

Communications Committee Meeting

4 July 2024

Employment Law Forum Meeting

16 July 2024

Equality, Diversity & Inclusion Committee Meeting

16 July 2024

MLS Officers Meeting

07 August 2024

Communications Committee Meeting

20 August 2024

MLS Officers Meeting

04 September 2024

Communications Committee Meeting

05 September 2024

Crown and Magistrates Court Committee Meeting

10 September 2024

MLS Council Meeting

11 September 2024

Civil Litigation Committee Meeting

17 September 2024

Equality, Diversity & Inclusion Committee Meeting

18 September 2024

Private Client Committee Meeting

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

5 November 2024

MLS Council Meeting

6 November 2024

Communications Committee Meeting

12 November 2024

Equality, Diversity & Inclusion Committee Meeting

19 November 2024

MLS Officers Meeting

20 November 2024

Private Client Committee Meeting

3 December 2024

MLS Council Meeting & AGM

4 December 2024

Communications Committee Meeting

11 December 2024

Civil Litigation Committee Meeting

17 December 2024

MLS Officers Meeting



## Financial Remedy Portal – Professional court user webinar – New date added 4th June

Due to the Webinar on the FR contested service on 29th May reaching capacity the HM Courts & Tribunal Service have set a further date for another repeat session on 4th June 1-2pm.

Professional court users can sign up to attend here: [Microsoft Virtual Events Powered by Teams](#)

Please feel free to share the link with any solicitors and or local user groups you may be part of.

- To help support the correct use of the FR Contested portal we will focus on:
- uploading documents covering confidential and FDR selections and impact of the same

- 'Notice of Change' use and sharing documents
- uploading D11/general applications
- uploading consent applications to finalise proceedings
- focusing on avoidance of common mistakes so that applications can progress smoothly – covering use of confidential and FDR selections and filing of correspondence etc.

## Welcome to our new MLS Advantage partner Shred-it!

We are delighted to announce our latest addition to the MLS Advantage group Shred-it, a Stericycle solution that helps organisations maintain the security and integrity of private and confidential information.

With stricter data protection legislation in place, it has become even more important to protect the security of the information your firm is processing. Shred-it can support you to do this with services including document shredding and recycling, hard drive destruction, and workplace privacy policies.

To learn more about how Shred-it can support you and your business to mitigate the security risks and protect your clients

call 0800 197 1164 or visiting [www.shredit.co.uk](http://www.shredit.co.uk)

MLS Advantage partners are able to identify and advise on core issues facing your business and using their experience, expertise and market knowledge can bring you the right solutions for these issues.

We know that our members recognise the value that technology, outsourcing and business services can deliver to the client experience as well as business processes and operational efficiency.

Our MLS Advantage partners all offer special packages to Manchester Law Society members. Why not contact one of them today?

# Quizzie Rascals

Thursday 23 May saw the return of the ever popular Posh Pub Quiz where over 100 quizzers from the Manchester legal community came together to test their knowledge in aid of the President's Charity of the Year [We Love MCR Charity](#) .

The night was hosted at the always brilliant [Manchester Hall](#) where guests enjoyed prosecco and elderflower fizz at the "book-in and bubbles" in the wood paneled Goldburn Lodge. Guests took the time to catch up with colleagues, size up the competition and try some last-minute cramming before being called in for the quiz!

As guests entered the Goldburn Suite for the main event they realized why this was a "posh" pub quiz. Not for us the sticky floors of a pub back room – we have chandeliers at this quiz!

After a couple of tricky rounds from Quizmaster [Chris Payne](#) , everyone was delighted to see the food come out. We were treated to hotdogs, sliders, chips, and doughnuts to power us through to the rest of the quiz.

The music round took us through the decades – I was only really useful for 90s and 00s which shows my age. Luckily we had a reasonable spread of ages on our team!

In the final genius round you had to name as many people in the top 30 of the 2002 BBC Greatest Britons poll. The catch was you only had 3 minutes and teams got a point deducted for anyone you got wrong! You can see the [full poll here](#) and you'll never guess number 17!





**Prizes went to:**

Best name: Rounds for Appeal from WTB Solicitors – who won three bottles of Laurent-Perrier Cuvée Rosé (we really had to keep an eye on Fran to make sure they all went to the team as it is her favorite tippie!) prize donated by [We Love MCR Charity](#) .

1st place: Izzy Quizzy Let’s Get Busy from etiCloud and the CS Partnership – who won an amazing prize kindly donated by the hospitality team at the [AO Arena](#) of a team night out to the show of their choice including hospitality in [The Mezz](#) !

Last place: the wooden spoon prize of a bottle of prosecco and a bucket of beer when to Bromley’s team What is a wooden spoon? And was kindly donated by [Manchester Hall](#) .



Place	Team name	Final score
1	Izzy Quizzy let’s get Busy	47
2	Lettuce Win	39
3	Bexley Beaumont	38
4	Top of the COPs	37.5
5	Let’s Get Quizzical	36
7	Family Law and Disorder	33
6	The Healthfire Club	33
8	Trial and Error	32.5
=9	Legally Brunette	31
=9	Uncivil Procedure	31
=9	Universally Challenged	31
12	The Fantastic Five	30
13	Quizzie Rascals	27.5
14	CoP to the top	27
15	Not So Great Expectations	23
16	Quiz Aka-boozy	22.5
18	Rounds for Appeal	22
17	Vimto Lovers	22
19	Quizzley bears	20
20	Trivia Newton John	19
21	Quizzie McGuire	17.5
22	What is a wooden spoon?	15



# Mental health allies: champions for a supportive legal sector-

In today's fast-paced and high-pressure legal sector, the role of a mental health ally has never been more crucial. Whether you're in a leadership position or just starting your career, embracing your role as a mental health ally can make a significant difference to your colleagues, your workplace and the legal sector more widely.

## What is a mental health ally?

An ally is someone who actively learns more about, supports and advocates for colleagues who belong to marginalised or underrepresented groups. Allies stand up against stigma, promote diversity and inclusion, and push for culture change.

As a mental health ally, you will be helping your colleagues and contributing to a

healthier, more supportive, and ultimately more effective legal sector. Put simply, it's about everyone creating a space where people and organisations can thrive.

## Who can be a mental health ally?

Anyone can be a mental health ally, and it often only takes one person to transform the culture of a business.

Partners, supervisors, and other respected colleagues can lead by example by sharing their own experiences, which can empower all members of the team. However, we often hear that it's those in managerial roles who are most reluctant to challenge the status quo. When it comes to calling out inappropriate practices at work, there's often a culture of 'not making a fuss', which only serves to normalise the behaviour.



Photo: Christina @ wocintechchat.com / Unsplash



Turning to more junior team members, it has been suggested that Generation Z (those born between 1995 and 2009) are most open to talking about mental health and are not prepared to put up with environments where they don't feel supported. Given this generation is expected to account for [27% of the global workforce by 2025](#), their status as allies should not be underestimated. By not listening to these concerns, organisations risk failing to attract and retain the best talent, losing people to competitors or from the legal sector altogether.

So really it falls on everyone in the legal sector, whatever your role, to create a psychologically safe working environment. Inspired by the words of Greta Thunberg, no one is too small (or too big) to make a difference.

### Why be a mental health ally?

The legal sector desperately needs mental health allies because of the pressures and challenges faced by people working in this field. The legal sector is known for its high-stress environment, including long working hours, the competitive nature of the work, and the emotional toll of handling complex, often distressing cases.

### Here are a few reasons you should be a mental health ally:

1. Mental health still carries a significant stigma, and many people don't feel able to be open and honest at work. Being a mental health ally helps to break down these barriers, encourage open discussions about mental health and promote a culture where seeking help is viewed as a sign of strength, not weakness.

2. People often feel isolated with their mental health struggles due to the fear of being perceived as incapable or unprofessional. As an ally, you can provide essential support to your colleagues by offering a listening ear, understanding, and creating a supportive community within the workplace.
3. An environment that values mental health is inherently more inclusive. Effective allyship helps to attract and retain a broader spectrum of talent and creates a more diverse and inclusive legal sector where all members have the opportunity to succeed.
4. Being a mental health ally also offers opportunities for your own personal growth. It fosters empathy, improves communication skills, and enhances your understanding of mental health.
5. On a larger scale, being a mental health ally in the legal sector can significantly enhance productivity, engagement, and job satisfaction. By advocating for change, you can influence policy reforms and foster a deeper understanding of mental health across the legal community.

On LawCare's helpline, we often hear stories of how allies are having a positive impact on workplace culture. For example, inappropriate comments are often brushed off as 'banter', particularly in a social context. Allies challenge discriminatory and unacceptable behaviour, and this can be really powerful when a leader sets that example.

Continued on page 12



LawCare can support callers who are worried about someone else, be that a colleague you work closely with, a family member or another member of staff. It can feel difficult talking to someone you are concerned about, and you may feel anxious about starting a conversation with them. But taking just a few minutes to talk could make a real difference to that person.

You don't have to be a lawyer to contact LawCare for support. Organisations couldn't function without an effective and healthy business operations team, so whether you work in HR or IT, as a secretary, on reception or in business services, you are part of the UK legal sector, and we are here for you too.

### Start by making small changes

1. You don't have to have it all figured out from the outset. Allies can start by making small changes, which all add up to make a big difference:
2. Better understand mental health by listening and learning. Take the time to listen to the experiences, challenges, and needs of people who have struggled with their mental health. You could also educate yourself about different mental health conditions, their symptoms, and the various challenges that colleagues might be facing. Mental Health First Aid training can be a good place to start.
3. Regularly check in on colleagues. A simple text or call can make a significant impact.
4. Use your voice to challenge discriminatory remarks, behaviours, and policies at work and in your personal life, even when it's uncomfortable. This is crucial for those in leadership positions, who are best placed to set an example.

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You don't have to be a lawyer to contact LawCare for support. Organisations couldn't function without an effective and healthy business operations team

5. Use your position to advocate for policies and practices that promote diversity and inclusion.
6. Continuously reflect on your actions and attitudes, accept feedback, and be willing to change and grow.

In conclusion, we urgently need more mental health allies within the legal sector. Whether leading by example, offering a listening ear, or championing a change of policy at work, every action taken contributes to a healthier, more vibrant legal community. Being an ally is an ongoing process of learning, listening, acting and reflecting. It requires a commitment to challenge injustices and contribute to a world where everyone feels valued and included.

You can contact LawCare for support on 0800 279 6888, [support@lawcare.org.uk](mailto:support@lawcare.org.uk) or by visiting [LawCare's website](#) to use the live online chat. LawCare's website also has lots of information (articles, stories, videos, blog and podcasts) on mental health and wellbeing.

CLICK FOR MORE INFO

# 11KBW



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# Local Authority Conference

We are delighted to announce the Local Authority Conference 2024, a joint event from Manchester Law Society and 11KBW Chambers.

Barristers from award-winning 11KBW will tackle the big questions in local authority law and what they mean for local authorities, their in-house legal teams and advisers.

## Topics will include:

- Section 114 Reports
- Subsidy Control
- Education
- Community Care
- Procurement
- Judicial Review
- GDPR and Information Law



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**For what comes next**

# Have you ever dodged a board duster?

There you were, minding your own business, sat in Maths, daydreaming about your tea, and hoping your mum had Findus Crispy Pancakes waiting for you when you got in and then whoosh, the sound of a board duster flying past your head broke you from your dreams. Plenty of you reading this article will be of a certain age where you still have a vague memory of dodging a board duster, not to mention standing in front of class and being slapped across your hand with a ruler! The good old days. Character building, I believe they called it!

Society has changed a lot over the years and for the better. No more flinging board dusters! Parenting has changed from years ago. I remember getting 'the slipper' and told to only speak when I was spoken to. These days, in many households it's much nicer!

Businesses haven't missed out on this shift. Management styles have changed from autocratic and dictatorial, to more inclusive and collaborative. Here's a quick overview of a few styles that are now common across all businesses.

## Collaborative

A collaborative style means helping your team work better together. It's about creating an inclusive culture and giving your team the tools and support they need to work together and communicate effectively. Everyone sees themselves playing an important part in the success of the team. They don't feel like are just a number.

## Participative

This management style requires everyone to be involved in problem solving and




decision making. Essentially, everyone works together and participates. Everyone's opinion counts no matter what level they are at. To do this there has to be high levels of trust across the team.

## Compassionate

At the heart of this style of management is relationships. This requires high levels of empathy, active listening, patience and understanding so that individuals and the team feel valued, respected and psychologically safe. As a result, people bring their best selves to work.

What I'm not saying is to live your life in one management style. That can be dangerous. The key is to flex your style depending on the individual and scenario. For example, always being participative can rub some people up the wrong way. They just want you to make a decision. Don't, and they might end up throwing a board duster at you!

Need a hand creating a healthy culture in your team? Contact Mike on: 07825301660 or email him direct on [mike@potentialunearthed.co.uk](mailto:mike@potentialunearthed.co.uk) 

CLICK FOR MORE INFO

# Manchester Pride Brunch

Have you decided how you'll be celebrating Manchester Pride yet? Why not come along, with your friends, family and colleagues, and join us for our exclusive Manchester Pride Brunch?

In aid of



A partnership  
event from



Manchester Law Society  
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**Saturday 24 August 2024**

**11:00 - 14:00 followed by a cash bar**



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**To book email**

**[ChandreMay@manchesterlawsociety.org.uk](mailto:ChandreMay@manchesterlawsociety.org.uk)**

# Simple Ways to Make More Money from Your Website: A Webinar for Law Firms

In today's digital age, a well-optimized website can be a significant revenue generator for law firms. However, many firms are not fully capitalizing on their online presence. To address this, we are hosting a webinar to equip Manchester Law Society members with actionable strategies to enhance their website's performance and ROI.

There is still time to affect the details of the webinar so if you have any specific gripes with digital marketing performance, or want to know anything in particular, let Carla

know at [CarlaJones@manchesterlawsociety.org.uk](mailto:CarlaJones@manchesterlawsociety.org.uk) before 5th July. All attendees will receive a complimentary website analysis and competitor benchmarking report.

Our webinar presenters have worked with some of the largest firms in the UK as well as some of the smallest, over the last 15 years. Including introducing Flight Delay Compensation to the UK market, and more recently helping Express Solicitors break into the top 100 law firms.





## Why Your Law Firm Should Attend

We will delve into practical techniques that can transform your website from a mere informational tool into a robust client acquisition and revenue-driving machine. Here are some key topics we will cover:

### 1. Improving Page Speed

Website speed plays a crucial role in user experience and search engine rankings. A slow-loading site can frustrate potential clients and drive them away. We will discuss easy-to-implement strategies to boost your website's speed scores.

### 2. Structuring Your Website for Success

Exploring the best practices for website architecture, including intuitive navigation, clear call-to-actions, and user-friendly design principles that can help convert visitors into clients.

### 3. Avoiding Common Mistakes

From overly complex designs to neglecting mobile optimisation, we will highlight these common pitfalls and provide solutions to avoid them, ensuring your website performs at its best.

### 4. Dos and Don'ts of Law Firm Websites

What should your website include to attract and retain clients? We will cover essential dos and don'ts, focusing on content strategy, visual appeal, and user engagement techniques that align with legal industry standards.

### 5. Optimising Client Enquiries

Turning website visitors into clients is the ultimate goal. We will share insights on how to handle enquiries effectively, ensuring

“

Our webinar presenters have worked with some of the largest firms in the UK

that potential clients feel valued and are more likely to choose your firm for their legal needs.

### Other Key Takeaways

Additionally, we will touch upon the importance of SEO (Search Engine Optimization) in driving organic traffic to your site, the role of high-quality content in establishing authority and trust, and the benefits of integrating client testimonials and case studies to showcase your firm's expertise.

### Join Us for a Transformative Webinar

Don't miss this opportunity to learn how to make your website a powerful tool for business growth. Join us for a comprehensive webinar packed with practical tips and expert advice tailored specifically for law firms.

### How to Register

Registration is open now [here](#). Secure your spot and take the first step towards maximizing your firm's online revenue potential.

By attending this webinar, you will gain valuable insights and practical knowledge that can help your law firm thrive in the competitive digital landscape. We look forward to seeing you there!

# 18 Regulation Update & News

By **Andrea Cohen**, Compli, Weightmans



Welcome to Summer (well, the sun is shining at the time of writing!) 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, and look ahead to what's on the horizon.

The Manchester Law Society's [Regulatory Conference](#) is on Thursday 26 June, when we will be considering a range of issues and discussing how firms can best prepare themselves for the future. We look forward to seeing you there. If you've not yet booked, there are still some places left. Further details [here](#).

## AML

[In addition to](#) the HM Treasury consultation on changes to the MLRs that we referred to last month, as part of a wider programme aimed at reducing money laundering, HM Treasury and the Home Office are updating the UK's National Risk Assessments on Money Laundering and Terrorist Financing (NRA) and Proliferation Financing (PF) and seeking input from practitioners that fall under the scope of the regulations. They want to understand the sector's views of vulnerabilities, likelihood and mitigations of the money laundering, terrorism financing and proliferation financing risk.

The National Crime Agency (NCA) and the UK Financial Intelligence Unit (UKFIU) have published a guidance document on requesting a defence from the NCA under POCA and Tact, aimed at those who report SARs. It includes how to request a defence, the information needed, the decision making process, FAQs and next steps.

## Sanctions

As discussed previously, sanctions remain a 'growth' area, and affects all law firms, not just those in scope of MLR. In the last few weeks, the Office of Financial Sanctions Implementation (OFSI) has

- [introduced FAQs relating to financial sanctions](#), including specific regimes and countries, Licensing and definitions
- updated the General, Russia, Counter-Terrorism and Enforcement and Monetary Penalties guidance, as a result of amendments to sanctions regulations, to reflect new reporting requirements and new immigration measures, and updated the reporting forms for designated person asset reporting requirements.
- Continued to add names/assets to the sanctions list

## Complaints requirements

The Legal Services Board (LSB) has issued new requirements and guidance to regulators aimed at improving how first tier complaints are handled. Watch this space for what this will mean for law firm complaints handling!



### SLAPP issues

Following the warning notice issued by the SRA in 2022, the SRA carried out a thematic review involving firms and file inspections that are not currently subject to an investigation and 'found good overall awareness on the issues of SLAPPS'. Most firms were aware of the warning notice, and more than half said they had changed their working practices since its publication.

There are some concerns regarding the use of third parties and the review indicated that when instructing PR companies or private investigators, firms need to have checks and balances in place to make sure they are acting ethically and within the law.

As a result of the review and feedback, the SRA will be publishing an updated version of its warning notice.

### Warning to law firms working on financial compensation claims

Following discussions with the Financial Conduct Authority (FCA) and the Financial Ombudsman Scheme (FOS) and concern that there may be a new surge in financial compensation complaints in light of reports of car finance being arranged at higher rates of interest than were needed, the SRA has [issued a warning notice](#), together with updated guidance, relating to claims management activity and where claims relate to financial services and products.

The SRA are particularly concerned about potential issues regarding firms getting proper instructions from clients and supervising staff in relation to financial services claims when part of high-volume/

bulk claim processes involving multiple clients, and the new guidance draws together previous guidance and warnings on areas including claims for mis-sold payment protection insurance, holiday sickness and personal injury.

Paul Philip, SRA Chief Executive said: 'As demonstrated by the various warning notices we have issued in past years, how mass claims are handled is a topic which regularly causes us, and other others such as the FCA concern... We expect the profession to treat clients as individuals, not just a number within a group. This means, for example, communicating with them clearly, giving them a proper assessment of their specific case and related decisions to be made, and asking them for consent before taking any actions in their name.'

### New practice notes and guidance

As referred to above, the SRA have published the following guidance since our last update.

- [Claims management activity](#): guidance for solicitors, law firms and their employees when representing clients during claims.
- [High-volume financial service claims](#) – Warning notice for Law firms, solicitors and individuals working under their supervision who undertake claims management activity and where claims relate to financial services and products.

Continued on page 20



### Disciplinary and regulatory decisions

There has once again been a large number of decisions and judgments reported since our last update.

#### Notable decisions include:

#### Solicitor who strung along client with false case updates struck off

A solicitor who, for 16 years, made false and misleading statements about the progress of a personal injury case, including telling the client she had been awarded £360,000 following an arbitration, and that he had issued enforcement proceedings against HMRC, her former employer, following an unsuccessful appeal, has been struck off and ordered to pay costs of £6300. No claim had been issued and he had created documents to substantiate these misleading statements, including submissions to counsel and notes of court hearings.

#### Solicitor struck off after failing to pay bill

A solicitor convicted of fraud for carrying out a 'dine and dash' at a Harvester restaurant has been struck off the roll. She said she would come back to pay the £60.91 bill, but did not, and on a separate occasion made a false representation that she had paid for a £43.47 takeaway when she had not.

#### Solicitor who charged higher rate is struck off

A solicitor who charged grade A fees for work he had not carried out himself has been struck off the roll. He endorsed a statement of costs totalling £85,000 in total, which included his hourly rate of £450 but

most of the work had been carried out and invoiced by a consultant solicitor who had made an advanced fees agreement.

The tribunal said 'dishonesty, where proven is inherently serious and it causes great harm to the standing of the profession in the eyes of the public. Here, the respondent had claimed for work which he knew he had not carried out and he had then not been truthful to the High Court when signing the statement of costs, nor to an arbitrator when later questioned about it.' He was also ordered to pay £10,650 costs.

#### Solicitor rebuked for rejecting settlement offers without client instructions

A solicitor who rejected offers to settle a case without taking prior instructions from his client has been rebuked by the SRA.

The SRA said he had a clean regulatory history up to this point and there was "a low risk of repetition". A rebuke was appropriate because his "conduct was reckless as to the risk of harm".

#### Firm fined for breach of MLR

Further to a regulatory settlement agreement, a firm has been fined £5,334 and £600 costs for not having compliant AML documentation, namely policies, controls and procedures (PCPs) and client/matter risk assessments, between June 2017 and November 2022.

#### 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).



Manchester Law Society

Instituted 1838 Incorporated 1871

# REGULATORY CONFERENCE

The MLS Regulatory Conference will be back on 26th June 2024.

Topics covered will include:

- Net Zero and Climate Action
- SQE and routes into a career in law
- AI and Cyber Security - what are we doing to manage the risks?
- A panel looking at the latest concerns in AML

Book your place now by emailing  
[ChandreMay@manchesterlawsociety.org.uk](mailto:ChandreMay@manchesterlawsociety.org.uk)

**Delegates at our 2023 conference said:**

“Very informative conference with lots to take back and act on”  
“A really useful event!” “Excellent speakers and content”



**WEDNESDAY 26 JUNE**  
**09:00 TO 15:40**



**MANCHESTER HALL, 36 BRIDGE STREET,**  
**MANCHESTER, M3 3BT**



**MLS MEMBERS £100.00 + VAT (£120.00)**  
**NON MEMBERS £125.00 + VAT (£150.00)**



With the 15th Manchester Legal Awards taking place on 6th June we've asked some of our shortlisted nominees:

## 'What are you most looking forward to at the Manchester Legal Awards?'

### **Kirsty Tinsley-Fenney** Partner, Fieldfisher

I am delighted that my team has been shortlisted for Property team of the year and that my colleagues have also been shortlisted in CSR and Clinical Negligence too! What I am most looking forward to is the excitement that the evening of the Awards brings together with the celebration of all professionals working

in the legal industry who strive each day to deliver a great legal service and go above and beyond. The evening is a time to be proud of what we have all achieved in the prior year and I will have a nervous desire all evening for my team to be successful on the night albeit with an overwhelming



amount of pride in what the whole team at Fieldfisher has already achieved this year which in my view has been recognised already in us making the shortlist. In honesty, I am also looking forward to enjoying a good few glasses of bubbles as we celebrate together!

### **James Brown** Partner, Hall Brown

One of my favourite parts is watching Fran unleash her arsenal of skills to try and control several hundred opinionated, rowdy and increasingly 'refreshed' legal professionals. Sometimes pleading, at other times charming, quite often colourfully clear in her instructions, but always entertaining!



### **Nick Buckley** Chamber's Director, Exchange Chambers

The MLA is now one of the iconic events in the Northwest legal calendar. It showcases the enormous pool of talent and expertise that the Manchester legal community has to offer at a gala event in the heart of the city centre



at the Midland Hotel, one of Manchester's landmarks for over 120 years. There is always a sense of anticipation and excitement building up to the awards and it is a fantastic evening where everyone comes to celebrate with the winners and commiserate with those less fortunate on the night.

It is a hugely enjoyable event where the legal community comes together to celebrate the significant achievements that have been made by firms, Chambers, and individuals over the last 12 months.

A great night, superbly organised by Fran and the team, where everyone is a winner. Not a night to be missed!

**Paul Westwell**

**Managing Partner, Bromleys**

The 2024 Manchester Legal Awards promises to be a fantastic evening, I'm truly excited to be celebrating the remarkable achievements and dedication of the Manchester legal community. The awards provide all of us at Bromleys with a chance to reflect on the strength, expertise, and success of our practice and the

wider profession. Greater Manchester has become a thriving hub in the Northwest, with legal practices flourishing across all 10 of its metropolitan boroughs. The evening will spotlight the exceptional talent within our city and reinforce the spirit of excellence that the Manchester commercial



sector is renowned for. The awards are a testament to the hard work, innovative thinking, reputation, and persistent advocacy of all our legal professionals at Bromleys. We're thrilled to celebrate with the rest of the Manchester legal community on the 6th of June.

**Carole Spiller**

**Partner, Weightmans LLP**

It's always a fun night at the MLA celebrating the amazing and diverse talent in the Manchester legal community. I'm delighted that we are sponsoring Barristers Chambers of the year again supporting our wonderful local chambers. Fran and her team work so hard to make it a successful evening and it never disappoints! See you all there!



**Linh Hoang**

**Senior Just Purpose Executive, Fieldfisher**

I'm looking forward to celebrating talented people, trailblazing firms and teams, and market leading initiatives. It's always wonderful to see the Northern legal community come together and reflect on the past year. Fieldfisher are up for three awards (CSR Champions of the Year, Property and PI/Clinical Negligence Team of the Year respectively) so I'm also looking forward



(and hoping!) that we will be successful in at least one of the categories – I am keeping my fingers crossed!

Congratulations and good luck to everyone. Special thanks go to Fran and her team for organising what will no doubt be a spectacular and exciting evening!

**David McGuirk**

**Partner, Real Estate Dispute Resolution, Eversheds Sutherland**

The Manchester Legal Awards is a genuine highlight of the year. I love the chance to bump into so many former colleagues and friends, and the odd opponent. There's a real atmosphere of friendly (mostly!) rivalry, but with a definite undercurrent that if one bread roll were to fly, the whole ballroom would quickly descend into an enormous food fight!





### Richard Bate

#### Partner, Weightmans LLP

Celebrating our successes and the chance to catch up with friends and colleagues across the Manchester legal community. It's an honour to be nominated for Private Client Team of the Year and something we are excited to celebrate. At Weightmans we see the possibility for

envisioning a better future, for better relationships and in people, whoever they are. We see the possibility in everything, so the opportunity to celebrate the success of the outstanding work undertaken throughout the Manchester legal community is exciting. A great evening for us to



pause and reflect on the valuable work our community delivers. We look forward to celebrating with friends and making new connections across the city. We are proud to be part of such a great event. Good luck to all those nominated and here's to a fantastic event.

### Ruth Heatherington

#### Partner and Head of Private Law Children Division, McAlister Family Law

I am looking forward to an evening which recognises the hard work and achievements of individuals and also law firms across



Manchester. It will be a celebration of legal practice, coupled with the glitz and glamour of a black-tie event – also huge excitement and anticipation as to who is the winner! I feel hugely overwhelmed but

proud that not only have I been recognised as a Family Lawyer but also shortlisted within the Partner of the Year category. I am also thrilled that all the hard work and dedication of McAlister Family Law has been recognised in their shortlisting for Firm of the Year.

### Cara Nuttall

#### Partner, Brabners

I always think the event is unrivalled in the level of energy and enthusiasm that is crammed into the room. It's such a wonderful celebration not just of the winners, but of the absolute mine of talent we have across the region, and a real reminder of what a legal powerhouse Greater

Manchester is. It's a great chance to reflect on what amazing things have been achieved, and what a lovely (fun!) and lively legal community we have. It's also the best event of the year for managing to catch up with all those people you have wanted to see during the year, but haven't



managed to. That all said, as parent to a toddler, who no longer get to go out much, what I'm REALLY most excited about is getting my dancing shoes firmly on, and being allowed to eat 3 courses sat down (and without Bing on in the background!).

### Ward Hadaway LLP Employment Team

Ward Hadaway are once again thrilled to attend The Manchester Legal Awards, a highlight in our calendar. The awards are a prestigious event for the legal community in our region and as a leading Northern law firm, they offer us an opportunity to celebrate our exceptional team and recognise their invaluable contribution to our success. We also look forward to getting the chance to reconnect with valued colleagues, forge new relationships and strengthen our network. All of which helps to foster

a spirit of camaraderie within the profession. A night dedicated to celebrating the achievements of our peers in a truly positive and inspirational environment is guaranteed. Attending the MLAs is always a real celebration of the significant successes across the legal landscape and showcases the excellence within Manchester's legal community.



### Marcin Durlak Solicitor, Managing Partner, IMD Corporate

I very much look forward to attending the Manchester Legal Awards gala dinner, especially as IMD Solicitors have been nominated for Small Law Firm of the Year for the fourth year in a row, following our victory in this category last year. The



awards dinner at the stunning venue promises a fantastic evening, offering the chance to network and celebrate with colleagues and peers from across the legal field. I look forward to seeing the outstanding achievements within our profession being deservedly recognised. This

event not only honours excellence but also fosters a sense of community and collaboration, making it a unique and professional highlight of the year. Finally, I look forward to everyone sharing the photos from the night on our brand-new MLS app ;) [see below - ed]. Good luck to all shortlisted firms and individuals and see you on the 6th of June!



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# First specialist legal sector supplier to gain B Corp status



Document Direct, the UK and Ireland's leading supplier of typing and transcription services to the legal sector have joined the growing ranks of B Corp certified businesses.

B Corp status is becoming globally recognised as a formal validation of the commitment that business makes in the area of environmental, social and governance (ESG), and their responsibility to a wider group of stakeholders associated with their business.

There are around 5,000 businesses with this status across over 80 countries, with 1,000 being based in the UK, and a small but growing number of law firms, such as Shakespeare Martineau, Stephen Scown and Manchester Law Society member Brabners amongst them.

CEO and founder of Document Direct, Martyn Best, described the tough certification process, and the business motive for this prestigious framework, "We initially answered over 200 questions across every element of our business and stakeholder engagement, and our approach and commitment to ESG factors. Then a six-month in-depth assessment by B Lab followed, with final validation happening this month.

"The certification is a formal and independent confirmation of our commitment to conducting business in the right way. Being "good" in all those areas of concern isn't just good enough; it has to be backed up across the whole organisation, and I'm really proud that everyone associated with Document Direct have played their part in this recognition."



Martyn Best, managing director, Document Direct

Whilst there are now almost 20 UK law firms who have attained B Corp Certification, Best believes that Document Direct are the first major supplier to the legal sector to do so.

Fran Eccles-Bech, Manchester Law Society CEO, said of the accolade, "I am so delighted for Martyn and Document Direct. They have been great supporters of our Society for many years and a key partner in our Advantage group. The B Corp recognition really sums up the values that Martyn and Document Direct have, and we are really proud that they are so well associated with us.

"Our members are showing a growing interest in B Corp status, and we will be looking at putting on some educational output to our members soon, as the ethos and the values that B Corp represents is something that resonates strongly within the Society."

If you'd like to discuss Document Direct's journey to B Corp status, Martyn will be very pleased to hear from you on [martyn.best@documentdirect.co.uk](mailto:martyn.best@documentdirect.co.uk)

## Pannone insolvency and debt teams triumph in industry standings

The insolvency and debt teams at [Pannone Corporate](#) have featured highly in the latest Insolvencies and Companies List, according to the latest Solomonic Year in Review.

The teams ranked second in the top insolvency law firm list, based on the volume of claims issued in 2023. Collectively, 260 claims were issued by Pannone Corporate, ahead of the likes of Irwin Mitchell, Shoosmiths and Weightmans.

Daniel Clarke, insolvency and restructuring partner at Pannone, commented: "Given the current economic climate and the challenges facing businesses across England and Wales, it's unsurprising to see such high volumes of claims going through the High Courts, with the Pannone teams contributing significantly to those claims numbers."

Paul Jagger, Head of Debt Recovery at Pannone, added: "We have invested in experienced and fresh talent to strengthen our proposition in both teams. This, coupled with our bespoke case management system, allows us to be perfectly placed to deal with high volume petitions, achieving excellent results for our clients."

The annual High Court commercial litigation data report looks at key trends and analytics on the claims issued in the civil courts of England and Wales over a 12 month period.

In 2023, more than 7,500 claims were issued, with an 86% increase in insurance-related claims driven by aircraft leasing and Covid-related disputes.



Daniel Clarke



Paul Jagger

The report states that 'geopolitical, pandemic and economic events loomed large over English High Court litigation in 2023', with winding up petitions continuing to drift upwards through most of the year, peaking in September.



## Hall Brown Family Law named one of UK's Best Places To Work

**Hall Brown Family Law's** record of looking after the staff behind its achievements has seen it named as one of the UK's Best Places to Work.

It is one of only two legal firms nationwide and the only boutique practice to feature in the latest edition of the respected annual ranking compiled by *The Sunday Times*.

Hall Brown is one of 40 companies of all sizes and from a wide range of industries singled out by the newspaper for creating ideal working environments for staff which provide "the best possible platform for business success".

This latest recognition comes just weeks after Hall Brown revealed that a continued focus on recruiting and developing staff talent had led to a surge in casework and further growth in its turnover.

Managing Partner James Brown described how being regarded amongst Britain's leading businesses was "vindication" of its approach.

"It is always heartening when someone outside our firm looks favourably not just on the quality of work which we do but the way in which we look after those who do it.

"To find ourselves considered alongside such a variety of companies - many of which are far larger than we are - is an indication that our collective effort really is paying off.

"We believe that it is absolutely essential to strike a balance between support for clients and for our colleagues.

"Clients understand that the lawyers and support staff in each one of our offices do their utmost to help not only because they are extremely professional but because they genuinely enjoy working for us.

"We are constantly striving to find new and relevant ways to make our firm a place where individuals want to work and want to stay.

"Having skilled, enthusiastic staff is an integral part of the progress which we have made and we fully intend to do what we can to keep it that way."

*The Sunday Times'* Best Places to Work classification was this year based on research conducted by the employee experience platform WorkL.

Using a survey devised by behavioural scientists, data analysts, psychologists, business leaders and academics, WorkL



James Brown

scored nominated companies based on their performance in relation to job satisfaction, their ability to reward and protect the well-being of staff as well as instilling a sense of pride in their workplace.

Hall Brown was one of 10 medium-sized organisations, with between 50 and 250 employees, which achieved the most impressive results.

Chris Longcroft, the Executive Vice-President Publisher, *The Times* and *The Sunday Times*, said: "All organisations are only as good as the people they employ and retain.

"The awards recognise companies that are innovating to create an engaged and fulfilling working environment for all and in so doing they are creating the best possible platform for business success.

"To be named on *The Sunday Times* Best Places to Work list is a true recognition of excellence."

Only last month, Hall Brown announced the promotions of seven staff for their contribution to its advances.

At the time, Mr Brown also disclosed that award-winning firm, which employs a total of 69 people - 51 of whom are fee earners - is on course to see turnover rise by one-sixth to £7.2 million in the current financial year.

The latest expansion by Hall Brown saw it open an office in Birmingham in December, its fifth location after Manchester, London, Sheffield and Leeds.

Hall Brown's latest national recognition comes two years after it triumphed in a competition to find the UK's Best Small Company To Work For.

The firm was also the highest ranked specialist family law firm in the legal category in the annual Best Companies awards and placed sixth in the classification for businesses of all sizes in the North West region.

## Dates for your diary

### The Messenger deadlines



**21 June 2024**  
July Messenger

**19 July 2024**  
August Messenger

**23 August 2024**  
September Messenger

**20 September 2024**  
October Messenger

**18 October 2024**  
November Messenger

**22 November 2024**  
December Messenger

**13 December 2024**  
January Messenger

## AFG LAW marks expansion across Greater Manchester with launch of Stockport office

**AFG LAW** has announced that it is to open a Stockport office to support its continued growth across Greater Manchester and beyond.

AFG LAW, which currently has offices in Bolton and Bury, is a long established, multi-disciplinary law firm providing a range of services across the region. Having experts in aspects of law including family, conveyancing, commercial property, dispute resolution and wills and probate, it is built on traditional foundations combined with modern values and a fresh, forward thinking approach.

The new office, which opens today on the 7th May, is based at Pure Offices at Cheadle Royal Business Park, South Manchester will offer all of AFG's services.

It comes in response to a market increase in enquiries and instructions from the South Manchester area, as AFG grows in both workforce and reputation.

Anita Boardman and Greg French, joint Managing Directors at AFG said: "We are extremely excited about our expansion in to the Stockport area, which marks a significant period for AFG . Over the past 12 months, we have noticed a greater demand for our expertise in the area and so the new office made complete sense.

"In addition, several of our team live in the South Manchester area and know the market and client base well. We are looking forward to bringing our services across all areas of the business to both private clients, businesses and our colleagues in the legal profession across the area."

Catherine Woolley, Director who will be based at the Stockport office continued:

"The new office is in a fantastic location that is easily accessible for clients in the Stockport area, with plenty of parking and public transport links. It also provides a great working environment for our team, meeting the requirements of a modern business to offer an enhanced experience for both our people and our clients."

Liz Faulkner, Centre Manager said: "We're thrilled to welcome AFG LAW to our office space. As a firm with an outstanding reputation, we are sure that they will be a great addition to our offering, both for our clients and the wider community."



L-R Greg French, Cath Woolley, Emma Cordock, Anita Boardman

# Are you ready to help your firm transition into a better future?



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## Specialist legal team celebrates five years of growth in Manchester

Since expanding its footprint by opening an office in Manchester in 2019, [Anthony Collins](#) has experienced rapid growth and now has a locally based team of 35 fee earners and support staff.

Led by Jonathan Cox, the team has a strong focus on the social housing sector and advises a range of housing associations across the region including leading providers Riverside Group and Great Places Housing Group. The Manchester-based team also advises a number of local authorities, ecclesiastical and third-sector organisations, as well as adult health and social care providers and co-operatives large and small (including Co-operatives UK, the apex sector body).

The North West region is home to one of the greatest concentrations of social housing providers in the UK. Housing associations need access to specialist legal teams that are agile and have the breadth of skills and experience to support their strategic plans.

Jonathan Cox, partner at Anthony Collins, said: "The social housing sector in the North West is well served by law firms, but social housing developers and landlords need continuous specialist support and high-level strategic advice. Our local team in Manchester is equipped with skills and depth of experience to meet their needs.

"As a social purpose law firm that is committed to delivering services that have a positive impact in terms of their social value, over the past five years in social housing and other sectors we have built upon our long-standing relationships with existing north west clients, and we have forged some extremely successful new



Jonathan Cox

client relationships. Enriching our team has given us the additional capacity needed to pitch for some major frameworks in the area and we are looking forward to learning about the outcome in the coming months."

Jonathan Cox and other locally based partners at Anthony Collins are active members of the Manchester Law Society, supporting events and sharing knowledge.


Looking ahead to the next five years, Jonathan Cox, sees a number of challenges for the social housing sector. He said:

"Manchester and the North West is home to one of the largest concentrations of social housing in the UK and faces especial challenges such as addressing ageing housing stock, rising levels of inequality and neighbourhood sustainability. Housing associations capacity to deal with those challenges has deteriorated significantly due to inadequate funding and the rising cost of repair and maintenance programmes. Some of the region's housing




stock is more than 200 years old and complying with new regulation such as Awaab's Law and new Consumer Standards, is going to be incredibly challenging as is the cost of new developments.

"It's vital that housing associations have access to a legal partner they can trust to support them in navigating the challenges that lie ahead."

Anthony Collins achieved B-Corp accreditation in 2022, and as a social purpose law firm is committed to working with clients to improve the lives of individuals, communities and society. For more information about Anthony Collins visit: [www.anthonycollins.com](http://www.anthonycollins.com) 

## MSB continues expansion with two new offices

**MSB Solicitors is expanding its footprint by opening two new offices in Chester and Birmingham.**

With a rich history of delivering expert legal services for 36 years, the new city centre offices will be the fifth and sixth locations for [MSB Solicitors](#) , which currently employs 220 people.

The decision to establish a presence in both cities comes as the firm continues its exceptional growth trajectory, having doubled its team headcount and turnover since 2018.

MSB Solicitors will be looking to recruit solicitors, paralegals, and trainees across all areas of the legal profession at the offices. This strategic move reflects the firm's commitment to serving the growing demand for legal services in the cities.

Each office will provide clients with expert advice and representation, serving the entire community – from international corporations to start ups, from ultra net-worth clients to the most vulnerable.

Emma Carey, Managing Partner at the firm, believes that this growth trend will continue, as the firm solidifies its position as a top-tier legal service provider.

"As an all-service law firm, we pride ourselves on our excellence and that is undoubtedly reflected in our growth," said Emma.

"Since we opened our Manchester office just two years ago, our team has expanded by a huge 250%, and we aim to replicate this success in Chester and Birmingham.

"This will allow us to further expand our reach, providing clients with the high-quality legal services they deserve. We look forward to being a part of the community in both areas, contributing to the growth and success of each city."

MSB Solicitors is listed in prestigious rankings including Tier 1 Legal 500, Band 1 Chambers and Partners and The Times Best Law Firms. The firm's expansion into these markets is a testament to its success and reputation for excellence in legal services.

# Hugh James Unveils Fresh New Look

Hugh James has revealed its new brand identity to reflect the ambitious growth of the thriving firm uniquely positioned to fight for the things that matter to individual and business clients across the UK and internationally, while retaining its deep roots in the communities where it all began.

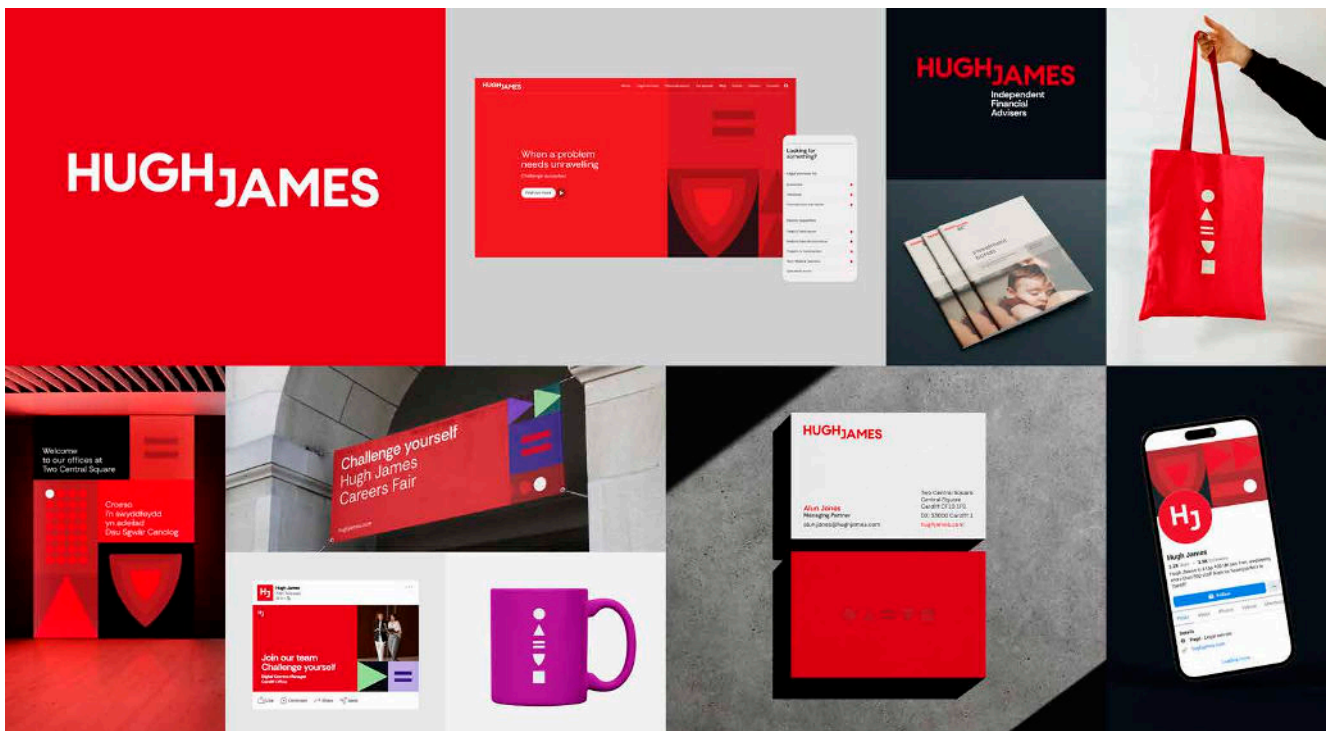
The modern brand refresh reflects the unique challenger mindset that unifies Hugh James' multidisciplinary expertise across all four points of the compass in England and Wales. From its Cardiff origins spanning over half a century, to its growing presence in London and Manchester and its offices on England's South Coast, the refreshed brand articulates the firm's purpose to protect individuals and businesses across a diverse spectrum of sectors and divisions.

Developed by London-based creative agency, Curious, the fresh look and feel is underpinned by the firm's commitment to making a positive impact for people and planet. With insight from extensive employee

workshops, the firm has placed a renewed importance on its values to better reflect its people and the fair and inclusive culture at the heart of the firm.

The firm's refreshed brand is aligned to its 2022-27 Bigger Bolder Better strategy which has, to date, seen the acquisition of leading firms in Cardiff, Manchester and Chester respectively, all while more than doubling its London footprint to reflect its growth in the City.

Speaking of the brand refresh and working with Curious, Joe Purcell, Director of Business Development and Marketing at Hugh James, commented: "This is an extremely exciting time for our firm as we continue to strengthen our presence and unite our legal expertise across all four points of the compass in England and Wales, and we need our brand to tell the story of a modern Hugh James while reassuring the market about who we are.





“Curious, our brand agency, has delivered on the extremely complex brief of creating a fresh identity that combines the roots and values of our people across all our UK locations with the excellent legal service we provide to clients across diverse sectors and divisions.”

“I’m delighted with the results of the brand refresh which far better reflects our dynamic and progressive firm, the values of people at the heart of it, and our commitment to responsible business practices. I’m confident our new brand identity will resonate with our employees, clients and communities alike, as we continue to grow our business together for the future.”

The brand retains the Hugh James name and signature red, with a refreshed and extended pallet and a refined logo and ‘adaptive’ brand devising a system of shapes to represent the firm’s characteristics – driven, fair, inclusive, protective, robust. The updated website reveals its colourful and engaging employer brand, bringing in purples, pinks and greens, to represent its diverse and growing people, clients and communities. The core idea “Challenge accepted” captures the firm’s self-belief, obsession for solving problems and its overarching purpose – to protect a business and individuals. Challenge accepted also crafts an authentic narrative about Hugh James’ culture and values and provides a framework for how its people act and work.

## Oldham law firm hits new high

[Pearson Solicitors and Financial Advisers](#) has this month reported an ‘amazing record year’ and looks set for further growth in 2024/25.

Revenue growth at the North West firm has increased to over £5.6million and the firm boasts its best year ever, with overall profits up a record 44%, the highest they have ever been.

The legal firm, with offices in North Manchester, Oldham, Milnrow, and Failsworth, and a new office planned for Saddleworth, employs 84 staff and is a multi-service law firm, with a bespoke commercial team working with many national businesses and North West SMEs.

This year Pearson acquired local law firm [Sarah Dixon & Co](#) in Milnrow, bringing on board all staff members and expanding legal services into the Rochdale area.

“These are impressive results and the culmination of a year of hard work and dedication by our teams who strive to deliver exceptional service and value to our clients,” said Director and Practice Manager, Joanne Ormston.

“I am so pleased that whilst we have expanded our services into new areas, we have been able to record positive growth and maintain a robust profitability margin, reflecting effective cost management and strong client relationships,” added Joanne.

### Commercial Growth

Strong performance in the past financial year has been achieved by the Commercial Property, Employment law, Personal Injury and Corporate Commercial departments, with growth of over 50% across all areas. Family legal services have also seen accelerated growth, with the family team providing pension and financial advice in

Continued on page 36

more high-net-worth divorce cases.

Client satisfaction has also been a big part of the results with positive feedback and favourable 5-star reviews across major review platforms.

### Awards and Accreditations

The firm also achieved Legal 500 ranking as a 'Leading Law Firm' with its employment department being recognised in both the employer and employee categories.

Additionally, Pearson Solicitors were successful at the Oldham Business Awards,



Director and Practice Manager Joanne Ormston

winning the 'Supporting Young People' category and have again been shortlisted in the Manchester Legal Awards.

## Pearson Solicitors donates £23,800.00 to Francis House Children's Hospice

Staff at Pearson Solicitors and Financial Advisers are over the moon with the amount they have recently raised, with a staggering £23,800.00 being donated to the Didsbury-based children's charity.

Pearson is now at the end of a successful two-year partnership with [Francis House](#) which was nominated by staff at the law firm. All offices in Oldham, Hollinwood, Failsworth, and Milnrow have been involved in the mammoth effort.

Throughout the two years, staff members have taken part in a variety of fundraising events including The Saddleworth Three Peak walking challenge.

Francis House is a unique facility providing respite care, home care, sibling support, end-of-life care, and bereavement support to over 600 families across Greater Manchester including Oldham, Bury, and Rochdale.



Susie Poppitt, Joanne Ormston and Julie Williams

The firm also took part in a [Will Month Campaign](#) with their legal experts donating their time for free by preparing [Wills](#) for clients. On completion of the Wills, clients made a charitable donation instead of paying for the legal service.

The charity's Chick Appeal is always popular at Pearson with staff and their families getting involved in knitting the little chicks and donating a mountain of crème eggs



There has been an emphasis on staff development over the past year and several initiatives have been introduced to improve the work/life balance and the mental health of employees. A well-being survey was undertaken, the findings of which have resulted in a 'Mentoring Programme' and a 'Costa Club' being set up where colleagues can have timeout together to share experiences and chat through any issues or concerns.

Commenting on the results, Director and Head of Commercial Litigation, Christopher Burke added:

"Our focus on providing tailored solutions and achieving favourable outcomes for our clients has been instrumental in driving forward our business and maintaining strong client relationships."

"Looking ahead our plan is to grow strategically and maintain the momentum of our consecutive year on year growth with a developing national client base. We plan to invest in our staff and our buildings and are excited about the opportunities ahead confident that we have a great team in place to deliver them."

which the charity sells. In 2024, the [Chick Appeal](#) alone is expected to raise over £65,000 for Francis House.

During the festive period, staff donated chocolates and gifts including toys, books, and over 250 advert calendars to provide some festive cheer.

Pearson helps the hospice by raising awareness about any upcoming events and fundraisers by sharing news on their social media platforms and informing clients on the value of [leaving a legacy to a charity](#) which is a key part of the fee income needed to run the facility.

Director and Practice Manager [Joanne Ormston](#) said: "Over the two-year partnership, we have worked closely with Julie Williams and Susie Poppit who are Fundraising Officers at Francis House, and we have got to know a lot about the hospice. The work they do is so important to those who unfortunately find themselves in need of their services.

"In April 2024, I attended Francis House to present Julie and Susie with a cheque and

my visit coincided with their '[Open Day](#)' which they run twice a year. I had a tour of the facility and felt overwhelmed by the peace I experienced. The hospice has a warm and friendly atmosphere, it is not clinical in any way, which is a comfort to the children and parents using the service."

### Feedback from Francis House

Fundraising Officer Julie Williams commented: "We are delighted with the amount donated by Pearson Solicitors. The services we provide are costly with our annual running costs exceeding £4.8 million.

"We receive only 15% from the government so the support we get from organisations such as Pearson is vital."

Charity chosen for 2024 to 2026.

Staff members of the law firm have chosen [Cancer Research UK](#) as their charity for 2024 to 2026.

*\*An additional sum has been added to the total since the photograph was taken, bringing the final amount raised to £23,800.00.*

## Cure Leukaemia appoints JMW managing partner Marc Yaffe as charity ambassador

National blood cancer charity, Cure Leukaemia, are delighted to welcome [JMW's](#) managing partner Marc Yaffe into the CL Family as he becomes an official ambassador to help the charity fund a paediatric trials network.

Cure Leukaemia currently funds Research Nurses as part of the National Trials Acceleration Programme (TAP) Network across 15 cities in the UK. This network enables pioneering blood cancer clinical trials, but the same network does not exist for children who require a stem cell transplant and cell therapy.

Every 14 minutes, someone in the UK is diagnosed with a form of blood cancer with four children diagnosed every day. Blood cancer is the most common cancer in children and teenagers and can affect children from as young as three months old.

Cure Leukaemia are looking to reverse this trend by funding a paediatric trials network which will deliver world-class, innovative and practice changing clinical trials to improve outcomes for children with leukaemia throughout the UK undergoing a stem cell transplant across the major metropolitan cities of the UK.

Marc recently spent some time at the Royal Manchester Children's Hospital and spoke with Professor Rob Wynn to hear about some of the groundbreaking work currently taking place across the region.

Said Marc: "I am honoured and humbled to be asked to be an ambassador of the charity. As the father of three-year-old twins, being in a children's hospital is an emotional moment for me. It is a role that I will take very seriously. Meeting Professor Wynn and his team has been inspirational, and I intend to learn as much as I can about Cure Leukaemia, and to use my network to assist in supporting the funding of the proposed paediatric trials network."

James McLaughlin, Chief Executive at Cure Leukaemia was pleased to welcome Marc's support. "When we were first introduced to Marc, we were impressed by his passion and determination to help the charity increase our profile in the North West. With the charity's close links to the region through the funding of The Christie and Manchester Royal Infirmary (MRI) hospitals, we are looking forward to working with Marc to help us launch our new paediatric network."



(L-R) Marc Yaffe, JMW managing partner, and Professor Rob Wynn, consultant haematologist, Royal Manchester Children's Hospital



## Lois Norris joins Kings Chambers

**Kings Chambers** [↗](#) has announced the arrival of Lois Norris.

Called to the bar in 2017, Lois specialises in Serious Injury – including Personal Injury and Clinical Negligence – as well as acting at Inquests.

Highly experienced in matters involving brain and spinal injuries, Lois is regularly instructed in amputation cases, and has expertise with both motor vehicle deaths and deaths caused by the state of the highway.

Her work also includes assisting junior practitioners in drafting schedules in catastrophic injury cases through ‘Schedule School’ – a free resource which Lois founded.



Prior to the call, Lois was the legal assistant to Kings Chambers personal injury silk, Gerard McDermott KC.

Director of Clerking at Kings Chambers, Steve Loxton, said: “All at Kings Chambers offer a very warm welcome to Lois. Clearly, Lois has established herself as a prominent junior within the serious injury field and we are all delighted to see Lois join the team at Kings.”

## Job Vacancy

### Accounts Executive Role with Hall Brown

Hall Brown is a multi-award-winning family law firm dedicated to providing exceptional client service.

They are looking for an Accounts Executive.

The core activities of the Accounts Executive role include but are not necessarily limited to:

- Engaging in and deliver on the daily operation of the Accounts department, including billing, banking, management of client ledgers and client debt.

- Establishing and enforcing proper accounting methods, policies and principles and reporting frequently to the Accounts Manager and CFO.
- Monitoring and analysing accounting data and producing financial reports periodically and when requested by the management team.

**[Further details on the role can be found here](#)** [↗](#).

**Please send your CV to Will Taylor, Chief Financial and Operations Officer at [Will.Taylor@hallbrown.co.uk](mailto:Will.Taylor@hallbrown.co.uk)** [↗](#)



## Former trainee solicitor becomes partner as expanding CFG celebrates its latest three promotions

A former trainee solicitor has been made a partner as one of a trio of promotions at [CFG](#) which has also seen recognition for one of the firm's highly-respected rehabilitation and support service.

All three promoted colleagues begin their new roles this week at the legal business, which added new offices in Warwick last year to its existing base in Cheadle after signing new, long-term contracts with work sources in the Midlands and the Thames Valley.

The firm's CEO hailed the promotions as recognition for the trio's contributions to CFG's continued expansion and to the emphasis the business places on helping colleagues develop their careers.

Solicitor Michelle Cresswell becomes a partner just over 16 years after she first joined CFG as a trainee in 2007. During her career with the serious injury specialists, she has developed a strong reputation for supporting people after life-changing injuries to claim compensation, including brain injuries, spinal injuries and other serious injuries.

Michelle is joined in the 2024 promotions round by Caroline Trinder, a former nurse who heads up CFG's market-leading rehabilitation and support service for those affected by serious injury and their families.

Caroline, who becomes a senior associate, joined CFG in 2021 and is another who has developed her career with the firm, taking a lead role in shaping its respected client service programme which ensures clients

## HELPING ALL THOSE AFFECTED BY INJURY - Together



*Michelle Cresswell*

Partner,  
Legal Services  
Supplier Lead



*Caroline Trinder*

Senior Associate,  
Rehabilitation and  
Support Lead



*Jessica Jones*

Associate,  
People and  
Culture Advisor



receive the utmost care and support during their recovery, accessing the specialist treatment and rehabilitation they need at the earliest opportunity.

Rounding off the promotions round is people and culture advisor Jessica Jones, who becomes an associate after playing a key role in helping the business recruit the new people it needs to support its expanding new business instructions. Jessica also plays an important role in CFG's learning and development programme for colleagues and is another who has benefitted from the firm's focus on developing careers during close to six years with CFG.

CFG CEO Richard Clark said: "It's always great to see our colleagues continuing to

grow at CFG and it's fantastic news for Michelle, Caroline and Jessica. All three play key roles in the business and the success we've seen over the last few years.

"Whether that's providing expert legal advice to injured people and their families, guiding them to access the very best rehabilitation and treatment immediately, or ensuring CFG is a great place to work with opportunities for learning and development and attracting the very best people to work with us, it's the strength of the entire team that makes CFG successful.

"With our focus on learning and development and helping colleagues advance their careers, we take great pride in seeing our people progress to more senior roles in the business."

## Stephensons appoints family law specialist to its partnership

**Stephensons** [✓](#) has appointed family law specialist, Rachel Benett to its partnership.

Rachel joined the Stephensons family law team in 2019 and is a highly regarded care solicitor, receiving work from guardians along with the Official Solicitor. Rachel has substantial experience in serious and often complex cases and regularly represents parents and children with mental health and learning difficulties.

Rachel joins the Stephensons partnership, which encompasses leading professionals and solicitors from more than 30 separate legal disciplines, effective from 1 May 2024.

Commenting on the appointment, Sean Joyce, managing partner of Stephensons said: "It gives me great pleasure to welcome



Rachel Benett

Rachel to the partnership. Throughout her career here at Stephensons, Rachel has demonstrated the utmost dedication to her clients, supporting them with exemplary professionalism and expertise, through what can be very challenging periods in their lives.

"Being able to see colleagues develop their careers and thrive at Stephensons is one of the most satisfying aspects of my role with the firm and I wish Rachel further continued success in the months and years to come."



## Hudgell Solicitors promotes five colleagues to its executive management team

**Hudgell Solicitors** chief executive Rachel Di Clemente says the appointment of five new members of the executive management team is a reflection of the firm's growth and will help to ensure the continued success of the business following its recent transition to employee ownership.

The move comes just five months after Hudgells became one of the largest law firms to date to become employee owned, after founder Neil Hudgell transferred the majority of shares to an employee ownership trust.

At the time he said the move was being taken to 'embrace the talent' and to 'give something back', saying it would provide a platform for employees to have a more direct voice in the firm's work, and influence the management of the business for the future.

Now, the first significant change has been announced, as it sees five colleagues join chief executive Mrs Di Clemente, executive

chairman Mr Hudgell and chief people officer Michelle Maltby on the firm's executive management team.

Promotions reward 'incredible commitment' to the business

Head of civil liberties and criminal injuries Vicky Richardson, who has been with Hudgells since 1998, has been appointed as Regional Director of Hull, with Head of Serious Injury and Travel Litigation, Paul McClorry, moving to Regional Director of Manchester.

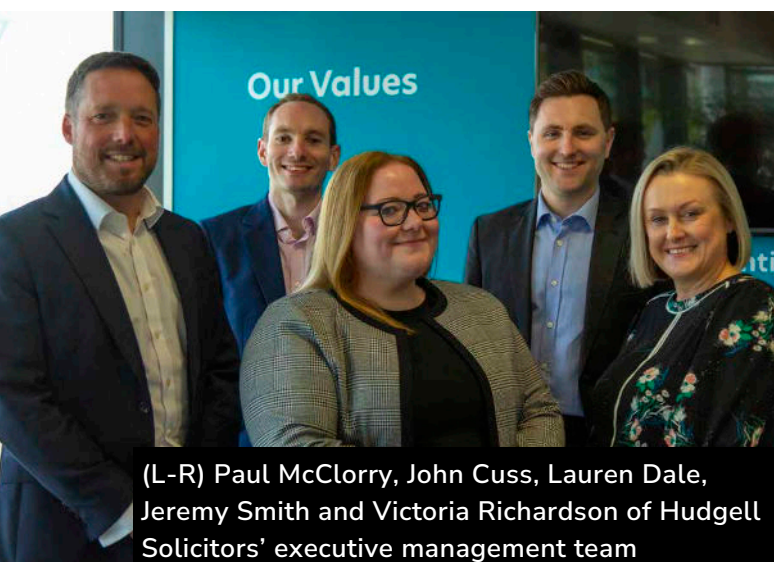
Lauren Dale, who joined Hudgells in 2010, has been promoted to the position of Risk and Compliance Director, with John Cuss, who heads up corporate services and strategic partnerships, moving to Legal Services Director.

The firm's National Head of Costs, Jeremy Smith, has moved to the role of Commercial Director.

The news follows the recent promotions of eight solicitors to the roles of Senior Associates in recognition of their positive impact on the business.

"We are extremely fortunate to have have an incredible pool of talent within our firm and these recent appointments reflect that," said Mrs Di Clemente.

"Adding to our executive team is very much a move focused on the evolvement of the business as an Employee Ownership Trust (EOT). It is about ensuring that we develop a strong senior executive team which not only includes great legal knowledge and expertise, but also expertise across all other



(L-R) Paul McClorry, John Cuss, Lauren Dale, Jeremy Smith and Victoria Richardson of Hudgell Solicitors' executive management team

areas of business which is vital in building a strong and resilient firm.

“I am very lucky to have the support of my newly promoted colleagues to help shape where the business heads over the coming years. Having worked closely with them all over the past few years, I have absolute confidence that their passion and commitment to the business will mean

that they continue to add to the success of the business, ensuring that we continue to improve our offering to our clients and colleagues.

The new leadership structure comes into effect from May 1st 2024 as Hudgells looks to build upon a hugely successful past 12 months in which it has enjoyed a record-breaking year in business growth.

## Bermans expands team with new partner

**Bermans has strengthened its corporate team with the hiring of a new partner.**

Bermans has appointed Charlotte Mills as a partner in the corporate team. She joins from Bermans sister firm Jackson Lees.

Charlotte has extensive experience in the legal sector having qualified in 2006, and later went on to work for Bermans’ sister firm, Jackson Lees, before making her latest move.

Charlotte represents and advises businesses and business owners on all issues that arise during the lifetime of a business, from running, owning, restructuring, buying and selling.

Speaking of taking on her new role, Charlotte said: “I am very excited to be part of such a well reputed firm, to continue my client-focussed approach with the support of a broader commercial team.

“Quality client care is at the core of how I deliver my services and I believe the rest of the team at Bermans share the same values as me. Together we can continue to provide excellent service and ensure our clients’ needs are met.”


Jon Davage, Managing Director & Head of Corporate at [Bermans](#), said: “We are delighted Charlotte has joined Bermans, who is already proving to be a valuable asset to the team, bringing extensive knowledge and her contact base. With transactional work picking up again, Charlotte’s expertise will allow us to deliver more efficiencies and support to our expanding SME clients throughout the Northwest and beyond.”



Charlotte Mills



## TLT bolsters corporate expertise with partner hire in Manchester

TLT  has continued the growth of its national corporate team with the appointment of Victoria Zivkovic as partner in its Manchester office.

Victoria has joined TLT from Irwin Mitchell where she has been instrumental in building up its corporate practice, being recognised as a leading corporate lawyer and a go-to advisor in the northwest.

Victoria has over 20 years' experience advising on all aspects of corporate transactions including M&A, private equity and venture capital investments. Recognised as a Next Generation Partner in the independent Legal 500 Directory, she also has experience advising on complex re-organisations, restructurings and partnerships. She has supported the growth and development of top regional, national and international businesses, having also previously worked at PwC legal.

At TLT, Victoria will join the national corporate team, supporting businesses across all the firm's key sectors including financial services; retail; leisure, food and drink; real estate; and digital.

James Chadwick, head of location in Manchester said: "In 2023 we celebrated the tenth anniversary of TLT in Manchester. During that period, the firm has grown from a founding team of three to nearly 200 colleagues. We have experienced phenomenal growth and have continued to invest in our resources to ensure we deliver a best-in-class service to clients. We're delighted to welcome Victoria to the team, adding further



Victoria Zivkovic

bench strength to our corporate team and supporting the next stage of our investment in growth in Manchester."

Andrew Webber, head of corporate at TLT commented: "It's been an exceptional year of growth for our national corporate team both in terms of revenue and headcount. Victoria's appointment will support our national growth strategy, which has recently seen us add to our senior corporate capabilities in London, Birmingham and Edinburgh, to ensure we continue to meet the growing needs of our clients.

"Victoria is a well-known, respected and trusted legal advisor who has a reputation of delivering quick and efficient results, providing exceptional support to clients. We're pleased to welcome Victoria to the team."

Commenting on her appointment, Victoria said: "TLT's corporate team has an impressive track record of undertaking outstanding work for its clients, and I'm looking forward to being part of its continued success. TLT is known for being one of the most progressive firms in the UK and I was very much drawn to its ambitions to drive female talent to the top. It's an exciting time to be joining TLT."

Victoria's appointment will support the continued growth of TLT's offering in the Northwest and drive the expansion of the firm's national footprint. The news follows the recent announcement of three colleagues being promoted to partner in Manchester, as well as several key lateral hires in the region, including the appointment of Matthew Johnson as legal director in the housing and regeneration team.

The news comes ahead of TLT's much-anticipated move to Eden, Salford – designed to be one of the UK's most sustainable office buildings – for its new

home in Manchester. The new office space will support the firm's growth ambitions, whilst also bringing TLT one step closer to achieving its net-zero targets and enhancing its flexible working offering.

The firm was awarded Manchester Law Firm of the Year in 2022 and has also celebrated a number of nominations this year in regional awards. These have included Kirsty Wilson being shortlisted for the [Young Corporate Lawyer of the Year Award at the Insider North West Young Professionals Awards](#); and [three nominations at the Legal 500 Northern PowerHouse Awards](#)

## Dan Banks returns to Trowers & Hamblins as Partner in Manchester

[Trowers & Hamblins](#) has welcomed a new Partner to its growing Property Litigation team. Dan Banks, who was previously with Trowers from 2017 to 2019, re-joins the firm from Fieldfisher where he was a Legal Director. He is based in Trowers' Manchester office.

Dan has 14 years' experience in advising on disputes in relation to the acquisition, disposal, development and management of real estate. His national practice focuses in particular on landlord and tenant matters, and acting on complex 'ad-hoc' disputes for developers, investors and occupiers.

Previously based in London, in early 2020 he relocated to Manchester to set-up Fieldfisher's Manchester Property Litigation team where he was the lead property litigator in Manchester.

Commenting on Dan's appointment, Manchester Head of Office and Head of Real Estate Sector, Suzanne Benson, said: "We



Dan Banks

are delighted to have Dan re-join Trowers with us here in Manchester. The breadth of his experience in property litigation issues is a real asset to the firm and he really compliments our wider Real Estate team both in Manchester and nationally. We are looking forward to working with him again and having him as part of our growing Manchester based team."

Dan Banks added: "It's great to be back at Trowers, and particularly in the property team at the Manchester office. The office's renown has grown massively in my time away and I am excited to be coming back and do my part to help with its growth, that of the property sector and the broader firm overall."



## Three newly qualified solicitors join Browne Jacobson's education team

Browne Jacobson's education practice continues to grow after welcoming three newly-qualified solicitors in this year's intake.

[Alice Wheatley](#), [Chantice Kyle](#) and [Georgina Hall](#) have joined the 100-strong team after completing their training contracts at the firm. They will play a key role in delivering legal and HR services to the full range of education clients, which include schools, academies, and further and higher education institutions.

Alice and Chantice are based at the firm's Nottingham office, with Georgina located in Manchester.

Georgina, who qualified in March this year, arrived in the legal profession after initially studying business at the University of

Reading's Henley Business School, followed by roles in university student recruitment and the Office of the Independent Adjudicator for Higher Education.

She said: "The experience I picked up in working on some of the most complex and high-risk complaints by students against higher education providers, and considering providers' compliance with policies and procedures, ignited my interest in the law and it was an easy decision to work at Browne Jacobson because it has one of the strongest education teams in the country.

"I want to continue building a broad caseload experience but I'll also look to leverage my experience in the higher education sector to build expertise as there's huge potential for us to grow this practice area."

## Fletchers Solicitors hires renowned cycling accident specialist to lead cycling practice


[Fletchers Solicitors](#) has appointed Nadia Kerr as partner to lead its dedicated cycling team including its renowned Cycle SOS brand, which Fletchers acquired in 2022.

An avid cyclist herself, with more than 30 years' legal experience representing cyclists and other vulnerable road users, Kerr joined Fletchers from JMW Solicitors where she headed up the cycling claims team, following previous roles as a Partner at Pannone LLP and in the senior management team at Minister Law.

Kerr is also a Trustee and Director for the national cycling charity, Cycling UK, for which Fletchers' is a Legal Partner.

She was named in Cycling UK's 2021 '100 Women in Cycling', runs a women's cycle group in South Manchester, and was also a founding member and Director of WalkRide GM, a campaign group focused on walking, wheeling and cycling in Greater Manchester.

Alongside her extensive legal career, Kerr is a key ambassador for road safety and active travel. Her advocacy efforts have led to tangible changes, including improvements

**Mark Blois** , Head of Education at Browne Jacobson, added: “It has been wonderful to welcome Chantice, Alice and Georgina to our education team as our latest newly-qualified solicitors.

“As our market-leading education practice continues to grow, it is vital we maintain a strong pipeline of young talent in order to ensure we can continue meeting all our clients’ needs.

“Chantice, Alice and Georgina will not only enhance the education team’s capacity, but they are a very natural fit with the team’s values and personality. We are all looking forward to working with them and seeing their careers flourish over the coming years.”

Alice and Georgina are among 10 newly qualified solicitors in Browne Jacobson’s spring intake. The group also includes Jasmine Shokar (real estate, Nottingham); Laura Roughan-Woodthorpe (healthcare and advisory litigation, Birmingham); Robert



(L-R) Georgina Hall, Chantice Kyle and Alice Wheatley

Clarke (business and professional risk, Birmingham); Isabella Moloney (healthcare and advisory litigation, Exeter); Zahra Khan (business services, Birmingham); Kim Roberts (business and professional risk, Nottingham); Tasha Jones (healthcare and advisory litigation, Manchester); and Thomas Mile (BPR, Birmingham).



Nadia Kerr

in road layouts and targeted resources for repairing dangerous potholes, and she has previously appeared on media outlets to provide expert commentary on long-term government funding for pothole repairs.

Speaking on her appointment, Kerr said: “I’m delighted to be joining the team at Fletcher’s, who have a stellar reputation as

a leader in personal injury cycling accident claims.

“The safety of cyclists on UK roads is still of utmost concern and I’m committed to advocating for safer cycling for vulnerable road users, as well as being dedicated to delivering access to justice for my clients.”

She is set to join Fletcher’s growing two-wheel team, under the direction of Victoria Marsden, Director of Personal Injury.

Marsden said: “We’re delighted to welcome Nadia to the team. She has an outstanding client-centred ethos and is truly tireless in her pursuit of justice, and long-term change. She is sure to make a meaningful impact to the lives of her clients, and the broader cycling community at Fletcher’s.”

## Record number of promotions made at Manchester's leading full-service law firm

**JMW makes 75 promotions across the firm as the business continues to reinforce its culture and values as a best-in-class employer**

**JMW** has announced a record number of promotions across its Manchester, London and Liverpool offices, including appointing to the Board 35-year-old Megan Christie-Copeland, an appointment made while she was on maternity leave with her first child.

Also appointed to the Board as equity partners are Mark Jones, head of Commercial Litigation, and Andrew Lilley and Gordon Cartwright, both of whom are joint heads of the firm's Personal Injury department.

In total, there have been 75 promotions made across the firm, the highest number in JMW's history. In addition to the four equity

partners, 32 have been made associates, 24 made senior associates, 12 have been made salaried partners, and three fixed share equity partners.

Megan joined JMW in 2020 from Linder Myers, bringing her team and caseload with her and merging the two Court of Protection teams during lockdown, whilst taking over the role of Head of Court of Protection from the retiring 'W' of JMW, Ged Wilson. The 2020 team of 28 with 350 cases has now grown to 63 people managing a caseload in excess of 900. Megan was named both Lawyer of the Year and the recipient of the discretionary Chairman's Rising Star Award by the Made in Manchester Awards 2022; in the same year, she and her team won the Private Client Team of the Year Award in the Manchester Legal Awards.

Mark, who has practised commercial and construction law for more than 25 years, is described in the prestigious Legal 500 directory as a "very experienced and commercially savvy litigator." He joined the firm 11 years ago and has a wide and varied client base, from acting for elite professional athletes to nationally known banks and construction companies. Mark is extremely popular within the firm and his promotion to the Board has been welcomed hugely by the many people who have worked directly alongside him.

Gordon Cartwright joined JMW as a trainee in 2001 and has specialised in catastrophic injury work since qualifying as a solicitor in 2003. A Special Ambassador for the Child Brain Injury Trust, he has a particular interest in paediatric brain injury claims and amputation cases, regularly securing seven figure settlements on behalf of his clients,



(L-R) Andrew Lilley, Meghan Christie-Copeland, Gordon Cartwright and Mark Jones



including a settlement of £5m for a child who suffered a brain injury in a road traffic accident and £1.6m for a claimant who suffered an above the elbow amputation as a result of an accident at work. To see him rise right through the ranks from trainee to Board member provides an extremely positive example of JMW's developing talent.

Andrew Lilley, who came to JMW in 1999, is a Director of Headway Central Lancashire and the firm's appointed representative for both Headway and the Spinal Injuries Association. He runs a significant caseload of challenging brain and spinal injury and is renowned for his ability to take on and win the most technically testing "problem" cases from other firms, in recent years winning his clients over £20 million in cases transferred to him from other solicitors.

Said Megan: "I'm honoured to be promoted to the Board, and in my opinion, it taking place whilst I was on maternity leave demonstrates JMW's holistic approach to career development. There are no barriers to success here: in my own team we have made 18 promotions this year. Ours is a highly specialist, experienced team, dealing sensitively and empathetically with some of the most vulnerable of people and their families, friends and carers. Our person-centred approach is one that has been developed over many years and I look forward to our continued success."

Gordon added: "I'm absolutely delighted to become an equity partner especially as this is such an exciting period of growth for the firm. I've been with JMW for my entire career so this really is a special honour for me. I would also say that I am particularly proud of the work carried out by my team in the field of catastrophic injury and I hope to see all those involved continuing to climb the career ladder themselves in the coming years."

Mark said: "The JMW Commercial Litigation team is over 60 strong and widely recognised in the industry for its market-leading work advising on multiple types of litigation issues, and I take pride in our collective achievements as we have developed our practice. As an equity partner, I'm now looking forward to ensuring the continued success of the team whilst working with the Board to continue the further improvement of our client offering. In doing so JMW remain committed to its people and clients."

Andrew Lilley said of his new appointment: "I am extremely pleased to be appointed to the Board and I look forward to working closely with my fellow equity partners. I've been with JMW for 25 years and over that period of time I've seen the firm grow not just in terms of numbers but in stature and reputation, all the while never losing sight of our mission to deliver the very best legal services to our clients at every level."

Marc Yaffe, managing partner at JMW, said: "We are happy to announce the highest number of promotions in the firm's 46-year history. This firm is blessed with brilliant people with drive, determination and a commitment to our clients, their colleagues and the firm's overall development.

"We will not rest on our laurels and our focus for 2024-25 is to make every aspect of what we do better, so that we continually improve on our past achievements. From recruiting smarter and retaining the best talent, to managing and developing our people in meaningful and more engaging ways, and continually improving systems and technology, we will always look to the future as a way of enhancing what has been built here whilst staying true to the culture and values which remain the beating heart of our business."

## Mills & Reeve boosts Manchester planning team

Leading national law firm [Mills & Reeve](#) has recruited Fiona Barker to its growing planning team.

Fiona has joined as a Principal Associate from Eversheds Sutherland, where she worked for nearly a decade, latterly as a Legal Director.

Fiona advises public and private sector clients on all aspects of planning, highways and compulsory purchase law. She has particular expertise in the promotion of Development Consent Orders and Compulsory Purchase Orders for major infrastructure and regeneration schemes.

Fiona is an active member of the Compulsory Purchase Association (CPA), and the CPA's Digital Working Group, which is advising the Government on the digitisation of the compulsory purchase process.

The Manchester planning team, led by partner Melanie Grimshaw, is part of the full-service, 24-strong real estate team advising on some of Manchester's most high-profile projects. Fiona's appointment is part of a strategy to grow both the regional and national planning team.

Melanie said: "Our Manchester planning team continues to grow to bolster our leading national planning practice, which advises on some of the largest strategic land developments in the country, including across the North West.

"Fiona's expertise and wealth of experience will be an extremely valuable addition to the national planning team - particularly in relation to complex planning and compulsory purchase projects, as well as nationally significant infrastructure projects




Fiona Barker

in the energy sector as we expand in the North."

Fiona said: "I was attracted to Mills & Reeve by its reputation - not only for having a high profile and diverse client base, and for achieving impressive and sustained growth; but also for its supportive and nurturing culture, as evidenced by its consistently high rankings in employee feedback surveys. Three months into my new role, I am delighted to say that I have not been disappointed!

"I feel fortunate to have joined Mills & Reeve at a very exciting time as the firm continues its expansion and maps out its 2030 strategy. I look forward to working alongside Melanie, and colleagues in the wider real estate team, to implement the firm's 2030 strategy, and to further grow its practice in the energy sector."

## Stephensons strengthens its partnership with two new equity partners

**Stephensons**  has appointed two new equity partners, effective immediately.

Judith Thomas-Whittingham and Neil Ireland-Davies will join their fellow equity share members in helping to shape the direction of the law firm, which has offices in Wigan, Manchester, St Helens, Warrington, Bolton and London.

Judith Thomas-Whittingham joined Stephensons over 25 years ago and was appointed as a partner in 2009 and head of clinical negligence in 2012. In 2023, Judith was appointed as a director of Stephensons Trust Corporation, and acts as a professional deputy on behalf of vulnerable clients.

Neil Ireland Davies has worked at Stephensons for over 22 years. He

started as a law costs draftsman in the costings team and was then promoted to department manager in 2006. Neil was made a partner in 2013. In 2021 Neil was authorised by the SRA to be Money Laundering Reporting Officer and then in 2022 was also authorised to be Money Laundering Compliance Officer.

Sean Joyce, managing partner of Stephensons said: "I am so pleased to welcome Judith and Neil to the equity partnership. For the best part of a quarter of a century, both Judith and Neil have made a substantial contribution in making Stephensons the firm it is today. I am certain that will continue with their promotion to equity partners and I look forward to working closely with them both as the firm continues to grow and thrive."



Judith Thomas-Whittingham and Neil Ireland-Davies

# GMLC's LASP students nominated for a Pro Bono Award

This year, Greater Manchester Law Centre (GMLC) was proud to be nominated for a LawWorks and Attorney General Student Pro Bono Award for Best Contribution by a Team of Students.

For many years, GMLC has run an innovative programme, the Legal Advocacy Support Project (LASP), which works with students primarily from Manchester Metropolitan University's Law department. Every year, a cohort of young lawyers gets an in-depth training in welfare rights law from GMLC's benefits team, and builds up to representing benefits claimants through their social security tribunal cases. Most of the people they support are disabled residents of

Greater Manchester who have been wrongly refused Personal Independence Payments or other disability benefits. In some cases, our student advocates have realised gains of tens of thousands of pounds for their clients. Many of our LASP students go on to become brilliant barristers, solicitors and legal advisers across a range of fields.

To support our work providing services and campaigning for the rights of our communities, you can become a GMLC member and donor on our website: [www.gmlaw.org.uk/work-with-us/membership](http://www.gmlaw.org.uk/work-with-us/membership). We also welcome corporate donations – email [development@gmlaw.org.uk](mailto:development@gmlaw.org.uk) for more information.



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## Manchester Young Solicitors Group – New Committee, New Charity Partners and New Chair!

The 15th May marked the new MYSG committee's first meeting, and with lots of exciting things in the pipeline MYSG's new Chair Helen Royle sets out some intentions for the year.

Following two years in the role of General Secretary and Marketing Director, Helen Royle shares that she is thrilled about becoming Chair of MYSG. Helen says:

"After two amazing years on the committee, I am so excited to be taking on the role of Chair. I hope that in my time leading the committee we will continue to build on the success of MYSG, expanding its reach and platform, elevating it to the next level! It is something I feel very proud to be a part of – a dynamic and inclusive group that allows our members to experience enjoyable and new experiences around the city whilst growing their networks.

With a mixture of old and new Directors for 2024, I am looking forward to working closely with each of the committee so that we can work collectively to achieving our goals for the year, which are to grow our membership base, host more events than ever before and raise a record-breaking amount for charity.

As a committee, we are dedicated to continuing to host amazing social, charitable, sports, inter-professional and educational events throughout the year. Our social media presence is ever-expanding and we hope that with it this will bring some new faces to our events!

“


As a committee, we are dedicated to continuing to host amazing social, charitable, sports, inter-professional and educational events throughout the year

I can't wait to catch up with our members old and new at our events soon – watch this space!"

Along with a new committee, MYSG will also be sponsoring two new charities for 2024 – Manchester People First and Manchester and Cheshire Dogs Home. Manchester People First are a charity who support self-advocacy for adults with learning disabilities, and the charity is run by adults with learning disabilities. Manchester and Cheshire Dogs Home are a home for stray and unwanted dogs in the Greater Manchester and Cheshire districts, who care and treat sick and injured dogs, nursing them back to health to be ready for adoption. They also attend schools and other events to teach about responsible dog ownership.

We think that both of these organisations will be close to the hearts of our members in some way shape or form, and we are particularly excited to be sponsoring two completely new charities to benefit from our fundraising events.

In terms of our new committee, as a reminder from the previous MLS article, the MYSG 2024 committee is as follows:

- **Chair:** Helen Royle
- **General Directors:** Claudia Arends, Hannah Smale
- **Social Directors:** Megan Lee, [Ana-Victoria Coast](#) 
- **Inter-Professional Directors:** Ron Leong, Cori Mckeown
- **Charity Directors:** Hannah Mycock, Lauren Jane Scott
- **Health and Wellbeing Directors:** Grace Matthews, Emma Whitehead
- **Professional Development Directors:** Tom Moody, Sam Bumby
- **JLD Director:** Emily-Jo Moore

For more information about our events, and to sign up to become a member (for free!) please head to our webpage: [www.mysg.org.uk](http://www.mysg.org.uk)  and be sure to follow us on Instagram [@mysgsolicitors](#) 





# Spinal cord injury awareness day

## Friday, 17th May was Spinal Cord Injury Awareness Day.

A day for us all to think about spinal cord injury, to think about how easily spinal cord injury happens and to remember that most people have been much closer to a spinal cord injury than they would like to think.

Spinal cord injury in the majority of cases, happens in the simplest of circumstances, a mistimed dive, a fall downstairs or an unfortunate road traffic collision; something that happens on our roads frequently.

The trouble with spinal cord injury is that nobody likes to think that spinal cord injury will happen to them; until it does.

I certainly never thought spinal cord injury would happen to me; I thought I was invincible!

Spinal injury has no respect for age, wealth, or social standing. I need only quote the example of Christopher Reeve.

The actor who many of you will know played Superman and who sustained his spinal cord injury when he was thrown from his horse in the late 1990s.

It was ironic that a man who portrayed Superman was never able to breathe on his own after his injury, let alone walk.

Jonathan Fogerty, Associate Solicitor at CFG is a tetraplegic after his own spinal cord injury as a teenager.

Jonathan dived into the shallow end of a swimming pool. His head struck the bottom

of the pool leaving instantly rendering him a tetraplegic, a wheelchair user and paralysed from the chest down.

To mark Spinal Cord Injury Awareness Day, Jonathan shares with us some of his tips for adjusting to life after spinal cord injury.

I have spoken openly about my spinal cord injury over the years, and these are my tips for adjusting to life after spinal cord injury.

- **Give in to your feelings** – It is common to experience a whole range of feelings, grief at the loss of your old life, sadness, anger, and frustration. This is normal. Talk to others. Remember, it's ok to be not ok.
- **Give yourself time** – Recovering from a spinal cord injury and adjusting to paralysis takes time. You don't need to rush. Yes, it's natural to feel motivated and want to embark upon an ambitious program of rehabilitation but you also need to give yourself time to get better.
- **Understand that no two spinal cord injuries are the same** – Do not try to compare yourself with others even those who may have a similar level of injury to you or who were injured in a similar way. Everybody rehabilitates differently after a spinal cord injury and the eventual outcome of somebody's rehabilitation depends upon many factors, such as the age of the person on injury, their height, weight, and gender.
- **Accept help** – Rehabilitating after spinal cord injury is never easy when done alone. Let those around you



Spinal cord injury in the majority of cases, happens in the simplest of circumstances, a mistimed dive, a fall downstairs or an unfortunate road traffic collision...

help and support you through your journey. Remember accepting help is not a sign of weakness.

- **Believe in yourself** – you will get through this. Sure, it will be tough and there will of course be difficult days but there is life after spinal cord injury – Life with a spinal cord injury is a different life – not the end of one.
- **And finally, make plans and look to the future.**

This is difficult in the early stages after spinal cord injury when there is so much else to focus on, like where will you live, how will you get out of the house, but your period of rehabilitation in a spinal injury centre or other rehabilitation setting will come to an end at some point and it is important that when it does, you have other things to focus on in life.

Think about going back to school or college or returning to the workplace.

Are you able to return to the job you did prior to your injury if. If so, great and think about what adjustments may need to be made so that you can do so.

Alternatively, has your spinal cord injury presented an opportunity for you to retrain and to do something different.

Set yourself some goals and give yourself something to do. Staying active and positive after your spinal cord injury will help on your journey.

The main thing to realise is that spinal cord injury rehabilitation does not have to be a lonely journey.

Approximately six people every day sustain a spinal cord injury that will leave them paralysed for the rest of their life.

So, on Spinal Cord Injury Awareness Day, let's take a moment to think about those people who will sustain a spinal cord injury today and the long rehabilitation journey that they now face.

And let us also think about those nurses, relatives and friends who will be there to support them through it.

**Jonathan Fogerty is an Associate Solicitor at CFG.**

**He is a wheelchair user after a spinal cord injury as a teenager.**

**Jonathan can be contacted through the CFG website and for more information see [this link to his profile page](#) [here](#).**



# Whilst Talent is Everywhere, Opportunity is Not – Why Social Mobility Makes Business Sense

By **Amber Ward**, Trainee Solicitor, Clyde & Co

Though traditionally perceived as a sector built around privilege, often recruiting from elite universities, and relying on a system that favours those with connections, the legal world is changing. Whilst it is important to celebrate these changes, we must also acknowledge that there remains more to be done.

Recent data collated by the Solicitors Regulation Authority (SRA) is a reminder of this, with statistics revealing that 21% of lawyers attended a fee-paying school compared with 7.5% nationally and that 58% of lawyers come from a professional background- with their parents having been in occupations classified as professional rather than intermediate or working class- compared to 37% nationally.

Encouraging social mobility is not only the right thing to do, but it also makes business sense.

## Talent and Innovation

A socially mobile workforce introduces a broader range of experiences, backgrounds, and perspectives. This diversity leads to more creative problem-solving and innovative thinking. By broadening their talent pool, firms gain access to talented and committed individuals from a variety of backgrounds. As Nick Emmerson, Law Society president says: “talented, intelligent, tenacious solicitors can be found in every corner of England and Wales”, basing an individual’s potential on their A-Level grades, or the university they have attended runs the risk of excluding talented individuals from the profession.

## Client Expectations

Clients are increasingly seeking legal representation that reflects their own values of diversity and inclusion. In fact, many clients now consider a firm’s commitment to social mobility and efforts towards diversity and inclusion when deciding who to instruct. Firms that are able to demonstrate their alignment with client values through active promotion of social mobility can differentiate themselves in a competitive market.



## Enhanced Retention and Management

A socially mobile workforce is one that is inclusive and welcoming. Employees who feel valued and supported are more likely to stay within a firm, leading to a reduced staff turnover and a more engaged workforce.

Social mobility programmes, such as mentoring, internships, and scholarships can create direct routes into the profession for individuals from underrepresented backgrounds who might not otherwise have such an opportunity. This investment in people yields long-term benefits, with staff providing a range of different perspectives

in an environment where they feel welcome and valued. This, in turn, contributes to a positive culture and improved client service.

Where you start in life should not determine where you end up but for some people, it still does. We must all promote diversity and inclusion, including social mobility, to ensure that our profession accurately reflects the society we serve. This means creating and promoting a diverse and representative workforce who are provided with an equal opportunity to succeed - *"if we limit who can contribute, we in turn limit what problems we can solve"*.

## Upcoming events **Social Events**



**6 June 2024**

Manchester Legal Awards Ceremony details [↗](#)

**12 July 2024**

"It's Not The Euros!" MLS Football Tournament in aid of We Love MCR Charity - SOLD OUT! [details](#) [↗](#)

**24 August 2024**

Manchester Pride Brunch 2024 in aid of Out Together [details](#) [↗](#)

## Legal Education

**26 June 2024**

Regulatory Conference [details](#) [↗](#)

**10 July 2024**

Local Authority Conference [details](#) [↗](#)

**18 September 2024**

Property Law Conference [details](#) [↗](#)

**25 September 2024**

Private Client Conference

**9 October 2024**

Family Law Conference



# Four-Day Week Improves Mental Health for Lawyers

Iwona Durlak, Co-Founder and Senior Partner, IMD Solicitors LLP

## Introduction

Mental Health Awareness Month is a critical reminder of the importance of mental well-being, especially in demanding professions such as law. At IMD Solicitors LLP, we have taken a groundbreaking step by implementing a four-day working week to address the mental health challenges faced by our team. This article, drawing on my personal experiences and the changes we've made at IMD, delves into how this initiative has significantly improved our team's mental health and explores its potential benefits for the broader legal profession.

## My Personal Struggle

As a Partner and Family Solicitor, I have personally experienced the overwhelming stress that comes with trying to balance a demanding career with family responsibilities and personal well-being. There were many times when I was consumed by guilt, struggling to find time for my family, my beautiful children, myself, and the job I love so much. The constant pressure to perform at work while also being present for my family left me feeling like I was failing on all fronts. I would often feel too exhausted to engage fully with my children, and neglect my own health and well-being. This relentless juggling act took a toll on my mental health, leading to feelings of inadequacy and chronic stress. It became abundantly clear to me that something had to change. I realised that if I, as a senior partner, was feeling this way, my

team likely was too. I realised it was time to reimagine our approach to work to foster a healthier, more balanced environment.

## The Tragic Death of Vanessa Ford

The tragic suicide of Vanessa Ford, a partner at one of the large law firms, who was overwhelmed by work pressures, further underscores the urgent need for better work-life balance in our industry. Vanessa's



“

There were many times when I was consumed by guilt, struggling to find time for my family, my beautiful children, myself, and the job I love so much

death was a devastating reminder of the toll that extreme work demands can take on mental health. Her tragic story highlights the critical need for the legal profession to re-evaluate its culture of long hours and constant pressure. Vanessa had been struggling with a punishing workload and felt isolated in her role. Her death has sparked a broader debate within the legal community about the unsustainable nature of our work practices. The profession must acknowledge that hard work and dedication should not come at the cost of mental health. It is imperative that we move towards a more compassionate and supportive working environment, where lawyers can thrive both professionally and personally.

### Implementing the Four-Day Week

Recognising the need for change, I decided to implement a four-day working week at 100% of salary, but without reducing financial goals, in our Family Department. This decision was driven by a desire to enhance work-life balance and improve mental health outcomes for our team. Initially, my team had some reservations, however, I believed it could be a success if we focused on changing the way we work. The positive impact on our lawyers' well-being was evident almost immediately, and we are now expanding this model firm-wide.

## Practical Tips for Enhancing Mental Health in Law

Beyond structural changes like the four-day week, there are several practical strategies that legal professionals can adopt to maintain good mental health:

- 1. Set Boundaries:** Clearly define work and personal time, ensuring that work does not intrude on personal life. This is particularly important for those working from home.
- 2. Prioritise Self-Care:** Engage in activities that promote well-being, such as exercise, meditation, or hobbies. Even small daily actions can significantly impact mental health.
- 3. Seek Support:** Build a supportive network of colleagues, friends, and family. Sharing experiences and challenges can provide valuable emotional support and reduce feelings of isolation.
- 4. Celebrate Small Wins:** Acknowledge and celebrate small achievements. This can boost morale and provide a sense of accomplishment, contributing to overall well-being.
- 5. Maintain Physical Health:** Regular exercise, a balanced diet, and adequate sleep are fundamental to good mental health. Encourage routines that support physical well-being.

## Improved Work-Life Balance and Well-Being

The implementation of a four-day working week provided our team with an extra day to rest, recharge, and engage in personal activities. This additional time off allowed our employees to better manage their work-life balance, reducing stress and increasing overall job satisfaction. Our lawyers reported feeling more refreshed and motivated, leading to higher productivity and improved mental health. With the extra day off each week, our team had more time to pursue hobbies, exercise, and spend quality time with family and friends. These activities are crucial for maintaining good mental health and reducing the risk of burnout. By having dedicated time to relax and rejuvenate, our lawyers experienced lower stress levels and greater overall happiness.

Implementing the four-day week also fostered a more supportive and collaborative work environment. Our team members felt valued and appreciated, knowing that their mental health was a priority. This supportive culture encouraged open communication about mental health issues, reducing the stigma often associated with discussing such topics in the workplace.

## Towards a Healthier Legal Profession

The success of our four-day work week initiative at IMD Solicitors, where we achieved 122% productivity on 80% of the time, suggests that this model could benefit the wider legal profession. By prioritising mental health and work-life balance, law firms can create a more supportive and productive work environment. Reduced

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The four-day working week should be just one part of broader strategy to support mental health of the lawyers

working hours can lead to improved well-being, higher job satisfaction, and ultimately, better client service.

We should all commit to continue our efforts to enhance mental health and well-being within our firms. The four-day working week should be just one part of broader strategy to support mental health of the lawyers. We should continue to explore and implement practices that promote a healthy work-life balance and foster a positive work environment.

As we reflect on Mental Health Awareness Month, it is clear that prioritising mental health is not only beneficial but essential for the long-term success of the legal profession. The implementation of a four-day working week at IMD Solicitors has demonstrated that it is possible to achieve professional success while maintaining a healthy work-life balance. By embracing innovative work models and fostering a culture of well-being, law firms can create a more supportive, productive, and fulfilling environment for their employees.

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# A topical debate: Should the UK leave the European Convention on Human Rights (ECHR)?

By **Elle-Sue Calderbank**, third year LLB Law student at Manchester Metropolitan University and the President of the Manchester Metropolitan University's Black Students Network.

In recent years, the UK's continued membership of the ECHR has come under sustained scrutiny – such that there is now a live debate in political, media, and legal circles as to whether the UK should leave a Convention which it played a significant role in creating.

Leaving the ECHR would undoubtedly have a significant impact on the UK's global reputation. Arguably, it would also lower human rights standards in the UK. In April, Rishi Sunak stated that, in his view, border security and controlling illegal migration ought to be prioritised over membership of a 'foreign' court. Whilst the surprising timing of the upcoming General Election means that UK membership of the ECHR is unlikely to be a live debate during this election cycle, there are undoubtedly many in the UK who share Rishi Sunak's sentiments.

In 1959, the Council of Europe (of which the UK was an influential member), established the ECHR in Strasbourg, to deal with state breaches of fundamental human rights. Since its formation, becoming a member of the ECHR has been widely thought to signify a commitment to the rule of law, and a state's willingness to prioritise the protection of universal human rights over local sovereignty. It is telling that the only European countries that are not members of the Convention are Russia and Belarus.

I share the view of former Law Society President Lubna Shuja, who stated that leaving the ECHR due to the challenges posed by illegal migration would be "*using a sledgehammer to crack a nut*". Debate over the utility of the ECHR often centres on illegal migration, and there is a danger that this obscures the other tangible ways in which





the ECHR has been used by ordinary people to seek justice against an overreaching state. A striking example of this can be seen in how Article 2, the right to life, contained within the ECHR, was used by the Hillsborough families in their fight for justice.

In April 2016, nearly 27 years to the day of the Hillsborough disaster, an inquest jury delivered the verdict that the 96 people who died at Hillsborough had been unlawfully killed due to the gross negligence of the state, thereby vindicating the bereaved families. Under domestic law, inquests had previously only permitted very narrow inquiries into how someone had died and had excluded the surrounding circumstances. ECHR Article 2 changed this – the Article, via incorporation into the domestic Human Rights Act, gave the Hillsborough families a right to seek inquiries that are specifically Article 2 compliant, thereby allowing juries to assess the wider circumstances behind a death when coming to a verdict, not just the narrow question of how the person died.

Leaving the ECHR would also have lasting damage on the UK's reputation and credibility as a state committed to the rule of law. As above, if the UK were to voluntarily leave the ECHR it would join a very small European club, currently consisting of only Russia and Belarus. Presently, the UK is considered a global leader in human rights protection – in an increasingly unstable world, it is crucial that the UK burnishes rather than tarnishes its global reputation and influence.

From a legal standpoint, leaving the ECHR could harm the practical application of legal principles. It could raise uncertainty as to the interpretation of human rights law, especially during the transitional process. There is also concern that it would undermine the consistency and coherence

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I share the view of former Law Society President Lubna Shuja, who stated that leaving the ECHR due to the challenges posed by illegal migration would be “using a sledgehammer to crack a nut”

of human rights protections within the UK, leading to potential conflicts between domestic and international legal standards.

Proponents of leaving the ECHR argue that leaving is necessary to restore the sovereignty of the UK courts, legislature, and government. This view has most recently been manifested in the controversy over the Rwanda scheme, which flared up in June 2022 when the ECtHR issued a Rule 39 order to prevent the first deportation flight to Rwanda. I believe that being a member of the ECHR is central to the UK's human rights protection framework and global reputation. Continued membership substantively protects our human rights, but also signals our government's commitment to upholding fundamental and universal rights and freedoms. By participating in this international framework, the UK not only reinforces its dedication to human rights but also aligns itself with European standards of justice and equality. The challenge of illegal migration can and must be addressed within the framework of universal human rights law – exiting the ECHR in order to empower the government to act contrary to European human rights standards would be a retrograde step for this country.

# Management Matters



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

## This Month

### As a firm – where are we and where do we want to be – how to get there

- **Where are we at commercially**
- **Key people stock-take**
- **Strategy going forward**
- **Additional considerations**

The commercial continuity and success of a law firm (revenue, gross profit, net profit, working capital, regulation), irrespective of its size and shape is critical for the owners, the staff (roles, development and retention) and their clients (skills, empathy, communication and support)

*For some this may look complex but it isn't and it is essential*

In order to achieve this, again irrespective of size and shape it is essential to have a clear business strategy, bought into by the team with an initial optimum of three years but with annual adjustments to budgets along with monthly perpetual reviews and necessary changes to match changing economy and laws, recover performance dips and enhance opportunities.

**Initial stock-take – an essential starting point.** This should cover the last two years with financials and numbers shown monthly to enable review of trends, peaks and troughs, results of recovery actions and support activities.

For the 24 month period key statistics should show by month (totalled for each year)

- Staffing levels (partners, managers, other fee earners, secretaries, support staff by office location and work-type

- Fiscal fee income by location and work-type
- Gross profit by location and work-type
- Overheads by month – analysis if available by location
- Bank balance – working capital analysis
- Major clients by office and work-type – revenue and GP
- New clients obtained by office and work-type – enquiry generation and conversion
- New and additional work-types by client
- Lost clients

An opinion to be expressed on any positive or negative trends – which could include resourcing, business development impacts, IT impacts, HR impacts, compliance and regulation impacts.

An assessment needed of any recovery actions, skills availabilities for all activities, the use of outsourcing for skills and work volumes

## Team availability and commitment

The next essential is a clear assessment of owners and managers who will be critical for the firm's future – managing partner/director, shareholders, directors, legal department heads, leads of finance, HR, business development, IT, compliance. We also have to remember that the biggest fee earner is not necessarily the best manager of a work-type team – a personality challenge.

These people need to be asked to be open about their motivations – winning



things, dealing with challenges, pride in success, client satisfaction, seeking more accountability. Also we need to know – how much longer they want to be in the job – retirement (seeking a capital sum maybe), of work:life balance changes. Do they consider they need enhancement in skills to be able to put more into their current accountabilities or to develop into a bigger and more contributory role.

This will enable consideration for future direction of required replacements or a succession plan and some fundamental training and development needs

All of the key roles require clear job descriptions with accountabilities for revenue generation, gross profit generation, staff motivation and development, client satisfaction levels and so on. Not just for the legal heads but also for staff functions. The next important things are the skill levels and experience required for each and every role and consideration of where some of those skills may come from – IT security, working capital management, M&A, - from within or does it need topping up with part time or outsourced advice.

Objectives and experience are the starting point of a job profile but there is also the essential candidate profile for all roles – communication skills, intellectual skills, management skills, motivation and emotional factors. It is assessing people against this, as one should a new recruit, that assist the people development programme.

Further considerations about participating in outsourcing, whether it be extending document production capabilities or even outsourcing book-keeping and legal skills where short through independent advisors.

### The Three Year Strategy

This is an annual requirement following an annual stock-take and another year's experience. Year one of the three years will become the budget and that will be reviewed and updated every month by the Operations/Management Board. Statistics and planned actions will be monthly for the 36 months initially and totals for each fiscal year.

With knowledge of where we are at and what the key resource wants to happen to their personal and business lives and the available skills and succession and development needed the firm can make the appropriate decisions such as

- We would like to sell the business by ----- discussions with some accountants can be fruitful
- In year 1 to 3 we would like to grow through acquisition. Need to specify the desired scale, work-types and locations and then contact accountants, advisers and make the ideals become public. There are multiple financing options.
- In year one we need to dramatically improve the profitability and working capital, enhancing efficiency with IT usage with the current map whilst also protecting support skills and compliance/regulation

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- We would like to grow the business
  - This can be done with acquisitions
    - need to identify the ideal profile of an acquisition – scale, work-types, locations and then contact the appropriate advice or make it clear to the sector
  - This can be with current locations and work-types and with enhanced business development for new and or existing clients
  - This can be with additional locations
  - This can be with additional work-types
  - Needs appropriate business development
  - IT efficiency
  - People development, acquisition and retention – skills and motivation/communications
  - Client support – for more business and referrals/recommendations

Activities and initiatives mainly by work-type (like Will Bank status) need to be timed across the 36 months along with the expected revenue, gross profits, overheads, chargeable time, lock up, headcount

### Additional Considerations

Here are a series of basic considerations for the firm going forward and supporting objectives achievements. Ideally done up front but also under consideration for the strategy period and objectives.

### People

- Real clarity over accountabilities of staff within their job descriptions
- A constructive appraisal system and ensuing development of individuals for their satisfaction but also performance
- Recognition that people often of different age groups need different communication and KPIs
- The firm to have a diversity/equality policy being developed along with community and charity support as well as environmental recognition – not only are about 65% of millennials considering leaving firms because of communication but also the missing social conscience. Clients are also choosing firms that have the environmental and social conscience

### Business Development

- Initiatives need to be in place and not just for new business – existing clients need constant communications and empathy, updates on needs – 42% of live matters at the moment clients are not happy – won't come back and are advising their friends.
- All within the firm need to be switched on to client communication from answering telephone calls, smiling in reception, demonstrating empathy

### IT

- Essential for performance especially after investment already made. With the challenges and strategy in mind meetings should be held with existing PMS/CMS suppliers getting them to demonstrate how they can currently meet the needs.

Then being very clear on their forward strategy for product development and enhancement. Further clarity on how the necessary added value items like MI, on boarding, client communications can be achieved or through which added value third party solutions.

- Full consideration should be given of getting IT into a managed service/hosted environment. For flexible working, business continuity and security. Care needs to be taken in the selection of the supplier because of some recent failings

### Compliance and Regulation

- We need to ensure that we have the best advice and the right processes and authorisations in place to minimise risk. Ownerships and workflows.
- We need to ensure no complacency in the needs of Pii insurance renewals – regular contact with the lead brokers but also the insurance companies is a need.

### Outsourcing

At the moment it is very hard to predict the movements in the economy that can affect work volumes. For efficiency reasons, client speed of response, flexible working there has been a large growth in outsourcing across multiple activities. For example transcription and document production. There is now an increase in firms not able to have all the skills on board because of scale needing to support their clients and so there is a growth in third party legal support.

Firms are increasingly outsourcing some basic activities because of flexible working needs – such as book keeping and accounting.

There is also a big growth in skills shortage - even within large firms – such as IT security, mergers and acquisitions, working capital management, refinancing law firms, regulation and compliance, HR needs, business development

### Brand

It is essential to get the firm's brand sorted so that clients and potential clients know you are lovely, high performance and communicate. You have a strategy, you have empathy, got the best client and staff orientated approach

### Management Structure

Finally, clarity is needed within the firm at the top level. MI, BI and KPIs are sorted. There is a management structure and every month the Operations Board needs to meet, review department head reports, enhance the balance of year numbers and re set targets and objectives.

There is also a great case for perhaps a meeting every two months or at a push three for the Strategic Board to get together for an update consideration.

Bill Kirby is a director of [professionalchoiceconsultancy.com](https://www.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](#)

# 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

**At Costs Judges' level, this month, the Solicitors Act 1974 has given the profession plenty to think about. In so far as case law is concerned, it is the Act that keeps on giving!**

First, **Bendriss v Nicholson Jones Sutton Solicitors Ltd** [2024] EWHC 1100 (SCCO). Kain Knight acted for the successful Defendant here in an interlocutory application brought by the Claimant (legally represented by Checkmylegalfees) for specific disclosure for documents concerning (i) an ATE premium, and (ii) call recordings, in Solicitors Act 1974 detailed assessment proceedings. The ATE premium had mistakenly been included in the statutory bill as a 'disbursement' and the Claimant attempted to argue that, because of that erroneous inclusion it became assessable under the Act. Accordingly, disclosure pertaining to it must be provided. Costs Judge Rowley found that, including it in the statutory bill, does not somehow turn an item which has been found not to be a disbursement (see *Herbert v H H Law Ltd* [2019] EWCA Civ 527 (03 April 2019)) into one. Costs Judge Rowley also found that it would be wholly disproportionate to allow disclosure of call recordings when the sums they went to in the statutory bill were relatively small. Application dismissed.

Second, **Hensley v Morris Law Ltd** [2024] EWHC 1101 (SCCO), Costs Judge Rowley (yes, Costs Judge Rowley again !!) was asked to decide whether a bill complied with the

requirements of the Act as to its validity. If not, it was the former client's case that a compliant bill should be delivered by order under s.68 of the Act so that his right to a detailed assessment would arise from that moment. The judge agreed. The bill delivered had sought a success fee over and above the costs recovered from the client's opponent. However, it had not made any attempt to provide information which would have made it a complete bill such as what costs had been paid, by whom and when and in what way (eg by direct payment, as had been the case). It followed that the solicitors were ordered to serve a fresh bill that complied with the Solicitors Act.

Next in **Pickering v Thomas Mansfield Solicitors Ltd** [2024] EWHC 1107 (SCCO), Costs Judge Brown found that a series of invoices rendered by the defendant solicitors in a family dispute amounting to £2,533,579.14 of which £1,175,849.50 were *unpaid*, were "statute bills". It followed that the date for applying for assessment ran from the date of delivery. He rejected an argument that the requirements for such bills had been expanded by observations made by the Court of Appeal in *Karatysz v SGI Legal LLP* [2022] Costs LR 1643. However, he declined an invitation by the solicitors to direct that the outstanding balance be brought into court as a condition of ordering a detailed assessment. The judge considered that the costs were high *and resembled* the level that would be expected in a commercial dispute. *However,*

*that* would not prevent an application being made for an interim payment *when a* breakdown of the bill and points of dispute had been served.

Next, in **Lorimer-Wing v Hashmi** [2024] EWHC 931 (Ch), Mr Justice Edwin Johnson (on appeal) dealt with the costs of a liability trial where the claimant had obtained judgment but quantum had yet to be determined. It was the defendant's case that the costs should have been reserved until it could be seen whether any offer for the claimant's shares had exceeded their value, when determined at the quantum trial. That submission failed. The judge below had ordered the defendant to pay the liability costs, but with the detailed assessment not to commence until either the court had determined the value of the shares, or an agreement had been reached as to their value. That meant that the defendant would not have to pay the costs until the conclusion of the quantum trial, either by way of interim payment or following a detailed assessment. It followed that the judgment below had been correct, so the appeal was dismissed.

With a consultation ongoing into whether the Overriding Objective in CPR 1 should be amended to include reference to Alternative Dispute Resolution (see [here](#)) the judgment of **Northamber PLC v Genee World Ltd & Ors (Rev1)** [2024] EWCA Civ

428, is a good indicator of the direction in which the wind is blowing. The claimant had obtained judgment for some heads of claim but its action for inducing a breach of contract had failed, meaning that the award of costs was limited to 70% in its favour. However, there had been silence in the face of an offer to mediate made by the claimant, and to compound matters, an order for an explanation to be provided by a witness statement, had been breached. That justified increasing the Claimant's costs order by 5%, with the Court of Appeal stating firmly that if breaches of such orders were ignored by courts when deciding costs, parties would have no incentive to comply with them. For that reason, it was right to penalise parties who ignored them in costs.

Finally, a rare journey into costs orders in the Employment Tribunal (ET). In **Ireland v University College Hospital** [2024] EAT 68 Eady J dismissed appeals against dismissal by the ET of the claimant's claims for direct race discrimination with costs of £14,000, and his application for wasted costs against the respondent's representatives. The judgment provides a thorough analysis of the law and applicable principles in reaching the conclusion that the ET had not erred in principle, nor failed to take into account all relevant factors, nor had reached a perverse decision in proceeding to hear the respondent's application for costs at the end of the liability hearing.

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)

# King Charles III announced as new Patron of The Solicitors' Charity

The Solicitors' Charity is delighted to learn that King Charles III will be its new Royal Patron.

Following His Majesty The King's Accession in September 2022, a major review of more than 1,000 Royal Patronages and charity Presidencies was undertaken. To mark the first anniversary of Their Majesties' Coronation, the conclusions were shared with The Solicitors' Charity this week.

Queen Elizabeth II was patron of 492 organisations, while King Charles III was affiliated to 441 and Queen Camilla 100. Following the review, just over 830 have been retained by the king and queen or passed to other members of the royal family.

The Solicitors' Charity is honoured that His Majesty has accepted the patronage of The Solicitors' Charity. The late Queen Elizabeth II was the Charity's previous Royal Patron.

The Solicitors' Charity has been supporting solicitors since 1858. It provides comprehensive support to improve the wellbeing of solicitors, helping them to overcome life's challenges.

Chair, Ginny Cannon, said: "We are honoured and thrilled that His Majesty The King is to become our Royal Patron. Royal patronage is a huge endorsement of the vital services we offer to solicitors and the positive impact we make on the lives of the people we help.



The Solicitors' Charity Chair, Ginny Cannon (pictured), is delighted to learn that King Charles III will be the Charity's new Royal Patron

We are delighted to welcome His Majesty as Patron of the Charity."

The patronage was announced by the Royal Household to mark the first anniversary of the Coronation. The Solicitors' Charity was told that King Charles III was "delighted" to accept the role.

Royal patronage endorses the work of more than 800 charities retained by Their Majesties and Members of The Royal Family, including military organisations, and professional and public service bodies in Britain and the Commonwealth. It allows their achievements and valuable contributions to society to be more widely recognised and promoted.

Find out more about the Charity's work at: [thesolicitorscharity.org](https://thesolicitorscharity.org)

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## Pet of the month

**Name:** Jeff Lewis

**Firm:** Brabners LLP

**Pet Name:** Harvey

**Pet Nickname:** Er...Harvey

**Pet Breed:** Cavachon

**Is your pet:** Male

**How old is your pet:** 4

**Favourite Toy:** Rope

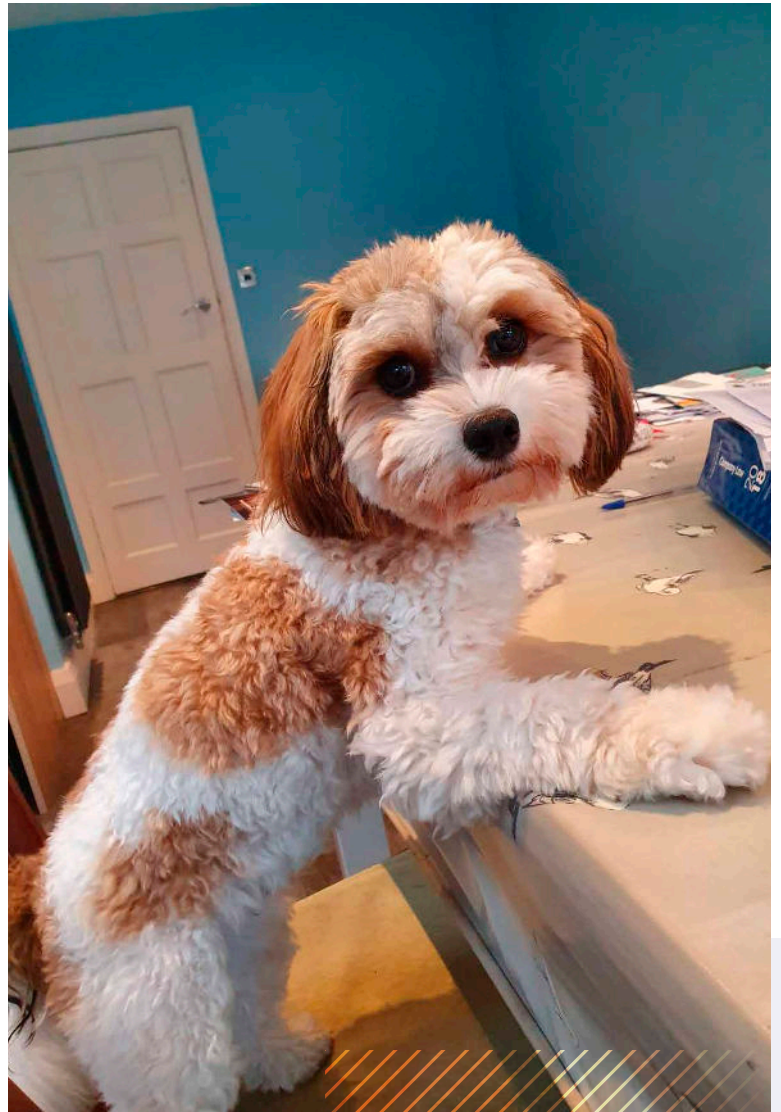
**Favourite Activity:** Eating

**Favourite Treat:** Cheese

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

*My perfect day would be...* Lying in the sun, eating cheese and frozen peas.

*My favourite thing my parents do is...* Feed me.



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

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

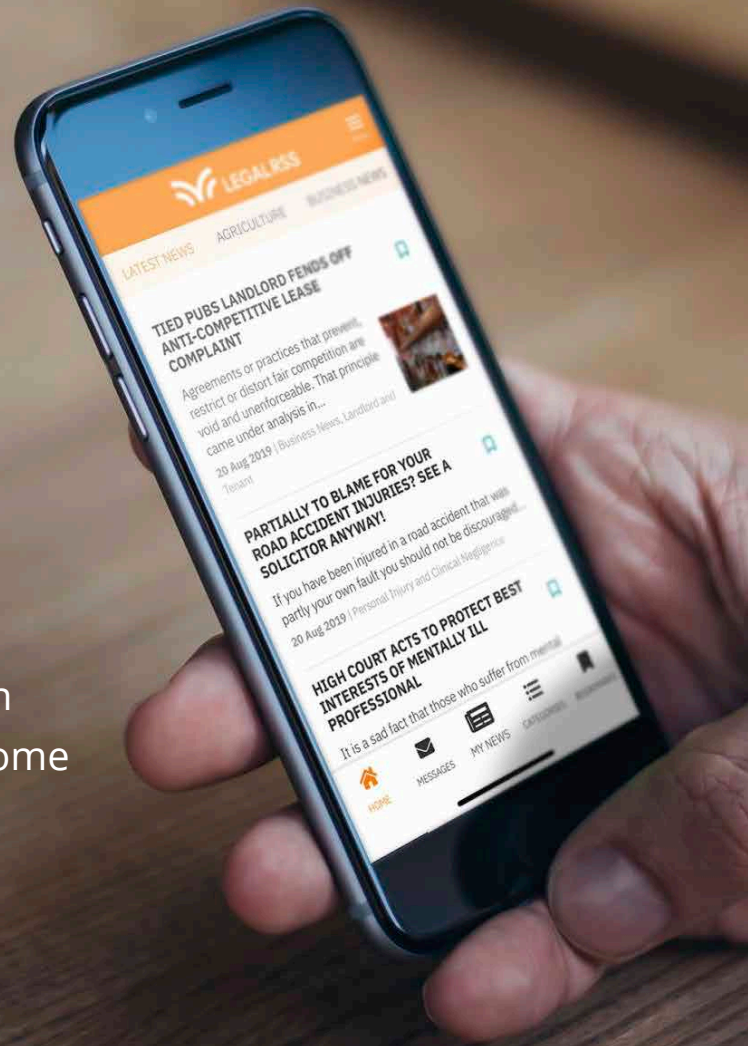
You can download a copy of the questions here then send your answers and photo to [Messenger@manchesterlawsociety.org.uk](mailto:Messenger@manchesterlawsociety.org.uk) [↗](#)

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